

KPMG and Microsoft expand global alliance

KPMG and Microsoft have announced two important strategic initiatives that will expand the scope of their global alliance: firstly, to provide clients in Saudi Arabia and around the world with a portfolio of digital solutions, and secondly to enable KPMG's smart audit platform, KPMG Clara – both built on KPMG business experience and the Microsoft intelligent cloud.

The two organizations are establishing the Global Digital Solution Hub, which will leverage Microsoft Azure intelligent cloud services and artificial intelligence (AI) technology with KPMG business experience to help companies transform all areas of their businesses - including finance, operations, customer experience, and insights-driven decision making.

The companies also announced plans to place the new KPMG smart audit platform, known as KPMG Clara, on Microsoft Azure, which will make KPMG the first of the Big Four professional services firms to enable its member firms to conduct external financial statement audits utilizing Azure, a comprehensive, cloud-based platform.

"In our recent 2017 KPMG Global CEO Outlook Survey, nearly half of the CEOs responding expect major disruptions in their sector from technological innovation within the next three years, with more than 90 percent of CEOs surveyed in Saudi Arabia viewing technological disruption as more of an opportunity than a threat," said Dr. Samer Abdallah, Head of Digital Transformation, Data and Analytics, KPMG Saudi Arabia. "Similar technological trends are also projected by the research firm Gartner estimating that by 2020, 30 percent of new solutions will include artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. Creating the Global

Digital Solution Hub re-affirms KPMG's and Microsoft's commitment to develop innovative solutions to address our clients' needs in the digital disruption era. New solutions from the Hub will leverage artificial intelligence, data and analytics, to optimize our clients' business performance, profitability, and growth."

Regarding the importance of the Digital Solution Hub to KPMG member firm non-audit clients in Saudi Arabia and around the world, Satya Nadella, Microsoft CEO, said: "As every industry and every organization becomes digitized, leaders are looking for the right technologies and partners to accelerate their transformation. Working with firms like KPMG, we aim to help customers harness the intelligent cloud

and build AI capability to drive business outcomes and unlock new opportunities."

Of KPMG's commitment to deliver KPMG Clara through Microsoft Azure, KPMG Global Chairman John Veihmeyer said: "As businesses become increasingly digitized and face continued disruption, audits need to continue to evolve with those changes and KPMG is committed to leading digital transformation in the professional services sector. Placing our smart audit platform on the Microsoft Azure cloud and leveraging other Microsoft technologies will accelerate and expand digital capabilities to further enhance quality, consistency and efficiency."

"KPMG Clara will bring more automation to the audit, and reduce the burden on clients around data preparation and delivery. KPMG Clara will provide deeper insights into the audit results, and highlight potential audit risk. This is a significant step towards the real-time audit of the future", Dr. Samer Abdallah added. — SG



Dr. Samer Abdallah