**Government initiative brews business success**

RIYADH: Lateefa Al-Waalan just wanted to make Arabic coffee simple: no more laborious mixing of ingredients and careful attention to boiling.

Supported by a program to foster, or "incubate", technology-based businesses with high growth potential, she developed a machine to produce Arabic coffee at the push of a button — the first of its kind.

In the process, Al-Waalan and her Yatooq company became emblematic of efforts to diversify the oil-dependent Kingdom's economy and employ more Saudis, particularly women.

Yatooq is one success story from the business incubation program, known as Badir (meaning "to initiate"), but it's not the only one.

After hitting the market in 2013 Yatooq has grown to employ 15 people with another 75 on contract.

"The factory is completely run by women," Al-Waalan said at the Riyadh plant where she directs operations from her laptop and telephone in a spartan office.Women handle administrative tasks in an adjoining office while the coffee is roasted and ground on large machines in another room.

Her business was driven by one idea: "I love coffee but it's very complicated. I want to make it simple."

John Mercer, an Australian consultant to Badir, calls Al-Waalan's success story "quite stunning."

Badir helped Al-Waalan create a prototype in its industrial lab and provided legal, accounting and other advice as well as valuable connections.

Traditional Arabic coffee blends the ground beans with cardamom and saffron, giving the liquid a yellowish hue.It takes about 30 minutes to brew in a home kitchen before it can be savored, typically accompanied by dates.

Yatooq's innovation was a type of electric kettle that uses patented computerized technology to brew with consistent quality a ready-made blend of ingredients.

"We wanted to make a machine that you can press a button and then make the coffee without you needing kitchen equipment and so on," said Al-Waalan, 30, who comes from a computer science and information technology background.