



NEWS RELEASE

# H.R.H. Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Attends Cisco's and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology's (KAUST) Launch of Landmark AI Institute to Accelerate AI Research, Development and Talent in Saudi Arabia

2025-10-29

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Oct. 29, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Energy and Chairman of the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) Board of Trustees, Cisco (NASDAQ: CSCO), the global leader in networking and security, and KAUST, the international graduate-level research university, today announced a significant expansion of their strategic collaboration with the establishment of a cutting-edge AI Institute. This initiative will bring together Cisco's global leadership in networking, cybersecurity and cloud-scale artificial intelligence infrastructure with KAUST's world-class academic research, advanced facilities, and pivotal role in education. The attendance of His Royal Highness underscores the national significance of the initiative in supporting Saudi Arabia's ambitions in research, innovation, and talent development.

Located at the KAUST campus in Saudi Arabia, the Institute will be dedicated to advancing AI research, development and education, representing a major milestone in fostering innovation and developing a highly skilled AI workforce within the Kingdom. Building on more than two decades of collaboration between Cisco and Saudi Arabia — and a shared vision for digital transformation — the new AI Institute at KAUST aims to become a cornerstone for AI innovation in the Kingdom, in alignment with Vision 2030.

"Our long-standing partnership with Cisco has been instrumental in realizing KAUST's vision," said KAUST President, Sir Edward Byrne AC. "Since our inception, we have pioneered a digital-first approach, leveraging advanced technologies to redefine how our campus community connects, collaborates, and conducts research. The new AI Institute is crucial for equipping our students with the vital skills needed for the jobs of the future, directly aligning with the Kingdom's Vision 2030, and

reinforces our leadership in scientific and technological education and research."

"To unlock the promise of AI, we must upskill the workforce to keep up with the rapid pace of innovation," said Chuck Robbins, Cisco Chair and CEO. "AI is poised to unlock groundbreaking opportunities for economic growth, accelerating KSA's Vision 2030. The Cisco AI Institute at KAUST builds on our 25-year partnership with the Kingdom, with a shared vision to ensure everyone can harness AI's limitless potential in Saudi Arabia."

The Institute's agenda will focus on applied research for AI-native communication systems, advanced edge infrastructure for Industry 5.0, including intelligent factories, as well as autonomous mobility and intelligent transport systems. It will also prioritize AI-driven use cases addressing vital public-interest sectors including water, energy, food, and health. Cisco's contributions to the Institute will include the donation of its latest technology, including a Cisco AI POD. This is a modular, pre-validated AI infrastructure solution, a ready-to-go AI "factory" that streamlines the process of building data centers to run complex AI workloads, enabling innovation to happen faster and more securely at scale.

This initiative also aims to develop local AI talent, building on [Cisco's recent commitment](#) to provide free digital upskilling for 500,000 learners in Saudi Arabia over five years through Cisco Networking Academy, focusing on AI, cybersecurity, data science, and programming. This builds on the Academy's strong track record, having trained over 480,000 learners in KSA, with 36% female participation.

The AI Institute is part of [Cisco's Country Digital Acceleration \(CDA\) program](#) that has been a driving force for digital transformation in Saudi Arabia since 2016, delivering 23 high-impact projects across vital sectors like healthcare, education, smart cities, and government services. The Institute will be overseen by a joint governing board comprising representatives from KAUST and Cisco, to provide strategic direction and collaborative oversight.

## **About Cisco**

Cisco (NASDAQ: CSCO) is the worldwide technology leader that is revolutionizing the way organizations connect and protect in the AI era. For more than 40 years, Cisco has securely connected the world. With its industry leading AI-powered solutions and services, Cisco enables its customers, partners and communities to unlock innovation, enhance productivity and strengthen digital resilience. With purpose at its core, Cisco remains committed to creating a more connected and inclusive future for all. Discover more on [The Newsroom](#) and follow us on X at [@Cisco](#).

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## **About King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST)**

Established in 2009, KAUST is a graduate research university devoted to finding solutions for some of the world's most pressing scientific and technological challenges in the areas of food and health, water, energy, environment, and the digital domain. The University brings together the best minds and ideas from around the world with the goal of advancing science and technology through distinctive, collaborative research. KAUST is a catalyst for innovation, economic development and social prosperity in Saudi Arabia and the world. Visit [www.kaust.edu.sa](http://www.kaust.edu.sa) to learn more.

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