keypoint

Technology Consulting Solutions
in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Technology Consulting

Regionally recognised as subject matter experts in - and problem-solvers for - a wide range of technology and information security issues, our technology consulting team has deep domain knowledge across both industry verticals and organisational tiers. Using a blend of best-fit leading practice and tried and tested methodologies, we help clients understand their technology requirements, align IT solutions with those requirements and identify (and manage) associated risks, including threats to information security and data privacy.

We operate in a world – and an economic system – that is transforming in real time. That transformation – overwhelmingly dependent on technology and the people and systems that develop and maintain it – requires significant investment – as well as a broad set of specific, unique and flexible skills.

Our technology consultants use their experience, knowledge and understanding of leading practice to help optimise investments in technology by understanding strategic goals, supporting the development of tactical objectives and aligning personal and corporate objectives.

- Certification consulting
- Regulatory compliance
- Operational frameworks
- Data Management
- AI governance

- Cybersecurity
- Business continuity & resilience management
- Data privacy
- Resourcing

- Transformation advisory
- System selections
- Strategy articulation
- Project management

- IT risk management
- IT internal audits
- Post-implementation reviews
- Effectiveness assessments

Technology governance

Our technology governance SMEs support the appropriate management of technology-related assets and processes. We assist organisations by developing, reviewing and upgrading IT policies, processes and procedures and using them as the basis for structured governance frameworks, aligning them with an organisation's operating model, practices and applicable standards, including globally accepted leading practice. We assess current states, identify improvement areas and document required processes.

Our technology governance offerings include:

Certification consulting

Reflecting the increasingly critical role information systems play in business operations, the International Standards Organisation (ISO) has issued several standards to improve information systems operations and security. Our experienced ISO consultants leverage their experience of working with a range of different clients across the globe to advise on ISO compliance and analyse gaps between current and leading practice. Our aim is to ensure that clients benefit from the intention behind the standards as well as the certification itself. ISO certificates that have particular relevance across MENA include ISO/IEC 20000-1 (IT service management), ISO/IEC 27001:2022 (IS management systems) and ISO 22301: 2019 (business continuity management systems).

Regulatory compliance

As economies transform, regulators across the GCC – including ministries, authorities and central banks - are increasingly focused on ensuring that businesses have the right internal controls in place to minimise risk and increase alignment with best-fit leading practice. Having worked across the region, our technology consultants use their knowledge of regulatory mandates and current practice to develop and - where feasible - future-proof technology-based solutions.

Operational frameworks

From off-the-shelf models developed by large IT companies to elaborately customised frameworks, there is a wide variety of IT governance and operations frameworks – all fundamentally designed to manage IT service delivery. We review, develop and analyse frameworks, recommending changes to bridge gaps to leading practice, such as COBIT 19.

Data Management

Data used to support business processes and informed decision-making needs to be accurate, complete and current – which is why KITCO provides comprehensive data management consulting services, helping organisations to establish effective, sustainable data governance practices. Our experienced data management team – offering solutions including current state, gap and maturity assessments and tailored data management governance framework development – has delivered successful data management initiatives across the GCC, leveraging industry-recognised standards and applicable regulatory requirements to strengthen governance, improve data quality, increase compliance and maximise the value of organisational data.

AI governance

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly absorbing functions typically associated with human intelligence – such as learning, reasoning, perception, language understanding and autonomous decision-making. Key decision-makers at businesses across Saudi Arabia must increasingly be aware of AI's implications for their organisations – such as strategic advantage, workforce transformation, data dependency, ethical and regulatory challenges and cultural shifts. Our certified AI governance team can:

- Develop governance frameworks
- Assess security postures and AI risks and develop mitigation plans
- Assess compliance with national, regional and international frameworks
- Provide training and drive change management

Information security

Artificial intelligence and machine learning, cloud and mobile computing and digital platforms are changing how, when, where and why people and businesses access their information. Access to information - from anywhere at any time across technology platforms - demands robust and effective information security (infosec) management strategies and systems which control information access and flow. Our infosec solutions - which empower clients to identify, solve and (wherever possible) avoid internal and external security threats - include:

Cybersecurity

In today's technology-driven environment, organisations face a wide range of complex challenges. As the level of threat from malicious actors grows, businesses – from the largest financial institutions to the smallest emerging start-up – increasingly need to be aware of how exposed their people, data and systems are to an ever-expanding range of cyber security risks. We help identify threats to business as usual and recommend short- and longer-term remedial actions. Our range of cybersecurity services includes:

- Vulnerability assessments and penetration testing (VAPT)
- Open banking framework gap assessments
- Cloud security assessments
- Cyber security solutions
- Red/Blue teaming
- Implementation effectiveness assessments for regulated entities
- Secondments and outsourcing of InfoSec resources
- Dark web monitoring
- Cyber threat awareness

Business continuity and resilience management

Business continuity (BC) is the ability of an organisation to maintain essential functions during, as well as after, a disaster. BC planning establishes risk management processes and procedures that aim to prevent interruptions to mission-critical services and support the reestablishment of functions as quickly and smoothly as possible. We provide end-to-end BC consulting services (aligned to ISO 22301:2019), including plan development, implementation support, testing and maintenance, and on-going support.

Data privacy

Personal data protection legislation has been introduced across the GCC and applies to any entity processing personal data wholly or partly by automated means - as well as the manual processing of personal data as part of an organised filing system. Keypoint's data privacy team has significant data privacy and protection experience, having been engaged on projects related to data classification, end-to-end data process reviews and data life cycles. Our data protection services include:

- Data protection impact assessments and audits
- Development and implementation of data protection frameworks
- Outsourcing of data protection officers

Resourcing

Best-in-class information security (infosec) requires significant resources with unique skills. While some businesses may choose to recruit (and then under-utilise) infosec officers, we have a hard-earned, well-deserved reputation for recruiting and developing consultants with hard-to-find expertise. Our specialised experts are available for for short- and longer-term secondments.

Technology advisory

Technology is the fundamental enabler of transformation and innovation. As artificial intelligence and machine learning become embedded in daily lives, many businesses are having to work harder to remain relevant. Key decision makers need confidence that the services and products they are offering – and developing – appeal to an increasingly fragmented marketplace. Our IT subject matter experts use their broad practical experience and deep industry knowledge to identify 'best fit' answers to increasingly complicated-technology-related questions and challenges.

Our technology advisory solutions include:

Transformation advisory

Businesses across the world are increasingly driven by the need to 'go digital', which can require a significant rethink of business models and strategies. However, going digital can be easier said than done. At the heart of any successful transformation is improved organisational agility - underlining the need to adopt a structured approach to the development of digital services. Our transformation team:

- Prioritises areas for development
- Develops digital strategies
- Costs digital solutions
- Project manages digital implementations
- Measures returns on digital investments

System selections

Because of their sheer size and scale, enterprise applications tend to be complex, scalable, component-based, distributed and mission critical. Our experienced enterprise applications SMEs help clients:

- Identify and validate solutions
- Develop RFPs/RFQs and validate responses
- Identify the right implementation partner
- Identify variances between projected and actual benefits

Strategy articulation

Converting a corporate strategy into a technology strategy - from defining and refining visions to measuring and managing strategic performance – is challenging in an environment of rapid and disruptive change combined with high expectations and tight budgets. Whether transforming (digitally or otherwise), embedding AI into an application landscape or securing deployed technology, our experienced team helps clients articulate and own their technical strategies by:

- Defining future state visions
- Identifying differentiators
- Setting operational objectives and initiatives

Project management

IT projects tend to be dynamic and significant in terms of timelines, costs and resourced required. Effective project management – ensuring work is (and remains) organised and coordinated; establishing an effective, efficient information system; developing and maintaining a project schedule; mapping changes to design and construction; assigning the right resources at the right time to the right challenge; and managing all of the people involved in a project – is a key contributor to project success. Our IT project managers have the required experience and subject matter expertise to support project success.

Technology assurance

From implementation reviews and IT audits to risk management and effectiveness assessments, our technology assurance services give management comfort that their IT systems are delivering expected results while protecting a business' people, systems and data.

Our technology assurance solutions include:

IT risk management

Our IT risk management services - based on the premise that a "best fit" adapts global leading practice to local and sector-specific factors, including regulatory mandates - cover the entire technology risk universe. As well as assessing and documenting current and - where applicable - future risks, we work with clients to design, develop and deploy formal risk frameworks - aligned with COSO and ISO 31000 - that prepare organisations to manage and mitigate a wide range of risks.

IT internal audits

To deliver on its promise, the IT function needs to operate to a design and structure; be effectively resourced; have clear accountabilities and responsibilities; be well-controlled; and have clear performance measures. Our IT internal auditors help businesses assess not just current ROIs but also the return that can – and should - be expected from the IT function. This is done by examining and evaluating an organisation's IT infrastructure, IT applications (such as SWIFT) and policies and operations to determine whether the IT controls in place are aligned with the business's overall goals while adequately protecting corporate assets and ensuring data integrity.

Post-implementation reviews

IT implementations tend to be significant – and not just in terms in costs and time and resources required. 'Go' decisions are often based on promised gains – ROI, efficiencies and others – but those promised gains can become obscured or forgotten over extended timeframes. Our PIRs help key decision-makers understand where and how promised have been fulfilled; detect areas where there may still be work to be done; and – critically – help identify additional benefits that may have missed (or misunderstood) at earlier stages.

Effectiveness assessments

IT metrics are key to making sure organisations proactively address symptoms before they become problems. Business success – particularly for IT functions – combines operational, delivery, organisational and functional excellence. These can be measured using metrics, such as – for operations – online application performance and availability, the percentage of key batch jobs that finish on time and the number of production problems. Our IT SMRs assess operational, solution delivery, organisational, financial and transformational excellence against international benchmarks and 'best fit' leading practice.

Our technology consulting subject matter experts

Senior members of our KITCO team with significant experience in Saudi Arabia include:

Wajdi Al-Jallad
Managing Director
+973 17206880
wajdi.aljallad@keypoint.com

Wajdi has been the managing director of the Keypoint group since it was established in 2006. Under his direction, Keypoint has developed into a firm which provides a wide range of professional business advisory services to a variety of clients across the GCC. A 'hands on' manager, Wajdi is extensively involved in all of Keypoint's services and is responsible for setting up and implementing Keypoint's strategies and operations and for assuring the quality of its services to clients. He fosters close relationships with Keypoint's clients – helping him to develop an unmatched regional network – and has a deep understanding of differing corporate cultures and needs.

Srikant Ranganathan
Executive Director, IT Consulting
+966 50 063 8273
srikant.ranganathan@keypoint.com

Srikant has led Keypoint's IT consulting function since 2017, using the experience gained over the previous 30 years in industry and professional services to develop client-focused solutions across governance, security, advisory and assurance. Having worked across Saudi Arabia for many years, he is currently leading IT-related engagements for the firm across MENA.

As a trusted advisor, Srikant has been consulted by key decision makers across the financial services, government, retail, manufacturing and telecommunication sectors. He has significant experience across business-critical and emerging areas including cybersecurity, business continuity and artificial intelligence (AI).

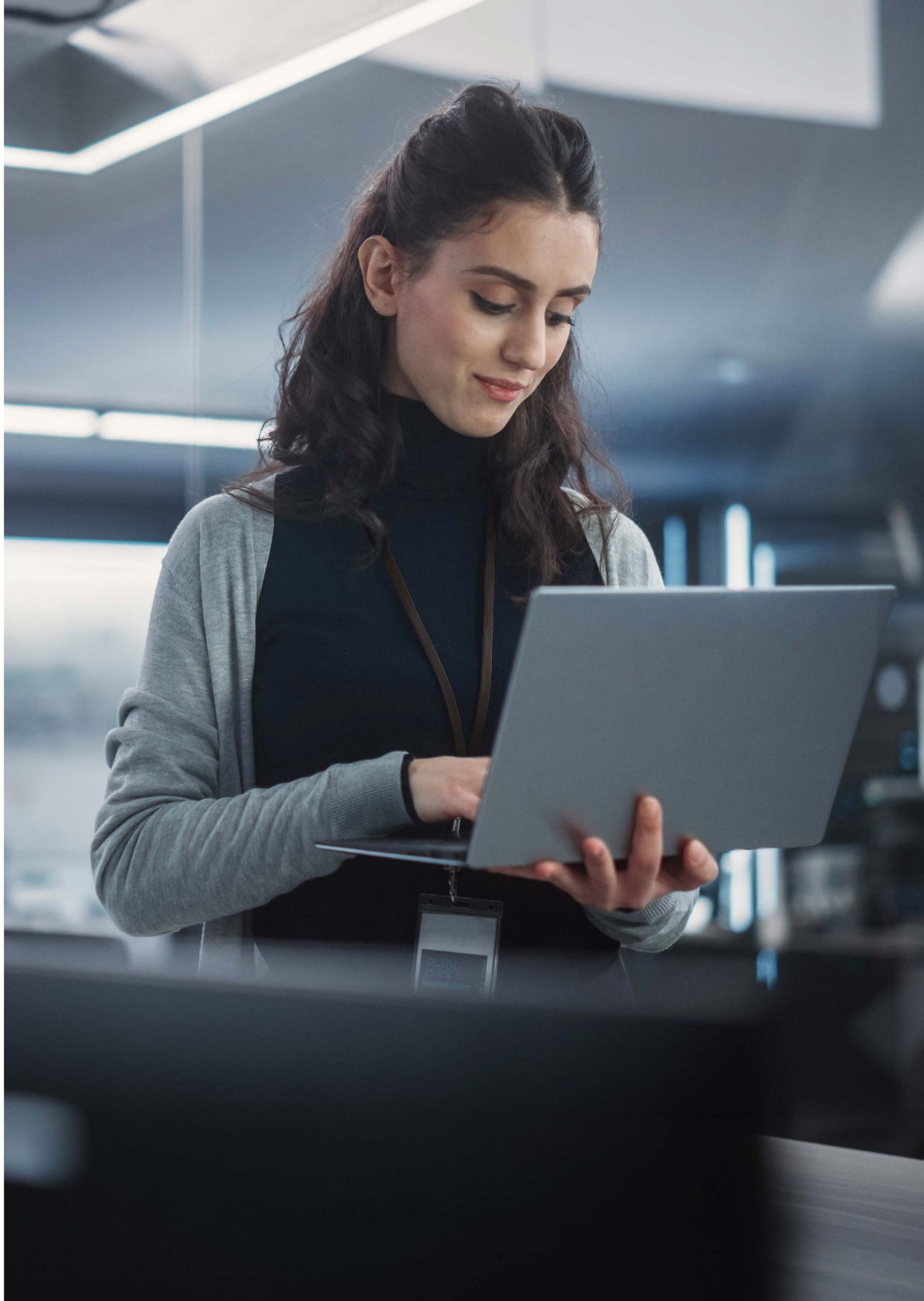
A certified information systems security professional (CISSP), a certified information systems auditor (CISA), a certified fraud examiner (CFE) and a chartered accountant (ACA), Srikant holds a range of other professional qualifications and certifications.

Darrshan Manukulasooriya
Executive Manager
+966 55 260 4027
darrshan.m@keypoint.com

With a background in software engineering, Darrshan set up and now leads a team of experienced professionals that work on digital strategy articulation and development, data management engagements, PCI DSS and ISO 27001 implementations, IT internal audits, IT governance projects, risk engagements and contingency management projects across the region. Widely recognised as one of the region's leading subject matter experts on business continuity (BC) – including by the UK's Business Continuity Institute (BCI (UK)) who named him the Middle East's leading continuity and resilience consultant for 2021 – Darrshan has offered a wide range of consulting services for over 15 years, supporting clients across the Middle East, Africa and in Sri Lanka. He is a committee member of Saudi Arabia's inaugural BC chapter.

Sagar Rao
Executive Manager
+966 55 384 4259
sagar.rao@keypoint.com

Widely recognised as one of the region's leading IT security professionals, Sagar has focused on information security (IS) assessments and IS risk assessments, as well as IT internal audits, for over a decade. He has worked extensively across Asia, including Saudi Arabia, for the last five years, managing over 450 security assessments and over 800 vulnerability assessment and penetration testing (VAPT) engagements. When delivering business-focused technical testing, he applies advanced technical methods to validate controls. A Certified Information Security Manager (CISM) and EC Council: Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH), Sagar is also an ISO 27001:2013 lead auditor with PRINCE2 foundation and ITIL v4 certification.



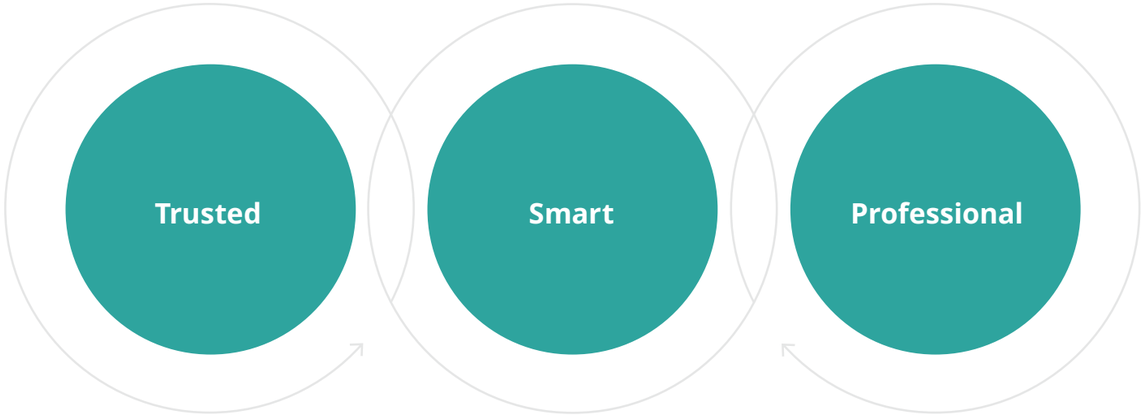
About KITCO

Inspired by the economic and social developments taking place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Keypoint's executive management decided in 2016 to establish two separate businesses (one focused on accounting and tax advisory and one focused on technology consulting) in Khobar – one of the fastest growing cities in the Arab world's fastest growing economy. 2016 was also the year that the first version of Saudi Vision 2030 was released, a transformative strategic framework aimed at diversifying the kingdom's economy while reducing its dependence on oil and enhancing societal and cultural development.

Vision 2030's central objective is to position the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a global investment and innovation hub. Its three central themes – to build a vibrant society in which all citizens can thrive and pursue their passions; a thriving economy where everyone has the opportunity to succeed and that supports economic growth and creates jobs; and an ambitious nation that is committed to efficiency and accountability – are the fundamental drivers of the work we do in Saudi Arabia. As a group that is built on technology and focused on digitalisation, we are deeply committed to Saudisation and the development of local talent – recognising the importance of nurturing national expertise for the long-term growth of the national economy. We are actively recruiting Saudi nationals to help grow local talent. Beyond that, we are committed to supporting the transformative projects that are shaping Saudi Arabia's future, while developing strong local expertise within our local businesses.

Keypoint Information Technology Company (KITCO), registered in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is a non-partner member firm of the Keypoint group, a pan-GCC boutique advisory firm that was established in the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2006.

Our culture reflects our business values:



Reliability, integrity and confidentiality are cornerstones of our business philosophy. Your reputation is our reputation - we take great pride in both.

- We focus on quality.
- We get the job done.
- We communicate effectively.

We love challenges. Working together as a team, we offer fresh perspectives to help our clients stay one step ahead.

- We solve problems.
- We innovate.
- We are responsive.

Knowledge informs, experience guides and creativity helps see around obstacles. We support our clients throughout every stage of their business journey.

- We share our knowledge.
- We apply our experience.
- We value creativity.

We offer our clients the highest level of quality and professionalism. Our comprehensive range of tailored professional business solutions supports commercial success and aligns operations with international leading practice and local regulatory requirements.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Khobar
Office 1101
Burj Al Fardan
7639 Prince Turki Road
2175 Kurnaish
Khobar 34413

Riyadh
Office 193
1st Floor, Building A
Alnarjis View
PO Box 13336
Alnarjis District

Keypoint also has offices in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.