



جامعة الملك عبد الله
للعلوم والتقنية
King Abdullah University of
Science and Technology

KAUST
Innovation

2020 Adapting Innovation

Annual Report

The past year was one of tremendous challenge. KAUST’s mission has always been to create meaningful impact for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – not just by developing innovative research but by fostering the necessary relationships between researchers, entrepreneurs, companies and policy-makers to transform that research into real-world, deep tech solutions. The vital nature of this innovation mission became more apparent than ever in the fight against COVID-19.

Never has the connection between innovation and impact been clearer. Thankfully, with scientific and technological innovation at the heart of all we do, KAUST and the department of Innovation were well prepared to adapt to the challenges of 2020.

Throughout the year, we worked to help both innovators and industry not just adapt to this turbulent time but to thrive. Thanks to our unique and collaborative ecosystem, the challenges of 2020 became the seeds of new growth and continued innovation, propelling KAUST – and the Kingdom – forward into the new decade.

Table of Contents

3	Adapting for Impact in a Changing World	12	Driving a Deep Tech Ecosystem KAUST Innovation Fund	23	KAUST Research & Technology Park
4	Empowering Vision 2030	16	Developing Technologies for Global Impact Focusing on Grand Challenges	24	Driving Innovation in the SME Community
8	A Community of Entrepreneurship Enabling Entrepreneurship in the Face of COVID-19 Entrepreneurship Highlights 2020	20	Partnering for Progress New Partnerships		



Kevin Cullen, Vice President of Innovation and Economic Development

Adapting for Impact in a Changing World

2020: a test like no other

The past year tested KAUST and the world in unprecedented ways. Faced with a global pandemic, we adapted our strategic approach and turned challenges into opportunities.

Not only did we meet milestones and experience a record-breaking 12 months, but we did it while prioritizing our community’s safety and security. Led by KAUST experts, we adopted the only sensible approach to combating COVID-19 – letting science lead the way.

From the outset of the pandemic, we faced the question: How do we keep staff and students safe while simultaneously forging ahead with the vital scientific research and innovation needed to help navigate the pandemic? This report details how we answered that question by adapting innovation across all our programs, operations, collaborations and partnerships.

We continued to turn science into technology through support and collaboration from our industry

partners. Bridging the gap between academia and industry is essential to all that we do, and we leaned into key external partnerships during the pandemic to stimulate innovation and create real, meaningful impact.

Continuing our mission to train the next generation of Saudi entrepreneurs, we embraced new technology and moved all activity online to virtually host our Entrepreneurship Center events and programs. The educational paradigm shifted too. As an institution, we needed to adapt quickly to virtual course delivery. We saw tremendous success with this new approach and learned that remote learning enables us to connect in unexpected ways.

It is with confidence and pride that we can say that KAUST, the deep tech heart of Saudi Arabia, adapts and excels when faced with challenges. We’ve learned valuable lessons in 2020, and we remain firmly on course to create an exceptional innovation ecosystem in the Kingdom – a critical element in delivering Vision 2030.



Empowering Vision 2030

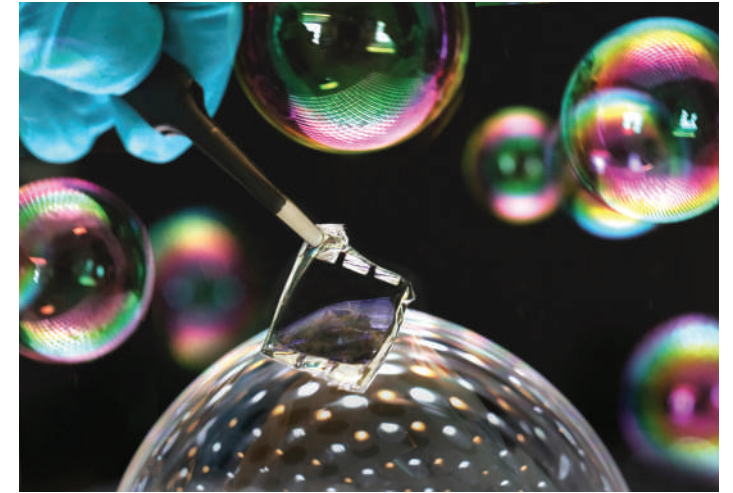
رؤية
VISION
2030
المملكة العربية السعودية
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Despite the challenges of 2020, KAUST continued to drive innovation and economic development in line with achieving Saudi's Vision 2030 objectives – and beyond.



Developing human capital by driving an entrepreneurial mindset

KAUST remained committed to training the next generation of entrepreneurs by enabling virtual entrepreneurship for KAUST students and innovators across the Kingdom and beyond.



Growing and diversifying the economy by building a deep tech ecosystem

We continued to drive a technology-based startup ecosystem in Saudi Arabia and invested in exceptional KAUST and global startups.



Unlocking the potential of non-oil sectors through research commercialization

KAUST put research into action by bridging the commercialization gap with new technology development funding.



Increasing industry partnerships and enabling new jobs for small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

We strengthened existing innovation partnerships, grew our Research & Technology Park and launched a new SME growth program.



World Changing Innovators

A Community of Entrepreneurship

“At KAUST Entrepreneurship Center, we see these big shifts as great opportunities to innovate in our programs alongside the entrepreneurs we work with on this journey.”

– Hattan Ahmed, Head of KAUST Entrepreneurship Center

Like other organizations and universities in 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, KAUST needed to rapidly adapt from in-person to remote learning. Fortunately, the university is home to an extraordinary pool of innovative talent and technology.

Not only were we able to smoothly transition courses and programs to a virtual environment, but we applied our expertise and world-class processes to partnerships and events that accelerated the fight against COVID-19. Despite the year's disruptions, we continued to make advances in training and investing in the most promising entrepreneurs and startups.

The KAUST Entrepreneurship Center provides hands-on training and funding support for a community of innovators. We help scientists and students turn research into technology solutions that inspire world-changing startups and real impact throughout the Kingdom and beyond.

This year, we accelerated this mission even as we pivoted to a virtual environment. We continued to nurture the Kingdom's future inventors and business leaders while also sustaining the spirit of community and drive for achievement that KAUST is known for.

59
startups supported
in 2020

2,486
innovators trained
across 17 programs
in 2020

Enabling Entrepreneurship in the Face of COVID-19

New course: Entrepreneurship for All

At KAUST, we believe that the future belongs to those who think creatively, lead decisively and aspire to create an impact. This new, two-week intensive program open to all KAUST students (running in January and again in June) combines experiential entrepreneurship training with creative thinking – essential skills for any graduate.

The program is designed in partnership with the University of California Berkeley, Cornell University and Stanford Center for Professional Development.



Cornell University



Stanford Center for Professional Development

Innovation adaption: To preserve the important experiential aspects of the program, the June session – held during 24-hour lockdowns in response to the pandemic – went entirely virtual. Incorporating new tools to connect online, KAUST invited remarkable guest speakers, including Robert Langer and Kevin McGovern, to share their expertise.



Taqadam Startup Accelerator Cohort 2020

TAQADAM is a startup accelerator powered by the extraordinary networks of KAUST and SABB that helps innovators push the boundaries of what's possible and transform their ideas into reality.

In 2020, 561 startups applied for the program and 59 were accepted. A final 37 startups graduated from the intensive mentor-led accelerator process. Each received 150,000 SAR of zero-equity investment and access to co-working spaces in the KSA.

Founders also received training and guidance from industry mentors in preparation to pitch at the TAQADAM showcase. As KAUST's biggest virtual event ever, the showcase had an

audience of over 7,000, with 11 startups receiving additional funding of 1.1 million USD.

Startups graduated:
2020: 37 | All-time: 126

Founders:
2020: 76 | Total: 445

Female founders:
2020: 45% | 2019: 30%

Innovation adaption: This year's accelerator went entirely virtual for the first time due to COVID-19 restrictions. And in spite of pandemic-related challenges, this year's accelerator saw more female founders, more startup pivots and more participants accepted into the program than ever before.



TAQADAM Cohort 2020 startup, Polymeron.



Entrepreneurship Highlights 2020



Entrepreneurship World Cup

The Entrepreneurship World Cup (EWC) competition attracts top talent and aims to build a global funnel to bring cutting-edge technologies to Saudi Arabia and provide opportunities and support for Kingdom-based startups.

Partner: Misk Global Forum (MGF)

EWC Saudi Semifinalist Winners:

- **Talon Dust Control**
2019 TAQADAM graduate
1st place: Saudi-manufactured dust control and stabilization solution

- **Edama Organic Solutions**
2018 TAQADAM graduate
2nd place: Saudi's first organic waste recycling solution
- **Peregrine Genomics**
2019 TAQADAM graduate
5th place: Next-generation genomic diagnostics testing platform
- **MIQYAS**
2019 TAQADAM graduate
6th place: Garment-tailoring app

Innovation adaption: KAUST hosted a virtual boot camp to help prepare participants for the competition's global finals.



Enterprise Forum Saudi Arabia

2nd KAUST-MIT Enterprise Forum Saudi Startup Competition

In preparation for the MIT Enterprise Forum (MITEF) Saudi Startup Competition finals, startups, entrepreneurs, investors and mentors gathered at KAUST in March 2021 for a three-day training session.

Participants practiced pitching to investors, receiving feedback from expert mentors and networking with top-flight members of Saudi Arabia's entrepreneurship ecosystem.

KAUST StartSmart Winners:

- **Firnas Aero**
2019 TAQADAM graduate
1st place: Drone-as-a-service for airport infrastructure inspection
- **Ghallah**
2019 TAQADAM graduate
3rd place: Management system to maintain palm health

Innovation adaption: KAUST's MITEF training was our last in-person event pre-lockdown. Originally, we planned to host MITEF Pan Arab and Saudi Arabia chapters simultaneously; however, travel restrictions put into place the weekend before the event necessitated a fast adaption. The event was held in person for Saudi participants and then shifted online to include those who could not attend.

First Conscious Investor Fellowship

KAUST and partners launched the first Conscious Investor Fellowship (CIF) in the GCC. The program is dedicated to empowering regional, mission-driven investors in ventures that use technology to invest with impact. The fellowship had excellent traction from the GCC region and had 50% female participation.

Partners: VentureSouq, startAD, New York University Abu Dhabi, Tamkeen

Innovation adaption: The fellowship was held virtually as part of the Angel Rising Symposium, which provides education and conversation about the future of angel investing and its potential to fuel national and regional innovation.

25
Conscious
Investor fellows



2020 standout startup prize winners

KACST Challenge
Azure Robotics

SeedStars Saudi
IFF Machine, 1st place;
Algoroo, 2nd place

Food Tech Challenge
Red Sea Farms, 1st place

Gulfood
Red Sea Farms, 1st place

World Bank Innovate4Climate
Sadeem, 1st place

KAUST COVID Innovation Challenge

Innovation in the community

In March 2020, President Tony Chan and KAUST Innovation launched the COVID-19 Innovation Challenge across the community to tap into KAUST's massive brainpower. There were 101 projects submitted, with six finalists pitching to an audience of more than 300 people. Each finalist was awarded 20,000 USD in prize money and a KAUST sponsor to guide development.

Finalists:

- **Antiviral Surface Additives:** an antimicrobial, eco-friendly phone case
- **Wayakit Disinfectant:** fast-acting antiviral, antimicrobial disinfectant for surfaces and clothes
- **Non-thermal Plasma Hand Sanitizer:** rechargeable, handheld non-thermal plasma hand sterilizer
- **Backpack Ventilator:** movable backpack mechanical ventilator
- **Virtual Laboratory Anywhere (VLALA):** interactive simulation of a realistic lab and robotic agent
- **Adaptive Tech for Distance Learning:** platform to enhance interactivity, access virtual labs, and conduct research



Cura telemedicine app sees tenfold growth

KAUST-funded startup Cura Telemedicine App (Cura) connects patients with healthcare on demand via video call. As the COVID-19 pandemic escalated, the demand for the service grew tenfold. Now, Cura is collaborating with the Council of Cooperative Health Insurance to simplify billing for patients and with Al Nahdi, one of the Kingdom's largest pharmacy chains, to enable medication deliveries.

Driving a Deep Tech Ecosystem

“KAUST is a hub for the best and brightest minds from around the world. We provide the facilities and networks, from R&D to connecting startups with investors, that enable founders to bring their ideas to life and make real impact.”

— Dr. Kevin Cullen, Vice President of I&ED

The KAUST Innovation ecosystem contributes to the Kingdom’s economic growth and fosters the creation of solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing Saudi Arabia and the world. As well as developing and supporting startups within the Kingdom, KAUST also attracts international deep tech startups by providing opportunities for R&D, growth and partnerships.

A primary part of this effort is investing in startups that have the potential for the greatest impact. This year’s innovations included a fast-acting, highly effective disinfectant spray that kills 99.999% of surface bacteria and viruses, including the SARS-CoV strain.

18
investments closed

11M
USD in value

KAUST Innovation Fund

The KAUST Innovation Fund (KIF) invests in and provides strategic assistance to commercially viable deep tech startups. KIF offers business and engineering insight to the Kingdom’s most innovative minds, as well as seed, early-stage funding and long-term strategic partnerships.



445,000
USD KIF INVESTMENT

Founders: Luisa Javier and Sandra Medina, KAUST Ph.D. students and TAQADAM Accelerator 2018 graduate and winners

Impact: KAUST startup Wayakit’s effective, quick-drying antiviral spray kills 99.999% of bacteria and viruses on high-touch surfaces in less than 30 seconds, including the SARS-CoV-2 strain. The startup has already partnered with airport ground services provider Swissport International AG to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at airports. This innovative partnership put the startup’s products to work on international aircraft and buses at the Jeddah, Dammam and Riyadh airports, reducing post-flight cleaning times without increasing delays for travelers.

KAUST startup, Wayakit.



830,000
USD KIF INVESTMENT

Founders: Sabrina Vettori and Mitchell Morton, KAUST Ph.D. students; Saud Alhagbani, KAUST Master student; and Rowan Jandu, TAQADAM Accelerator 2018 graduate

Impact: Edama enables sustainability via a portfolio of progressive, organic waste-recycling technologies. These solutions divert organic waste from landfills, reduce pollution and supply high-value soil-improvement products. Used in desert agriculture, these products help improve food security by reducing water consumption and increasing yields. In 2020, Edama confirmed a new contract with KAUST to build a large-scale facility that will enable KAUST to reach 96% of its organic waste reduction goals.



950,000
USD KIF INVESTMENT

Founders: Osman Bakr

Impact: Quantum Solutions’ high-performance quantum dots – semiconducting nanoparticles – interact with light, emitting a different light or generating an electric current. These dots enhance the capabilities of displays, image sensors and solar cells. Quantum Solutions is expanding sales of this proprietary technology to a range of worldwide customers, establishing key strategic partnerships as it does so. In 2020, the startup received a 250,000 USD investment from KIF and successfully opened its UK branch.

Fund ranked
4th
active MENA investor
for 2020 by Magnitt

Translating Research into Action





Developing Technologies for Global Impact

22
IP deals closed

60
all-time

191
patents
achieved
globally

461
all-time

84
US patents
issued

251
all-time

170
invention
disclosures
received &
managed

1,408
all-time

KAUST is dedicated to removing barriers between research and commercialization. The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) mission is to translate KAUST's most innovative and promising research into next-generation technology-based products and companies. The TTO is a technology development engine actively driving the translation of research into commercial reality.

A key part of this effort is the strategic funding of research translation through technology development. In this unprecedented year of challenge, the TTO pivoted to focus its efforts on technologies that can impact the Kingdom's fight against COVID-19.

Bridging the gap: new technology development funding

In 2020, the TTO launched the first cohort of technology development projects to accelerate the delivery of impactful technologies from KAUST. These grant programs aim to rapidly bridge the gap between the lab and the marketplace. Thirty-two research translation projects were submitted for review, with 15 projects awarded 18 million USD in funding. There are now 38 projects underway, totaling 44.5 million USD invested toward developing products from research.

Focusing on Grand Challenges

KAUST's Near Term Grand Challenge projects are designed to solve society's most intractable challenges in food, water, energy, and the environment. The year 2020 saw the commencement of our first six projects in areas as diverse as soil biostimulants to vastly increase crop yields for farmers in Saudi Arabia to a new world record in the efficiency of solar panels for manufacturing around the globe. The program has already resulted in the deployment of a Cryogenic Carbon Capture™ (CCC) unit, up and running for the first time in the Kingdom.

2020 technology development highlights

PI
Professor Bill Roberts, Clean Combustion Research Center (CCRC)

Partner
SES Innovations

Grant
2.5 million USD

Cryogenic Carbon Capture Now

KAUST is collaborating with Saudi Electronics Systems Company (SES) to develop innovative, low-cost Cryogenic Carbon Capture technology that can capture up to 40 tonnes of CO₂ per day. The technology, which operates using only electricity and halves the energy and cost requirements of alternative technologies, has applications across multiple industries. This technology recovers a significant amount of usable water and is easy to retrofit on any stationary source of CO₂ emissions.

PI
Professor Magnus Reuping, Catalysis Center

Partner
TIBA Biotech

Grant
2.5 million USD

Universal Coronavirus Vaccine

The Rueping group at KAUST, in collaboration with TIBA Biotech in the United States, proposed a novel immunization regime for a heterologous SARS-CoV-2 vaccine. The strategy: using two complementary antigen-delivery technologies to achieve lasting protection against a pandemic pathogen that might remain in circulation among the global population for years.

PI
Professor Manuel Aranda, Red Sea Research Center

Partner
Red Sea Development Company, Beacon Development and NEOM

Grant
990,000 USD

Next-Generation Coral Gardening

KAUST's Red Sea Research Center is growing coral that can augment natural reefs by using an organic polymer spray to secure coral on the seabed. This project will dramatically enhance the readiness of our Maritechture™ technology to produce, deploy, and sustain coral in KAUST and the oceans of the world.

Innovation in the time of COVID-19

In 2020, the TTO prioritized the search for innovations that could result in new products to fight against COVID-19. The TTO:

- Reviewed 19 proposals for products that could provide greater access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilation
- Facilitated KAUST's entry into the COVID-19 Technology Access Framework, where it joins MIT, Harvard and Stanford in making inventions that can immediately alleviate pandemic-related needs widely available and free of charge
- Kicked off its inaugural IP workshop for students and faculty with two days of interactive sessions with global experts in the field, adapting a six-week intensive training course to online live modules.

Fueling Innovation Through Collaboration



Partnering for Progress

KAUST's partnerships with industry leaders and policymakers are an important factor in our ability to help corporate partners turn innovative research into cutting-edge products and solutions that have a positive impact in and beyond the Kingdom. From developing new and diverse research collaborations to growing our Research & Technology Park, we found ways to help both innovators and partners thrive during an unparalleled year.

Strategic Innovation Partnerships

KAUST's Strategic Innovation Partnerships team relies on close collaboration across academic departments and direct engagement with companies and government partners outside the university. With in-person interaction shut down by the pandemic,

maintaining these relationships became more challenging – and more important – than ever. KAUST responded swiftly, shifting focus to COVID-19 response, adapting to virtual communications and welcoming new partners.

Rapid Research Response Team

In response to the pandemic, a group of KAUST faculty formed a Rapid Research Response Team (R3T) focused on collaborating with and supporting the Kingdom's healthcare stakeholders. A variety of coordinated efforts with the Saudi Centers for Disease Control, Saudi Ministry of Health (MoH) and Oxford University, among others, worked to improve testing efforts and efficacy.



Keynote speakers included Dr. Mohammed Al-Abdulaali, Assistant to the Saudi Minister of Health and Official Spokesperson of the Ministry.

First Virtual KAUST Industry Advisory Board meeting: "COVID-19 Impact and the Way Forward"

In September 2020, the KAUST Industry Advisory Board (KIAB) held its 11th annual meeting virtually, maintaining vital communication while complying with pandemic safety precautions. The meeting focused on strategies to combat the COVID-19 crisis, with keynote speaker Dr. Mohammed Al-Abdulaali, Assistant Minister at the Saudi Ministry of Health, who discussed the Kingdom's approach to public health. Keynote speaker Fahad Alsaawi, Chief Data Officer at Lean Business Services, presented insightful pandemic statistics. KIAB participants discussed the challenges each had faced and strategies for innovating, adapting and persevering throughout the pandemic.



University Industry Demonstration Partnership

In 2020, KAUST became the first university in the Middle East to join the University Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP). With this prestigious membership, KAUST joins other leading universities and companies in an effort to identify key issues that impact university-industry relations and to seek opportunities and innovative approaches to partnership and collaboration.

New KICP members

The university welcomed two new members, Modon and SIDF, to the KAUST Industry Collaboration Program (KICP), bringing the total number of industry partners to 24. The KICP is a membership-based program to foster strong and productive partnerships with industry, generating value for both KAUST and the KICP members. These new partnerships in 2020 will enable KAUST to strengthen the research-to-technology-commercialization pipeline further and create more impact for the Kingdom.



MODON

Following a 2019 memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish a high-level framework for collaboration, KAUST welcomed MODON as an official KICP partner. MODON develops unique, sustainable communities that combine residential and commercial properties to empower and delight residents.



SIDF

SIDF was founded to promote industrial investment opportunities, strengthening industry throughout the Kingdom. In line with Vision 2030, SIDF supports strategic initiatives in a variety of industrial sectors.

New Partnerships

In 2020, KAUST signed three new MoUs, each of which offered an opportunity to pursue and support innovation in healthcare. These partnerships will focus on defeating COVID-19 and other threats to global health and safety.



National BioPark at KAUST

In April, KAUST virtually joined the National Industry Development Centre (formerly called Industrial Clusters) to formalize plans to host a National BioPark at KAUST’s Research & Technology Park.

The initiative will provide a vital resource for research and technology development in biopharmaceutical, smart health and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies.



Lean Business Services

A key enabler of e-health innovation through digitization, Lean Business Services will collaborate with KAUST to continue R&D activities related to AI and data science. The goal is to build a “smart health” ecosystem and help the Saudi Ministry of Health utilize AI-powered analysis to strengthen and support pandemic-related decision making. With access to KAUST supercomputer Shaheen, Lean Business Services has been able to help the Saudi healthcare sector gain more accurate information and make better informed decisions to guide the Kingdom through the pandemic.



Johnson & Johnson

In late 2020, KAUST announced a new collaboration with Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson. This alliance will support increased research of and innovation in neglected tropical diseases, especially dengue fever. This partnership is the first between a Saudi Arabian university and Johnson & Johnson.



KAUST President Tony Chan virtually signing an MoU formalizing a National BioPark project in the KAUST Research & Technology Park.



KAUST Research & Technology Park

In 2020, KAUST’s Research & Technology Park continued to expand as an environment for technology-based businesses to access KAUST’s laboratories, faculty and student talent and network of public spaces and facilities designed for creative collision and knowledge-sharing.

Adjusting quickly to the demands of the pandemic, KAUST put the Research & Technology Park into hibernation to protect tenants, students and staff. Likewise, tenants shifted to remote operations to protect their employees, partners and Kingdom residents. As the Park has reopened, KAUST and our partners have prioritized health-related ventures to help protect the residents of the Kingdom and beyond. Despite these unexpected transitions, Park tenants have developed a variety of products to weather the pandemic.

“The pandemic has been a reality check for the way we do business. It has opened up new opportunities for growth and accelerated our digital transformation as we adjust to the ‘new normal’ and strengthen business resilience.”

– Nawaf Algain, Manager KAUST Research & Technology Park

50
total tenants

17
new tenancy agreements in 2020

2020 Park achievements



Hand Sanitizer Production Partner: SABIC

SABIC responded rapidly to the urgent need for disinfectants during the pandemic and formed a task force to evaluate the feasibility of producing isopropanol, a key ingredient in hand sanitizer. A team from the SABIC research center at KAUST worked with the company’s global technology and innovation and manufacturing teams to produce hand sanitizer during the peak of COVID-19.



RED SEA FARMS

Saltwater Greenhouse Partners: Red Sea Farms, Research Products Development Company (RPDC) and the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) Innovation Research Program

AgTech startup Red Sea Farms launched a groundbreaking commercial greenhouse operation at the Park. This state-of-the-art, 2,000-square-meter facility is built in collaboration with KAUST, RPDC and the KACST Innovation Research Program.

Driving Innovation in the SME Community

As a champion for innovation and entrepreneurial efforts of startups and businesses of all sizes, KAUST launched the Kingdom's first university engagement program aimed at fostering the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Our new SME Innovation Services team supports the SME community by providing access to KAUST's resources and capabilities. Not only will this first-of-its-kind program help SMEs increase their customer base and reach new markets, it will strengthen and diversify the Kingdom's economic landscape in line with Vision 2030 goals.

150
SMEs supported

185
SME innovators trained across three workshops

"There is a need for SMEs to adopt innovation in their products to enhance business growth and a desire to cooperate with a pioneering university such as KAUST."

— AdbulMajeed Al-Omran, Director of Innovation at Monsha'at

517
SME survey respondents

Engaging the SME community

To better understand how SMEs and universities can interact, KAUST conducted a survey of more than 500 SME stakeholders. The survey responses helped KAUST develop programs and initiatives to support SMEs throughout Saudi Arabia's economic landscape.

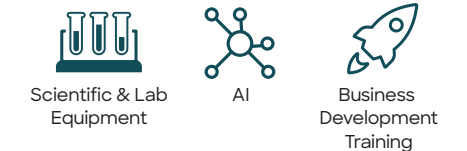


Nearly half
the challenges SMEs face relate to lack of know-how.



Three-quarters
of respondents want to partner with KAUST to address technical challenges.

The top 3
desired professional development areas were:



80%
of survey participants selected at least one innovation and entrepreneurship service of interest, with commercialization taking the lead.

Participants

were from the following industries:



Programs

Results from the survey led to the development of three programs:

- **KAUST Knowledge Partnerships:** This evolving digital platform, designed to spur innovation and bridge industry gaps, enables SMEs to register for internships and request assistance with a challenge that is then reviewed, evaluated and answered by KAUST students, faculty and mentors.
- **SME Growth:** This six-month program helps SMEs develop a minimum valuable product (MVP), secure a customer base for sales and distribution, and upscale their company. Two tracks – Digitization (software) and Prototyping (hardware) – create opportunities to inject an innovation mindset into the curriculum.
- **Building Capacity (professional development):** This program focuses on developing cross-functional skills in emerging technologies, product development and specialized training.

RAQMANA workshops

KAUST launched our SME-focused professional development efforts with the RAQMANA series of workshops. Due to the pandemic, these popular workshops were made available online. Throughout 2020, two workshops were held:

- **Digital Transformation for SME Executives**
- **Applied AI for Beginners**

Partners

The success of the development of this new department was in no small part thanks to KAUST's close collaboration with multiple government organizations, including:



The Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) visits KAUST.

Get in touch.

innovation.kaust.edu.sa

innovation@kaust.edu.sa

Innovation

KAUST Innovation
King Abdullah University of Science & Technology
Thuwal, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



جامعة الملك عبد الله
للعلوم والتقنية
King Abdullah University of
Science and Technology

KAUST
Innovation