



Cooper Fitch

GULF EMPLOYMENT INDEX

EMPLOYMENT MARKET REVIEW

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Q4 2022 vs Q3 2022

The fourth quarter of 2022 saw a range of activity across the Gulf despite the holiday period and lots of people traveling. The Fifa World Cup brought 1.4 million visitors to Qatar which boosted tourism numbers across other parts of the Gulf. Dubai hosted the European DP World Tour Championship and the Rugby World 7s which contributed to the latest figures from the Dubai Sports Council highlighting that the sports sector has added more than €2 billion to the economy, accounting for 2.3% of the emirate's annual GDP as well as contributing to job creation in the UAE.

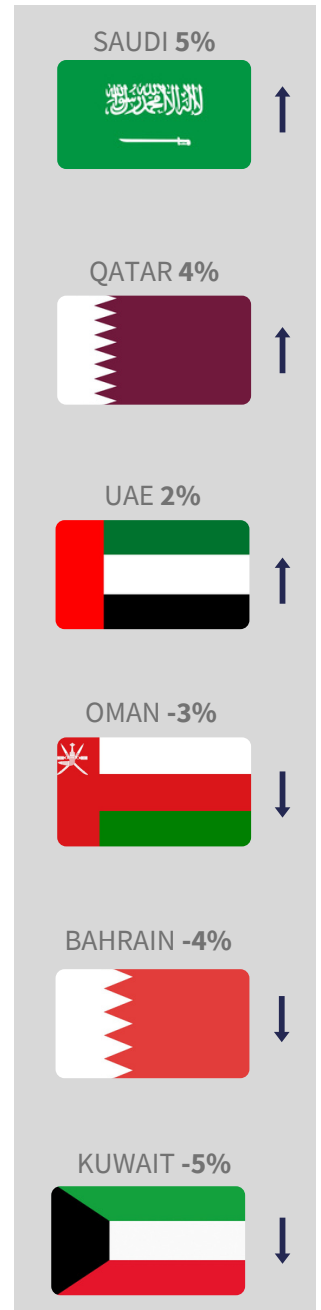
Bahrain has seen growth in real estate and construction-related projects as well as a surge in visitors leading to increased tourism numbers. Due to this, and a strong performance from other non-oil sectors, the forecast for real GDP growth at the end of quarter four 2022 was to reach above 6%. In Saudi Arabia, there have been hundreds of new companies set up with a focus on a cluster approach, examples include EVP with two of the fastest growing OEMS, Ceer & Lucid both building specialised factories, that will create thousands of highly-skilled jobs.

We witnessed the highest level of growth in job activity in the Saudi Arabian market in quarter four at 5%. Job creation in Saudi has been consistent throughout 2022 with increases each quarter and projections for a rise in 2023. UAE had a slightly lower rate of activity in the final quarter due to high levels of travel from residents. Qatar had a strong quarter of activity at 4% enhanced by the Fifa World Cup and Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman saw slightly weaker performances in terms of job creation with Kuwait seeing a 5% decrease, Bahrain 4%, and Oman 3%.

One trend that has gained a lot of traction this quarter is artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. These technologies are being used in the public and private sector, specifically driven by large-scale data transformation programs that would support decision-making, automating processes, and increase efficiency. There has been a significant increase in the need for individuals with data governance experience with the number of jobs in the data and digital sector growing by 3% in this quarter.

The public sector saw a 5% climb in job activity, particularly across tourism and culture, economic zones, investment, and public policy. Advisory had a steady quarter however there was a boost in mandates aligned with strategic government objectives in hiring subject matter experts for various sectors, we expect to see a rise in such opportunities.

Sales and marketing showed a 3% uptick in job activity in quarter four. As marketing efforts continue to shift online, there is a growing demand for professionals with expertise in social media and email marketing, and search engine optimisation (SEO). Equally, we have seen strong demand across manufacturing, retail, real estate, events, hospitality and FMCG.



Founder and CEO, Trefor Murphy

ABOUT COOPER FITCH

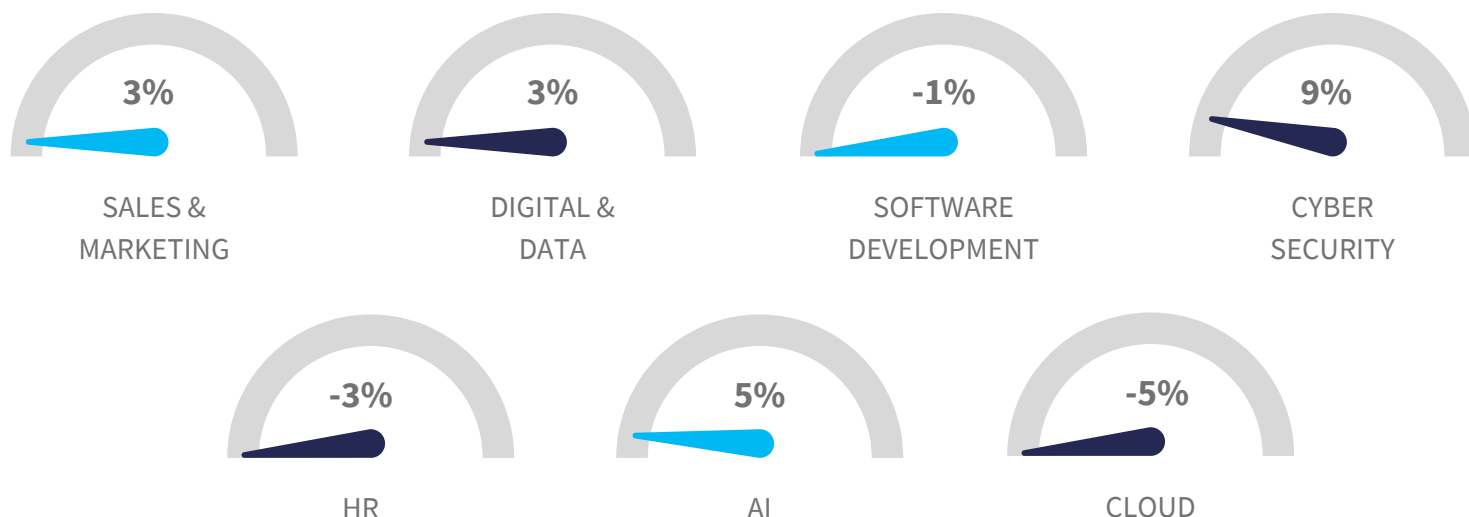
Cooper Fitch is a professional services company with expertise in all people-related matters. We have been facilitating employee attraction and retention through market and data insights and consulting services since 1997, helping our clients build better talent density. With 37 offices across three continents, we are also a proud member of The Talent Club.

SERVICES

Recruitment, Executive Search, RPO and HR Advisory

GULF EMPLOYMENT INDEX

Q4 2022 vs Q3 2022



Quarter four saw a 4% decrease in job activity across strategy however it is expected that recruitment will pick up in January as firms resume operations with an increase in hiring across real estate, renewable energy, transportation, and the public sector. In the legal sector, private practice saw a surprising increase in job activity of 6% despite the end-of-year restrictions. The recent changes in the legal system in Saudi Arabia has provoked firms to review their current hiring strategy, with an emphasis on senior, established Saudi nationals. In-house had a surge in roles across investments, banking and consulting and a demand for regulatory lawyers, particularly within technology and fintech start-ups.

Within the Saudi investment market, we have seen a shift in demand for specific candidates with organisations having a preference for hiring females. We did however see a 2% drop in investment job creation with less activity from foreign candidates' towards the end of 2022 as annual bonuses are paid in the first part of 2023. The finance and senior finance markets noticed a rise in job activity with a demand for Internal Audit roles (Director and Chief). Firms have also been aggressively searching for financial controlling and reporting roles. Banking saw growth of 4% particularly in wealth management and private banking with further expansion expected across the Middle East as it becomes an attractive area for various financial institutions.

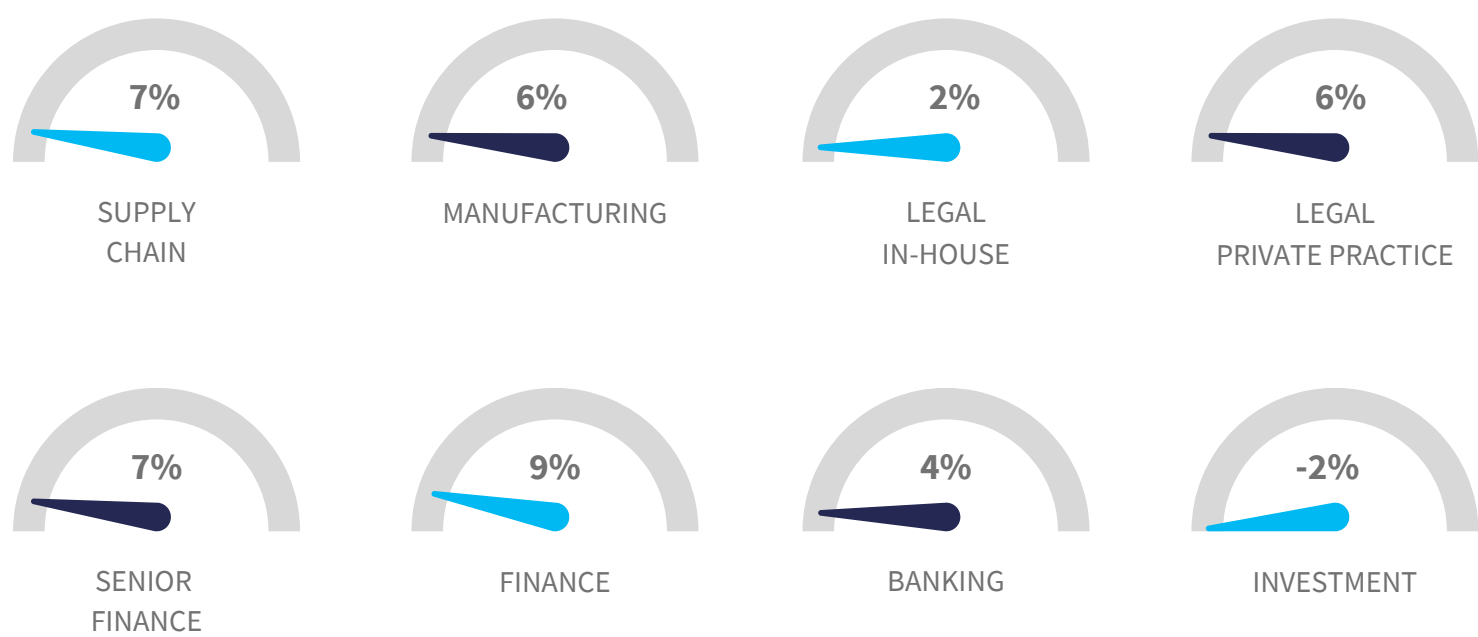
Manufacturing and supply chain saw huge activity in quarter four with requests for specialist engineering roles that require SMEs from outside the region due to specific skill sets requirements. We equally expect growth in the automotive, chemical manufacturing, power and water sectors. In Real Estate we have witnessed a slight increase of 3% in job activity with Saudi Arabia slowing down as they finalise manpower plans for 2023. The UAE announced a number of new projects setting the market for a busy year ahead with a real focus on sustainability.

Our HR advisory division has seen an increase in the introduction of psychometric and leadership assessments to enhance the selection process. The data continues to show that there is a drive for national candidates across all sectors which will carry on throughout 2023 as firms aim to meet their nationalisation targets.



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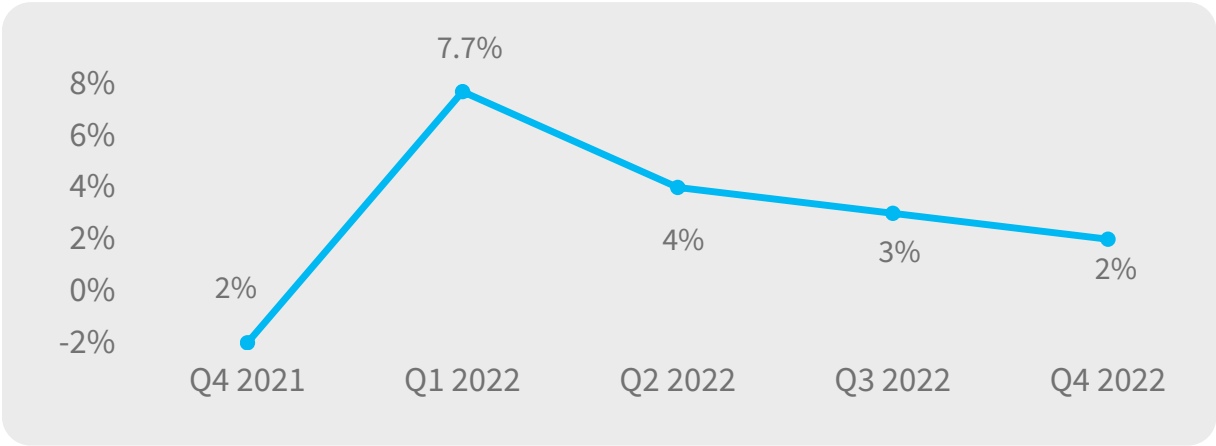
Q4 2022 vs Q3 2022



QUARTER-ON-QUARTER REVIEW

For the quarter-on-quarter review, we take the total number of jobs from our data for each quarter and work out the cumulative increase or decrease. Cooper Fitch analysts reported regional economic growth of 2% during Q4 2022. This figure is exactly the same as the 2% rise witnessed during the corresponding period of last year which we saw as a year of recovery. It's a slight decrease on quarter three but given the surge planned for recruitment activity in H1 2023 we expect good growth for the year ahead.

As we enter Q1 2023, the GCC looks set for a very busy start to the year with all sectors continuing to register high levels of recruitment activity, especially across national hires. As each country finalises their manpower plans for the year ahead we anticipate mid-to-high single-digit growth across the Gulf during the remainder of the year.



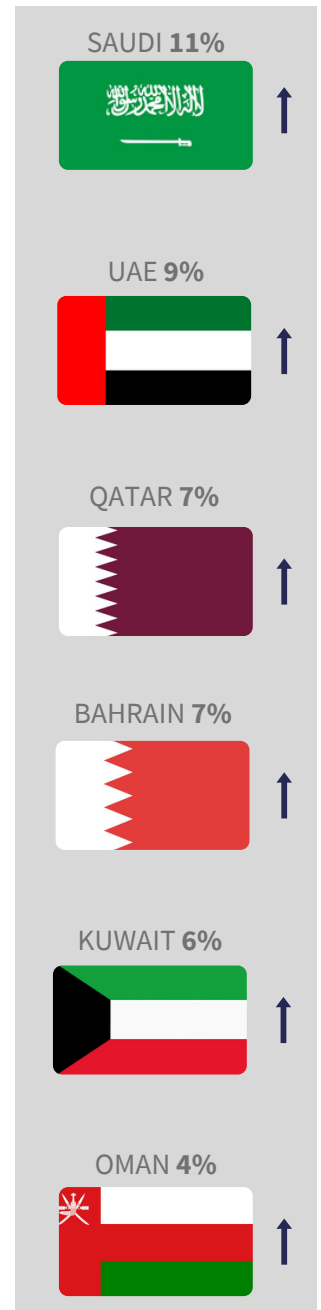
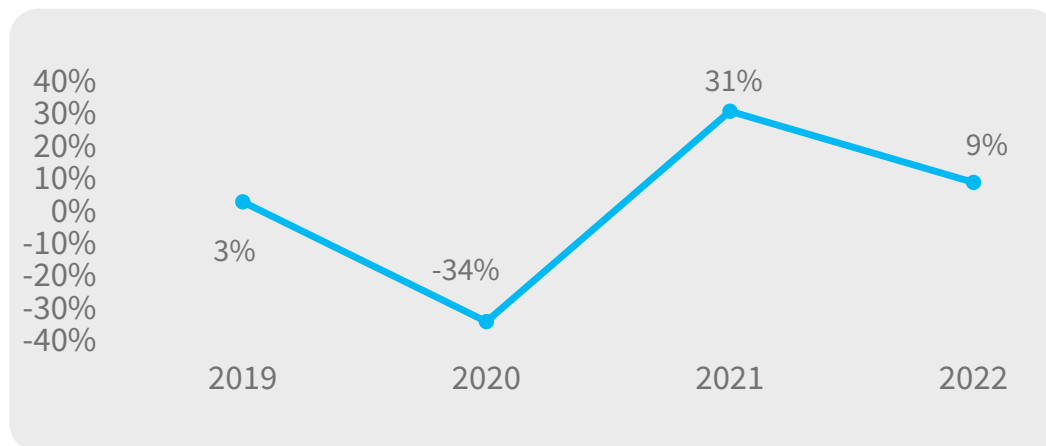
YEAR-ON-YEAR REVIEW

2022 vs 2021

For the 2022 vs 2021 annual review, we take the total number of jobs from our data for each year and work out the percentage increase or decrease, our analysis shows a 9% increase in the number of jobs in 2022 across the Gulf when compared with the previous year. We believe that this growth reflects the region's strong economic performance and the influx of expatriates looking to invest and work in the GCC. The 2022 numbers represent a high growth rate from the year before Covid, showing a full recovery from the global pandemic.

Each country showed high single-digit growth in job creation from 2021 to 2022 with Saudi Arabia leading the way at 11% followed closely by UAE at 9%. Bahrain and Qatar had significant increases over the course of the year with 7% when compared with the corresponding year of 2021. Kuwait and Oman also showed growth in job activity over the duration of 2022 drawing upon the conclusion that the GCC had a noteworthy improvement in the number of new jobs in 2022 compared with 2021.

GULF YEAR-ON-YEAR PERCENTAGE CHANGE



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Cooper Fitch Gulf Employment Index reviews new employment activity across the GCC, with a particular focus on changes in the number of new jobs in the region based on our proprietary data. Our team conducts extensive analysis for each quarter, calculating cumulative increases or decreases across multiple market segments. The primary aim of this index is to compare Q3 and Q4 2022 as well as a yearly comparison of the corresponding years, 2021 and 2022.

Established in 1997, Cooper Fitch is a privately owned search and HR advisory company in the Gulf. With 37 offices across three continents, we are also a proud member of The Talent Club. We hope you find our latest Gulf Employment Index insightful. If you would like to learn more about the services we offer, or ask any questions about the contents of this report, please feel free to contact Emily Bates from the Cooper Fitch CEO's office by writing to ebates@cooperfitch.ae.