

# CIPS supports airport operator with key role in Saudi's Vision 2030

## CIPS Procurement Excellence Programme (PEP)

To fulfil its critical responsibilities within Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030 transformation, Riyadh Airports Company (RAC) recognized that its procurement function needed to perform at a world-class level. Choosing the globally respected **CIPS Procurement Excellence Programme (PEP)** as its framework, RAC embarked on a journey to accelerate its procurement maturity. By implementing leading-edge best practices, the function has **optimized its performance and prepared for its pivotal role in multi-billion-dollar airport expansion projects.**



# Centre of attention

Riyadh Airports Company (RAC) manages and operates King Khalid International Airport (KKIA), the main international gateway to the Saudi capital, Riyadh, strategically located to the north of the city. Opened in 1983, KKIA features two parallel runways that support simultaneous operations and high traffic efficiency. The airport handles an annual cargo capacity of approximately 1 million tons through its dedicated Cargo Village and has seen strong passenger traffic recovery post-COVID, continuing its upward trajectory to exceed 41 million passengers by 2025.

KKIA has also sustained excellence in operational performance, achieving 1st Place as the Most Punctual Airport in 2025 and securing 2nd place in the same year. As a core asset under Saudi Vision 2030, KKIA plays a strategic role in enabling Riyadh's transformation into a global aviation, business, and tourism hub.

RAC remains committed to maintaining and upgrading KKIA's infrastructure while expanding services and facilities, working closely with local and global partners and stakeholders to ensure high levels of customer satisfaction across all services and products offered.

For procurement, these objectives had always demanded a focus on continuous improvement, technological adaptation and sustainable practice integration. The kingdom's Vision 2030 strategic plan to diversify and develop the economy, which includes transforming public sector organisations and boosting tourism, put RAC's procurement performance in the spotlight - and sharpened its focus.



## Working at pace

The procurement function knew that the operational excellence and professional development it was aiming for would require a robust solution combining international best practices, comprehensive training and up-to-date resources. The Procurement Excellence Programme (PEP) provided precisely the practical, fast-track framework for improvement it was seeking.

Ahead of the PEP assessment process, a diagnostic exercise highlighted the procurement function's strengths and identified some gaps. The team took the initiative to immediately close these gaps, wisely involving everyone from directors to junior staff, and finding smart solutions where approaches differed between CIPS Global Standards and RAC's company.

With the help of the CIPS Assessor, the team developed its first procurement strategy and first competency framework as well as more robust contract and supplier relationship management procedures and a strategic sourcing process. Details of these improvements were submitted for the PEP assessment alongside evidence of existing good practices.

## Making a difference

With the PEP Award achieved and new ways of working being applied, procurement is more streamlined, consistent and professional, contributing to smoother airport operations and enhanced passenger services. Crucially, given the challenges ahead, the team has confidence that its best practice guidelines will also reduce risks, delays and disruptions.

It cites two simple but significant ways risks are now minimised. The first is an annual purchasing plan for vital equipment such as solar lights for runways which removes the risk of flight delays caused by late deliveries. The second is a new partnership between procurement and compliance to ensure regulations, contracts and company policies are always aligned with new procurement practices.

All the discussions and collaborations behind these improvements have themselves, the team believes, also strengthened the function. Another new practice, resulting from a conversation between a junior buyer and a senior director, brings this home. Every buyer will now, for the first time, automatically be invited to attend site visits on projects they're involved with.

So inspired has the team been by the insights gained and advances made during the PEP process that it has already set its sights on achieving the Silver Award at renewal time.

## The benefits for Riyadh Airports Company

Riyadh Airports Company reports that the CIPS Procurement Excellence Programme has helped overcome several key challenges, enabling it to:

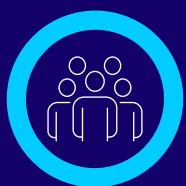
- Strengthen procurement's capabilities and practices to ensure consistency, continuity and safety
- Improve communication and relationships throughout the business and supply chain
- Address gaps in staff knowledge and skills through competency assessments, training and resources
- Enhance procurement's ability to support the company's strategic objectives
- Create a more confident and motivated procurement function
- Give a strong signal of commitment to high-performance to stakeholders, clients and partners
- Benefit from the added value procurement contributes to the business
- Enhance the profile of procurement across the organisation.



**85% increase in process efficiencies as a result of the PEP process**



**Runways: 2 parallel runways, supporting simultaneous operations and high traffic efficiency**



**Passenger Capacity: Up to ~52 million passengers annually (after terminal redevelopment)**



**Terminals: 4 International Terminals (T1-T4), 1 Domestic Terminal (T5), Royal Terminal, General / Private Aviation Terminal**



**Aircraft Stands: 100+ aircraft stands**

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I am grateful for the opportunity to manage the PEP and work with many different stakeholders. Collaborating with such a diverse team taught me how to navigate different perspectives and align everyone toward a common goal. I truly enjoyed working with the CIPS Assessor, whose guidance and support were invaluable throughout the process. The experience not only strengthened my knowledge of procurement best practices but also highlighted the value of teamwork, structured processes, and effective stakeholder engagement ”

Dalia Al-Otaibi  
**Procurement Operations Officer,**  
**Riyadh Airports Company**

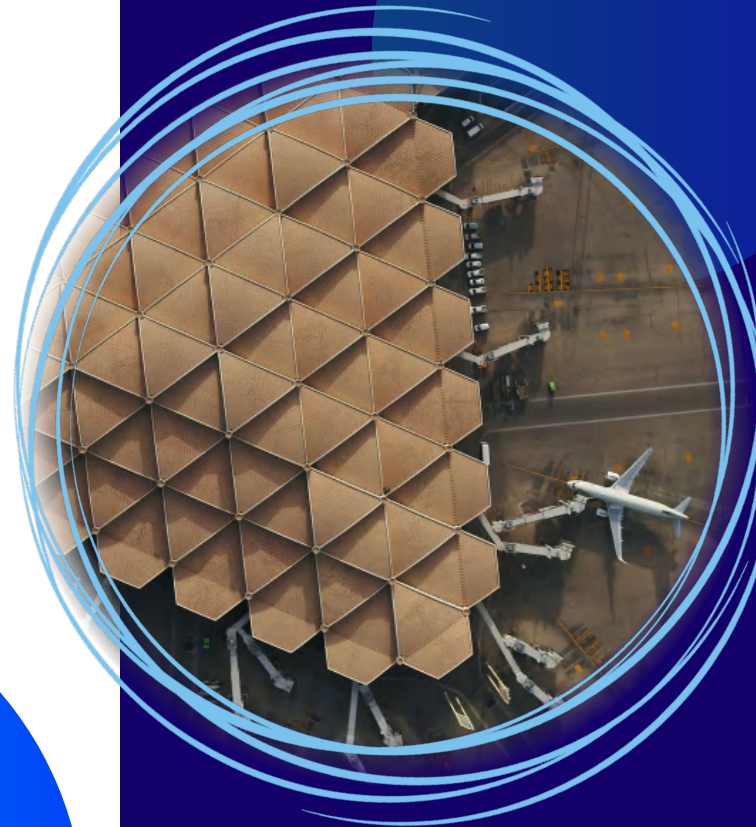
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It was good to see senior, mid and entry-level employees all regularly involved in the PEP process as this meant things didn't get delayed. There was a lot of proactivity. Given the work they were doing and the improvements they were making, they completed the process relatively quickly ”

Ramy Alkaissy  
**CIPS Assessor**

**The CIPS Procurement Excellence Programme is an independent and comprehensive assessment of your procurement team function designed and delivered by world-class, leading experts.**

- Globally recognised award
- Demonstrates how well your procurement function is performing against an internationally recognised standard
- Helps your organisation build a function fit and ready for future challenges



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