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# Outsourced SDR Services in the Middle East: One Team, Three Rulebooks for the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar (2027 Guide)

**Short answer:** Outsourced SDR services in the Middle East book meetings with buyers in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar on your behalf. Expect retainers from roughly $2,000 to $7,500 a month, a four-day shared working week (Monday to Thursday) across the three countries, consent-based data laws in all three, and a phone-and-LinkedIn-first approach in Qatar, where unsolicited electronic marketing is prohibited.

## Key takeaways

- **Three rulebooks, not one.** UAE marketing calls are limited to 9am to 6pm from locally registered numbers; Saudi Arabia's PDPL makes consent the main legal basis; Qatar prohibits unsolicited direct marketing by electronic means.
- **The shared week is four days.** The UAE's working week runs Monday to Friday, Saudi Arabia's and Qatar's Sunday to Thursday, so a team covering all three has Monday to Thursday in common and must plan Sundays and Fridays by country.
- **Plan around Ramadan 2027**, expected to begin on or about 8 February 2027: shorter days, slower decisions, and a strong post-Eid restart in March.
- **Government and giga-project budgets in Saudi Arabia need a local footprint:** since 1 January 2024 government bodies cannot contract with companies that lack a regional headquarters in the Kingdom (contracts under SAR 1 million excepted).

## Which rules does an SDR work under in each Gulf country?

| Rulebook | United Arab Emirates | Saudi Arabia | Qatar |
|---|---|---|---|
| Data protection law | Federal Decree-Law No. 45 of 2021 (PDPL), in force 2 January 2022; prohibits processing personal data without the owner's consent, with exceptions. DIFC has its own Data Protection Law No. 5 of 2020. | PDPL in force 14 September 2023, grace period to 14 September 2024; consent is the primary legal basis; conditions for direct marketing sit in the Implementing Regulations; cross-border transfers need adequacy or safeguards. | Law No. 13 of 2016; unsolicited direct marketing is prohibited; electronic marketing needs prior, explicit consent; every message must identify the sender and offer an opt-out; fines up to QAR 5 million. The Qatar Financial Centre has its own regime. |
| Regulator | UAE Data Office (federal); DIFC Commissioner for DIFC | Saudi Data and AI Authority (SDAIA); CST for spam messages and calls (Regulations for Curbing SPAM Messages and Calls, decision 493/1444 of 17 October 2022) | National Cyber Governance and Assurance Affairs (NCGAA) |
| Telemarketing code | Cabinet Resolutions 56 and 57 of 2024, in force 27 August 2024: all licensed companies including free zones; calls 9am to 6pm only; local numbers registered to the company's licence; no call-backs after a rejection; unanswered calls capped at one a day and two a week; Do Not Call Registry fines of AED 50,000, 75,000 and 150,000 for repeat breaches | CST spam regulations govern promotional messages and calls; check the current text before any SMS or calling campaign | Covered by the 2016 law's direct-marketing rules; calls to named individuals are safest with a prior relationship or referral |
| Working week | Monday to Friday; federal government works Monday to Thursday full days and Friday until noon since 1 January 2022; private employers were free to follow and were expected to | Sunday to Thursday since the 2013 weekend change | Sunday to Thursday; many businesses open Friday and close early Thursday |
| Government access | Open to licensed suppliers; free zone status matters for mainland work | Since 1 January 2024 government agencies cannot contract with companies without a regional headquarters in the Kingdom; exceptions include contracts under SAR 1 million and sole technically acceptable offers | Formal tenders; a local partner is the usual route |
| Currency peg | AED 3.6725 per US dollar since November 1997 | SAR 3.75 per US dollar | QAR 3.64 per US dollar |
| Time zone | UTC+4 all year | UTC+3 all year | UTC+3 all year |

## Which days and hours should the team work? The four-day shared week

| Day | UAE (Dubai, Abu Dhabi) | Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Jeddah) | Qatar (Doha) | What the SDR team does |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Weekend | Working day | Working day | Riyadh and Doha calls and LinkedIn; UAE research and list building |
| Monday to Wednesday | Working | Working | Working | Full programme in all three countries |
| Thursday | Working | Working (end of week) | Working (often a half day) | Morning calls everywhere; afternoons for Dubai only |
| Friday | Half day (federal) or working | Weekend | Weekend (many shops open, offices mostly closed) | Dubai mornings only; no Saudi or Qatar outreach |
| Saturday | Weekend | Weekend | Weekend | Nothing goes out; reporting and prep |

## What should a Gulf SDR programme cost, in AED, SAR and QAR?

| Option | Published range (estimate) | In AED (at 3.6725) | In SAR (at 3.75) | In QAR (at 3.64) | Checked |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Managed outbound retainer, global range | $2,000 to $25,000 a month | AED 7,300 to 91,800 | SAR 7,500 to 93,750 | QAR 7,280 to 91,000 | 12 Nov 2026 |
| Outsourced SDR retainer, typical band in a 2025 guide | $3,000 to $6,500 a month | AED 11,000 to 23,900 | SAR 11,250 to 24,375 | QAR 10,900 to 23,660 | 12 Nov 2026 |
| One Gulf-focused vendor's managed SDR engagement | From $7,500 a month, first pipeline in 2 to 3 weeks (their claim) | AED 27,500 | SAR 28,125 | QAR 27,300 | 12 Nov 2026 |
| Pay per appointment, global range | $200 to $600 a meeting | AED 735 to 2,200 | SAR 750 to 2,250 | QAR 730 to 2,185 | 12 Nov 2026 |
| B2BXclusive Starter (1 channel, 5,000 contacts a month) | $1,950 a month | AED 7,161 | SAR 7,313 | QAR 7,098 | 12 Nov 2026 |
| B2BXclusive Growth Accelerator (2 channels, 10,000 contacts) | $3,950 a month | AED 14,506 | SAR 14,813 | QAR 14,378 | 12 Nov 2026 |
| B2BXclusive Scale (3+ channels, 25,000 contacts, dedicated strategist) | $5,950+ a month | AED 21,851+ | SAR 22,313+ | QAR 21,658+ | 12 Nov 2026 |

## How do you staff one SDR team for three countries?

| Role | UAE | Saudi Arabia | Qatar |
|---|---|---|---|
| Researcher and list builder | English; sources: free zone registries, LinkedIn, event exhibitor lists (GITEX, trade shows) | Arabic reading helps for ministry and giga-project supplier portals | English; Qatar Financial Centre and state-backed company registers |
| Email and LinkedIn writer | English, with Arabic greeting lines where the buyer's profile is in Arabic | English for regional offices and scale-ups; Arabic for family groups and public bodies | LinkedIn and referral messages only until consent exists for email |
| Phone SDR | English; must call from a locally registered number between 9am and 6pm | Arabic speaker for public sector and family groups; English for multinationals | Arabic-English bilingual; introductions beat cold calls |
| Account lead (your contact) | One person who owns the qualified-meeting definition, the weekly report and the three country calendars | | |

## Country and language coverage clause (template: copy and adapt)

```
The Provider will run outbound for the Client in the following countries: [United Arab
Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar]. For each country, Schedule A lists the channels permitted (
email, LinkedIn, phone, referral) and the local rules the Provider will follow, including UAE
calling hours of 9.00am to 6.00pm from numbers registered to a UAE commercial licence, and no
unsolicited electronic marketing to individuals in Qatar.

The Provider will assign at least [one] Arabic-speaking SDR to the Client's account for [Saudi
Arabia and Qatar], named in Schedule B, available for at least [20] hours per week during the
working week of each country (Sunday to Thursday for Saudi Arabia and Qatar, Monday to Friday
for the UAE).

Meetings are reported by country. A change to the countries, channels or named SDRs requires
the Client's written agreement.
```

## Qualified meeting definition for Gulf buyers (template: copy and adapt)

```
A "Qualified Meeting" is a meeting held (in person, by video or by phone) with a person whose
title is listed in Schedule C at an organisation that matches Schedule D for that country, who
was told the purpose of the meeting when it was booked, and which lasts at least [15] minutes.

For Saudi government bodies and state-backed companies, a meeting is Qualified only if the
Client has confirmed in writing that it is able to contract with that body (for example,
through a regional headquarters, a local partner or a contract under the SAR 1 million
threshold).

Fees are payable for Qualified Meetings held. Meetings cancelled by the prospect, including
during public holidays, Ramadan or Eid, are rebooked by the Provider at no charge.
```

## Who should choose what

| Your situation | Best fit | Why |
|---|---|---|
| Software or services company testing the Gulf for the first time | Outsourced SDR team covering the UAE first, Saudi private sector second | Cheapest way to learn which country answers before hiring locally |
| Selling to Saudi ministries or giga-projects | Local partner or regional headquarters, with SDRs for private groups in parallel | Government contracts need a local footprint since 1 January 2024 |
| Selling to Qatari institutions | Referral and event-led outreach, LinkedIn, Arabic-English phone SDR | Unsolicited electronic marketing is prohibited |
| One country already producing steady pipeline | Hire a local SDR there; keep the outsourced team for the other two | Local presence pays once the market is proven |
| Indian or UK company with no Gulf office | India-based team working Gulf hours with a named Arabic speaker | Hours fit a normal Indian day; cost per meeting stays sensible |

## Quick answers

**How much do outsourced SDR services cost in the Middle East?**
Published retainers for managed outbound run from about $2,000 to $25,000 a month globally, and one Gulf-focused vendor lists a managed SDR engagement from $7,500 a month. At the dirham's peg of 3.6725 to the dollar, a $3,950 plan is about AED 14,500; at the riyal's peg of 3.75 it is about SAR 14,800. Compare quotes on cost per held meeting and on which countries and languages are included.

**Is cold email legal in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar?**
All three run consent-based data protection laws, and the detail differs. The UAE's federal PDPL prohibits processing personal data without the owner's consent, with exceptions. Saudi Arabia's PDPL makes consent the primary legal basis and sets conditions for direct marketing in its regulations. Qatar's law prohibits unsolicited direct marketing by electronic means. Take local legal advice; this is not legal advice.

**What are the telemarketing rules in the UAE?**
Cabinet Resolutions 56 and 57 of 2024, in force from 27 August 2024, apply to all licensed companies including free zones. Marketing calls are restricted to 9am to 6pm, must come from local numbers registered under the company's licence, must stop after a rejection, and unanswered calls are capped at one a day and two a week. Fines for calling numbers on the Do Not Call Registry start at AED 50,000.

**Which days should an outsourced SDR team work for Gulf buyers?**
Monday to Thursday are shared by all three countries. The UAE moved its federal working week to Monday to Friday, with a half day on Friday, from 1 January 2022, and private employers were expected to follow. Saudi Arabia and Qatar work Sunday to Thursday. A team covering the whole Gulf works Sunday for Riyadh and Doha and Friday morning for Dubai.

**Do outsourced SDRs need to speak Arabic for the Gulf?**
For multinationals' regional offices and most technology buyers in Dubai, English works. For Saudi government bodies, family-owned groups and many Qatari institutions, Arabic opens doors that English does not, especially on the phone. Ask the provider for the split of Arabic and English speakers on your account, not just on their website.

**Can an outsourced SDR team sell to the Saudi government?**
Only with a local footprint. Since 1 January 2024, Saudi government agencies cannot contract with companies that lack a regional headquarters in the Kingdom, with exceptions such as contracts under SAR 1 million or cases with only one technically acceptable offer. SDRs can still open conversations with private groups, scale-ups and regional offices in Riyadh without a local entity.

**When is Ramadan in 2027 and does it affect outbound?**
Ramadan 2027 is expected to begin on or about 8 February 2027, subject to the moon sighting, and in 2028 on about 28 January. Working hours shorten across the Gulf (Qatar's labour law cuts hours to 36 a week), decisions slow, and the two weeks after Eid are usually strong. Plan prospecting before and research during.

**Should I hire an SDR in Dubai instead of outsourcing?**
Self-reported pay data for SDRs in Dubai is thin (an average base of AED 50,000 a year from 15 profiles, last updated March 2025), so budget with care and expect visa, housing allowance and recruitment costs on top. A local hire makes sense once one country produces steady pipeline; an outsourced team is the cheaper way to test all three.

**Book a free strategy call**
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