



SBJBC Technology & Smart City Delegation to Saudi Arabia from 18-21 November: Mission Report

Executive Summary:

SBJBC organised a 4-day visit to Jeddah and Riyadh from 18-21 November for 16 UK technology and smart city companies (Annex A). The delegation included 6 SBJBC members and was split between larger and smaller companies, including some who had a presence in the market and others who were exploring opportunities.

Chris Innes-Hopkins, SBJBC UK Executive Director led the mission with support from Oliver Grogono, Head of Operations. Omar Saeed, Senior Trade Advisor at BCG Jeddah, helped with recruitment, programme planning/briefing and bus transport. SAGIA facilitated the visa process. Saudi SBJBC members assisted and attended some of the meetings.

The mission was a first by SBJBC UK and a direct follow-up to SBJBC's SME Partnership Forum at Level39, London in April 2018. Recruitment was initially affected by negative publicity following events in Turkey, but after consultation with SBJBC UK board members the decision was taken to go ahead. The visit was seen as a welcome sign of continued UK business commitment and coincided with SBJBC's Biannual Meeting in Riyadh.

Highlights of the programme included a half day visit to King Abdullah University of Science & Technology (KAUST), a networking dinner reception at the British Embassy supported by SABB, and a high-level presentation at the Ministry of Communications & Information Technology (MCIT). There were also business roundtables at the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and the Saudi SME Authority (Monsha'at). Delegates were able to meet representatives of the Ministry of Municipalities and Rural Affairs (MOMRA) at the Embassy reception and the Ministry of Hajj in Jeddah, who briefed on smart technology cooperation opportunities.

Initial feedback has been very positive. Geotourist commented that the visit was "impeccably organised with access to the best and relevant organisations." Ricardo felt the mission fully achieved its market exploration objectives, adding that: "All the presentations were good - giving great insights in the KSA market opportunities." irisguard commented that "it was the perfect introduction to KSA and how to do business here." A full feedback report is being prepared.

All delegates said they were following up specific opportunities as a result of the mission. These include Atkins, Ricardo and Adam Smith International's who are pursuing MOMRA's smart city initiatives (on which a workshop is being planned), GeoTourist and irisguard are in discussion with the Ministry of Hajj on specific digital opportunities, LDD have been invited back to KAUST for a desalination workshop, and Big Innovation Centre have made proposals to MCIT on blockchain and AI.

Delegates were charged a £500 + VAT programme management fee (reduced to £300 for SBJBC members and very small companies). Discounted hotel rates were negotiated.

Good publicity was achieved through the local press and social media. **The programme achieved excellent access to key Saudi stakeholders and potential clients.** It demonstrated a high level of UK technology expertise relevant to Vision 2030 implementation, and enhanced UK visibility.

Programme Highlights:

British Consulate General Briefing

The programme started with a briefing at the Hilton Hotel chaired by Seif Usher, HM Consul General in Jeddah and Chris Innes-Hopkins. Representatives from the Ministry of Hajj, Ashurst LLP and the Ministry of Municipalities (MOMRA) gave brief presentations and answered questions.

Wadi Makkah

The session at Jeddah Chamber of Commerce included an interesting presentation on Wadi Makkah by Dr Faisal Allaf (CEO). Wadi Makkah is an important innovation hub and incubator attached to Makkah University, which has incubated over 40 technology companies, and commercialised research from Makkah University. They can provide soft landing facilities for UK companies and issue an entrepreneur licence. They are keen to be part of any Saudi-British Tech Hub. It was agreed to arrange a follow-up site-visit in early 2019.



King Abdullah University Of Science & Technology (KAUST)

Hattan Ahmed, entrepreneurship director in the Innovation Cluster introduced the “Taqadam” accelerator programme for technology based start-ups supported by SABB, and the “9/10th accelerator programme” supported by Takamol. KAUST research priorities are water, food, energy and environment. Support is available for companies setting up in the new research park through an innovation fund. This would be extended to foreign companies interested in relocating in 2019. Help was also available with obtaining necessary licences. The visit included a tour of the CoreLabs, and networking lunch with faculty members. KAUST already have a relationship with the SETsquared partnership of university innovation hubs in the UK, and are keen to support a Saudi/UK Tech Hub.



British Embassy Reception

Some 80 guests attended SBJBC's dinner reception in the British Ambassador's Residence Garden, which was sponsored by SABB. Delegates were able to nominate specific guests, and the weather remained fine! There was an excellent turnout from key Saudi public and private sector stakeholders, with extensive networking opportunities. Welcome speeches were made by Alistair Long (Trade & Investment Director KSA, DIT), Dr Abdulaziz Jazzar (SBJBC Board Member) and Chris Innes-Hopkins (SBJBC UK Executive Director).



Ministry of Communications & IT

Dale Millar (Advisor to Minister) arranged an excellent briefing on Saudi ICT plans ([link here](#)) including AI, blockchain, data analytics and E-government. The Vice Minister opened proceedings and the Head of the National Digital Transformation Unit and SAGIA participated. Key points included the following:

- Internet speed had increased by 150%, and 70% of the population would have access to high-speed broadband by 2020.
- An ambitious E-government programme 'Yesser' will improve access to government services and result in a new 'gov.sa' hub by 2019.
- A new E-payment platform 'STC Pay' had been established to facilitate digital payments. This should enable E-commerce to grow from 1% to 15% of retail business in the next few years.
- Digital skills were being prioritised and MCIT would set up a new innovation hub to facilitate technology start-ups in 2019.
- Cyber security was critical and a new National Cyber Security Authority had been established.



Clyde & Co Business Lunch

SBJBC member Clyde & Co kindly hosted the delegation at their offices at Business Gate. This was a good opportunity for delegates to ask about legal frameworks for business. The lunch was hosted by Mr Abdulaziz Al-Bosaily, Managing Partner.

SME Authority (Monsha'at)

Dr Lilac Safadi (King Saud University and Advisor to SMEA Governor) arranged a presentation and business roundtable at Monsha'at's new Riyadh offices. The Vice Governor briefed on SMEA progress including the launch of entrepreneurship hubs, mentorship platforms and start-up / scale-up funds.

Delegates received a briefing on the NEOM Project, Riyadh Valley Company and the Royal Commission for Jubail & Yanbu. Riyadh Valley Company provides venture capital for sustainable life sciences and ICT projects. They have invested in two UK companies, Prokarium (a bio-pharma company from Keele University) and Epidarex (life sciences). They will be hosting a venture capital conference on 28-29 January 2019, to which delegates were invited. The Royal Commission briefed on the support they can offer, and plans for photovoltaic manufacture and integrated smart-poles.



Council of Saudi Chambers

Delegates were invited to a SBJBC review meeting with SAGIA on the progress of business environment reform. This included a discussion on the investment environment and licensing procedures for SMEs. Some delegates remained for SBJBC's Biannual Meeting, which included a report back on the technology mission and plans for 2019 events.

SBJBC UK

London

3 December 2018



SBJBC Technology & Smart Cities Delegation

COMPANY	DELEGATE	BRIEF PROFILE
Adam Smith International	Neil Fowler	Global development company specialising in the design, management and delivery of complex projects and lasting change through economic growth and government reform.
 ATKINS Member of the SNC Lavalin Group	Mustafa Baghdadi	Multinational engineering, design, planning, project management and consulting services company.
 BIG INNOVATION CENTRE	Professor Birgitte Andersen	The Big Innovation Centre exists to help businesses, public agencies and universities put their open innovation principles into practice. Acting as an open innovation hub.
CLYDE&CO	Rizwan Osman	Clyde & Co is a leading, sector-focused global law firm with 415 partners, 2200 legal professionals and 3800 staff in 52 offices and associated offices on six continents.
 corrotherm INTERNATIONAL	Jan Ward	Corrotherm produces heat and corrosion resistant alloys for a wide range of applications.
 CYANCONNODE	Christopher Hawthorn	With a wealth experience in smart technology, the Group provides long-range, low-power networking solutions and high-performance applications that help to enhance service delivery, improve business efficiency and save energy.
 geotourist	Mo Talukder & Shaon Talukder	GeoTourist offers audio tour guides by smartphone for the world's most interesting attractions and landmarks based on an individual's exact location.
Honeywell	Ross McKenzie	Honeywell is a Fortune 100 company that invents and manufactures technologies linked to global safety, security, energy and urbanisation challenges.
 irisguard	Bashar Arafeh	irisguard is the world's leading supplier of end-to-end Iris recognition software that provide financial inclusion and authorisation of transactions, particularly for vulnerable populations.
 LDD	Mark Stevens	LDD is a global provider of marine foundation solutions, with expertise spanning across nearshore and offshore industries.
 newtecnic buildingengineeringtechnology	Howard Tee	Global design and engineering firm. The Newtecnic approach allows the company to achieve design innovation, from concept to fabrication, for the engineering design of structure, facades and internal environment.
POPULOUS	Ben Vickery	Populous is a global architectural firm specializing in the design of sports facilities, arenas and convention centers, as well as the planning of major special events. Populous formerly operated as HOK Sport Venue Event, which was part of the HOK Group.
 Ricardo Energy & Environment	Akin Adamson	Ricardo E&E is a global strategic engineering and environmental consultancy that specialises in the transport, energy and scarce resources sectors.
 SAVORTEX® A Smart Energy Saving Revolution	Syed Ahmed	SAVORTEX Limited is a low energy hand drying technology manufacturer serving the corporate washroom sector.
 SAUDI BRITISH JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL	Chris Innes-Hopkins & Oliver Grogono	The Saudi British Joint Business Council is an independent and private sector-led body, which aims to develop and enhance business relations at all levels between Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom.
 serco	Daniel MacGregor	Serco specialise in the delivery of essential public services, with over 50,000 people working in defence, transport, justice, immigration, healthcare and other citizen services across our four regions.
 SystemRapid over 1000 projects delivered	Sajid Hafesjee	SystemRapid is an intuitive and innovative technology company providing turnkey solutions to ensure delivery of business productivity and unrivalled support.
wood.	Tarek Hamade	Wood delivers comprehensive services to support its customers across the complete life cycle of their assets, from concept to decommissioning, across the Oil & Gas, Power, Infrastructure, Government, Mining, Industrial & Manufacturing sectors.