

A large yellow dump truck is driving on a dirt road in a mining operation. The background shows a deep, terraced mine pit with other smaller vehicles and equipment. The sky is clear and blue.

The Chile to Saudi Copper Opportunity Playbook

Where Chilean copper expertise fits, which entry route makes sense and how to navigate the Saudi mining market.

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The staffing and HR solutions specialists · People For Tomorrow

THE OPENING

Saudi Arabia Is Building A Copper Industry, Not Just Buying Copper

For Chilean mining companies, the larger opportunity is not a shipment of copper. It is the knowledge, technology and people needed to build more of the copper value chain inside Saudi Arabia.



US\$2.5T

Estimated value of Saudi Arabia's mineral wealth



309

Exploration licences in the dataset issued during 2026



1,205

Exploration licence records in the supplied Ta'adeen dataset



US\$2B

Vedanta's stated plan for a smelter, refinery and rod mill at Ras Al Khair



Saudi Arabia already has a producing copper mine at Jabal Sayid. It is widening exploration, opening geological data and attracting investment in processing. What it does not yet have is Chile's depth of copper operators, technical specialists and mining suppliers.

The opening is not copper from Chile. It is copper capability from Chile.



Four Signs That Copper Is Moving From Intent To Execution

01 Copper is a named priority

Saudi Arabia's Exploration Enablement Program names copper among the critical minerals it wants investors to explore. The same program requires greenfield experience, Saudi talent development and use of local providers.

02 Exploration is being done at scale

The Ma'aden and Ivanhoe Electric venture covers at least 48,500 km² and targets copper, nickel, gold, silver and other strategic minerals.

03 There is already an operating base

Jabal Sayid has produced copper concentrate commercially since 2016 through a 50/50 venture between Ma'aden and Barrick.

04 The ambition goes beyond mining

Vedanta has stated plans for a copper smelter, refinery and rod mill at Ras Al Khair, alongside exploration rights over 1,038 km² in the Jabal Sayid 1 area.

**Saudi Arabia does not yet have a full copper ecosystem.
That gap is the opportunity.**



Chile's Advantage Is Not A Flag. It Is Repeated Experience.

Chile has learned to run complex copper operations at scale, in dry regions, with demanding productivity, water, energy and community constraints. That experience maps directly to problems Saudi projects will face.



No. 1

World copper producer



21%

Of world copper reserves



39

Markets buying Chilean mining services



US \$15B+

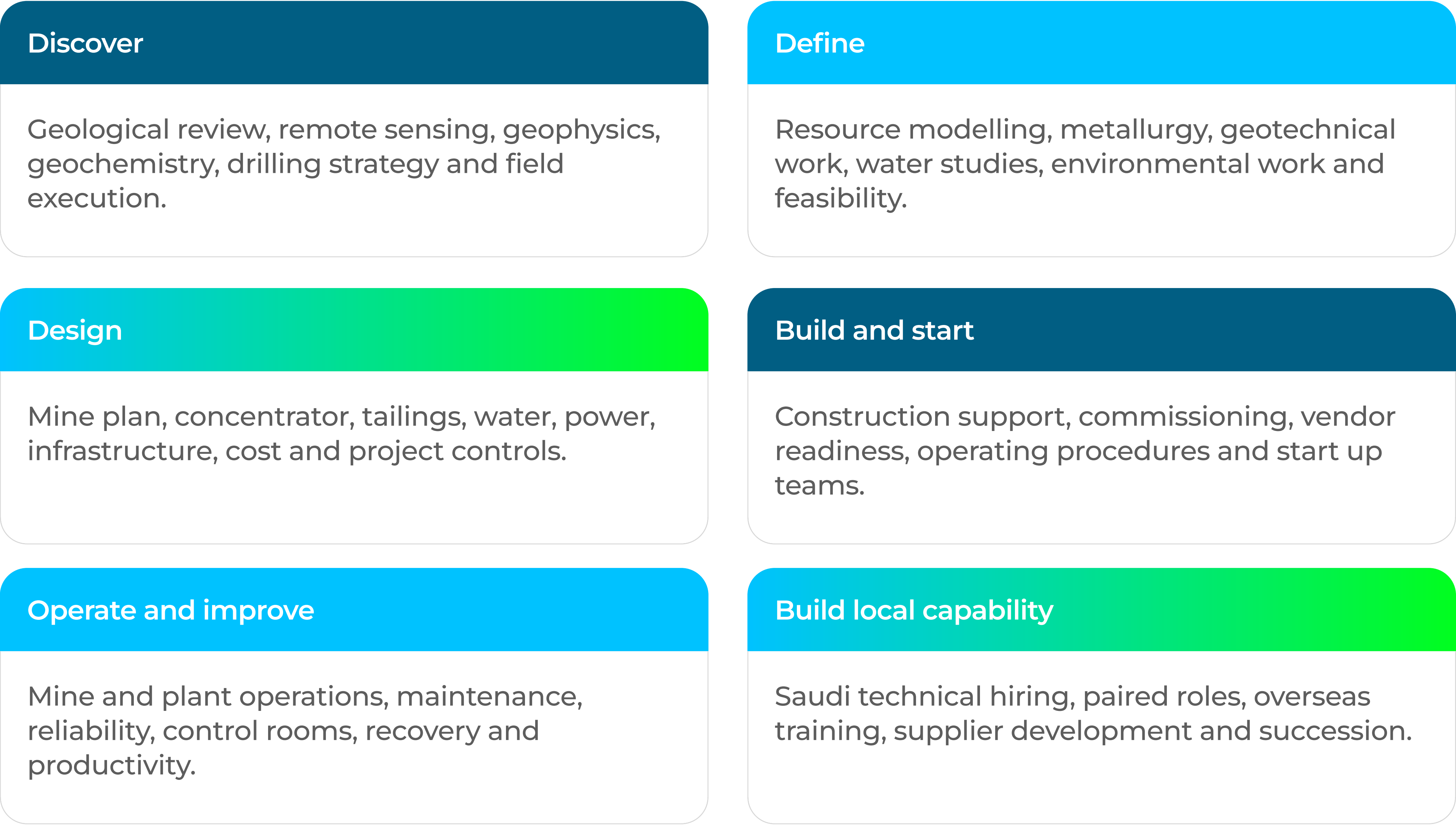
Spent each year by Chilean miners on equipment, services and technology

What Chile can bring, and where it fits

Capability	Chilean depth	Saudi need
Exploration	Copper geology, geophysics, drilling programs, resource models	Underexplored belts and fast moving licence programs
Mine studies	Mine planning, geotechnical work, cost and schedule discipline	Projects moving from targets to economic decisions
Processing	Concentrators, flotation, metallurgy and recovery improvement	A growing need to design and operate copper processing capacity
Water and tailings	Seawater, desalination, recycling and tailings management	Water scarce projects that need practical operating models
Digital operations	Remote control, automation, maintenance data and reliability	New projects that can design digital operations from day one
Supplier depth	Specialist equipment, maintenance, testing and field services	A local mining services market that is still being built

Do not sell Chile. Sell the Saudi problem your Chilean experience can solve.

Where Chilean Capability Can Enter The Saudi Copper Value Chain



The first revenue may come from a study, a specialist or a service package, not a mine investment.

Where Chilean Capability Can Enter The Saudi Copper Value Chain

The wrong starting point is: How do we get a mining licence? The better starting point is: Which route gives our capability a real buyer?

Route	Best fit	Commitment	Main advantage	What must be solved early
Exploration licence	Companies ready to fund and lead exploration	High	Direct access to ground	Technical, financial, environmental, reporting and local capability commitments
Joint venture or strategic partner	Specialists bringing capital, technology or scarce copper depth	Medium	Shared access, local knowledge and risk	Partner fit, governance, ownership and decision rights
Client or supplier contract	Most engineering, technology and mining service firms	Fastest	Revenue without carrying licence risk	Vendor access, local contracting route and delivery readiness
Downstream industrial investment	Smelting, refining, rod, recycling and manufacturing players	High	Position in Saudi industrial growth	Capital, site, feedstock, utilities, incentives and long lead approvals

For most Chilean suppliers, the client or partner route should come before a licence application.

Who Can Actually Open The Door

The Saudi copper market is wider than Ma'aden, and a regulator is not the same as a buyer.
Build an account map around the route you chose.

Account group	What they control	Why they matter	People to find
Ministry and Ta'adeen	Market rules, licences, data and programs	Not a normal sales target	Mining investment, licensing and technical program leaders
Licence holders and exploration ventures	Ground, programs and field demand	Exploration services, technical teams and local setup	Country Manager, Exploration Director, Technical Director, Project Director
Operators and industrial investors	Mine, plant and processing demand	Engineering, operations, maintenance, technology and talent	COO, Mine Manager, Plant Manager, Processing Head, Projects Director
EPCM and study firms	Project design, studies and delivery packages	Specialist subcontracting, studies and project teams	Mining Lead, Study Manager, Project Director, Procurement
Saudi contractors and service partners	Local delivery capacity and relationships	Joint bids, local contracts, field support and vendor access	CEO, Business Development Director, Operations Director, Supply Chain

One government meeting and one Ma'aden contact are not a pipeline.

Ma’aden Can Be A Route Into Saudi Arabia. It Is Not The Only Route.

Ma’aden has used different partnership models to bring global capital, technology and operating depth into Saudi mining. The right approach depends on what the Chilean company can contribute and how much it is prepared to commit.

Supplier route	Technical collaboration	Strategic partnership or JV
Best for equipment, technology and specialist service companies. Register as a supplier, define the operational problem and build internal sponsorship around a relevant use case.	Best for proven technology or scarce copper expertise. Start with a pilot, study or defined work package that can show value inside a Saudi operation.	Best for companies bringing material capital, intellectual property, operating capability or access to a strategic resource. Governance, ownership, risk and decision rights must be clear.

What the existing partnerships show

- Barrick and Ma’aden operate the Jabal Sayid copper mine through a joint venture.
- Ivanhoe Electric and Ma’aden work together on mineral exploration. Ma’aden also uses focused technology and engineering partnerships, not only joint ventures.

THE PRACTICAL RULE

For most Chilean SMEs, the realistic first move is a defined Saudi problem, an internal sponsor and supplier registration. A joint venture should come later, if the opportunity truly requires one.

An Exploration Licence Is A Work Programme, Not A Badge

An exploration licence is for a company prepared to carry exploration risk, fund the work and own the technical, environmental, social and reporting obligations. It is not the default route for a supplier.

How a licence opportunity may be accessed

Ta'adeen application01

Submit applications for eligible sites through Ta'adeen with the required company, technical, financial and environmental information.

Competitive licensing round02

Selected blocks can be released through formal rounds. Round 10 used qualification, online bidding and award stages.

Licence transfer03

An existing licence may be transferred to another eligible investor, subject to Ministry approval and the applicable conditions.

What must be ready

- An eligible Saudi company whose commercial registration includes mining activity
- Evidence of technical and financial capability
- A credible exploration thesis and funded work programme
- Environmental and social impact management plans
- Minimum exploration spend, reporting, data and compliance capacity

LICENCE FACTS AT A GLANCE

Ta'adeen lists a five year term, a SAR 5,000 application fee and a SAR 5,000 issuance fee. The real commitment is the funded work programme and ongoing compliance.



From Chilean Company To Licence Ready Saudi Applicant

Saudi Arabia’s updated Investment Law replaced the old investment licensing step with investment registration. Foreign investors register with MISA first, then complete commercial registration and obtain the approvals required for their activity.

Stage	What happens	Output
Prove the case	Define the Saudi problem, likely buyer, project stage and commercial value before choosing an entity or licence.	Entry thesis
Register investment	Complete investment registration with MISA for the intended activity.	MISA registration
Form the Saudi entity	Complete the company structure and commercial registration needed for the chosen route.	Eligible local entity
Select the mining route	Use Ta’adeen to identify the relevant licence service, live opportunity or competitive round.	Confirmed route
Build the submission	Prepare technical and financial capability, work programme, environmental and social plans and required supporting documents.	Complete package
Complete award conditions	If successful, meet the stated incorporation, registration, guarantee and document conditions within the required timelines.	Licence ready applicant
Operate in compliance	Track committed spend, reporting, data, environmental, social and licence obligations from day one.	Licence in good standing

DO NOT CONFUSE PARTNER ACCESS WITH READINESS

A Saudi partner or Ma’aden relationship can improve market knowledge and commercial access. It does not replace a sound exploration plan, a compliant entity, technical depth or financial capacity.

Use The First 100 Days To Prove The Market Before You Commit Capital

Days 1 to 30 Validate OUTPUT A clear go or no go market thesis Define the exact Saudi problem. Interview operators, licence holders, EPCM firms and experts. Decide whether Ma’aden, another operator, a licence holder or an industrial investor is the real buyer.	Days 31 to 60 Choose OUTPUT One selected route with owners and costs Compare the client, supplier, Saudi JV, Ma’aden partnership, exploration licence and industrial investment routes. Check entity needs, partner fit, supplier registration and live licence opportunities.	Days 61 to 100 Enter OUTPUT A qualified opportunity or application path Secure relevant introductions. Start supplier or partner qualification. Prepare the technical package for a pilot, bid or licence route. Set the capital threshold for the next decision.
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Do not establish a company simply to say you are in Saudi Arabia. Establish it when the route, buyer, economics and regulatory need justify it.

AVOID THESE

Seven mistakes to avoid

01 Leading with Chile credentials

Saudi buyers still need a clear local problem, result and delivery case.

02 Treating one Ma’aden introduction as the strategy

An introduction opens a conversation. It does not create a budget, tender or partnership.

03 Applying for a licence without an exploration thesis

Ground access has little value without the geology, capital and work programme to use it.

04 Choosing a partner only for access

Check capability, reputation, governance, ownership and decision rights.

05 Ignoring environmental, social and local commitments

These obligations belong inside the entry plan, not in a later compliance file.

06 Treating registration as market access

A legal entity allows a company to operate. It does not create demand.

07 Confusing meetings with pipeline

Track buyer, need, budget, procurement route and next decision.

Is Your Chile To Saudi Market Entry Plan Ready?

Opportunity and route

- ☐ Have we defined the exact Saudi problem we solve?
- ☐ Do we know which project stage creates demand?
- ☐ Have we compared supplier, partner, licence and industrial routes?
- ☐ Is there a clear reason to enter now?

Licence readiness

- ☐ Is an exploration licence genuinely the right route?
- ☐ Is the technical and financial capability proven?
- ☐ Is the work programme credible and funded?
- ☐ Are environmental, social, reporting and spend obligations understood?

Industry access

- ☐ Have we identified the right Ma’aden route: supplier, pilot or strategic partnership?
- ☐ Have relevant Saudi SMEs and service partners been mapped?
- ☐ Have local experts challenged the market assumptions?
- ☐ Do we know the next three conversations that matter?

Buyer and demand

- ☐ Do we know the real buyer, user and budget owner?
- ☐ Have we mapped Ma’aden, other operators, licence holders and EPCM firms?
- ☐ Do we understand the vendor or tender route?
- ☐ Is there a qualified next step beyond an introduction?

Saudi setup and partners

- ☐ Is the MISA registration and entity path clear?
- ☐ Does the commercial registration cover the required activity?
- ☐ If a partner is needed, are roles and decision rights agreed?
- ☐ Can the Saudi structure sign, invoice and remain compliant?

THE READINESS RULE

A Saudi market entry plan is ready only when the buyer, route, local entity, licence obligations, partner roles and next commercial step fit together.

Enter Saudi Arabia Through The Right Door

Chilean credentials earn attention. We help identify the Saudi buyer, licence, partner or setup route that fits before you commit.

FREE CHILE TO SAUDI MARKET ENTRY REVIEW

Bring us one Saudi opportunity. We will help identify the most credible route into the market.

- ✔ The right client, supplier, Saudi JV, Ma'aden, licence or industrial route
- ✔ Investment registration, local entity and approval path
- ✔ Licence readiness gaps if exploration is the chosen route
- ✔ Relevant Ma'aden, Saudi SME and industry expert introductions

[REQUEST A CHILE TO SAUDI MARKET ENTRY REVIEW ↗](#)

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