

APRIL 2026
Q1 2026

GCC IPO INSIGHTS

OUR NEWSLETTER



FOREWORD: IPO MARKET AND CAPITAL ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

FY26 began on a foundation of structural momentum: a GCC-wide pipeline of around 73 IPO candidates, with approximately 40 applications under active review by the Saudi Capital Market Authority and the remainder at earlier stages of preparation or targeting other GCC exchanges and the landmark elimination of the Qualified Foreign Investor (QFI) framework in Saudi Arabia, effective 1 February 2026. That momentum was tested when the outbreak of the regional conflict introduced significant disruption, reshaping the forward outlook of regional IPO activity and investor engagement. GCC equity markets reflected the severity of the disruption, yet early indicators suggest that the structural foundations of GCC capital markets continue to hold.

During the quarter, there were two issuers in Saudi Arabia. Saleh Abdulaziz Al Rashed & Sons Co., the first TASI IPO of 2026, posted gains in early March, with its retail tranche significantly oversubscribed, as per market announcements, reinforcing the depth of Saudi Arabia's domestic liquidity base and the continued decoupling between short-term index movements and primary market execution on the Saudi Arabia stock exchange. This resilience is structural rather than circumstantial, built on deep institutional capital pools, a maturing retail investor base, and consistent government-linked issuance

activity, which have collectively established Saudi Arabia as the region's most robust primary market.

At Uniquis, we see this moment as a stress test and not a structural break for GCC capital markets. The regulatory architecture underpinning the region's capital markets remains intact and continues to evolve. The elimination of the QFI framework and the abolition of swap-based access, effective 1 February 2026, represent the most significant reform of Saudi equity markets in recent history, opening the Saudi Arabia stock exchange to all foreign investors through a unified direct participation regime. These reforms, when Combined with the continued evolution of corporate governance and reporting standards across the region, will support market depth and transparency when conditions normalize.

For companies in the IPO pipeline, the current environment presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen governance, financial reporting, and operational readiness, so they are well positioned to move quickly when market conditions improve. This issue of our GCC IPO Insights consolidates these trends to provide a clear perspective on GCC's capital markets, with a specific focus on Saudi Arabia. The knowledge corner of this edition examines the Capital Market Authority's (CMA's) six-month execution window following IPO approval.



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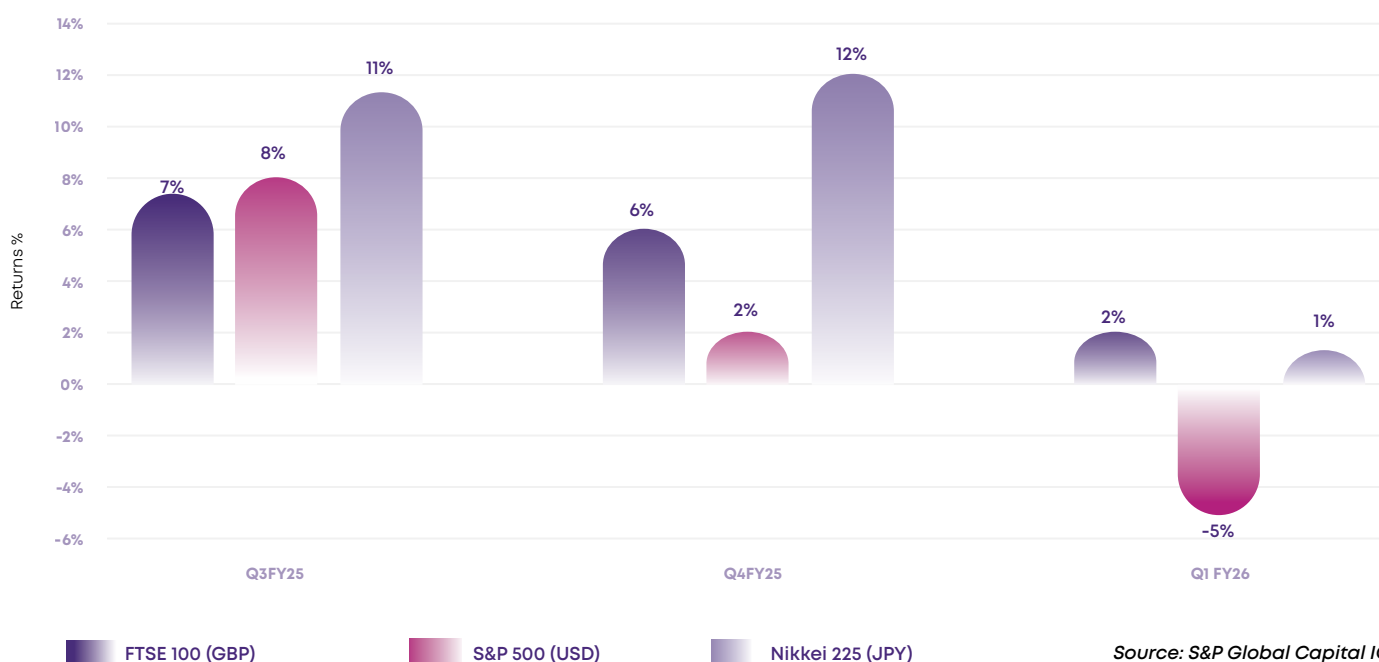
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GLOBAL NAVIGATION AND GCC RESILIENCE

The first quarter of 2026 unfolded in a more balanced global market environment, with major indices moderating from the stronger momentum seen in earlier periods. The FTSE 100 (GBP) remained positive at 2.47%, while the S&P 500 (USD) recorded a 4.63% decline and the Nikkei 225 (JPY) delivered a modest 1.44% gain. Market performance reflected a selective global environment, with valuation discipline, evolving rate expectations, and increased sensitivity to external factors.

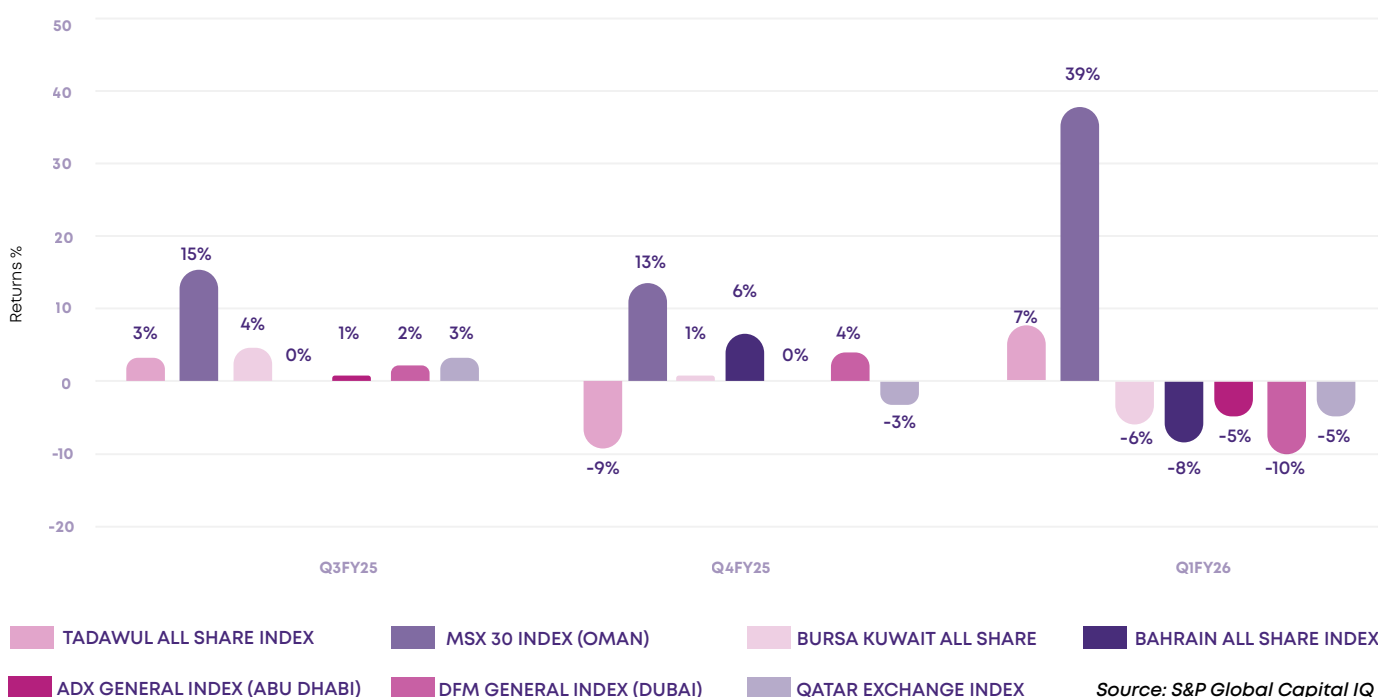
Market sentiment turned more cautious towards the close of the quarter. In March 2026, geopolitical developments towards the end of the quarter influenced oil prices and market sentiment, contributing to greater dispersion in global equities and a more differentiated performance profile across regions.

PERFORMANCE TRENDS OF MAJOR GLOBAL EQUITY INDICES



Within the GCC, market performance was mixed, with clear variation across individual exchanges. While the Tadawul All Share Index (TASI) advanced 7.23% and Oman's MSX 30 Index delivered a strong 39.23% return, the Bursa Kuwait All Share Index declined 5.51%, the Bahrain All Share Index fell 8.10%, ADX General Index decreased by 4.72%, DFM General Index dropped 10.13%, and Qatar Exchange Index dropped by 5.33%. This dispersion highlights the increasing influence of domestic liquidity conditions, sector composition, and investor participation in shaping market outcomes.

PERFORMANCE TRENDS OF GCC INDICES



GCC resilience is increasingly evident at an individual market level rather than as a uniform regional trend. The relative outperformance of Saudi Arabia and Oman underscores the role of deep domestic capital pools, ongoing reform momentum, and more developed market structures in sustaining investor confidence amid shifting global conditions.

Saudi Arabia's equity market emerged as a focal point of relative resilience. Despite broader regional pressures, the TASI posted notable strength in March, outperforming several peers and sustaining gains in market capitalization. This relative performance reflects both the market's structural

depth and continued policy-driven improvements in liquidity and access. Reforms aimed at broadening foreign investor participation and removing previous investment restrictions have enhanced market depth and are expected to support sustained activity over time.

Overall, Q1 2026 underscores a global environment defined by selectivity and a GCC landscape marked by increasing differentiation. While external factors became more pronounced toward the end of the quarter, stronger regional markets continued to stand out for their liquidity, structural support, and ability to sustain investor confidence.

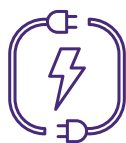
REGIONAL CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT ON GCC CAPITAL MARKETS

GCC capital markets entered Q1 2026 with a steady pipeline and reform-driven momentum, with approximately 40 IPO applications under review by the Saudi Arabia Capital Market Authority.

The outbreak of the regional conflict disrupted this momentum, leading to sharp volatility across GCC equity markets and prompting issuers to reassess their IPO timing and execution strategies. TASI fell sharply on the first day of trading following the outbreak before regaining ground by mid-March, supported by strong performance in the energy sector and the index's significant concentration. UAE and other regional stock markets recorded more pronounced declines during the period.

Sector Impact across TASI:

The conflict triggered a visible rotation across TASI sectors, with energy and commodity-linked industries attracting stronger investor interest while consumer-facing and service-oriented sectors saw more cautious positioning. The key dynamics observed across major sectors are as follows:



Energy

The energy sector was TASI's standout performer, with Brent crude surging as much as 13% on the first day of trading following the outbreak of conflict, amid fears that the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz would cut off roughly 20-25% of global oil supply. Saudi Aramco, which carries approximately 12% of the index's total weight, rose sharply in early sessions, acting as the market's pillar against broader losses. By the end of March, Brent crude had gained 51% since the start of the conflict, its largest monthly surge on record.



Petrochemicals and Materials

The materials sector recorded weekly gains of 3.5% in the week of March 8-14, as chemical prices rose on supply disruption expectations and producers with access to Red Sea export routes on Saudi Arabia's western coast were seen as better insulated from strait-related constraints than peers dependent entirely on Hormuz passage.



Insurance

Insurance stocks fell as investors priced in rising claims exposure and a sharp contraction in reinsurance capacity. Maritime war risk premiums surged four to five times within days of the conflict beginning, with hull war risk rates (insurance coverage protecting vessels against physical loss or damage caused by war, terrorism, or hostile acts) rising from approximately 0.25% to over 1% of vessel value. Major P&I clubs issued formal cancellation notices for Persian Gulf coverage, creating an immediate and material underwriting headwind for Saudi-listed insurers.



Banking

The sector provided relative stability on TASI, supported by expectations of solid first-quarter earnings and a cautious but constructive investor outlook. Sentiment remained measured as the market assessed the potential impact on lending growth, expatriate deposit flows, and asset quality across SME and real estate portfolios.



Real Estate

Real estate was among the hardest-hit sectors, with project timelines in flux and early signs of an expatriate departure dynamic weighing on investor sentiment. However, Real estate stocks on TASI displayed a more differentiated and ultimately resilient pattern during the conflict period, reflecting the domestic demand anchors that underpin the sector and distinguishing it from the sharper declines seen in UAE property markets. The TASI real estate sub-index saw modest early-session pressure of approximately 0.9% on March 12, as project timeline uncertainty and concerns about expatriate workforce mobility weighed on positioning. Although the sector initially came under pressure, Saudi real estate stocks demonstrated relative resilience, supported by strong domestic demand fundamentals. Performance, however, remained mixed and was influenced in part by company-specific developments. By contrast, UAE property stocks faced more pronounced investor concern, as the market absorbed the cumulative impact of infrastructure strikes and business continuity disruptions across the UAE.



Retail and Consumer

Retail stocks showed a marked bifurcation as investors rapidly distinguished between import-dependent discretionary names and domestically-oriented staple businesses. Over the period, import-exposed names came under greater pressure, while established domestic retailers provided comparatively resilient. The divergence reflected investor concern over the Strait of Hormuz's role as the principal transit route for GCC food and consumer goods imports, with commercial tanker passage effectively halted from early March onwards.



Transportation and Aviation

Transportation and aviation stocks saw sharp declines as airspace closures across the GCC led to what was widely reported as over 4,000 daily flight cancellations, stranding hundreds of thousands of passengers. Freight and logistics sentiment deteriorated on fears of prolonged disruption to access through the Strait of Hormuz. With recovery timelines closely tied to the normalization of regional airspace and access through the Strait of Hormuz, investor appetite for the sector remained limited throughout the quarter.



Tourism and Hospitality

Hospitality and tourism stocks were among the impacted sectors, with event cancellations, including both F1 Grand Prix races scheduled in the region, and a sharp drop in inbound travel bookings stripping near-term revenue visibility from hospitality-linked names. This reflected investor concern that Saudi Arabia's flagship tourism ambitions face material near-term disruption; the sector's recovery trajectory on TASI remains directly tied to the pace of regional stabilization.

Despite the broader market uncertainty, TASI showed signs of structural strength relative to other GCC markets. The index benefited from its significant energy-sector weighting, which naturally rises when oil prices rise. A strong domestic retail investor base continued to participate actively throughout the period, providing depth and stability for trading activity. Saudi Arabia's position as a leading oil exporter also meant that higher crude prices supported the Kingdom's fiscal position, helping offset cautious sentiment in other sectors. Notably, the first IPO of 2026 on TASI went ahead as planned and posted positive returns, a clear signal that the primary market remained open and functional even during a challenging period.

Implications for the IPO Pipeline:

While the conflict has slowed IPO execution across the GCC in Q1 2026, the pipeline remains intact. In our assessment, the conflict represents a cyclical disruption overlaid on a structurally sound primary market. The approximately 40 applications under review by the Saudi CMA continue to progress through their regulatory and preparation stages, and the density of that near-term pipeline signals that the IPO market is not structurally impaired but, only temporarily paused. Issuers that use this window to complete financial reporting preparation, governance build-out, and investor materials will be disproportionately advantaged in any re-opening.

The implications vary across sectors: energy-focused issuers may find that higher oil prices strengthen their equity narrative. In contrast, sectors more exposed to supply chain and operational disruptions may need to revisit forward projections and timing considerations.

The region has previously demonstrated its ability to sustain IPO activity during periods of uncertainty, and the market's underlying structural strengths remain intact. Key indicators to watch include oil price stability, the reopening of shipping routes, and the upcoming Q1 2026 earnings season, which is expected to reflect strong energy sector performance. For companies in the pipeline, the current environment presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen governance, financial reporting, and operational readiness, positioning them to move decisively when market conditions improve.

IPO INDUSTRY TRENDS

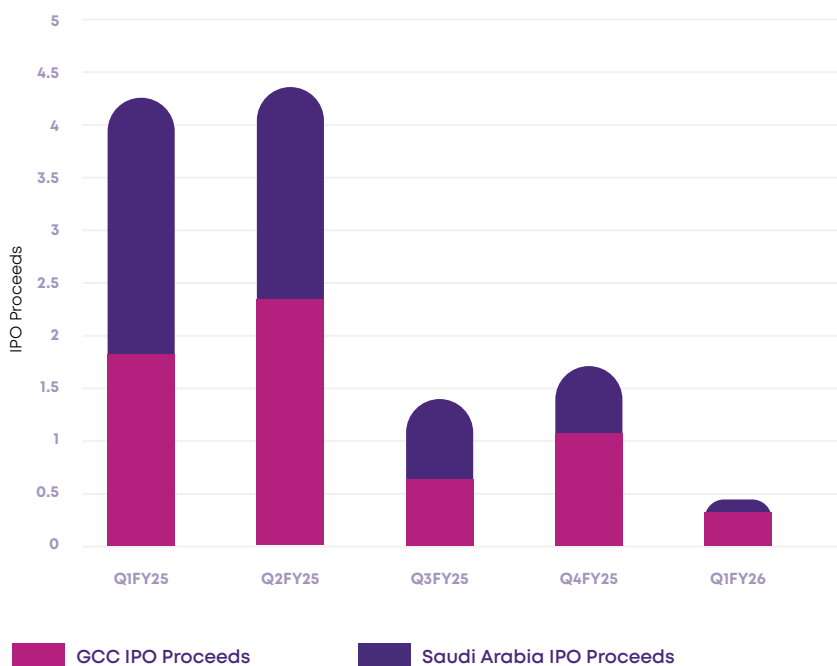
GCC OVERVIEW WITH A FOCUS ON SAUDI ARABIA

In the first quarter of 2026, GCC IPO activity continued at a modest pace, with total issuance proceeds of approximately USD 0.27 billion. Saudi Arabia contributed around USD 0.07 billion from 2 issuers. At the same time, Kuwait accounted for approximately USD 0.19 billion from a single issuer, reflecting a measured issuance environment, with activity concentrated in a limited number of transactions.

In Saudi Arabia, the IPO market showed selective investor interest, particularly for offerings with strong fundamentals and clear investment propositions. Notably, the retail tranche of the first Saudi IPO in 2026 experienced significant oversubscription, highlighting continued demand among domestic investors for well-positioned listings. Within this setting, execution remained open for issuers with clearer positioning and stronger fundamentals, despite sensitivity to global conflicts.

SAUDI ARABIA IPO PROCEEDS COMPARED WITH GCC

(IN USD BILLION)

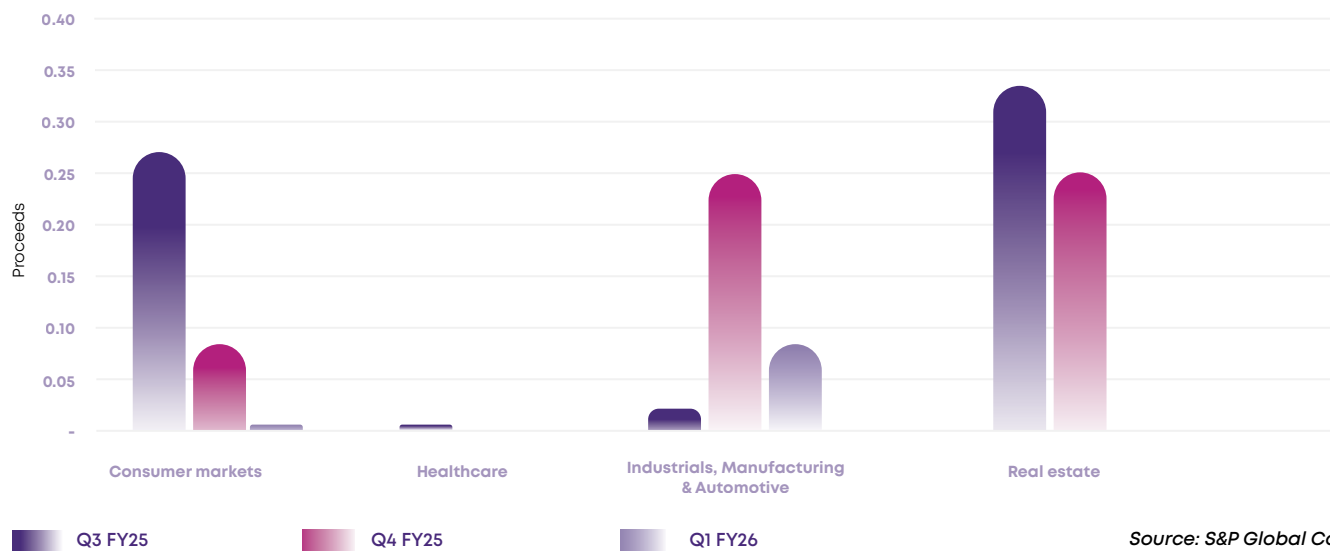


Source: S&P Global Capital IQ

Despite short term issuance weakness, Saudi Arabia retains a central role in the GCC's capital markets, underpinned by the scale and liquidity of the Saudi Stock exchange, a deep institutional investor base, and broader market reforms aligned with Vision 2030. Recent policy shifts, including the elimination of the QFI regime, which previously required foreign investors to meet minimum AUM thresholds and registration requirements before accessing Saudi equities, enable direct participation by all foreign institutional and retail investors. This is a structural step intended to deepen liquidity and diversify the investor base, aligned with Vision 2030 capital markets objectives.

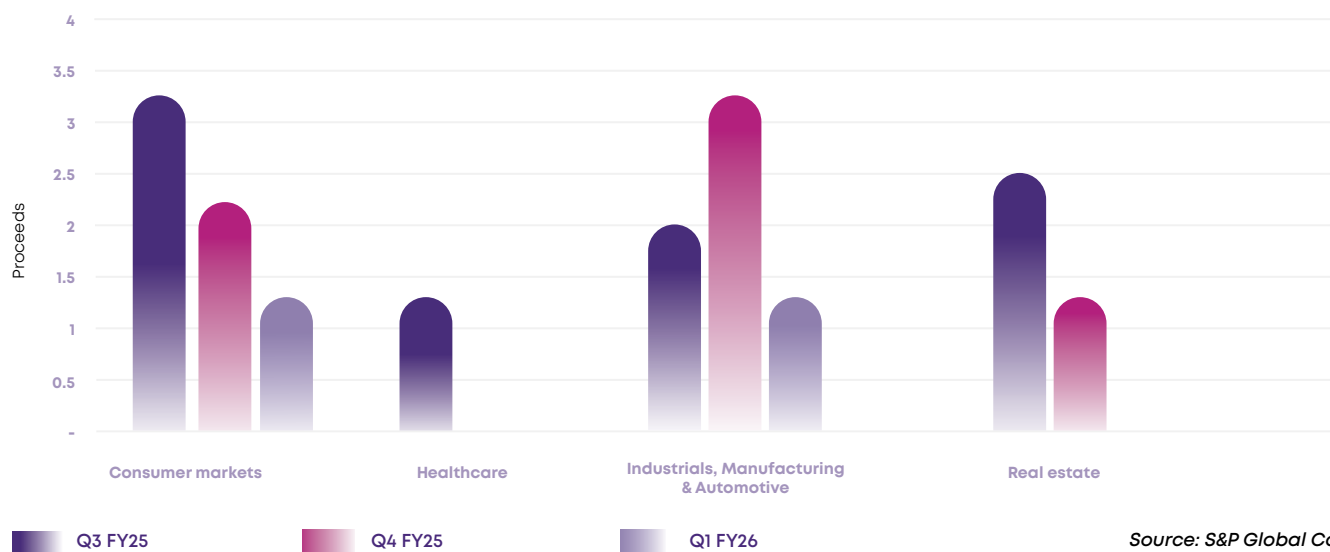
SAUDI ARABIA PROCEEDS BY SECTOR

(IN USD BILLION)



SAUDI ARABIA - ISSUERS BY SECTOR

(IN USD BILLION)



During the quarter, issuance was towards the Consumer markets and Manufacturing sectors. Overall, the period highlights a more selective global backdrop and a GCC market landscape defined by growing differentiation. While external conditions influenced sentiment more noticeably toward the close of March, stronger regional markets continued to stand out through their liquidity, structural support, and ability to sustain investor confidence.

KNOWLEDGE CORNER

CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY APPROVAL VALIDITY: THE SIX-MONTH EXECUTION WINDOW

For companies preparing to list on the Saudi Exchange, one of the most critical regulatory considerations is the validity period of the CMA IPO approval. While regulatory approval represents a key milestone in the IPO journey, it also marks the start of a strict, time-bound execution period. Issuers generally have six months from the CMA approval date to complete the offering and commence trading. This six-month window is grounded in the CMA's Listing Rules, and the CMA does not, in practice, grant extensions; approvals lapse if the transaction is not completed within six months, making the deadline firm and absolute.

If the transaction is not completed within this period, the approval expires and is deemed canceled. In such cases, the issuer must reapply to the CMA, providing updated financial disclosures, including restated or refreshed historical financial information, and a Financial and Legal due diligence report – restarting the full regulatory review process.

In 2025, several companies experienced delays in completing their IPOs, leading to the cancellation of their planned listings. These expiries were often driven by delays in finalizing audited financial statements, shifts in market conditions, investor sentiment, or pricing uncertainties. This pattern was evident in Saudi Arabia, where deteriorating secondary-market conditions made it difficult for issuers and institutional investors to agree on pricing terms, underscoring the six-month window's vulnerability when macro conditions shift.

Even after receiving approval, failing to meet the deadline can disrupt market strategy and execution. Market conditions, including investor sentiment, appetite, macroeconomic factors, and liquidity dynamics, can shift materially over six months, making it essential for issuers to enter the approval phase with a fully developed equity narrative, and a clear plan for market engagement.



KEY REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO CMA FILING

Some of the key steps required to be completed before filing for approval are as follows:

Entity structure and legal readiness: Conversion to a joint stock company, with articles of association aligned to both the Companies Law and CMA Listing Rules. Where the issuer has undergone restructuring, 1 financial year must have elapsed before it will be eligible to issue any securities.

Free float and shareholder structure: Offering structure should meet the free float and shareholder requirements of the target market. For the Main Market, issuer must have a minimum free float of 30% and at least 200 public shareholders, along with a minimum market capitalization of SAR 300 million. For Nomu-Parallel Market, the issuer must have at least 50 public shareholders and either a free float of at least 20% or at least SAR 50 million worth of shares held by the public (representing a minimum of 10%), with a minimum market capitalization of SAR 50 million.

Prospectus-ready financial statements: Audited historical financials, covering the last 3 financial years (Main market)/ 1 financial year (Nomu-Parallel) restated under International Financial Reporting Standards Accounting Standards ("IFRS Accounting Standards") that are endorsed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other standards and pronouncements that are endorsed by the Saudi Organization for Chartered and Professional Accountants. Any unresolved accounting policy positions or qualified opinions should be addressed before seeking approval.

Working Capital Report: A clean working capital opinion confirming the issuer has sufficient liquidity for at least 12 months post-IPO. This report is a CMA requirement and must be updated if significant time elapses between preparation and the offering.

Bookbuilding readiness: Institutional investor outreach and premarketing completed, cornerstone or anchor investor engagement at an advanced stage; pricing range anchored by an updated fairness opinion or valuation.

Corporate Governance: Board and committee structures must be established in line with CMA Corporate Governance Regulations, including independent board composition, Audit Committee with financial expertise, Remuneration, Nomination, and Risk Management Committees with documented charters and Terms of Reference, and other key governance policies and controls required for listing readiness.

Regulatory filing completeness: Draft prospectus approved in substance by legal counsel and compliance advisors; all material contracts disclosed and related party transactions reviewed.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

As your IPO advisory partner, we bring local market depth and a global perspective, helping you navigate the complexities and unlock maximum value from going public, while continuing to drive value post-IPO.

01 IPO Readiness

- **Pre-IPO Structuring:** Review and streamline group and entity structure to ensure alignment with CMA, TASI, SCA, DFM and ADX requirements, incorporating tax considerations.
- **Financial & Accounting:** Implement IFRS conversion and complex accounting support to ensure audit-readiness, crucial for a seamless transition.
- **Financial Reporting Readiness:** Prepare interim and annual financials, develop technical accounting analyses, and establish robust closing processes.
- **PMO Setup:** Define IPO roles, timelines, and responsibilities while establishing clear communication channels and stakeholder coordination.

02 Execution and Regulatory Compliance

- **Project Management:** Manage the IPO process end-to-end, including data room setup, deliverable reviews, and stakeholder alignment.
- **Governance and Controls:** Implement a governance framework, set up boards and committees, and establish internal financial controls compliance, including ELCs and anti-fraud measures.

- **Internal Audit and IT Controls:** Establish internal audit functions and enhance IT systems to automate reporting and strengthen control reliability.
- **Regulatory Readiness:** Ensure full compliance with CMA, Tadawul, SCA, DFM and ADX listing requirements through close coordination with advisors and auditors.

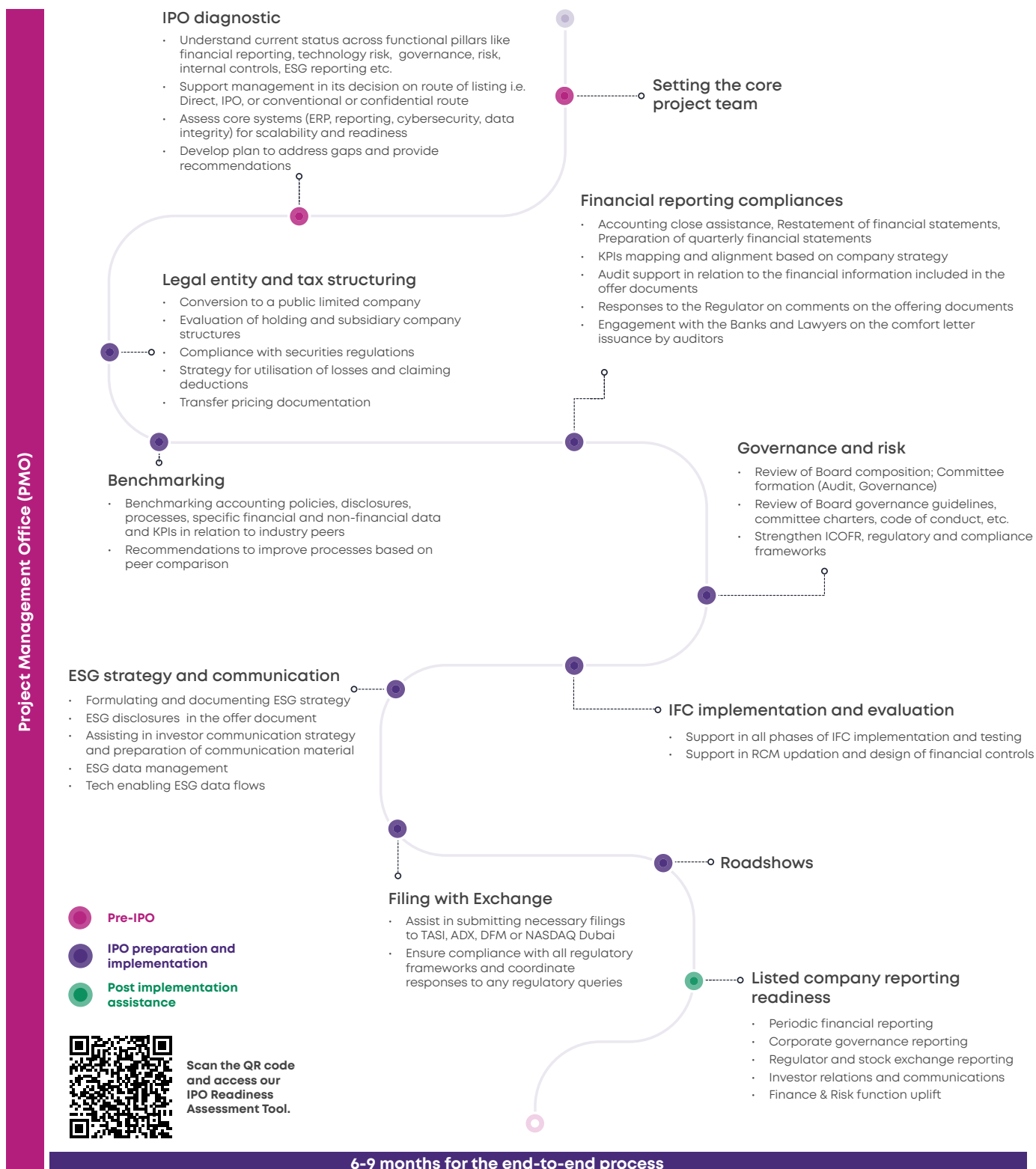
03 Post-IPO Value Creation

- **Investor Relations:** Build a strong IR function to manage investor expectations and maintain transparent, consistent market communication.
- **Corporate Governance:** Support post-listing governance, board effectiveness, and disclosure compliance to sustain market credibility.
- **Growth Strategy:** Guide effective deployment of IPO proceeds through capital planning, M&A integration, and expansion initiatives.
- **ESG and FP&A Enablement:** Strengthen FP&A and ESG frameworks to meet public company reporting and investor engagement needs.

Our in-depth local knowledge of GCC regulatory environment, combined with our global IPO experience, ensures that your company is not only ready to list but also ready to thrive as a publicly traded entity.

IPO JOURNEY – A SYNOPSIS

IPO journey and how Uniquis can help



Contact our Middle East Capital Markets Leadership Team to discuss your path to a successful public listing.

About Uniquis Consultech:

Uniquis Consultech is a global tech-enabled consulting company that specializes in Accounting & Reporting, Governance, Risk & Compliance, Sustainability & Climate, Tech Consulting, and Valuations. The Company is co-founded by consulting veterans Jamil Khatri and Sandip Khetan and backed by marquee investors such as Nexus Venture Partners, Sorin Investments, and UST.

Uniquis has a global team of 800+ professionals led by 100+ Partners & Directors across eleven offices in the USA, the Middle East, and India. The company serves more than 300+ clients, including marquee names in each of the markets it operates in.

Uniquis is committed to leveraging technology and an integrated global delivery model to provide best-in-class consulting services to its clients.

About Our Accounting & Reporting Consulting Services:

In today's dynamic business environment, organizations are continuously required to adapt to the dynamic shifts in accounting & reporting standards and regulations. Enhanced management reporting requirements and accelerated reporting timelines necessitate increased automation within the finance function. Special events, such as preparing for an IPO/capital market transaction or fulfilling the reporting requirements arising from an M&A transaction, introduce additional complexities and challenges for the finance function.

As a result, organizations need to transform their finance functions from time to time with a focus on people, processes, and technology. Our Accounting & Reporting Consulting (ARC) practice is designed to partner with the finance function through these challenges. Our teams function as an extension of your finance teams to execute your plans seamlessly.

We bring the necessary technical expertise, skills, technology, and bandwidth, enabling you to navigate your plans in real time without adding additional manpower costs within the organization.

A Team You Can Trust to Deliver



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Co-Founder & CEO



Sandip Khetan
Co-founder & Global Head
of Accounting & Reporting
Consulting



Anu Chaudhary
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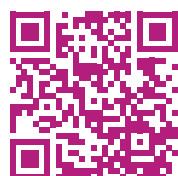


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