

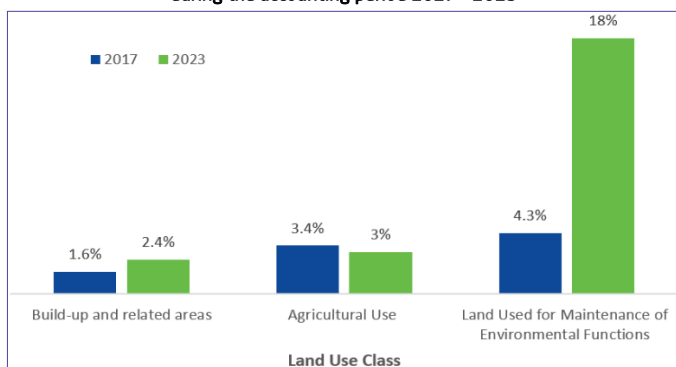
Percentage of maintenance and restoration of environmental functions increases in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 4.3% to 18% in 2023

During the accounting period of 2017 - 2023, maintenance and restoration of environmental functions in the Kingdom (maintaining the natural development of the environment and restoring it to its original state in the Kingdom) witnessed an increase. After representing 4.3% of the total land area of Saudi Arabia in 2017, it became 18% in 2023. This was accompanied by an increase in the area of rangeland in the maintenance and restoration of environmental functions, reaching approximately 23 million hectares in 2023.

Land use accounts

The land use classification showed three main categories: built-up and related areas, agriculture, and maintenance and restoration of environmental functions. During the accounting period of 2017 and 2023, maintenance and restoration of environmental functions experienced an increasing rise that reached 18% in 2023 from the total land area of Saudi Arabia. Built-up and related areas also recorded an increase by 2.4%, compared to 1.6%. There was a slight decrease in agricultural use from 3.4% to 3% of the total land area of Saudi Arabia (Figure1).

Figure 1. Change in the relative distribution of land use categories in Saudi Arabia during the accounting period 2017 - 2023



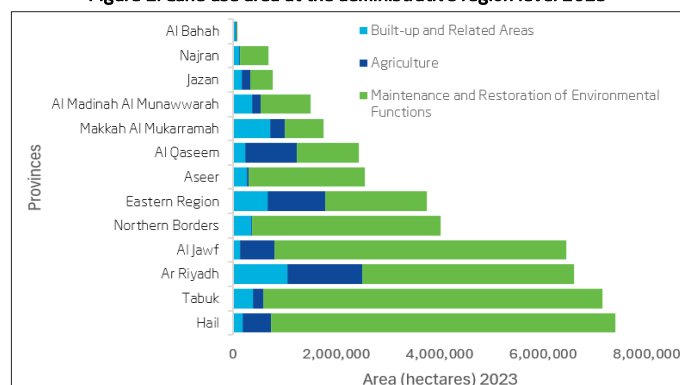
Land use assets

During the same accounting period, there was a change in the assets of land use in the Kingdom. The built-up and related areas increased from 3.03 million hectares in 2017 to 4.7 million hectares in 2023. Land used for agriculture decreased from 6.6 million hectares in 2017 to 5.7 million hectares in 2023.

Across administrative regions, there was an increase in maintenance and restoration of environmental functions in all administrative regions. Tabuk Region had the largest area of lands used for maintenance and restoration of environmental functions in 2017 with approximately 2.6 million hectares, while Hail Region took the lead in 2023 with around 6.7 million hectares. There was also an increase in the built-up and related areas in all regions. Riyadh Region had the largest area of the built-up and related areas, expanding from around 649 thousand hectares in 2017 to about 1 million hectares in 2023.

Regarding the significant changes in agricultural land use during the accounting period of 2017 and 2023, despite the slight overall decrease in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, some administrative regions witnessed an expansion in agricultural lands, including Eastern Region, Northern Borders Region, and Najran Region. Riyadh Region still had the largest area of agricultural lands, although it slightly decreased from 1.8 million hectares in 2017 to 1.4 million hectares in 2023 (Figure2).

Figure 2. Land use area at the administrative region level 2023



Land cover accounts

The land cover classification in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia includes four main categories: built-up areas, crops, rangeland, and bare ground. The bare ground accounted for 48% of the total land area in 2023. The area of built-up areas changed from 1.3 million hectares in 2017 to 2.2 million hectares in 2023. The crops increased by 9% from 1.5 million hectares in 2017 to around 1.7 million hectares in 2023.

Key indicators during the accounting period 2017-2023

Key indicators during the accounting period 2017-2023 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Built-up areas accounted for 4.7 million hectares in 2023.

The percentage of maintenance and restoration of environmental functions increased from 4.3% in 2017 to 18% in 2023.

The percentage of built-up areas increased from 1.6% in 2017 to 2.4% in 2023.

[table](#)

Methodology and Quality

The statistical publication methodology for environmental-economic accounting for lands (land accounts publication) was prepared according to the SEEA Central Framework and the Statistical Business Process Model. Multiple data sources were utilized, including administrative records from relevant authorities, open-source data, and big data. Geographic information system software was used to estimate the statistics as well. [For more information, look at The Methodology and Quality Report](#)