

MARKET ENTRY ASSESSMENT

SAUDI COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

FOR FOREIGN OPERATORS

01-03 Data Residency – flow maps, vendor contracts, default telemetry configuration

04-05 OT Auditability & Control Integrity – event reconstruction, tamper-resistant logs

06-08 Positioning & Commercial Readiness – bid language, SAO access, evidence packs

09-10 Revenue & Risk Exposure – pipeline value at risk, 2026 compliance readiness

Ten questions foreign companies operating in or entering the Saudi industrial market should be able to answer – with documented evidence.

SCORE EACH ITEM: **YES** — documented evidence available **PARTIAL** — assertion without evidence

NO — gap or unknown

DOMAIN 1 – DATA RESIDENCY

- 01** **Can you produce a verified data flow map showing every node where your data is processed, cached, transmitted, or backed up within the Saudi network?**
- A policy document is not sufficient. The map must reflect actual system architecture, including vendor-managed components and integration APIs.*
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- 02** **Have you reviewed every active vendor support contract to confirm it does not create residency exceptions — including remote diagnostic access from outside the Kingdom?**
- Default enterprise support contracts typically permit access from global operations centres. This creates violations that are not visible in the data residency statement.*
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- 03** **Have you verified the default configuration of every diagnostic tool and integration API in your Saudi deployments — confirming telemetry does not route through nodes outside the Kingdom?**
- Most platforms default to the cloud region their global architecture was built around. Kingdom-resident configuration requires explicit action at provisioning, not a checkbox at contract signature.*
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DOMAIN 2 – OT AUDITABILITY & CONTROL INTEGRITY

- 04** **Can you reconstruct a significant OT event — an override, a configuration change, a safety interlock activation — and connect it to accountable ownership?**
- OTCC-1:2022 requires Level 3 auditability for critical systems. Most foreign operators assess at the framework level. The NCA tests at the system level.*
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- 05** **Are your edge-to-cloud control interfaces configured to produce tamper-resistant, audit-grade logs — aligned to IEC 62443 requirements?**
- Commands and configuration changes that move between OT layers must be synchronised, authorised, and resistant to modification after the fact.*
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DOMAIN 3 – POSITIONING & COMMERCIAL READINESS

- 06** **Does your Saudi bid documentation address the compliance mandate directly — using the framework language the SAO and CISO evaluate against?**
- Procurement now has a compliance gate controlled by technical reviewers with a specific mandate. Bids that do not speak their language do not clear the gate.*
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- 07** **Have you identified the SAO and CISO at your target Saudi operator accounts — and do you have a relationship or access pathway to them specifically?**
- The procurement decision-maker for compliance-sensitive contracts is not the procurement team. Access to the technical compliance reviewers is a prerequisite.*
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- 08** **Can you produce a compliance evidence pack — on request, within 48 hours — covering data residency, auditability controls, and vendor sovereignty for your Saudi operations?**
- Due diligence requests in Saudi procurement move quickly. Companies that cannot produce evidence on demand lose to those who can.*
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09 Have you mapped the value of Saudi contracts in your pipeline where compliance failure would result in disqualification – and do you know the probability-weighted exposure?

Compliance risk is a revenue risk. Most foreign companies have not quantified it. The ones that have are the ones that prioritise fixing it.

YES

PART

NO

10 Does your leadership team understand the 2026 compliance deadline and what it means for your Saudi market position – and have they allocated resources to address it before the bid cycle closes?

The enforcement environment moves in one direction. Operators that pass their 2026 assessments will be held to a higher standard. Companies that partner with them will be expected to match.

YES

PART

NO

READING YOUR RESULTS

8-10 YES

Strong Posture

Your compliance posture is ahead of most foreign operators in this market. Verify your evidence pack is current and your bid language reflects it. Schedule a structured review before your next major procurement cycle.

4-7 YES

Known Gaps

You have documented gaps and known partial positions. The question is whether those gaps appear in due diligence before or after you submit. The repositioning window is open — but it has a close date.

Fewer than 4 YES

Material Exposure

Your exposure is material and the enforcement environment is accelerating. The contracts you want require a compliance posture you do not currently have documented. This is fixable — but only before the bid.

THE FULL PICTURE

What the mandate requires – and where foreign companies consistently misread it – is in EXPOSED, available on Amazon.

The book covers what Saudi compliance actually demands of foreign operators: the residency rules that catch companies by surprise, the audit standard most foreign operators have never encountered, and the commercial decisions that determine who wins the next bid cycle.

If your checklist revealed gaps that need to be addressed before your next Saudi bid:

alqabbatadvisory.com/book?edition=exposed

Or contact Ahmad Alqabbat directly:

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Saudi Industrial Edge Compliance Series - 2026