

The background of the entire page is a dark, teal-colored digital landscape. In the center, a human brain is depicted in a wireframe, glowing blue style. It is surrounded by several floating rectangular panels, each containing different types of data visualizations: a bar chart with an upward arrow, a line graph, a table of data, and icons of gears. Below the brain, there are concentric circular lines and a small, stylized human figure standing on a circular platform. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and futuristic, representing the intersection of human intelligence and artificial intelligence/data science.

# The Future of Advice:

How SaaS is  
Reinventing the Global  
Consulting Industry

# Content

1.Executive Summary .....	3
2.A Global Demand for a New Kind of Value .....	5
3.Strategic Deals: Saudi Arabia and the U.S. in a New Tech Era .	7
4.The Cracks in the Foundation – Why Traditional Consulting No Longer Works .....	9
5.The Solution – What is SaS, and Why It’s the Future .....	11
6.SaS in Action – 3 Use Cases Shaping the Future of Consulting..	11
7.The Measurable Impact – A New Equation for ROI.....	13
8.Spotlight – Why SaS Is a National-Level Accelerator for Saudi Arabia .....	15
9.Conclusion & The Next Step with ICG .....	17
10.ICG Expertise .....	19
11.Sources.....	20



# 01 Executive Summary



The Global consulting industry has made a shift. With AI at its peak, there are challenges and opportunities. This shift aims to propel the consulting industry to a \$1.06 trillion valuation by 2025. Traditional models are no longer a part of the race. Modern businesses demand a faster approach. There's no place for slow cycles and long reports.

Clients now demand value with speed at lower rates. Real-time insights are in demand. A PowerPoint deck is no longer a valuable hack to analyze what the next three months will hold. Businesses are no longer willing to spend on static advice.

Here comes the Services-as-Software (SaS). SaS platforms are software systems that ditch traditional consulting with automation, providing 24\*7 insights. They scan markets, analyze competitors, and design strategic impacts even when you sleep. You can drop the manual report and make SaS your digital partner.

It's global. Leaders are switching to SaS. It's a common tool in the US for tracking supply chain risks among retail giants. UAE isn't behind. Their banking systems feature AI-driven dashboards that enable weekly strategy adjustments.

While bigger continents are emerging as tech giants with SaS, Saudi Arabia has a more promising future with it. The model is more urgent in the kingdom.





The KSA is already moving fast under Vision 2030. From tech to tourism, there's no sector left untouched. Building new sectors from scratch has become a new trend in the kingdom. Static consulting won't keep up with the pace. It's high time for decision-makers to move ahead with SaS and ensure much-needed agility.

For instance, project NEOM already has digital partners to monitor sustainability metrics in real time. AI is at its core to analyze investor sentiment and track FDI flows.

This report explains:

- What is SaS and how does it work?
- Traditional Consulting breaking and SaS overcoming it.
- Success stories
- High time for Saudi Arabia to stand on the edge
- Why is ICG a trusted advisor across the MENA region?

While the future holds growth, Saudi Arabia can become a promising present with SaS in the future.





# O2 A Global Demand for a New Kind of Value




Like all other industries, the consulting industry is growing and changing with AI at its edge. Clients prefer real-time insights, real-life examples, and live results. They are no longer sticking solely to external advisors. With AI tools and advanced analytics, clients have internal data teams to explore everything. About 72% of companies have already incorporated AI into their core business functions. SaS possesses a \$1.5 Trillion Opportunity for both Software and Services firms.

## **This shift has changed expectations.**

Adaptive advice is in demand. Leaders demand continuous evolution with real-time advice. Consulting is much more than a static report. While the research with months of input is important, companies don't have enough time to give months in this volatile world. While this should be a continuous solution, it should also be evolving with the right tech in hand.

Companies don't want to pay for billable hours on the old model anymore. It's expensive yet slow. By the time results are delivered, they're often outdated. Clients instead yearn for outcomes. AI has live insights and quick responses. Live dashboards and predictive alerts attract clients. This is where Services-as-Software (SaS) changes the story.



SaaS in the consulting industry has made it tech-driven with 24\*7 services. It has platforms that show live performances and true results instead of some PowerPoint slide decks. With a round-the-clock model, it supports easy decision-making in real time. While the model has gained attention globally, the UK is ahead with its adoption in the retail chains. It's easier to monitor supply chain risks. However, the UAE has always been ahead in fintech with SaS deployed in banking systems to analyze competitor moves and track regulatory changes.

#### **What's in for Saudi Arabia?**

Vision 2030 has changed the oil-based economy of the kingdom to a tech-based economy. This rapid transformation aligns tech at every pace of development. Corporations and ministries demand accuracy and speed. SaS gets it covered. Projects like NEOM and smart tourism need something fast and accurate. SaS can help get diversification metrics, FDI inflows, and ESG targets without any baggage.

SaS isn't relevant anymore; it's critical for economies like Saudi Arabia.



# 03 The Cracks in the Foundation Why Traditional Consulting No Longer Works



While the old model helped corporations in the past, it's no longer workable. Here's why?

## **Mismatch Between Cost and Value**

The hourly contracts are still in use. While traditional firms charge hourly, clients are willing to pay only for the outcomes, not the research and efforts put in. With AI taking over, it's doing everything from research to efforts. Clients are not willing to pay anything extra on a \$500,000 strategy project just to yield a small measurable ROI. The market now operates in a performance-driven environment, not suitable for long-term efforts with little to no returns.

## **Reports Are Outdated on Arrival**

Traditional firms take time to deliver results, and that too in a 90-page slide deck. Some results are no longer effective after months of research. Saudi Arabia has an evolving environment and fast-growing markets. The kingdom needs real insights before it gets stale. Vision 2030 and associated projects require real-time updated data, not monthly or quarterly information.



### **Consistent Quality Across Teams**

Despite AI being a trend, clients stick with individuals for the service quality they offer. It's not about the brand; it's about the efforts and involvement an individual puts into the project. No one tolerates inconsistency in the results, and it's the top reason clients switch advisory partners. It can pose a real risk in high-stakes projects.

### **Knowledge Is No Longer Exclusive**

While there was a time when knowledge was a rare gem, the edge around the proprietary data is fading slowly. Clients now have access to AI tools: ChatGPT Enterprise. They use functional instruments like public datasets and BI dashboards. Instant answers have become a new trend. Saudi ministries and private firms are building in-house analytics teams. They are replacing raw data with real-time information and actionable insights.


### **A Shift Already Underway**

Everyone demands tech-driven partners in this rapidly growing tech world, and so does the Public Investment Fund (PIF). They need someone who can provide dynamic forecasting and real-time strategy. Static PDFs are nothing more than mere written numbers. Even Riyadh SMEs have sidelined the generic reports and are welcoming dashboards.

Traditional consulting is bygone now. It's high time for the industries to work with tech-driven, smarter models.



# 04 The Solution – What is SaS, and Why It's the Future



Services-as-Software (SaS) is a game changer. While static advice had its importance in the past, businesses are bending towards new solutions to receive strategic advice. Long workshops aren't meaningful anymore. Clients' demand for real-time insights via tech.


SaS has now changed the concept of raw data. It provides you with cleaned, ready-to-use data. That saves time, effort, money, and growth.

The services once delivered by consultants are now a core part of SaS. From market analysis to forecasting, it does everything. It's automation to benchmark. The result is strategic advice with smart and fast solutions.

## What Does SaS Include?

As SaS is a tech update, it includes everything tech:

- **Real-time dashboards** - To show you the latest, updated, live performance, market, and internal information.
- **Predictive models** - To analyze and understand the market and come up with the future demand and forecast shift.
- **Scenario tools** - It's a tool that offers you the right choices to expand, launch strategies or products, decide price, or move towards something new.
- **Continuous benchmarking** - It's not limited to a particular industry. So, you get insights about industries and geographies to plan expansion and growth.



Consider a scenario when a Saudi retail brand wants to expand into North Africa. A SaS tool can be a go-to tech for the brand to understand competitor moves, analyze currency volatility, and predict logistics costs. One dashboard, and you get all new, refreshed data with regular updates. No more spending weeks on research for a static report. Pure AI for regular updates and the latest information throughout.

Imagine a fintech from Riyadh that has a SaS platform to track regulatory updates across the Gulf. This tech can help the firm identify red flags, risks, and other compliance issues. It can suggest real-time response strategies with no monthly retainer.

### **What Makes SaS Different?**

SaS isn't like traditional consulting. It does not take weeks/months to collect and process information, the way people do in traditional consulting. Instead, it's an automation that uses artificial intelligence to work 24\*7 and provide real-time results. The machine learning capability makes it learn in real time, analyze data, interpret results, and fine-tune decisions on its own, eliminating human interference.

This shift to eliminate human reliability can be a boon for busy markets. For Saudi Arabia and other high-speed markets, this shift can drive an unseen evolution. Leaders need measurable outcomes, speed to use information, adaptability to new environments, and SaS can deliver exactly the outcome. It's more than just a tool. It's a scale to measure strategy.

According to a recent Statista report, the Business Intelligence Software market in the Kingdom will generate US\$58.7 million in revenue this year. With a CAGR of 3.28%, it will reach US\$69 million by 2030. While Saudi Arabia still has a long way to go, the USA is leading the market with an expected revenue of US\$14.64 billion this year.



# 05 SaS in Action - 3 Use Cases Shaping the Future of Consulting

Let's understand SaS in practice. The following are three different use cases of SaS explaining how it can work in real-world applications.

## 1. Automated Intelligence Platform

Consider a UAE-based logistics company. Uncertainty of transportation delays, supplier uncertainties, and other factors is common. From port delays to geopolitical risks, anything can happen. The analyst team does wonders, but in uncertain times. Here comes a SaS platform.

This automated tool scans over 50,000 sources daily. It can help the company gather live data with satellite images and news feeds. Government alerts and trade data are easily available to the company now. The tool helps flag potential disruption. Anything from an oil price spike in West Africa to a port strike in Asia, this tool alerts in seconds.

### Impact:

- The company can drop the risk mitigation cost by 38%.
- It can be an 80% drop-in crisis response time.
- Early signs and alerts without any human intervention and paper reports.

## 2. Strategy-in-a-Box Service

Another example is for a Saudi Arabia-based manufacturing firm that needs to relocate its operations and become cost-effective. While manual research could take months to suggest the right location, a SaS tool can build a strategic simulation. The platform will suggest 10 relocation options within the MENA region based on local tax incentives, energy prices, labor costs, and logistics access.

It will take a maximum of 48 hours to generate a rank-based list with clear risks and associated costs detailing all regulatory barriers.



#### **Result:**

- Reduced the 10-week effort to 2 days of brainstorming with better results.
- Eliminated the chances of mishaps and a potential \$2 million investment loss.
- Live dashboards and clear data to ensure real-time results and returns scenarios.

### **3. Organizational Health Monitor**

The third instance is for a Riyadh-based fintech startup facing challenges with misalignment and struggling with resource allocation. Poor communication, slow results, and difficult approvals are the common problems for this firm.

A SaaS application can change everything positively. While the tool analyzes Slack messages for better understanding, it simultaneously goes through the CRM notes. Moreover, it understands the email traffic too. The concurrent approach allows real-time solutions with a collaboration score.

#### **Outcome:**

- Instant alerts for workflow breakdown
- A 22% increase in project speed
- Data-backed strategies with strong back-up

SaaS isn't a gut-based system. It's a data-backed, well-trained, intelligent, and rational model that works operationally. From manufacturing to fintech, logistics to healthtech, it has everything covered. Businesses are not only allocating tasks more effectively, but they are also making better decisions, cutting costs, saving time, and generating wealth.

# OC6 The Measurable Impact A New Equation for ROI

Unlike traditional consulting, Services-as-a-Software (SaS) does not involve researching from scratch. It's a well-trained model, fine-tuned on billions of data points. It changes how organizations measure value. It uses previously stored data and researches new data sets, combines both, and results in a faster, cheaper, and continuous solution.

Check Out How:

Criteria	Traditional Consulting	SaS Model
Performance	4-10 weeks	2-4 days
Investment	\$300,000 to \$1M+ per project	\$2,000-\$10,000 for a monthly subscription
Data Depth	Sampled, retrospective analysis	Fresh, New, Continuous, predictive, integrated
Return	Static reports, slide decks	Live dashboards, real-time alerts



It's happening in real time. This is more than a theory. It's live in the market with real-time results.

Imagine a Riyadh-based public-sector agency dealing with a project for mobility planning across the city. If the agency uses a SaS simulation tool, it can analyze and predict traffic, pedestrian flow, and gas emissions across different zones. It will generate results in a few days, maybe within a week, that would have normally taken a few months. Imagine saving almost \$500,000 in advisory costs.

Saudi Arabia is in a competitive pace to embrace digital transformation across industries. To be specific to the retail sector, many multi-brand retailers are eliminating quarterly reports and static slide decks with automated tools and SaS-powered dashboards.

While the old method would have taken three months to generate this report, these three months can be a drastic change for the brand with SaS solutions. Here's how:

- 12% increase in footfall, driven by market trends and pricing changes.
- Fast clearance of dead stock and happy customers with discounted prices.
- 15% reduction in inventory stockouts, driven by real-time demand and sales.
- Decision cycle reduced from 90 days to 24 hours, making store managers instantly respond to competitor strategies and customer sentiments.

SaS tools have eliminated the need for quarterly reports. It has changed the leadership style with an automated system, data-driven decisions, agility, and real-time alerts.

# 07 Spotlight – Why SaS Is a National-Level Accelerator for Saudi Arabia



Vision 2030 has made Saudi Arabia a global icon. It proved to the world that sustainability isn't a tough challenge. The right tech can not only diversify the economy but can also create new industries and lead them. The challenge is rapidly changing industries and making smarter decisions on these changes. While traditional consulting did its best, it's slow, static, and expensive.

## **Services-as-Software Enters the Picture:**

SaS platforms opt for new tech to provide real-time insights. They analyze current scenarios, calculate them with past case studies, opt for tech-driven results, and adapt to change all within a fraction of time. It's perfect for a high-speed transformation of Saudi Arabia.

## **Why SaS aligns with KSA's national goals:**

### **Time-Sensitive Projects Need Dynamic Advice**

Project NEOM is a historical project, and the kingdom is also dealing with other giga-projects like the Red Sea Project and Qiddiya. Traditional consulting and quarterly reports will be expensive and outdated. SaS dashboards are new, updated, tech-based, and proven. It can help in generating real-time data for everything from talent gaps to supply chain risks.





### **AI & Data-Driven Vision**

Vision 2030 and tech projects make Saudi Arabia a visionary nation. The Saudi Data and AI Authority (SDAIA) is aligned with the vision to take the kingdom to the top 15 AI nations worldwide. Artificial intelligence with predictive strategies and digital twin platforms can make this vision a reality by 2030.

### **Local Content Mandates**

As Saudi organizations are expanding, SaS platforms help localize. It can not only integrate Arabic-language UIs but also other language UIs to get place-specific data sources. It can help manage local user controls. A firm can maintain its global quality while meeting IKTVA and Nusuk KPIs.

### **Fiscal Efficiency**

Government entities and ministries are working hard to reduce expenses. SaS tools can be a go-to solution. It can provide real-time, fast, and regular updates for a fraction of the cost. For instance, if an infrastructure agency wants to replace its \$500,000 consulting agreement with a SaS platform, it can update construction KPIs daily. Result - saving almost 70% advisory spend and 5x faster decision making.

### **A New Standard for National Progress**

Saudi Arabia has left no sector untouched. From logistics to education, healthcare to finance, everything is growing with sustainability and tech. The kingdom is on the way to building a better future. SaS tools can ensure strategic decisions at lower expenses.

# 08 Conclusion & The Next Step with ICG



The consulting industry is no longer static. Technology is driving the industry at speed. It has reduced human intervention with promising results. It's easier to get real-time strategic insights without any human error or expensive tasks. Services-as-Software (SaS) has become a new standard.

With Vision 2030 near its conclusion, it's the right time for Saudi Arabia to opt for SaS tools and platforms. Giga-projects like the NEOM and Red Sea Project demand real-time insights. Rapid regulatory changes create urgency for speed and precision. Traditional consulting models aren't enough. Outdated results cannot cope with future challenges.

The trend for reports is long-gone. It's an era of real-time strategic alerts and live data.

Selling advice worked in the past. It's an era of automation. Artificial intelligence makes everything happen. Smart leaders do not wait for others to perform; they find ways to make it happen fast. SaS capabilities are their new tools to operate in real time across industries like logistics, energy, finance, and more.





With ICG as your partner, transformation can be strategic and well-planned. We combine global strategy with local execution. Our experience and collaboration with regulators, offices, startups, and sovereign funds across the Gulf have exposed us to infinite possibilities and strategic solutions.

### Why ICG?

- Proven regional expertise: Across the MENA region, ICG has its value with ministries and industries.
- A trusted innovation platform: The ioi Foresight tool is tech-driven and up-to-date to ensure future signals with curated intelligence to transform Gulf markets at the core.

Are you ready to get on this competitive edge? Partner with ICG now and lead the way. Let's build together this dominant SaS model!

The shift from selling advice to delivering automated intelligence is no longer a future prediction; it is the new competitive reality. The question is not if your organization will adapt, but how.



# 09 ICG Expertise



ICG believed in transformation. We are built to transform Saudi Arabia, expanding to a wider MENA region evolution. With our regional insight and global thinking, we deliver everything from the digital era to local execution and policy foresight.

Our historical evidence to shape the region's future with the most influential players makes us the right partner for your digital growth.

- We supported a G50 telecom giant to reduce costs by 20% by optimizing its global tax and compliance services.
- We advised a top global sports retailer shifting to a direct-to-consumer model with strategic outsourcing, resulting in 30% cost savings and reinvestment opportunities.
- We helped a major multi-brand retailer with a “Zero Ops” IT strategy to enhance their operational scalability.

We have our innovation engine – ioi Foresight to work beyond capabilities.

- It helps Gulf decision makers with policy alerts, market intelligence, and ESG signals.
- It provides SaS-enabled opportunities to industry giants with an investment-ready approach for everything from supply chain to clean energy.
- We host bootcamps and foresight simulations to bring innovators, investors, and regulators together for brainstorming.

We help private and public leaders with future-proof solutions. Join Giga-projects and corporations to take action with tech-driven advice. Let ICG partner with you in your next advisory chapter.





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# Sources



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