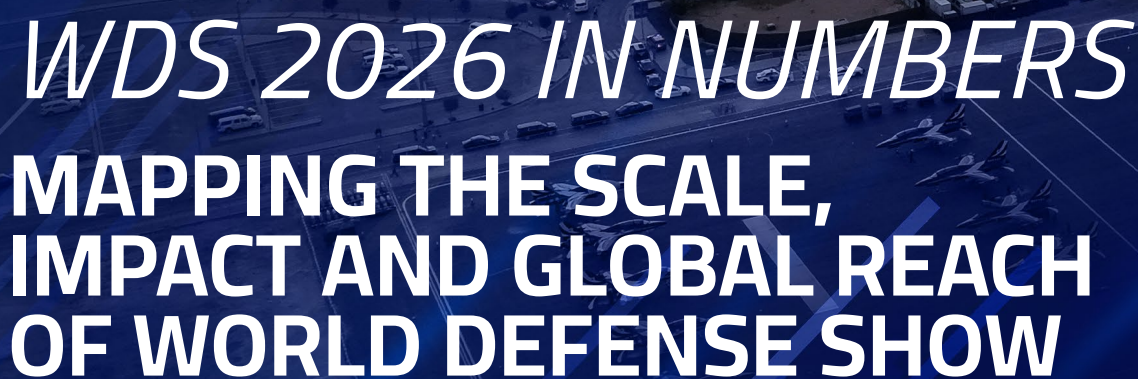




الهيئة العامة
للصناعات العسكرية
General Authority
for Military Industries



وزارة الدفاع
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

SÁMI

WDS 2026 IN NUMBERS and independent post-show research highlight WDS 2026's scale, operational depth and growing role as a platform driving defense integration.

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - World Defense Show (WDS) has published its latest WDS 2026 In Numbers Report, offering its most comprehensive assessment yet of the scale, performance and long-term impact of its third edition.

Developed following an extensive post-show review, including operational analysis, stakeholder engagement findings and broader market feedback, the report positions WDS 2026 not simply as a successful event, but as an increasingly influential global platform driving defense integration, industry collaboration and international engagement.

More than a retrospective summary, the report has been designed as a consolidated overview of WDS 2026's key achievements and performance indicators, capturing the breadth of WDS's contribution to defense dialogue, industrial development and cross-border cooperation.

Its publication is further reinforced by independent post-event sentiment research conducted by GRS, which points to exceptionally strong exhibitor and visitor confidence in the value delivered by WDS 2026.

A common way to gauge event success is by understanding how willing attendees are to recommend it to others - an important signal of overall satisfaction and future growth. In our case, both exhibitors and visitors expressed strong enthusiasm and a clear willingness to recommend WDS, exceeding typical industry benchmarks.

Among exhibitors surveyed, 100% said they expect to generate business as a result of participating, while 89% said they are highly likely to return for the next edition in 2028. Visitor sentiment was equally positive, with 85% saying WDS helped strengthen relationships with suppliers and partners.

Together, the report findings and third-party market feedback provide a fuller picture of WDS's growing international relevance, operational credibility and long-term platform strength.

Held in Riyadh under the theme of The Future of Defense Integration, WDS 2026 brought together governments, military leaders, manufacturers, innovators, investors and defense stakeholders from around the world in one of the largest and most operationally sophisticated defense exhibition environments globally.



WDS 2026 IN NUMBERS

At headline level, WDS 2026 delivered strong performance across participation, engagement and commercial outcomes, underscoring both the scale of the show and the depth of international confidence it now commands:

- **1,486** exhibitors participated in the show, representing **89** countries
- **513** official delegations attended, representing **121** countries
- **137,000** trade visitors attended from **149** countries
- **SAR 33** billion in announced defense deals were signed
- Participation from all of the world's **Top 10** defense companies
- Representation from **61** of the **Top 100** global defense firms

These figures reflect more than scale. They demonstrate WDS's continued evolution into a high-value international platform where strategic dialogue, operational capability and commercial opportunity converge.

A GLOBAL CONVENING PLATFORM FOR DEFENSE INTEGRATION

Founded by the General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI), WDS was established to support Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 ambitions by accelerating defense industrial growth, fostering localization, including Saudi Arabia's goal to localize 50% of defense spending, and creating new pathways for international collaboration.

The 2026 edition reinforced that role at a larger scale than ever before.

The show brought together a uniquely broad mix of stakeholders across government, defense, industry and innovation ecosystems. One of the clearest indicators of WDS's growing influence as a trusted international convenor was the strength and structure of its delegation program.

Across five days, WDS facilitated:

- **513** official delegations
- **169** Ministers / Chief of Staff
- **6,300** delegation members
- **616** formal delegation visit sessions

These interactions were not limited to exhibition access. They created direct channels for procurement dialogue, industrial partnerships, supply chain conversations, and future capability discussions.

The dedicated Meet the KSA Government program further strengthened this dimension by providing exhibitors and international stakeholders with direct access to Saudi defense and regulatory entities, helping translate visibility into meaningful institutional engagement.

The Meet the KSA Government Program saw over one day:

- **8** speakers
- **8** entities
- **8** topics
- **1,214** attendees

WDS Connect facilitated meaningful business engagement, helping participants explore potential collaborations and generate valuable commercial opportunities with global buyers and suppliers. The program delivered:

- **486** suppliers
- **21** buyers
- Over 1,000 meetings and connections

The introduction of the Investor Program at World Defense Show delivered tangible opportunities for participants pursuing investment and growth. The program, held over one day saw:

- **16** investors
- **23** investees
- **34** meetings
- **11** countries
- **4** panel sessions

NATIONAL PAVILION EXPANSION AND INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION DEPTH

A further indicator of WDS's growing international relevance was the significant expansion of key national pavilions between the 2024 and 2026 editions, reflecting deeper market commitment and stronger country-level participation.

Saudi Arabia's national pavilion expanded from approximately 32,700 sqm in 2024 to more than 34,000 sqm in 2026, with 287 Saudi companies participating compared to 181 companies in the 2024 edition, with an increase of 59%, underscoring the Kingdom's continued commitment to developing its domestic defense ecosystem.

International participation also saw notable growth across major defense markets.

China's pavilion grew by 40%, expanding from 4,700 sqm to 6,600 sqm. Participation also increased significantly, with more than 286 companies taking part, compared with 70 in 2024, an increase of 308%.

Türkiye's pavilion expanded by 25%, increasing from 4,500 sqm to 5,700 sqm. Participation also grew significantly, with 128 participating companies taking part compared with 70 in 2024 – an increase of more than 82%.

The United States recorded a 55% increase in pavilion footprint, growing from 2,900 sqm to 4,500 sqm. A total of 163 companies participated – an increase of 117% from the 75 companies that took part in the 2024 edition.

South Korea recorded the highest percentage growth, with its pavilion expanding by 63%, from 1,600 sqm to 2,600 sqm, and participation rising from 12 companies in 2024 to 36 in 2026 with an increase of 200% compared to 2024.

Europe has demonstrated strong growth, with its footprint expanding by 66%—from 6,015 sqm at WDS 2024 to 10,012 sqm in WDS 2026. Participation also increased significantly, rising from 16 to 23 countries (44%) represented with an increase from 160 to 300 exhibiting companies (88%).

Taken together, these gains reflect growing international confidence in WDS as a platform for defense industry engagement, market access, and long-term partnership development.

VENUE SPACE, STATIC AND LIVE DEMONSTRATION CAPABILITY

A defining differentiator for WDS remains its operational environment.

Unlike traditional exhibition venues, WDS is delivered within a purpose-built site designed to support live land and air demonstrations, multi-domain showcases and large-scale stakeholder movement within one integrated ecosystem.

Scale at WDS is not measured only by attendance, but by the operational environment it is able to deliver.

The 2026 edition was delivered across:

- **272,827** sqm of exhibition space
- within an **800,000 sqm** purpose-built venue
- featuring a dedicated **2.7 km** runway

This infrastructure enables WDS to offer one of the most extensive and impressive live demonstration environments in the global defense calendar.

Land capability remained a major feature in 2026:

- **135** live land demonstrations
- **43** land assets

These demonstrations provide military and industry stakeholders with direct operational insight into mobility, integration, and system performance in realistic conditions

Additional figures relating to live air displays and static air assets remain subject to final alignment and will be updated once confirmed:

- Live air displays: **172**
- **500+** airside arrivals
- Static air assets: **113**

This remains a core differentiator for WDS and a key element of its international appeal.

A MULTI-DOMAIN EXHIBITION ECOSYSTEM

WDS 2026 continued to expand its wider exhibition ecosystem, offering visitors a more immersive and integrated experience across all defense domains.

Outdoor and feature zones saw significant growth, reinforcing the show's depth and operational realism.

Current verified figures include:

- **700+** outdoor assets displayed
- **36** participating countries

The outdoor spaces enabled exhibitors to demonstrate larger platforms, mobility systems and operational technologies in ways that are not possible within conventional exhibition halls.

Together with the show's indoor halls, feature programs and demonstration areas, this helped position WDS as a truly multi-domain defense environment, spanning land, air, sea, space and security.

ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

WDS 2026 also delivered strong commercial outcomes, underlining its role as both a business platform and a strategic industry marketplace.

The announcement of SAR 33 billion in defense deals highlighted the show's ability to support meaningful procurement, industrial partnerships, and market activity.

Equally important was the breadth of international representation, as 80% of exhibitors came from overseas, reinforcing the event's global reach. Additionally, the show welcomed 149 countries across all attendees.

The presence of all Top 10 global defense companies, alongside 61 of the Top 100, reinforced WDS's credibility as a serious international marketplace and strategic industry platform.

This level of participation reflects growing confidence in Saudi Arabia's defense ecosystem, and in WDS as a platform capable of convening both established global players and emerging market opportunities.

INNOVATION, KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND FUTURE CAPABILITY

Beyond scale and commercial activity, WDS 2026 also deepened its role as a platform for future capability, innovation, and strategic knowledge exchange.

The new Future Defense Lab brought together:

- **76** participating companies
- from **12+** countries

The Lab provided a focused environment for showcasing emerging technologies across AI, autonomy, advanced systems, and future operational solutions.

The new Unmanned Systems Zone showcased autonomous systems across land, sea, air and space, further reinforcing WDS's commitment to integrated future defense capability.

The Unmanned Systems Zone delivered:

- **100+** platforms and systems
- **29** companies
- **10** countries represented
- Spanning **8,000** sqm of outdoor space

Additionally, the new Naval Zone explored the forefront of maritime defense through a dedicated feature area highlighting the technologies and strategies advancing naval capabilities worldwide.

The Naval Zone showcased:

- **120** naval assets
- **10** countries
- **21** companies
- Spanning **7k** sqm of outdoor space

Meanwhile, the Saudi Supply Chain Zone brought together:

- **51** Saudi companies, primarily SMEs

This helped support localization ambitions while connecting local suppliers with international primes and procurement stakeholders.

Knowledge exchange also remained a key strength:

- **68** content sessions
- **151** speakers
- **5,834** total content attendees

These programs positioned WDS as more than an exhibition, but as a platform for dialogue around defense integration, industrial development and future operational challenges.

INDUSTRY CONFIDENCE AND MARKET PERCEPTION

Beyond operational and commercial performance, independent post-show sentiment research conducted by GRS points to exceptionally strong confidence in the value delivered by WDS 2026.

The findings add an important qualitative dimension to the report, showing that WDS is delivering not only scale, but meaningful outcomes, access and long-term platform value.

Among exhibitors surveyed after the show:

- **85%** rated their return on investment as good or excellent
- **80%** said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their participation
- WDS recorded a return likelihood score of 4.35 out of 5, outperforming both the industry benchmark (4.01) and sector benchmark (3.99)

These findings point to strong exhibitor satisfaction and reinforce WDS's ability to deliver tangible commercial value.

The research also highlights the strategic access WDS provides:

- **76%** cited access to the international defense market as a key participation driver
- **78%** highlighted access to the Saudi market
- **70%** pointed to access to international delegations as a major value factor

Visitor feedback was equally positive:

- **82%** said the show helped them source new products or services
- **50%** of visitors hold purchasing responsibility

Taken together, these findings add an important qualitative layer to the headline figures, showing that WDS is valued not only for scale, but for relevance, access, and practical outcomes.

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF DEFENSE TALENT

World Defense Show dedicated a strong emphasis on engaging young people and early-career professionals with the defense sector. Through structured programming and curated exposure, WDS introduces participants to the breadth of opportunities across defense, technology, engineering, and associated industries.

This approach reflects national priorities under Vision 2030, including:

- Skills development in strategic sectors
- Exposure to advanced technologies and future industries
- Early engagement with national and global defense ecosystems

By situating talent engagement within a live, operational defense environment, WDS enables participants to connect academic learning with real-world application.

The Future Talent Program at WDS delivered a truly engaging and interactive experience for its young attendees:

- **6,049** attending students
- **100+** participating entities
- **14** exhibiting partners
- **12** content sessions

LOOKING AHEAD

The newly published WDS Strategic Report reinforces a clear conclusion: World Defense Show is growing not only in scale, but in strategic importance.

Its combination of operational capability, international participation, industry confidence and long-term strategic relevance positions WDS as one of the world's most important defense platforms.

As Saudi Arabia continues to advance its defense industrial ambitions under Vision 2030, WDS is playing an increasingly important role in shaping dialogue, enabling partnerships and driving integration across the global defense ecosystem.

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WDS_KSA



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