

Unsolicited Contracts (Scam)

In recent months, the U.S. Commercial Service in Saudi Arabia has noticed an uptick in the number of U.S. firms receiving unsolicited but seemingly attractive business proposals from scam artists. Perpetrators of sophisticated internet scams use Saudi Arabia's wealth and admiration for American products and services to lure unsuspecting U.S. companies and citizens with "419" type scams (named for a Nigerian law aimed at combating financial crimes). In several instances, the scammers present themselves as working for a Saudi government or reputed business entity that is seeking a potential partner to participate in lucrative government procurement opportunities in the Kingdom. These scammers use in their communications official-looking letterheads, websites, known names of government and business executives, and routine tender/procurement language and procedures to give the impression of legitimacy. Businesses should be particularly wary of unverified Saudi "companies" and/or government entities promising lucrative business deals and demanding staggered payments to progress through a non-existing procurement process. U.S. companies are strongly advised to carefully scrutinize and vet such "offers" and "entities" before making any payments, ship samples, or commit other resources. U.S. businesses should verify the identity of any potential "partner" and the veracity of proposals before committing any resources. If U.S. businesses have doubts about proposals, they are encouraged to contact the Commercial Service office in the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh or U.S. Consulates in Dhahran or Jeddah or the nearest U.S. Export Assistance Center in the United States for assistance in verifying the identity of potential partners and legitimacy of contracts.