SAUDI TRADE · 2024–2025 / INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

Saudi room cooling: the import mix behind the headline

Saudi buyers imported nearly the same dollar value of window and wall air-conditioning equipment in two successive years, while the reported item count jumped. For distributors planning summer inventory, the useful signal is the mix of models selling through each channel.

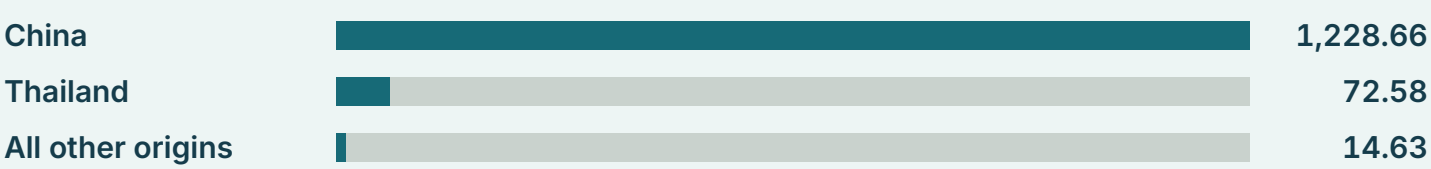
$1.32bn

Saudi gross imports of window or wall air-conditioning machines in 2025



China supplied 93% of Saudi import value

USD million, 2025 • HS 841510



Thailand represented 5.5% of the total. The residual combines every other trade partner. Values may differ slightly from totals due to rounding.

WITS / UN Comtrade — Saudi imports, 2025

EXHIBIT 02 · BUILDING EQUIPMENT

Two measures of the same customs flow diverged

Reported measure	2024	2025	Change
Value (USD million)	1,294.96	1,315.87	+1.6%
Item count (million)	4.16	7.37	+77.3%
Implied USD/item	$311	$178	−42.7%

Implied unit value equals declared import value divided by reported items. Values and changes are calculated using unrounded WITS records.

A shipment can sit in stock through the season

Gross imports capture goods arriving at the border. A distributor also has opening stock, purchases from local suppliers, transfers and closing stock. A seasonal buying plan starts with monthly sell-through by cooling capacity, model and region, then reconciles those sales to inventory and inbound orders.

The average conceals model and reporting differences

Reported items rose from 4.16 million to 7.37 million while declared value grew 1.6%. The implied value per item fell from about $311 to $178. Verify whether shipment records count complete systems or components and whether the model mix shifted before using either number as a purchasing target.

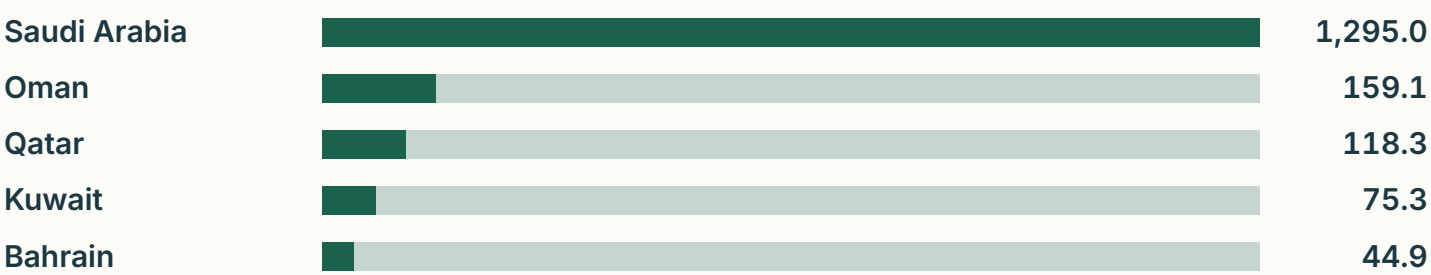
REGIONAL DEMAND SCREEN

Saudi distributor scale changes the stocking decision

Saudi Arabia has the largest recorded import bill in this comparison. Local assembly and retail inventory can make border arrivals diverge from installations. Comparing the same customs line by year and reporter helps locate distribution activity, while capacity-band sell-through determines which models deserve working capital.

Gross imports by reporting market

2024 · USD million · HS 841510



The same annual world-partner query returned five Gulf reporters. It returned no UAE observation for this series. The five values therefore cover a partial region. Cross-border re-exports and domestic production prevent a direct conversion from imports to end-user demand.

What to verify in a second market

Obtain monthly orders, installed selling prices, returns and installer coverage for one model family in Oman or Qatar. Separate distributor stock transfers from final installations. Pay attention to local warranty support when comparing an importer with a manufacturer.

UN Comtrade · Saudi Arabia and Oman UN Comtrade · Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar

BUYERS, SUPPLIERS AND QUALIFICATION

A distributor competes on availability and installed service

Shaker's disclosures describe both an air-conditioning factory in Riyadh and a trading business. That local structure matters. A national import series covers one part of supply, while a distributor's ability to retain a customer depends on stock, installation and service after the sale.

Route	Purchase trigger	Commercial test
Retail and installer network	Fast availability in a popular cooling-capacity band	Compare delivered unit price, installation margin, return frequency and service response.
Project contractor	Handover date, approved model and site-specific efficiency requirement	Confirm the exact model, test documentation, installation scope, spare parts and warranty.
Local manufacturer or distributor	Seasonal mix, capacity and reliable replenishment	Separate local production from inbound finished units. Compare stock turns, lead times and aged inventory.

Conformity follows the model

SASO publishes updated efficiency requirements for air conditioners. Match the appliance type and capacity band to the applicable requirements, product documentation and label. Ask for the registration and test evidence for the model being offered.

Shaker Group · annual report and operating businesses SASO · updated air-conditioner efficiency requirements

COMMERCIAL SENSITIVITY / ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

How much sell-through protects a seasonal order?

A distributor is considering 300 identical units. Assume SAR 1,600 realized at full price, SAR 1,100 on clearance, SAR 1,140 landed cost and SAR 110 per unit for fulfilment and warranty. A dedicated sales campaign adds SAR 45,000 per batch.

Units sold at full price	Realized SAR/unit	Batch contribution · SAR	After campaign · SAR
50%	1,350	30,000	-15,000
65%	1,425	52,500	+7,500
80%	1,500	75,000	+30,000

All 300 units are assumed sold. Contribution = units × (weighted realized price − SAR 1,250 per unit). Deduct the campaign cost once. The prices and order size are illustrations. Financing costs, additional returns and unsold inventory would lower the result.

180 of 300 units at full price

The batch breaks even at 60% full-price sell-through. At 65%, it generates only SAR 7,500 after campaign costs. Upfront inventory alone ties up SAR 342,000 at landed cost. A reorder based on paid installations reduces exposure to clearance pricing.

DECISION AND DILIGENCE

Commit working capital one capacity band at a time

Stable import value can coexist with heavy markdowns on slow-moving models. Build the plan around paid installations, opening inventory and the total cost of a returned unit.

01 Reconcile stock

Start with opening stock. Add receipts and saleable customer returns. Subtract sales, supplier returns and write-offs. Reconcile transfers separately for each SKU.

02 Test the offer

Obtain matched quotes for two models with the same cooling duty. Check energy performance, warranty parts, installer rate and customer lead time.

03 Stage the order

Reserve supply for peak weeks, then release purchase orders against sell-through and lead time. Establish who pays freight on returns and who carries obsolete stock.

A change that warrants another order

A confirmed reorder at the target realized margin supplies better evidence than a distributor’s initial stocking order. Track repeat sales and warranty claims together.

OPERATING IMPLICATIONS

Efficiency changes the installed economics

A procurement comparison should hold cooling output and test conditions constant. SASO distinguishes requirements by appliance type and capacity. For each shortlisted model, match the applicable test and label documentation to the actual model identifier, then compare installed cost, service coverage and energy consumption under the intended use.

DECISION

Build a pre-season purchase plan for the three highest-volume capacity bands. Compare two offers per band using delivered cost, efficiency, warranty service and replenishment lead time. Set reorder points from verified sales and stock.

Method

Saudi Arabia is the reporter, the flow is gross imports and the source series uses HS 1988/92 code 841510. Partner shares use the world total as denominator. Dollar figures are nominal and refer to the customs reporting year.

Scope of the evidence

The code does not identify cooling capacity, efficiency tier, brand, end user, installation charge or inventory position. Product and reporting differences can affect the item count across years. Domestic production and central chiller equipment are outside this import measure.

Source documents

WITS / UN Comtrade — Saudi imports, 2025
WITS / UN Comtrade — Saudi imports, 2024
SASO — Updated AC energy-efficiency standards
Shaker Group · annual report and operating businesses
UN Comtrade · Saudi Arabia and Oman
UN Comtrade · Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar