



# Media FAQ



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# Global Competitiveness Forum 2010

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The enthusiasm generated by the 9th GCF fuelled a passion for forward thinking that has been carried forward into the 10th annual GCF, with the theme “Sustainable Competitiveness” being chosen as the ideal way to symbolize 2010 as the start of a new decade of thinking.

To deliver sustainable prosperity, the global corporate and public sectors must be attentive to the social, environmental, political, and financial systems in which they are integrally woven. This imperative is reinforced daily by the diverse stresses placed on the foundations of the world’s economic well-being. Achieving sustainable competitiveness has never been a more pressing challenge for Saudi Arabia and other forward-looking nations. Economic growth activities that occur under fair market conditions and that enhance and restore the health of natural and social systems are the essence of Sustainable Competitiveness.

## GCF Background:

The Global Competitiveness Forum (GCF) was founded in 2006 by the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA). It is an annual meeting of top business leaders, international political leaders, and selected intellectuals and journalists, to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



More than a thousand leading global businessmen and women, government officials and academics participated in the First Annual Global Competitiveness Forum in Riyadh, held in November 2006, under the patronage of HM King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz. That year set the tradition of excellent keynotes with a speech titled “ICT as an Enabler of Competitiveness” given by Bill Gates, Chairman of the Microsoft Corporation.



## Vision

An annual program of activities attended by top business leaders, international political leaders, and selected intellectuals that share a common interest in global competitiveness.



## Mission

To formally raise awareness and enthusiasm around competitiveness challenges, and to critically evaluate competitiveness theory and practice as related to International Trade, Regional Development, FDI, Environment, Innovation, Human Resources Development, Sustainability, Globalization, and the Micro- and Macroeconomic consequences of becoming globally competitive.



## Speakers FAQ

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### 1. When will the GCF be taking place?

The GCF will be held on the 23rd to the 26th of January 2010

### 2. Where will the event take place?

The event will take place in Riyadh, the capital city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the Four Seasons Hotel

### 3. Do I need a Visa to attend the GCF?

GCC nationals will not require a visa, however, non-GCC nationals will be required to obtain a visa to travel to the Kingdom.

### 4. How do I obtain a Visa?

For journalists who've received their invitation from Hill & Knowlton, please fill the visa application form attached to the invitation with a colour scanned copy of your passport photo ID page and send directly to them at (email address).

For journalists who are directly registering on the GCF website,

- a. During registration you will be asked if will need a visa, please select yes.
- b. Fill the application form and attach a scanned copy of your passport photo ID page.

To avoid complications with your visa application process, please do not submit visa applications to both Hill & Knowlton and on the GCF website.

### 5. What does 'Country of Origin' mean in the Visa application form?

'Country of Origin' in the Visa application is the location of the Saudi embassy/consulate where you want to collect your Saudi visa.

### 6. Where can I pick up my visa?

You can pick up your visa at the nearest Saudi embassy or consulate, please check [www.mofa.gov.sa](http://www.mofa.gov.sa) for locations. Please contact the relevant embassy or consulate prior to collecting your visa to determine what documents you need to bring with you. Usually you will need to submit your passport and at least two (2) passport photos **NOTE: You will be required to submit your passport so the visa can be inserted. In some countries this may take several weeks. Please check with your local embassy/consulate on processing times and be prepared to be without your passport for that period.**

### 7. What are the requirements for issuing a visit visa?

For a visit visa you will need to send a clear copy of your passport photo ID, where the passport number is clearly visible and a filled visa request form.

### 8. Is there anything I should take with me to the Saudi Embassy?

When going to the Embassy please ensure that your passport has more than 6 months validity and 2 adjacent blank pages. You will normally also need to supply two (2) passport photos. For exact details of the documents needed please contact the Embassy you will be picking up your visa from.



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### 9. Where and when should I submit my visa request?

For, journalists who've received their invitation from Hill & Knowlton, please send your visa request directly to them. For other please complete the visa application during registration. To ensure all paper work completion on time Visa requests must be submitted by 15th of Dec, 2009. Once applications have been submitted you will receive an email confirmation from the GCF or Hill & Knowlton.

### 10. How long will it take to process my visa?

Processing for visa should take approximately 2 weeks time, although this varies from country to country. Please check with your local Saudi embassy/consulate. Be prepared to be without your passport for this time.

### 11. How do I know that my visa has been issued?

After the visa is issued, Hill & Knowlton or the GCF will immediately contact you to give you your visa reference number that you will need when going to the Embassy. You can then collect your visa from your local Saudi Embassy in the country stated in your application form. Please contact the Embassy in advance for documentation required to pick up the visa.

### 12. How long will it take the embassy to place the visa in my passport?

The amount of time that embassies take to process a visa will vary for each embassy, but usually this will take from two days to two weeks.

### 13. What should I keep in mind while travelling to the Kingdom?

While travelling please keep in mind that Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country with its own specific cultural and traditional values. Key factors to keep in mind are:

- When in public, women should at all times wear an abaya – a traditional loose-fitting black robe covering from the neck to ankles and wrists. They should also cover their hair with a black scarf. An abaya will be provided for female speakers at the hotel.
- Shorts and singlets/vests are not appropriate dress for males in public.
- Openly practicing or preaching of any religion other than Islam is not permitted.
- Photography/videography of any government building or installation is strictly forbidden, unless permission has been granted by the Ministry of Information.
- Alcohol and pork products are forbidden in the Kingdom and consumption and/or possession of such is a crime.
- Like most countries, illicit drugs are illegal. The death penalty applies for drug trafficking.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its people are very welcoming, provided you are respectful of local customs and traditions.



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### 14. How can I arrange my accommodation?

After you register on the GCF website, you will be asked if you require accommodation. For journalists who have been invited by Hill & Knowlton, please coordinate with them in this regard.

### 15. Will there be someone to meet me when I arrive at Riyadh airport?

When you arrive at King Khaled International Airport, you'll find a GCF 2010 desk after you exit customs. GCF volunteers will provide any assistance that you may require.

### 16. Are there any restrictions on photography?

In the event venue there are no restrictions. However, a permit is required to take photographs outside the forum venue. This should be done while submitting your visa request. Hence, please state so at the earliest opportunity.

### 17. Will I need a license for photography/filming equipment?

Yes, equipment should be declared while submitting the visa request. You should send a detailed list to with your visa application form stating your filming equipment, type and quantity.

### 18. Will there be a press center at the event?

Yes, there will be a fully-staffed press center at the event, with internet-connected computers, fax and photocopy equipment.

### 19. Where can I get the conference schedule and the speaker list?

The conference schedule, list of speakers and their bios are all available on the GCF website – [www.gcf.org.sa](http://www.gcf.org.sa). Copies of these will also be available in the press pack provided at the event.

### 20. Can I arrange interviews in advance of the event?

Hill & Knowlton will e-mail a list of speakers available for interviews prior to the GCF. You should determine the interviewees required then and send the names to Hill & Knowlton by the 21st of December 2009. Following that Hill & Knowlton will get in touch with you to coordinate a suitable time for the interview to take place.

### 21. I haven't requested any interviews by the said deadline, is there any possibility for interviews?

Arranging for interviews during the event will be very difficult as speakers will have their schedules already set. Hill & Knowlton will be available at the forum venue and will do all they can to help to arrange interviews, but this will depend upon an interviewees availability.

### 22. What press conferences will be held at the GCF?

The list of speakers holding press conference and their timings will be provided prior to the GCF. Copies of the schedules will also be available at the press centre and with press packs.



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### 23. How can I ensure that I receive event press releases and pictures?

All journalists attending the GCF will be e-mailed press releases and pictures of the GCF during the course of the forum. If you are not receiving these please contact one of the Hill & Knowlton team members in the press center. Contact details are listed below

### 24. Are there any additional activities arranged to take place over the course of the forum GCF in addition to the forum?

Cultural activities have been scheduled for the GCF, a complete agenda will be provided prior to your arrival to the Kingdom. The agenda listing all events taking place will also be available on the GCF website.

### 25. Whom do I contact for further information?

For further inquires Please Contact:

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