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**QATAR 2022**  
WORLD CUP SPECIAL EDITION



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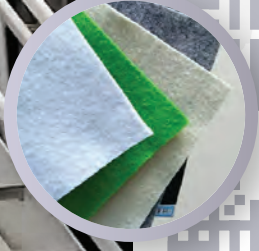




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# THE BUSINESS YEAR: QATAR 2022

**T**he Business Year has charted the course of the Qatari economy for the best part of a decade, including every development since it won the right to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup. As the first Middle Eastern country to host the tournament, Qatar has focused much effort on making sure it not only puts on a good show, but that its legacy extends well into the future. It is in this atmosphere that we carried out research for this publication, *The Business Year: Qatar 2022, World Cup Special Edition*.

Qatar was awarded the World Cup on December 2, 2010. Since then, many changes have taken place, including the peaceful transition of power in 2013 from Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani to his son Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

The country has also undergone solid economic growth. Indeed, following the lifting of a regional economic blockade, the country actually emerged with greater self-sufficiency credentials, especially in food production.

Elsewhere, the population increased from 1.8 million in 2010 to 2.8 million in 2022, and there have been marked improvements in infrastructure, healthcare, and education, as well as the expansion of manufacturing, construction, and financial services. To accompany all these changes, digitalization has become a key

enabler, and Qatar is today one of the most digitalized countries in the region, having been the first to roll out commercial 5G. On top of that, Qatar has become an outstanding hub for aviation thanks mostly to the performance of Qatar Airways.

GDP grew from USD125 billion in 2014 to USD146 billion in 2020. All of this would not have been possible without Qatar's position as the world's second-largest exporter of LNG, with a capacity of 77MTPA, and the future looks bright for Qatar in this regard. Qatar is working to expand its capacity to 110MTPA by 2026, and potentially take this further, to 126MTPA, according to comments made by Saad Sherida al-Kaabi, Minister of Energy Affairs and President & CEO of Qatar Energy. This comes at a time when the West is courting Qatar as an alternative supplier of natural gas amidst a Russian war of aggression in Ukraine.

And with COVID-19 now slipping into the rearview mirror, Qatar is on solid footing to ride the World Cup wave toward the conclusion of Qatar National Vision 2030, a wide-ranging blueprint for economic development and diversification. In 2022, Qatar is expected to grow by 4.9% as per World Bank's estimations and is set to be the fastest-growing economy in the GCC in 2023 and 2024, with 4.5% and 4.4%, respectively. ✖

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the last several years *Qatar* has been busily building roads, railways, hotels, stadiums, and more ahead of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. It hopes that the fruits of its labor will extend well beyond the final whistle.

The Qatari economy is projected to grow by 4.9% in 2022, followed by prints of 4.5% and 4.4%, respectively, in 2023 and 2024, according to the latest report released by the World Bank. Positioned as the largest exporter of LNG in the world, investment in the North Field Expansion project has acted as a catalyst for government revenue. Work there will increase Qatar's liquefaction capacity and production by 64% by 2027. At the same time, war in Ukraine has Western nations knocking on the door, increasing demand for Qatari gas.

Going forward, enhancing diversification is at the forefront of Qatar National Vision 2030, a wide-ranging blueprint for the development of a knowledge-based economy. To achieve its targets, the business leaders we spoke to for this publication are deeply focused on adopting new technologies, while also committing themselves to ESG best practices.

## THE DIPLOMATIC SCENE

Earlier this year, HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani made his first European trip since succeeding his father. There,

he presented the country as a reliable strategic partner and made clear Qatar's willingness to cooperate on technology, agriculture, energy, and more. And while new alliances are established, others are being reinforced. Longstanding ties with the US reached a new zenith as the US designated Qatar a Major Non-NATO Ally, which will enhance the country's role as a regional mediator.

The Doha Forum and the Qatar Economic Forum were held this year in Doha, hosting the world's most influential financial and economic thinkers and policy makers and presenting a platform for dialogue at a crucial period in the region's history.

## COUNTDOWN TO KICKOFF

It has been over 10 years since Qatar was awarded rights to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Since then, Qatar has built a host of infrastructure in preparation for the greatest show on earth. This is the first time the tournament will take place in the Middle East, heaping added pressure on Qatar to get it right. From hotels and stadiums to roads, railways, and more, Qatar has, in the words of John Hammond, "spared no expense." Qatar expects to welcome

between 1 and 1.5 million visitors over the course of the event, generating around USD17 billion for the local economy.

**ENERGY TRANSITION**

The energy transition has become a hot topic at cabinet meetings around the world, with carbon neutrality the eventual goal. Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi, Minister of State for Energy Affairs, has been hard at work expanding energy production with the optimal utilization of local natural resources a priority. And while a range of projects are in the works, special attention has been lavished on hydrogen, biofuels, wind, and solar power. Much of Qatar’s economic future, though, rests on the wealth derived from its hydrocarbon resources. As the minister recently stated, “We need to invest more in the oil and gas sector, and what’s happening today is due to the better revenues that the sector is having and to the legislators understanding that you cannot do transition without having the base covered by investment in the gas business. In Qatar, we started in 2017 and embarked on the largest LNG expansion in the world, increasing production from 77 million tons currently to 126 million tons per annum by 2027.”

**WOMEN IN BUSINESS**

The role of women in politics and the economy is growing gradually in Qatar, a result of policy directed at increasing participation in employment and education. Indeed, a hallmark of any successful, modern nation is the normalization of female participation across the economy. With this in mind, this year’s edition includes a special chapter on female participation. Research in this area was carried out in order to gain a deeper understanding of the role of women within Qatari society and the success of efforts to utilize this key portion of the local population. As part of this research, we held Female Voices and the Qatari Economy,” an event gathering key personalities for a series of panel discussions on the policies and protocols being deployed for success in areas such as IT, education, sports, finance, and health. The event aimed to send a message of how the business community should keep empowering female leaders as entrepreneurs by accelerating their creative process and allowing them to play bigger, more leading roles. The general vision from panelists was that all women need to take action and set the trend for generations to come. ✖

**GDP PER CAPITA (2020)**

SOURCE: WORLD BANK

USD50,805.46

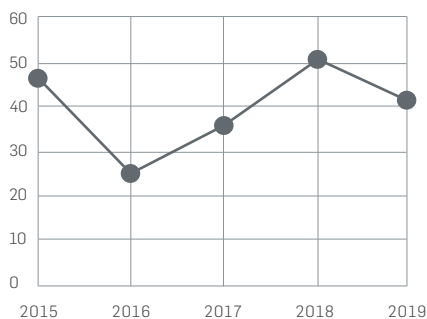
**INFLATION (2021)**

SOURCE: WORLDDATA

2.3%

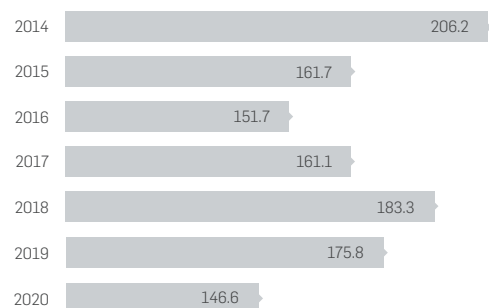
**TRADE BALANCE (USD BN)**

SOURCE: FOCUS ECONOMICS



**GDP (CURRENT PRICES, USD BN)**

SOURCE: THE WORLD BANK



**2021  
OCTOBER 2**

Qatar holds its first ever legislative elections. Two-thirds of seats in the 45-seat Shura Council were up for grabs.

**2022  
DECEMBER 18**

Algeria wins the 2021 FIFA Arab Cup at the Al Bayt Stadium in Qatar.

**2022  
MARCH 24**

The 800-MW Al Kharsaah Solar PV Project, the country's first large-scale solar power plant, becomes fully operational and is set to reduce Qatar's CO2 emissions.

**2022  
JUNE 8**

Qatar Energy selects four international partners for its USD29 billion North Field expansion project, which is expected to increase Qatar's LNG production capacity by 64% by 2027.

**2022  
JULY 5**

Shell invests in Qatar's USD29 billion LNG project, clinching a 6.25% stake as Europe races to secure new sources of energy.

**2021  
OCTOBER 11**

Qatar Petroleum rebrands to Qatar Energy, signalling a commitment to a more sustainable future.

**2022  
MARCH 10**

Qatar is designated a major non-NATO ally, a move that upgrades the partnership between the Gulf state and the US.

**2022  
MAY 4**

The Healthcare Services Law No. 22 of 2021 (the Insurance Law) goes into effect. Health insurance is now mandatory in Qatar for all residents and visitors.

**2022  
JUNE 16**

Qatar Airways posts USD1.5 billion in profits for the 2021-2022 financial year, the highest ever for the national carrier.

**2022  
NOVEMBER 21**

The 2022 World Cup in Qatar kicks off at the Al Thumama Stadium, Doha.





# STRONGER *together*

His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, highlights the need for countries around the world to work together toward peace, security, and coexistence for the benefit of all humanity and future generations.

HH Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani  
AMIR OF THE STATE OF QATAR

The world today has reached a pivotal stage on all political, economic, environmental, and social levels, and this stage requires radical revisions to spare the world from reaching a state of imbalance.

At the level of environment and climate change, non-eco-friendly consumption patterns and rates of irresponsible industrial production are steadily increasing, which may lead to catastrophic repercussions that impact all of humanity and even extend to reach future generations.

At the societal level and peoples livelihood, the social and economic gap among states and within a single society is indicative of a serious defect in the overall economies, especially after the strengthening of the technology sector and its role in the economy and the lives of individuals.

This is in addition to the horrific increase in global poverty rates, the difficulty of accessing the basic necessities of life, and the deterioration into famines in some cases. We believe that social justice is the real shelter for societies, and this requires fair tax policies because the majority of societies cannot dispense with state services.

But we warn against the exclusionary populist voices in a time of societal tensions and economic recession. One of these exclusionary phenomena that have increased in recent years is the phenomenon of Islamophobia.

Regretfully, Islamophobia is not confined only to the forces of the populist right. However, it needs taking a firm and serious stand against it, such as the one witnessed by the world when it took a stand against racial discrimination and anti-Semitism. It is noteworthy here that the accusation of anti-Semitism is now used wrongly against everyone who criticizes Israel's policies, and this impinges on the struggle against racism and actual anti-Semitism.

On the political and security level, it is sorrowful to see a contraction in the political and diplomatic means in favor of military expansion and armed solutions. The militarization of solutions has begun to grow during the last four decades till it reached one of its most challenging peaks in the Ukrainian war.

From here, I emphasize the firm position of the

State of Qatar on the renunciation of violence, intimidating civilians, and assaulting states sovereignty and all other acts that may constitute a violation of human values and international laws. We stand in solidarity with the millions of innocent people and refugees who have been victimized by this unjust war and geopolitical calculations. While stressing this solidarity, I would like in this context to remind of the millions of Palestinians who have been suffering from the Israeli occupation and international neglect for more than seven decades, similarly a lot of other peoples, such as the Syrian people and the Afghan people, for whom the international community has failed to render justice.

This war reveals, beyond any doubt that the formulas upon which the international order was based in the aftermath of World War II and after the end of the Cold War are changing. It is incumbent on all of us, especially the major countries, to take a serious pause to determine the future of the international order and to ask ourselves an important question: What is the shape of the world that we want to bequeath to our children? What is the new era that the current war in Europe, and before it the Coronavirus crisis and other successive crises have proven that we must act to reshape for the benefit of all humanity? Would the major powers answer this question by fighting after competing in the development of new types of weapons? Humanity cannot accept this catastrophic scenario, and there must be other means than the war to get the answers.

For our part, we have chosen a path of rational dialogue that is simultaneously based on balancing common values and interests. We have chosen the path of mediation to resolve disputes by peaceful means. We have an accumulated experience in this field, which we put at the service of peace, stability and just solutions to conflicts.

The new age that we dream of, and that I personally work for, is the era of peace, security, and coexistence for all, the era of social justice, the era in which all people can access their basic needs in education, health, water resources, and living with dignity, and where they can fulfil themselves and exercise their lifestyle and cultures. ✖

**\*Excerpt from a speech given by HH The Amir at the opening ceremony of the 20th edition of Doha Forum, March 26, 2022**







# HOW QATAR FOUNDATION WENT FROM VISION TO REALITY

Qatar Foundation, founded in 1995, located in Education City, fosters numerous scientific research and economic and social development projects to achieve excellence in Qatar.

HH Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser  
CO-FOUNDER & CHAIRPERSON,  
QATAR FOUNDATION

**THE UNTOLD** Stories of Qatar Foundation saw Her Highness, who envisioned and founded QF in 1995 with the support of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, give unprecedented insight into why QF was established and the belief that made it happen. Joined by the central figures in QF's establishment 26 years ago, the panel recounted the plans, challenges, goals, and milestones that lined the path to creating a globally unique ecosystem of education, science and research, and community development.

“Our belief in the success of Qatar Foundation as a project was deep-rooted, despite the challenges and curves that we faced at the beginning of our journey more than 25 years ago,” she said. “In 2005, on the day Education City opened, we promised that tomorrow would be here. And, indeed, tomorrow was made at Qatar Foundation.”

“We never looked at Qatar Foundation's projects, centers, and initiatives as being there to serve a specific geographical area. We thought of it as Arab-Islamic renaissance project, based in Qatar, to promote sustainable development in the Arab world, by creating positive change from an academic, research, and societal perspective.”

Her Highness spoke of how QF's first school, Qatar Academy—established in 1996—was born of two dimensions. “The first came from my role as a mother who had concerns about the education of my children, and the second was national, reflected by our role in the development of society,” she told the discussion, filmed at QF's former headquarters within Ed-

ucation City.

“At the time, I realized we were facing a national challenge related to education, and we needed to make a radical change in the educational system by providing advanced, quality education—based on the logical analysis and rational deduction that were central to previous Arab civilizations and applied in Western civilizations, while at the same time preserving our heritage, language, and national identity.”

“The Qatar Academy project grew and developed, and it was necessary to continue the process of progress by building the components of higher education and a culture of scientific research at QF, in order to support the development of our community.”

“We recognized that every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end, so we started to attract prestigious international universities to Qatar according to the disciplines that met national needs, in order to provide an ecosystem based on creativity and innovation which enables us to cultivate, localize, and reproduce knowledge.”

HH stated that “One of the challenges we faced during our negotiations with international universities was their questions about the academic level of our students. But our belief in human capabilities in Qatar and the Arab region was solid. We knew that if these young people were given the right educational environment and the right opportunities, the world would witness their achievements. And that is what we see today.” ✖

*Extracted from Qatar Foundation Official Portal*

## BIO

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser serves as Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development, a private non-profit organization founded in 1995. She served as the Vice Chair of the Supreme Education Council. She chairs Sidra Medicine and Msheireb Properties. Sheikha Moza works with the UN to support global education and other key areas of development for marginalized children and youth. Since 2003, she has held the role of UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education. In 2016 she was appointed as an Advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2008, Sheikha Moza founded Silatech to address the challenge of youth unemployment in the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond. Sheikha Moza's many honours include the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy and the George Bush Award for Excellence in Public Service. In 2009, she was inducted into the Academie des Beaux Arts de l'Institut de France. In 2007, Sheikha Moza was presented with the Chatham House Award for her contribution to improving international relations. Sheikha Moza holds a master of arts (MA) in public policy in Islam from Hamad bin Khalifa University's Qatar faculty of Islamic studies and graduated from Qatar University with a bachelor's degree in sociology. She has been awarded honorary doctorates by Virginia Commonwealth University, Texas A&M University, Carnegie Mellon University, Imperial College, London, and Georgetown University.

SPOTLIGHT FEATURE  
State leadership



SPOTLIGHT FEATURE

Image: Hassan Zeidi

# LEADING BY EXAMPLE

The strong vision and effective policies of Qatar’s leadership have paved the way for the country to become an example in the region and the world in multiple areas.

**A**mid challenging economic and regional circumstances in the last few years, Qatar has emerged even more resilient and stronger, growing not only economically but also culturally and socially as well. Different state bodies have worked on key goals as part of Qatar National Vision 2030, and the country has seen remarkable achievements across the board. Case in point, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has worked to promote the growth of investments in various sectors as part of its mission to diversify income sources and increase real added value from priority sectors. And even as all eyes turn to the FIFA World Cup 2022, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy is already looking beyond to help the country forge a path toward becoming a leading sports hub in the region and even the world. Closer to home, QNL has focused its efforts on boosting local community development and increasing efforts to help Qatar become a cultural and knowledge hub. Likewise, the efforts of the Ministry of Municipality and Environment has seen Qatar make significant progress in securing its national food security strategy and boosting local internal supply chains.

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Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al-Thani  
MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

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Hassan Al Thawadi  
SECRETARY GENERAL, SUPREME COMMITTEE FOR DELIVERY & LEGACY

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Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kawari  
MINISTER OF STATE & PRESIDENT, QATAR NATIONAL LIBRARY (QNL)

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Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Subaie  
MINISTER OF MUNICIPALITY AND ENVIRONMENT



Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al-Thani  
**MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

**QATAR** has adopted a set of preventive measures to safeguard the health of all members of society, to enhance the resilience of our state’s economy and to help the private sector overcome the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic measures include a QAR75-billion stimulus package for the private sector, exempting food and medical commodities from customs duties for a period of six months, as well as sparing industrial projects from paying the rent of their lands and electricity fees for a period of nine months. These efforts have reflected positively on Qatar’s GDP, which grew by about 4% in the second quarter of 2021. The real gross value added (GVA) of the oil sector increased by 0.7% in the second quarter of 2021, in parallel with a significant rise—6.2%—in the contribution of non-oil activities. In its latest reports, the World Bank projected that the Qatari economy would grow by 3.2% in 2022.



Hassan Al Thawadi  
**SECRETARY GENERAL, SUPREME COMMITTEE FOR DELIVERY & LEGACY**

**OUR JOURNEY** to Qatar 2022 started in 2010, so the pandemic was not the defining moment of our journey to the tournament by any means. The pandemic was our biggest challenge though, and three years on, the world seems to be getting back to a new norm. With the global vaccine rollout taking effect in many countries, and travel confidence returning to many consumers, we are confident we will see many football fans travel to Qatar later in 2022. Given our record-breaking global hospitality and ticket sales, much of which hit the market for fans mid-pandemic, it is looking certain we’ll see some good crowds in Qatar for the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab world. We continue to be extremely diligent and work hand-in-hand with Qatar’s Ministry of Public Health, WHO, and FIFA to make ensure this year’s tournament is a safe one for everyone involved.



Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kawari  
**MINISTER OF STATE & PRESIDENT, QATAR NATIONAL LIBRARY (QNL)**

**SINCE** its inception in 2017, QNL has been on a mission to preserve the nation’s and region’s cultural heritage and enable citizens to positively influence society by creating an exceptional environment for learning and discovery. From its architecture to the interior design, facilities and services, QNL perfectly embraces both traditional and modern elements. Over the years, QNL has become a melting pot for various cultures convening together as one, for the common purpose of education and knowledge sharing. It is the regional hub of knowledge, research, and access to Islamic history and culture. With a wide variety of events and workshops taking place throughout the year, the library is one of the most visited places by knowledge seekers, new residents, students, and researchers. QNL caters to all expatriates by offering a myriad of blended learning opportunities that are interest specific. While QNL develops innovative programs to boost knowledge, promote learning and amplify research studies, it also provides innumerable opportunities for community members to learn more about Qatari and Arab culture.



Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Subaie  
**MINISTER OF MUNICIPALITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FOOD SECURITY** initiatives contributed to Qatar’s leading position in the Arab world in the global index for 2021. The ministry praised the waste treatment and recycling projects, rehabilitation, and management of transfer stations, projects for planting green food using treated water, producing concentrated feed, fresh fish, and fresh shrimp, as well as an integrated program for food waste, as well as the initiative to enhance the capabilities of research stations and agricultural laboratories. There are initiatives in the field of urban planning, including the development and implementation of an integrated national plan for infrastructure at the state level. The ministry has and will continue to implement the national food security strategy according to what is planned and hoped, pointing out that significant progress has been achieved in the pillars of that strategy, which include local production, internal supply chains, foreign trade and logistics, and strategic warehousing.



The Amiri Diwan  
government  
complex in Doha.

**TOTAL QATARI AID TO  
THIRD COUNTRIES  
DURING COVID-19  
(PUBLIC AND PRIVATE,  
UNTIL AUGUST 2020)**

SOURCE: TBY RESEARCH

**USD88,660,928**

**AID DESTINATIONS**

SOURCE: TBY RESEARCH

**78 countries,  
WHO, Gavi, Unicef,  
UNHCR**

**PILLARS OF QATAR'S  
NATIONAL VISION 2030  
PROGRAM**

SOURCE: TBY RESEARCH

Human development

Social development

Economic development

Environmental development



Image: Erika Cristina Manno





# Diplomacy

## THE HALLS OF POWER

**Q**atar has become accustomed to being outward facing, whether acting as a mediator or courting suitors to its vast natural gas reserves. Its wide-ranging Vision 2030 blueprint, too, envisions Qatar front and center on the world stage, with ever-strengthening strategic alliances.

Qatar's current account surplus has allowed it to project power efficiently in recent years. In recent figures released by the Planning and Statistics Authority, the trade balance hit a surplus of QAR36.6 billion in May 2022, up 120.1% on May 2021 on the back of increased gas exports.

On the diplomatic front, Amir Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has been a busy man in recent months, visiting Iran, Turkey, and the UAE, followed by a diplomatic tour of Europe. Much of the diplomatic hustle and bustle was aimed at securing greater energy cooperation with Europe

amid Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine. Qatar strives for greater investment in its LNG infrastructure, while also seeking the rescue of the Iran nuclear deal.

On the latter issue, Qatar is working closely with the US, with which it has developed pragmatic ties in recent years on a range of issues, including US diplomatic interests in Afghanistan. As Michael Schreuder, Deputy Chief of Mission of the United States of America for Qatar, acknowledged, "The US Embassy in Qatar is proud to celebrate 50 years of the US-Qatar relationship, which has broadened and deepened in recent years on a variety of fronts, including trade, education, humanitarian assistance, and defense and security cooperation. In January, the Amir visited the United States and met with President Biden, who recognized our partnership with the designation of Qatar as a major non-NATO ally." ✖

# BILATERAL *success*



Jean-Baptiste Faivre  
AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE  
TO QATAR

Capitalizing on its strong relations with Qatar, the French Embassy is fully committed to supporting the country in all fields including security, defense, culture, community engagement, and so on.

**France-Qatar relations go back to 1971. How has the Embassy keep enhancing the bilateral co-operations within both countries since then?** My mission is to build excellent relations between our two countries which are strategic partners. I am very pleased that this is being achieved. President Emmanuel Macron made a successful visit last December that allowed our two heads of state to have a friendly and in-depth exchange on all topics. We are pleased that His Highness the Emir was able to visit France on a working visit a few days after President Macron's second term in office begins. This has been an opportunity to further deepen the exchanges between our two countries. I would also like to point out that the former minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, has visited Qatar three times in six months. During the strategic dialogue, which took place at the end of March 2021 at the level of our ministers, a clear road map for our relation has been designed. Our Minister of Home Affairs, Gérald Darmanin, also came on a visit to open the MILIPOL 2022 fair trade together with his Qatari counterpart. Many visits of Qatari officials have also taken place in France. Since 1971, bilateral relations have developed in a significant manner. France was there, side by side with Qatar, since the beginning. In 2022, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of our bilateral relations, and I am proud to see what we have achieved together in all areas.

**How aligned is the French Embassy in Qatar with Vision 2030?**

The protection of the environment has been recognized as a key priority at the international level. This issue is a challenge for us all. Climate change and sustainable development is also a very important area of our bilateral cooperation with Qatar, which we are very much looking forward to developing. In this regard, the French Embassy is promoting a collaborative approach between our two countries' authorities and companies. For example, the Ministry of Municipality and the French Embassy organized a bilateral conference on circular economy and solid

waste management in March 2021, which allowed to present and share our respective complementary experience in sustainable urban development. The French Embassy, together with the Qatar Green Building Council (now called Earthna) and the Doha Institute, also organized a conference on coastal cities and climate change on the occasion of the Qatar Sustainability Week. The conference was organized with a team of international and local experts, who provided important insights into both the science of climate change and the necessary adaptive strategies regarding Qatar and other regions' coastal cities. It is a concrete example of a topic on which we can reflect and think about together.

**Which strategies are determined to bolstering cooperation in the field of energy?**

Qatar has become the largest LNG exporting country and recently launched the biggest LNG project worldwide. France is proud to contribute to the development of the energy sector in Qatar, notably through the long-term relationship of French companies with the State of Qatar, whether in gas, oil, electricity production and, increasingly, in the field of renewable energies. In this field, Qatar has implemented projects to curb air pollutants and reduce CO2 emissions. French companies contribute to projects related to sustainable development and are committed to share their expertise to support Qatar's national vision of developing a knowledge-based economy.

**Can you elaborate on the plans for French-Qatari relations this year?**

The World Cup 2022 will be a key event, and we look forward to standing next to our Qatari friends to make it a success. The French Embassy is fully committed to supporting Qatar in all fields: security, defense, culture, community engagement, and so on. We are also looking at more long-term cooperation, and the strategic dialogue was precisely designed for cooperation in the longer run and to identify long-term projects and partnerships that could be implemented together. ✖

**BIO**

Jean-Baptiste Faivre has been Ambassador of France to Qatar since September 2021. He was previously the Middle East and North Africa deputy director of the French MOFA from 2017-2021; minister-counselor at the French Embassy in Algiers from 2012-2017; head of the Middle East Department at French MOFA from 2009-2012, political counselor at the Permanent Mission of France to the UN in New York and head of the Middle East and North Africa section from 2006-2009; political counselor to the French Embassy in Beirut from 2002-2006, and central administration (Middle East and North Africa Directorate), French MOFA from 1999-2002. He holds a National Order of Merit (2017) and Honor Medal of Foreign Affairs (2006, silver).

# exchange OF EXPERTISE

Spain's long history with the Arab world and close ties between the two royal families have resulted in exceptional bilateral relations between Spain and Qatar.

Belén Alfaro  
AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN TO QATAR



## What is your overall assessment of the Spain-Qatar relations?

Relations between Spain and Qatar have been excellent since their establishment in 1972 and have progressed further since the opening of the respective embassies in 2003. In 2021, Qatar hosted two ministerial visits from Spain. The one in September was led by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, and the EU, José Manuel Albares Bueno, who held meetings with the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani. Moreover, in the last few months, Qatar and Spain have signed multiple bilateral agreements, including an Agreement on Cultural Cooperation and an MoU in the field of youth and sports. In addition, tourism between our two countries has resumed; since the re-opening of the borders in July 2021, more than 5,000 Qatari residents have been able to visit Spain.

## How would you describe the economic relations between Qatar and Spain? Which sectors are best positioned for cooperation?

Qatar is a strategic partner of Spain. Our bilateral trade was about EUR1.3 billion in 2019, though in 2020 bilateral trade dropped around 43% because of COVID-19; however, once the economy recovers, bilateral trade will continue on its traditional upward trend. Spain depends on foreign energy supply, and Qatar is one of its leading suppliers of gas. Spanish exports to Qatar are well diversified, featuring machinery and mechanical appliances, clothing, electric and electronic devices, and equipment and furniture. In the area of direct investments, Qatar's capital investment stock has registered steady growth in the last few years, and the Qatar Investment

Authority (QIA) has made important investments in Spain. By way of illustration, QIA holds stakes as relevant as the one in Iberdrola, with an 8.6% share of its equity. We can also find equity holdings in Colonial, Marina Port in Tarragona, W Hotel in Barcelona, Intercontinental Hotel in Madrid, and even a small share of Banco Santander in Brazil, among others. There are four sectors with current opportunities for investing in Spain: private healthcare, renewable energy, the food industry, and real estate sector, not only in Madrid and Barcelona but also along the Mediterranean coast. Spanish companies are at the forefront in sectors such as digitalization, green economy, energy, culture, sports, and infrastructure. Therefore, they are in solid position to contribute via their know-how in the fields of sourcing, development of agriculture, livestock, digital transformation, and environment in Qatar.

## How are Spanish companies getting involved in Qatar's main projects in the road to achieve Vision 2030?

We recognize Qatar National Vision 2030 as a landmark initiative, showing how Qatar is facing the upcoming challenges of the decade and beyond. Given our historic partnership, our institutions welcome such an undertaking and regard it as an opportunity to expand our abundant common interests. Spanish enterprises can accompany this effort in two ways, firstly by attracting Qatari investments in sustainable economic sectors. In 2021, QIA stands as the second-largest shareholder in the Spanish Stock Exchange, investing in key sectors of our economy. Second, Spanish companies are leaders in renewable energy, sustainable tourism, and other sectors in the Qatari market prioritized in Vision 2030. At the moment, there are already

more than 200 Spanish companies established here and many more that will be able to support Qatar National Vision 2030. Such partnerships will help enhance the qualitative goals of the vision.

## How is the empowerment of women taking shape in Qatar?

Spain is committed to working for a better world for girls and women. Spain works in the multilateral arena and on a bilateral basis to exchange good practices. In this regard, Qatar sets an example in the Arab region as it features the highest percentage of women in the workforce. Moreover, Qatari women represent around two-thirds of higher education graduates. These statistics reflect the engagement of women in education and in the workforce. ✖

## BIO

Belén Alfaro is a member of the Spanish Diplomatic Service and has been Ambassador to the State of Qatar since 2018. She was also ambassador at large for the UN Alliance of Civilizations and for Intercultural Dialogue, Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2011-2018; minister counselor, Mission of Spain to the UN in New York from 2006-2011; political coordinator for the General Assembly and the Security Council, chair of the EU Committee of Political Coordinators, representative for MENA region affairs, and senior counselor at the Directorate General for Foreign Policy with the Middle East and North Africa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2004-2006; deputy head of mission of the Embassy of Spain to Pakistan from 2002-2004; counselor, permanent representation of Spain to the EU in Brussels from 1997-2002; and counselor for the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, counselor at the cabinet of the Vice minister for the EU at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1993-1997; among other positions.

## INTERVIEW



Graciela Gómez García  
AMBASSADOR OF MEXICO  
TO QATAR

## MORE *to be done*

Qatar is currently Mexico's fourth-largest commercial partner in the Middle East, but there is potential to do much more in several up-and-coming sectors.

### BIO

Graciela Gómez García is a career diplomat with more than 30 years of experience. Since 2019, she has been the Ambassador of Mexico to Qatar, the first woman to serve in this position. Prior to this, she was deputy consul general of Mexico in Boston for six years. Her professional portfolio encompasses various positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico City as well as diplomatic postings in Switzerland and the UK. She holds an MBA in international relations from El Colegio de México, a master's in diplomatic studies from the Diplomatic School of Madrid, an MPhil in European studies from the University of Cambridge, and a specialized diploma in intelligence and national security.

**How does the embassy enhance the promotion of trade and investment relations between both countries?**

Qatar and Mexico are natural partners whose economies are complementary. There is great potential to build on our competitive advantages to increase trade, investments, and joint ventures.

The embassy plays a pivotal role in two strategic areas: economic intelligence in terms of identifying opportunities based on demand and competitive advantages and providing analytical information about how to conduct business in Mexico; and connecting business communities and enhancing dialogue between entrepreneurs, investors, and innovators. We encourage and support trade missions and the presence of Mexican exporters in Qatari fairs and exhibitions. In 2021, bilateral trade recovered some of its pre-pandemic dynamism, reaching a value of USD157.4 million, a 29% increase compared to 2020. Qatar is currently the fourth commercial partner of Mexico in the Middle East, but there is potential to do much better. During the first trimester of 2022, three trade missions have taken place both ways. In March, agro exporters from the state of Querétaro visited Doha, and few weeks later, a high-level business delegation headed by Mexico's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marcelo Ebrard, fulfilled a comprehensive agenda of meetings with Qatari entities and private counterparts in sectors such as construction, agriculture, energy, technological innovation, and investment funds. We are already working on a comprehensive program for the rest of the year.

**Which sectors are prominent for the promotion of a sustainable commercial exchange?**

Qatar and Mexico are transitioning toward fully-fledged knowledge-based economies. The challenge is to further promote trade in well-established sectors while encouraging opportunities to innovate and weave alliances in areas yet to be explored. I foresee Mexican exports of high added-value agricultural products and advanced manufacturing continuing to grow in the future. There is ample room for highly specialized services in priority areas for Qatar, such as cultivation techniques in arid zones, organic agriculture,

water treatment, clean energies, e-health, and logistics. Qatar is constantly on the lookout for cutting-edge service providers in areas ranging from architectural, industrial, and scientific design to information technology that could be fulfilled by Mexican companies. We are also looking into direct flights between Mexico City and Doha, which will contribute to increase tourism, business as well as closer relations between our societies.

**What benefits will a bilateral agreement on agriculture between the two countries bring?**

The agreement is the expression of our shared determination to improve cooperation for the benefit of our respective populations. The objective is to promote food security and strengthen collaboration between Mexico and Qatar in areas of mutual interest such as agriculture, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture. It takes into consideration that food and agricultural production; trade and research are common priorities and aims to guarantee that agricultural and livestock producers in our two countries have access to sustainable resources in a global market. Once subscribed, this agreement will contribute to achieving the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 and its food security program.

**The Embassy expects tens of thousands of Mexicans to visit Qatar as part of the FIFA World Cup 2022. Which role does sports play in on your diplomatic vision?**

Mexicans love football and our fans are on the top five worldwide in terms of tickets bought for the World Cup. The large majority of the expected 80,000 fans might not be familiar with the Middle East's cultural and religious context. Their first visit to Qatar is a perfect occasion to experience its hospitality and its traditions as well as an opportunity for Mexicans and Qataris to learn about each other. We want to join forces with Qatar on building a legacy that can live on in 2026 when Mexico, together with Canada and the US, will host the FIFA Unity Cup. We are also working on an ambitious program to showcase our artistic and musical heritage, gastronomy, and tourist destinations so that Qatar and the world can learn more about Mexico and hopefully visit it soon. ✖



# Sunrise over Qatar National Museum



Image: Hasan Zafar

**FOCUS**

Major non-NATO ally

# FOREIGN FRIENDS

The White House has labeled Qatar a “major non-NATO ally,” laying the foundations for a wave of new defense cooperations between Doha and Washington, DC.

**IN MARCH 2022, US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN** recognized Qatar as a major non-NATO ally (MNNA), by issuing a presidential memorandum. The MNNA status is granted to foreign states that have “exceptionally” close ties with the US despite not being a NATO member. The designation became official during Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani’s state visit to the US, when the Amir of Qatar became the first leader from the Middle East to visit Washington since Biden’s election. The US President praised Qatar’s exceptional assistance in joint military operations as well as its role as a mediator to deescalate military standoffs and tensions in the region.

President Biden said the designation marks the importance of Doha-Washington ties, adding that the MNNA status for Qatar was “long overdue.” Hopefully, the renewed defense alliance will stabilize the region in these challenging times. “The world today has reached a pivotal stage on all political, economic, environmental, and social levels, and this stage requires radical revisions to spare the world from reaching a state of imbalance,” the Amir of Qatar had previously observed.

Although the US and Qatar have always had close ties, strengthening their alliance makes sense in the wake of Russia’s military adventure in Ukraine, which has jeopardized the West’s energy security. Qatar is the world’s leading natural gas producer with a wide array of liquefaction plants and a fleet of gas tankers. Therefore, Qatar is Europe’s best bet for avoiding a frosty winter in 2022, as it can deliver large amounts of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Europe to make up for Russia’s cut. However, designating Qatar as a major ally is primarily because of the country’s geopolitical importance in a volatile part of the world. Qatar hosts the largest US military presence in the Middle East, with 11,000 American soldiers currently stationed in Al-Udeid Air Base outside Doha. The base also hosts the headquarters of US Central Command Forward and the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing. Since 2003, Doha has spent over USD8 billion on the maintenance and upgrading of Al-Udeid Air Base.

The US describes the security cooperation between the two countries “indispensable to supporting US military operations throughout the region.” The two countries have already inked a number of defense deals, building upon the 1992 Defense Cooperation Agreement that laid the foundations of defense cooperation between Doha and Washington by allowing US forces to be stationed in Qa-

tari military bases.

Other notable defense agreements between Doha and Washington include the General Security of Military Information agreement in 2012, a major defense cooperation in 2014, and the sale of USD2.8 billion worth of defense articles in 2016. Now that Qatar is officially an MNNA, cooperation will be even greater. The designation has symbolic value as a gesture of trust; however, the memorandum issued by the White House also specifies the potential relaxing of the Arms Export Control Act in Doha’s favor, which means Qatar will soon be able to purchase state-of-the-art American weaponry and ammunition as well as enjoy access to the defense surpluses of the US.

Qatar will now enjoy preferential access to American defense equipment, among other benefits. “As a MNNA state, Qatar will have the option to conduct cooperative research and development projects on defense equipment and munitions with the US, and private companies in Qatar will be eligible—as companies in NATO countries are—to bid on contracts to maintain, repair, or overhaul US military equipment,” explains R Clarke Cooper, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.

The recognition of Qatar as a strategic regional partner by the US will also pave the way for future cooperation between other US allies and Doha. Members of the EU, in particular, are excellent candidates for future defense cooperation. In 2021, Qatar aided the EU with the evacuation of EU nationals from Afghanistan after the fall of Kabul.

The EU, in return, has shown interest in playing a bigger role in maritime security in the Gulf region. Over the last few years, the EU has increasingly come to the conclusion that “there is a strong link between what happens outside of the EU’s borders and security within Europe. In a rapidly changing world, security challenges have become more complex, multi-dimensional, and fluid.” In February 2022, the Council of the European Union concluded that the EU should extend its coordinated maritime presence to the Gulf region.

If this happens, Qatar can be a reliable partner for European forces, just as it has been a crucial ally for the US. As Qatar continues its ambitious military modernization program, partnership opportunities with allies such as the US and the EU will be a welcome development for the country’s armed forces. ✖



# spreading THE WEALTH

The US Embassy in Qatar is looking forward to higher levels of investment, trade, education, humanitarian assistance, security, and defense with a new and larger embassy in the country.

Michael J. Schreuder  
ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF MISSION,  
AMERICAN EMBASSY IN QATAR



**In 2022, Qatar and the US celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of ties. How would you define this anniversary?**

The US Embassy in Qatar is proud to celebrate 50 years of the US-Qatar relationship, which has broadened and deepened in recent years on a variety of fronts, including trade, education, humanitarian assistance, and defense and security cooperation. In January, the Amir visited the US and met with President Biden, who recognized our partnership with the designation of Qatar as a Major Non-NATO ally. In further recognition of the importance of this relationship, President Biden nominated Timmy Davis, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and the former Consul General in Basra, to be the next US Ambassador to Qatar.

**An estimated USD110 million will be invested in the local economy and approximately 1,200 third-country nationals will be employed during construction of the new US Embassy. How will this represent a new resilient platform for diplomacy in Qatar?**

During our 20 years in the current US Embassy compound in Al Luqta, the US' relationship with Qatar has strengthened. The new diplomatic compound will reflect that growth, giving us more space to best accommodate the staffing resources to advance our common interests in investment, trade, education, humanitarian assistance, security, and defense. In line with US sustainability goals as well as Qatar's National Vision 2030, the new US Embassy compound will be an eco-friendly facility. The project is designed to achieve LEED Silver certification by the US Green Business Council. It will meet rigorous energy-saving and sustainability standards and take advantage of the local climate to reduce energy usage. This careful design will reduce the

compound's environmental impact and enhance the surrounding space.

**What have been the major strategies to enhance investments in the education sector and translate them into a mutually beneficial human capital development?**

We are pleased that despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, educational cooperation continues to grow through professional exchanges like the Fulbright program. In 2021, Qatar Foundation's Education City institutions received US Fulbright Scholars for the first time, and the program expanded in 2022, with Qatar University also hosting a Scholar. We hope to facilitate an additional three US Fulbright Scholar exchanges to Qatar within the next year. Separately, Fulbright Specialists have recently been placed at Qatar National Library and Qatar University's Center for Law and Development. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education will host a Fulbright Specialist later this summer, as well. In tandem with our strong partnership with Education City, we seek to increase enrollment by Qatari students in universities across the US. We value our partnership and university engagement via support and collaboration on programs like EducationUSA and through US university engagement in events like University Expo Qatar, which will take place on September 19-20 in Doha. These educational exchanges broaden our people-to-people ties and contribute to the strengthening of our bilateral cooperation in areas such as health, law, environmental sustainability, infrastructure, education policy, and library science.

**What are your expectations for the development of partnerships between US and Qatar for the upcoming years?**

The US Embassy facilitates trade and investment ties that go both ways. We stand ready to grow US jobs by supporting US manufacturers and service companies in growing their business via exports. For Qatari companies, we also welcome the opportunity to work with Qatari businesses to facilitate and develop commercial partnerships and joint ventures with US companies, as well as to promote Qatari investments into the US. US companies are already providing technical expertise, project management, equipment, and construction services to Qatar's multitude of ambitious projects, such as the North Field LNG expansion and the FIFA Men's World Cup build out. In the future, we aim to foster even more US participation in such projects as Qatar moves forward in fulfilling its 2030 National Vision. ✖

#### BIO

Michael J. Schreuder has been serving as the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission in the US Embassy Doha since 2020. He graduated from Western Michigan University and began serving as a foreign service officer soon after graduation. His foreign service career has spanned across the Middle East and Latin America, having served as a consular officer in Bogotá, economic reporting officer in Mexico City, a student of the Arabic language in Tunis, a reporting officer on the Palestinian economy and Gaza humanitarian issues in the US Consulate General in Jerusalem, a counter-narcotics program officer in Bogotá, political and economic section chief in the US Consulate in Jeddah, and deputy political and economic section chief in Montevideo. In Washington, D.C., Schreuder served as the Oman and Qatar desk officer and the Arabian Peninsula Affairs' Senior Advisor on the Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA).



# MANATEQ

## A SUSTAINABLE FOUNDATION FOR QATAR'S ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION



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## Economy

# ECONOMIC MOMENTUM

**Q**atar is one of the fastest-growing economies in the Middle East. After emerging from a four-year economic blockade and the COVID-19 pandemic, the country is now more self-sustaining and committed to diversification than ever before. Many even argue that these events were in fact beneficial, paving the way for a more sustainable economic horizon.

And this really is Qatar's year. After years of build up, the FIFA World Cup 2022 is only months away. The event is expected to attract over 1 million spectators, generating significant revenue and helping to put Qatar on the map.

Nasser Al Khater, CEO of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, notes that since Qatar was awarded the event in 2010, the country has posted an average GDP growth rate of 4.5%. In fact, government officials predict a USD17 billion boost to the economy from the event alone. According to the World Bank's latest report, GDP is projected to increase 4.9% in 2022.

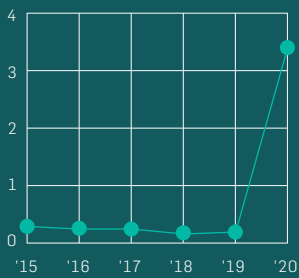
Revenue estimates for the 2022 budget come in at QAR196 billion (USD53 billion), an increase of 22.4% YoY. Much of this, it can be assumed, will be reinvested in infrastructure and public works,

always a win-win for a country with growing regional ambitions. Indeed, while Qatar continues to invest in its hydrocarbons sector, with a specific focus on its North Field gas reserves, it hopes the recent renaming of Qatar Petroleum to Qatar Energy signals a significant-enough change in mentality to ensure a gradual energy transition moving forward. Medium term, Qatar is committed to both UN Sustainable Development Goals and its role as one of the largest suppliers of LNG and other natural gas products, especially in the wake of global energy insecurity caused by Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine.

Anticipating increased foreign investor interest, Qatar has seen fit to improve its regulatory environment. During an interview with TBY, Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al-Thani, Minister of Commerce and Industry, stated that "Qatar is working on reforming legislation to incentivize foreign direct investment and issue additional laws that would stimulate the participation of the private sector in development projects across vital sectors, including tourism, health, industry, and other sectors that would support the growth of the national economy." ✖

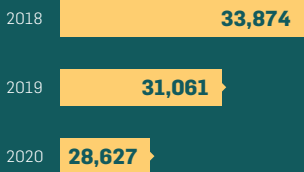
## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

SOURCE: STATISTA



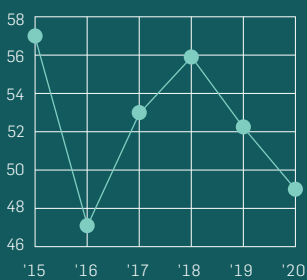
## FDI STOCK (MN USD)

SOURCE: LLOYDS BANK



## EXPORTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES (% OF GDP)

SOURCE: WORLD BANK







The Qatar Economic Forum 2022, held on June 20 in Doha, was a who's who, featuring heads of state, global CEOs, and leading investors



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Hamad bin Qassim  
Al-Thani  
MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

## POSITIVE *reflection*

To further support the Qatari industrial sector and enhance its contribution to the national economy, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry has developed a Manufacturing Strategy as a roadmap for manufacturing industries up until 2030.

**To what extent has Qatar managed to recover its pre-COVID-19 main economic performance indicators, and how are these expected to evolve over the course of 2022?**

Qatar has adopted a set of preventive measures to safeguard the health of all members of society, to enhance the resilience of our State's economy, and to help the private sector overcome the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic measures include a QAR75-billion stimulus package for the private sector, exempting food and medical commodities from customs duties for a period of six months, as well as sparing industrial projects from paying the rent of their lands and electricity fees for a period of nine months. These efforts have reflected positively on Qatar's GDP, which grew by about 4% in the second quarter of 2021. The real gross value added (GVA) of the oil sector increased by 0.7% in the second quarter of 2021, in parallel with a significant rise—6.2%—in the contribution of non-oil activities. In its latest reports, the World Bank projected that the Qatari economy would grow by 3.2% in 2022. The private sector specifically has made great progress in the local development and manufacture of new products—notably penetrating market shares for food and beverage (F&B) and consumer goods, which were previously met exclusively by imports. Self-sufficiency in the F&B manufacturing sector has contributed significantly to Qatar's in-country value (ICV). Moreover, Fitch Solutions, a subsidiary of Fitch Agency, revised its 2021 current account forecast for Qatar from a 3.3% GDP surplus to a surplus of 4.1% of GDP, a significant indication of the recovery of the Qatari economy. It also forecasts that Qatar's current account surplus will stabilize at 4% of GDP in 2022, as a result of a record rise in the visitor count to the State due to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ tournament.

**What are some of Qatar's main advantages for industrial investments?**

As part of its efforts to support the industrial sector and enhance its contribution to the national economy, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry created Qatar's Manufacturing Strategy (2018-2022) to lay out a road map for manufacturing industries up until 2030. Qatar has promoted the growth of investments in the industrial sector by launching a number of significant reforms and initiatives, including: developing and facilitating the procedures for establishing companies and industrial establishments through the Single Window services and the Ministry of Commerce & Industry's website; stimulating foreign investment in strategic manufacturing sectors by facilitating investor access to financing and simplifying the associated approval process; launching a manufacturing capital investment fund and encouraging the availability of alternative financing mechanisms such as venture capital, equity crowdfunding, peer-to-peer business lending in addition to other incentives and benefits; a long-term forecasting program to determine Qatar's needs for manufacturing talent on an annual basis so that manufacturers will continuously benefit from local talent in Qatar to build durable and competitive companies; enhancing the ease of making initial investments and doing business by making key laws and regulations or their real-world application more investor friendly; attracting major international companies to Qatar to invest in flagship projects in strategic manufacturing sub-sectors such as plastics products, 3D printing, pharmaceuticals, and extreme environment infrastructure solutions; and expanding Qatar's preferential trade regime through the negotiation of new FTAs to improve access of our manufacturers to international markets. The industrial sector is expected to witness

significant growth following the implementation of the Manufacturing Strategy initiatives. The contribution of the manufacturing industries increased by 1.4% to reach about 8.67% during the first six months of 2021, compared to 7.3% during the same period in 2020.

**How is the non-hydrocarbon economy expected to evolve in the short term?**

In recent years, Qatar's non-oil sector has continued to grow. Its GDP contribution increased from 52% in 2018 to about 66% by the end of 2020. The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has adopted world-class practices to increase Qatar's ease of doing business—specifically with regards to industrial land allocation and the establishment of manufacturing operations. This is in addition to the state's efforts to establish logistics facilities such as the Hamad Port, Free Zones, and Special Economic Zones. The manufacturing sector is expected to continue to undergo further expansion as an outcome of various ongoing strategic initiatives, as indicated by the increase in the contribution of manufacturing to the GDP from 7.3% in the previous year to 8.7% in the first half of the current year. The manufacturing sector was also among the fastest to recover following the recent economic downturn—demonstrating an improved ranking from seventh in 2020 to fourth in 2Q2021 among the various sectors in terms of its GDP contribution. Based on all of these positive indications, we expect the manufacturing sector's growth and momentum to be sustained in the coming years.

**What would be your overall assessment of the economic and social progress made by Qatar owing to the hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup?**

Undoubtedly, Qatar's organization and hosting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ has had a vital, significant role

in promoting economic growth and diversification in the nation. Since the beginning of this journey, Qatar has been keen to launch initiatives that support the urban planning and economic diversification sectors. This global event will contribute positively to Qatar's economic landscape by attracting local and foreign investments and ensuring the economic growth of a number of vital sectors such as trade and tourism, as well as promoting the expansion of sports' contribution to the economic sector.

**What sectors and projects are expected to sustain Qatar's growth pace after the World Cup?**

The Second National Development Strategy (2018-2022) pays great attention to the national economy diversification in order to achieve the goals set by the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030), aimed at transforming Qatar into an advanced country capable of achieving sustainable development. The projects implemented within the framework of organizing and hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ support the State's journey toward achieving its strategic and development goals in the coming years. Qatar is working on reforming legislation to incentivize foreign direct investment and issue additional laws that would stimulate the participation of the private sector in development projects across vital sectors, including tourism, health, industry, and other sectors that would support the growth of the national economy. It is estimated that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ will attract more than one million visitors, thus leading to projected international tourism revenues of QAR67 billion in 2022, compared to QAR31 billion in 2021. Moreover, the National Tourism Sector Strategy aims to attract 5.6 million visitors to Qatar annually.

**What are the Ministry of Commerce & Industry's main priorities in 2022?**

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry seeks to diversify income sources and increase the real value added from priority sectors, especially non-oil ones, as well as raise Qatar's non-oil exports in 2022. The Ministry is also working to remove all obstacles to Qatar's business environment and to develop it further, as well as provide significant incentives to enhance investment in the manufacturing sector. Additionally, the Ministry seeks consolidating the role of the private sector in achieving the economic prosperity of the State of Qatar. ✕

**BIO**

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Hamad Bin Qassim Al-Thani was appointed Minister of Commerce & Industry in 2021. He currently holds several high positions in Qatar, including as a member of the Supreme Council for Economic Affairs & Investment and chairman of the board of directors of Al Rayan Bank, the Qatar Stock Exchange, the Advisory Board of the Investment Promotion Agency, and the Qatar Financial Centre Authority. He is also a member of the boards of directors of the Qatar Investment Authority and Qatar Energy. Throughout his extended career, he held several other key supervisory positions such as deputy governor and vice chairman of the board of directors of Qatar Central Bank, chairman of the board of directors of the Qatar Financial Markets Authority, and deputy chairman of the board of directors of Qatar Development Bank. Prior to that, he held the position of director of the risk management department at Qatar Central Bank until 2012. He also served for five years as the secretary of the personal representative of His Highness the Amir for follow-up affairs.





Saleh bin Mohammad Al-Nabit  
PRESIDENT,  
PLANNING AND STATISTICS  
AUTHORITY (PSA)

## FORWARD *outlook*

One of the main ways PSA works in coordination with ministries and various stakeholders in Qatar is to formulate and implement the country's strategic development goals.

### BIO

Saleh bin Mohammed Al-Nabit is President of PSA. He was minister of development planning and statistics between 2013 and 2018. From 2011-2013, he was secretary-general of the General Secretariat for Development Planning, and from 2008-2011, he served as director of institutional development at the General Secretariat for Development Planning. He also contributed to the development of QNV2030 and the National Development Strategy 2011-2016. The president of the Permanent Population Committee, he holds a PhD in development economics from the University of Bradford and an MBA from Saint Louis University.

How is PSA coordinating with ministries in Qatar on the implementation of the foreseen objectives on the National Development Strategies (NDS)?

The mandate of the PSA is premised primarily on coordination and cooperation in all aspects of its national functions with all stakeholders in Qatar including ministries, the private sector, and civil-society organizations. Coordination and cooperation are pivotal to the fulfillment of PSA's role as the body responsible for setting and developing the comprehensive vision of the state and the national development strategies, in close coordination with the relevant authorities. Some of the major roles of PSA involve preparing NDS, following up on their implementation, supporting the planning process in government agencies, and establishing an integrated statistical system. One example of the main ways on how PSA works in coordination with ministries and various stakeholders in Qatar in the process of formulation and implementation of the country's strategic development goals based on the experience from Qatar's Second National Development Strategy 2018-2022. PSA set up an organizational structure with well-defined roles and tasks that guaranteed wide participation and buy-in of the national stakeholders, including representatives from the government and private sector and civil society. For the purpose of monitoring and follow-up, PSA developed in-house monitoring and follow-up system to ensure that strategic projects and programs are implemented and that relevant corrections and adjustments are made to achieve the strategic goals of NDS. All follow-up and evaluation reports are then submitted to the Council of Ministers and shared with the relevant implementing government agencies.

**“Qatar Statistics app is important in terms of enabling users to get more engaged with Qatari society.”**

What is the rationale behind the roll out of the Qatar Statistics app, and what is the response in terms of users?

This advanced smart mobile application Qatar Statistics is available for free download on different types of devices running Android and iOS operating systems. It is an important step that came in conjunction with the start of field visits for Qatar Census 2020. It played an important role for all users who responded to it extensively to register in order to complete the data of Qatar Census 2020 electronically in an easy, fast, safe, and practical way without the need for face-to-face interviews to register families and individuals in the country. The application is completely related to PSA statistical work, as it contains various periodic data issued by the statistical departments in PSA in terms of indicators, figures, and survey results. In addition, it is easy to conduct statistical comparisons for the selected topics over several years. It also has the ability to share many data through social media and e-mailing platforms, as well as sending them to others through state-of-the-art means of communication. The Qatar Statistics application displays statistical data in a smooth, non-traditional interactive way, such as foreign trade statistics and the data of a comprehensive set of Qatar maps. It allows users at any

time to directly contact and communicate with PSA, in case they have any inquiry or data request. Furthermore, the application sends alerts to users when data is updated or new data is issued, which makes it interactive. The application has the functionality to display monthly statistics along with statistical charts. It also enables users to see different new publications and news regarding monthly statistics. Users can follow regular updates to get the latest demographic, economic, social, and environmental statistics. Qatar Statistics app is important in terms of enabling users to get more engaged with Qatari society. It helps users to increase the knowledge about the country. Currently, we have around 10,000-12,000 downloads of the application, of which 88% is from Qatar. The response rate of the application is positive overall, and the initial response rate was quite high.

#### **What role will PSA play in maintaining Qatar's economic momentum in the aftermath of the World Cup?**

The importance of a well-developed statistical system emerges from the need to respond to new national development priorities arising from the changing national and international development priorities as well as the implementation of Qatar National Vision 2030 to transform Qatar into an advanced society capable of achieving sustainable development by 2030. The potential sources of data available for statistics are expanding with new technology and new means of harnessing big data and other non-traditional data sources. To upscale the capacity development in statistics, PSA has documented various assessment criteria to be used in identifying and selecting appropriate statistical tools that fit the statistical needs

and requirements. This will permit our well-developed statistical system to play a crucial role in providing timely and usable data. As a matter of fact, it is essential for setting priorities, making informed choices, and implementing better policies for sustainable development. In this context, PSA has explored the opportunities and the factors that enable it to face the challenges in the use of big data and other new data sources. We have set the basic conditions for building a statistical system capable of supporting and sustaining the economic growth of the State of Qatar. There is no doubt the role our developed statistical system plays in supporting the economic momentum of the State of Qatar will be crucial in the future.

#### **What are PSA's priorities for 2022?**

PSA realizes that in order to successfully set the 2022 National Agenda, it must employ innovative and collaborative thinking free from rigid and dated stereotypes. For this reason, PSA will continue its work with its strategic partners in the public and private sectors to set the road map for the next phase of the national planning by adopting a pragmatic, flexible, and comprehensive approach, with the importance of taking lessons learned from its previous experiences, specifically issues related to the implementation of its Second National Development Strategy (2018-2022) and the prompt changes that resulted from the global challenges. The identification of PSA priorities must be accompanied by a human resource development, mainly in the field of planning, follow-up, evaluation, and capacity-building in statistical fields. This focus will contribute to support the sustainability of national strategic goals and reduce the waste of efforts and resources. In the

same context, it is important to mention that setting the 2022 national development priorities will be aligned with QNV 2030, based on the following considerations: His Highness the Emir's speech at the opening of the 50th session of the Shura Council stressed the importance of considering the progress already made toward the second NDS, specifically the progress related to workforce efficiency, economic diversification, and strengthening the capabilities of the private sector. The use of analytics will play a large role in drafting the 2022 priorities. The key reports that will be utilized accordingly include: (i) social and economic forecasts provided by PSA; (ii) conclusions drawn from macroeconomic indicators and possible scenarios; and (iii) global reports on world economies for 2021-2022 issued by research centers and regional and international banks. These analytics will help provide a solid base of knowledge on which future planning can be based. Next, PSA is committed to accomplishing the remaining development goals before 2030. It will achieve this by aligning the SDG 2030 with the third NDS 2022-2027. In this regard, the voluntary national review of Qatar, which was conducted by PSA and the relevant authorities in 2021, will primarily contribute to identifying the imperative issues that face the achievement of the SDGs, specifically those caused by COVID-19. Finally, the transition to a knowledge-based economy requires a solid foundation of thorough research combined with cutting-edge innovation. As Qatar is in the midst of its economic and urban renaissance, thus, PSA, in coordination with relevant authorities, will intensify its efforts to support this evolution, in order to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030. ✖



تعداد قطر ٢٠٢٠  
QATAR CENSUS 2020



**Qatar's population increased by (67.5%)** compared to 2010 Census.



**Qataris holding a university degree or higher increased by (135.5%)** compared to 2010 Census.



**The illiteracy rate among Qataris declined to (0.8%),** compared to **(4.4%)** in 2010 Census.



**The number of buildings in the country increased by (49.7%)** compared to 2010 Census



جهاز التخطيط والإحصاء  
Planning and Statistics Authority

## Qatar Statistics App

Get the latest Population, Economic, Social and Environmental Statistics through the Qatar Statistics application.



Download on the  
App Store



ANDROID APP ON  
Google play

A Successful Census... for Sustainable Development



## QATAR ATLAS

This Atlas is considered the second "electronic" version that complements the series of atlases issued by the Planning and Statistics Authority, as this atlas provides an analysis of the results of the Census 2020, comparing them with previous years, and interpreting them geographically through thematic maps.



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# supporting HAND

IPA Qatar was launched to act as a single and complete source for investment solutions in Qatar and smooth the way for investors' journey to business success.

Sheikh Ali Alwaleed Al-Thani  
CEO,

INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY (IPA QATAR)



## What is your view on the increasing importance of PPPs in Qatar's inbound FDI?

The issuance of the PPP law in May 2020 symbolizes a landmark in Qatar's journey to diversify its economy and bolster its vibrant business ecosystem, while emphasizing productivity, competitiveness, and private sector-led growth. The law reinforces investors as genuine, long-term partners in the economic diversification strategy. The country pairs public goods with a competitive offer, helping bring in the latest technology, expertise, and skills for these projects. Furthermore, investors are offered access to the market's multi sectoral opportunities, are introduced to the local economy, and connected to a network of potential partners who support them discover the compelling business climate Qatar has to offer. The significance of PPPs is underlined by the growing number of new domains that have been added to the PPP framework. To name a few, education, healthcare, real estate, tourism, power, and utilities among others offer PPP opportunities. It is significant that the PPP adds another dimension to Qatar's dynamic business environment, and further complements the various advantages that are collectively part of the country's FDI value proposition (ownership, labor laws, residency, tax system, free zones, etc.).

## Apart from this new legislation, how is IPA Qatar working to facilitate the journey of foreign investors in Qatar, and bring their attention to sectors that can enable a greater economic diversification of the country?

IPA Qatar was launched in 2019 to act as a single and complete source for investment solutions in Qatar, helping connect investors to the right people, resources, and platforms through the investment process. By leveraging an integrated ecosystem of business and licensing platforms, we

partner with investors throughout their investment journey, from exploration and setup to expansion, in a way that is tailored to their unique goals and ambitions to ensure their long-term success. Committed to supporting investors' pursuit of long-term success in Qatar, IPA Qatar is continuously monitoring the business climate and catering to the evolving needs of investors. One of our recent endeavors is the launch of the Investor Connection Platform (ICP), which supports new and existing foreign investors in Qatar to establish long-term business relationships with Qatari companies. Additionally, the newly revamped Invest Qatar website provides an overview of the business environment and investment opportunities across various sectors and showcases success stories of our partners.

## How is IPA Qatar coordinating the different initiatives by Qatar to attract FDI under the different licensing platforms?

IPA Qatar aims to smooth the way for investors' journeys to business success in Qatar, while transforming and diversifying one of the world's most prosperous economies. Invest Qatar is the national brand that showcases Qatar as an exceptional investment destination, connecting international investors to lucrative business opportunities that support their long-term success, while bringing about the country's economic development and facilitating diversification goals across sectors and geographies. Our contribution here is to offer information about this landscape to the investor in addition to helping them navigate this landscape and connecting them to the appropriate experts. In this context, the newly revamped Invest Qatar website offers an intuitive experience and represents a comprehensive source of support and advice on Qatar's value

proposition, in addition to highlighting up-to-date information about the business environment, investment solutions, and regular updates on new opportunities across key sectors.

## As Qatar gains more international visibility thanks to the hosting of the FIFA World Cup, what would be your message to international investors?

Qatar is an excellent launchpad to do business, backed by its strategic location, world-class infrastructure and connectivity, the availability of high-skilled talent, a competitive regulatory and tax framework, and excellent quality of life. Not only that, but Qatar offers stability and predictability for investors. With so many factors in flux nowadays, stability and predictability are of increasing importance. Qatar offers a strong and resilient economy, underpinned by a clear long-term national vision and a stable political and financial foundation. ✕

### BIO

Sheikh Ali Alwaleed Al-Thani is the CEO of Qatar's Investment Promotion Agency and the Coordinator for Economic Affairs, Office of the Prime Minister of Qatar. Previously, Sheikh Ali was director of Qatar's Office to WTO in Geneva and was elected by consensus as chairman of WTO's Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS) Committee in 2017. He also served as the commercial attaché to Qatar's permanent mission to the UN, covering negotiations and standing committees in the UNCTAD and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). He holds a bachelor of science in foreign service from Georgetown University, as well as an executive master's in international negotiation and policymaking from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva.

# CONTRIBUTING *to success*

QFC's vision is to transform Doha into a leading global financial and commercial hub through attracting FDI and developing a sustainable local economy.

Sheikha Alanoud Bint Hamad Al-Thani  
DEPUTY CEO & CHIEF OF BUSINESS OFFICER,  
QATAR FINANCIAL CENTRE (QFC)



**How is QFC working to convert the international exposure from the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar into an interest in investing in Qatar?**

QFC is a leading onshore business and financial center that is being used as a gateway of choice by FIFA, specialty sports, and other foreign investors when investing in and out of Qatar. We have already attracted 25 sporting companies onto our platform, covering sub-sectors such as advisory and consulting, media, event management, and technology from markets including the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and North and South America, with a plan to grow this number. Their success and positive experiences within the QFC business ecosystem, wherein they can interact with over 1,100 firms, approach their own courts, and benefit from minimal local taxes, is a testament of our continuous success that we are proud to highlight. To meet our targets, we will continue to present our value proposition and engage with businesses from different markets worldwide. We will also continue facilitating the commercialization of sports-related services, reinforcing Qatar's plans to become a regional hub for sporting events well beyond 2022.

**What is your vision on the role of women in Qatar's society and economy, and how can women further contribute to the realization of the Qatar National Vision 2030?**

I am proud to be one of the many high-achieving Qatari females who were able to seize opportunities and contribute to the success of others. Women have unique and indispensable roles in the growth of businesses and developing economies and societies. Qatar has been making great strides in closing the gen-

der gap and fostering a culture of equal opportunity and female empowerment. Today, more women in Qatar go to university than men, and they are increasingly represented well in masters and PhD programs. Qatar National Vision 2030 envisages a country with knowledgeable human resources with prospects to reach their full potential, where men and women have equal opportunities to succeed. It also aims to establish a sustainable economy, and to get there, we need the active participation of women in society and the business field.

**You have been appointed as one of the Young Global Leaders (YGL) by the World Economic Forum. What does this recognition mean for you and Qatar?**

I am humbled by this important recognition and the opportunity to represent Qatar as one of this year's Young Global Leaders. I am also proud to join the other Young Global Leaders from different countries. This recognition means a lot to me and Qatar, which invests heavily in the education of the younger generation to nurture their talents and prepare them for leadership roles so they can continue driving the country's remarkable growth. I am passionate about sustainable socio-economic development in the MENA region and see great benefits in being a part of the YGL network with a shared vision and passion for a better tomorrow. I believe in the power of global networks and hope to build personal and institutional links via this important community to enable me to make a real difference beyond the corporate results and personal growth metrics. From my position in QFC, supported by the YGL's diverse community, I aim to identify, promote, and enable fintech and other

innovations that have a visible impact on inclusive growth in our region.

**You were recently appointed Deputy CEO of QFC. What are your plans to keep positioning QFC as a leading onshore business and financial center?**

My new position will allow me to execute bold plans for the expansion of the QFC platform. We have been fortunate, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, to have grown robustly in size. When many struggled to keep their doors open, we grew in size by hundreds of firms attracting a wide assortment of specialty companies and financial institutions. As Deputy CEO, I look forward to improving our platform's proposition and attracting many more quality firms that will contribute economically to Qatar. ✖

#### BIO

Sheikha Alanoud Bint Hamad Al-Thani is the Deputy CEO & Chief Business Officer of QFC. Prior to joining QFC, she served as the Qatar country representative & director for Silatech, a Qatar-based social initiative that connects young people to employment opportunities across the Arab region. Out of her deep belief in the need to support Arab youth empowerment, Alanoud greatly expanded Silatech's operations within Qatar, helping connect thousands of young people to private sector opportunities and supporting economic development across the MENA region. She is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including Global Shaper by the World Economic Forum, Young Arab Achiever, and the His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani Education Excellence Award. She was recently honored as a 2021 Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum.

# business EXCELLENCE



Fahad Rashid Al-Kaabi  
CEO,  
MANATEQ

Manateq is working on creating a business environment that allows and enables investors to deliver world-class products and services in Qatar.

**How will Manateq obtaining the integrated management system (IMS) certification benefit its wide range of stakeholders and help attract new investments into its zones?** An IMS, by definition, combines different management systems into one system. Hence, in terms of operational processes, our IMS implementation has seen us merge our business components into one system aligned behind a single goal of improving the entire organization's performance. In this way, we are fulfilling Manateq's target of delivering business excellence across all outcomes, performance, practice, structure, and systems. This demonstrates our commitment to having an efficient business environment that eases investing opportunities so that investors can focus more on their investments and productivity.

**How will the Mesaieed industrial Zone Benefit from your five-year new projects plan?**

Mesaieed Industrial Zone will receive a significant share of the investment allocated as part of our five-year plan for new projects that will enhance its infrastructure in line with the nation's long-term vision to diversify Qatar's energy-rich economy into a well-developed and sustainable economy by 2030. These improvements are needed to service various industrial clusters. These investments are an addition to the existing and ongoing projects that are at various stages of completion. The five-year plan and its investment allocations aligns with Manateq's vision and mission of creating a business environment that allows and enables investors to deliver world-class products and services in Qatar.

**Among Manateq's latest projects are Birkat Al Awamer Logistics Park extension and the open yards in Al Khor and Al Karaana. How does this infrastructure stimulate Qatar's business community?**

Our 9.4 million sqm Birkat Al Awamer Logistics Park is designed for companies wanting to build their own warehouses or workshops, commercial showrooms, offices, and staff accommodation on one plot. The park has been well received, with our investor total reaching 3,320. Leases were available

at QAR20 per sqm per year, with investors being incentivized by a two-year, rent-free grace period and flexible construction procedures. The open yards in the Al Khor and Al Karaana industrial zones provide the business community with competitive rent rates and short-term lease contracts. In particular, these yards are attractive, practical solutions for SMEs to take advantage of affordable rental prices, as low as QAR10 per sqm annually with short-term lease contracts. This has resulted in successfully leasing more than 3 million sqm of open yard space. Assisting the growth of SMEs is a key aim of Qatar that recognizes how this important business segment significantly contributes to areas such as innovation, efficiency, job creation, and international competitiveness. Qatar has worked harder to provide the appropriate environment for the growth of SMEs by enacting laws and administrative procedures necessary to encourage this sector, facilitating the necessary procedures for their establishment, and launching national initiatives and programs that support the owners of these enterprises. There have been initiatives to enhance the competitiveness of SME products and services at the local level and support for their export capabilities at regional and global levels, thus reflecting the directives of the wise leadership in Qatar. This is also in line with the most important economic pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030.

**Manateq has been instrumental in raising the profile of Qatar as an investment destination in the last decade. What is your overall assessment of its work?**

We have experienced considerable success over the past decade, though we will not rest on our laurels and will continue to strive to attain the Qatar National Vision goals of diversifying the economy. We have played a significant role in prioritizing the local SME sector as evidenced by our new open yards and logistics parks, in addition to our investments have attracted international expertise to Qatar and are going a long way to stimulating an entrepreneurial culture. The government does not want the economy to drop off after the 2022 World Cup. ✖

**9.4**  
million sqm Birkat Al  
Awamer Logistics Park

Mesaieed Industrial  
Zone key to  
transforming Qatar into  
a sustainable economy  
by

**2030**

**BIO**  
Fahad Rashid Al-Kaabi joined Manateq in 2013, bringing over 20 years of wide-ranging experience in the areas of engineering, project management, and top-level administration. He was previously CEO of QPM and, before that, manager of the conservation and energy efficiency department of Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (KAHRAMAA). Al-Kaabi received his bachelor's degree in industrial engineering and another bachelor's degree in business management, both from the University of Miami in the US. He then received his master's degree in project management from the University of Houston.



## INTERVIEW

# VOICE of *experience*



QSTP provides entrepreneurs with an impactful platform through which they can contribute new and innovative ideas that can solve real-world issues.

Yosouf Abdulrahman Al-Salehi  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
QATAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
PARK (QSTP), PART OF QATAR  
FOUNDATION RESEARCH,  
DEVELOPMENT, AND INNOVATION

## 77

registered companies

## 1K+

participants in QSTP's  
innovation programs  
since 2008

## 42

start-ups incubated  
since 2016

**What is your assessment of Qatar's progress since winning the bid for the FIFA World Cup 2022, and what role has QSTP played in that development?**

Qatar has undergone a rapid transformation over the past decade, including the transition toward a knowledge-based economy. For QSTP, our greatest success in that time is that we have established ourselves, and therefore Qatar, as an international hub for applied research, technology development, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Some QAR4.3 billion has been invested in R&D&I activities by international companies registered at QSTP. While leading global tech companies have invested in Qatar through QSTP's free zone, our comprehensive programs have also contributed to significantly enhancing the landscape for start-ups and entrepreneurs in Qatar and which see them through their entire entrepreneurial journey

**Which sectors and projects will be able to sustain Qatar's economy after the 2022 FIFA World Cup, and what will be the role of QSTP in it?**

Qatar has always looked to the future in order to improve its economic and social standing on a global stage. The World Cup has been one element of this, but the country's vision is much more far-reaching. Organizations like QSTP are proof of that vision and Qatar will be well prepared for continued development after 2022. All of the work and investment that has been put into the country's development, whilst accelerated by the hosting of the tournament, is part of a bigger, longer-term future for the country. The Qatar National Vision 2030, for example, is a road map for Qatar to become an advanced society capable of sustainable development, with the goal of providing a high standard of living for all citizens. Over the past few years, Qatar has weathered the same storm as other countries across the world, as a result of the pandemic. The disruption of markets globally has catalyzed technological innovation, and we have seen years' worth of R&D&I activity take place within weeks. Our work to position Qatar as a global technology hub has meant the country can capitalize on the potential of R&D&I to transform our world and

address global challenges, by turning ideas into impact.

**How are your acceleration programs and other entrepreneurship initiatives of QSTP helping to overcome the challenges of Qatar's economy?**

QSTP is an integral part of Qatar's rich and diverse R&D&I ecosystem. Today, the value of RDI cannot be overstated as it is the pathway for turning the research and technologies into tangible products and services that improve people's lives. Not only that, RDI is vital for Qatar's transition from a hydrocarbon economy to one based on intellectual capital. But to capitalize on the potential of R&D&I to transform our world and address not only Qatar's challenges but those facing our global population—including climate change, health, energy, sustainability, water, and food security—we need to turn ideas into impact by taking the technologies, products, and services to the market. QSTP does this by ensuring a robust support system catering to all stages of tech entrepreneurship are provided for. Our range of support such as mentorship, accelerators, grant funding, and investment programs are accessible to all entrepreneurs to foster innovation and drive the creation of impactful products and services for local and international markets.

**What has been the response of entrepreneurs based in Qatar to your different initiatives in this field?**

We work with a wide range of innovators and entrepreneurs, from school-age and university students to experienced start-up founders. The unanimous feedback we receive from them is that our programs have allowed them to turn their ideas and ambitions into reality, and that they benefit from QSTP as an impactful local, regional, and international platform through which they can contribute new and innovative ideas that can help to solve real-world issues. By nurturing this talent, we are positively impacting the flow of new products and services into the Qatari and global market, and ultimately benefiting the businesses and consumers that can use them. ✖

### BIO

Yosouf Abdulrahman Al-Salehi joined QSTP as executive director in 2018. Over the past 24 years, he has held technical, management, and research positions in the oil and gas industry in Qatar, starting his career in the petrochemical sector, focusing on quality control, technical service, and product development. In 2007, he joined the Qatar Shell Research & Technology Centre (QSRTC). In 2011, he was vice president at QSRTC where he oversaw its USD100-million investment in research. He also managed Qatar Shell's collaborations with various local and international academic institutions.

# innovation HUB

QRDI works on building a strong and dynamic RDI ecosystem in Qatar capable of addressing national imperatives and delivering significant economic and societal impact.



Omar Ali Al-Ansari  
SECRETARY GENERAL,  
QATAR RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT,  
AND INNOVATION COUNCIL (QRDI)

## What are the latest developments stemming from QRDI 2030?

Our strategy in general was developed because we wanted to increase collaborations in Qatar and between Qatar and other countries in the area of innovation and research. Collaboration is at the heart of building an innovation ecosystem for different entities to work together effectively. The QRDI 2030 strategy was created to enhance those collaborations, and that is the underlying theme of all our latest developments. At the end of 2021, we launched the QRDI Portal to enhance alliances by including many services that all kinds of entities in Qatar can benefit from in the area of innovation and research. We also launched the Corporate Innovation Leaders program to create champions for innovation within our large state enterprises, so that we can have those champions participate in the local economy and society. Qatar Open Innovation program is another major program, launched in February 2022. Through this, we encourage innovators to develop solutions made to the purpose of Qatar and its specific requirements. The aim is to connect innovators with opportunity owners and expand the innovation ecosystem by creating an attractive environment for innovators and innovation-led companies to set up in the country.

## The council launched the QRDI Portal in November 2021. What services does this portal provide to the ecosystem?

The innovation ecosystem requires many services, and our goal is to provide all those services and increase the number. The first service we launched is infrastructure; right now, on the portal, there are 3,000 pieces of equipment, labs, workshops, and facilities. These have been uploaded by our universities, research institutes, and ministries. For example, a university has a fantastic piece of equipment that others can possibly benefit from as well. When the university uploads information about it, others can now connect to the university and ask to collaborate or

share the equipment. This is another example of how we can inspire collaboration and sharing. For example, we have an oil and gas company collaborating with a hospital because the hospital has an MRI machine, and the oil and gas company had mined a rock that it wanted to scan. It later used the 3D printer from the hospital to print it. If we bring greater transparency to all of this infrastructure, just imagine the magic we can all create. Also, it is inspiring for these entities to think of themselves as service providers and generate some revenue, and it also makes the environment interesting for our international partners. If they want to set up an R&D base, Qatar is the place to be, because they can set up a center and not have to buy the equipment. There are already 3,000-4,000 pieces of equipment we all have access to. This is another way we can inspire international firms to invest in our country.

## What differentiates Qatari research programs from other international curricula?

The main difference is that the country has always had a vision. His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar, His Highness the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, have always found this to be an important agenda topic, and they were always a strong driver for such an ecosystem. 15 years have passed, and at present, there is Qatar University with 15 research centers, seven to eight partner universities also doing research, and three big research labs, one each for energy and environment, computing, and biomedicine. There is the genomics program and a precision medicine program. Other countries have done these things, but few countries have done this in 10 years. In the last 10 years, the number of researchers in Qatar has grown 15-fold, the number of publications 14-fold, and the number of patents by 14-fold. If this is what we did in a decade, imagine what the next 10 years will look like if we maintain the same type of inspiration, vision, leadership, and commitment. ✖

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***QRDI believes in "golden triangle" of government, industry, and academia***

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***Around 80% of QRDI leadership are women***

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***Collaboration is at the heart of an innovative ecosystem***

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***15x increase in R&D in last decade***

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**BIO**  
Omar Ali Al-Ansari is the Secretary General of the QRDI Council. As an industrial and manufacturing engineer, Al-Ansari began his career in the oil and gas sector at ExxonMobil and continued in the manufacturing sector to support the development of Qatar's primary aluminum plant, Qatalum. He then transitioned to working on issues of national strategic importance.



## ADDING *value*

With more than 53,000 members from the private and semi-governmental sectors, the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry is considered one of the most important entities in the country.

### BIO

Mohamed Bin Ahmed Twar Al Kuwari is the Vice Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Qatar. He is also chairman of Bin Twar & Partners Group, leading a chain of Arab customer-service centers, making up as a whole the leading Bin Twar & Partners Group in Qatar with decades-long of legacy and tradition.

Mohamed Bin Ahmed Twar Al Kuwari  
CHAIRMAN, BIN TWAR &  
PARTNERS & VICE CHAIRMAN,  
QATAR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND INDUSTRY

**How has Bin Twar and Partners been involved in the FIFA World Cup projects?**

This event has created many business opportunities. As a family group, we work in different sectors such as services, construction, and real estate development. Qatar is now diversifying the economy, and this is happening at the right time, with this event coming to support our way forward with international investors. We see this as a great opportunity, particularly after the COVID-19 crisis. Now is the time for international investors to come to Qatar. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry encourages investors to come in and find partners with our businesses for the local expertise in a knowledge transfer.

**As your holding is highly diversified, which sectors are best positioned to expand business in Qatar?**

Technology is trending now. We are a part of this with our services to telecommunications companies in addition to IT and new solutions. This is the most important sector where we work. There is also real estate development, which we do outside of Qatar. Given that the megaprojects and hotels are in development, now is the time to contract services for real estate management and facility management. Whatever is required, there is a great opportunity in services.

**What prospects do you see for energy renewal in Qatar?**

As a group, we have the number-one company working in renewables: Power Green. Power Green has worked on megaprojects including fitting the entire Lusail project with solar panels. Power Green has a large profile in renewables. And now, we are tendering for bigger projects focusing on solar renewables. We see strong potential for the future in

renewables, and as a group we have great contributions in this space.

**What are some of the chief priorities for Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry in terms of new commercial relations?**

Most of the facilities have been created by the government, and the chamber tries to help local and international businesses find ideal partnerships to benefit from these activities. We have weekly online conferences with different countries to encourage international investors to come to Qatar and local investors to enter other countries. We have seen promising opportunities in both directions. We have 60-65 business consults in other countries. We are always in contact with businesses to ease any issues that arise; this is our role. And with the recent changes in legislation, Qatar is ready for international investors.

**What is your economic outlook for Qatar after the World Cup, and what will be the role of Bin Twar and Partners in making this a dynamic period?**

The government will be issuing projects up to and even after the World Cup. The chamber sees a promising future, especially in the sectors where we have added value. We have liaised with the government to support our ideas and investors, especially in industry. Plus, we have chemical materials from oil and gas, for example, which is a big added value for international and local investors. This is our priority. We have been supporting the government with its diversification of the economy. There have been many initiatives to create a positive environment to develop partnerships and complete projects, particularly in petrochemicals. We see the global demand for these products, and this is an area where we have added value. ✖



# greater ENGAGEMENT

USQBC works with the public and private sectors to promote new, and solidify existing, business relations between US and Qatari companies.



Mohammed Barakat  
MANAGING DIRECTOR &  
TREASURER OF THE BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS, US-QATAR BUSINESS  
COUNCIL (USQBC)

**Qatar is America's strongest partner in the Gulf. Which sectors are currently exhibiting the most potential for investment by American companies in Qatar?**

Qatar is the strongest partner for the US in the Middle East across several sectors including security, defense, infrastructure, and energy. This major investment kicked off around 1995-1996, especially in the energy sector when American companies invested in Qatar. Today, we have seen increased diversification of investment in different industries in Qatar from the American side. Qatar has advanced many laws that enable American companies to establish and expand their business in the country, which has allowed more companies to invest in Qatar today. Finance, fintech, infrastructure, and energy are still crucial sectors, in addition to smart cities and smart technologies, which many American companies have invested in. There are also the traditional sectors such as the oil and gas sectors but there is also a pivot towards sustainable energy. Currently, there are several ongoing infrastructure projects as part of the buildup to the FIFA World Cup.

**What is the advantage of being a member of USQBC, and what relationship is the Council aiming to enhance?**

USQBC was established in 1996. Our organization has brought together USQBC members, partners, and officials from both the US and Qatar and facilitated business discussions amongst them. Our organization has consolidated and enhanced business relationships by hosting networking events, webinars, and engagements. We have provided business consultancy services to both markets about business opportunities and connections in the US as well as Qatar. We have offered assistance to Qatari and American companies to navigate the business landscapes including the market conditions, business opportunities, laws, and regulations in both countries. We have also provided business services that included market research, market entry, and facilitated the formation of connections. However, we remain a non-profit organi-

zation, and our operations serve to help and build the relationships between Qatar and the US. Since the Qatari-American relationship is growing on the political side, that by default boosts business as well. With the rapid growth of bilateral commercial ties, our work as a business council has expanded to include multiple business entities to whom we provide advisory and networking services.

**What direction is this business relationship heading toward?**

We see the World Cup as a stepping stone toward greater business engagement in the future. With the upcoming mega event, people have learned a great deal about Qatar, and the American companies that have been involved in Qatar. Qatar has repeatedly demonstrated its conviction to attracting international companies by easing commercial laws and regulations for establishment and operation. The country has been making strides in other sectors as well such as tourism, education, and entertainment. This diversification has enabled investors to expand their portfolio in the country. To further solidify the commercial ties between the US and Qatar, our organization has launched the USQBC Business Portal. The newly developed USQBC Business Portal provides unparalleled access to investment and trade-related information in addition to USQBC services as well as providing an interactive and curated experience of the US-Qatar business relationship. We have seen traffic coming from outside of Qatar and the US, which demonstrates the keen interest in creating and expanding business in the US as well as Qatar. The portal will aid the business communities across Qatar and the US to enhance and consolidate their commercial ties to mutually grow their businesses. With the help of tools such as the Business Portal and the upcoming FIFA World Cup which has provided several opportunities for commercial collaboration, the business relationship between the US and Qatar is only going to grow exponentially from here. ✕

## 120

fully American-owned  
companies in Qatar

Almost

## 850

joint ventures between  
US and Qatari companies

### BIO

Prior to joining the US-Qatar Business Council, Mohammed Barakat was a business strategy advisor at the US-Saudi Arabian Business Council (2011-2013) based in Washington, D.C. Earlier in his career, he worked in business development for a major Qatari holding group (2008-2011). He also worked in the UAE as a marketing manager for a major construction and engineering group (2006-2008). Previously, and under different capacities, Barakat developed strategic business plans and provided political, economic, social, and security analyses for several companies and organizations in Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, Tajikistan, Djibouti, and the US (2004-2006). He was also a defense contractor for the US Defense Intelligence Agency. He holds an advanced business strategy degree from the Cornell Johnson Graduate School of Management and a BA degree in political science and public administration. Barakat has also completed several executive degree programs in marketing, finance, and defense procurement.

**FOCUS**

Economic resilience

# TURNING PENALTIES INTO GOALS

The Arabian Oryx, a hardy species of antelope, could not be a more appropriate national animal. Its durability in a challenging environment makes it a perfect metaphor for Qatar's economy.

**BY WORLD BANK ESTIMATES,** Qatar will post respective growth of 4.8% and 4.9% for 2022 and 2023, respectively. This not only bests the MENA's 4.4% and 3.4%, but the EM's 4.6% and 4.4%, Advanced Economies' 3.8% and 2.3%, and the World's 4.1% and 3.2%, respectively. Fitch forecasts the current account surplus stabilizing at 4% of GDP in 2022 on soaring visitor numbers thanks to...

**...THE PRIZE OF 2023.**

On December 2, 2010, FIFA made history by declaring Qatar the host of the FIFA World Cup 2022, a first for the Middle East. And, as Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al-Thani told TBY, "It is estimated that the 2022 World Cup will attract more than 1 million visitors, [with] international tourism revenues [of] QAR67 billion in 2022, compared to QAR31 billion in 2021." Qatar's National Tourism Sector Strategy targets 5.6 million annual visitors.

**FOUR-YEAR BLOCKADE ENDS AT AL-ULA**

Qatar's darkest moment had come in June 2017, when Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt, charging Doha with endorsing terrorism, agreed upon a total economic blockade of land, sea, and air. Fast forward to January 5, when at the 41st GCC Summit in the Saudi Arabian city of Al-Ula, those same nations voted to restore relations. This opened the floodgates to investors keen to ride ascent of Qatar's diversifying economy.

**CARBON? COPY**

Hydrocarbons are far from being consigned to the dustbin of history. According to the World Bank's GCC Economic Update report, Qatar

is set to expand its hydrocarbon stake with the operation of its North Field projects, a multi-billion dollar undertaking on a historic scale that will boost annual LNG production capacity from 77 million metric tons to 126 million tons by 2027. And meanwhile, being the world's preeminent exporter of liquid natural gas, the fallout of war in Ukraine and economic sanctions on the commodity markets has worked to Doha's advantage.

**A SHOT IN THE ARM**

The minister notes that when COVID-19 brought global lockdown economic measures included, "a QAR75-billion stimulus package for the private sector, exempting food and medical commodities from customs duties for six months, [while] sparing industrial projects from rent [...] and electricity fees for a period of nine months." In consequence, GDP rose around 4% in 2Q2021. "The real gross value added (GVA) of the oil sector rose 0.7% in the second quarter of 2021, in parallel with a significant rise of 6.2% in the contribution of non-oil activities." The IMF's 2022 Article IV Mission to Qatar in March notes diligent banking supervision, as well as liquidity in the banking system sufficient to prop-up economic activity, while a "balanced and growth-friendly fiscal consolidation strategy could help to achieve [...] diversification," all conducive to building a "knowledge-based, stronger, more inclusive, and greener economy."

**A CLIMATE FOR DIVERSIFICATION**

Even a cursory glance confirms the aggressive diversification drive of Vision 2030. And just a few stats reveal the conducive circumstances enabling it. Located between East and West, Qatar has ready access to a combined market of 2 billion people across 25 economies, within

3,000km, and with a combined GDP of USD6 trillion. Additionally, the nation benefits from superb connectivity and logistical and digital infrastructure. As our fintech focus article lays out, Qatar actively champions start-ups to cement its status as a regional hi-tech innovation hub.

Through bodies such as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI)—operating Qatar’s Manufacturing Strategy (2018-2022)—and the Public Works Authority (ASHGHAL), the state promotes diverse PPPs in core sectors such as construction, infrastructure, and tourism. A comprehensive roadmap for manufacturing industries to 2030 promotes in-country value (ICV). Qatar also calculates annual import substitution potential of around USD30 million. And thanks to MOCI’s long-term forecasting program, “manufacturers will efficiently utilize local talent to build durable and competitive companies.” Manufacturing industries’ contribution to GDP climbed 1.4% to 8.67% in 1H2021, from 7.3% YoY. Annual export potential to MENA,

Africa, Central Asia, and Europe is about USD28 billion. “In recent years, Qatar’s non-oil sector has continued to grow, as its contribution to GDP rose from 52% in 2018 to about 66% by end-2020 [marking a] 26% increase, and contributing about QAR102 billion,” according to the minister, dwarfing QAR60 billion as of 4Q2020. Qatar is excelling in advanced manufacturing, with a skilled workforce engaged in, among others, aerospace additives and medical consumables and device parts. Medical consumables spell potential as Qatar’s affluent population accounts for a USD1,700 per capita healthcare spend, high among MENA, the accessible healthcare markets of which also have high per capita healthcare spend (the UAE at USD1,800, Kuwait at USD1,700, and KSA at USD1,500).

In 2019, Qatar earned regional plaudits by beating four-time Asian Cup champions Japan 3-1 in the final. The global prestige from hosting the World Cup, then, stands to springboard this competitive economy to fresh heights. ✖



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& Project Management



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& Sports

# pillar OF THE ECONOMY

In the last five decades, Al Faisal Holding has grown into one of Qatar's largest privately held diversified industry groups with operations across local, regional, and international markets.

Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al-Thani  
CHAIRMAN,  
AL FAISAL HOLDING



**You have been appointed Chairman of the newly created QHA. What is your vision for Qatar's hospitality industry, and how will QHA advance the profile of Qatar as a tourism destination?**

It gives me great pleasure to be part of the QHA leadership team. In recent years, we have witnessed many private companies investing in the hospitality sector, and the QHA offers a platform for enhancing cooperation among participants and investors in the sector locally and internationally. Through the delivery of a comprehensive action plan, the QHA aims to enhance Qatar's image as a prominent tourist destination and an attractive investment opportunity, while supporting the successful implementation of the National Strategy for the Tourism Sector 2030. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the outlook for Qatar's hospitality sector is encouraging. This is largely thanks to the government's strategy for the development of the tourism sector, which has focused on multiple pillars including leisure and entertainment, sport, medical and business tourism, education, and more. Significant investment in tourism infrastructure has further supported the resilience of the sector.

**QBA has been key to strengthening economic relations with other countries. What are the immediate priorities in terms of new commercial relations for QBA, especially now that GCC relations have been restored?**

QBA plays a key role in enhancing cooperation among businesses, as well as promoting Qatar's economy and the attractive investment opportunity the country provides. Meetings organized by the Qatari Businessmen Association encourage companies from other countries to explore opportunities in the Qatari market with the aim of attracting foreign capital. These meetings also provide a

great opportunity for us to gauge recent market developments and investment opportunities internationally. QBA has succeeded in building strong relationships with several countries, the results of which were evident in the support we received during the blockade. These robust relationships helped Qatar establish alternative supply chains for many raw materials and commodities, enabling the country to proceed with business-as-usual.

**Aamal Company has been instrumental in consolidating Qatar's industrial landscape, including the manufacturing of cement, steel, pipes, and cables. Which factors will mark the industrial development of Qatar in the near future?**

Qatar's industrial manufacturing sector benefits from the availability of raw materials and low energy prices, as well as robust infrastructure for project delivery, including an advanced local, regional and international transport network. Together, these factors will support Qatar's growth over the coming years and increase competitiveness.

**What is your overall assessment of national evolution since the announcement of Qatar's winning bid for the FIFA World Cup in 2022?**

Since Qatar was appointed host of the FIFA World Cup 2022, absolutely everyone has been working at full capacity—the government, the private sector, and even individuals. Qatar has succeeded in completing World Cup-related projects well ahead of deadlines, and over the past 10 years we have witnessed a tremendous transformation in Qatar's infrastructure. The 2022 FIFA World Cup will be forever considered an unprecedented event due to the enormous challenges we have faced, but we have been

able to exceed expectations, supported by the Qatari government and private sector.

**What are Al Faisal Holding's main contributions to hosting a successful FIFA World Cup?**

Al Faisal Holding has made a significant contribution to the FIFA World Cup 2022 through its subsidiaries. Notably, Al Rayyan Tourism Investment Company (ARTIC) will play a vital role in providing accommodation for guests, players, and sports delegates for the duration of the event, while many of our other subsidiaries will also play a direct or indirect role depending on their sector. Our various subsidiaries will strive to provide best-in-class services to ensure the success of this tournament, whether by providing high-quality products, facilities and property management services, or by providing medical and pharmaceutical products and hospital supplies. We are extremely proud to be making such a prominent contribution to the success of our beloved Qatar's hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022. ✖

#### BIO

Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim bin Faisal Al-Thani is one of Qatar's most successful businessmen playing a significant role in the development of its business sector. He is the founder & Chairman of Al Faisal Holding. As a firm believer that business and education go hand in hand, education and research have formed an integral part of Al Faisal Holding. Sheikh Faisal Museum and the ALF Foundation activities reflect his personal philosophy and contribution to the development of Qatar's knowledge-based economy. Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani is also Chairman of the Qatari Businessmen's Association (QBA) and Qatari Hotels Association (QHA).

## INTERVIEW



Aisha Hussein Alfardan  
 VICE CHAIRWOMAN, QATARI  
 BUSINESSWOMEN ASSOCIATION  
 (QBWA) &  
 CHAIRMAN PERSONAL ADVISOR,  
 ALFARDAN GROUP

## BUSINESS *insights*

QBWA's mission is to be a platform that supports female professionals and businesswomen, and it has led numerous forums over the years focused on Qatar's female workforce and its growing impact on the country.

### BIO

Aisha Hussein Alfardan is a prominent Qatari businesswoman, Vice Chairwoman of QBWA, head of the Qatar Hub, and board member of the Middle East and North Africa Businesswoman's Network. In 2006, she was ranked 24th on the Forbes list of the 50 Top Businesswomen in the Arab World. She graduated from Qatar University with a degree in English literature and began her career in the Commercial Bank of Qatar, where she worked for over nine years, during which she climbed the business ladder to become the ladies branch manager. In 2003, she joined Alfardan Group to assist her father and brothers in running the family business. She actively participates in local, regional, and international conferences.

**How have you been supporting the role of women in Qatar's society?**

Currently, we are seeing more and more women entering Qatar's diverse workforce. From our ministries to our front-line against the COVID-19 pandemic, women have also been playing a leading role in advancing the future of Qatar. As the pandemic has left a resounding impact on global economies, QBWA, along with Qatar's business community, has come together to create new national and international initiatives to assist female professionals in building sustainable business models for the future. We are proud to have the opportunity to witness this increase in female economic participation and remain committed to its progress in all sectors of our economy. It was an incredible honor for me to represent QBWA at the Qatar Economic Forum 2021 (QEF), which brings together prominent financial and economic thinkers, policymakers, and business leaders from around the world to set the next stage of global growth. It is also a testament to our female leaders and professionals, whose strategic and successful contributions to Qatar's growth have been exemplary for the world. During QBWA's Qatari Businesswomen: Shaping the Present. Leading the Future virtual event earlier this year, leading businesswomen and speakers celebrated the success of Qatari women in executive positions in private and public sectors. Currently, Qatari women are leaders in various fields, including the medical, engineering, and entrepreneurial sectors. Women in such positions have the opportunity to inspire the next female workforce and encourage them to reach similar positions in their respective fields as well. Female leaders can also help women who face difficulties advancing their careers. Networks such as QBWA can help identify such challenges and offer experienced and professional insights from their associations. It is also important to celebrate and promote the achievements of women in workplaces. QBWA is the host of TAKREEM Awards, which recognizes the contributions of Qatari women to the country's economy. Such recognition serves as a benchmark for excellence and highlights the progress of female participation at all eco-

nomie and corporate levels.

**What will be Alfardan Group's main contribution to a successful FIFA World Cup 2022 event?**

The growth of Alfardan Group shows its legacy to continually deliver service excellence for the people of Qatar and contribute to the economic landscape of the country. The group, with its values of mastery, evolution, trust, passion, and distinction, offers products and services for every facet of life to all people and visitors of Qatar. Through its history of more than 65 years, Alfardan Group has evolved into a collection of businesses that began in 1954 with Alfardan Jewellery and grew with Alfardan Exchange in 1971. Now, Alfardan Group manages a multifaceted portfolio covering a wide range of industries and sectors. Alfardan Group's hospitable experiences have been recognized in various sectors throughout the years. In 2021, FACT Dining Awards lauded nine Alfardan Group food and beverage outlets for their fine-dining experiences, showcasing Alfardan Hospitality's commitment to delivering exclusive experiences to its guests. Our contributions are aimed at making the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 a memorable and distinct experience for all.

**How do you expect the country's economy to perform in the short term, especially after the FIFA World Cup 2022?**

As the world continues to innovate, so do we. Qatar is an increasingly self-reliant country that continues to empower its people and create a sustainable and smart country for future generations. The delivery of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is one of Qatar's monumental goals that reflects how the country is utilizing its capabilities to amplify Qatar's position as one of the leading economies in the region and the world. As the country continues to progress toward a knowledge-based economy, Qatar is also supporting the rise in female workforce participation. Homegrown organizations such as QBWA are striving to empower female professionals at the forefront of this evolution and create new opportunities to serve the people of Qatar in a rapidly changing environment. ✖



# creating a brighter FUTURE

Power International Holding has a portfolio of successful businesses operating in Qatar, Europe, the UK, Turkey, Oman, and the Maldives.

Moutaz Al-Khayyat  
CHAIRMAN,  
POWER INTERNATIONAL HOLDING (PIH)



**To what does PIH attribute its success across all sectors since its inception?**

From the start, Power International Holding has been built upon a foundation of an inspiring vision, clear management structure and strong culture. Our people—and the skills they bring—are the company's greatest asset and we work hard to ensure everyone is empowered and aligned behind not only our immediate commercial objectives, but more importantly our longer-term core mission: to create a brighter future from Qatar to the world. This guides us constantly, helping inform decision-making throughout the company and providing confidence to colleagues and external stakeholders alike.

**How would you define PIH workforce distribution and its diversity?**

Diversity is one of our core values and because we are committed to having a workforce that reflects the world's population, we reap the benefits of employing a diverse talent pool of 87 nationalities. Nevertheless, we understand that there is more to do and we remain relentless in diversifying our workforce in a range of different ways. Recent developments include us launching in November 2021 our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Steering Committee (DEISC) to help guide our DEI strategy and ensure that each of our colleagues understands what we are doing to foster an inclusive workplace and how they can help contribute individually toward that. Furthermore, on International Women's Day on March 8, 2022, we became a signatory to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), becoming the first fully Qatari private-sector company to adopt the framework—an important milestone for

our company and for Qatar more widely.

**PIH has introduced Leena AI, an experience platform under the name of Daizy. How does this program function as an enabler of digital transformation?**

Our people work at the heart of the global knowledge economy, and it is essential that innovation and talent development are among our very top priorities. Daizy has proven extremely successful since it was launched and is just one example of how we are integrating digital transformation at every level of the organization. We are driving a clear digital transformation strategy across all our businesses and brands, to ensure we have the right technologies—coupled with people, processes, and operations—to not only meet our customers' evolving demands, but to actually go further and innovate new ways of working and new ways to deliver value to our customers and colleagues alike. This approach will help ensure that despite our considerable organizational size, we are able to remain agile and responsive to change and disruption across our many industries.

**Which are PIH's medium-term objectives on the aftermath of FIFA World Cup 2022?**

Power International Holding continues to go from strength to strength and we have clear medium-term goals and objectives beyond 2022, many of which are already being implemented. We continue to expand into new markets. UCC, our international construction services company, has plans underway to expand across Saudi Arabia, having recently opened offices in the country, as well across Northern Africa. This expansion will complement UCC's continuing work in Qatar, where a number of exciting new

projects are scheduled to commence over the coming 12 to 18 months. Aura Group, our diversified food, beverage, and entertainment company, has similar expansion plans across the MENA region, as well as into Europe. As Qatar has been gearing up for the FIFA World Cup starting in November 2022, Aura Group has introduced new international franchise brands that will further enhance Qatar's culinary offering. Baladna, our international dairy business, has similarly ambitious growth targets. Baladna's ongoing partnership with the government of Malaysia will see the joint establishment of a large-scale, state-of-the-art integrated dairy farm in the country's Northern Corridor Economic Region. Similar partnerships are underway in the Philippines and Indonesia, with Baladna well placed to explore further opportunities across Asia. Furthermore, Estithmar Holding, our group of professional service companies, will continue to grow across its core sectors of facility services, tourism, heavy industry and contracting. ✖

#### BIO

Moutaz Al-Khayyat is an entrepreneur and businessman, striving to explore new business frontiers and provide clients with cutting-edge solutions. With over 41,000 experts and tradesmen, Al-Khayyat has grown his group of companies into a diverse business conglomerate. Under Al-Khayyat's leadership, Power International Holding has grown horizontally by the creation of more than 40 affiliated companies, with ambitious plans for future expansion.



Image: Hasan Zaidi

Souq Waqif  
pictured in Doha



# READY PLAYER

Drawing on its state-of-the-art 5G infrastructure, Qatar wants to be an early adopter of immersive technologies.

**QATAR HAS BECOME** an early adopter of almost all new technologies. The 5G was one well-publicized example, among many, which made the headlines back in 2018-19. Immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality have come to the foreground of IT discussions since the pandemic, when many noticed the importance of VR to merge the physical and virtual worlds. Now, after those challenging months, companies and researchers in Qatar are experimenting with the use of VR in interactive education, e-commerce, and enhanced entertainment.

The country's flag carrier airline, Qatar Airways, launched a metaverse experience called "QVerse" in which participants can wander around the premium area at Hamad International Airport (HIA), examine the interior and the seating area of the airline's various aircrafts, and even interact with cabin crew. The national carrier is employing immersive technologies to show off its quality features to win the hearts of travelers. "With physical boundaries beginning to be challenged by the metaverse on an increasingly larger scale, it is exciting to embrace a technology that enables all travel enthusiasts to enjoy a unique immersive experience of our award-winning products and services," says the group's chief executive Akbar Al Baker. Now is an excellent time to keep a virtual presence for Qatar Air, as there are upwards of 1.7 million potential customers who want to fly to Qatar in November and December during the FIFA World Cup 2022.

The aviation industry is not the only sector in the Qatari economy that will have a busy year in 2022, because many who will not make it to Doha will be on the lookout for immersive streaming services to enjoy the games. A Qatari startup called Amazing Reality View Experience (ARVEX) is using AR for entertainment purposes, "providing high-quality 360° video content." Using virtual reality glasses and headsets, the company offers a live 3D video feed of the games. The experience is something between watching the event in person and following it on television. Mega-events, whose tickets are extremely difficult to obtain, are the main focus of ARVEX. With the kickoff day of the FIFA World Cup 2022 approaching fast, the startup is hopeful to draw on the mega-event's attraction to establish itself. The startup comes out of the Qatar Science and Technology Park.

Qatar University, too, is supporting researchers who want to focus on the many uses of immersive technologies. The university runs a virtual reality lab that focuses on the potential applications of VR in the education sector. The university itself will soon experimentally use VR to assist the students of engineering, architecture, and medicine in their studies. Qatar University will likely be among the first in the world to use VR to let medical students be part of advanced medical procedures in a risk-free manner.

The use of VR for training is not limited to formal education. Companies based in Qatar are taking advantage of immersive technologies to train their workforce. "Immersive training using VR provides resource-efficient ways to educate and onboard employees in exciting, stimulating scenarios," according to DHL, a logistics company, which uses VR to train its future employees in Qatar. To name but one example, the company trains its warehouse workers to operate forklifts using virtual reality headsets and simulators in the early stages of training.

A certain VR-powered innovation called "cave virtual environment," yields itself particularly well to public education purposes. A VR cave is usually made of several interactive walls, which are in reality extra-large digital screens. The installation of at least four walls (2 on the sides, 1 in the front, and 1 on the ceiling) can create the illusion that one is in a chamber of imagination, and no VR headsets are needed. A VR cave opened its doors to the public in a mall in Doha Festival City in March 2022. The augmented reality experience on offer is designed to give you "a virtual tour of the cosmos and learn about the different planets, the sun and stars, as well as constellations and comets."

In March 2022, the same mall in Doha Festival City drew on a different VR technology for "showcasing the latest collections from its wide range of homeware brands from across the globe." The organizers complemented their furniture and homeware display with AR features such as pop-up displays created with the help of augmented reality. AR headsets are much like VR headsets, but while relaying the external world to the user more-or-less truthfully, visual features are augmented to the video. Thus, while visiting a real exhibition in person wearing an AR headset, one can also see, say, additional information hovering around each item on display.

Indeed, entertainment and public education are among the most typical applications of VR in Qatar. The wide availability of 5G makes it easier to implement VR solutions which require a stable internet connection with high bandwidth to instantaneously download the 3D graphics from the cloud. Although the application of VR and AR in Qatar is currently experimental and limited, it is still more than what many countries have to offer. The country is adopting immersive technologies at an accelerating pace. "The AR/VR market was estimated at US \$37.7 million in 2022 and is projected to grow at 13.8% annually to reach USD63.2 million in 2026," according to Tasmu Digital Valley, an innovation cluster backed by the ministry of communications and information technology (MCIT). In addition to a conducive economic and technological climate for VR to flourish, the adoption of VR is also accelerated by initiatives such as Smart Qatar. ✖



# ADDING *greater value*



Suhail Industrial Holding Group has grown from a local manufacturer to include operations in 10 countries, including the UK, China, South Korea, and more.

Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmad  
bin Mubarak Al Thani  
CHAIRMAN,  
SUHAIL INDUSTRIAL HOLDING GROUP

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***“Made in Qatar” products creatively tackle gaps in the market***

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***15 factories and a further three in the making***

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***5-year plan of 5 new factories per year***

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**BIO**  
Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mubarak Al Thani has always focused on the pursuit of Qatar’s sustainable growth in the industrial sector. While the primary focus for Sheikh Khalid has been ensuring that the nation’s industrial sector is entirely self-sustaining, he has also pursued the goal of Qatar being a front runner in the region’s pursuit of industrial evolution and technology, ingenuity and overarching sustainability.

**How has Suhail contributed to sustained national development through local demand for “Made in Qatar” final industrial products?**

Suhail holding group started in 2012 with the first factory for battery recycling. The start was easy, but we faced many challenges in establishing ourselves in the industrial arena. The company opted for rapid growth with the construction of new factories. Today, we aim to make Qatar sustainable by producing, where possible, formerly imported materials and products. We settled on entering industries that at the time had no developed competition. Essentially, we are innovators, and there is no scope for copying the output of other firms. We now produce numerous in-house products, including 1 million batteries per year. There are approximately 700,000 cars in Qatar, whereby we cover the local market and export, with all-original equipment manufacturing spare parts. We aim to become an OEM supplier. As an OEM supplier, our product will be produced in Qatar, boxed, and labeled as Toyota, Nissan, Ford, GMC, or Lexus. We then sell those products as original spare parts. We need to sign deals with global manufacturers to achieve that goal. Furthermore, the Public Works Authority, Ashghal Qatar, has great demand for geotextile foil, a non-moving foil used for excavations and road infrastructure, of up to 10,000 tons a year. We built a factory dedicated to geotextile foils with an annual capacity of 8,000-10,000 tons, which meets 100% of Ashghal’s requirements. Additionally, we produce utility hole covers and drainage tops. Meanwhile, we also built the largest foundry in the Middle East with a 40,000-ton annual capacity. This foundry will produce utility hole covers, gully tops, mechanical spare parts, and spare parts for agricultural equipment. Around 40% of this foundry’s capacity, including numerous mechanical spare parts, will cover Qatar’s needs, with 60% exported to the US. Innovation underpins our entire strategy.

The second approach developed within our strategy is the pursuit of sustainability in Qatar. And third and most challenging is environmental protection. We do this by recycling all waste. We started with lead-acid batteries. When we recycle batteries, two things result: one is lead, and the other is plastic. And today, we operate the whole cycle from battery recycling to production and sales. This process is kind to the environment while adding value to our products.

**Are you thinking of expanding trade operations and exporting premium products to major international markets?**  
Besides our 15 factories, there is a new facility under construction in Ethiopia, and recently we acquired two factories in the US to enter that market more directly. We work on a five-year plan and are set to introduce three to five new factories annually, mainly in Qatar. And we consider becoming Qatar’s industrial leader, which means never resting on our laurels. Among new ventures, we are considering tire recycling. We have engaged in different types of recycling, but so far, not tires. In addition, we will expand our production of automotive spare parts. Also in the pipeline is the construction of a factory producing oil, air, and engine filters to meet the automotive industry’s needs. We are also looking at the recycling of used automotive engine oil. Interestingly, we have also established a mobile car service called WHEELZ. We have deployed 50 cars, 17 vans, and 35 smaller cars in the field at competitive pricing. We use our own brake pads, brake drums, batteries, oil filters, air filters, and oil imported from Turkey. This helps us to build up the logistics of all our products and applications. Lastly, we invest in human resources, having introduced VR training and designed specific courses at the factories covering firefighting, handling chemical or toxic material, first aid, electrical troubleshooting, and repairing mortars. ✖

# standing READY

In the last 30 years, Dyarco has been an integral partner in much of the infrastructure development in Qatar, including the upcoming FIFA World Cup.



Ullattil Achu  
GROUP CEO,  
DYARCO INTERNATIONAL GROUP

**Dyarco is celebrating its 30th anniversary in Qatar. How has the company's growth been complemented by the country's great progress over these past three decades?** I can compare our success with the typical, local, indigenous plants and nature on this terrain, such as the Sidra tree. For us, we have a similar character, because we have grown organically in Qatar driven by the existing culture, all without compromising our ability to expand. The founders of the company built it based on demand conditions and the resources that were available. I joined the group in 2000 and worked as a consultant for a year before becoming a manager, moving up through the operations. Dyarco became an independent operation under my management in 2005, when I was able to convince the group to allow us to spin off, developing a strategy, plan, network, and partnerships. We have been doing well since then, even during times of crises. Dyarco has been able to find its own niche and opened up its own venues in regional and local industries. One recent change on our side is moving to manufacturing, which was seeing a boost in Qatar. Dyarco is opening its first full-fledged paint factory, which is a great way of celebrating 30 years working in Qatar.

**2022 is the year of the FIFA World Cup. How has the company been involved in the FIFA-related projects, and what will it be its main contribution to a successful event?**

Indirectly, Dyarco has been an active partner in much of the infrastructure development for the FIFA World Cup, for example, in the participation in many of the air conditioning projects in the stadiums. We supplied paint, technology, elevators, escalators, and even certain consultations with security issues. Once the event is over, we expect many services and maintenance opportunities. Assets of this size and value need regular maintenance and conditioning, so we expect that to remain. With such advanced infrastructure in place in the region, there is always the possibility of

having regular events, matches, regional tournaments, and so on.

**How is Dyarco getting ready for business opportunities in facility management?**

We already have existing partners that are global players in facility management, for example, and we have discussions in progress in order to develop and adopt a new way of doing things. Many of these approaches have been rolled out in countries such as the US and Germany already. We are working with one of the largest technology players in the world in order to develop a digital platform-based service industry for maintenance and facility management. This is in the pipeline for demand after 2022. Dyarco has also established a new company that is predominantly driven by advanced technology involved in energy management, which we refer to as green energy issues. Furthermore, we recently formed an associate maintenance company in order to take care of green energy infrastructure.

**What value can local partners like Dyarco bring to investors who are looking at the Qatari market?**

Even if the state permits a foreign player to have an industry or a manufacturing unit, the ideal thing to do would be to partner with an existing player. Companies coming to Qatar can mitigate or reduce their costs by pairing up with a local entity that can take care of many areas that are well established, tested, and proven. The integration of business and the synergy of ideas and planning, as well as two cultures, is always better. It has a stronger value and will generate a new breed of entity. For example, if a company from Europe wants to set up here, they have to look at the initial primary costs of operation, which will be massive because of the mobilization of people bringing into the company as well as their families and residency. My view is always that a partner like us can add substantial value, not only in terms of operational opportunity, but also in real cost terms. ✖

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## *30 years in Qatari market*

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## *Seeks to bring value to growing facility management sector*

**BIO**  
Ullattil Achu has been the Group CEO of Dyarco International Group since 2005. He has over 22 years of holding executive management and business leadership roles with prominent international banks, including consulting for a World Bank-funded project. He holds executive and senior directorship in some of the group's companies including Jotun Paints Qatar, Leminar Qatar, Al Failaq International Trading, Qatar Oilfield Supply Center, and Singapore Petroleum Qatar, to name a few.

# TBY ANALYTICS QATAR 2022

128 interviews were conducted for *The Business Year: Qatar 2022* Analytics.

## BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX

How confident are you about the outlook for business in Qatar this year (1-5)?

**3.7**  
AVERAGE  
RATING

### SECTORS TO WATCH



FINANCE

**4**



ENERGY

**4**



TRANSPORT

**3.5**



DIGITALIZATION

**4**



INDUSTRY

**3**



CONSTRUCTION  
& REAL ESTATE

**3.5**



AGRICULTURE

**4**



HEALTH &  
EDUCATION

**4**



CULTURE &  
TOURISM

**3.5**

## ADVANTAGES & CHALLENGES

What are the most commonly mentioned advantages and challenges of doing business in Qatar?

### ADVANTAGES

- Qatar National Vision 2030
- Strong self sustainability agenda
- FIFA World Cup 2022
- Easy access to raw materials
- Low energy prices
- Increasing role of women in economy
- Simple investment regulations
- Growing demand for gas

### CHALLENGES

- Ongoing impact of COVID-19
- High reliance on desalinated water



# leaving ITS MARK

AbuIssa Holding has grown from a retail operations business to become one of the most successful business conglomerates with more than 100 stores in six countries and over 4,000 employees.



Ashraf AbuIssa  
CHAIRMAN,  
ABUISSA HOLDING

**How is AbuIssa Holding preparing to make its retail offering stand out for visitors to the FIFA World Cup 2022?**

As a retailer, we have to be ready and we are paying attention to the teams that will be qualifying so our retail destinations can adapt to their consuming patterns of credit cards, special products, sizes, brands, and so on. AbuIssa Holding has experience in dealing with different nationalities because we have business in other locations such as Turkey and the US. We expect between 1.2 and 1.7 million visitors during the World Cup, so we have to be prepared. For the brands that we represent we want to also give them a chance to project their products and to display their products in a good way. We feel that we are more like partners with the brands that we represent rather than just a retailer. Additionally, AbuIssa Holding has managed to obtain a license for some of the products for the FIFA World Cup that they can be displayed in all of our stores around Doha. We are planning to take a shop-in-shop or pavilion to sell FIFA souvenirs and merchandise. We are producing under the licensing agreement certain products that are specific to Qatar with the designs and the items being connected somehow or the other to the country. People will be able to go home with a nice souvenir they can remember forever. AbuIssa Holding will be offering a wide variety of merchandise. We also have a department producing and importing high-end food items. We try to have something that is more of our region and the neighboring countries like Oman and Iran and Turkey produce specific items that would appeal to some of the visitors.

**How do you see the interest of international brands and firms in entering or expanding their presence in the Qatari market?**

Most of the major global brands are present, but some niche brands are not, and that is maybe

where the opportunity lies. Some of them have a connection with one of the star players or sometimes teams or clubs. We work with Replay, which is a brand interested in football and that has made an agreement with the football team Paris Saint-Germain and also with Neymar who acts as a brand ambassador. For a brand like that, it is important for us to highlight such things. Also, some watch companies for example like Breitling or Zenith are brands that are particularly popular amongst sport lovers. We will have special editions made for Qatar for that period. Even in our porcelain ware, tabletop items, linen, and luggage we are trying to have something symbolic of the event, and we are even making head covers like ghutras in each team's colors. For every team we are going to have the colors of that team in the ghutra.

**What is AbuIssa Holding's vision on attracting tourists to its shopping destinations?**

In Qatar we have all the basics in place, including a good airport, quality infrastructure, and amazing hotels. The country is now working to develop the tourist experience for a wider offering, ranging from shopping, culture, and business to sports. In support of this, Qatar is restoring some of its old villages to bring them alive in different parts of the country. As a group, we are always ready because we have a good footprint in our retail scene in Qatar and are probably the largest luxury retailer in the country in terms of floor size. We are present in every mall and are extremely responsive to developments. I feel that Qatar will be able to compete and attract a lot of tourism in the region. In addition, if we offer something new then the countries will complement each other and tourists will come from other regions and visit several countries in the GCC. ✕

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***Between 1.2 and 1.7 million visitors during the World Cup***

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***Ready to deliver the best retail experience for FIFA World Cup visitors***

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#### BIO

Ashraf AbuIssa took over the family business with his brother Nabil at a young age. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award 2019 from the Swiss Business Council in Qatar, the Businessman of the Year by Arabian Business magazine in 2016, and Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2011. He is also a founder of NGOs and charities such as like INJAZ Qatar, where he is founding board member, the Young President's Organization (YPO) Qatar Chapter, and Palestinian Children Relief Fund (PCRF) as its vice chairman.

## INTERVIEW



## PEOPLE *first*

Artan Holding is a Qatari company with a diverse portfolio of businesses in the education, real estate, architecture, construction, logistics, and energy industries, playing an instrumental role in progressing Qatar's national agenda of social and economic progress for all.

### BIO

Natra Abdulla is one of Qatar's most prominent and successful businesswomen. A leading figure of Qatar's Business Women Association (QBWA), she actively participates in the development of Qatar's private sector through business opportunities, policy advocacy, and mentorship opportunities for young entrepreneurs and SMEs. She was awarded the Arab Businesswoman Award in the business category in 2013 and was ranked 76th in Forbes' Middle East's 200 most powerful Arab Women index. She endeavours to promote a sense of social responsibility at every level in her business dealings, successfully building and operating Qatar's most impactful educational institutes, real estate companies, and energy-solutions company.

Natra Abdulla  
CEO & FOUNDER,  
ARTAN HOLDING

**How do ESG initiatives and sustainability principles play a vital role in the development of your strategies across the different business?**

Although we are not a publicly listed entity, Artan Holding firmly believes in ESG factors, and we practice them in the holding company and across our subsidiaries. In terms of environmental goals, we believe in the conservation of our environment and practice this, specifically when it comes to climate change, energy efficiency, and waste management. We subscribe to these objectives by instilling these values in our community (our staff, students, partners, and clients), as well as practice them in our business operations. In our education portfolio, environmental objectives are instilled in our students through academia as well as extracurricular activities. In our real estate portfolio, we are conscious of and proactive in building, operating, and managing environmentally-friendly assets. And, in our logistics and energy solutions subsidiaries, we offer our clients efficient, sustainable solutions. We will always strive to understand and implement clean, sustainable solutions to our business ventures and challenges. In terms of social goals, the consideration of people and relationships has always and will always remain at the core of everything we do. We understand that our people are our greatest assets, and with such a diverse community in gender, nationality, and technical backgrounds, Artan will continue to invest in its people to produce the optimal work environment. Finally, in terms of governance goals, we are proud of the structure we have in place. Artan's governance structure provides transparency, credibility, and reliability to our staff, our partners, our clients, and our board members. We will continue to operate this way.

**What impact will the FIFA World Cup 2022 have across all sectors in Qatar and how would you define the legacy that will remain?**

We are already witnessing the impact this tournament has had (and will continue to have) in Qatar across infrastructure, society, and the economy. The FIFA World

Cup 2022 provides Qatar with significant brand equity locally and internationally. The trust that comes with hosting a global sporting event of this magnitude is immense, and Qatar has proved worthy of this trust, and we will deliver in November. But, more importantly, the hosting of this tournament has cemented Qatar's older generation's pride and trust in seeing this country's direction and growth, and above all, gives its younger generation the belief that the sky is the limit: Qatar can and will strive for the best. Qatar has witnessed immense economic growth over the last decade since being awarded the right to host the FIFA World Cup. It is important to stress that the World Cup is not the be-all-and-end-all, but instead, serves as a "north star" for a young country building a nation, and it is only the beginning.

**Which are your main objectives for the next year 2023?**

As with any fiscal year, Artan Holding's business objectives entail economic and social goals. Artan Holding's economic objectives are two-fold. For the existing sectors that we participate in, our goal is to build on our profitability by continuously reflecting on where and how we can improve our offerings to our clients. We are a highly adaptive entity, we strive to be at the forefront of global trends that can be localized for the Qatari market, and we will continue to grow sustainability this way. As for potential new sectors, we are constantly evolving, and we are always on the lookout for new, attractive opportunities that complement or even (positively) disrupt our existing business operations. But these opportunities need to make sense for us, and above all, must not only have an economic impact, but also a social impact for our community. Our social objectives also serve a dual mission: external impact for our community, in the form of direct, indirect, and induced impact, as well as internal social impact for our employees in the form of increased human capital, and a competitive, healthy work environment. ✖

# changing THE GAME



Sheikh Mansoor Bin Khalifa Al-Thani  
FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN,  
MBK HOLDING

MBK Holding invests, manages, and incubates market-leading technology companies and experiments with revolutionary business to help elevate the corporate world through a new way of implementing business models.

**MBK Holding was designed to support and enhance the role of start-ups in Qatar, and what strategy does it apply to transform them into market-leading companies?**

MBK Holding is not a traditional holding and does not follow a traditional path for investments. I focus on people, and all my investments are in people in an ecosystem of entrepreneurs that complement each other's business. Recently, entrepreneurship and innovation are the new terms that define this. MBK wants to help entrepreneurs initiate as a start-up to being a regional or global leader; it is all about talent, the quality of the talent, and how they work together to produce a greater value and manage scalability. The main challenge I see in entrepreneurs is scalability. They start out well and experience success, but then it becomes difficult for them to continue. Recently, we came up with new methodologies and approaches to help break through this scale-up strategy. Continuing to grow is a completely different game. It is different growing from 10 people to 100 people than it is from 1,000 people to 10,000 or even 100,000 people. The entire engine is different. You have to create new departments, disciplines, and partnerships. It is really about people and how you can grow. I am learning from Microsoft, where I started in 1996. There were about 10-15,000 people at the time, and there are 181,000 people today. Every five years, the company evolves and changes. I established many start-ups myself, and MBK Holding emerged as an ecosystem builder for start-ups and innovation globally.

**How does MBK enhance the flow of know-how between young entrepreneurs?**

We are creating a few new initiatives. The last three years have been dynamic, because we have been scaling up as a holding as well. We started with a basic engine investment and subsequently developed new initiatives about mentorship and coaching. In 2022, we will start focusing on incubators, accelerators, and venture builders, be-

cause this is the level-up of what we are doing on a smaller scale. Venture builders develop technology for start-ups. With an innovative model, they take a service fee as well as some equity, which is unique and empowering. MBK Holding is making the global ecosystem bigger and stronger in the UK, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. It is not only about money; it is about the effort, knowledge, and network that we have from being all over the world. I create opportunities for ecosystem participants by leveraging their services among each other and by interacting within the extended global reach of their clients too. I am working on making money without money, which is super-innovative and can only be done by quality talent that share the same value of next generation entrepreneurship. You create super-quality talent that works together to create value that can generate revenue and bring in investments. We want to create something with minimum—if not no—investment.

**How would you define the start-up ecosystem in Qatar?**

MBK Holding started 15 year ago earlier than anyone else. The ecosystem of Qatar started early, and it is mature in so many different areas; however, there are weak points. One is the regulations of entrepreneurship and innovation. Businesses know how to establish a company, though there is a lack of details about shares or classes of shares that are friendly to entrepreneurs. The focus has mainly been on legislations, which is business law and court law. Second, which is extremely important, are investor visa schemes. Qatar recently started to offer them, though visa issues remain an issue that can make a huge difference in the ecosystem. Updates to legislation will also include the central bank, which is becoming extremely active. Many people like Qatar and enter the country, but when they come in, they cannot advance more for these reasons, unfortunately. There are certain things we cannot solve with money, and we need to create the necessary infrastructure. ✕

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***Majority of start-ups are in fintech, agri-tech, sport technology, or health technology***

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***Works as enabler of human capital formation across sectors***

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***Building an international ecosystem of interconnected knowledge***

**BIO**  
A member of the Qatari ruling family, Sheikh Mansoor Bin Khalifa Al-Thani is a visionary leader and entrepreneur with over 25 years of experience in strategic development, innovation, and venture capital. As the founder and Chairman of MBK Holding, he leads a multinational team of entrepreneurial leaders with distinctive experiences and professions.





## EZDAN PALACE HOTEL

### CREATING MEMORIES

Ezdan Palace Hotel is a member of Ezdan Holding Group and is a unique landmark in Doha offering the ultimate in luxury experience. Nestled between old and new Doha, close to the biggest shopping malls in Qatar, five-star Ezdan Palace Hotel raises the bar in service, style and sheer indulgence.

Opened in May 2018, the hotel features refined Andalusian architectural design, and unique service which blends true Middle Eastern hospitality with international standards. Ezdan Palace is an ideal place for all and sundry and offers various options to suit different lifestyle needs.

The hotel offers a personalized 5 -stars services coupled with modern amenities and on site facilities including a luxury restaurant, state of the art Gym and Spa, a cozy lounge, Banquet halls and business meeting rooms for guests' comfort.

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Ahmed Abu Sharkh  
COUNTRY SENIOR PARTNER,  
KPMG QATAR

**BIO**

Ahmed Abu Sharkh is the Country Senior Partner at KPMG in Qatar. He brings more than 28 years' experience in serving clients and leading audit, advisory, and leading country practices in various locations across Europe and the Middle East. His advisory focus has been on helping clients to manage financial risk, finance function effectiveness, post-merger integration, IT risk management, capital markets' services, and various CFO advisory services. In addition, he has led various major audits and capital markets assurance services for major clients in Eurasia and the Baltic states including banks, insurance companies, a FTSE 100 mining company, airlines, rail operators, ports, pipelines, and shipping companies.

**What have been the main achievements of KPMG Qatar in terms of its performance in the last few years?** There are two reasons out of many behind the success of KPMG over the last two years. The first reason has been our focus on trust as part of our core strategy, while the second being our focus on our auditing quality to enhance our clients' trust in us. Not only has our auditing grew by 4%, but the quality of our team's work delivery has been booming. We are very proud of our significant growth in advisory by 27% due to our emphasis on quality and the digital spectrum, including various user experience and cybersecurity services. I can confidently say that our team have been performing extremely well. Our key success is that we have an agile structure that enables us to move faster than others. We have centers of excellence in different countries undertaking incredible jobs in digital fields. We did a great job in tax re-design, which looks at the future digital impact on clients' businesses in taxes.

Every government is focusing on ensuring correct taxation, and we are doing that because it fits our trust agenda.

**What is the company's strategy in terms of implementing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives?**

We formed a team led by two partners focusing on ESG in Qatar. They work with a multi-disciplinary team to build services and tools. We have started to help two major clients with ESG engagements. We are collaboratively working to develop KPMG's global methodologies in terms of building infrastructure and ESG services. We focus on educating markets and community services. There is a large gap between global trends, regulations, and the awareness level of businesses and the local community about ESG. Honestly, few people know about this, and that is exactly why we are working to shed light on the importance of the matter and build it up further. ✖



Laith Dajani  
MANAGING PARTNER,  
CONSULTING HAUS LLC

**BIO**

Laith Dajani has 15 years' experience working in corporate finance consultancy and is the founding partner of Consulting HAUS LLC, prior to which he held the position of director in Ernst & Young's transaction team (Qatar) for approximately six years. He has vast experience in transaction related work including capital market transactions (IPOs and direct listings), financial modelling, valuations, and M&A.

**How has Consulting HAUS LLC successfully differentiated itself from other players in the market?**

The idea behind establishing Consulting HAUS LLC was born out of the absence of high-quality boutique consulting practices in Qatar offering affordable services to the market. Over the last three years, we have witnessed significant growth on the back of offering our clients a real alternative to the Big 4 and also by offering end-to-end support regardless of our clients' needs. We are now considered as a one-stop shop for our clients' corporate finance and corporate governance needs and are always on hand to act as a virtual sounding board when they are testing their ideas. As a result of the team having Big 4 backgrounds and vast experience in Qatar, we were able to quickly obtain our listing advisory and valuation advisor licenses from QFMA, which has positioned us one of Qatar's preferred firms for companies with aspirations to be listed. Strong client relationships, flexible approach, and value for money pricing has been the key to our success thus far and will put us in a good po-

sition to achieve our future objectives.

**How do you support your clients through their business life cycle?**

Supporting the business eco-system in Qatar and encouraging the private sector to increase its participation in the overall economy in line with Vision 2030 is one of our top priorities. In order to achieve this, we have assembled a highly specialized team with deep cross-sector expertise that are able to support our clients develop, grow, and optimize their businesses. We have also invested heavily in supporting young entrepreneurs get their ideas off the ground by providing expert advice and using our network to accelerate the growth of their companies.

**What are your main objectives for the next 12 months?**

Our main objective is to continue to be seen as our clients' partner in growth and ensure that their businesses are well placed to take full advantage of the upcoming World Cup and beyond. In 2023, we will seek to replicate the successes of our operating model in more GCC countries that will enable us to widen our network and bring unique and value adding opportunities to our clients. ✖



## INTERVIEW



**Bassam Hajhamad**  
SENIOR PARTNER,  
PwC

**PwC has named its refreshed global strategy as the “New Equation.” What fundamental features are involved in this initiative?**

PwC’s new strategy responds to fundamental changes in the world, including technological disruption, resource scarcity, demographic and social change, new economic and political dynamics, and the post-effects of COVID-19 pandemic. The New Equation focuses on two interconnected needs that clients face in the coming years. The first is building trust. Organizations increasingly need to earn trust across a wide range of topics that are important to their stakeholders. Success depends on fundamental shifts in the way executives think, organizational culture, systems, and ambition. The second is to deliver sustained outcomes in an environment where competition and the risk of disruption are more intense than ever, and societal expectations have never been greater. Businesses need to change faster and more thoroughly to attract capital, talent, and customers.

**BIO**

Bassam Hajhamad is the PwC country senior partner and consulting leader for Qatar, working closely with major public and private entities. He has 20-plus years of experience in management consulting, digital/ICT, and private equity, covering North America, the Middle East, and Africa. He is an active member of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Digital Economy and Policy initiative. He holds an MBA from MIT Sloan School of Management and a master’s of science in computer information systems from the University of Detroit.

**What initiatives is the company pursuing to support companies’ efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their operations?**

The world is at a pivotal moment to act on environmental sustainability. We work with clients to chart a course to a sustainable future, establishing holistic strategy-through-execution programs. We have built a unique set of capabilities that enable successful design and implementation of national sustainability and ESG programs, and we are currently at the forefront of adapting international frameworks for environmental solutions to the specific circumstances of the GCC. We work with government agencies to ensure that sustainability is an integral part of all sector strategies and initiatives. Our work focuses on encouraging public and state-owned enterprise decision-makers to seek opportunities for operational efficiency, cutting costs, and capturing growth created by green markets. Key focus areas include: water scarcity, circular economy, climate risk and response, green hydrogen and energy, and carbon footprints. We are also establishing an ESG center in the Middle East and globally to act as a think tank for sustainability and environmental management. ✖





# STEPPING OUT ON THE STAGE

The Qatar Economic Forum signals the Gulf nation's intentions on the world stage.

**WHILE THE FIFA WORLD CUP IS THE PRIMARY EVENT** on Qatar's calendar this year, the Qatar Economic Forum 2022, held on June 20, 2022, in Doha, was also seen as a key opportunity for the Gulf state to don its Sunday best and lay out its stall for foreign investors. Indeed, the event was somewhat of a who's who, featuring heads of state, global CEOs, and leading investors.

The event took place against a complex backdrop, however, as the world emerges from COVID-19 strife yet remains mired in uncertainty amidst Russia's ongoing onslaught in Ukraine. All of this has led to supply chain disruptions, rising inflation, and reductions in spending power across the world. It is in this context that Qatar continues to offer its services as a diplomatic arbiter and center for dialogue.

The three-day event was successful in bringing the world together and shedding light on crucial topics, including challenges in the global energy market, trends in financial markets, the role of technology, and recovery in areas such as tourism. At the heart of many discussions held over the course of the event was the changing nature of globalization and the opportunities it continues to offer to emerging markets. Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) is also now fully established as the buzzword of the moment, leaving CSR in its wake. And the phrase was never far from the lips of speakers for the duration of the event.

The forum was opened by HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who showcased Qatar's efforts to seek development and achieve sustainable targets. He stated that in the advent of a global economic recession, Qatar is committed to aiding an equal recovery, as well as presenting incentives for the private sector to adapt to changing

trends. "We will work on policies to enhance competition and protect consumers and support national products and foreign investment. Especially, we will allow foreign investors to own 100% of the capital of a company. Qatar is responsible as a partner in the global community to face these changes."

One theme that was present was that of Africa's 21st-century renaissance, which has the potential to unleash the continent's economic potential. Monica Geingos, the First Lady of the Republic of Namibia, stated: "We need to start paying attention to the state of our political systems," as she laid out a vision for the future of the region.

Qatar itself is no stranger to adversity, having overcome the impact of a regional trade blockade to emerge more self-sufficient. On the back of these experiences, Qatar hopes that playing host to economic forums and great sporting events will cement its status on the global stage as a reliable partner. Beyond the World Cup, which is now only months away, Qatar hopes sports and culture will remain cornerstones of its economy.

Hassan Al Thawadi, Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, closed the event, declaring that, "In Qatar, we are trying to build an environment where the business community benefits but the event is also affordable and accessible to the fans as well." This followed comments from Gianni Infantino, President of FIFA, on Qatar's preparedness for the tournament: "Everything is done to make this experience special to the people that will come. It is not only a sporting event; it is much more than that. We at FIFA want to be present and shape this impact." ✖

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# Finance

## AT A CROSSROADS

**Q**atar has a mature and diverse financial landscape, including 12 local and eight international banks. In a keynote address at the Euromoney Conference 2022, Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud Al-Thani, Governor of the Qatar Central Bank (QCB), confirmed that the banking sector is well capitalized and liquid and boasts stable profitability levels. He added that QCB will begin a gradual exit from COVID-19-related support measures. It has also raised interest rates as part of its policy to maintain the fixed exchange rate of the Qatari riyal.

One area identified as a priority is SMEs, which, according to Qatar Chamber, represent 97% of the country's private-sector institutions. Another key pillar of the financial landscape is Qatar Financial Centre, which offers licensing and regulatory support and aims to shepherd both local and

international firms. It plans to have 1,000 companies registered by the end of 2022.

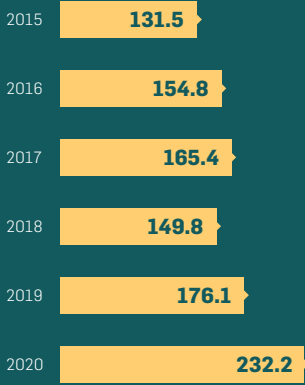
And responding to global digitalization trends, Qatar has emerged as a regional fintech hub in recent years, with the aspiration to transform into a cashless society. According to Qatar Development Bank, fintech-led funding activity in Qatar accounts for one-third of total deals closed and is the main driver for foreign investment in the country.

All the financial institutions interviewed for this chapter, including banks, financial centers, investment firms, insurance companies, and consulting companies, have two main objectives for 2023: to increase digital services to make financial transactions faster, simpler, and more secure; and boost their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) credentials. ✖



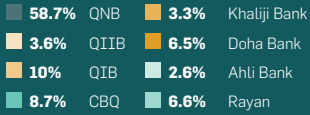
## BANK ASSETS, PERCENTAGE OF GDP

SOURCE: THE GLOBAL ECONOMY



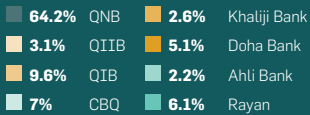
## MARKET SHARE OF TOTAL ASSETS (LISTED BANKS)

SOURCE: PWC



## CUSTOMER DEPOSITS SHARE BY LISTED BANK

SOURCE: PWC





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Abdulla Mubarak Al-Khalifa  
GROUP CEO,  
QNB



**What is the key for QNB to maintain the balance between traditional banking values with close attention to clients and the most innovative technological solutions?**

We aim to foster our core value proposition as an international universal bank while leveraging innovation as a strategic enabler, for both corporate and personal clients. Changes in customer behavior has led to a shift to more convenient and remote channels. This trend has accelerated our drive toward digitalization and automation, which ultimately impacts our business and operating model. Those trends are further exacerbated by the entry of new players, such as non-banks, non-financial institutions, fintechs, and bigtechs and results in disruption through technological innovation and financial disintermediation. We, therefore, embarked on a group-wide innovation program with the objective of transforming QNB into an innovative bank leveraging digital capabilities. We put our customers at the forefront of our business' priority to create an enhanced value proposition that includes holistic customer centrality. We aim to digitalize our offerings to 24/7 solutions that are scalable and capture presence on the ground, as we do in Qatar, Turkey, Egypt, and Indonesia. We also provide personal interaction for advisory-related services for selected wholesale and investment banking as well as affluent, asset management, and private banking offerings. This helps us to reposition the traditional human interaction with our customers to focus on what matters the most for them: where we create and add value.

**What does it mean for QNB to be the Official Middle East and Africa Supporter and Official Qatari Bank of FIFA World Cup 2022?**

As part of QNB's strategy, we aim to generate long-term profitable growth. As such, we do not limit ourselves to pursue growth opportunities that are organic or inorganic but actively pursue strategic partnerships and alliances on an ongoing basis. Besides numerous strategic partnerships that we capitalize upon, one of our highlights was the conclusion of our partnership with FIFA by becoming the official Middle East and Africa Supporter of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. This partnership will strengthen QNB's brand image and reputation globally. Furthermore, QNB, as the largest bank in the country, is determined to play a key role in supporting this unique event for the State of Qatar. We see ourselves as a patron of major sports events in Qatar as well as regional and global tournaments. With this in mind, our objective is to be a facilitator for all services around payments and financial transactions to provide a seamless and holistic customer and fan experience during the event.

**Which sectors and projects will be able to sustain Qatar's momentum after the 2022 FIFA World Cup, and what will be the role of QNB in it?**

Qatar's economy is expected to experience significant momentum and growth after the 2022 FIFA World Cup. We expect to see a surge of business as this event will benefit the economy long beyond the closing match attracting FDI while, at the same time, developing do-

**“As the leading incubator for private-sector engagement, we act as a one-stop shop for SMEs.”**

mestic entrepreneurship. Qatar's status as a global sports hub will be a driver for new business opportunities for the private sector, though we also expect to see strong growth in new projects beyond sport that will benefit the economy. A strengthening of regulatory frameworks is paving the way for public-private partnerships (PPP) projects, particularly in the education, healthcare, and tourism sectors. QNB as the largest bank in the country provides the full range of universal banking services. As the leading incubator for private-sector engagement, we act as a one-stop shop for SMEs to support them throughout all lifecycle stages. Besides providing the classical range of financial services, we offer solutions from market insight and skills training to one-to-one consulting to help them manage and grow their business. Furthermore, our holistic and bespoke wholesale and institutional products and services range entails project finance, structured finance, trade finance, cash management as well as treasury solutions across all tenor and currencies. This enables us to actively participate and contribute across projects in all sectors and provide banking solutions along the entire supply chain. ✖

## INTERVIEW



**Bassel Gamal**  
GROUP CEO,  
QATAR ISLAMIC BANK (QIB)

## NEW *era of banking*

QIB is committed to continuously improving its products, digital platforms, and service levels to support the diversification of Qatar's economy and help its customers achieve their business and financial goals.

### BIO

Bassel Gamal has held the position of QIB's Group CEO since 2013, having accumulated 30 years of experience in the banking and finance industry. He is currently Chairman of QIB-UK and a Board Member of Qinvest. He chairs the Credit and Investment Committee, Special Assets Committee, Assets and Liabilities Committee, and the Management Committee. He is also a member of Board's Policies and Procedures Committee. His career started with Commercial International Bank (Chase National Bank) in Egypt, after which he joined Ahli United Bank Group in Bahrain. He has chaired and was a member of a number of committees.

### How did QIB perform in 2021, and what do you expect for the future?

2021 was another good year for QIB with assets up 11.2% YoY to QAR194 billion; financing expanding by 7.8% YoY, while deposits increased by 11%. Net operating income was also strong, rising by 10.1% YoY to QAR6 billion, while net profit increased by 16% YoY to QAR3.56 billion. We are an experienced, stable financial group which during the last few years has expanded to cover all market segments and sectors. In terms of key financial indicators, as of end of 2021, the bank achieved some significant milestones: the highest ROA in Qatar at 1.9%, the highest ROE in Qatar at 18.2%, and the best efficiency ratio (cost/income) in Qatar and the MENA region at 18.1% (15.7% at standalone basis). We have further accelerated our bank-wide digital transformation program, which has successfully translated into an increase of sales and revenue, a significant migration of branch transactions to digital channels, and a reduction in cost that helped reach the best cost/income ratio in the MENA region. We are committed to continue investing in technology to improve the customer experience, speed, security, and efficiency of our operations. Furthermore, since the outbreak of the COVID-19, having the right technology, people, and processes in place, we managed to launch a series of new digital banking solutions in a short period to enable previously unbanked customer segments to fulfill all their banking needs remotely. We have introduced a series of new banking products and services with some of them being introduced for the first time in Qatar. This allowed us to ensure business continuity while supporting the financial needs of vulnerable customers during the pandemic, with the health and safety of our customers and employees being our absolute number one priority at all times. We also released our first sustainability report to highlight our efforts towards contributing to the global sustainable development goals and to display our achievements in implementing ESG standards. Keeping customers at the core of our strategy, in 2022,

we will continue reinventing our business model, exploring new revenue streams, and further embed ESG into our strategy by creating new sustainable banking practices. We are committed to supporting the diversification of Qatar's economy and the development of a strong private sector while remaining focused on continuously improving our products, digital platforms and service levels, helping our customers and partners to achieve their business and financial goals. As part of our renewed ESG focus, important elements of our future strategy include how we can enhance sustainability in our financing activities, continue to support local communities, and take initiatives that reduce our own environmental impact.

### What are the next big steps for the Islamic finance sector in Qatar?

The current trend in the banking industry is its full digitization and the adoption of new-age technologies. I believe that the focus will switch from automation, speed, convenience and efficiency to changes that are more revolutionary. Banking in the future will look very different from today, with emerging technologies shaping the way banks and consumers interact. Friction-free digital account opening, artificial intelligence, video conferencing, hyper-personalization through data science, and cloud computing are some of the key technologies that will define the banking industry in the future. At the same time, climate change is undoubtedly humankind's most pressing challenge and as ESG concerns grow, banks are being urged to become "guardians" of the planet and are under increasing pressure to demonstrate their commitment to climate-friendly business. As part of a highly regulated industry, banks have long addressed governance issues and in recent years, they have increasingly focused on social issues with particular emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion. Now the attention is turning to the E in ESG—environmental—as we begin to analyze and understand the impact of environmental considerations on risk within lending and investment portfolios. ✖

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## INTERVIEW



## LEADING *position*

Dukhan Bank's positive financial results is a reflection of its strong performance, its leading position in the Qatari market, and the integrity of its risk management systems.

### BIO

Khalid Yousef Al-Subeai has been the CEO of Dukhan Bank since 2014. Prior to this, he served as CEO of Dukhan Bank's investment banking arm, The First Investor, which he initially joined in 2013. He is currently the chairman of the board of directors of Tanween Real Estate Company, vice chairman of the board of directors of First Finance Company, and a member of the board of directors of The First Investor Company, First Leasing Company, and Dlala Holding Company, in addition to his affiliation in numerous committees and companies. Before joining Dukhan Bank, he led Morgan Stanley, where he was responsible for Qatar client coverage. Previously, he was the senior financial advisor at Qatar Petroleum (QP). Al-Subeai graduated from the University of Arizona with a bachelor's degree in finance.

Khalid Yousef Al-Subeai  
CEO,  
DUKHAN BANK

**To which does Dukhan Bank attribute its successes in the last few years?**

The strong positive financial results we have achieved is an outcome of concerted efforts and dedication to excellence in services at every stage of our operations. We developed strategic plans that make our customers' satisfaction a top priority as their continuous loyalty and unwavering trust have a direct impact on our success. The simplest way to emphasize the effectiveness of our customer-first strategy is to look at Dukhan Bank's strong financial performance at all levels. In 2021, we attained a considerable net profit of QAR1,193 million, while recording a 7% growth in total revenues, which reached QAR4.05 billion, and a rise of total assets reaching QAR110.7 billion (28%), supported by financing assets that exceeded QAR75.2 billion. Dukhan Bank has positively navigated through the ongoing economic environment generating a significant 17% YoY growth in net profits. We attribute our success to our talented and technologically savvy team of employees, an expanded portfolio of digital banking services, retail and private banking, real estate and structured finance, corporate banking and government institutions, in addition to a business model that focuses on variation and continuous product and service invention designed to enhance the customer experience. Our positive financial results reflect the bank's strong performance, its leading position in the Qatari market, and the integrity of the risk management systems we follow. The outstanding financial achievements of the past few years were mirrored by the evaluation of long-term foreign exchange ratings from international credit rating agencies. Fitch and Moody's ratings reflect the robustness of Dukhan Bank's independent credit and remarkable liquidity rate, which exhibit strong financial assets position and an ability to play a leading role in the banking sector in Qatar. All these have also earned Dukhan Bank a top position as one of the 10 safest banks in the Middle East and the 10 safest Islamic banks in the GCC, according to American Global Finance magazine.

**What strategies does the bank follow to expand technologically enabled products and services?** Dukhan Bank is a forward-thinking corporate entity that is always on the lookout for

**“Our ESG strategy aims to deliver positive change.”**

innovative technology to better enhance and revolutionize its service delivery. Since we declared our digital strategy in 2020, we have quickly built our portfolio of digital banking products and services that include an award-winning mobile banking app, best-in-class finance services, and the latest corporate and business banking solutions. Each of these innovations pave the way for customers to enjoy a safe, simplified, and smooth banking experience that makes their lives easier and helps maintain our position as “Qatar's bank of choice.” These offerings include D-Tap, a maintenance-free solution that allows merchants to accept payments through a variety of contactless-enabled cards and devices; and the launch of a set of corporate credit cards in collaboration with Mastercard to meet the needs of our commercial clientele, offering a convenient, secure method of managing day-to-day expenses, supplier payments and business-to-business payments. Our bank always strives to offer its customers digital-first products and services to provide them easily accessible platforms that will enable them to be in control of their banking transactions.

**Does Dukhan Bank promote ESG initiatives under its investment portfolio?**

Our ESG strategy aims to deliver positive change, and our goal is to be the nation's leading bank as Qatar transitions to a sustainable society. Dukhan Bank has a unique opportunity to contribute to a sustainable future of Qatar by demonstrating leadership on ESG. Our ESG principles include the launch of “green” products such as electric vehicle finance and “green” sukuk, as well as sustainable targets in its day-to-day operations and initiatives to work with customers and communities to improve people's lives. As a responsible banking corporation, we recognize the importance of embedding ESG principles as part of the culture and operations of Dukhan Bank and to engage in projects which advance the broader objectives of the UN SDGs and Vision 2030. ✖





Until 1966, Qatar used the Indian rupee, known as the Gulf rupee. Later, it briefly adopted the Saudi riyal before entering into a currency union with Dubai and adopting the Qatari and Dubai riyal. After Dubai joined the UAE, Qatar began issuing the Qatari riyal that we know today.



# MAJOR *advancements*

Given the need to provide ever-more convenient banking and payment options in Qatar ahead of the World Cup, Commercial Bank has been steadily working on providing newer and better features.



Joseph Abraham  
GROUP CEO,  
COMMERCIAL BANK OF QATAR

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## ***Financing projects in stadiums, roads, and hotels in preparation for FIFA World Cup***

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## ***2nd-largest conventional bank in Qatar***

**What is the strategic importance of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investments for an economy like Qatar?**

ESG issues in all their aspects will become increasingly important for countries and businesses across all sectors. Qatar is uniquely positioned because the economy has the capacity to be flexible. Qatar is showing its commitment to sustainability through different ways, as evidenced by HH The Emir attending COP26 and the establishment of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. On another note, the new name of Qatar Energy shows an emphasis from Qatar on ESG at all levels. ESG is not just a matter of the environment, as it entails social and governance factors. Companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) will be asked to optimize their ESG credentials. The same is happening in the government. Consequently, the Qatari economy is well positioned to not only further ESG, but also make a stronger sustainable transition. Regarding the banking sector, the carbon financial commitment is drawing considerable attention at the moment. Qatar has the fiscal wherewithal and inclination to make all this happen to increase the potential for success on this front.

**What have been the recent major digitalization advancements by Commercial Bank?**

Commercial Bank embarked on a steady digitalization journey five years ago and has since then adopted a highly creative approach to it. The future of banking lies at the intersection of technology, operations, and the client interface. The ability to respond quickly and be innovative in delivering client-centric offerings will be important, particularly as we face greater competition from sectors such as fintech. About 10 years ago, we had outsourced our operations and technology to an offshore third-party provider. However, given the importance of technology to delivering client experience and innovation, we created our own in-house subsidiary Commercial Bank Innovation Services to house our tech and operations. We can now apply technology to all our opera-

tions processes to improve risk, straight-through processing, speed, and ultimately the customer experience. Clients increasingly want to do everything seamlessly and easily without visiting a branch, so our aim is to make everything available on a mobile app. In this regard, Commercial Bank was the first bank in Qatar to introduce certain key features. For example, our clients can print off their credit cards at self-service machines instead of waiting for mail delivery. Additionally, we have focused attention to the payment ecosystem, which in the lead up to the FIFA World Cup must become entirely cashless. Commercial Bank came out with CB Pay, a convenient mechanism enabling merchants to receive payments through QR codes without the need for POS machines. In addition, our relationship management is being digitalized through the creation of virtual video relationship managers. On a video call, clients are also able to transact with due regard to security by using voice and facial biometrics so that documents can be signed securely and other transactions be done remotely improving both security and the client experience.

**How has Commercial Bank been involved in the FIFA-related projects in Qatar?**

In terms of direct contribution to the FIFA World Cup, there are the stadiums, for one of which Commercial Bank has been financing major contractors. The same is the case for the roadworks being built, for which we have again contributed through our core business. Meanwhile, the hotel landscape of Qatar has completely changed, and Commercial Bank has financed many of these projects. More widely, the 2022 FIFA World Cup particularly in a post COVID-19 world will need to be completely cashless. We are one of the largest providers of tap-and-pay, and our terminals are located widely at merchants. We are working with transport authorities, including taxis, to make them cashless. We are working closely with all the authorities to contribute to the cashless environment so no one entering Qatar has to carry or withdraw cash. ✖

### BIO

Joseph Abraham has extensive banking experience across both developed and emerging markets. Prior to joining Commercial Bank in 2016, he was CEO of ANZ Indonesia based in Jakarta from 2008 onward. Prior to ANZ, he was with Standard Chartered Bank where he served in a number of roles including chief of staff to the global head of client relationships, wholesale banking; head of strategy and product management, North East Asia; and managing director and CEO, Ghana. He holds an MBA from Stanford Business School.



# MODERN SOLUTIONS

Thanks to Commercial Bank Financial Services (CBFS) and its “CBFS Trade” app, almost everyone can now trade Qatari stocks or bonds, manage their portfolio, and enjoy low-risk steady revenue using nothing more than a smartphone.

**THE COMMERCIAL BANK OF QATAR**—often simply referred to as the Commercial Bank—has provided a wide range of banking services to its customers over the years, always trying to stay ahead of the pack in the GCC. A passing look at the services provided by the Commercial Bank shows how much thought has been put in designing specific banking services, which suit the local and expat population of the country. Given Qatar’s appeal as an investment market with huge growth opportunities, the Commercial Bank in 2011 launched a new subsidiary, Commercial Bank Financial Services (CBFS), which specialized in providing investment services. CBFS is essentially a brokerage house, but as it is wholly owned by the Commercial Bank and has a paid-up capital of USD190 million, it is more dependable than most players in the market.

As a brokerage house linked to a major bank and a member of Qatar Stock Exchange, CBFS has been successful in developing unique asset management and asset accumulation products. In terms of equity, CBFS enables its users to digitally build a truly fluid portfolio. CBFS simplifies the trading of equities through its user-friendly and safe portal. “We ensure that our customers are well informed and at an advantage over other investors by providing various trading reports and market pointers, as well as daily updates about news related to stocks and economy,” points out CBFS.

Another key feature is an emphasis on digitalization. As of 2022, most services are accessible online with nothing more than one’s full name, a valid phone number, and their QID—a distinct national ID number issued for all Qataris and temporary residents. In order to register for stocks and bonds trade, meanwhile, an “account opening form” is available for download that can be filled out at leisure and then submitted to any branch of the Commercial Bank.

The Commercial Bank and CBFS took a digital turn well ahead of the pandemic, although their strong digital infrastructure greatly helped ensure continue their business as usual in 2020-2021. The bank had won a “key digital award,” for “Best Use of Digital in the Financial Services Sector,” according to The Peninsula back in 2013. And now, after just under a decade, the CBFS Trade app is receiving many positive reviews. CBFS is similarly proud of its achievements in terms of digitalization. Roughly 50% of CBFS’s interaction with its clients takes place through digital channels such as their award-winning app. The app allows CBFS clients to freely to trade on the Qatar Stock Exchange or buy and sell bonds and treasury bills.

The majority of clients who install the CBFS Trade app have a very clear objective: they want to have a reliable stream of income through their portfolio. CBFS helps its users to ensure their “fixed income” with the timely diversification of portfolios and creating a foolproof mix of assets.

Aside from stocks, bonds issued by large companies—or preferably the government—can promise good interests to investors, as well as a full repayment upon the bond reaching maturity. CBFS offers a mix of Qatari bonds.

Following the success of CBFS’ products such as its online trading app, its margin trading product (which remains unique in Qatar), its portfolio management solutions, and its fixed income scheme, among many others, the institution is working on several new financial products including “Liquidity Provisioning, Market Making, Investment Advisory.” Above all, however, CBFS hopes to attract the local population—and especially the younger generation—to the financial services industry through interesting and user-friendly packages. ✕

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Masraf Al Rayan has a vision to grow its local and regional market share in the Islamic banking sector and be a catalyst for change.

Fahad Al Khalifa  
GROUP CEO,  
MASRAF AL RAYAN



**How would you assess the merger between Masraf Al Rayan and Al Khalij Commercial Bank?**

I am excited for the future of the bank following its merger. The transaction represents a milestone for Qatar, as it is the first merger of listed banks locally. The combined entity operates as Masraf Al Rayan under Islamic banking principles. With over QAR174 billion in total assets, Masraf Al Rayan is one of the largest shariah-compliant banks in the region. With a robust capital position and strong liquidity, the bank is in a prime position to accelerate Qatar's journey toward Vision 2030 by leveraging its increased scale, compelling product offering and excellent talent base. The merger is a turning point in Qatar's banking sector, enabling growth for corporates facilitating landmark deals, fostering SME development and lending, supporting our private clients to manage and grow their wealth, and helping our retail customers to reach their potential. The group has international operations in France, the UK, and the UAE. Our larger merged bank will become an Islamic financial powerhouse that will support the prosperity of our clients and development of the nation and enhance the bank's social progress.

**How would you classify the country's current competition landscape in its banking sector?**

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do, and we realize long-term relationships are to the benefit of all parties. We have great pride in the thousands of deep relationships we have established across all sectors of society and business in Qatar, and overseas, through the many years we have been in operation. As we look to the future our aim is

to be the "bank you want to do business with." Through our people, branches, and technology we will be "Always Available, Always Connected," and we will not waver from our commitment to adhering to the principles of honor and integrity in our dealings with our valued clients to ensure their future success. As a leading Islamic financial institution, Masraf Al Rayan enjoys strong relationships with government and government-related entities, for which we are most grateful. Our bank intends to capture and grow market share in the Islamic banking sector in Qatar and regionally. We aim to be a center of innovation and digitalization as well as a catalyst for change, bringing about the next generation of Islamic banking. As a reliable partner in Islamic banking, we will target the private HNW, corporate, and public sectors financing requirements for development initiatives in Qatar and facilitate their overseas investment needs via our international footprint.

**What is the key for the bank to maintain a balance between traditional shariah banking values and modern banking being shaped by technology?**

Building on the region's culture and heritage, the Islamic banking sector in Qatar is witnessing strong growth; this is also fueled by rising migration from the conventional banking sector. While our immediate focus is on the operational integration of both banks into one seamless platform, our medium-term plans are ambitious. The transformation journey will focus on enhancing our customer experience through service excellence, speed, and technology. We are determined to increase the pace at which we digitalize Masraf Al Rayan

through greater investments in technology. By adopting a "high-tech, high-touch" approach, we will utilize technology to enable speed and growth and become the market leader in this arena; in parallel, we will enrich client services through appropriate segmentation via our dedicated teams of private, premium, and corporate relationship managers. These measures will strengthen the links between our local and international footprint in the UAE, France, and the UK to better serve our clients' overseas banking requirements. We will drive digitalization to redefine and upgrade the Islamic banking experience. We aim to breathe innovation into the field and introduce state-of-the-art products and services that truly push the envelope, while maintaining adherence to shariah principles and governance. ✖

#### BIO

Fahad Al Khalifa is a senior banker with over 20 years of experience. He started his career with Qatar Central Bank (QCB), later moving to Qatar National Bank (QNB) Treasury group, where he consistently moved up the ranks. In 2014, Al Khalifa was appointed Group CEO of Al Khalij Commercial Bank (al khaliji) QPSC, later becoming the GCEO of Masraf AL Rayan in 2021 upon the merger between Masraf Al Rayan and al khaliji. He holds a BSc in finance from Seattle University in the US.



# Tied to our roots and proud of our heritage

Bringing tomorrow's banking to Qatar today.



Ahlibank has been at the heart of the business community in Qatar for over 35 years. For all of that time we have stayed true to our traditional values and they have defined who we are today.

In line with the vision of Qatar, we are looking to the future and embracing change whilst retaining our heritage. Across all our business divisions, we are investing in people, technology, processes and premises to bring you tomorrow's banking today.

We offer a range of products and services to serve our current and future customers including; Corporate Banking, Retail & Private Banking, International Banking, Treasury & Investments and Brokerage Services.

Ahlibank. With you.

البنك الأهلي  
ahlibank



# commitment TO GROWTH

Ahlibank is spearheading its digital transformation by making major investments in technology infrastructure with tech-driven solutions to enhance the value proposition of its offerings to its customers.



Hassan AlEfrangi  
CEO,  
AHLIBANK

**Ahlibank's net profit was QAR713 million for the year ending 2021. What strategies lie behind the bank's consistent profit growth?**

Ahlibank delivered consistent profit growth driven by operating income results in 2021 in a challenging environment. Ahlibank is focused on customer service and business development to provide our customers with digital and easy to use solutions while improving the customer experience and serving them more efficiently. Ahlibank is spearheading its digital transformation by making major investments in technology infrastructure with tech-driven solutions built to enhance the value proposition of our offerings for our customers. At the same time engagement with customers and giving them personal service and attention has been our key differentiator.

**A large part of your success has been due to bond issuance in foreign markets. How would you define the bank's international landscape?**

Two strategic initiatives during the current year were significant milestones in the history of the bank. First was the inaugural issuance of USD300 million Additional Tier 1 Capital in the international markets at a highly competitive 4% coupon rate. At the time of issuance in February 2021, this was the lowest-ever rate for a conventional bank in the Central, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (CEEMA) region, with 86% of investors coming from outside the MENA region. Second was the successful completion of the fifth five-year bond issuance for USD500 million under Ahlibank's USD2-billion EMTN Program in the international debt capital markets in June 2021, which achieved a highly competitive coupon rate of 2%. This was supplemented by a healthy geographical split of international investors, with over 71% beyond the MENA region. These issuances bring investments into Qatar, as well as representing a vote of confidence from international investors not only for Ahlibank, but for Qatar itself. These two transactions also underpinned Ahlibank's fortress balance sheet strategy in terms of capital and stable funding, which ensures ABQ maintains a strong financial position to overcome any obsta-

cles that we may face from time to time.

**In 2021, Ahlibank officially launched the new Ahlipay Digital Wallet to the Qatari market. How has this app developed financial and e-payment services for all individuals and businesses?**

Ahlipay Digital Wallet works in line with Ahlibank's strategy of providing financial and e-payment services to all individuals and businesses. With its numerous privileges, Ahlipay gives users an advanced, secure, faster, and smarter payment experience. Ahlipay is based on Qatar Central Bank's initiative of Qatar mobile payments. The Ahlipay Digital Wallet is available to everyone. With seamless online enrollment, all residents of Qatar (Ahlibank and non-Ahlibank customers) and visitors can download the app, register, and start using it immediately, hassle-free, without the need to visit a branch. The Ahlipay merchant app is also a new and convenient way for merchants to handle their business transactions at zero set-up cost and rental fee-free for the first year. Ahlipay Merchant QR code payments provide a brand-new way for businesses to sell products more conveniently, have instant access to their funds, and monitor their transaction history with peace of mind.

**The Ahlibank Kawader program aims to recruit, develop, and build in-depth expertise in banking and finance among Qatari nationals. Can you elaborate more on it?**

The focus on Qatarization and the supporting of local talent development is integral to Ahlibank and will continue in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. The Ahlibank Kawader program aims to attract, recruit, develop, and build in-depth expertise in banking and finance amongst Qatari nationals. We are committed to developing and qualifying Qataris to become successful in the banking and finance industry and for them to assume leadership positions in the bank of tomorrow. Our HR strategy is always pivoted around the development and grooming of national talent, and to date over 10 Qataris have successfully completed our Ahlibank Kawader program and joined the bank in various business areas within the bank. ✖

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**Net profit of QAR713 million in 2021**

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**Leads digitalization process in banking sector**

#### BIO

Hassan Ahmad AlEfrangi was appointed CEO of Ahli Bank Q.P.S.C. (Ahlibank) by the board of directors in 2020. He started his career with Ahlibank and worked in various departments where he played a prominent role in the growth of the bank. AlEfrangi is an expert in business development, with extensive experience in retail banking and risk management. He has held many senior positions during his years at the bank, the last being Deputy CEO – Retail and Private Banking. Prior to joining Ahlibank, AlEfrangi was the Group CEO of Qatar General Insurance Co. He holds a bachelor's degree in finance and banking and has more than 20 years of experience in the banking field.



# TRANSFORMATIVE *experience*

Doha Bank is updating its business model and offerings in line with the rapid transformation of the sector.

Gudni Stiholt Adalsteinsson  
ACTING CEO,  
DOHA BANK



**How is Doha Bank working to promote ESG investments, and what has been the response from your client base?**

Doha Bank was the first Qatari bank to publish a corporate, social, and responsibility report starting in 2009. The bank was also the first Qatari bank to publish a sustainability report, which has been updated annually since 2011. Our sustainability reporting is aligned to the GRI Universal Standards Framework GRI and the Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) ESG reporting methodology. In terms of investment options, Doha Bank was the first listing from QSE to be included in the FTSE4Good Emerging Market Index. The bank is also the founder of QSE's first listed exchange traded fund, the QE INDEX ETF (QETF). In addition, the bank's private banking unit, in coordination with the Bank of Singapore, has been offering ESG equity fund solutions to our ultra-high and high net worth individuals. Now, in our latest move toward supporting ESG oriented investors, we are creating a Sustainable Bond Framework that will allow us to identify our qualifying green and social assets. Once this framework is in place and the assets validated by an external provider, the bank, depending on market opportunities, will execute its first sustainable bond.

**To what extent is Qatar's banking sector embracing digital transformation?**

Digitalization and financial inclusion go hand in hand. We are working closely with the Qatar Development Bank (QDB) to promote these fintechs, financing them together and even working with some as payment gateways. The product offerings of banks will change moving forward toward higher margin products that will re-

quire a point of contact with the clients. In such a scenario, Doha Bank, with its extensive branch network in Qatar, holds an advantage. I can foresee our branches shifting from solely service and transaction-based units where people come to cash cheques and so on toward more inclusive sales and experience centers. I therefore see our branch network as a great strategic advantage.

**What are your plans now that relations in the GCC have been reestablished?**

We are currently operational in 20 countries. Wherever Qatar has an economic influence, we have a presence, either as a functional office or a place to take care of trade and treasury. We have full-scale operations in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, India, and Kuwait. While we initially had two branches that were affected by the blockade, we have since overcome those hurdles, and see plenty of opportunities for further economic linkage. Now, as the economy recovers from the lasting effects of a global pandemic, we have identified several steps to further scale our operations.

**Doha Bank has outperformed the average of the Qatari banking sector in some key performance indicators. What were the main contributing factors to your performance?**

Sustainability is the name of the game. The approach has been to be moderate and mitigate risk, all while taking opportunities as they come up. Gradually, we scaled up without any acquisitions, organic in substance and slow, but steady. The only real challenges we faced were during the blockade, where we took up the recognition of market risk and provided for it. There was turbulence, and then COVID-19. We will

be competitive, and the size of our operations has always been consistent in our delivery lines. In the future, with a transformation taking place in terms of business remodeling, we will make sure keep pace and move in the same direction.

**Which sectors and projects will be able to sustain Qatar's momentum post-World Cup?**

2022 will be a first-of-its-kind celebration for all of the Arab world, with Qatar as its host. A great deal of development and modernization is taking place for the event. There are enough reasons to believe we will continue to see demand for sports with airports, seaports, and road linkages shaping up. Qatar has and will continue to invest in infrastructure and the transformation into sustainable development country underpinned by the 2050 Net Zero commitment will accelerate spending into sustainable energy project and other diversified ventures. ✖

#### BIO

Gudni Stiholt Adalsteinsson is the Acting CEO of Doha Bank and Chief Treasury and Investment Officer. He joined the bank in 2019 with 25 years of senior banking experience working in the UK, Germany, and Scandinavia for number of organizations including Credit Suisse, Lehman Brothers, AIB, and Legal & General Group. Adalsteinsson holds a bachelor's degree in economics and an MBA from the University of Cambridge, UK. He has been a non-executive board member of banks in UK and Scandinavia and has contributed to the field of liquidity management and investments as a published author and speaker.





Mohammed Gad  
CEO,  
STANDARD CHARTERED QATAR

**Standard Chartered is Qatar's oldest bank, having been established in 1950. How would you assess the connection between the bank and Qatar's extraordinary growth in the last few decades?**

Qatar is one of our oldest markets in the Middle East, and our presence here remains highly strategic. We are not a transactional partner, but stable and reliable partner with decades long banking relationship with the country. The bank has a long-term strategic view on any market, which revolves around being here for good. Qatar had a strong transformation, especially in the past 20 years, and we have been a proud partner of this change having made critical contributions at sensitive times in the country's history.

**How would you assess Standard Chartered's involvement, directly or indirectly, in the FIFA-related projects?**

We have been supporting the broader economy as well as key state-owned companies in Qatar. Our role has is one of local enablement and delivering the critical global connectivity. We give access to institutional and corporate clients to international capital markets, so they can get funding and allow clients to have accessibility to invest on our network. We bring them liquidity to finance their business aspirations and economic growth and also help them invest across different sectors. We are very excited by what the FIFA World Cup 2022 will bring and look to building on the remarkable exposure and progress that has been made.



Mohammed Ahmed Al-Suwaidi  
CHAIRMAN & MANAGING  
DIRECTOR,  
INVESTMENT HOUSE

**What is Investment House's approach when offering investment opportunities abroad for Qatari investors?**

Most of our investment products are located abroad, especially across Europe for our real estate investments. The cornerstone of our approach rests in understanding the market needs and identifying potential clients' demands, which we continue to accomplish through our ongoing extensive research, and markets knowledge and experience. Certainly, we thoroughly study potential investment opportunities worldwide, scrutinizing and focusing on those with robust economic, political, social, and legal aspects. We invest in countries such France, Germany, and Spain as they all have such solid aspects. Moreover, we take into account other factors to reinforce stability of our investments, similar to offtake agreements, long-term agreements, solid legal framework, and sustainability.

**How is Investment House navigating Qatar's economic growth evolution?**

We are open to all opportunities that have significant potential. We conduct comprehensive research to identify sound investments. Afterward, when we envision a prospect of real growth; we conduct in-depth studies and analyses on many scales including but not limited to risks, economic trends, and possible future effects on the sector. As a leading investment company, we also accentuate diversifying the sectors of our investments from real estate to shipping and logistics, energy, environment, and education; to mitigate risk and offer solutions that suit the different needs and preferences of our investors.

An ATM pictured at Souq Wakif in Doha



Image: Fliria Remli



# enhanced CAPACITIES

Qatar Credit Bureau is contributing to building a banking system using global technology, including credit scores.

Sheikha Maryam Bint Khalifa Al Thani  
CEO,  
QATAR CREDIT BUREAU

**What have been the major developments at Qatar Credit Bureau in the past year?**

Talking about major developments, we are constantly assessing the need and opportunities for developing our credit scoring model. In fact, the credit score is included in all of our reports, and we have extended the scoring to non-banking institutions, such as telecommunications and automobile companies. They can easily track the credit bureau's score within their loan system since it is integrated into the system. Perhaps 35% of our members have integrated their loan systems and live services directly with the scoring system. Using the scoring system, they can make decisions and access application forms directly. There are several different credit score models available. We are currently developing a scoring system for SMEs, aiming to elevate the current system to a higher level.

**Qatar Credit Bureau has received a certificate for cybersecurity and business continuity. What strategy are you implementing to provide trusted solutions to your clients to develop their financial sector?**

This is something we are extremely proactive about. On the digital side, we do not wait until an attack occurs on our system before continuing our work. Similarly, we developed our procedures policy based on these factors to ensure the continuity of our business and services. In addition, all Qatari institutions are aware of the risks associated with cyberspace, and they all conduct cybersecurity exercises. As part of our communication with all relevant regulators and authorities in Qatar, we are taking the necessary policies and procedures to ensure stability and safety.

**Qatar Credit Bureau has been working on providing credit information using sophisticated technologies. What is your approach to this digitalization process?**

In today's world, digital services and products are the backbones of all service providers, and we consider digital services and products to be the future of the Qatar Credit Bureau. One of our primary objectives is to continue providing solutions and services to our members and customers. As part of our efforts to make everything online during the pandemic, we launched an online system to provide customers with reports. On top of that, we are working on new Android and iPhone apps that will enable customers to order online reports at any time.

**In 2021, Qatar Credit Bureau signed an MoU with Qatar Financial Center (QFC) to facilitate and accelerate the query process and companies' access to services. What have been the benefits for both since then?**

The integration with QFC was essential to achieving a solution that would benefit both parties. With the first phase completed, QFC can receive credit reports online, and the second phase involves working with QFC to obtain real-time data from the commercial side so that we can match it with our data from the banks. The Credit Bureau and QFC are currently engaged in continuous efforts.

**How does Qatar Credit Bureau enhance women's participation in the national market?**

Women empowerment was a central theme in our National Vision QNV-2030 to position the Qatari women among others not only in the region but on a global scale as well. We are dedicated to empowering women in all sectors, not

only in the financial sector and are implementing this vision by ensuring women's participation and leadership in the Credit Bureau and QCB in general. From my position today as the CEO of Credit Bureau, this is an assurance that reflects the leadership support and encouragement given to young women in the financial and banking industries in Qatar.

**How aligned is the current situation with Qatar's expectations for this year, and what is the plan for the upcoming year?**

This year, Qatar will host the World Cup 2022, and we are working to enhance the capacity of our system and develop reports to meet the requirements. Credit Bureau strives to benchmark its services among the best in the region, therefore, self-assessment is continuously conducted to ensure compliance with international standards and new requirements. ✖

## BIO

In 2018, Sheikh Maryam Bint Khalifa Al Thani was appointed CEO of Qatar Credit Bureau, under the aegis of Qatar Central Bank. She has been with the bureau since it was established and has held several positions. She has managed a number of projects and holds extensive executive business experience, having led multi-functional teams as director of the economic intelligent department for five years. After graduating from Qatar University with a bachelor of sciences degree in business administration with a minor in English, she joined the Qatar Central Bank in its investment department.



## FOCUS

Fintech mindset

# AN EYE ON THE GOAL

In the financial services space, fintechs are the Swiss Army knife of digital solutions.

**THE INHERENT EFFICIENCIES** of the digital space have brought fintechs and the start-up ecosystem into sharp relief. Often visionary start-ups in origin, these firms bring financial participation to the unbanked, enhance traditional banks' digital personas, and fuel the inexorable drive towards a cashless society. While the UAE claims the lion's share of fintech investment (70% in 2019), Qatar's technology-oriented initiatives are making headway. As Group CEO of Doha Bank, Raghavan Seetharaman, told TBY, "All the dynamics in the global space are changing. Apple Pay, Google Pay, and other digital wallet tools are coming on," he says, "and there is tremendous transformation taking place on the payment side. Fintech itself represents 85-95% of payments, so there is a revolution taking place." Indeed, by tapping a wider audience of SMEs and entrepreneurs, the financial services sector facilitates economic diversification—a pillar of the nation's National Vision 2030. Small wonder that fintech is a key component of the Second National Development Strategy 2018-2022.

## QATAR'S FINTECH SCENE

Qatar has a well-established financial services arena, home to giants such as Qatar National Bank (QNB), the Middle East's largest bank by assets. This environment is in and of itself a huge factor in fintechs' ascendancy. Moreover, Qatar's digital economy is advancing in term of interaction between government, business and citizen, business and consumer, and business with business. Meanwhile, e-commerce and online transactions have taken root like never before, offering convenience for basics like remittances, contactless payment, remote insurance claims processing, and lending to SMEs.

Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) recognized the potential for innovative digital solutions in the frozen world of the lockdown that pre-saged comprehensive digital adoption. By 2019, QFC, the nation's one-stop shop for licensing, commercial registration, immigration, and related services, had encompassed 800 fintech, IT, tax, and investment consulting firms and expects to scale 1,000 this year. By its reckoning, based in part on the pronounced arrival of fintechs in Qatar, ICT spend in the as-yet unsaturated market is set to scale USD9 billion by 2024.

QFC expects this to help cement Qatar's status as a regional fintech hub. Indeed, the nation has recently seen the launch of its National Fintech Strategy. And meanwhile, the iron is kept hot by the QFC's Fintech Circle and Tech Talk promoting awareness of the local ecosystem.

## MOTIVATIONAL THINKING

Fintechs worldwide are understandably something of a darling child attracting generous state funding and start-up conditions to foster local talent in the disrupted world of international finance. Qatar has laid out a regulatory framework conducive to innovation and the adoption of international standards and best practice. Qatar Central Bank's (QCB) National Fintech Strategy is building a fintech ecosystem aimed at motivating international fintechs to set up regional launch-pads in Qatar. Initiatives to foster and retain local talent take the form of funded accelerator and incubator programs and close collaboration between industry and academia.

## QATAR FINTECH HUB

As 2019 concluded, Qatar launched its National Fintech Strategy, establishing the Qatar Fintech Hub (QFTH) in April of the following year, to realize initiatives championed by Qatar Central Bank. In step with Qatar Vision 2030, QFTH earmarked fintechs as tomorrow's engine of economic growth, an idea swiftly borne out by international interest shown. Indeed, by 1Q2021, QFTH was already ranked as the MENA region's second-largest fintech investor, supported by around 40 fintechs from around the world. The first wave of the QFTH's dedicated Fintech Incubator and Accelerator programs offering financial, mentorship, and training support addressed payment and emerging technologies to address the challenges of financial institutions.

Over 1,300 applications were received from fintechs overseas developing advanced technologies. QFTH's second wave that broke in 2020 involved knowledge exchange partnerships with several countries ahead of the digital curve, with Swedish fintech Findec being a notable example. Incidentally, Sweden is a particularly interesting nation, which, having pioneered banknotes in Europe in 1661, is now set to be the first nation to realize cashless adoption and likely to be entirely digital by March 2023.

2022 is the big date for the "beautiful game." And the World Cup certainly provides an ideal stage for Qatar to showcase cashless payment and champion broader digital adoption. Qatar Vision 2030 is clear about the catalytic role fintechs are to play in the digital economy, and a burgeoning ecosystem is honing local talent and leveraging international advances in the process. Finally, it is a sobering thought that close to 2 billion adults today lack access to financial services. Fortunately, as fintechs' technological solutions extend a supporting hand to the unbanked and small business, they also, as QFTH will tell you, grease the wheels of diversification. ✖

# powering THE FUTURE

In Qatar, Mastercard is a technology enabler of choice helping to connect government entities, digital e-tailers, telcos, and fintechs to accelerate digital payments and a cashless economy.

Erdem Çakar  
COUNTRY MANAGER, QATAR AND KUWAIT,  
MASTERCARD



**What would be your assessment on Mastercard's position in Qatar's highly competitive and diverse financial sector?**

In an evolving digital financial services ecosystem, Mastercard is a technology enabler of choice that connects government entities, digital e-tailers, telcos and fintechs to accelerate Qatar's adoption of digital payments and fast-tracking its cashless economy. We provide technology solutions, platforms and propositions that enable a superior digital experience for consumers across the Middle East and North Africa, in addition to driving greater financial inclusion for these populations. In Qatar, we are collaborating with multiple partners in the ecosystem, which is a testament to our commitment of catering to Qatari businesses of all sizes and driving digital transformation in the country. We have been focused on helping both corporates and SMEs by giving them innovative products and payments solutions that enable them to scale and grow, powered by Mastercard's technology and Payment Gateway Services. Most recently, we launched Apple Pay with our partner banks to cardholders therefore providing a safe, secure, and fast way to pay. Apple Pay helps customers avoid handing their payment card to someone else, touching physical buttons or exchanging cash. We will continue to leverage our innovative Mastercard Digital Enablement Service (MDES) for more mobile payment opportunities in order to provide additional peace of mind and security alike for every transaction process through our network. This rollout supported the country's efforts to develop digitization initiatives, enabled merchant success and accelerated the adoption of high-security digital payments, and is aligned with the Qatari national vision 2030 and digital transformation journey.

**The payments industry has gone through a recent transformational digital process. Which actions have you taken to best cater to an increasingly digital population in Qatar?**

Qatar's population is digitally savvy and increasingly embracing omni-channel payment technologies. Because of its fast, secure, and touch-free experience, contactless technology was a recent digital catalyst for exploring new digital payment methods, spurred by the pandemic. More than 100 markets saw contactless as a share of total in-person transactions climb by at least 50% between 1Q2020 and the same period in 2021, and contactless continues to prove its vitality. We have taken the opportunity to launch and roll out new products that are boosting digital payments amongst businesses and consumers, including initiatives and products within the e-commerce space. As example, Click to Pay is a next generation e-commerce technology that makes it easy and safer for consumers to instantly check out without the need to enter their card credentials every time or to store this sensitive information with different merchants. Powered by tokenization, Click to Pay reduces fraud risk, with a potential for higher approval rates and fewer abandoned shopping carts. The new solution simplifies the online checkout experience by replacing the manual entry of personal account numbers and information at checkout. Consumers benefit from a seamless digital checkout button that keeps the underlying card on file data protected by industry standard security.

**What can we expect in terms of payments innovation to be implemented in Qatar and brought about by Mastercard?**

We will continue to join hands with our partners to ensure that consumers and businesses in Qatar have access to the

last, most innovative, and most intuitive payment solutions. We always develop these to meet the changing needs of the market. There's Mastercard Tap on Phone for example – an innovative technology and cost-effective application which allows merchants to accept electronic payments directly on their smartphone or tablet. Once downloaded, businesses can immediately offer it to their customers, providing consumers with a flexible, seamless, intuitive, and secure checkout experience. Tap on Phone turns Android smartphones into secure payment acceptance devices for contactless cards, mobile wallets, and smartwatches with no additional equipment or setup-related costs, making it ideal for SMEs. Our Mastercard Digital First program is another initiative to look forward to—it offers consumers the ease of applying online, instant digital card issuance, real-time card management and secure, straightforward online payments. ✖

#### BIO

Erdem Çakar is the Country Manager of Qatar & Kuwait at Mastercard. He has over 20 years of banking and payments experience, having held number of roles across multinational banks and payment firms. In his previous role at Mastercard, he was the head of sales for Turkey as well as the country manager of Azerbaijan. During his 10-plus years in Mastercard, he has worked closely with banks and fintechs focusing on the expansion and digital transformation of the payment ecosystem. Prior to Mastercard, he was a senior director in Citi European HQ. Before that, he held a number of positions at Citi including operations, technology, and risk. He holds an economics degree from Boğaziçi University in Turkey.

# PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Whether inside or outside Qatar we are the companion you can trust. At Sharq Insurance we are continuously using our creativity to be the leaders in creating innovative and affordable insurance plans for both Retail & Corporate clients. Our promise is to provide bespoke services and take care of our clients like family.





# a new WAY

Sharq Insurance facilitates proactive management of general insurance risk protection and offers services to corporate and individual clients in Qatar.

David Cook  
CEO,  
SHARQ INSURANCE



**How does Sharq Insurance secure consumer trust and brand loyalty?**

An insurance company is all about trust. The service that we provide only occurs when there is a claim, which generally is an emergency and must be handled with delicacy. So, you only know how good your insurer is when you have a claim. Building confidence with consumers and purchases of our products, typically only happen at the claim process, but we would prefer to build brand awareness and trust before a claim occurs. Therefore, we are kicking off an ad campaign to try to not only build brand awareness, but make people realize that Sharq is here to serve you in your times of need. This is a typical approach by insurers globally, but I have not seen this approach here in the Gulf region. So, we are interested to see how the public and consumer react to our campaign and the content that we are going to add to our social media. We're going to focus on building trust, and one of our mottos will be to provide bespoke services for our products.

**Can you elaborate on the company's rebranding in 2020?**

Currently, our assessment of the insurance market is that the consumer has been acclimatized, if you will, solely to price because they are receiving few value-added services. Hence, we understand that in order to break that trend, we are going to have to provide the right price while providing the value-added services that they are not getting cur-

rently. We intend to change the marketplace to where price is not the only denomination or consideration to buy a product. We basically have two different segments, the consumer segment, and corporate products. The brand awareness and the value-added service—the bespoke service—is different for a consumer than it is for a corporation. So, we are dividing our company and our employees into segments to service the needs of each. For the consumer, we have the advantage of being a wholly owned subsidiary of the bank which has depositors and credit card clients.

**What is the value of know-how and human capital formation within the firm?**

Most recently, we had an offsite gathering where we spent the majority of the day sharing our business plan for this year. As a result, we decided to take the time to recognize employees for their contributions, giving out five-, 10- and 15-year awards for their employment record, and I was astonished that these people had worked here and never been properly recognized. We also initiated an employee of the month program and try to take the opportunity in the office to celebrate small activities to create an atmosphere of togetherness and teamwork. We believe human capital is the most important asset that we have. One of the things that I've developed over several years is what I call the six Ps—the people, process, product, philosophy, and producers equals profit. Producers are what we refer to as those who sell our

products on our behalf. These are brokers and agents. Ultimately, the people who know the best working process are the employees themselves. Additionally, we've replaced the entire leadership team with highly qualified international insurance leaders whose first priority is to lead, teach, coach, inspire, and mentor.

**What are your priorities for the coming year?**

The number one priority is our employees. So, if I take care of them, they will take care of the company. Then there's the ad campaign, which is crucial in that our company, despite having been established 14 years ago, is for the most part unknown as well as it should be. If we get the brand recognition, our employees will be all the prouder to work here. Our two-year goal and objective is to be rated as the most preferred insurer employer in Qatar. ✖

**BIO**

After completing his university degree, David Cook began his insurance career as a marketing-underwriting trainee for Aetna Casualty & Surety. His career later excelled when he joined American International Group (AIG), where he was appointed to key executive positions in the US, East Asia, and MENA. He also spent six years with Allianz. Between Allianz and AIG, Cook spent six years in the Gulf region working in both the UAE and KSA, which later led to his appointment as CEO of Sharq Insurance in 2021.



FIFA WORLD CUP  
Qatar 2022

HUBLOT

360

Days

3

Hours

29

Minutes

HUBLOT

The 2022 FIFA World Cup countdown clock

Image: Hasan Zaibi





# 2022 FIFA World Cup & Sports

## ALMOST TIME

**T**his winter, the FIFA World Cup will be held in the Middle East for the first time in its over-90-year history. And while this is significant for the region, for Qatar, the host to be, it is transformative. No other international event draws so many eyes, nor offers the kind of long-term benefits, as the World Cup. Indeed, Qatar is hoping the tournament will put it on the map as a global tourism—and sports—destination. The energy the event has injected into the construction sector as well has left Qatar, and especially Doha, with modern infrastructure from trains and buses to hotels and, most importantly, sporting facilities.

The first whistle blows on November 20 at Al Bayt Stadium in Doha, and by the time the event concludes, up to 1.5 million visitors will have made the trip to Qatar, generating around USD17 billion for the local economy.

Fans will watch the action unfold across eight

state-of-the-art stadiums, stay in new hotels, and shop at new malls, such as Place Vendôme. They will even get the chance to visit Lusail, a new district of Doha that is set to be the epicenter of the tournament. The event will also be the first carbon-neutral World Cup, thanks to the development of green mass transit systems and more.

Beyond the World Cup, many initiatives have also sprung up to ensure sports remain at the forefront of the country's cultural appeal. Recent years have seen the emergence of diverse projects such as Qatar SportsTech, an accelerator program, as well as Sport Accelerator, a pioneering hub under Aspire Zone Foundation that brings together elite sports businesses under one roof.

For this chapter, The Business Year interviewed the main players across Qatar's sports ecosystem to give readers an idea of just what to expect post World Cup. ✖



Qatar international player Akram Afif pictured during the 2019 America Cup Group B game between Paraguay and Qatar at Maracana Stadium



# unifying power of sports & ENTERTAINMENT

Qatar Sports Investments is proud to be at the forefront of developing sports and entertainment brands, businesses, and communities in Qatar and around the world.

Nasser Ghanim Al-Khelaifi

PRESIDENT, PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN | MINISTER OF STATE |  
CHAIRMAN, QATAR SPORTS INVESTMENTS | QIA BOARD MEMBER |  
GROUP CHAIRMAN, BEIN MEDIA GROUP | UEFA EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE MEMBER | CHAIRMAN, EUROPEAN CLUB ASSOCIATION



**How have events of the past year affected your roles?**

Whatever divisions or challenges we may face, football brings people together—people of all nationalities, ages, backgrounds, interests, and circumstances. We saw this during the pandemic, where sport gave people hope—we may have been further apart physically, but we became closer through our shared experiences of sport. Nothing has the capacity to inspire and to encourage people to be the best they can be quite like sport.

**It has been a significant year for UEFA and the European Club Association (ECA), of which you were appointed Chairman in 2021. What have been your achievements this year?**

ECA has a unique voice, as it represents over 240 football clubs of Europe—clubs of all shapes, sizes, and locations. As an organization, we have made decisions over the past year that will shape European football for decades to come. We have focused on bringing financial stability to the European football pyramid, particularly through new financial sustainability rules. We have also focused on giving more of a voice to small and medium-sized clubs especially through recent reforms to the UEFA Club Competitions based on sporting merit. In addition, we have made European football more inclusive and diverse through new membership structures for women's football and youth football; however, the most important achievement of the past year has perhaps been shifting the philosophy of European football administration to being based around collective interest, not self-interest.

**How would you describe the development of Paris Saint-Germain F.C. over the past decade under your leadership?**

What we have achieved in our first decade at Paris Saint-Germain is based on a clear vision and a commitment to excellence in everything we do. Our sporting success across men's and women's football, handball, judo, and e-sports is outstanding; while our commercial growth, international brand expansion and digital influence has set the very highest standards. However, we are most proud of our social impact work—we now have 160 youth academy centers across 15 countries inspiring the next generation, while our Foundation supports some of the most in-need charities and causes for social good around the world.

**Premier Padel is one of the most exciting new tours in sport. What are the ambitions of Qatar Sports Investments for this project?**

We have fantastic ambitions for Premier Padel based around professionalizing and globalizing the sport, while also placing the players at the heart of its future. Together with the International Padel Federation and the Professional Padel Association, we are building a new dawn for the sport. We were proud that the first major of the new tour was hosted in Qatar by the Qatar Tennis, Squash, & Badminton Federation. In 2023, padel will be part of the European Games 2023 for the first time, and the Olympic Council of Asia has also started the process for accepting padel into the Asian Games shortly. Padel is the sport of the future, and it is great that QSI is shaping its growth and development so positively.

**As an official broadcaster of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 in 25 countries across MENA and France, what are beIN's plans to captivate the world?**

As a leading global media company, beIN will proudly showcase the very best of Qatar to the world during what will be the greatest World Cup ever hosted. Qatar 2022 will be the first World Cup where over two-thirds of the world's population will be able to watch the tournament in prime time—that's over 6 billion people. As one of the leading official broadcasters of this historic event, we will do everything we can for fans across MENA and France to make memories for a lifetime and be a global ambassador for the Arab world.

**What would be your message to fans ahead of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022?**

We share His Highness the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani's vision for the World Cup being a truly special and unifying moment for the entire MENA region and the Arab world. As a nation, Qatar is honored to welcome fans from all around the world, and we have no doubt that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will be the greatest show on earth. ✖

#### BIO

Nasser Ghanim Al-Khelaifi is President of Paris Saint-Germain, Chairman of Qatar Sports Investments, Group Chairman of beIN MEDIA GROUP, a UEFA Executive Committee Member, Chairman of European Club Association, a QIA Board Member, and a Minister of State.



# A TRUE LEGACY

With the tireless work of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, Qatar has forged a path toward becoming a leading sports hub in the MENA region.

Hassan Al Thawadi  
SECRETARY GENERAL,  
SUPREME COMMITTEE FOR DELIVERY & LEGACY



**How has the pandemic shaped the run up to the organization of the event for the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy?**

Our journey to Qatar 2022 started in 2010, so the pandemic was not the defining moment of our journey to the tournament by any means. The pandemic was our biggest challenge though, and three years on, the world seems to be getting back to a new norm. With the global vaccine rollout taking effect in many countries, and travel confidence returning to many consumers, we are confident we will see many football fans travel to Qatar later in 2022. Given our record-breaking global hospitality and ticket sales, much of which hit the market for fans mid-pandemic, it is looking certain we'll see some good crowds in Qatar for the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab world. We continue to be extremely diligent and work hand-in-hand with Qatar's Ministry of Public Health, WHO, and FIFA to make ensure this year's tournament is a safe one for everyone involved. Qatar paved the way globally for the safe return of sport and professional football during the pandemic, successfully hosting 77 games during the AFC Champions League East and West matches, including the final, via innovating a secure bio-bubble concept that set an international benchmark at the time. Qatar also hosted the FIFA Club World Cup 2020 amidst a secure bio-bubble, marking the first FIFA tournament during the pandemic. More recently, we successfully hosted 32 matches during the inaugural FIFA Arab Cup. The tournament witnessed the highest attendance ever at a football match in

Qatar where over 63,000 fans attended the Qatar v UAE match during the quarter-final stage at Al Bayt Stadium.

**Qatar has created a multi-million sports industry thanks to the hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022. How will the committee be engaged in other potential bids?**

Qatar has always positioned itself as a leader in sport, hosting a wealth of sporting events dating back to the 1970s, and the FIFA World Cup will not be the last for us. The country has hosted over 600 sporting events since it won the hosting rights to the World Cup, and many of these will continue post-2022 as we look to help the country achieve its 2030 vision. Qatar will continue to host a number of annual sporting events such as the WTA Qatar Ladies Open and Qatar ExxonMobil, Commercial Bank Golf Masters, Grand Prix of Qatar and the Formula One Qatar Grand Prix to name but a few. When the curtains come down on 2022, the country will also be gearing toward hosting yet another memorable edition of the Asian Games in 2030. We are also bidding for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup. I am sure that many of the talented individuals we have hired over the last decade or so will continue to help Qatar deliver these sporting events. I am also sure that through educational program such as our Josoor Institute, we will continue helping develop the next generation of sporting and events professional for the region who will continue delivering work class events for years to come.

**What will be Qatar FIFA World Cup 2022's legacy for the world?**

Legacy lies at the heart of this entire project. We have always believed this World Cup will leave behind a positive social, economic, and environmental impact not just for the people of Qatar, but the region as well. Hosting a sporting mega event of this scale for the first time in the Middle East and Arab world will have an impact on the perception of the entire region and we are confident it will help breakdown many of the longstanding stereotypes that exist. With an expected million plus fans travelling to the country, and over 6 billion tuning in to watch from around the world, it's an unrivalled opportunity to introduce the world to a new region and all it has to offer and dispel some of the misconceptions people have about this part of the world. ✖

#### BIO

Hassan Al Thawadi is Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, the organization charged with delivering the infrastructure and host country planning and operations for the FIFA World Cup 2022™. He is also Chairman of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC, the joint venture between Qatar and FIFA that is responsible for leading the tournament's planning and delivery. His appointment in 2011 as Secretary General followed his role as CEO of Qatar's 2022 Bid Committee. A lawyer by profession, Al Thawadi previously served as General Counsel for Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) and Qatar Holding. He holds board positions at QIA, Katara Hospitality, Qatar International Islamic Bank and Qatari Diar amongst others.



# a tournament TO REMEMBER



Nasser Al Khater  
CEO,  
FIFA WORLD CUP QATAR 2022

The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is just the beginning to making Qatar a regional sporting hub as the country continues growing its sports events-hosting portfolio.

**How have you developed Qatar World Cup's sustainability, and how will it take shape during the event itself?**

From day one, we knew the World Cup was more than a 28-day footballing event. It was a chance to harness the power of football to drive positive and sustainable change beyond the tournament. A key part of that is realizing and leaving behind a sustainable human, social, economic, and environmental change not just in Qatar, but the region as well. To achieve such change, ourselves and key stakeholders in Qatar have worked on several campaigns to ensure a lasting legacy of institutional and cultural change across various sectors including tourism, hospitality, economy, education and more. Qatar is committed to host a carbon-neutral World Cup. Key elements such as fan transportation via the Doha metro to stadiums and wider festivities, electric buses and the tournament's small geographical footprint supports that vision. We have also achieved ISO 20121 certification, the third-party international standard that sets requirements for developing and implementing an effective management system to deliver a sustainable event. Qatar 2022 is the first World Cup in history to achieve this certification

**Technology and innovation will be key to the hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. How will it help improve fan experience and the overall smooth organization of the event?**

Qatar 2022 is an innovative tournament across all fronts. It is a tournament of firsts. Qatar 2022 is the first edition of the tournament to be held in the Middle East and Arab World. For many fans, this will be their first time visiting Qatar or even the region, so the World Cup is more than just the football; it is a unique opportunity for fans to explore our region's rich culture, heritage, and customs—a chance for them to experience them all firsthand and dismiss any misconceptions they may have held about it for years. The FIFA World Cup 2022 will be the most compact tour-

nament yet, with no two stadiums further than an hour apart, meaning internal air travel is eliminated, and visitors and players alike can stay in the same accommodation throughout the tournament, further reducing the tournament's carbon footprint and supporting efforts to host the first carbon neutral edition of the event. Fans will be able to make the most of the football atmosphere in the stadiums and across the country by attending more than one live match in a day—an unprecedented opportunity for passionate fans. A key promise in our bid, this will also be the first World Cup to feature cooled stadiums. While temperatures will be mild in November and December, the cooling technology will be used to overall the fan experience by ensuring constant cool and clean air. Outside of the stadiums, the fans will have the chance to immerse themselves in an electric environment of celebration, whether at the fan zones, concerts, beaches or even in the malls—the country will be one big football festival offering something for everyone.

**How would you evaluate the whole ecosystem created to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the infrastructure where the games will be held?**

We are pleased to let fans see the world-class facilities that Qatar has developed for their national teams. As with all of our World Cup projects, legacy planning has been a key factor, and many of the training sites renovated and built will benefit local clubs and communities long after the tournament has finished. The new hotels will also support Qatar's growing tourism industry post-2022. Over the last decade, Qatar has hosted over 600 regional and international sporting events, including the FIFA Club World Cup on two occasions, and our major test event, the FIFA Arab Cup. These tournaments in particular have helped us to prepare for the greatest show on Earth and prepare to welcome the world to our home. ✖

## BIO

Nasser Al Khater is the CEO of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the joint venture between Qatar and FIFA that was launched in 2019. He is also a senior advisor to the Secretary General's Office of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy. He is responsible for leading the planning and delivery for the FIFA World Cup 2022. Before joining the bid committee in 2009, Al Khater worked at Shell Qatar and HSBC, as well as with Qatari government agencies to establish development strategies for SMEs and national leadership development programs, which led to the establishment of Enterprise Qatar and the Qatar Leadership Centre.



An interior view of the Al Janoub Stadium in Al Wakrah







Image: Novshad Thekkeyil



## INTERVIEW



## BEST OF *the best*

Working to develop more professionals in the long run, increase fan engagement, and boost corporate sponsorship, QSL has made great progress in just a few years.

### BIO

The CEO of QSL, Hani Taleb Ballan holds a bachelor of mechanical engineering and pre-master's diploma in project management from the University of Oxford Brookes and Lille University of Science and Technology. He was previously a FIFA referee, vice chairman of FIFA Referees committee, vice chairperson of AFC Referees Committee, and chairman of QFA Referees Committee.

Hani Taleb Ballan  
CEO,  
QATAR STARS LEAGUE (QSL)

### What strategies does QSL use to improve the championship's technical levels?

Since the beginning, QSL has built its strategy based on four main goals—higher performance, professionalism, fan passion, and corporate leadership—to achieve its purpose of delivering high-quality competitive football entertainment. Our vision was to become one of the top three leagues in Asia, and we have achieved it; however, we want to raise the bar and bring the highest level of professionalism to all levels by implementing the new professional development strategy.

### What has been the role played by sponsors and partners on these developments?

Sponsors and partners have a major role to play in our scheme of things. Our tournaments, competitions, and events would not become totally successful without the active participation and support of our various stakeholders. They contribute immensely toward achieving our goals.

### How does the Qatar Stars League inspire greater engagement from fans at the national and international levels?

QSL actively promotes fan engagement. We leave no stone unturned in inspiring greater engagement from fans by having specific events, activities and programs, be they at the club, community, national, or international level. All that should come in handy when Qatar hosts the Arab world's first FIFA World Cup later this year. We interact and engage with fans through innovative ways with an aim of enhancing the fan experience.

### The new plan of action will also see the number of teams in QSL being reduced to 10 from the present 12 from 2023-2024 season onward. What are the benefits of this new participation agreement?

The new professional development strategy is based on various pillars—a new broadcasting revenue distribution system, reducing the number of clubs in the Qatar Stars League to 10, a new firm club participation agreement, a central scouting team (CST), and a balanced distribution of Qatari talents. Our goal is to raise the level of professionalism on and off the

pitch for all clubs in the first and second divisions. The clubs will have a better distribution of broadcasting revenue and, by introducing the new club participation agreement, they will follow the highest professional governance standards, which will reflect on their management and playing performance.

### QSL has constituted a central scouting team. How will this body monitor the club's recruitment policies and guide with new policies?

The central scouting team will support the clubs in scouting top talents and coaches. The strategy is to understand clubs' needs and philosophies and provide them with candidates that suit them and add value to the team. The goal is to make Qatar a hub of talent rather than a place to retire. We have had many successful players and coaches who, at the time they came here, were at the beginning of their careers, but made their name here and moved to other countries and achieved great accomplishments. Nevertheless, scouting talented players and coaches will help Qatari players develop in the long run.

### Qatar has achieved the highest standards in terms of football facilities. How will this influence the domestic league after the 2022 FIFA World Cup?

Having such top-level facilities will help all stakeholders of the football ecosystem in Qatar to achieve great goals. Clubs will be able to play and train at high-level facilities, commercial partners will benefit from a higher visibility opportunity, and fans will enjoy a great experience at top-level stadiums. The legacy of hosting mega events in the country will benefit our league in the coming years.

### What are the league's main goals before and after the World Cup?

Football stakeholders in the country are prepared in line with the country's vision to become a global sport capital. As the domestic league, we aim to observe, learn and implement the highest standards in football industry. The World Cup will be an accelerator to achieve our goals. Our new professional development strategy will benefit from the momentum that will be created. ✖

# BACK OF THE NET

After years of preparation, the footballing world will descend on Qatar in late 2022 as the country hosts the pinnacle of the beautiful game, the FIFA World Cup 2022.



Number of teams competing



Start of competition



Cup final



Number of Stadiums



Expected visitors



Expected boost to the economy

## FAVOURITE TEAMS



BRAZIL



FRANCE



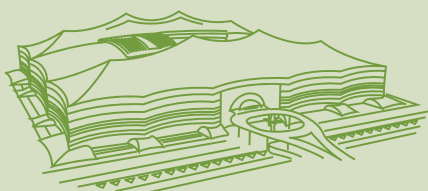
ENGLAND



SPAIN

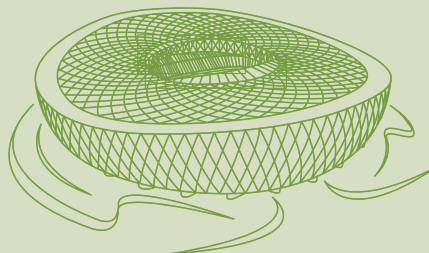
### AL BAYT STADIUM

**CAPACITY:** 60,000 **COST:** USD770 million  
**NUMBER OF MATCHES HOSTED:** 9  
**DESIGN:** Traditional nomadic tent



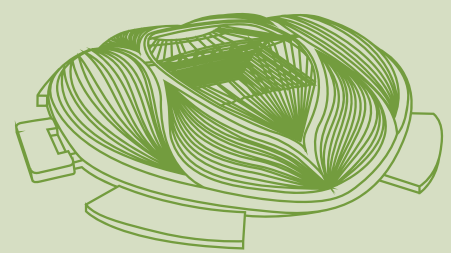
### LUSAIL STADIUM

**CAPACITY:** 80,000 **COST:** USD767 million  
**NUMBER MATCHES HOSTED:** 10 (including the final)  
**DESIGN:** State of the art metropolis



### AL JANOUB STADIUM

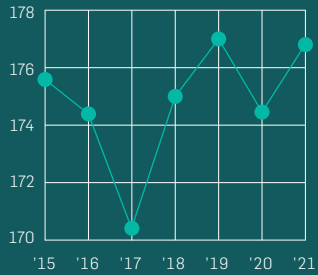
**CAPACITY:** 40,000 **COST:** USD656 million  
**NUMBER OF MATCHES HOSTED:** 7  
One of Qatar's oldest inhabited areas



A gas facility pictured in Qatar

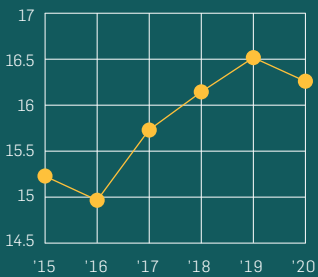
### NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION (B CU M)

SOURCE: Y CHARTS



### PER CAPITA ELECTRICITY GENERATION (kWh)

SOURCE: OUR WORLD IN DATA



### ELECTRICITY GENERATION (TWh)

SOURCE: OUR WORLD IN DATA

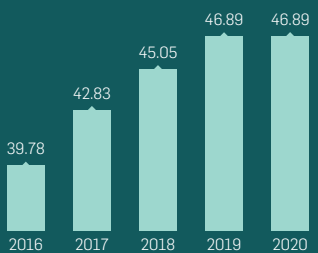


Image: Glimas





# Energy Transition

## SLOW & STEADY

**Q**atar has come to rely on an ever-evolving strategy to guarantee energy supply, reclaiming the title as the world's top liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporter, which is, crucially, the main driver of the Gulf nation's energy transition.

The country used its considerable hydrocarbons wealth to invest at home and abroad, striking deals to guarantee energy security as it sees fit. Deals have been struck with energy firms such as Exxon Mobil Corp., TotalEnergies SE, Royal Dutch Shell, and ConocoPhillips in order to materialize the planned North Field expansion project, a nearly USD30-billion expansion to the world's largest LNG project. This growing capacity will go a long way to meeting the world's growing demand for energy while supporting a lower emissions future.

There are myriad reasons for high oil and gas prices around the world at present, including capital expenditure in the upstream industry, the impact of COVID-19, and the war in Ukraine, although with energy firms also posting record profits, we are clearly a long way from a sustainable reality. Qatari officials have expressed their dissatisfaction with the high price of gas and be-

lieve investing in its gas fields will help to bring down prices moving forward.

In remarks on the start of work on the North Field East LNG project, a part of the wider North Field expansion, Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi, Minister of State for Energy Affairs and the President & CEO of QatarEnergy, said: "This is a historic landmark for Qatar's energy industry and for the world's largest LNG development. The North Field East project is an iconic achievement that will not only ensure the optimal utilization of Qatar's natural resources, but will also provide the world with the cleaner and more reliable energy it needs."

But while gas is seen as a cleaner alternative to oil, it should be viewed as somewhat of a stepping stone, a transitory fuel on the path to truly sustainable energy sources. With this in mind, Qatar recently inaugurated the Kharsaah Solar Plant, a giant 800-MW facility that will provide renewable power to the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup, ensuring the competition be "net zero."

Elsewhere, green bonds issuances, the installation of power storage units and solid waste treatment facilities, and the development of power grid and generation projects are under way to aid the sustainable ecosystem. ✖

## FOCUS

Qatar Energy rebrand

# NEW NAME, NEW OUTLOOK

Qatar Petroleum became Qatar Energy in 2021. What seems like a simple rebrand could have a huge impact.

**SAAD BIN SHERIDA AL KAABI** wears many hats. As well as his cabinet role as Minister of State for Energy Affairs, he is also the President and CEO of Qatar Petroleum. Or at least he was, until October 2021, when he announced Qatar Petroleum would now be known as Qatar Energy.

While mostly symbolic for now, the name change offers a hint at Qatar's priorities going forward, as well as its rise to prominence as a global LNG superpower.

The state-owned company, established in 1974, operates all oil and gas activities in Qatar, including exploration, production, the local and international sale of crude oil, natural gas, and gas liquids, refined products, synthetic fuels, petrochemicals, fuel additives, fertilizers, liquefied natural gas (LNG), steel, and aluminum. The role of Qatar Energy, therefore, cannot be overstated, especially considering that over half of Qatar's GDP is derived from its hydrocarbons resources.

While active in a number of fields, the North Field looms large over the natural gas sector, especially in light of the growing energy crisis in Europe, which has seen Western diplomats flock to Qatar in order to secure alternative supplies in the face of Russian aggression. Speaking at the announcement in October, Al Kaabi stated that, "We are moving full-steam ahead to develop the North Field by building state-of-the-art LNG trains that would

take our leadership position further with a production capacity of 126 million tons per annum by 2027. Not only that, but we are making sure that we protect our environment by keeping our carbon footprint at a minimum. This is why we are utilizing sophisticated carbon sequestration methods to capture and sequester 9 million tons of CO2 per annum by the end of this decade."

Focusing further on the reasoning behind the rebrand, the minister concluded by saying; "Becoming Qatar Energy reflects our understanding of the global changes and our response to the need to protect our planet and int environment. Not only will our LNG projects bring additional cleaner energy to customers across the globe, but we will continue our heightened commitment to our central role in the global energy transition."

Qatar Energy's rebrand is but the latest stop on its journey, and the biggest since it joined the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in 2019. And ditching "petroleum" from its branding has come with a new manifesto. Qatar Energy now claims to adhere to a series of sustainability pillars, including climate change mitigation, operational responsibility, and social and economic development. And with the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar set to be the most sustainable yet, it's clear that Qatar is taking its sustainability responsibilities seriously. ✖

Pylons pictured in the Qatari desert



Image: Puumidol



# POWERING *progress*



Shell is the largest international investor in Qatar, having invested over USD20 billion over the past decade in Pearl GTL.

**Rick Tallant**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR & CHAIRMAN,  
SHELL QATAR

***Shell powering progress by providing more and cleaner energy solutions***

***Strategic, long-term partnership with QatarEnergy***

#### BIO

Richard Tallant is Executive Vice President of GTL for Shell & Managing Director of Shell Qatar Companies, responsible for Shell's global GTL portfolio. He has a bachelor's degree in both petroleum engineering and economics from the University of Tulsa. He joined Shell in 2003 in the US as a reservoir engineer before moving to the Netherlands in 2007 to work in the portfolio and reporting team. In 2011, he became the deepwater planning focal point, after which he became the operations manager of the Ram Powell Tension Leg Platform and was appointed GM East Assets GoM in 2015. Tallant was appointed Vice President Production, GoM, Deepwater in 2018 and Executive Vice President of GTL for Shell and Managing Director of Shell Qatar Companies in 2021.

**How have Shell's investments contributed to the Qatari economy?**

Pearl gas-to-liquids (GTL) has been a major project and is perhaps the single-largest investment Shell has ever made globally. It is the ambition and ingenuity of Qatar that allowed that to happen. We have been on an amazing journey with QatarEnergy. Pearl GTL diversifies Qatar's energy exports beyond LNG by converting gas into different products, enabling industry sectors also to diversify. Qatar is one of the best places to invest anywhere in the world. As a company, we look for transparency and predictability, which Qatar provides. Geographically, it is one of the best places in the world, as not only does it have the natural resources, but is also centrally located between Asia and Europe. This allows investors to find ways to optimize overall supply chains and markets. The human capability and capacity in country is also extremely high.

**How would you define Shell's strategic partnership with QatarEnergy, and how have you worked together to drive industrial development and prepare for the energy transition?**

QatarEnergy is one of the most strategic partners that Shell has anywhere in the world. We have invested in Qatar due to the ingenuity, creativity, and capacity of QatarEnergy. We also partner on international joint ventures in Mexico, Brazil, and Namibia and elsewhere. Relevant to the energy transition, we have a cooperation agreement to study potential hydrogen investments in the UK, to better understand what a hydrogen economy could look like in the future. We will look to expand both our international relationships as well as our partnership with QatarEnergy. We want to look at moving away from a fossil-based economy to one that has more renewables and a much lower carbon footprint, so if we combine the capabilities and skillsets of QatarEnergy with the capabilities and technology of Shell, we can come up with extremely creative solutions to drive both companies

through the energy transition. It is a win-win for both companies.

**Qatarization plays a vital role within Qatar Shell and is key to the future success of the company. What strategies do you have to support people development in-country?**

Qatarization is paramount for us to have a successful business in Qatar. Shell has won a Qatarization award four years in a row for the industry, and we are extremely proud of that. We partner with the University of Doha for Science and Technology, HBKU, and Texas A&M University to build up some of those skill sets within Qataris before they graduate and are ready to join the private sector. We also do a great deal of training and development. On top of this, we send many Qataris abroad just to learn parts of the business in an international setting and then bring those skills back to Qatar. We have Qatarization committees and champions who look after the wellbeing of Qataris to truly understand what it takes for them to be successful and accelerate their development, so they can eventually take over this business.

**Pearl GTL is the world's largest GTL plant. What has 2021 been like, and what are your plans for 2022?**

They are extremely complementary and aligned in terms of the objectives and vision of where we can contribute to Qatar. Qatar wants to build an economy that is robust and diversified away from fossil fuels in order to thrive in the energy transition and creates opportunities for people to develop and be successful. That is also Shell's Powering Progress strategy, which is based on key areas such as generating value for shareholders, respecting nature, and empowering lives. We are working with QatarEnergy to find ways not only to preserve the environment here, but also reduce greenhouse gas using different solutions. Qatar Shell employees do not see themselves as working for an oil and gas company but a company that does more than just that and provides clean energy for the world by also empowering the lives around them. ✖

# for THE LONG HAUL

TotalEnergies is positioned to accompany Qatar's energy transition, which is also aligned with its own transformation into a multi-energy company.



Matthieu Bouyer  
COUNTRY CHAIR,  
TOTALENERGIES IN QATAR &  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
TOTALENERGIES EP QATAR

## How does the company continue to play a vital role in Qatar's energy transition?

Over the course of more than 85 years in-country, TotalEnergies has built a unique relationship with the State of Qatar and QatarEnergy. What we have in common with QatarEnergy is the foundation of our long-standing presence in Qatar, and we have together pioneered many developments. TotalEnergies was the first international partner to help develop the North Field, join Qatargas, aid the development of the petrochemical industry, and support the development of utility scale solar energy, and today, TotalEnergies was the first international partner to enter the North Field East giant expansion project (NFE). Our partnership with QatarEnergy has a common and longstanding thread in each of these key milestones. Another mark of trust is linked to our role alongside QatarEnergy as the largest international partner in oil operations through the operatorship of the Al Khalij field as well as our participation and material technical support to the development of the world class Al Shaheen field. In gas operations, we are involved in Qatargas 2 and Dolphin which supplies gas through a pipeline to the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Today again our vision and QatarEnergy's are aligned as their ambitious sustainability strategy aims to reduce carbon emissions by 25% by 2030, develop renewables as well as carbon capture and storage (CCS). To contribute to this transition, TotalEnergies plays a role on three key axes: first, we act on producing assets by reducing their carbon footprint to the lowest possible level; we develop new projects that are as efficient as possible with the aim to have our new facilities avoiding emissions by design; and we help Qatar to diversify its energy mix by supporting the development of utility scale solar energy. Alongside QatarEnergy, we are developing the 800-MW Al Kharsaa project, one of the largest in the world being built in one phase. The plant will significantly contribute to the goals for a net-zero FIFA World Cup 2022. Qatar has always been a special country for TotalEnergies, and we have always pursued

the objective of bringing together technical, commercial, and financial value as a trustful long-term partner. Today, we are positioned to accompany the country's transition as its ambition is closely aligned with our own company transformation into a multi-energy company.

## TotalEnergies teams up with different local institutions for various sustainability initiatives How important are these initiatives for the company?

TotalEnergies has committed to place sustainability at the heart of our strategy, projects, and operations. We want to be recognized as a company that positively contributes to the 17 UN SDGs. To address that ambition, we have established a clear framework that encompasses our operations as well as our CSR initiatives in Qatar. The main pillars are climate and biodiversity, education and inclusion, sports and health, and culture. We have set ourselves clear targets in terms of emissions reduction, and we diversify our portfolio toward a more multi-energy mix. In 2021, TotalEnergies also developed the Tamkeen program to promote initiatives for knowledge-sharing and human development. In the sports field, we have more than 20 years of partnership with the Qatar Tennis, Squash and Badminton Federation (QTSBF), and we are the main sponsor of the Qatar TotalEnergies Open (QTO) women's tennis tournament. We also have a strong partnership with Qatar Museums, and the Qatar TotalEnergies playground currently under construction will introduce a new generation to the energy domain and instill curiosity.

## What are your plans for the coming year?

We just entered the NFE asset and although we already have some secondees mobilized in the NFE's teams, we are ready to strengthen our support for the success of the project. On the business side, the North Field South (NFS) project is currently under study, and after NFE, we would be interested in continuing our journey on the North Field with QatarEnergy. ✖

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worldwide

Goal to be within top

**5**  
global companies in  
renewables by 2030

## BIO

Matthieu Bouyer oversees TotalEnergies in Qatar's operated and non-operated businesses as well as research activities. After joining TotalEnergies in 2005, he developed extensive oil and gas operational and international experience through various managerial assignment in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. He then moved to more business-oriented roles in 2015, developing his strategic approach in TotalEnergies' headquarters strategy division as well as his financial capabilities in the company's investor relations entity. Bouyer is a chartered engineer and has a masters' degree from École Centrale de Nantes in France.



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# at the FOREFRONT



Jassim Al-Mansoori  
CEO & VICE CHAIRMAN,  
AL AHED HOLDING

Al Ahed Holding works to be the preferred partner of choice for its customers and employees, striving to deliver world-class products and solutions while maximizing stakeholder value.

**With more than 45 years of experience working in Qatar's energy sector, how would you assess the connection between the company's growth and the country's establishment as one of the main players in the global energy sector?**

The subsidiaries of Al Ahed Holding comprise Doha Petroleum, Al Ahed Trading, and PEMCO. Subsidiary companies have been within the Qatar market for close to five decades, and this long existence facilitated the establishment of a strong brand image within the market. The services provided include EPIC, shutdowns, manpower, non-destructive testing, trading operations, and other value-added services to the oil and gas sector. We represent several internationally reputed MNC brands such as John Crane, Emerson, Syndyne, and so on. Al Ahed Holding embarked on an ambitious transformational initiative in 2021 wherein the focus was primarily on three aspects: a strategy through a five-year plan with strategic initiatives for upscaling business activities, the implementation of a SAP system for subsidiary operations, and the revalorization of our staff with a strong focus on talents with competence-based evaluation and training programs. This will allow us to deliver on our vision to be the preferred partner of choice to our customers and employees, striving to deliver world-class products and solutions while maximizing stakeholders value. We always aspire to be in forefront of adapting ourselves ahead of times and exceed expectations of our customers. In this regard, corporate governance and risk management will be the silver lining of our progress going forward.

**Qatar is working to increase the local content of its energy industry. How would you assess the efforts done so far by the local industry, and how are family-owned businesses such as Al Ahed Holding positioned to service following international standards?**

Even before ICV was introduced, we always believed it is our moral responsibility to contribute to the success and growth story of Qatar. One such initiative has been collaborating with John Crane (MNC) to establish a service center and manufacture gas seals within Qatar. We are on the cusp of having our first prod-

ucts released within the market. Several such initiatives are in the pipeline with major international players to increase the in-country value. Another strategy is to review the existing value chain and aggressively push for import substitution through vertical integration.

**Al Ahed Holding has been able to deliver projects despite challenging circumstances such as COVID-19. What is Al Ahed's approach to delivering projects in order to exceed expectations?**

COVID-19 was an unprecedented event, resulting in a great deal of pressure on various aspects such as material delivery, manpower, and project delivery. Thanks to the effective risk management process in place, we were able to overcome the tough situation on hand. Al Ahed Holding has developed various contingency plans to mitigate any risks that we foresee within the immediate future. Our aim is always to provide service agreed upon for various oil and gas customers within a stipulated time period as they are critical for overall operations.

**The North Field Expansion project is set to be the next major driver of Qatar's growth. How is Al Ahed Holding engaging in such an important project for the global energy sector, and what are your plans for the future in this regard?**

Forward thinking by the Qatari government has resulted in the North Field Expansion, which is critical to uplifting production capacity. Upon several discussions and deliberations with various international companies that were awarded to contract, they are of the unanimous view that they require strong support from competent local player. Al Ahed Holding with its excellent track record, local facilities, skilled manpower, and a representative of several international companies perfectly fits the requirement. Action taken includes the formation of a key management team that will address the various demands and collaborate to meet customers' demands. Transformation, which kicked off in 2021, will start showing the results of improved performance in 2022, wherein we will have competitive-edge solutions for our customers. ✖

## BIO

Jassim Al-Mansoori has more than 30 years of industry experience and is a highly regarded individual in the Qatari social and business community. He graduated from Eastern Michigan University with degree in computer science and a minor in math. He has since held positions in government and semi-government sectors, and he held several positions such as executive director of HR at Qatar Telecom/Ooredoo. Currently, he is the Vice Chairman & CEO of Al Ahed Holding and the Chairman of iHorizons, People Dynamics.

## FOCUS

LNG industry expansion

# LIQUID GOLD

With the demand for Qatar's LNG being on the rise, QatarEnergy is repositioning itself to almost double output within five years.

**QATAR, THE BIGGEST LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS** exporter in the world, has been urged to ramp up its production since the beginning of 2022 to replace Russia's energy exports to Europe. The peninsular Gulf nation currently produces some 77million metric tons of LNG each year, but QatarEnergy is planning to raise its output according to a five-year roadmap. If all goes according to plan, by 2027, QatarEnergy will export 126 million tons per year, contributing remarkably to the world's energy security and almost doubling its income into the bargain.

Quite conveniently, the rise of global demand for energy coincides with the coming into production of the country's famous North Field, which is believed to be the world's largest natural gas and gas condensate reservoir, holding as much as 50 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. The field was long disputed between Iran and Qatar, but it has recently come to light that the field stretches further southward toward Qatar's territorial waters than what was previously believed. As such, Qatar is perfectly free to tap into the productive layers of the North Field near Ras Laffan.

"During the past two years, [QatarEnergy] worked diligently to determine the degree to which the North Field extends toward the southwest, as well as the possibility of production from Qatar's northern coastal onshore areas," revealed Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi, the country's Energy Minister who simultaneously serves as the President & CEO of QatarEnergy. The top energy executive told the press as early as 2019 that no doubts remain about Qatar's right to tap into the reservoir or the feasibility of the enterprise.

Ramping up LNG production is not possible without the construction of infrastructure such liquefaction plants, storage tanks,

and loading facilities. Since the news about Qatar's rights to North Field, Qatar Petroleum has been expanding its infrastructure to keep up with the rise in production. The engineering work is at an advanced stage at the moment, and several contracts have been awarded. In April 2022, a large-scale engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract was awarded to a Spanish-Chinese consortium to begin work on LNG storage and loading facilities in Ras Laffan industrial city, not far from the southernmost extremity of the North Field.

A major public-private partnership regarding North Field East was finalized in June 2022 between QatarEnergy and the American petroleum giant, ExxonMobil. The deal is likely to raise LNG production from the current figure of 77 million tons per year to 110 million tons. North Field East will be fully owned by a joint venture comprising QatarEnergy (75%) and ExxonMobil (25%). Four massive liquefaction plants (LNG trains) with the combined capacity of 32 million tons per year will be designed and constructed by the joint venture company.

Qatar's past success stories in the hydrocarbon sector largely relied on its progressive attitude to working with international companies, which also created synergy in the sector. The long-term presence of Shell which constructed Pearl GTL, one of the largest gas-to-liquid (GTL) facilities in the region, is a case in point. Shell Qatar invested USD20 billion in the country's hydrocarbon sector, while also paving the way for knowledge transfer. "If we combine the capabilities and skillsets of QatarEnergy with the capabilities and technology of Shell, we can come up with extremely creative solutions to progress both companies through the energy transi-

tion. It is a win-win for both companies,” Rick Tallant, managing director and chairman of Shell Qatar, told the TBY team in the country.

It is true that as far as hydrocarbon fuels go, LNG is one of the cleanest ones, but LNG trains can create hazardous byproducts if they are not constructed and operated with the highest standards. Given the sharp increase in LNG production over the next five years, the Ministry of Energy will be highly conscious about the implementation of eco-friendly practices across the sector.

Indeed, the Amir has personally emphasized this point. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani explained during an energy summit in February 2022 that the North Field project will see a huge investment in eco-friendly technologies. The facilities will be equipped

with carbon recapture solutions, while the sector will do its best to minimize the pollution caused by the shipping of the LNG. QatarEnergy is launching a shipbuilding program to expand its fleet of LNG carriers, and the new additions to the fleet will employ the latest and cleanest technologies. Qatar will award EPC contracts to reputable Japanese and Chinese shipbuilders, according to Al-Kaab.

The momentum created by the rise of activities across the LNG sector will be reflected in Qatar’s economic growth. The country’s GDP grew by 3% in 2021, during its post-pandemic recovery. This year, however, it is expected that the growth rate will exceed 4.9% “on the heels of boosted hydrocarbon exports of 10%,” according to the World Bank. ✖

## Shell partners with QatarEnergy in the development of North Field East project

### The largest LNG project of its kind in the world

We are greatly privileged to celebrate this historic milestone with the State of Qatar. Shell is grateful for the unwavering trust and partnership with QatarEnergy. We are committed to maximizing the value of the LNG expansion for the State of Qatar and continue to be a trusted, reliable and long-term partner in Qatar’s continued progress.







**Mathieu Mailaender**  
GENERAL MANAGER,  
DIETSMANN QATAR



**Toshikazu Hirobe**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
CHIYODA ALMANA ENGINEERING  
LLC

## NEW TECHNOLOGIES

These international corporations are employing up-and-coming technologies and research to strengthen their offerings and positions in Qatar.

**How has the company's Qatar office evolved in recent years?**

**MATHIEU MAILAENDER** Dietsmann has had a branch in Qatar for four years now. We opened here because we won a large contract to provide maintenance and inspection engineering services to review an entire equipment database in client SAP. This project was a significant achievement for us because it covered a great deal of equipment, encompassing around 200,000 tags for the Al-Shaheen Oil Field, namely the oil and gas field for NOC. The project lasted almost two and a half years and concluded last year. After the maintenance and inspection engineering services rendered for Al-Shaheen for NOC, we moved to more operational activity with TotalEnergies. We are now providing maintenance and operation services on their Al-Khalij site, which includes offshore platforms close to Halul Island. We are working there with almost 50 people on a three-year contract.

**TOSHIKAZU HIROBE** Chiyoda has actively supported Qatar's energy development since the 1970s, including the development and delivery of EPC projects for 12 of the 14 LNG trains in Ras Laffan. Throughout these EPC projects, Chiyoda

has always given its utmost to Qatar. Chiyoda's intentions have not changed: to be a sustainable partner in energy operation in Qatar. In 2008, Chiyoda together with a local Qatar partner, Almana Trading Co., established Chiyoda Almana Engineering LLC to execute local plant lifecycle projects to the oil and gas sector and other industrial sectors in Qatar. Accordingly, when Qatar announced the national intention of expansion of LNG production, Chiyoda was trusted by QatarEnergy as a reliable global EPC contractor to undertake FEED and EPC in a major North Field East Onshore LNG Facilities Project. Chiyoda was selected not only because of its valuable record of mega LNG trains accomplishments in Qatar, but also for the massive development of its technologies and project operations capabilities over the decades. As Chiyoda is keen to strengthen its position as one of the leading global engineering companies, it launched a big data and AI technology service called LNG Plant AI Optimizer in 2019 to improve energy plant production. Furthermore, Chiyoda is looking at hydrogen as a promising and clean energy source and is carrying out several projects to demonstrate a hydrogen supply chain with Chiyoda's own SPERA hydrogen technology.

**What initiatives are you working on in terms of streamlined internal operations?**

**MM** This has been one of our strategies for the past three years now, and we're focused on further digitalization of our processes. To this end, we have created in 2019 a branch called Dietsmann Smart Labs that is focused on related initiatives. In 2022, we introduced digitalized signatures across our processes. All of our contracts and documents that require signatures are done online. We have also digitalized all of our pay slips and no longer deliver them by post. We are also working on the digitalization of our technical processes. We are increasingly conducting maintenance on a digital basis with a more predictive approach and analysis of patterns. This can avoid having to send someone offshore, which saves on cost, environmental impact, and time. Our partner Taurob has also developed Inspection and Operation robots which are the future of maintenance and operations. Our Taurob Inspector Robot is just 12 years old and is now showing good outcomes on the field. TotalEnergies is our main partner in this since 2014 and has just completed a proof of concept with Taurob Inspector Robot on Halul Island Plant.

**How does the company support human capital development in Qatar as one of the main pillars of Vision 2030?**

**TH** Chiyoda Almana has an intensive corporate social responsibility program to align and support Qatar's government and, national vision. Over the years, Chiyoda Almana established a strong partnership and cooperation with educational institutions, medical and environmental authorities, and ministries in Qatar to carry out several initiatives under the umbrella of our CSR program. Support of national human resources comes as one of the key lines in our CSR program which we support through several initiatives such as, offering technical training opportunities to young local engineers in Qatar and in Japan as well, in collaboration with Chiyoda global headquarters in Yokohama. Furthermore, we provide internship opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students of national and international universities in Qatar such as Qatar University, Texas A&M, and more. We also offer on-the-job training opportunities to national candidates at our ongoing projects to ensure proper knowledge and technology transfer to young local generations. ✖

# innovative SOLUTIONS

Iberdrola Innovation Middle East was launched in 2016 to tackle the practical technology challenges related to innovation and digitalization of the electrical grid.

Santiago Bañales  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
IBERDROLA INNOVATION MIDDLE EAST



**What strategies were behind the idea of creating Iberdrola Innovation Middle East in Qatar?**

Digitalization is a key enabler in the current radical transformation of the energy sector toward electrification and net-zero emissions. Iberdrola as a global leader in renewable energy has invested in the last decade more than EUR10 billion in an ambitious digitalization program across countries and businesses. A key aspect of this digitalization program implies acquiring and nurturing high-level internal talent able to innovate from the inside. The incorporation of Iberdrola Innovation Middle East in 2016 is part of this global strategy to acquire a competitive edge via internal development of digital solutions. The decision to establish this global innovation center in Qatar was motivated by our strong relationship with the country, Qatar Investment Authority being our main shareholder since 2011. Qatar has a great location between Europe and Asia and offers great opportunities to attract global talent and partner up with first-class universities and research centers.

**Power decarbonization and the use of more renewable alternatives are at the core of the company's mission. What have been some of your achievements?**

As a global innovation center, we develop digital technology-based solutions for the energy sector that are applied worldwide. We work in three main areas: integration of renewable energy, smart grids and smart solutions for our final user clients. Iberdrola Innovation ME has developed machine learning algorithms and visualization software to drastically improve the operations and maintenance of the wind turbines for Iberdrola wind farms around the globe.

Regarding offshore wind projects, we are undertaking system stability studies to ensure that these very large projects can safely evacuate their output to the transmission grid. On the customer side, we help the final customers have better control of their own energy consumption, generate their own renewable energy, and sell it to the grid. We have developed technologies based on cloud computing such that the client can control the electrical vehicles, heat pumps, water heaters, and solar panels, and, therefore, not be a passive but an active player that can contribute to make the grid and the system more manageable and contribute to the net zero emissions target.

**How has the company worked in partnership with local institutions to create more innovative solutions and cleaner energy sources?**

The secret of our success is that we have mixed traditional capabilities, such as power systems engineering and energy management, with IT capabilities such as data scientists and software developers. In any part of the world, in particular the Middle East, the challenge is having the right environment to bring together excellent engineers in different fields and at different levels of seniority and making them work together on such a project. We have hired many graduates from Qatar universities, and we have been able to build a great team, combining local hiring with international talent from Iberdrola and other countries. Co-developing with outstanding partners is the other key aspect of our formula for success. We have cooperation agreements with three Universities in Qatar: HBKU, Texas A&M, and Qatar University. There are several projects running under Qatar National Research programs and an on-going cooperation

with Qatar utility Kahramaa in different fields such as smart metering, electrical vehicles and energy efficiency in schools.

**How is Iberdrola contributing to Qatar's national energy transition in the long term?**

We are contributing to Vision 2030 in two ways. Out of the four pillars of the vision, one has to do with the diversification of the economy away from hydrocarbons and hence the development of a knowledge-based economy. The second relevant pillar is to make compatible this economic vision with the sustainability of the environment and the society at large. The solutions we develop in our center are developed in Qatar, therefore contributing to the development of a knowledge economy, and their application to the local environment will help also to make a more sustainable future for all of us. ✖

## BIO

Santiago Bañales has been Managing Director of Iberdrola Innovation Middle East (ME) since 2016. He has 25 years of energy industry experience fulfilling executive roles in R&D, engineering, product development, management consulting, M&A, and general management. Before his current role, Bañales was CEO of Ormazabal Current. He holds a master of science in technology and policy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Fulbright Fellow) and a dual engineering degree from Ecole Centrale Paris and Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. He is a published author and has been involved in graduate and executive education for more than 15 years. He is also an INSEAD-certified international board director, having held executive and non-executive board directorships positions in several energy industry associations, start-ups, and universities.



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# Women in Business

## A GROWING ROLE

**O**ne hallmark of any successful, modern nation is the normalization of female participation across the economy. And women in Qatar have begun to play a key role in the development and shaping of the socioeconomic landscape.

Of all enablers, education remains king—or queen. Indeed, female enrollment rates in tertiary education now far outstrip those of men, with 58.8% of women attending university compared to just 8% of men, according to UNESCO data for 2020.

One figure who has emerged as a champion of women's education is HH Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al-Missned, the mother of HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. She has long been at the forefront of this movement, promoting and encouraging expansion in the role of Qatari women in both public and private spheres of life. In 1995, she initiated the Qatar Foundation, which is dedicated to scientific research and economic and social development projects.

And according to Qatar Foundation figures,

and potentially as a direct result of high university enrollment rates among women, female participation in the workforce stands at 59%, the highest in the Arab world.

Indeed, women are reaching some of the highest positions in the country. In government, Dr. Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari was appointed Minister of Public Health in 2016, Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser Al-Misnad was appointed Minister of Social Development and Family in 2021, and Buthaina bint Ali Al-Nuaimi was appointed as Minister of Education and Higher Education in 2021.

Recently, The Business Year held an event in partnership with the Qatari Businesswomen Association titled Female Voices and the Qatari Economy. The event, which took place in March to coincide with International Women's Day, convened top female executives and public leaders to discuss the role of women in areas from sports, education, and health to technology and beyond. This chapter is a continuation of that discussion. ✖

# ALWAYS *excel*

Sheikha Mayes Bint Hamad Al Thani believes that women in Qatar can excel even further by investing in themselves and seeking opportunities provided by the government.

Sheikha Mayes Bint Hamad Al Thani  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
US-QATAR BUSINESS COUNCIL (USQBC)



**How would you define the role of businesswomen in the development of the Qatari economy?**

There is often a misconception that women in the Middle East are limited in their pursuits or lack freedom of choice. Qatar, however, has aimed to eliminate this stereotype and promote the active role of women in the country. Businesswomen in Qatar play an important and leading role in a variety of sectors in the Qatari economy ranging from finance to hospitality, to healthcare, to sports, and many other sectors. In fact, Qatar has a 59% female labor participation rate, which is above the global average, and the highest in the Arab world. This statistic represents the importance that Qatar has placed on the economic participation of women and their pivotal role in the development of Qatar's knowledge-based economy. Not only do they participate in these areas, but Qatari women also occupy key leadership and decision-making positions, whether they are in the public sector, private sector, start-ups, SMEs or large corporations. It is an indisputable fact that Qatari women are a central part of the country's growing economy.

**Qatar has the highest females' economic participation rate in the Arab world. Which strategies do you believe have been prominent to reach this goal?**

It is difficult to point to a few aspects that have encouraged the economic participation of women in Qatar when in reality it has been a collective effort over the course of many years. The government has empowered women in the country through access to education, favorable laws, economic participation, and career opportunities. To the extent that

even in the Qatar National Vision 2030, the country has specifically placed an emphasis on the effective participation of women in the country's labor force. Qatar demonstrates its commitment to this goal for women as they enter the professional world. For example, 60% of grant recipients from the Qatar Business Incubation Center were women. The innovation center at QSTP has also seen a dramatic growth in the number of female entrepreneurs. In addition to achieving the highest female economic participation rate in the Arab world, Qatari women's unemployment rate is the second lowest globally. In fact, 30% of decision-making positions in Qatar are occupied by women, and more women are employed by the Qatari government. Several women have senior roles in many sectors including the recent appointment to the Shura Council by HH the Amir, where 29 of the candidates announced were women. While these initiatives provide a solid foundation for female success, women also require inspiration and motivation, which in large part comes from the successes of brilliant Qatari women. Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser has been seen as a "standard bearer" for Qatari women and the role that they can play in the society and the workplace. There are countless other women I could name as role models, but the list would be endless. This just goes to show that Qatar has worked tirelessly to empower its women in all segments of society.

**As an extremely accomplished businesswoman in Qatar, where would you say lies the existing gap of women employment on top management levels?**

Qatar has made considerable efforts to

remove barriers and enhance women's role at all levels, but by no means am I suggesting that Qatar is at the end of its journey for the empowerment of its women. There are certainly areas that can be improved upon such as the promotion of women to executive level jobs. In order to prompt more female participation in the economy, I encourage women to invest in themselves and seek opportunities provided in order for them to excel and enjoy areas they fit in. By leveraging the resources provided by the government, each woman has the ability to create a strategy to improve in her area of expertise and gain the know-how to operate in any segment. This includes striving to reach for top management level positions in the country as well. ✖

#### BIO

With an MBA degree from the University of Leicester and a BFA degree in interior design from Virginia Commonwealth University, a holder of the Business Leader Award at the Women of Change 2022 by Doha Women's Forum, Sheikha Mayes bint Hamad Al Thani is an extremely accomplished businesswoman overseeing many businesses across different sectors in Qatar. She has been part of YPO, global leadership community of over 30,000 extraordinary chief executives, where she served as chapter chair for the Qatar Chapter, the chief administration officer at Silatech, director of administration and HR at DFI, and part of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's delegation to the 4th US-Qatar Strategic Dialogue in November 2021. Currently, she is the Qatar Managing Director for the US-Qatar Business Council and owner of M Power Investment Group.



## a fit CULTURE

The Women's Sports Committee strives to develop sports performance and further popularize the culture of sports among women in the community.

### BIO

Lolwa Husain M Almarri has an executive masters in sports or organization management from the University of Poitiers and a degree in physical education and sports science from Qatar University. Aside from her role on the Qatar Women's Sports Committee, she is a board members of the GCC Women Sports Committee, as well as sitting on a number of other related committees.

Lolwa Husain M Almarri  
PRESIDENT,  
QATAR WOMEN'S SPORTS  
COMMITTEE

**What does it mean for Qatar as a country to have a Women's Sport Committee, and how is the committee involved in the promotion of sports among women?**

Qatar pays great attention to sports in all categories. Certainly, the presence of a Women's Sports Committee enhances the vision of Qatar on the need to practice and persevere in sports, which we notice through the presence of many women in sports centers and other areas. The Women's Sports Committee looks forward to spreading sports values, and we cooperate with other sports associations to develop women's sports in accordance with the foundations of the Olympic Charter and to support and develop sports performance within the framework of the Olympic spirit by organizing events and awareness campaigns to spread the culture of sports among ladies in the community.

**In which sports have women in Qatar showed most interest?**

Women are keen on practicing all kinds of sports, whether individually or team sports. As for specific sports, football is popular among women, whether in terms of those who play it regularly or are just fans of this sport. Handball and basketball are popular as well. In the GCC competition, we won gold medals in handball, basketball, and table tennis. Padel has also seen a massive popularity among women, as they used to practice it before as amateurs for recreation in their spare time, and now that it has gained such great popularity, tournaments and competitions are being organized due to the high demand for it. Women are also interested in sports that raise fitness and physical efficiency, such as CrossFit. There are tournaments being organized for women lately, and they are extremely popular.

**Qatar is looking to become an international hub for sports. What are the prospects in this regard, and what role can women play?**

Qatar has become the capital of sports culture by organizing and hosting sports events at the level of the region and the world. The largest event is certainly hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup for the first time in the Middle East and the Asian Games 2030 for the second time, as well as

**“There are tournaments being organized for women lately, and they are extremely popular.”**

hosting the competitions of the 10th edition of the Arab Cup, which witnesses the participation of 16 teams for the first time in the Arab world under FIFA. Women play a prominent role through the presence of women in leadership positions in the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, authority responsible for organizing the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar, which is expected to be an exceptional version. We also see examples of Qatari women who occupy positions in matters of coordination, media, and the organization, and we see their place in the security of stadiums and many other positions like marketing, advertising, designing, and even architecture.

**Qatar is looking beyond the 2022 FIFA World Cup and bidding for larger sports events. What are Qatar's advantages for this?**

Qatar has gained many experiences by hosting major international tournaments, and now Qatar has one of the largest sports media platforms in the world. Since Doha won the right to host the 2022 World Cup, the attention of the whole world has turned towards Qatar. Qatar is a country that many did not know about before, but it could put its name on the map by the hard work of its people and proving that it is capable of hosting and organizing huge events despite its small size. Qatar's ambitious vision in sports is not a new phenomenon or a coincidence; it is the result of consistent hard work. The resolve and determination of the political leadership has resulted in strengthening women's political rights and protection to raise the status of Qatari women and enhancing the country's reputation in international community; therefore, the great integration and involvement of women prompted Qatar to show and highlight the role of women and highlight the importance of them occupying high positions, which has had a positive impact on the community. ✖



# SIGNIFICANT *advances*



Awatef Mohammed Al-Dafa  
BOARD MEMBER,  
QATARI BUSINESSWOMEN  
ASSOCIATION (QBWA)

For many years, QBWA has worked to aid in the professional development of women and launched many initiatives for female entrepreneurs to advance their businesses.

## BIO

Awatef Mohammed Al-Dafa is a board member on the QBWA. She has founded two businesses: Arabella, a fashion outlet offering luxury evening gowns, and Regalo, a gift shop for beautifully crafted accessories and Italian home decor items. She is a member in many charities in Qatar and abroad. She was chair of the Mosaic Foundation, a Washington based non-profit that aims to improve the lives of women and children. She is also an active member of the Qatar Diabetes Association and Al Heba Cancer Society in Qatar Voluntary Center. She has also collaborated with Qatar Cancer Society to raise awareness of breast cancer.

### How can better synergy be created between the advancement of women and the realization of the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030)?

In Qatar, major work is underway to empower women as part of the QNV2030. The vision prioritizes women's right to study, work, and enhance their social status. One of the goals of QNV2030 is to enhance women's capacities and help them participate fully in the political and economic spheres, mainly in decision-making. Qatar remains committed to all regional and international agreements on women's rights and gender equality. Our country's legislation prevents discrimination against women when it comes to employment whether in the public or private sector. I would like to see more women assuming better positions to play a role in the socio-economic growth of our country and achieve the objectives of QNV2030.

### Can you describe the advocacy work you are doing to raise the awareness of the role of women in Qatar?

I have always believed in the importance of women's role; I have been a strong advocate since my time in the US, when I worked with the spouses of Arab ambassadors in the Mosaic Foundation in the mid-2000s to support underprivileged women and children in the US and the Arab world through fundraising and social work. For over a decade, we have been doing a tremendous job in the Qatar Business Women Association (QBWA) to assist women through vocational training and professional development to help them contribute to the economic growth of the country. Also, through QBWA, we have launched many initiatives for female entrepreneurs to develop their skills and advance their businesses.

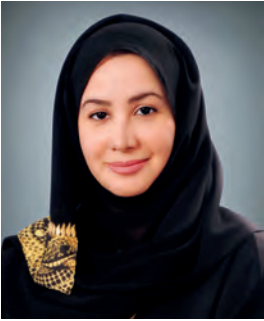
### How would you assess the role of education in empowering women to take further steps in becoming leaders of the country?

Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is

the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." I truly believe that you can achieve wonders and advance any nation with education. Over the past two decades, Qatari women have focused on education to play a bigger role in society. At the postgraduate level, female students have outnumbered males. Almost 75% of Qatari students registered at Qatar Foundation universities have been women, according to the organization's official figures. Thanks to Qatar's wise leadership, young Qatari women were given an alternative to scholarships abroad by attending international universities right here in Doha. These efforts have empowered women and given them greater opportunities to join the workforce. We have seen female decision-makers playing a pivotal role in the government sector, female doctors who worked day and night at the front-line during the COVID-19 pandemic, and brilliant female engineers in the oil and gas sector, just to name a few.

### What would be your message to the Qatari business community on how to best integrate women?

My message to Qatari women is to stand up for their rights and inspire the new generation of young girls to be future leaders. Thanks to the great leadership of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, women have gained equal opportunities with men and assumed the leadership positions of ministers, ambassadors, directors in both public and private institutions, and entrepreneurs among other roles. Qatari women have also become the region's first female judges and prosecutors. I encourage women to never stop learning, educating themselves and developing their skills. I call upon women's organizations to support the building of self-confidence in women and to promote the self-development of young girls. I also call upon women to speak up if they face any kind of discrimination whether in the workplace or in society. ✖

**BIO**

Mishael Al-Ansari started her career at HSBC as a banker. Then, her career took a different path, and she was the first female senior staff in Qapco and first woman and youngest manager to be appointed in the downstream oil and gas company as an HR manager and PR Manager. She later joined a team of experts in the sports industry to build the first anti-doping lab of its kind in the Middle East and West Asia. Once the project was up and running, she was appointed as its marketing and communications director. Today, she is the special projects director of ADLQ. In September 2012, she was awarded Business Woman of the year.

**Mishael Al-Ansari**  
BOARD MEMBER,  
QATARI BUSINESSWOMEN  
ASSOCIATION (QBWA)

**How are you advocating for the advancement of the role of women in Qatar's society and economy?**

I was the first Qatari woman to become a senior staff member at QAPCO, an oil and gas company that was male-dominated back in the day. After I was appointed at a senior level, policies began to change to cater to female employees and their needs. I was then appointed HR manager, which enabled me to play a significant role in advocating for women. When I later became a board member of QBWA, I had the opportunity to work with amazing professionals to create a platform to empower businesswomen and unlock the potential of future generations. At QBWA, we support our members emotionally, mentor and guide them, help them fulfill their ambitions, and enhance their contribution to the country's economic activity. The association also has its own role models most notably in our chair, Sheikha Al Anood Bint Khalifah Bin Hamad Al Thani, and other prominent businesswomen who have a

history of success across various sectors. Together, these women have delivered several key initiatives that support and promote Qatari women such as the Qatar Businesswomen Award, the Qatar International Businesswomen Forum, and the QBWA Takreem Awards.

**You have been involved in the establishment of the first anti-doping lab in the GCC. What has been your experience in this achievement?**

When I was asked to join the Anti-Doping Lab Qatar (ADLQ), I jumped at the opportunity. We were tasked with setting up the first anti-doping lab not only in Qatar, but the Middle East and West Asia. Qatar is moving toward being a leader on the global sports and sports tourism landscape, and the anti-doping lab was the last, but incredibly important, piece of the puzzle. We closed the circle of the sports' industry, making Qatar one of the strongest countries to compete in hosting global sporting. ADLQ, which is both a doping lab and major research center employing highly skilled researchers and scientists, is one of the world's 33 elite anti-doping labs working to fight doping in sports. In line with Vision 2030 and its Human Development pillar, ADLQ also believes greatly in investing in Qatari youth. The talent management department operates on providing scholarships for emerging talent. ✖

**BIO**

Amal Al Aathem is one of the most prominent and proactive Qatari artists today. She is well known for establishing programs for women and the youth and occupies many roles, including consultant of fine arts in the Ministry of Culture and Sports, creative consultant in Qatar Heritage & Cultural Events Center, board member at the Qatar Business Woman Association, and founder & chairman of the 7th Heaven Arts Center. Her work has been widely exhibited in the region and in different parts of the world.

**Amal Al Aathem**  
QATARI ARTIST &  
BUSINESSWOMAN

**Women in business are becoming a steady trend in the Qatari business landscape. What have been the contributing factors to this trend, and how do you expect it to evolve?**

Over the years Doha experienced a great diversity in the business field which was eye-opening and as a result of this women had a wide range of choices on which to establish themselves and working towards promoting and nourishing their chosen business field. Education in Qatar has been much developed and much stronger, Qatari women started to prioritize their education whether in the country or abroad and began having more awareness on how to become more financially independent therefore they chose to divert their education and passion into a business that can fully accomplish them as established businesswomen in the country. When women choose specific fields in business or the market, they serve the community as they contribute into

closing gaps where there are needs that aren't catered to yet across the country. This is how the economy gets stronger.

**As a board member of the Qatari Businesswomen Association, how would you classify the role of the association in bringing together and forging the female leadership in the country?**

In addition to the undeniable outstanding team work spirit that we have, we truly take our time in the selection and evaluation process to make sure that our choices are always fair and right. Through our hard work the opportunity to many women is now given to shine in different platforms to flourish in their fields, lead in key role positions and take authoritative decisions that enables them to have a say in crucial roles in the society. For example, we initiated multiple awards and prizes to motivate the ladies, for different generations. We recognize the older generation for initiating such businesses in all fields and the newer generation for picking up after the previous generation and developing it further with more innovation. This motivates all women to do better as they are being recognized for their efforts. ✖







# the next STEPS

With all its successes in advancing women's empowerment, Qatar is now looking at increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions and on boards.



Buthaina Al Ansari  
CHAIRMAN ADVISER,  
JUST REAL ESTATE (JRE) &  
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT EXPERT

**How have you been involved in the advancement of the role of women locally and in the GCC?**

Regarding the story of Qatari women, I always refer to the changes that happened with Sheikha Moza, because she is the main source in matters related to women. She created an ecosystem wherein Qatari women could benefit from a strong infrastructure including education, and where they could create balance between social and working life. One could write countless books and papers on creating this balance, but it remains a challenge in reality. First of all, a good education sets you up for success throughout life. This was the slogan in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Education and experience will enable you work anywhere. Recently, KPMG Qatar published a report indicating that the employees required in the future will be totally different from what is needed today. Digitalization will replace many skills and abilities. In Europe and the US, there is a tendency to follow your passion, and the Middle East should follow suit. My view is that in your 20s you have to prepare yourself with skills and abilities, as passion will come later on. I am now a speaker and coach, which is my passion, but which rests upon my education. Companies must also prepare their infrastructure and staff to face the new challenge of digitalization. His Highness has announced the creation of the Committee for Artificial Intelligence as well as the National Cybersecurity Agency, which are working to anticipate what the market needs. And we need to keep training our children and the new generations to specialize in medicine, research, all things related to digitalization, and blockchain, because these are the new realities of the world. Many women are already involved in those fields, and we need to keep working for more to come.

**What would be your advice in terms of education and professional development to any woman in Qatar seeking to make an impact through her work?**

We need to empower women in different fields,

both as employees and business owners. The country's vision 2030 consists of four pillars to invest in human capital, which means providing education and health to both women and men. On the social development pillar, there is a subtitle for empowering women in health, education, entrepreneurship and politics. The Qatar Development Bank helps women and men establish their businesses, and the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunication enables the right infrastructure to support women in e-commerce, for example. You can run your business while sitting in your house close to your family, and do not need to incur significant expense to create an e-commerce business. My advice to all women is to venture into this sector. Qataris currently spend a lot on international e-commerce, and there is considerable potential for a local e-commerce industry.

**What tools are available in Qatar for women to be better prepared to make their projects a success?**

Qatar Development Bank provides business support for all sort of entrepreneurs. It also secures capital for a prospective project with support provided on how to run a project, regardless of the service or product you provide. Many institutions in Qatar are offering conferences and workshops, and invite many speakers on entrepreneurship from around the world. There is a Qatari Women's Forum headed by Sheikha Alfardan, who is doing an amazing job to provide women with networking opportunities and expose their business to other women and other countries. Qatari universities are working to develop specialized committees, for example for artificial intelligence. The Qatar foundation has a technology oasis, where you can develop any ideas related to technology. I am honored to be part of the science jury, this is the 13th season, and I am the first woman to be a juror. The topic addressed will be how to improve the community with technology so as to enhance innovation. ✖

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**70% of Qatar's graduates are women**

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**Speaker at international forums and coach**

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**BIO**  
Buthaina Al Ansari holds an MBA in human resources, a master's degree in strategic planning, and a doctorate in business administration. She brings with her a wealth of experience and an expansive career that stretches more than 13 years. Al-Ansari worked across the education, finance, and telecommunications sectors before joining one of Qatar's leading real estate consultancies. Her experience prior to being appointed as chairman advisor of JRE saw her assume senior leadership roles within organizations such as Qatar Investment Authority and Ooredoo, among others.

**FOCUS**

The empowerment of Qatari women

# LOOKING FOR AN EQUAL STANDING

Qatari women have come a long way in achieving educational and workplace equality.

**IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO EXAGGERATE** how much things have changed for Qatari women over the last three decades or so. Back in the 1990s, almost no local woman was to be seen working in banks, corporations, or stores. Although some women were employed as teachers and nurses, Doha's public and private sector was almost exclusively manned by—well—men; however, thanks to a series of efforts in the 1990s heralded by the influential member of the Qatari royal family, HH Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, women found a voice to express their capabilities. These efforts reached a memorable climax in 2003, when Sheikha Ahmed Al-Mahmoud became the first woman member of the Qatari cabinet as the minister of education.

If the experience of other nations is any indication, the empowerment of women in the 20th century has been based on three pillars: access to education, employment opportunities, and presence in social arenas. Whenever women have ticked these three boxes, they have immediately continued toward true equality. Qatari women have achieved many milestones in all three areas over the last couple of years, becoming one of the most empowered women in the Gulf region.

This is more impressive when we realize that it all started near the turn of the 21st century, and so much ground has been gained in under three decades. The first step was taken in 1995 by granting women equal educational opportunities. "At the time, I realized we were facing a national challenge related to education, and we needed to make a radical change in the educational system by providing advanced, quality education," recalls HH Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, co-founder and chairperson of Qatar Foundation.

Qatar Foundation's first co-educational school, Qatar Academy, was launched in 1996 thanks to the efforts of pioneers such as Sheikha Moza, offering women better education opportunities. The academy has now expanded to five schools, while other modern schools and colleges have been launched one after another. As of the academic year 2021-22, women's enrollment has grown to 75% at Qatar Foundation's universities and over 60% elsewhere.

Nearly three decades after those first steps, equal rights for men and women at workplace has become part of the country's public policy. The Qatar National Vision 2030, as the country's most important roadmap, promotes gender equality as a necessity—and one which has a huge economic importance. Women as half of the population have started to participate in the economy, boosting the nation's human capital.

There are currently about 7,000 notable businesses owned by Qa-

tari businesswomen, up from zero before the year 2000. It is impressive that in a country where traditions are respected Qatari women have entered the areas of business which were male dominated until recently. And women entrepreneurs are truly contributing to the economy. "It is estimated that their investments amount to billions of riyals and is an important part of economic activity in Qatar," said businesswoman Ibtehaj Al Ahmadani to The Peninsula.

With the employment of more women, the Qatari labor market is evolving rapidly, becoming a more conducive environment to thrive for women. Essentially, the first women who joined the Qatari job market paved the way for the next waves and generations. With women managers and employees proving to be valuable assets, the once traditional and male-dominated labor market of Qatar finds it reasonable to adapt itself to the new reality.

This trend is helped and reinforced by the formation of public and private entities which support women in the workplace. The Qatari Businesswomen Association (QBWA) is one such body. Chaired by Sheikha Al Anood Bint Khalifah, the association has been trying to "unlock the potential of future generations in support to the Qatar National Vision 2030." As for the legal system, now the Qatari law supports "equal pay and growth opportunities," according to QBWA board member, Mishael Al Ansari.

The new generation of Qatari women are not shy to express their innovative ideas, and the state is supporting them. In 2022, the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) reported a remarkable growth in the number of female innovators at QSTP as well as startups headed by women. Yosouf Al Salehi, executive director of QSTP, recently noted that "there are more and more women trying to join the different programs being offered at QSTP, such as in the accelerator program. They also want to discuss how to open their businesses through the incubation program," according to the Gulf Times. QSTP's innovation director, Hayfa Al-Abdulla, recently confirmed this to TBY, adding that women innovators exhibit high interpersonal skills which is necessary to kickstart a business in the real world.

What Qatari women have achieved can be an inspiration for other women living in similar cultures across the region. Pointing out that she never wanted the achievements of Qatar Foundation to only benefit the Qatari women alone, Sheikha Moza argues that "we thought of [the empowerment of women] as Arab-Islamic renaissance project, based in Qatar, to promote sustainable development in the Arab world, by creating positive change from an academic, research, and societal perspective." ✖



**Hayfa Al Abdulla**  
**INNOVATION DIRECTOR,**  
**QATAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**PARK (QSTP),**  
**PART OF QATAR FOUNDATION**  
**RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND**  
**INNOVATION**

**How has the growing interest of young women in new technologies influenced the development of innovative projects in the country?**

In Qatar's universities, we have a high percentage of women studying STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) topics, which is fantastic to see. QSTP runs the Arab Innovation Academy (AIA) bootcamp every year for students across the MENA region, to equip them with tech entrepreneurship skills, which are essential for the eventual commercialization of innovative projects. Interestingly, around 50% of the participants every year are women, and we consistently see a high level of interest, especially from women, to be educated in entrepreneurship and technology development. At QSTP, we realize the importance of the confidence of our younger generations, including women, because creating a technology start-up is not easy, particularly in traditionally male-dominated industries. We provide an environment that instills

#### BIO

Hayfa Al Abdulla is Innovation Director at Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP). She has gained extensive experience in management, ICT, and tech-based entrepreneurship while working at QSTP, Qatar Petroleum, and Qatar University. She is a board member at Qatar Mobility Innovation Center (QMIC), an innovation center focused on smart mobility systems, and is also a business writer and blogger. She earned a bachelor of computer sciences and an MBA from Qatar University. She is a certified project management professional, business analyst, and incubation manager.

those essential skills, builds up their courage to try out new ideas and network with other young innovators to get inspired. At AIA, we immerse the participants in real-life scenarios where they created their start-ups in just 10 days. They work with a diverse group of people coming from different academic backgrounds, mindset, nationalities, and skillsets. This experience pushes students to shape their idea, develop a prototype and pitch it to real investors. It has been encouraging to see great examples of ideas from women who have actively participated in this program.

**What is your advice to other women in Qatar interested in growing in managerial positions?**

Having confidence in yourself is key. Even when women are highly educated, they continue to doubt themselves, especially in leadership roles. Instead, they should be more confident and not be afraid to take the leap. We should build on and use the community around us and not take on everything on our own. To make a good leader, you must learn how to leverage the support of others. I believe that knowing how to interact with people is a talent that most women have and it can be nurtured with the right confidence. The same formula applies to the entrepreneurial path: have a clear vision, surround yourself with the right people and the right team, and believe in yourself. ✖



**Aysha Khalifa Al Romaihi**  
**HEAD INCUBATION SPECIAL**  
**PROGRAMS,**  
**PROJECT MANAGER OF SCALE7,**  
**QATAR DEVELOPMENT BANK (QDB)**

**Scale7 is the first fashion and design business incubator in Qatar. How does it boost creativity and the healthy development of local brands?**

The country has announced the launch of M7, a fashion, design, and tech hub to focus on the business side of nourishing Qatari talent and designers based in Qatar. Our role as Qatar Development Bank is to develop local talents and young leaders who can lead this sector with a business mindset in the future. We partnered with Qatar Museum represented by M7 to create Scale7. This is the first fashion and design business incubator with a focus on all design aspects, from fashion, ready-to-wear, haute couture, and high end to fashion jewelry, accessories, product design, and fashion technology. Many fashion houses and fashion organizations have started to adapt to new technology during the pandemic. One of them is creating innovative customer experiences such as having virtual fitting rooms and having their own virtual stylist. In addition,

we are currently introducing a new technology for designers: 3D printing. Most designers lead the production of their businesses through passion, without focusing on the business side, and this is where we come in. This is our role as a business incubator: to support these designers, create a business model for them, connect them with suppliers and partners in the ecosystem, guide them in business development activities, involve them in exhibitions, support them in creating a supply chain for sourcing materials, and so on.

**What other initiatives are you working on?**

We also have other activities like the Hackathons or Scale7 lab program that specialize in intensive courses, 3D printing, laser cutting and in jewelry design, which our facility here is fully equipped with in order to cater to the best practice for participants. One very unique initiative is the Scale7 Passport. This is like a fund of EUR10,000 for the pioneer start-ups from the acceleration program. The start-ups must come up with a proposal on how they plan to spend this token by expanding their businesses, either by participating in international fairs, visiting a factory or supplier to support them with their production, or even attending any course that could enhance their talent outside Qatar. It represents a way for them to explore a new journey outside Qatar. ✖

#### BIO

As the Head of Special Incubation Programs at Qatar Development Bank, QDB, Aysha Al Romaihi brings a wealth of expertise and experience to a role that ties together two of her deepest passions: a genuine desire to guide and support start-ups in Qatar and her appreciation and love for fashion and design. Armed with an MBA in Strategic Business from HEC Paris, she has been behind many strategic initiatives and business collaborations at Qatar Business Incubation Centre (QBIC). She has spearheaded a number of QBIC's forward-thinking initiatives, including the successful Lean Fashion Program (LFP) and the launch of Scale 7, Qatar's first fashion and design business incubator for innovative entrepreneurs in collaboration with M7, a creative start-up hub operating under Qatar Museums.



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# Transport

## STAY CONNECTED

**O**ver recent years, Qatar has embarked on a series of major infrastructure works to ensure it is ready for the over 1 million visitors expected to descend on its shores for the World Cup.

Alongside this, Minister of Transport Jassim Saif Ahmed Al Sulaiti recently launched the Transportation Master Plan for Qatar 2050 (TMPQ), which will serve as a roadmap for the land transportation investments needed to support growing urbanization and increasing international commerce. A number of government entities, including the Ministry of Transport, the Public Works Authority, and Kahramaa have also gone a long way to show off their green credentials, with sustainability at the heart of new metro, rail, and bus projects.

Elsewhere, no entity embodies Qatar's logistics ambitions as well as Qatar Airways, which recently announced record net profit of USD1.5 billion for the 2021-2022 financial year. As Akbar Al Baker, Group CEO & Executive Board Member of Qatar Airways, reaffirmed to *The Business Year*, "Our goal is to establish Qatar as a world-leading des-

tinuation and welcome more than 6 million visitors a year by 2030. We expect to welcome around 1 million visitors for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. To prepare for this, Qatar Tourism and Qatar Airways are undertaking a range of initiatives to offer new and undiscovered experiences."

On the maritime front, the vast majority of Qatari trade is carried out via the country's ports, a situation that became a necessity during a four-year blockade imposed by its neighbors. With relations now restored, facilities across the country continue to play a key role in the economy.

In December 2021, a second terminal at Hamad Port became fully operational under the operation of QTerminals. And in a recent interview with *TBY*, Managing Director Nadeem M. Mian confirmed; "Hamad port was built to the highest specifications and standards when it opened its doors, so it was ready to handle the largest ships. Our wharf depth measures 17m, and we have enough quay space and the equipment of high specifications to handle the large vessels coming to this part of the Arabian Gulf." ✖





## ROADWAYS SNAPSHOT (2019)

SOURCE: WORLDDATA

Length	<b>7,000 KM</b>
Per 1 million inhabitants	<b>2,443 KM</b>
Per sqkm	<b>606.29 KM</b>

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## AIR TRANSPORT SNAPSHOT

SOURCE: WORLDDATA

Biggest airport	<b>HAMAD INT.</b>
No. of airlines at Hamad International	<b>41</b>
No. of destinations reached via Hamad International	<b>116</b>
Biggest airline in Qatar	<b>QATAR AIRWAYS</b>
Destinations flown to by Qatar Airways	<b>133</b>
Air cargo moved in 2020	<b>13,54B TKM</b>
Cargo handled by Hamad International (2020)	<b>2.22M MT</b>



# leading BY EXAMPLE

Qatar Airways is focused on sustainability throughout its entire operation by promoting environmental leadership and awareness and aligning with international standards.

Akbar Al Baker  
GROUP CEO & EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER,  
QATAR AIRWAYS



**Qatar Airways is leading the aviation sector's transition to sustainability. What developments can we expect in the near future in this regard?**

At Qatar Airways, we recognize the importance of environmental sustainability in aviation, and we will continue to reaffirm our leadership and commitment to work in collaboration with governments and aviation industry stakeholders toward our ambitious environmental goals. We are constantly setting new milestones on environmental sustainability for the aviation industry, together with our global and regional partners. In 2020, together with oneworld, we were the first global alliance to unite behind a shared carbon neutrality goal, and in October 2021, we also celebrated the International Air Transport Association (IATA) agreement to set the global industry's target to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Together with oneworld Alliance, we outlined the path to achieving net zero emissions by 2050, including an ambitious collective target of using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) for 10% of combined fuel volumes by 2030. Most recently, in November 2021, we committed together with the oneworld airlines members to purchase 350 million gallons of blended sustainable aviation fuel at one airport in California. In the coming years, there will be more industry-leading announcements not only on SAF but also on aviation-technology partnerships and new carbon offsetting. In November 2021, Qatar Airways Cargo, in partnership with IATA, became the first carrier to join the IATA CO2NECT platform offering a new voluntary carbon offsetting program for air cargo shipments. This established a landmark for the upcoming voluntary carbon offsetting program for passenger,

corporate, and cargo. In 2021, Qatar Airways became the first carrier in Middle East to join the ICAO Global Coalition for Sustainable Aviation and also the first carrier in Middle East to join the IATA Turbulence Aware data exchange platform. We will continue having one of the most modern fleet and advanced aircraft technology in the sky, and we continue to explore ways to keep our fleet young, flexible, and efficient through advanced fleet management and our more than 70 fuel optimization projects. Qatar Airways has also made considerable progress in reducing the uses of single-use plastics onboard and are constantly looking at alternate sustainable products that meet the changing regulatory requirements.

**What does it mean for Qatar Airways to be the Official Partner and the Official Airline of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022?**

As the Official Partner and Official Airline of the greatest football event on earth, we look forward to welcoming fans from across the world on board our flights, where they can experience Qatar Airways' five-star hospitality. Qatar Airways understands the power of sport in bringing people together in the spirit of friendly competition. FIFA, as the governing body of the world's most popular sporting tournament, embodies the power of football's popularity and is a natural partner for Qatar Airways. We are incredibly proud to be a part of this iconic tournament in our home country of the State of Qatar.

**How do you envision the expansion of the Qatari tourism sector in the journey toward the realization of Vision 2030?**

At Qatar Tourism, where I serve as chairman, our goal is to establish Qatar as a world-leading destination and welcome

more than 6 million visitors a year by 2030. We expect to welcome around 1 million visitors for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. To prepare for this, Qatar Tourism is undertaking a range of initiatives to offer new and undiscovered experiences. The destination is constantly evolving to ensure visitors have a seamless and memorable trip, including the development of a number of new hotels in the pipeline. Through these efforts, Qatar Tourism aims to increase tourism demand, which fuels the domestic ecosystem in building world-class tourist assets and attractions, creating a tourism demand multiplier effect that will boost the domestic economy and strengthen Qatar's ecosystems across hospitality, retail, food and beverage, cultural and creative industries, sports, transportation systems, and business events. ✖

## BIO

Akbar Al Baker has been instrumental in shaping the development of Qatar Airways into one of the fastest growing and most highly acclaimed airlines in the world. He is the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Arab Air Carriers Organization (AACO), a member of the board of governors of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and a non-executive director of Heathrow Airport Holdings (HAH). A highly motivated individual, he has been a successful businessman for more than 25 years, holds a private pilot license, and is also CEO of several divisions of Qatar's national airline, including Qatar Executive, Hamad International Airport, Qatar Aviation Services, Qatar Aircraft Catering Company, Qatar Distribution Company, Qatar Duty Free, and Internal Media Services. He is a graduate in economics and commerce and worked at various levels in the Civil Aviation Directorate before becoming Qatar Airways' Group CEO in 1997.

# The Al Wahda Bridge pictured in Doha



Image: Hasan Zaïdi



# flying HIGH

Boeing has played an important role in the development of the Qatari aerospace sector and encouraging young Qataris to develop careers in aviation.



Kuljit Ghata-Aura  
PRESIDENT OF MIDDLE EAST,  
TURKEY, AND AFRICA (META)  
BOEING

**Boeing has been present in the Middle East for the last 70 years. Which has been its major contribution for transforming the Middle East into a global air transport hub?**

Boeing enjoys a strong partnership with the Middle East region that goes back over 77 years. Our partnership with the state of Qatar spans over nearly two decades. We currently employ 264 employees in Qatar, and we are committed to supporting Qatar National Vision 2030. We are proud to support the Qatari armed forces, supplying iconic products such as the C-17 transport aircraft, the F-15 fighter, and the Apache helicopter. Qatar Airways is one of Boeing's most valued partners, and we recently announced two very significant deals for the new 777X freighter and 737-10 aircraft. We are proud to support Qatar Airways in its 25th anniversary year. Boeing has also been collaborating with research, education and government institutions in Qatar on a range of initiatives that promote STEM education, as well as entrepreneurship. Over 4,400 students have benefitted from the community engagement programs we have organized with the support of INJAZ Al-Arab. Boeing has been a research partner of the Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), part of Hamad Bin Khalifa University, since 2013. To date, we have co-hosted six machine learning and data analytics symposiums. The Qatar University – College of Engineering (QU-CENG), has been one of our other important academic partners. Through Boeing's support, students of the college have access to new programs and tools. One of the initiatives with QU-CENG that really stands out is the iLearnSpace we launched in 2021. More than 200 female architecture students have used the space to design and model their ideas and aspirations using VR/AR technology. iLearnSpace has also hosted many Qatari high school students to explore the college's STEM initiatives. It is a nice way to reflect the importance virtual and augmented reality plays in designing the next generation of Boeing aircraft.

**How is Boeing committed to enhancing the defense, space, and security business in Qatar?**

Boeing has supplied the Qatari armed forces with

the C17 Globemaster III transport aircraft and Apache AH-64E helicopters, and provides training and support in the defense sector. In 2017, the US Department of Defense awarded Boeing a contract to manufacture 36 F-15 fighter jets for the QEAF. We have started deliveries of the Qatar Advanced F-15 jets earlier in 2022 and expect the second batched to be delivered later this year. The F-15 offers the world's most advanced technologies and delivers more payload to the fight, more speed to target and more range than any fighter in the world.

**Currently, Qatar Airways has a backlog of more than 100 Boeing airplanes. To what features does the company attributes this success to?**

Boeing has built long-standing relations with both the State of Qatar and Qatar Airways; we deeply value these partnerships, and are committed to building on them for mutual benefit. Our partnership with Qatar Airways was established in May 2006, and today Qatar Airways operates an extensive fleet of passenger and cargo aircraft. Qatar Airways' latest orders for 777-8 freighters and 737-10 passenger aircraft are significant for Boeing, and will provide Qatar Airways with one of the most advanced and most efficient passenger and cargo fleets in the region. These new aircraft will position the Qatar Airways for significant and sustainable growth in the future, and Boeing shares their confidence in the potential of commercial aviation in the region.

**How is Boeing working with the government to ensure future advancements in the country's defense and services capabilities?**

DIMDEX 2022 is a key international platform for Boeing to highlight both the present and future capabilities of its diverse product portfolio that supports the region's needs. DIMDEX is an important opportunity for us to demonstrate how our technology is being used by the Qatari military. For example, the QEAF's fleet of eight C-17 Globemaster IIIs has become a familiar sight supporting disaster relief and other humanitarian operations around the world, symbolizing the generosity of Qatar and its people. ✖

Supports airlines and allied government customers in more than

# 150

countries

The Middle East represents

# \$200

billion of the combined services market

#### BIO

Kuljit Ghata-Aura is the President of Middle East, Turkey, and Africa at Boeing. He joined Boeing in 2010 and has occupied a range of leadership positions. Before Boeing, he was founding partner at Eversheds in Abu Dhabi and spent 13 years practicing law in London. He is a graduate of Oxford University.



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# strategic GROWTH



Mahmut Yayla  
VICE-PRESIDENT FOR SALES  
(NORTH EUROPE),  
TURKISH AIRLINES

Turkish Airlines has worked hard in the last few years to be ranked first in Europe and in the top-five worldwide among network carriers.

**Turkish Airlines has launched its SMARTIST operations center. How will this facility represent a new era in cargo traffic?**

While the global air cargo sector contracted during the pandemic period, we continued to grow and expand at Turkish Cargo with the right strategy. We established our new mega cargo hub, SMARTIST, at Istanbul Airport, which started its operations in late 2021. This state-of-the-art facility features revamped business processes, automated storage systems, and a fully integrated warehouse management system. SMARTIST, one of the world's largest cargo facilities by capacity, is poised to become one of the most advanced facilities of its kind in terms of innovation and technological capabilities. In its new comprehensive strategic plan, Turkish Cargo aims to become one of the top three worldwide by 2025. SMARTIST facilitates the management of business processes in a faster, more efficient and traceable way via the work order optimization system in which all processes are integrated. As a result, it will remain one of the main factors in Turkish Cargo's journey toward achieving its strategic goals with technology-oriented projects to be commissioned in 2022.

**How has the presence of new technologies encouraged a faster and more efficient experience?**

To ensure its competitiveness, Turkish Cargo prioritized integration with its revenue management system. In 2022, Turkish Cargo laid the groundwork for implementing best practices in the industry, meeting customer expectations at the highest level, and developing a machine learning-based system that aims to maximize cargo contribution. The system is being developed via a dual structure in which Turkish Cargo takes an active role in product development and design capitalizing on its sector experience, and Turkish Airlines Technology Inc. is a pioneering member. The new system will ensure that customer demands are met more quickly after this stage, as digital sales channels become more widespread in the sector. The profile and visibility of Turkish

Cargo will increase on these platforms through more dynamic capacity and price management. Turkish Cargo, starting to work on integration with digital marketplaces, aims to boost penetration for its customers and business partners by having advantages over the competition with its innovative and competitive price policies, apart from traditional communication channels.

**What steps are being taken to make sustainable aviation a reality?**

We fly for a habitable world and future generations. As a global company, we focus on preserving natural resources for future generations. Since 2008, we have developed and continue to implement more than 100 operational optimization initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint. Thanks to the fuel saving efforts we successfully implement every year, we once again prevented hundreds of thousands of tons of carbon emissions in 2021. In addition to these efforts, we have started using aircraft fuel obtained from sustainable sources and we aim to expand this use even more. We count with 116,809 tons of prevented CO2 emissions.

**What are the airline's main aspirations for 2023?**

Despite the uncertain picture created by the pandemic, the aviation industry remains a major driver of globalization. Air travel is the fastest and safest method of transportation in the world today and will be so in the future. At Turkish Airlines, we aim to further develop our products and services and enhance our innovation efforts, now an integral part of our corporate culture. Every day, we are readying ourselves for the intense competition expected in the aviation sector in the coming years. The Turkish Airlines family is prepared for the zenith of the global aviation industry with our employees—our most valuable asset. Backed by our 89-year history and the unshakable support our nation has given to our brand, Turkish Airlines is moving forward into a bright future together with its passengers. ✖

**60K**  
employees

Fleet of  
**377**  
passenger and cargo  
aircraft

Network serving  
**340**  
destinations around the  
world on 5 continents

**FOCUS**

Modernizing maritime logistics

# WE ARE SAILING

Qatar's maritime sector is being upgraded in terms of port capacity and fleet size.

**AS A PENINSULAR COUNTRY IN THE GULF** whose livelihood depends on international trade and energy exports, maritime transportation is indispensable for Qatar. Both the size of its commercial fleet and the capacity of its ports have been growing over the last two decades. The country is ahead of the rest of the GCC and most of Middle East in terms of domestic logistics, according to Agility Emerging Markets Logistics Index.

A new milestone was achieved in early 2022, when the 366-m-long container ship, CMA CGM APOLLON, called on Hamad Port, south of Doha. The container ship belongs to the ultra-large class of cargo ships, carrying 15,000 TEUs. The event was notable as it demonstrated Hamad Port's capacity in handling large vessels. Ships such as CMA CGM APOLLON require special port infrastructure for berthing, loading and unloading, and container handling.

QTerminals, the port's operator, has great faith in the port and its capacity. "Hamad port was built to the highest specifications and standards when it opened its doors, so it was ready to handle the largest ships. Our wharf depth measures 17m, and we have enough quay space and the equipment of high specifications to handle the large vessels coming to this part of the Arabian Gulf," pointed out Nadeem M. Mian, managing director of QTerminals at Hamad Port.

These favorable views are supported by facts and numbers. Hamad Port operates direct sea lanes to East Asia and Europe, as well as a handful of transshipment hubs, thus linking Qatar to almost everywhere in the world. The port is quite new and has managed to become the preferred port of call for many ocean-liners in just under seven years. The construction work on the port began in 2010 in Umm Al-Houl district near Doha, and the port became fully operational in 2015-2016.

The port has been evolving and developing continuously. New direct shipping lines to Malaysia, India, and Turkey were recently announced to expand Qatar's international business opportunities. The port facilities have been upgraded several times since its launch, so as to keep up with the highest standards in maritime logistics. A new terminal, known as CT2, was launched in 2020, while the older infrastructure were robustly upgraded after a mere four years of service.

Hamdan Port's container volume grew by 9% in 2021, alone. In the same year, the port registered 150 more arrivals compared to the previous year, with a total of 1,750 ships birthing at the port. The figures are expected to grow further in 2022, as global trade bounces back to its pre-pandemic levels. Moreover, with Europe replacing Russia with Qatar as its main energy supplier, even more LNG carriers are going to call for Qatari ports in 2022, though LNG is not handled at Hamdan Port due to health and safety concerns.

Ras Laffan Port, located to the north of Hamdan Port, houses the world's largest LNG terminals. Owned by QatarEnergy, the port only handles petroleum products, at quantities exceeding 10 million metric tons a year. The deep-water port can accommodate LNG tankers of all classes. Since the beginning of the energy crisis in Europe in the wake of the war in Ukraine, more-and-more gas-tankers are berthing at Ras Laffan Port each month. As of 2022, Ras Laffan Port operates six facilities for handling the larger classes of LNG carriers, including Q-Flex and Q-Max, and four wharves for smaller gas-tankers.

The LNG carriers, too, should be the focus of any comprehensive logistic overhaul. No maritime transportation system is complete without a fleet of vessels. Qatar has placed orders for new cargo ships and tankers, as the Gulf nation prepares itself to double its LNG output by 2027. QatarEnergy ordered four oceangoing LNG carriers to South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering in 2021. Two similar vessels were commissioned to another Korean shipbuilder, Samsung Heavy Industries. These will be the first ones in a series of 60-100 new LNG carriers which will be commissioned to Korean shipyards by 2027 at an estimated cost of USD19 billion. All commissioned LNG carriers will be operated by Nakilat, which already operates the world's largest LNG fleet.

The simultaneous expansion and overhaul of the fleet and ports, for both cargo and LNG transportation, means that Qatar has a long-term plan to become something more than a regional maritime hub; the Gulf nation is gearing up to become a modern-day maritime power, in keeping with the Qatar National Vision 2030. The country's massive LNG reserves coupled with the rise of global demand for energy is a major driving force of the sector's expansion at present. ✖



# excellence FIRST

As the leading maritime and logistics service provider in Qatar, Milaha works to maintain efficient and resilient supply chains while supporting the country's economic diversification and growth.

Mohammed Abdulla Swidan  
INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO,  
MILAHA GROUP



## How is Milaha working toward the realization of Qatar National Vision 2030?

At Milaha, we believe that sustainability is an approach that needs to be implemented at different business levels. We are committed to supporting the communities in which we operate through multiple initiatives related to health, safety, security, environment, and quality (HSSEQ), employee welfare, equal employment opportunities, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Milaha is working diligently to minimize the impact on the environment associated with its operations and increase the sustainability of the business through the implementation of its environmental management system. This will provide the framework for carbon intensity reduction, management of wastes and emissions, sustainability of resources, and compliance with national and international regulations. Milaha is also committed to protecting and improving the health and safety of all individuals associated to the company by providing a safe, secure, and healthy work environment. The integration of safety principles into everyday business activities and striving to continually ensure that our activities are carried out in a safe and ethical manner is recognized as essential to achieve health and safety excellence. In recognition of its compliance with the best HSSEQ practices, Milaha was awarded the prestigious Sword of Honour for the third consecutive year and the Globe of Honour for the second consecutive year from the British Safety Council. Considering its employees as its most valuable asset, Milaha is fully compliant with labor laws and regulations relevant to the company. We also work on developing internal rules and controls to protect the rights and interests of all our employees. Milaha's commitment to investing in tech-

nology and digitalization included significant upgrades to our platforms, systems, and digital tools to enhance connectivity, mobility, and efficiency.

## How would you assess the efforts thus far by the local industry to increase the local content of its oil and gas industry, and how is Milaha engaging in it?

As the leading maritime and logistics service provider, Milaha is keen to constantly maintain efficient and resilient supply chains while supporting Qatar's economic diversification and sustainability, through contributing to constructive initiatives such as Tawteen, the supply chain localization program for the energy sector led by Qatar Energy with the aim of creating local investment opportunities in the oil and gas sector in Qatar. With this in mind, and as one of our many initiatives, we have partnered with multinational oilfield services firm Schlumberger to expand into the well services industry in Qatar, through developing and equipping well stimulation vessels over the next five years, the first of which was launched in April 2021, demonstrating our commitment to enhancing a highly resilient and competitive, localized supply chain, and our vision to be the partner of choice to our customers. Milaha is also working on expanding its offshore service capabilities by developing new subsea surveys and providing maintenance and installation services.

## What other sectors are expected to drive the demand for marine transport and supply chain solutions in Qatar?

The freight and logistics sector in Qatar has been growing steadily over the past five years, with estimated market value of more than USD7.5 billion, and is expected to register an annual growth rate of more

than 7% during the 2021-2026 period, supported by the ambitious government plans to develop the economy. The warehousing market is another key contributor to the logistics industry in Qatar, mainly supported by the retail and FMCG sectors, and recently the advanced warehousing facilities have gained a strong boost with the growth of the e-commerce sector globally. With this in mind, Milaha Logistics City emerges as an integrated center for freight logistics, warehousing facilities, and business solutions for start-up entrepreneurs and SMEs. Milaha Logistics City offers diversified solutions that cater to various customers' needs in the areas of shipping, storage, and re-export. The state-of-the-art bonded warehouse located in Milaha Logistics City offers comprehensive services with zero-duty upfront to support global trade and e-commerce, while enhancing business efficiency and profitability. ✖

## BIO

Mohammed Abdulla Swidan was entrusted by Milaha's Board of Directors to carry out the duties of the President and CEO of Milaha group in 2022 and he is the Executive Vice President of Milaha Offshore & Marine since 2018. Prior to his position as EVP, he held various leadership positions as senior commercial manager at Halul Offshore Services Company in 2013 before being promoted to vice president, operations in 2014. He holds a bachelor's degree in maritime engineering and a master's degree in ship and port operation management from Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport in addition to an MBA in global shipping management from Greenwich-London University.

**UKRAINE**

Olvia

**TURKEY**

Antalya




**QATAR**

YEMEN

**OUR INTERNATIONAL FOOTPRINT**



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# regional HUB

QTerminals Group is focused on enhancing its portfolio through acquisitions, strategic investments, and business combinations and enhancing its competitiveness in operating and managing ports.

Neville Bissett  
CEO,  
QTERMINALS GROUP



**QTerminals Group has acquired several ports out of Qatar. How would you characterize the group's expansion plans?**

QTerminals Group, Qatar's terminal operating company jointly established by Qatar Ports Management Company (Mwani Qatar) and Qatar Navigation (Milaha), is eyeing more growth opportunities through concessions, acquisitions, investments, and joint ventures in the next five years, as part of its internationalization strategy to operate multiple terminals around the world. The group, which provides major services to Hamad Port, includes QTerminals Antalya, officially inaugurated in January 2021, and the Port of Olvia in Ukraine, which was officially inaugurated in December 2021 after signing a 35-year concession deal for (until 2056). The signing of the Port of Olvia concession deal is considered an important turning point in the future expansion of QTerminals Group's image in the coming years. QTerminals Antalya receives about 1,500 ships annually and has the capacity to handle 350,000 TEUs and 4 million tons of dry and bulk cargo. As per the group's vision and the guidelines and directions of the board of directors, the group's objectives are to enhance its portfolio through concessions, acquisitions, strategic investments, and business combinations. QTerminals Group also is seeking to expand and diversify its assets across a growing number of sectors, such as marine services. Entering into such acquisitions and operating and managing several important global ports in Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia will help enhance the company's competitiveness in operating and managing external ports, reducing expenses, and establishing an advanced infrastructure for international trade and logistics, which will make QTerminals a pivotal center in the field of marine infrastructure in the Middle East and around the world. These synergistic acquisitions in international

seaports development will provide QTerminals with a leading position in the regional and international market to achieve more growth opportunities. The group plans to enter into solid acquisition strategies that will underpin successful acquisitions in the end in the field of seaports. While QTerminals Group contributes to the development and operation of international ports, the group also plans to enter into partnerships to develop key seaports in countries that will enable them to develop their maritime transport. This will enhance the ongoing efforts of Qatar to contribute to maritime transport overall, especially in the field of commodities and particularly in landlocked African countries and enhance cooperation between countries

**What advancements is QTerminals making to promote Doha's position as an international maritime player as well?**

In the context of expanding its continuous efforts to make Qatar a major international player in areas such as LNG, QTerminals has signed several agreements with several local, regional, and international players to enhance the position of Hamad Port in the region. The port is already achieving a qualitative shift in diversifying Qatar's economy and strengthening competitiveness through its role in securing the import and re-export of goods and merchandise. Hamad Port, one of the largest ports in the Middle East, has contributed to the revitalization of the local maritime sector, as it handles the largest share of the total trade movement in the port. The advanced infrastructure and modern technologies of Hamad Port have contributed to attracting major international shipping lines. The modern technology used in Hamad Port has played a key role in the rapid completion of handling operations, which has contributed to providing comprehensive services and more solutions that allow

customers to make the most of an ideal competitive environment for business.

**How would you assess the synergies created around Hamad Port, Hamad International Airport (HIA), Qatar Free Zones (QFZ), and the industrial areas?**

With the completion of the construction cycle in Hamad Port and the readiness of HIA, in addition to the completion of the infrastructure in QFZ, Doha has welcomed renowned international companies and witnessed the opening of a number of international offices in QFZ. All these projects have provided an impetus in preparing Qatar and making it a global investment hub that attracts international companies and significant investments, as it provides a well-balanced and integrated business environment, which will make Qatar a major investment destination after the end of the 2022 World Cup. ✕

#### BIO

Neville Bissett is the Group CEO of QTerminals Group. QTerminals Group is the Qatar-based manager and operator of Hamad Port, including Container Terminal 1 and Container Terminal 2 and multi-purpose cargo terminals, as well as QTerminals Antalya, Turkey and QTerminals Olvia, Ukraine. Prior to joining QTerminals, Neville was the general manager of Ports Development Company, the master developer and port authority of King Abdullah Port in Saudi Arabia. Previously, he was managing director of an AP Moeller Terminals/Bolloré joint venture in West Africa and, during his time with Hutchison Port Holdings, CEO of Alexandria International Container Terminals, in addition to being CEO of Tanzania International Container Terminals. He has also held other senior management roles in the Middle East, Africa, South America, the Caucasus, and Europe.



## INTERVIEW

# QATAR'S *gateway to the world*



In just a few short years, QTerminals Hamad Port has positioned itself as a major regional player in the shipping industry.

Nadeem M. Mian  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
QTERMINALS HAMAD PORT

Investments totaling

**QR27**

billion

Targets

**4%**

growth

## BIO

Nadeem M. Mian joined QTerminals in 2018 as chief commercial officer. He was also the acting COO until 2Q2018. He was appointed as Managing Director for QTerminals Hamad Port, the flagship business unit of QTerminals Group, in 2020. He has over 29 years' experience in the ports and shipping industry. He has worked for major shipping lines, terminal operators and recently, a port owner and developer in senior management roles across seven countries including Pakistan, Nigeria, Hong Kong, Oman, the UAE, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia prior to his assignment in Qatar. He has held CCO, COO, and deputy CEO positions with Hutchison Ports and director position at Ports Development Company, King Abdullah Port. He holds an MBA from the Lahore University of Management Sciences.

**How do you assess the evolution of the cargo movement of Hamad Port from 2017 to 2022?**

Before 2017, the main port in Qatar used to be Doha Port, where all the commercial cargo used to come through. In 2016, a new project was launched at Hamad Port, over 30km south of Doha. This is a huge greenfield development complying with the highest international specifications and completed with the top standards for modern cargo handling. The port's size and scale will match Qatar's future economy in the coming years and even decades. Hamad Port started commercial operations at the end of 2016, and it handles various kinds of cargo, including containers, bulk, breakbulk, Ro-Ro vehicles, and livestock. We also have offshore supply services for offshore oil and gas activity on the high seas. We have been operating for over four years in Hamad Port and have two container terminals here. We have one general cargo terminal for handling bulk, break-bulk, project cargo, a Ro-Ro, and livestock terminal called multi-user terminal. We also have a separate offshore supply service terminal. We have almost all the major global shipping lines and regional lines calling directly. We handle a robust variety of non-containerized cargo at our non-container terminals. After the blockade, Qatar had to quickly realign and develop new trading relationships with new trading partners, secure new supply lines and supply chains, and new suppliers of different commodities, cargo, and items required daily. Qatar increased the number of its trading partners from seven to over 23 within months. Hamad Port facilitated the cargo handling of sudden and critical mass or volume, became both a mainline port with larger vessels calling directly, and started to handle transshipment shipment business, especially for the upper Gulf ports of Kuwait, Iraq, and other ports in the region. Hamad Port has since positioned and established itself as one of the main transshipment ports for the upper Gulf region.

**What does it mean to Hamad Port to be the first 5G-en-**

**abled seaport in the Middle East?**

Regarding the best practices and cutting-edge technology, we are the first regional port with 5G connectivity covering the whole terminal. Our CT2 facility, including the remote-controlled crane operations, is completely controlled by Wi-Fi. The terminal's low carbon footprint is appreciated because it is primarily electric and remote controlled. We are using future technology that other terminal operators are thinking about using. Wi-Fi plays a large part in the terminal operating system and the software. We already have the best hardware we need. We also have remote units that transfer data between the planning, field employees, and all the machines operating in the yard and on the vessel to timely communicate what to do next. We now continue to operate for the fifth year and have grown exponentially. Our total cargo in the last year was 1.4 million TEUs. We did a bulk and a break-bulk of approximately 1.5 million freight tons and another 1.5 million freight tons handling of Ro-Ro. Livestock trade has reduced as Qatar has become more self-sufficient. We have achieved so much in no time, which demonstrates the port's growth and cargo volume to reach those milestones.

**What are your main aspirations for the rest of the year and going into 2023?**

We are aiming for 3.5-4% GDP growth this year. We are all set to cross 7 million TEUs by mid-2022. In addition to containers, we target to cross 15 million freight tons of non-containerized cargo handled since start-up. The 4% growth target is a safe parameter because GDP growth and cargo growth always go hand-in-hand. For example, Qatar's economy depends on local domestic consumption and industrial growth, and as the population increases, so will the cargo volume. Hamad Port is ready and capable, and it has all the ingredients to grow. We have the capacity, skills, human resources, equipment, latest systems, and a competent team with vast industry experience to keep growing. ✖

# role TO PLAY

S'hail Shipping plays a major role in global trade, providing shipping solutions to local industry.



Rajiv Pal  
CEO,  
S'HAIL SHIPPING

**How does S'hail Shipping positively impact Qatar's role in global trade in dry bulk commodities?**

Over 90% of global trade is conducted via sea, of which more than 50% involves carriage of dry bulk commodities like iron ore, coal, grain, minerals, and so on. This is equivalent to global shipment of about 5 billion tons of dry bulk commodities per year. The trade and shipment of dry bulk commodities is a massive global operation of immense importance to the world for proper management of its resources to the benefit of the mankind. To this end, since its incorporation in Dec 2016, S'hail Shipping is perhaps the only Qatari company that has transported over 12 million metric tons of dry bulk cargo across six continents connecting iron ore for steel plants or coal for power plants or grains for food and so on.

**S'hail Shipping collaborates with around 343 local shareholders. How would you define this partnership, and to what extent does it influence the growth of the sector?**

Qatar ranks as number one in per capita income, and naturally, there is a need for this income to find investment avenues for securing and growing the wealth. S'hail shipping provides a unique opportunity to local shareholders to own dry-bulk ships, which is different from traditional investments in oil and gas or real estate related assets. S'hail Shipping through its website provides access to its shareholders with all information including monthly updates of the financials, minutes of board meetings on various matters of importance to the company, and so on. This is aimed at creating shareholder interest, involvement, and confidence in the management and operation of dry-bulk ships rather than simply gathering the dividends at the end of the year. The company expects to grow this relationship between the business activity and shareholders resulting into a steady and profitable expansion of S'hail Shipping's market size.

**How interested is S'hail Shipping in expanding operations to other international markets?**

Currently, 100% of S'hail Shipping's revenue is generated from international markets. This makes the company a net contributor to Qatar's foreign exchange. It also helps boost the local economy; for example, our entire multi-million-dollar hull and machinery insurance is covered by Qatar Insurance Company (QIC). The company aims to keep expanding its share in the international market.

**How did the three-year blockade affect your operations, and what was the main lesson that you learnt from it?**

This company was incorporated in December 2016 to primarily transport gabbro from the UAE to Qatar for local clients engaged in trading and construction activity. Between January and May 2017, the company swiftly acquired four large dry bulk carriers until suddenly Qatar found itself in midst of an embargo in June 2017. For us, although not an ideal scenario, we were able to immediately switch our business from regional to international shipments. The know-how to convert a materialized risk into a business opportunity helped the company overcome the intended damages of the blockade. The success in trading the ships internationally not only received the support of Qatar Development Bank to fund our expansion but also our own shareholders to increase our capacity.

**What are the company's main aspirations for 2022 and into 2023?**

With the blockage now lifted, the company is well poised to provide shipping solutions to the local industry engaged in import of gabbro. To this extent, the company is engaged in discussion with major players in the local market. Hopefully, the company can add a portfolio of local market to its existing international contracts. ✖

Connecting globally,

**210**

voyages,

**6**

continents

Private fund with  
around more than

**350**

investors

#### BIO

Rajiv Pal started his career as a graduate engineer trainee at Essar Shipping Limited in Mumbai. Since then, he has remained in the shipping and maritime industry. Before joining S'hail Shipping, he was operating over USD1 billion of shipping assets in Singapore, prior to which he was the manager of business development and planning at Qatar Shipping Company (Q-Ship). He recently received the Global Leader of the Year 2020-21 award from URS AsiaOne.

# integral part OF LIFE

As Qatar continues to advance its tourism sector, Mowasalat (Karwa) is gaining greater prominence as a key provider of transport services.



Fahad Saad Al-Qahtani  
CEO,  
MOWASALAT (KARWA)

School transportation  
for over

# 63,000

students

Whole public network  
will be converted to  
electric vehicles by

# 2023

## BIO

Fahad Saad Al-Qahtani has been CEO of Mowasalat (Karwa) since 2019. He has held several high-profile positions, including President of Community Development at Qatar Foundation from 2016-2019, following his post as Executive Director of Qatar Foundation's Administrative Group. Earlier, he was Al Shaqab's Executive Director and also served as Strategic Supply Manager in the procurement department at Qatar Foundation, after several positions in the oil and gas industry and public sector organizations. He has been a Board Member of Al Ahli Bank, Mazaya, WISH, and Siemens WLL Qatar. He holds a degree in engineering management from the University of Hertfordshire in the UK.

**What are the plans for public electric transportation in Qatar, especially as the country seeks to meet the objectives set out in Vision 2030?**

Qatar has extremely ambitious objectives in terms of sustainability, and for Mowasalat it has been a priority to make them a reality for the public transportation sector of the country. Mowasalat has incorporated many initiatives in this regard, such as recycling engine oil from fleets, recycling tires, and reviewing water and electricity consumption. Waste management has been addressed as well. In 2022, Qatar will host the biggest football event in the world, and it will be a great opportunity to showcase what has already been achieved in terms of public electric transportation and accelerate the pace toward our 2030 goals. Transportation is one of the biggest strategic elements for the success of any event. About 700 of our buses now run on clean energy and Mowasalat is working to train drivers, provide infrastructure for charging, and equip the team with the knowledge on how to use digital smart solutions to operate such a fleet. We agreed on the design of the electrification process and how to carry out the transformation in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport. The whole public network will be converted to electric vehicles by 2023. With our partners, Mowasalat is also in preparation of a project to assemble e-buses and equipment in Qatar, further adding to the country's role as a pioneer in the field of electric transportation.

**How would you classify Mowasalat's current fleet, and how are you preparing it to transport football players and high-ranking individuals?**

We have different streams including a mass transit network, school transportation for over 63,000 students, and private hire buses. Mowasalat has contracts in place with different stakeholders, ranging from Qatar Energy to ministries and schools. All our state-of-the-art buses will be utilized for our guests during the upcoming international events. Additionally, for high-ranking individuals, our luxury business section features

a fleet of limousines that can be booked as part of event transportation packages, for individual rides or immediate pick-ups through the Karwa Taxi App.

**How are you working with other counterparts in the country like Qatar Tourism to improve the tourist experience?**

Mowasalat signed an MoU with Qatar Tourism for a broad cooperation on service excellence. This includes the training of our drivers to best adapt them to the needs of tourists. We use our driving school as a central platform for this endeavor. Qatar Tourism added training about landmarks specific for tourism and educates drivers on how to communicate with tourists. They need to know about restaurants, sightseeing, and culture and be able to make recommendations to visitors. We are working with them to develop these programs. We are also working on the eco-friendly component and will soon provide electric vehicles dedicated for airport transfers, and later for general limousine services.

**How is Mowasalat working to promote the use of public transport in Qatar, and how are you cooperating with related parties such as Doha Metro?**

We fulfil clear objectives from the Ministry of Transport regarding public transport. For everybody to commit to utilizing the public transport system, it needs to be efficient and work on time. We have diversified our fleet to support other public transportation entities, which was implemented successfully with the Metro Feeder for Doha Metro and our "last mile" cooperation for e-scooters that are stationed all around the city. We are raising awareness that by using public transport, we are protecting the environment for the next generation. We support SILA, one of the main initiatives by the Ministry of Transport to integrate all means of public transportation, including Hamad International Airport and the airlines flying into it. Together, we promote our idea of a shared transport infrastructure as an integral part of everyone's everyday life. ✖





**Shaikh Abdulla Bin Fahad  
Bin Jassem Bin Jabor Al Thani**  
**CHAIRMAN**  
**GULF WAREHOUSING COMPANY**

**BIO**

Shaikh Abdulla has been a member of GWC's board of directors since 2008, holding seats on the Board's Tender and Nominations Committee, prior to his election to Chairman of the Board in 2014. Shaikh Abdulla brings more than 10 years of experience to the position, having previously worked with Qatar Petrochemical Company (QAPCO) and Qatar Chemical and Petrochemical Marketing and Distribution Company (Muntajat) while currently holding a position at Qatar Steel.



**Ranjeev Menon**  
**GROUP CEO**  
**GULF WAREHOUSING COMPANY**

**BIO**

Under Ranjeev Menon's leadership, GWC has become the logistics leader in the State of Qatar, with an over 3.8 million square meter footprint, including the largest privately owned logistics park in the region, Logistics Village Qatar. He holds a master of business in supply chain and logistics management from RMIT University of Melbourne, Australia.

## DELIVERING GLORY

Gulf Warehousing Company (Q.P.S.C) has grown alongside Qatar in recent years, and is playing a key role in delivering the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup.

### How has GWC play a key role in helping FIFA organize the Qatar 2022 World Cup?

We have been looking forward to the World Cup for almost 10 years now. We are Qatar's leading logistics company and the Official Host Nation Logistics Provider for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. It is an critical moment for Qatar to showcase everything it has accomplished, and also for GWC. It is testament to our incredible progress over the past 18 years. Being named the Official Logistics Provider for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 was a momentous occasion, demonstrating how far we've come since 2004. Hard work, strong belief in our values, and unwavering commitment to delivery has helped us achieve this goal. FIFA recognized this commitment, along with our dedication to training and innovation, and trusted us to play a key role in organizing the biggest single-sport event on the planet—and the most prestigious sporting event ever to be held in the Middle East and Arab world. The GWC team has been planning for the World Cup for eight years. And their journey will continue once the estimated 1 million visitors, to a country of just 2.88 million people, have returned home. While the world is mesmerized by the action on the pitch, it's the work behind the scenes that will leave a real legacy for Qatar, the MENA region, and the world.

### Qatar is one of the largest exporters of liquefied natural gas (LNG). How has such a small country achieved so much in this area?

Much of Qatar's enormous gas reserves

lie under the country's northern shore. Extraction is no easy feat. Exploration and production rely on pre-engineered structures that GWC ships into the country. It is a highly complex operation to bring this equipment in. GWC first entered the energy sector with Oryx GTL, a partnership between Qatargas and Dutch energy giant Shell. At the time, it was the largest gas-to-liquid (GTL) plant in the world, using innovative technology to turn natural gas into cleaner-burning alternatives to oil-based fuels like diesel. LNG comprises most of Qatar's exports, but GTL follows the same principle: Once liquefied, the gas can be transported in containers, much like any liquid. In the beginning, GWC provided onshore operations, breakbulk handling, heavy equipment transportation, warehousing, customs clearance, and freight forwarding. The company's infrastructure has since grown to include open yards for pipe laydowns, chemical and hazmat storage, and overhead cranes for repair and refurbishment. This infrastructure now covers around half a million square meters, largely clustered in two dedicated hubs to the north and south. These hubs provide comprehensive logistics for oil and gas projects, emphasizing the company has been careful in driving cost efficiency by building close to source facilities and implementing new technology such as real-time consignment tracking. The scale is impressive for a company that was only established in 2004. But the safety record might be what GWC is most proud of. ✖

An interior view of the BeIN Sports television studio

### QATAR INTERNET USAGE SNAPSHOT (JANUARY 2021)

SOURCE: DATAREPORTAL

Internet users	2.88M
Increase between 2020 and 2021	29,000
Internet penetration	99%
Social media users	2.87M

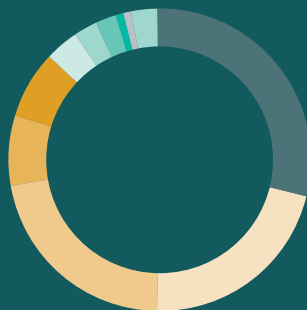
### MOBILE TELEPHONY SNAPSHOT (JAN 2021)

SOURCE: DATAREPORTAL

Mobile connections	4.67M
Increase between 2020 and 2021	35,000
Mobile connections penetration	160.6%

### MOBILE VENDOR MARKET SHARE (JUNE 2022)

SOURCE: STATCOUNTER



- 29.1% Samsung
- 21.32% Apple
- 21.89% Xiaomi
- 7.43% Huawei
- 7.31% Oppo
- 3.72% Vivo
- 2.4% OnePlus
- 2.17% Realme
- 0.78% Unknown
- 0.84% Nokia
- 3.04% Other



Image: Noushad Thekayil



# Digitalization

## CUTTING EDGE

**I**ncreasing digitalization has become a hallmark of diversification plans across the Gulf, seen as it is as a crucial aspect of a modern knowledge economy.

According to Invest Qatar, the “technology sector” contributes USD3 billion to GDP. And the government is keen to get the latest technologies into the hands of start-ups and SMEs. Technologies that are proving particularly disruptive in this area include Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and AI.

Elsewhere, AR solutions are being increasingly pedaled, as are cybersecurity solutions.

Qatar is also ahead of the pack on 5G deployment, having attained a penetration rate of 99.7% already. This is allowing the concept of the smart city to flourish, especially in new Doha suburbs Msheireb Downtown and Lusail City, which are being built from the ground up with smart city concepts at the forefront.

And while focused on the development of home-grown technologies, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has also sought to encourage the entrance of international know-how. In one particular coup, Microsoft set about building a Qatar-based cloud data center, making Qatar the “55th Azure Region in the world.” Lana Khalaf, Country Manager for Microsoft, told TBY that, “Not every country has the potential or opportunity to have a global data center on its territory. In the whole Middle East, Qatar will provide the largest number of services in the region and have a global data center in the country.”

Qatar is dreaming big, and with the eyes of the world soon set to be focused on the Gulf nation for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, it is hoping to showcase its technological achievements just as much as its ability to build stadiums, hotels, and transport links. ✖



# TOGETHER WE CAN

## turn challenges into achievements



Scan here



When the human spirit and technology join forces, the world will change for the better. We no longer consider what we “might” be able to do, but how much more we “can” do and achieve, together.



# together WE CAN

Vodafone strives to facilitate and promote the digital transformation of Qataris and businesses via its GigaNet network and broad range of solutions and services.

Sheikh Hamad Al-Thani  
CEO,  
VODAFONE QATAR



**Vodafone Qatar had its best financial results ever in 2021, with its highest net profit to date of QAR327 million. To what can the company attribute this success?**

Vodafone reported an annual Net Profit of 76.9% increase in 2021 compared to the previous year, mainly driven by EBITDA growth. Total revenue for the year also increased due to continued growth in our postpaid, fixed broadband services (GigaHome), managed services and equipment and related services. We are now serving 1.9 million mobile customers representing a growth of 16.3% compared to the previous year. Our investments to enhance and expand our network, as well as our continued focus on innovation, allow us to better support all of our consumer and business customers across Qatar, which contributes greatly to our ongoing success. Our 5G network is at its most robust and extensive yet and this, as part of our work to develop Qatar's national digital infrastructure, is continuously opening up opportunities to embrace and deploy other emerging technologies. IoT and AR, for example, are constantly unlocking swathes of applications across smart city, industrial, transport and smart home settings, to name a few. Our latest solutions, including Push-To-Talk Plus and IoT Fleet Management, both of which were launched in 2021, are good examples of how we are empowering our customers to leverage these technologies to achieve their own business goals and take advantage of unrivalled connectivity experiences, at both work and in their everyday lives.

**What are the best examples of Vodafone Qatar's contribution to the development of emerging technologies?**

At Vodafone Qatar, we champion innovation through the development of our technological solutions and services, which all aim to accelerate Qatar's digital transformation and infrastructure. For example, our enhanced IoT Fleet Management solution has been enabling businesses to maximize the efficiency of their fleet operations, our newly launched Asset Tracking solution facilitates the delivery of real-time information such as asset location and environment conditions for those in industries such as construction or logistics, and the new features we have introduced to our Software Defined Network (SDN) offer businesses a chance to enhance the level of agility and control they have over their operations and increase their overall productivity. In addition, we are constantly expanding our 5G network to propel Qatar's economic growth and provide businesses and individuals alike with access to the latest 5G technologies. We are constantly expanding our 5G connected sites and enhancing our network capacity and capabilities by improving the 5G mobility of our sites. This investment allowed us to also increase customer 5G coverage by 30% and to greatly enhance their experience of the technology in 2022. Our 5G GigaNet network now covers more than 70% of the country's population.

**In 2021, Vodafone unveiled its new brand positioning; can you explain how this represents your company and fits into the current business landscape?**

Vodafone Qatar launched its new brand positioning—Together We Can—in 2021 to build partnerships with key parties and stakeholders from various sectors, bringing tangible changes in sustainabil-

ity, sports and innovation. This demonstrates how the connection between technology and human spirit can turn challenges into opportunities, and reinforces our commitment to investing in our core infrastructure including our wireless and fiber networks. We want to move from being a communications service provider to being an active player in the technology sector as a whole. Our purpose at Vodafone is to facilitate and promote the digital transformation of our lives and businesses via our robust GigaNet network and broad range of solutions and services. In a world that is constantly evolving, the people of Qatar have shown resilience and adaptability to be the key ingredients of success over the past few years. So, it was important to us to show that together with our cutting-edge technology, we can leverage this success and embrace sustainable living, leaving a legacy for generations to come. ✖

#### BIO

Sheikh Hamad Al-Thani joined Vodafone Qatar in 2013 and is its Qatar's CEO. Previously, he served as Vodafone Qatar's COO, where he was responsible for the company's customer operations, human resources, legal and regulatory, and external affairs functions. Prior to joining Vodafone Qatar, he served in the oil and gas sector in various areas such as industrial network engineering and control system engineering. He sits on the boards of multiple ICT companies, also serving as chairman of the board at MEEZA. Al-Thani has a bachelor's degree in computer science from the University of Ottawa in Canada.



# CELEBRATING QATAR'S *digital transformation*

MEEZA continues to look beyond ensuring it remains ahead of cyber threats, smart city requirements, and Qatar's data requirements when making investments in its operations.

Ahmad Al-Muslemani  
CEO,  
MEEZA



**MEEZA currently has four Tier III certified data centers in Qatar. What were the factors that encouraged MEEZA to invest in opening these data centers?**

A market study done by Arthur D. Little and supported by MEEZA confirmed global trends and news that the world is going through an insatiable appetite for data center services, be it in Europe or Asia. There is an aggressive growth trend and significant demand for data center services, and our part of the world is no different. As a matter of fact, we are witnessing greater demand in our part of the world because of our geographical location, our submarine connectivity, and our relatively inexpensive energy rates. All this makes Qatar and the Gulf region an attractive destination for content providers, hyperscaler cloud computing providers, and esports and gaming players wanting to move the infrastructure to the central part of the world. As a result of all these trends, MEEZA worked hard, even during the pandemic, to expand one of its major data centers while opening a brand-new facility, M-VAULT 4 Data Center. It is our latest in an array of Tier III, high-standard data center facilities right here in Qatar, suitable for a variety of use cases, most notably hosting hyperscaler and large-scale cloud computing and content platforms.

**MEEZA was the first in Qatar to open a commercial security operations center (SOC) in 2013. How have its operations evolved since its establishment?**

MEEZA's SOC facility acts as a specialized command and control center that focuses on detecting cybersecurity events and helps address and defend against these challenges. Hackers around the world continue to come up

with new ways of cyber-attacks, and technology companies and service providers such as MEEZA have to always innovate and stay one step ahead. This has meant MEEZA had to invest repeatedly in both upgrading its technology platform as well as its processes and people's skillsets in an attempt to remain one step ahead. Since 2013, we have gone through a number of revamps of our technology, the latest of which is powered by AI. AI and cybersecurity play an extremely effective role in filtering out false negatives and suspicious activities that need to be looked at, which means fewer manual interventions and higher accuracy, translating into both economic as well as technical advantages for our clients. In terms of people and skills, MEEZA strongly believes in developing in-country value (ICV) in Qatar, and accordingly we have been actively developing the human capital in the country by training and developing our resources. This is one of the things that sets us apart from other companies in the field, whereby all our investments in the form of technology and manpower reside entirely within the country.

**Can you elaborate on MEEZA's work on smart cities and ICT infrastructure services in Qatar?**

MEEZA continues to deliver on its macro-level digital transformation commitments and has been actively engaged in a number of smart city projects across the state. We recently participated at a strategic level in the Smart City Expo Doha 2022 at Msheireb. Many smart city projects are now maturing in terms of the design and delivery cycles, and they are now giving way to robust operations with ongoing service improvements.

These are either at the efficiency level in terms of introducing better technology to achieve the same thing and potentially achieve more savings and adding to the economic value of these services, or at the innovation level and how users experience living, working, and even transiting through smart cities in terms of constant connectivity and having information available their fingerprints. We have to ensure all this complexity and data is provided in a user-friendly and intuitive manner that translates bits and data into information and knowledge, which ultimately impacts how these users perceive the smart city. The easier they gain information to this information, the more innovative they perceive the smart city to be. ✕

#### BIO

Ahmad Al-Muslemani has worked within the IT and telecom sector for more than 14 years. Before his appointment as CEO of MEEZA, Al-Muslemani was the chief sales and marketing officer in MEEZA. Prior to joining MEEZA, he was the chief commercial officer of Qatar National Broadband Network Company (QNBN). Prior to QNBN, Al-Muslemani was the section manager at the Industry Development Department at Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MOICT). He also worked at the Communication and Regulations Authority (CRA). Al-Muslemani holds a master's degree in communication systems from the Swiss Institute of Technology and a master's degree in management from HEC Paris. He also holds a BCS of science in electrical and computer engineering from Ohio State University in the US.



# DATA SOLUTIONS AT THEIR FINEST

MEEZA announces the launch of its 4th M-VAULT 4 data center in concurrence with its 13th anniversary celebrations.

**THE M-VAULT 4** data center, launched to host a major global hyperscaler data center, offering virtual cloud services to customers in Qatar, the region, and the world, is set to further contribute to the acceleration of Qatar's digital transformation agenda and support a smarter, more technologically advanced economy. It is the fourth to be introduced on MEEZA's list of data centers.

The new data center is considered the biggest data center in Qatar and has been built in line with the highest international standards and provides the largest information technology (IT) capacity of any data center in the country. It is considered a new important milestone in the Qatar public cloud journey, meaning organizations in Qatar and the region will soon be able to benefit from the innovative solutions provided by Qatar cloud region, which keep pace with the development of the era and drive growth.

As such, it enhances Qatar's position as a regional and global center of cloud data and improves the level of IT services in the region and the world. Moreover, the launch of the M-VAULT 4 data center will play an instrumental role in supporting smart solutions that contribute to supporting the path of transformation and growth for various vital fields and economic sectors, including healthcare, scientific research, artificial intelligence, education, and energy, as well as managing and organizing major sporting events, amongst others.

It is the latest step in the promotion of technological development and digital transformation in the State of Qatar, and will improve investment opportunities in various local sectors, therefore helping to achieve the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, a wide-ranging blueprint for economic development that envisages the creation of world-class infrastructure and a knowledge-based economy that contributes to the diversification of the national

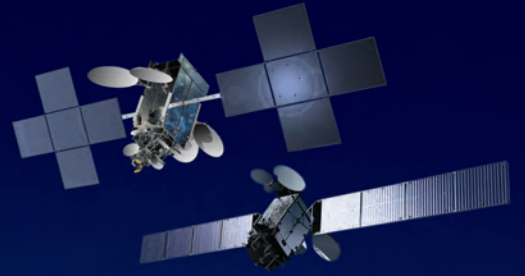
economy.

Indeed, the inauguration of the new data center M-VAULT 4 is especially significant considering that it was developed despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and to initial plans and specifications. It is an outstanding milestone for MEEZA on its journey to enhance the level of cloud services in Qatar and compete with a global market"

MEEZA, a Qatar Foundation joint venture, delivers end-to-end managed IT and cloud services that are distinguishable by their high levels of availability and capabilities to provide the best technological solutions to customers, facilitate the transformation of products and services, and empower companies. MEEZA owns four globally rated Tier III certified data centers offering a guaranteed uptime of 99.98%. MEEZA's data centers are designed with the strictest international standards enabling companies to benefit from greater efficiency rates while reducing risk. MEEZA's state-of-the-art data center M-VAULT 2 has been certified as LEED Platinum, while the M-VAULT 3 is LEED Gold certified.

The firm accepts nothing less than excellence, which is why it always strives to adopt the highest standards of international practices and offer state-of-the-art services and distinguished hosting solutions to its customers, who can benefit from the highest rates of compliance, availability, and cybersecurity. Moreover, this step paves the way toward new promising prospects for the exchange of information, ideas, and technological development, whilst playing a pivotal role in Qatar's digital transformation. Managing the technological production and boosting the domestic public product through this sector allows us to support the country's attempts to achieve a knowledge economy in accordance with the fundamental pillars of the Qatar National Vision 2030. ✖

PROVIDES **TELEVISION, INTERNET, CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES** ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA AND BEYOND.



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TELEPORT SERVICES



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TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES



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**Es'hailSat** سهيل سات  
Qatar Satellite Company الشركة القطرية للأقمار الصناعية

# groundbreaking ACHIEVEMENTS

A key enabler of Qatar's ICT sector over the past decade, Es'hailSat is preparing to expand its suite of services further to support the rapid growth of Qatari customers across the board.

Ali Ahmed Al-Kuwari  
PRESIDENT & CEO,  
QATAR SATELLITE COMPANY (Es'hailSat)



**Es'hailSat has received ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018 certification. What is the impact for your client base of this certification?**

Es'hailSat's IT systems infrastructure services have been certified as ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018 to protect critical business resources that need the right support in place for success. ISO/IEC 20000 is the first international standard for IT service management. It promotes the adoption of an integrated process approach to delivering managed IT services. The standard is aligned and fully compatible with the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework. Its benefits include benchmarking service delivery, measuring service levels and assessing performance and showing an ability to meet customer requirements. Furthermore, it demonstrates Es'hailSat's reliability and high quality of service and inculcates a culture of continual improvement.

**How can the advancement of the international media sector be supported from Es'hailSat's perspective?**

As Qatar's satellite operator of choice, Es'hailSat has been serving broadcasters, telecom companies, enterprise, and government customers for the past 11 years from our headquarters in Doha. From our perspective, the media industry has transitioned from being an entertainment service that people sat back and received to become an information source that people step forward and consume. For our business, the priority over the next 12 months is to expand our services to support the rapid growth of Qatari customers across the board. Projects such as Media City show that the sky is the limit for Qatar's ambitions, and Es'hailSat wants to ensure that we are the first choice for companies in Qatar and across the region

wherever there is a need for connectivity over satellite. We are adopting the latest advancements in international technology, including cloud playout services, content delivery networks (CDN), mobility, and telecommunication services. In addition, our fleet of two satellites, Es'hail-1 and Es'hail-2 at 25.5/26 East hotspot, is bolstered by an expansion of services delivered from our Teleport in Doha.

**As the country approaches the long-awaited FIFA World Cup, how will progress achieved so far contribute to a successful event?**

For our customers, pathbreaking broadcasters such as Al Jazeera and beIN Sports, opportunities lie in delivering every possible genre of content to consumers across all touch-points—the television at home, the mobile device on the move, and through internet connectivity over land, sea, or air. Es'hailSat is enabling these opportunities by employing cutting-edge technology and delivering a world-class service from our strategically located teleport facility in Doha. For various mega-events such as FIFA World Cup that are broadcast live across the globe, Es'hailSat has enhanced its satellite news gathering services capabilities. These, along with our Es'hail-1 and Es'hail-2 satellites at 25.5/26 East hotspot, will provide the backbone required by news broadcasters and TV channels to carry these events across the region and beyond.

**What will be the role of technology to maintain Qatar's economic momentum in the post-FIFA scenario, and how will Es'hailSat be involved?**

Es'hailSat's satellites are a symbol of Qatar's commitment to free, secure, and independent communication, and the FIFA World Cup is the perfect opportunity for us to showcase our capabilities. Even beyond

FIFA, Qatar's Vision 2030 is designed to move us from a carbon-based to a knowledge-based economy, and Es'hailSat is a key part of that vision. In Qatar, we've learned that sustainability is about more than growing your own fruits and vegetables. We're investing in education so we can "grow" our own technology. Es'hailSat conducts outreach programs with universities and schools to educate and promote satellite engineering among the students. We have outsourced application development to universities where senior students work in a group and with supervision from our engineering team to develop and enhance solutions for certain parts of our teleport operations. We also provide guidance and advice to the CubeSat teams at the university to support their programs. All these initiatives nurture talent, broaden their horizons, and improve the skills set of the youth in the field of satellite engineering for generations to come. ✖

#### BIO

Ali Ahmed Al-Kuwari is President & CEO of Es'hailSat. He is a strategic leader with a progressive career of 20-plus years in guiding and directing an enterprise through substantial resource management by utilizing strong and effective strategic leadership. Prior to his appointment, he was assistant secretary general at ict Qatar. He also held the position of finance director at ict Qatar and was a member of the organization's management team overseeing the strategic investment in the satellite initiative which became Es'hailSat. Al Kuwari has a bachelor's degree in business administration and master's degree in financial analysis. He joined ict Qatar in 2004 following senior financial positions with Ras Gas and the Ministry of Finance.



## FOCUS

IoT &amp; Qatar National Vision 2030

# MODERNIZE THIS

The MoTC and private tech companies are setting the stage for the realization of National Vision 2030.

**SEVERAL YEARS AGO**, the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MoTC) launched the Smart Qatar initiative, commonly known as TASMU, as a vehicle toward achieving the goals specified in Qatar National Vision 2030. The initiative specifically focuses on the implementation of smart cities and “will work on empowering the Smart Qatar Vision by using the developed infrastructure to provide a smart lifestyle for citizens, residents, visitors, and companies in the State of Qatar,” according to a press release by MoTC.

TASMU is supposed to bring together most major players in Qatar’s IT and ICT market in a synergic manner to pave the way for the birth of smart cities in the peninsula. It further intends to create an exchange between stakeholders in the country’s digital ecosystem such as the government, as represented by the MoTC, NGOs, which will represent special interest groups across the society, and citizens, as the ultimate beneficiaries of a truly smart nation. Other stakeholders include start-ups as the places where good ideas germinate, as well as Qatari SMEs and multinational companies present in Qatar, that can take innovations to the next stage. Academia, too, is a major stakeholder, given the part it plays in training Qatar’s future workforce and specialists.

The government offers its full support to the initiative, setting aside QAR6 billion (equal to USD1.65 billion) for the next five years. As for the private sector, the Doha-based telecom giant, Ooredoo, will team up with the MoTC to be part of the initiative. Ooredoo is confident that the TASMU project will speed up the country’s digitalization in a sustainable manner. The telecom company will act as an enabling force in the process, particularly extending its support to the implementation of solutions which can help the digitalization of the sectors deemed “high-priority” such as transportation and logistics, health-care, environment, and sports.

IoT is the most useful technology in smart cities. Although IoT has been used as a buzzword in a rather confusing way, it is simply the technology of processing and acting upon the information lawfully gathered from a massive network of internet-enabled devices. For being part of an IoT system, the said devices must have an internet connection as well as sensors (such as GPS) or even operators (like robotic arms). IoT can be employed for purposes from traffic management to national security. For example, by counting the number of smart phones around certain GPS coordinates the urban transport authority’s computer system will be able to determine the busier metro stations at any hour, so as to take measures such as redirecting trains from less busy lines to overburdened ones. Fortunately, MoTC has teamed up through TASMU with a series of private companies which can provide the right prerequisite technologies for the transformation

of Doha into a smart city.

Ooredoo’s participation in the TASMU project makes sense. As a leading provider of ICT technologies such as IoT in Qatar, the telecom company can contribute to many solutions desired by the MoTC and the State of Qatar. MoTC, for instance, has been keen for some years to create a “real-time crowd analytics” solution to optimize Doha’s metro system and Hamad International Airport (HIA). IoT solutions seem to be the easiest and safest way to perform crowd analysis, especially as Ooredoo has the upper hand in the nation’s 5G market, with its customers enjoying a 5G coverage of 70-90%, nationwide. “We look forward to a nation of smart cities, where we utilize state-of-the-art technology to enhance Qatari citizens’ and residents’ digital lives on a daily basis,” says Sheikh Nasser Bin Hamad Bin Nasser Al Thani, chief commercial officer of Ooredoo Qatar.

The consortium behind the TASMU initiative has other members, including American software giant Microsoft. The company has launched a major Azure datacenter in Qatar in recent years. Given its potential to realize many of the National Vision 2030 objectives in terms of digitalization, Microsoft seems like a natural ally for the TASMU initiative. The company’s country manager for Qatar, Lana Khalaf, recently talked to TBY, emphasizing the Microsoft’s role in the initiative: “Our investment in local infrastructure through the launch of our new Azure region in Qatar will enable not only the FIFA World Cup and TASMU smart cities, but also drive the digital transformation across every industry, every organization and every person in Qatar enabling them to leverage the power of technology to achieve more.”

Microsoft is also helping an important group of stakeholder in the TASMU initiative, namely local start-ups. Khalaf believes that start-ups are powerhouses of innovation for all digitally driven markets, including Qatar. Microsoft is empowering local market players through “partnering closely with many companies and entities in Qatar such as QSTP, QDB, Nautica 360, TASMU, and Tawteen to enable start-ups to grow.” It is also helping “by empowering them with advanced technologies like AI and IoT that are secure and powered by the most trusted and the most sustainable cloud.”

IoT, in particular, seems to be a hot topic in Qatar’s quickly evolving IT sector, especially in the TASMU platform. “The IoT market size in Qatar was estimated at USD614.6 million in 2022, and is expected to grow by 31% annually to reach USD1,822.6 million in 2026, with the Qatar’s smart city initiatives such as TASMU Smart Qatar program being a major driver of this growth,” according to MoTC. The growth of the IoT market is an indicator of the rapid pace of digitalization and the imminent emergence of Doha as a truly smart city. ✖

# CONNECT ALL

Qatar is looking to lead the way when it comes to IoT by setting up TASMU to pave the way for smart cities and ultra-connectivity.



90% 08:00

GLOBAL IOT MARKET (2021)  
**\$384.7**  
BILLION

EXPECTED CAGR GROWTH GLOBALLY  
**26.4**  
PERCENT

PREDICTED GLOBAL MARKET BY 2029  
**\$2,465**  
BILLION

QATAR'S IOT MARKET (2022)  
**\$614.6**  
MILLION

EXPECTED ANNUAL GROWTH OF IOT MARKET  
**31**  
PERCENT

PREDICTED SIZE OF IOT MARKET IN QATAR BY 2028  
**\$1,822**  
MILLION

## TASMU

Leading government initiative behind the push to increase the IoT market



5G COVERAGE GOAL  
**70-90%**  
NATIONWIDE

## GOAL

Bring together Qatar's major players to pave the way for smart cities

## BUDGET

USD6 billion over the next 5 years



# INVENT THE FUTURE

Microsoft's Datacenter is now live  
From Qatar to the world



Microsoft

وزارة الاتصالات وتكنولوجيا المعلومات  
Ministry of Communications and Information Technology





# smart INFRASTRUCTURE

Microsoft has been focusing its efforts on supporting Qatar in its pursuit of Vision 2030 in line with its mission to empower every individual and organization to achieve more.



Lana Khalaf  
COUNTRY GENERAL MANAGER,  
MICROSOFT

**How would you assess the role of Microsoft in helping Qatar be in the right place digitally ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2022?**

Qatar being chosen as the first country in the Middle East to host the FIFA World Cup is a milestone for the country and the region, and we are honored to be a part of this historic moment. We have been heavily involved in partnership with Qatar to deliver amazing technology for the FIFA World Cup 2022 that will create a truly amazing experience for the fans. Leveraging our past global experience working with the 2018 World Cup in Russia, the Tokyo Olympics, La Liga, and several other sporting events around the world, we have been working closely with the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy to realize their vision for the role of technology in shaping the overall experience of the tournament. We have also worked in partnership with the government, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), and many others in order to build new smart infrastructures and capitalize on the existing world-class infrastructure that Qatar achieved for the event.

**What is the potential significance for Qatar to become an Azure region?**

Cloud and disruptive technologies are key enablers of the infrastructure development projects that the Qatari government has been investing in as part of its mission to diversify the economy in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. Microsoft shares this vision, and we are committed to working closely with the Qatari government to realize it. Our investment in local infrastructure through the launch of our new Azure region in Qatar will enable not only the FIFA World Cup and TASMU smart cities, but also drive the digital transformation across every industry, every organization and every person in Qatar enabling them to leverage the power of technology to achieve more. By providing them with an ever-expanding set of trusted cloud services that help them meet local compli-

ance and data residency requirements, the data region truly brings unprecedented opportunity to the country. Additionally, a study that we did with the IDC to calculate the impact of such investment to the country showed that it will create a USD3.14 billion opportunity for revenues in the economy in the coming five years, which is a major benefit to the country. And it will increase employment by bringing 24,000 new jobs to the market as a result of cloud technologies. This includes the innovation, transformation, and everything else that this cloud will utilize.

**How is Microsoft partnering with local start-ups to promote better synergies between entrepreneurship and IT at the local level?**

Start-ups are a key segment in digitally-driven markets such as Qatar because they come with potential ideas and innovation for the country, so it's important to develop and empower them to contribute to the growth of the economy. Microsoft is partnering closely with many companies and entities in Qatar such as QSTP, FinTech, QDB, Nautica 360, TASMU, and Tawteen to enable start-ups to grow and achieve more by empowering them with advanced technologies like AI and IoT that are secure and powered by the most trusted and the most sustainable cloud. To further ensure people are ready to use and support this technology, we will partner with Ministry of Communications and Information Technology as well as other schools and companies to launch a digital center of excellence that will offer certified skilling opportunities for Qataris and encourage them to them to pursue lifelong education. This initiative will have one track for youth and students; one for professionals on cloud AI, cybersecurity, and many others; one track for developers; and one for leaders. We are also utilizing the arm of Innovation Cafe to host the start-ups, and we are keen to invest, enable, and develop more than 20 start-ups every year. We also aim to establish the first unicorn from Qatar and are dedicating our efforts towards achieving this. ✖

Number

1

company in the world with over

70K

partners globally

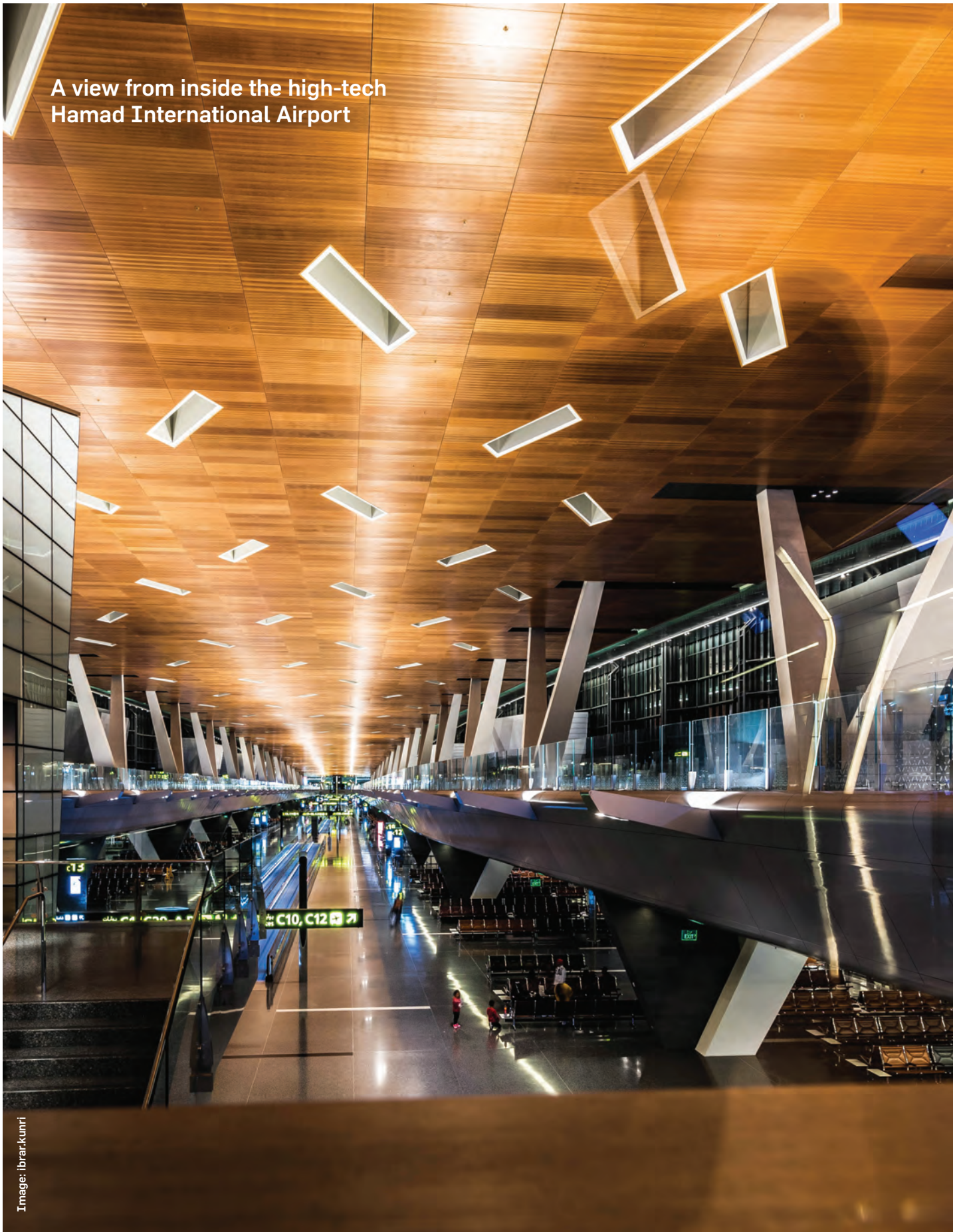
35%

of Qatar's staff is female, high figure in Qatar IT sector

## BIO

As Country Manager for Microsoft Qatar, Lana Khalaf oversees Microsoft's strategic partnerships in the public and private sector to enhance Qatar's ecosystem, as well as investing in critical infrastructure in order to accelerate innovation and sustained economic growth. She also drives Microsoft's objectives in Qatar to promote diversity and inclusion in order to bridge gender parity gap, as well as encourage the role of women in the ICT sector. She started her career with Microsoft in 2006. Prior to that, she held positions in organizations such as Samsung and Active Mania. She has an MBA with focus on leadership from the Lebanese American University and majors in computer science from the American University of Beirut.

# A view from inside the high-tech Hamad International Airport





# digitalization BOOM



Ghassan Kosta  
COUNTRY MANAGER,  
GOOGLE CLOUD QATAR

The first cloud region in the Middle East, Turkey, and Africa, Google Cloud Qatar has been helping its customers and partners succeed in their digital transformation goals.

**Google is quickly expanding its cloud services offerings in Qatar. What has been the response of the business community in the country?**

Google Cloud began establishing a physical presence in Qatar in 2019, and now three years into our journey in Qatar, we have been building up a diverse team of local and regional experts, especially with a full team that possesses industry-specific knowledge and expertise. We were able to also acquire talent of the highest quality in Qatar and the regional market so that we can help our customers and partners succeed in their business and digital transformation goals. There has been an increase in the interest and uptake of cloud adoption by businesses across all industries based on the growing awareness of its benefits. In addition, we work closely to support our customers who started the journey with Google Cloud to realize the importance of cloud adoption in their business transformation. Now, with cloud adoption picking up not only in Qatar but also regionally, there is a surge in the requirement for upscaling talent and cloud knowledge as skills. We are also launching a cloud region in Qatar, one of the first cloud regions in the Middle East that Google Cloud is going to be activating. Google Cloud is also keen to take the lead in building a digitally skilled workforce in Qatar. The main objective of the center of excellence that we opened virtually in June 2021 is to build digital skills for the future. The center will also serve as an incubator for high-potential start-ups, as a hub for research to address digital transformation challenges.

**What is your overall assessment of the advancements made by Qatar toward digitalization?**

When it comes to digitalization, we must talk about Qatar National Vision 2030 to transform the country into an advanced society capable of achieving sustainable development and providing a high standard of living for its people. In order to achieve the vision, organizations should

accelerate digital transformation to become more efficient and a catalyst moving toward a knowledge-based economy, as well as making investments in state-of-the-art ICT infrastructures. Scaling the e-government and its services is also fundamental. Those efforts will increasingly allow Qatar to position itself as one of the leading dynamic and fast-growing economies in the region. Qatar possesses significant economic potential if cloud technologies are fully leveraged. Qatar can unlock USD39 billion of economic impact in 2030 through supportive policies that enable the full utilization of digital technologies enabled by the cloud. On top of it, customers in Qatar will benefit from reliable performance, low latency, high security reliability, and fast infrastructure where they will run their data locally benefiting from a secure and sustainable infrastructure. When the cloud region in Qatar is active, it will be twice as energy efficient as an average enterprise data center and will be a touchpoint for the sustainability goals on the government's agenda.

**How will technology developed by Google be present in the long-awaited FIFA World Cup 2022, and what are the company's objectives in its aftermath?**

We have been on the ground in Qatar for several years and have established a strong presence. Google Cloud is supporting customers such as Sponix Tech, that will at have presence at the World Cup in Qatar, by leveraging services that every customer, partner, and citizen are using. The World Cup will be a key aspect for Qatar because most of the digitalization is happening in the build up to this milestone, and it is a revamp. There are many different commitments that will happen, and MCIT is being active to secure Qatar as a regional hub for the future. Every industry is going digital, and by 2023-2024 the world's data is expected to increase by five times its current value. Google Cloud is present in Qatar because we are geared up to enable the much-anticipated digitalization boom. ✖

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***Trains  
around 2,000  
participants  
every year***

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***Cloud region  
is twice as  
energy efficient  
as average  
enterprise data  
center***

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***Constantly  
investing  
in global  
technology  
infrastructure***

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#### BIO

Ghassan Kosta joined Google Cloud as Qatar Country Manager in 2021, with the objective of building the new Google Cloud region and helping make a difference for businesses in Qatar. Before that, Ghassan worked for EMC and Dell Technologies for 15 years, based in Qatar. He brings strong market experience of managing successful teams and leading great revenue growth. Kosta graduated with a bachelor of engineering from Notre Dame University.





# WORLD CUP 2022

## How GBI's Smart Network in the Middle East will ensure that no goals are missed

There will undoubtedly, be a short-term hike in connectivity demands around the World Cup, as billions of individuals from all over the world tune in to watch the tournament unfold.

The 2018 World Cup saw a total reach of 3.87 billion, and an average of 190.5 million live match viewers per game.

Alongside the forecasted 67% growth year over year in sports venue data usage, increasing mobile usage, 5G connectivity, and trends in IP-based networks, connectivity providers in the Middle East must be prepared to provide fully assured services to ensure the event is successful. It's a monumental task; how can connectivity providers ensure that no goals are missed?

Connectivity players in the region will need to increase capacity, availability, and elevate their capabilities from an enhanced services perspective. GBI is steps ahead in our preparation for the World Cup, our wealth of experience in the region has enabled us to navigate the geopolitical landscape to ensure we can meet customer demands. As a Qatari company, we understand and are proud of our role as one of the key infrastructure connectivity providers supporting the event.

GBI is currently aligning with the relevant Qatari authorities and broadcasters to ensure a seamless viewing experience for the billions who will watch this event in their homes.

Starting this year, GBI kicked off its Capacity Protection Programme in part to support the 2022 World Cup and ensure that under no circumstances are end-users disadvantaged in a case of network compromise. GBI's Capacity Protection Programme looks to guarantee restoration and protection on the GBI Smart Network. In addition to optimising the network and enabling a proactive approach to fault detection.

**GBI is continually investing in its network to put its best foot forward for global connectivity, partners, and customers.**

In line with Qatar's Vision 2030, GBI will continue to innovate and make strides in a collaborated effort with industry peers to establish Qatar as a global connectivity hub. Our abiding commitment to service continuity will provide the consistency of services that end-users and global football fans deserve.



# connecting THE DOTS

GBI seeks to provide the highest-quality, fastest, and most secure connection in Qatar, enabling the country to become both a connectivity and a digital hub.

Cengiz Oztelcan  
CEO,

GULF BRIDGE INTERNATIONAL (GBI)



**How would you assess the growth of ICT in Qatar as the country prepares to host the largest football event in the world?**

The growth of the ICT sector in Qatar can be assessed by adopting the right outlook as encompassed in Vision 2030. A large step on this journey is Qatar's digital transformation ambitions. A digitalized nation attracts major global players and passes on the efficiencies of the digital transformation to its citizens and businesses. As a result of this spending growth and other major developments, Qatar has passed significant milestones, and the FIFA World Cup 2022 is one of them. This global event will serve to showcase to the rest of the world how far Qatar has progressed on many fronts, including but not limited to technology infrastructure and seamless execution.

**What is GBI's contribution to Qatar ranking among the most technologically advanced economies in the run-up to hosting the World Cup?**

GBI and similar companies are the unseen heroes of the telecommunications era that we are currently witnessing. GBI's role in the telecommunications era specifically as it relates to Qatar can be summarized at the highest level as providing the backbone to Qatar's internet. Today more than 95% of the internet operates on more than 400 submarine cables globally. This connectivity enables the data to travel across the continent in a few milliseconds to reach you, the end-users of the internet. GBI seeks to provide the highest quality, fastest, and most secure connection, on its own international network. While end-users want the fastest uninterrupted connectivity, enterprises also look for security and availability. There is profound

digital transformation occurring that spans the cloud, the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and smart cities. The underlining fact is all new technologies and digital transformation can only be enabled through solid connectivity, reliability, and redundancy. That's where GBI comes in. In this context, GBI is proud to have become the ultimate international subsea cable operator with global reach. Any person who attends the World Cup in Qatar or the billion who will experience it online will get to know Qatar, a small but hugely ambitious country with a highly developed digital infrastructure. They will witness all the products and the fruits of long-term planning, hard work and execution.

**How would you assess the expansion of GBI's Smart Network and what are your plans for expansion?**

Our goal is to make Qatar an attractive commercial destination and to build a solid infrastructure enabling the country to become both a connectivity and digital hub. This involves the large cloud companies, the hyper-scalers, and the big internet content players hosting their services in Qatar. As it currently stands, the GBI Smart Network spans from Europe to Asia, connecting the East to the West through the Gulf region effectively. For economies of scale, we intend to extend this footprint to newly developing regions, such as those in East Africa. We are keen to assist with the early digital transformation in Africa by increasing internet and connectivity access. As the world undergoes this digital transformation, we are seeing the emergence of new connectivity hubs. GBI will continue to follow this trend closely, and as these

connectivity hubs become more established, one of our key goals is to ensure that our network provides the necessary connectivity.

**What are GBI's key priorities for 2022?**

In 2022, GBI aims to add to the efforts of Qatar to successfully execute this significant global event, which will demand a robust infrastructure. Billions of people will tune in and watch the matches in Qatar's stadiums. This massive project cannot afford any hiccups, or even the slightest broadcast error or delay. So, currently, GBI's work is underway with the authorities and broadcasters to ensure that we are technically aligned and everything is in place. People who do not make the journey to Qatar will nonetheless enjoy a marvelous World Cup experience from the convenience of their homes. ✖

#### BIO

Cengiz Oztelcan has over 25 years of experience in sales, marketing, business, and corporate development areas in telecommunications and IT sectors, building and managing large, diverse and geographically dispersed organizations. He has held a variety of senior management roles for multinational companies such as Boeing, Intel, and Turk Telekom. He holds a BSc and MSc in mechanical engineering from Texas A&M University and an executive MBA from the University of Washington.



# DOHA

# NEWS

QATAR'S LEADING  
INDEPENDENT NEWS OUTLET



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# enabling PEOPLE



Maha Al-Mansouri  
CEO,  
MADA CENTER

Qatar came in first worldwide on the Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index in 2020 as a result of the hard work of the Mada Center.

**What is your aim as an organization and which initiatives do you pursue to implement this goal in society?**

Mada is a non-profit organization established in 2010. Its main goal is to connect persons with disabilities with technology and the world of information surrounding it to implement the rights of PWDs to access information. We consider ourselves a strategic enabler for other sectors to enhance the ICT accessibility ecosystem of persons with disabilities using Innovation and advanced technology. We started out solely as an assistive technology service provider, but later shifted into a strategic enabling model, which has proven to be much more effective. Today, technology is part of a wholly different domain that persons with disabilities are in. For example, in education, employment, and community, technology is part of the services, and we thrive to make services inclusive which is the ultimate goal. We are not looking at current technology alone, but also running Mada innovation program to ensure that the Arabic language is always an option for users, respecting our first language.

**How does the center work to achieve an inclusive education and community?**

We have our strategic partners from different sectors which are the organizations and entities that support persons with disabilities. We support them to provide inclusive services and inclusive programs. The private sector is supporting us in this mission. We have numerous ICT industry partners in our Mada Lab with whom we collaborate to make technology available and localized in Qatar and the region. We are effectively the medium between the private sector and end users and are trying to connect the dots.

**At the national level, Mada Center has attained a digital accessibility rate of 90% among government websites. What does this say about the national advancement of IT platforms?**

One of our program's commitments to persons with disabilities is making the platform accessible to them. You need accessible technology and plat-

forms and to build capability within the community for the ecosystem to mature. One of the programs involves accrediting websites and various digital platforms in the country. Another project concerns the digital government, which last year achieved a score of 90%. What we did in Mada was to create an internal tool, called Mada Accessibility Monitor Tool, available online to anyone. It checks the accessibility of a website instantly. This is the way we support organizations to work on their platform. And at the same time, we run programs to build capability among their own IT teams and developers so they can follow international Accessibility standards and ultimately receive a digital stamp from Mada on their website to prove the accessibility of their website. By doing this, we create trust between people with disabilities and service providers, and when they see the accreditation stamp, they feel a sense of participation. Once the process of reviewing the accessibility of the website starts, a grey stamp will be showing to acknowledge the commitment from the entity to accessibility. It will turn into green stamp once the website is fully accessible.

**The Mada Innovation Program encourages innovators to create Arabic solutions for persons of disability and the elderly. In which way is this an awareness building mechanism?**

Anyone who has interest, from young innovators to 99-year-olds, are welcome to participate in this program. We have a dedicated track for accessibility, and have sponsored an award, the Mada Innovation Award for innovators in Qatar. We have also joined forces with multiple organizations. We signed MoUs with all the occupational centers in Qatar and the GCC to support or seed-fund some of the projects that are focused on accessibility solutions in Arabic. In addition, we have a third track, which is grants for existing businesses. We are attracting companies to localize or find solutions for the challenges faced by those with disabilities published in our website. It is not only about financial support, but also about supporting the ecosystem to champion further innovation. ✖

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***Qatar ranks first worldwide on the Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index 2020 (DARE Index)***

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***Portfolio of innovation, strategic enabler***

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#### BIO

Maha Al-Mansouri has been CEO of Mada Center since 2015. Her strategic successful leadership led Qatar to rank first worldwide in the Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index in 2020 on an international level. On a national level, she led a key program in education, culture, and innovation that improved the echo system of ICT accessibility for people with disabilities and the elderly. She is a member of the National committee for Women, Elderly, and People with Disabilities and the chair of the GREAT conference.

# WE LOST ALL OUR CLIENTS...

BECAUSE THEY BECAME OUR FRIENDS.

The secret to our 40-year business success is that we've formed relationships built on transparency, honesty, and commitment.

We've never sold fairy tales. We've always focused on ambitions that can be reached. We take pride in working hard – on your project and our development. And we've always got your back.

We aim to make friends with like-minded businesses. Those that strive to be a little bit better every day. They're the companies that have helped us along our 40-year journey.

*Thanks, friends.*



# leading THE WAY

Dallah Holding is the region's leading creative innovative media solutions provider with local and international experience.

Rashid Mohamed Al-Nuaimi  
CHAIRMAN,  
DALLAH HOLDING



## What have been the group's major advancements since it was founded?

We've come such a long way since we were first established as a 100% Qatari-owned corporation in 1982. Dallah's goals have been to create opportunities to flourish and build an environment that stimulates economic growth and societal development. Our name is taken from the first company we established: Dallah Advertising. Dallah is the Arabic word for the coffee pot, symbolizes our pride in our roots and culture—it is such a potent symbol of Qatar's warm and welcoming hospitality. It is also an accurate representation of how Qatar's community builds connections and forges business relationships. When we started Dallah Advertising, we were keen to help put Qatar's businesses and industries on the map. In fact, we did this. We were the first company in Qatar to create digital maps that government entities and companies could access. We were also the first agency to develop branding and corporate identities for many government and private entities in Qatar. Companies like us took those first steps to lead the country in a new direction. Now, we are helping key companies to transform their communications through powerful storytelling, attend worldwide trade shows with impactful exhibition stands, and create events that the world attends. Since our inception, our media division has grown organically from the business created through the advertising agency. In 2022, we are celebrating our 40th anniversary, an amazing achievement for the State of Qatar and us.

## What are Dallah's main business lines?

Marketing and communications are the group's forte. In the local market, we

have no competitor—no other media agency in Qatar provides a 360-degree approach to providing services from concept through to implementation. Dallah Holding's media division has nine companies specializing in advertising, event management, sports and experiential marketing, digital and offset printing, packaging, gift items, photography, videography, and technology solutions. Our main strength is that we offer a complete in-house service. We can creatively conceive and produce events. We have access to specialist knowledge, and each team can support each other to develop and create unique ideas—this collaboration and cohesive approach sets us apart. Dallah Holding also has other sectors and divisions, including real estate, trading and contracting, FMCG industries, and hospitality.

## How are you aligned with the vision of the country?

Qatar has always inspired us and set our vision toward success: its ambition and determination to continue its upward trajectory. It also inspired us to diversify our business and not to rely solely upon one revenue stream and create new opportunities that enable us to thrive. It is truly a marvel that Qatar is the first Arab country to host the most coveted sporting event in the world, FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, that we would be showcasing stories from all over the world via our successful broadcasting channel, and that the country's airline would be named World's Best Airline. We take great pride in leading projects contributing to Qatar's National Vision. To be involved in initiatives stimulating economic, cultural, technological, and educational change and progress. Each year

in our 40-year history has allowed us to develop and nurture new skills and be inspired by the changes we are witnessing.

## What are your main objectives for 2022?

Dallah Holding's focus is to enhance its media and event growth. Qatar has proved that it has excellent potential to become a bustling event hub. We aim to expand our expertise and knowledge and enhance the experience of the local market and people by collaborating with international partners. This strategy has been part of our foundations since day one. We are always trying to be the first to bring technology and solutions to support the growth of our country. In 2022 and beyond, we will continue to focus on our clients' success and ensure a delightful experience for them throughout the process. We treat our customers in the best possible way with dedication and seek to go above and beyond. ✖

## BIO

Rashid Mohammed Al-Nuaimi brings 40-plus years of progressive leadership experience in management spanning several sectors. He holds a BA in economics and commerce and a master's degree in technology and management. He has represented Qatar in many specialized committees in regional and international forums in financial, legal, and media spheres.



**INTERVIEW**



Hossam Farouk  
CEO,  
QATAR COMPUTER SERVICES (QCS)

**QCS was established in 1978. What have been some of the most important highlights of the company on this journey?**

The country's leadership and Vision 2030 focuses on prioritizing the ICT sector and driving a knowledge-based economy to adopt next generation cutting-edge technologies in information security, AI, IoT, machine learning, digital transformation, and so on. QCS partners with leading technology vendors to provide end-to-end information security and IT infrastructure solutions. We have successfully built an in-country next generation Security Operation Center (SOC) that is fully managed and operated by our local certified resources. This facility secures our customer's technology landscape for IT and OT on a 24/7 basis. QCS believes in developing local in-house expertise and strengthening our team. We are a Grade-A listed company and an ICV, ISO certified organization, including ISO 9001, 27001, and 20000, to meet and comply with quality and information security requirements.

**BIO**  
Hossam Farouk holds a bachelor's degree in electronic engineering. He has 28 years of experience in the information technology and services industries. He is currently leading QCS as CEO.

**How does QCS introduce new technology while providing in-country training and maintenance needs to clients?**

Our major objective is to support various enterprises to overcome their skills and technology challenges. We have our own research team that always does rigorous testing of technologies mapped to various business aspects. We communicate those new technologies through multiple platforms such as one-on-one discussions, constantly broadcasting those technologies through digital media. In parallel, we have aligned with technology partners to enable technology awareness for various enterprises. These programs not only educate employees but also enable them to use the same in their business needs.

**COVID-19 has accelerated the path toward digitalization. How can companies keep up with technological trends?**

COVID-19 encouraged customers to accelerate the utilization of cutting-edge technologies. This resulted in a technology boom, though at the same time, this brings many gaps and risks to the business environment due to changes in working style that requires heavy investment in infrastructure along with process amendment to ensure seamless operations. ✖

**IT Pioneers in Qatar Since 1978'**



- ❖ Security As - A - Service
- ❖ Digital Risk Management
- ❖ Industrial Security ( IT/ OT)
- ❖ Security Awareness Training
- ❖ NextGen Networking & Infrastructure Solutions & Services



María Balbás  
PRESIDENT,  
ELEV8

**Which of Elev8's initiatives differentiate it from other companies in the sector?**

We saw an opportunity to support Qatar to achieve its vision of becoming a knowledge-based and digital economy. The jobs in demand in the coming years will be related to new emerging technologies, and we want to support everyone from youth to professionals to leaders in skilling, upskilling, and reskilling them in the digital competencies they require. What differentiates Elev8 is that we have a strategic alignment with the digital agenda of the country, we provide skilling programs for employability, and we are passionate about encouraging people to become life-long learners. We want to support the creation of the jobs of the future and the roles that organizations need to be transformed, both in the public and private sectors.

**How is Elev8 empowering women to develop their technical skills?**

Elev8 is keen to support programs that work toward a higher female participation rate in the ICT industry specifically. We are connecting with the right networks and approaching this goal from different angles. One way is training and development. Second, we need to support women through a network of mentors. Third, we need to enhance women's relationships and networks through industry-focused round tables or other types of events to enhance women's connections with other people within the industry and beyond. We would like to build a "women in technology" program to advance the growth of women in technology.



Tejinder Singh  
FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN,  
360 NAUTICA

**How does 360 Nautica materialize its relationship with start-up founders?**

The idea was not to be any incubation or acceleration center, but to be a venture building company. Whatever it takes to build a company, whether it is incubation, acceleration, investment, coaching, using the existing ecosystem, we do it, and we make sure the start-up is successful. We have been investing in some of the promising start-ups in the past, one of which is Q tickets, which has become the largest entertainment brand in the country, with 95% of the market. Qtickets beside having 100% market share on cinemas, did some of the largest Broadway shows and concerts in Qatar. We help those start-ups that will have an impact on the economy.

**How do you work to best align the vision of the founders and the demands from investors?**

We do not work like a family office, but as a purely independent legal entity that aims to build ventures from start-ups. We identify the start-ups of interest, and we bring them to investors. 360 Nautica is only one of the investors among many, the idea is to attract more investors to make the growth even bigger. We are looking at starting a fund in late 2022 that will have other investors, and it will be managed as an angel fund. In 2023, we want to launch a crowd-sourcing fund as well. It will have 50-100 individual investors, probably with USD20,000-30,000 ticket size.



Rania Abou Mosleh  
CEO,  
SMART COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS  
(SCS)

**How has SCS met the high demand for AI in Qatar?**

SCS is a subsidiary of the Construction and Development Company (CDC), one of the oldest and biggest holdings in the country. It has done many contracting projects and works in diverse sectors including contracting and hospitality. We formed a partnership with CBC to establish SCS in 2014-2015. Since 2014, we have been one of the biggest system integrators in the country. Qatar is on a fast track to be smart, automated, and AI. Our added value is to create this solution and have one platform and integrate them all. We have grown exponentially since 2014 and have become one of the biggest system integrators in the country.

**What have been your strategies to support the digitalization of the World Cup 2022?**

SCS is extremely proud to have won the tender security for the anti-drone system in all the stadiums, special hotels, and other sensitive areas. We are also in the mobile locations for the anti-drone protection. We and Qatar were able to deliver the most sophisticated and safest anti-drone system in the world on the commercial side. This covers almost 99% of any drone risk. It took great effort from the team to combine more than five or six technologies to develop our own data and product. It took great coordination with the government and FIFA to reach this state-of-the-art solution. We will later replicate this in other countries. Qatar is the first country to achieve this, and we are extremely proud.



Nayef M. Al-Ibrahim  
CEO & CO-FOUNDER,  
IBTECHAR

**What is the story behind Ibtechar's success?**

Ibtechar started as an education technology company focusing on developing products and later went on to develop platforms, apps, and software. Three years after our establishment, we pivoted from a product focus to a service focus. From 2015 until before the pandemic, the company went through a growth mode, growing from two people to almost 20 people in just four years. We moved from innovation space management in education, ICT, and special needs to assisting and supporting companies and started to provide innovation space management as a service. We design a space, procure the equipment, recruit a team, and improve and operate the space based on the need of the sector. We supported about 300 companies from 2018-2021 from app domain to tech domain.

**What is your vision for Ibtechar in the coming years?**

In six to eight years, Ibtechar's strategy is to become a holding group with various subsidiaries, targeting different sectors such as education and innovative services and solutions. Being in the market for the past decade, we have tackled gaps, developed, grew as a team, and learned so much. As a local leader of innovation, we are always working on building up knowledge and updating our services to enrich the practical innovation landscape in Qatar. We help stimulate the country's social development and economic growth to build a more sustainable future for generations to come.



**Hamad Mubark Al-Hajri**  
COFOUNDER,  
SNOONU



**Baker Qaisi Utrilla**  
CO-FOUNDER & MANAGING  
PARTNER,  
ONE AUTOCAR

## RETAIL APPS

Focusing on user friendliness and advanced features to stand out from the competition, retail apps are pulling out all the stops to provide users with the best experience possible.

**What are the latest developments at Snoonu in the context of Qatar hosting the FIFA World Cup 2022?**

**HAMAD MUBARK AL-HAJRI** Snoonu has finalized its process of fundraising to build its product and is currently in the process of changing its business model in order to build a strong super services application. Now, we offer food delivery and will continue to focus on that area until we gain a competitive advantage and a market leadership position. We will switch to a super application to provide multiple on-demand services to the customer. When World Cup visitors come, we will have food delivery, e-commerce, and q-commerce, which is quick commerce. The idea of the future is how to deliver groceries within 10 minutes down from the current time of 25 minutes; however, with more innovation, investment, and expansion, we can achieve our goals. Additionally, Snoonu is targeting expansion in three new countries: Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco. As for the FIFA World Cup, the volume of users will be fairly large. We have extended opportunities to talent from Kenya, Uganda, and Bangladesh by giving them full training and additional educational courses. We are preparing the new staff for the World

Cup and customer interactions in multiple languages. Furthermore, customer experience varies depending on the location. We have to be a multi-language, multicultural platform.

**What is your comparative advantage as a company?**

**BAKER QAISI UTRILLA** We have conducted a number of polls in which we asked individuals about their experience searching for automobiles online. The findings have revealed that users find it extremely difficult to find what they are looking for. Not only that, many said that listing their own cars online is either complicated or costly. This is the point at which we decided to enter the fray and aim to become a game-changer in this business. With One Autocar, users can easily find the best deals for the car they are looking for in just three simple clicks. We have also simplified the car listing process for private used car sellers. In addition to the above, the technologies used in our product distinguishes us from our competitors. We have incorporated advanced features such, AI image processing tools, audio search functionality, valuation tool, Auctions, 360 car view, and much more. As for car dealerships, we have de-

veloped an automotive business solution that allows the dealer to autonomously manage their listings, view their analytics and dashboards, and access the leads of interested potential buyers. Additionally, we provide API integrations with the dealer's CRM system. We have also introduced a live multi-chat for dealers, which allows them to interact with potential buyers in real-time and facilitate closing the deal.

**How would you characterize the innovative and entrepreneurial ecosystem in Qatar?**

**HMAH** Start-ups usually need a market, talent, and money. I believe in Qatar; from our experience, the funding, talent, and support infrastructure are all available. What we lack at the moment are entrepreneurs. There are initiatives happening here where the government is trying to link up as a sports destination. The second important vision of the country is to be known for fashion, a creative economy, and a museum country. The government has created M7, an acceleration partnership with museums. Anyone wanting to invest in fashion, museums, and 3D printing will find in Qatar an amazing place. Other than fintech and the digital world, there are innovation centers to encourage fashion and sport. Having a healthy media presence is something that people need to think about as well. The country has real potential to be a larger hub for international entrepreneurs.

**Where do you see a gap in the supply and demand of cars in the Qatari market?**

**BQU** There has always been a high demand for automobiles, but the recent supply-side disruptions the world is experiencing nowadays have significantly increased the gap between supply and demand, and that's due to the pandemic, chip shortage, increased production costs, and other factors. In other words, there is a high demand for vehicles but a limited supply. We have a high level of confidence that the market will return to normal and stabilize in the not-too-distant future. One Autocar will remain committed in helping car dealers sell their automotive inventory, increase the number of preorders, and boost the sales of new cars. The used cars market has also witnessed an increasing demand, and One Autocar came in place to fulfill this need and become an intermediary between C2C and B2C used car vendors and buyers. ✖



# better life FOR ALL

Established in 1998, Ideal Solutions has become a leading IT & GIS solutions and services provider in Qatar.

Mahmoud Amer  
CEO,  
IDEAL SOLUTIONS



## What are some of the highlights of Ideal Solutions' history in Qatar?

Ideal Solutions is recognized as an innovative company able to implement more than 200 uniquely challenging and pioneering projects that we introduced as firsts for Qatar or the Middle East. Ideal Solutions is constantly setting new standards in the smart digital technology arena that add value and distinction to users and communities. Recently, we were awarded for our design and implementation of a state-of-the-art innovative smart and accessible self-service kiosk to raise and promote community awareness of assistive accessible technological solutions that provide the access to services for the disabled, and we receive at least one such award every year for work excellence. We have turned challenges into opportunities by increasing our qualified staff and investing in appraisals, events, training, office space, the latest technologies and tools, and R&D. Ideal Solutions offers an extensive portfolio of strong value solutions across 12 industries with a rich setup of five professional departments with over 80 skilled experts committed to "Deliver on Time with Quality," as embodied in our company motto. Our rich client base hosts a long list of VIP organizations in government and private sectors that include the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Environment, Ministry of Transportation, Public Works Authority, Woqod, KAHRAMAA, Qatar Energy, and Qatar National Bank.

## What does Ideal Solutions offer in the area of electronic payments?

Ideal Solutions had envisioned the strategic contribution of electronic payments in the national interest of Qatar back in

the 1990s, and hence started its pioneering groundwork by laying down a strong foundation based on industry trends and the best practices. Over the intervening two decades, the seed that Ideal Solutions sowed has now yielded fruit. Proudly, the spectrum of electronic payment services has gone beyond empowering government entities and Financial Institutions to encompass health sectors, education, hospitality, retailers, telecommunications, insurances, charities, energy sectors, and other service disciplines. Ideal Solutions is uniquely positioned to provide the complete set of electronic payment products and related services. This includes all types of point of sale (POS) terminals, in addition to a wide spectrum of POS applications for sales, currency exchange, loyalty, and top up among others. We also supply and serve highly security specialized high-performance network infrastructure, key injection, and terminal management products. Our electronic payment services include the certification of POS applications from Visa, Mastercard, and other processors, providing technical support services and 24x7 SLA services to serve the banks, merchants, and clients on behalf of the banks.

## How would you describe the company's alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030?

Ideal Solutions is recognized locally and internationally for being a community-focused and customer-centric company that constantly demonstrates its value and strength and readiness to successfully implement unique projects by employing the latest innovative technologies in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. We realized early that technology was at the heart of living safely and happily in any country, city, or community. Transforming pro-

cesses and tools for government services and transactions is no longer an option, but a prerequisite to a stable and secure way of living. Ideal Solutions is in compliance with the Qatar TASMU initiative to harness the power of ICT to deliver outcomes that benefit the public, and to drive the sustainable economic growth of Qatar towards 2030, in transportation, education, and health.

## What are Ideal Solutions' main objectives for 2022?

Ideal Solutions' main objectives for 2022 are to play a lead role in promoting Qatar and ensuring that the Qatar FIFA World Cup 2022 is a major success of lasting significance. We will cultivate and sustain our unique winning culture to help enhance the productivity and outcome of our community. We will present more creative and innovative ideas and solutions. Our mission remains to deliver quality solutions that make life more secure and enjoyable. ✖

## BIO

Mahmoud Amer is the CEO and founder of Ideal Solutions. He received his master's degree in computer engineering with honors and has over 40 years of experience in both the government and private sectors. During his career, he has implemented hundreds of projects and received dozens of awards and appreciation letters for his achievements. The extent of his contribution stands as one of the few in the Middle East with his extensive experience and know-how in business and technology.

## REAL ESTATE PRICE INDEX

SOURCE: QCB

Jan. 21	204.2
Feb. 21	202.3
Mar. 21	211.95
Apr. 21	216.63
May 21	214.32
Jun. 21	218.61
Jul. 21	218.76
Aug. 21	216.65
Sep. 21	221.99
Oct. 21	223.03
Nov. 21	218.68
Dec.21	211.98
Jan. 22	212.8
Feb. 22	217.03
Mar. 22	217.56

## BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

SOURCE: THE PENINSULA

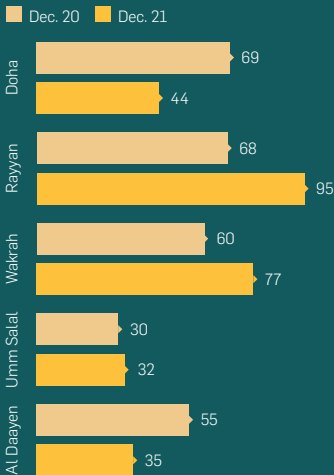


Image: Hasan Zaidi



# Construction & Real Estate

## BUILDING AHEAD

One of the main pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030, a wide-ranging blueprint for a more resilient economy, is the development of sustainable infrastructure that meets the current and future needs of both the country and the region.

The main driver of construction growth in recent years has been in preparation for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Alongside stadiums, new metro routes, roads, and intersections have sprung up around the country in anticipation of hosting fans from across the globe.

But long after the last whistle has blown, Qatar's new infrastructure will continue to serve the local population and, it is hoped, a growing number of regular visitors, either on holiday or attending the many events, sporting or otherwise, that the Gulf nation hopes to host now that it is firmly on the map.

Projects of note have included eight stadiums; the Sabah Al Ahmad Corridor, a main road artery; Lusail City, the first private and planned city in the region; Hamad International Airport expansion;

the finalization of Doha Metro lines; and the development of smart city initiatives such as Msheireb in Doha. And notably, the usage of local materials in infrastructure projects increased from 38% to 70% between 2016 and 2020, reflecting the policy of self-sustainability that Qatar embarked upon following the economic blockade by neighboring countries in 2017.

Indeed, self-sufficiency is going hand-in-hand with sustainability, and there is no better example than the Public Works Authority (Ashgal), the organization in charge of the design, construction, and management of major infrastructure works. Ashgal has led a program of environmental protection, recycling, and sustainability, while encouraging much the same from the private sector.

On the real estate front, demand continues to rise as it has for the last few years. According to the Real Estate Index, released by the Ministry of Justice, the real estate market enjoyed a positive outlook during April 2022, with real estate trading exceeding QAR2 billion over 330 deals, with 31% being within Doha. ✘



## INTERVIEW



## HIGH *standards*

Ashghal is gradually transitioning from an authority entrusted with awarding and executing projects to one focusing on the operation and maintenance of the country's road and drainage networks, while ensuring the delivery of high-quality services and solutions in managing these assets.

### BIO

Saad bin Ahmad Al Muhannadi began his engineering career after graduating from Qatar University with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He also received a master's degree from Qatar University in 2009 and his doctorate from France in 2016. He has held several leadership and managerial positions in Qatar within the energy, transportation, and infrastructure sectors. He also held major roles such as electrical grid planning manager, technical affairs manager at Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa), and CEO of Qatar Railways Company. In 2017, he was appointed President of Ashghal with the rank of ministerial undersecretary.

Saad bin Ahmad Al Muhannadi  
PRESIDENT,  
PUBLIC WORKS AUTHORITY  
(ASHGHAL)

**Which have been the main projects finished over the last year?**

Over the last year, Ashghal has continued to achieve operational excellence and timely delivery of its projects to create advanced and sustainable infrastructure that meets the current needs and future aspirations of the State of Qatar. Ashghal inaugurated the Sabah Al Ahmad Corridor, the main road artery in the State of Qatar with a total length of 29km. The new highway with 18 multi-level interchanges, 30 bridges, and 15 underpasses is an important addition to the land transport network of Qatar and a major link between the South and North. Ashghal's Local Areas Infrastructure Program maintained the road and drainage network across Qatar through the development of infrastructure to serve citizens' subdivisions, completing 42 projects in new areas, which will serve more than 36,000 land plots in 25 different areas of the country. With the healthcare and education sectors being our key priorities, we completed two health centers in Al Khor and Umm Al Saneem areas that service approximately 600 patients each, in addition to completing two community colleges. Introducing the latest innovation and technology within Roads Operation and Maintenance works, Ashghal implemented ground penetrating radar and asphalt recycling techniques in addition to the usage of drones to inspect drainage networks.

**Which initiatives and programs have been defined in order to bring awareness about sustainability in the local community?**

Ashghal is committed to adopting high standards in environment protection, recycling, health and sustainability across all our programs and projects. Promoting and complying with environmental and social standards is an essential goal within our corporate strategy and is in line with the efforts of various national institutions working towards providing a better future for the next generations as part of the Qatar National Vision 2030. To raise awareness of sustainability in our local communities, the Supervisory Committee of Beautification of Roads and Public Places in Qatar in coordination with the Ministry of Municipality launched and implemented the "Qatar Beautification and Our Kids

Planting Trees" initiative. The ongoing campaign aims to raise awareness among students about the importance of planting trees and preserving nature. The committee recently received the Guinness World Record for involving largest number of different nationalities in planting trees simultaneously in Qatar. We have a number of projects underway to expand green spaces across the country, such as the Doha Central Development and Beautification project which has been designed to provide cycling and pedestrian-friendly paths and crossings, which encourages visitors to use various means of transportation, and link all vital places in Doha.

**How has FIFA World Cup 2022 positively impacted infrastructure development in Qatar?**

In the last 15 years, Ashghal has continued to enhance the development of efficient and sustainable infrastructure in Qatar. We have been committed in ensuring that the country's roads infrastructure is developed and upgraded to create a long term, sustainable road network that continues to support social and economic growth far beyond 2022. Ashghal has delivered major expressways such as Sabah Al Ahmad Corridor, Al Majd Road, Al Khor Expressway, and Lusail Expressway and integrated infrastructure projects providing new free-flowing roads linking ports and logistical locations. Certainly, hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup has been fundamental in speeding up the pace of development. Our road network is becoming bigger and better every day. We created partnerships with local and international entities where we acquired advanced technical and professional knowledge and succeeded in applying it to all our projects. In our efforts to pave the road to FIFA World Cup 2022, Ashghal has completed 99% of the roads leading to the eight stadiums across Qatar. In coordination with relevant authorities in the country, Ashghal has ensured the integration of its projects with various facilities that serve the World Cup, including the Doha Metro, public bus stations, commercial, and tourist areas as well as fan zones, parks, and amusement parks. As we deliver some of the largest infrastructure projects, our purpose remains unchanged, which is an unwavering commitment to improving performance. ✖





Image: Hasan Zaidi





# Reliable Partner in Qatar's Growth

[rcalmana.com](http://rcalmana.com)



*Doha Oasis, Musheirib, Qatar*



# a helping HAND

RC AL MANA is one of the top players in Qatar, committed to the country's development and employing innovative construction techniques.



Monjid Othman Abdulmajeed  
CEO,  
RC AL MANA

**What is your assessment of the company's preparations to host a memorable FIFA World Cup?**

RC AL MANA tried to be a part of the stadiums, though unfortunately, we did not win any of the tenders; however, we are glad to be doing the Lusail Commercial Boulevard, which is the fan-zone street. We are also doing many hotels that have been built for the World Cup, such as the Banyan Tree, Dusit, Accor Swissôtel, Sofitel and Novotel. Other than that, we are currently constructing the biggest water park in the Middle East, Qetaifan North Water Park, which will be an entertainment option for tourists. Therefore, about 80-90% of our work these days is related to the World Cup 2022. 2021 was one of the most challenging years for the construction industry, due to COVID-19. We had challenges as well as difficulties handing over important jobs. We also could not hire new people from outside. We needed thousands of people, so we had to hire them from the market, at higher prices. There were also changes like the minimum wage for workers, which increased slightly and was a financial burden. This affected the entire sector. At the end of the day, we are negotiating with the leadership in the country, to show them our expenses, and what we had to solve to get to this level.

**RC AL MANA has been in charge of developing the Lusail Commercial Boulevard. What has been the company's approach to this outstanding project?**

This street will be the fan-zone area for the World Cup that was slated within the same stadium. It is a 1.3-km street with 18 buildings. It will have a ground floor, restaurants, hotels, a museum, and mega marts. Guests can enter through a fan-zone area, with four towers that another contractor is building. The whole street will be designed and built by us, and one-third of that street will be air-conditioned. After the World Cup, it will be

a landmark. It will be the best street in Qatar to go on walks, shopping, and leisure activities. We have other major project, a water park that will be one of the biggest water parks in the region. It is linked to a hotel that will be built by another contractor. It will also be an attraction after the World Cup and will also benefit residents of this country. It will serve to attract people from outside to visit Qatar. We won the water park project because of our experience in the entertainment sector of projects. This sector is important for us. After 2022, I expect the country to look toward entertainment as a requirement to attract overseas visitors.

**How does the company's new slogan, Reliable Partner in Qatar's Growth, reflect the company's strategy to align with Vision 2030?**

The rebranding was the starting point of shifting the company to the digital era. This is part of the ongoing evolution of our company and our effort of being more agile and adaptive of new technologies. Ashghal is going digital; all clients are going digital. We wanted to start a new system, with new software and technology to help us in the future. The future will be built on that technology. This new brand reflects our futurist vision and permanent commitment to the construction industry and innovative techniques. Our continued ambition to embrace the country's development and maintain our position as pioneers in the construction in Qatar is tailored under a challenging new look. Qatar will welcome the world at the upcoming events that the country hosts. These events will be materialized thanks to projects like the ones we are currently involved in and like those that we anticipate. RC Al Mana will be part of these events with innovative and modern leadership, as well as with clear methodology and sharp style. Exactly as the values that convey the way we work. ✖

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***Over two decades, Al Mana has become a landmark in building developments***

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***Reliable partner in Qatar's growth***

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***Specialized in large-scale projects in the public and private sectors***

**BIO**  
Monjid Othman Abdulmajeed has been CEO & board member of the RC AL MANA group of companies since its establishment in 1998. He holds a BS in civil engineering from University of Missouri in the US and has worked in leading and delivering prestigious projects in Qatar.

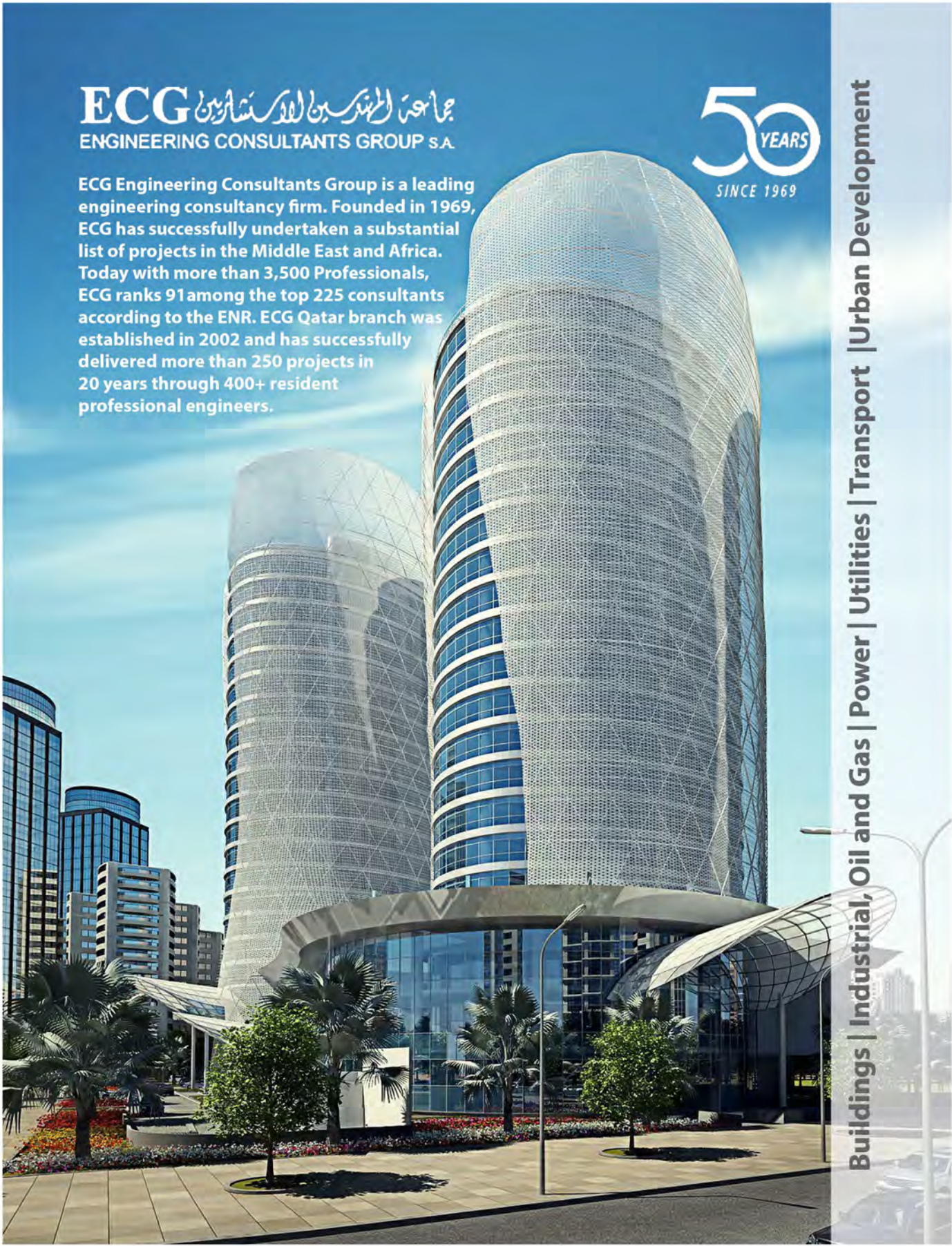


# ECG **مجموعة المهندسين الاستشاريين** ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS GROUP S.A.

ECG Engineering Consultants Group is a leading engineering consultancy firm. Founded in 1969, ECG has successfully undertaken a substantial list of projects in the Middle East and Africa. Today with more than 3,500 Professionals, ECG ranks 91 among the top 225 consultants according to the ENR. ECG Qatar branch was established in 2002 and has successfully delivered more than 250 projects in 20 years through 400+ resident professional engineers.

**50**  
YEARS  
SINCE 1969

**Buildings | Industrial, Oil and Gas | Power | Utilities | Transport | Urban Development**





# highest QUALITY

ECG has managed, designed, and supervised many successful major projects in Qatar, including Banana Island, Al Duhail Stadium, and the training pitches for FIFA World Cup 2022.

Omar Bahgat  
VICE PRESIDENT & REGIONAL MANAGER,  
ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS GROUP (ECG)



**How do you see the business environment evolving in the medium term?**

Qatar is considered one of the best places to practice business in the Middle East. We believe that the business environment in Qatar will continue to stay healthy and promising in the short and medium terms. All the projects related to the FIFA World Cup 2022 are progressing as planned. Many stadiums have been commissioned by the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy and have already hosted international events. ECG has proudly been part of those projects. Our latest tendered to market project was the concept overlay of the eight tournament stadia, as well as other related infrastructure projects, including highways, internal roads, drainage, beautification, and hospitality. A remarkable size of these projects are already ahead of the schedule, where other projects are awaiting final design to be tendered. After commissioning of the New Hamad Port in Messaeed, the old port area undergoes a complete re-design to be transformed into a state-of-the-art hospitality and entertainment development, which shall be integrated with the national museum park and the Islamic museum area. Hamad Medical Corporation in cooperation with Ashghal is implementing a big healthcare portfolio that includes the construction of the new medical city and tertiary hospitals, the projects are currently in planning stage, and ECG is proud to be part among others in such a huge project.

**How do you expect the profile of your clients to evolve in the medium term?**

More than 80% of ECG's current projects are governmental in nature. At the same time, we keep an excellent track record of major private developments

and landmark projects. We do not expect big changes in our client portfolio, though we will keep our involvement in different construction sectors in Qatar including healthcare, education, hospitality, beautification, and infrastructure, with a major emphasis on governmental projects. Our clients' portfolio includes Ashghal, Kahramaa, QP, MME, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Transportation, Aspire, Supreme Committee for Legacy and Delivery, Doha Port, ISF, Qottayfan, and others.

**What is the potential of floating construction projects in Qatar to keep the sector alive after the event?**

A sustainable approach has been implemented by the Supreme Committee for delivery and legacy in all its FIFA 2022-related projects to ensure a legacy mode for all the sports facilities is included and designed ahead, which covers the after-tournament period for legacy purposes, the implementation of such mode shall start immediately after the tournament event is finished. Following the World Cup in 2022, the development of different sectors will undergo a very ambitious implementation plan to fulfill Qatar National 2030 Vision. This will include a big portfolio of infrastructure and urbanization projects. Some life examples are Al Sharq Crossing, the North Field Expansion Project, and continuing the full development of Lusail City. These portfolios involve hundreds of upcoming sustainable projects.

**How will new technologies impact the engineering and architecture industries in Qatar in the medium term, and what are your plans to become more efficient and environmentally friendly?**

ECG believes that the future of the con-

struction industry can be transformed by integrating three new technology practices: applying Lean principals to construction, maintaining sustainability and green buildings goals as strategy, and using Building Information Management (BIM) tools, all aligned together. Notably, ECG is registered as one of the design and construction service providers for GSAS and green buildings in Qatar, the first consultant to register a four-star building in Lusail. With the wide implementation of the BIM system, ECG was able to provide the highest quality of integrated systems on 3D models. ECG is also one of the main recognized sponsors of the Lean construction movement in Qatar developed recently through the LCI-Q organization. Many of our engineers are certified to implement the lean construction technology in our projects, especially with the current practice to include lean specialists in many governmental projects, especially ASHGHAL mega schemes. ✖

**BIO**

Omar Bahgat holds a master's degree in civil engineering with more than 33 years of experience in regional operations management and business development, in addition to extended technical experience in the design, construction, and operation of water and wastewater systems. He assumed several positions in engineering consultancy, contracting, as well as client representatives in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, and Australia. In 2012, Bahgat assumed the position of Vice President & Regional Manager in ECG Engineering Consultants Group.



جست  
ریک  
استایت



JUST  
REAL  
ESTATE

# YOUR REAL ESTATE JUST REAL ESTATE

Known for our distinct approach to real estate – a reputation built around loyal clientele, and success stories beyond compare – JRE has developed and cultivated a trusted brand that is sought out by high-net-worth investors and buyers. We work collaboratively to develop, manage, sell and lease outstanding properties within Qatar and around the world.

We strive to deliver excellent investment returns and have built a reputation for integrity and reliability, built on a long-standing record of guarantees to meet the challenges of the commitments we make.



# more TO OFFER

JRE believes that Qatar will see many new real estate investors from around the world as a result of the World Cup and the new laws of foreign ownership.

Nasser Al Ansari  
CHAIRMAN,  
JUST REAL ESTATE (JRE)



**Real estate in Qatar has been booming in the past decades. How would you assess the role of JRE during this time during the sector?**

The company has adopted a few innovative methods to promote real estate. One of the key aspects of the company is a focus on marketing. The marketing department is essential for the company. We are not just a broker; we go beyond that by being a solutions provider for real estate investors. We do many market surveys. We are a licenses property evaluator. We do a great deal of development management and advisory and asset management. We offer services in a more professional way. IT is important in the company; we are working on developing this but are facing challenges in terms of attracting the talent with the right capabilities. There are now new methods of promoting real estate either through social media or search engines. We are not just relying on contacting people; we are trying to remove the middleman perceptions. Our aim is to take the customer where they need to go based on their requirements. We are licensed as true real estate agents because the brokerage law has helped regulate the industry. The more professionals there are in this business, the fairer competition will be. The industry would otherwise be highly vulnerable and be subject to a great deal of speculators, which would impact clients, investors, and tenants.

**What added value are real estate clients looking for when they approach JRE?**

Our clients are looking for clear, straight-

forward service. They want a deal, a great location, and excellent contractual legal terms. We have great legal, sales, and marketing teams. We handle a situation from A to Z. We make the connections and prepare the entire contract. After a tenant has signed a lease and moved in, even though our job is technically complete, we still follow up with those who have issues with their landlords and resolve them. If they come back seeking advice, we will help.

**JRE is currently present in Turkey, Lebanon, the UK, and US. Do you plan to enter new markets?**

My strategy as a business in Qatar is to expand overseas; that is one of our strategies for 2022. Some 90% of our work is in Qatar. We plan to expand further into Egypt, the UK, Turkey, and other countries. I am also considering Central Asia, such as Uzbekistan. I would like to set up a franchise JRE in these locations and establish a proper office with proper agents. Once our CRM and IT plans are complete, we will be able to put staff in the office and teach them how to broker and generate revenue from this business.

**What impact will the World Cup have on the sector, and will these potential changes impact your priorities for 2023?**

There will be almost 100,000 millionaire visitors during the World Cup coming with their families. After the World Cup, many people will leave, and many will stay. On top of that, Qatar has proven itself in the health and education sec-

tors. With the World Cup fervor and people looking at this country, there will be many people coming for different reasons. Secondly, people are seeking a better place to live. Qataris today are learning how to invest and save. The first opportunities to invest will be real estate and the stock market. The laws of foreign ownership will also encourage many expats to invest when they find affordable homes available to purchase. If we look at all these factors, after the World Cup, there will be growth. As for plans for JRS, I want to find new and more sophisticated talent. I also want to build a proper IT platform. My priority is to encourage new methods of buildings that require less labor. ✖

#### BIO

Nasser Al Ansari, Chairman of Just Real Estate, graduated in civil engineering from the University of Miami in the US and holds an Executive MBA (EMBA) from HEC Paris. He has gained a wealth of experience across all areas of the real estate sector over the course of his career, allowing him to spearhead the launch of Just Real Estate.

## INTERVIEW

**BIO**

Elias Bou Maroun is acting CEO & COO of Mawaqif Qatar by QDVP. He joined the company in 2012 and has overseen the major projects currently in operation. Since 2000, he has worked in international companies in facility management, and formerly in Secure Parking, heading its car parking expansion plan in UAE. To date, he has more than 20 years of experience in the Middle East. He holds an MBA from Notre Dame University and is currently pursuing his financial leadership study in Harvard Business School.

**Elias Bou Maroun**  
ACTING CEO,  
QDVP (MAWAQIF QATAR)

**What is your assessment on the overall availability of managed parking spaces in Qatar and Mawaqif Qatar's position in the market?**

The challenge is on-street parking, which remains free and uncontrolled. There has been a plan by the authorities to implement on-street parking controls and enforcement, which will motivate customers to park off streets. QDVP participated in this project, with its head company, QDVC, and a key investor, and we are awaiting the next step in this project. Without on-street controls, the cycle will not be complete. In terms of paid parking spaces capacity, we are the leader in the market, with more than 22,000 parking spaces and 1.5 million customer transactions as of 2021. We are also the leader in digital solutions, where we can centralize parking systems, manage them remotely, and connect them to our apps and platforms, all of which have been proven in Qatar.

**What has been the role of Mawaqif Qatar's mobile app in improving your B2C operations, and what has been the response from end users?**

Mawaqif Qatar app is a breakthrough in the market, especially following the pandemic, where customers do not want to handle parking tickets or pay stations. With the Mawaqif Qatar App, customers can register their profile, their license plate numbers, and their credit card information and access any of our projects. Payment is later, not on the spot. This enables customers to save commission fees from each transaction. When the amount is considerable, the payment will be due. We have had almost 1,000 downloads so far. Our app will be also part of other key players loyalty programs in the long run. Moreover, our app can be integrated with a project app, where landlords prefer to have one app for their customers, rather than having them download several apps. QDVP will continue with its digital evolution, prepare for more electric charging stations, develop more its ticketless solutions, and strive for more park-and-ride services, car sharing, and sustainability initiatives. ✖

**BIO**

Alaa Abu Siam joined Egis Group in 2020 with over 20 years of experience in multi-disciplinary engineering, business management, governance, and expansion in international and multi-cultural environments. Throughout his career, he has held positions of increasing responsibility in the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, the US, and Latin America. He holds a BSc in electrical engineering from Jordan, an MBA from the University of Oxford, and is a Certified Project Management Professional from the Project Management Institute.

**Alaa Abu Siam**  
CEO MIDDLE EAST,  
EGIS GROUP

**What have been the main challenges in materializing greener projects in Qatar?**

In the Qatari market, there are a number of challenges where we could create value in an expedited manner. For example, in terms of green spaces in Qatar, according to the last study I looked at, the percentage of green coverage is on average 4sqm per capita, though the average globally is 25sqm. There is a lot to be done in order to greenify Qatar and Doha, where Egis has strong recent experiences to share. The other challenge in Qatar is that over 60% of carbon emissions are related to electricity generation. One of the biggest consumers of electricity are desalination plants, because Qatar generates 99% of its water from desalination activities. It is about finding a more energy efficient way to run these desalination plants. The third challenge is transportation related and how we can become less dependent on vehicles and this can be done.

We need to make way for electric vehicles and other less polluting solutions. These are some of the challenges that Egis is excited and well equipped to address together with our partners in the country.

**What will drive growth for Egis Qatar in 2023?**

For Qatar, our engineering and project management know-how is strong and the pipeline is healthy. Our partnership with Ashghal will continue to drive growth after the World Cup. Beyond project management consulting, we are also working on roads and infrastructure design projects. One area that we are increasingly interested in is the operation and maintenance of assets. Today, we operate more than 4,500km of roads in 17 countries and 17 airports worldwide. This means we put in equity and become a part of the company running the asset, alongside local partners. We are also looking for external growth through acquisitions as Egis is fairly active in the M&A space; having acquired 14 companies in 2021 globally and currently considering transactions in the Middle East that we should be able to announce soon. ✖



# The Al-Janoub Stadium in Al-Wakrah



Image: Noushad Thekeyil

## FOCUS

Infrastructure

# THE BACKBONE

While an overhaul of infrastructure is ramping up construction activities in the public sector, private real estate developers are capitalizing on liberalized property ownership laws in Qatar to sell to foreigners.

**THE CONSTRUCTION MARKET IN QATAR** managed to grow around 1.5% in 2021 despite unfavorable conditions caused by a prolonged stagnation which led to decline in many Asian and Middle Eastern real estate markets. In 2022, the Qatari market is performing even better, raising the expectations for a growth of over 3% by the end of the year. The wave of construction for FIFA World Cup in 2022 is certainly one contributing factor—and one which has been discussed thoroughly; however, it is not the only factor. Much of the current spending in the sector is made under Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Qatari national budget, which have little to do with the forthcoming sporting event.

Government spending in public infrastructure projects is the main driving factor in 2021-2022. The country's national budget has set aside some QAR60 billion (USD15 billion) for construction projects this year. Coupled with this is another QAR60 billion (USD16.5 billion) which will be directed to infrastructure construction gradually by 2025. For the time being, the public works authority (Ashghal) has embarked on a series of road renovation, public arena development, and infrastructure upgrading projects for 2021-2023, which will come with a price tag of QAR7.5 billion (USD2 billion).

Ashghal will have a number of projects up for grabs between 2022 and 2023, with a major one being awarded at least every other month. In May 2022, the structural renovation of 14 aging school buildings were awarded to qualified contractors. Fortunately, the public works authority is making sure that the large number of its ongoing projects will not undermine sustainability, as in keeping with its Corporate Strategy 2018-2022 to promote sustainability and recycling.

This is important for the sector because a large number of renovation projects may soon be commissioned, while the government

tries to rebuild the infrastructure in a more eco-friendly way. "Since the 1970s, the country has improved in all metrics of well-being, economic growth, and GDP per capita. The challenge now is the operability of those assets and their long-term sustainability," Alaa Abusiam, CEO of Egis Group for the Middle East, told TBY recently.

The shift toward sustainability, especially in projects commissioned by Ashghal, is changing the business structure of many construction companies, creating niche specialties such as environmental engineering and urban development. There are companies active in the public sector which focus on the design of eco-friendly structures. For example, "ECG is a green building registered company in the US and Qatar at the GCS as a service provider for design and supervision," says Omar Bahgat, regional manager of ECG Engineering Consultant Group.

As always in Qatar, the private sector is also a huge driving force. Although a surge in supply is visible in the sector as the opening day of the World Cup approaches, World Cup-related supply does not form the majority of real estate construction activities—and certainly not now in 2022, when most projects have already been completed. The demand in the market is generated locally and not likely to go away soon. This is reflected in the increase of demand for rentals for the first time since 2015.

Part of the demand is caused by the arrival of new expats, who make up 88% of the peninsular country's population. The passage of a new law in 2018 facilitated property ownership for non-citizens in freehold zones of Qatar, which motivates expats to buy property both for personal use and as a form of investment. In 2020, the rules were further liberalized, letting foreign nationals to buy property in nine additional areas. Under the new ownership law, non-Qataris

may even receive full residency rights after buying long-term real estate leases. This has become a big selling point in Lusail, where the growth in demand is quite tangible.

In 1Q2022, Lusail and Al Wakrah saw the highest supply of residential units compared to other parts of Qatar. “Two residential projects in The Pearl including a tower, and seven apartment buildings in Lusail, were completed adding 600 apartments. Also, Ezdan Real Estate has announced the launch of 4,000 units across eight compounds in Al Wakrah municipality during 2022,” according to a new report released by ValuStrat, a real estate market intelligence provider in the Gulf region.

Even in the private sector, where contractors do not have to follow the same strict sustainability standard as the public sector, property developers are keen on sustainability, as it is an important selling point in the market. Msheireb Properties recently completed the fourth phase of Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD), which is said to be among the smartest and most sustainable residential complexes in the Gulf region. MDD has a “consistent architectural language with the city buildings,” according to The Peninsula. Given the success of MDD and its popularity with the buyers, other developers are likely to follow suit as they try to grab a piece of action in Doha’s revitalized real estate market. ✖



Husam Gawish  
MANAGING PARTNER,  
HKA

**HKA is positioned as one the world's leading consultancy in risk mitigation and dispute resolution. What are your main business lines in the country and the region?**

HKA is a unique global company that provides a multidisciplinary stream of advice to its clients. We work across almost all sectors of construction and offer a diverse list of services. We are the world’s leader in providing expert services to the engineering and construction industries, which cover delay, quantum engineering, and what we call financial accounting and commercial damages (FACD). Our experts can provide independent reports to clients on various matters, and we can provide world-renowned testifying experts who can attest before tribunals locally and internationally, both in litigation and arbitrations. We also count on an extremely successful dispute avoidance and dispute mitigation line of service to help our clients avoid disputes. Furthermore, we also provide media-

tion and conciliation services. Finally, we provide a wide range of training services, whether it is on contract and commercial management, delay or contract assessment, or preparation of claims. Training is provided through the HKA Training Academy, which we are proud of.

**How is HKA committed to ESG initiatives, and how is the firm maximizing its sustainable influence on the sector?**

We have an active ECG committee that meets on a monthly basis, and we are also working to improve the sustainability of our operations and further our contribution to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. This is key to adopting a sustainable approach to running a business. We are committed to conducting our business in an innovative, creative, and commercially viable way to improve our environment from a socioeconomic perspective on all our operations, both locally and globally. At a local level, we get involved in many initiatives. During Ramadan for example, we ran an initiative in both Qatar and in the UAE to provide Iftar care packages to construction workers working on various projects in both countries. It was a chance for us to connect with the people on the ground who deliver all these fantastic projects. ✖

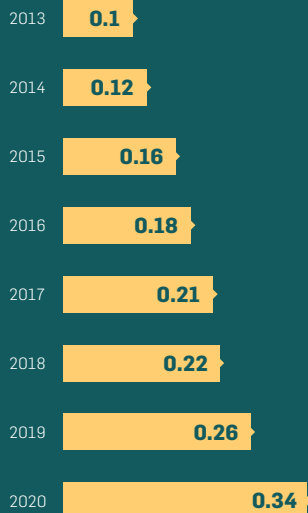
#### BIO

Husam Gawish is a Chartered Engineer and a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers in the UK. He has 25 years of diverse engineering, claims, project management, and business development, and marketing experience gained through working on a wide range of global projects across several industry sectors, including infrastructure, power generation, buildings, and oil and gas. He has a strong technical background and extensive commercial and contractual experience.



## VALUE ADDED IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AS PERCENT OF GDP

SOURCE: THEGLOBALECONOMY.COM



## NUMBER OF PLANT AND ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES CONSERVED IN QATAR BIOBANK

SOURCE: QATAR VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW 2021

### CONSERVED PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

2016	2017	2018	2019
105	89	14	43

### DNA RESOURCES

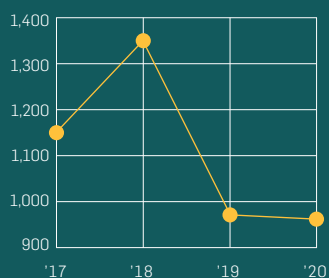
2016	2017	2018	2019
143	167	24	22

### HERBACEOUS GENETIC RESOURCES

2016	2017	2018	2019
858	1002	24	22

## FUNDING FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM FOOD SECURITY PROJECTS (DIRECT LOANS, QAR MLN)

SOURCE: QATAR VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW 2021



## A pivot sprinkler irrigating a field in Qatar



Image: SLSK Photography



# Food Security

## CULTIVATING SELF SUFFICIENCY

**Q**atar is more aware than most about the need for self-sustainability, having recently emerged from a years-long blockade that saw its access to regional markets severely restricted. And the need for food security has only been brought into sharper focus over the course of COVID-19 and with the onset of war in Ukraine. The resultant disruptions to supply chains, with food supply especially impacted, has caused inflationary spikes across the globe.

As an indicator of how far Qatar has come, back in 2015, pre-blockade, the country imported 70% of its dairy products. Today, it is self-sufficient in this category. In fact, fish, animal, and dairy products have experienced four-fold increases in production over the last three years. Qatar has also achieved self-sufficiency in fresh poultry.

And efforts continue. The Ministry of Municipality has outlined plans across a wide range of areas to boost not only food security, but also general sustainability. Plans are afoot in Qatar to develop stronger waste treatment and recycling, rehabilitate transfer stations, advance projects for the use of treated water in an agricultural capacity and the production of concentrate feed, as well as grow in fresh areas, such as shrimp. There

are also plans for an integrated program for food waste and an initiative to enhance the capabilities of research stations and agricultural laboratories.

Qatar also ranked first among Arab countries and 24th globally in the 2021 Global Food Security Index (GFSI). Much of this success is owed to investment in the technology required to grow food in a harsh environment. As Mohamed Al-Sadah, CEO of Hassad Food, told TBY: “All areas related to Qatar’s food security are relevant and shall be addressed; however, R&D, as well as farm support services and the enhancement of logistics and infrastructure, are key areas of focus.”

Indeed, much work has gone into improving greenhouse cooling efficiency, as well as aquaponics, hydroponics, and vertical farming. Both the government and private sector are investing in controlled environment agriculture (CEA), hoping to turn Qatar into a future food exporter. The Qatar National Food Security Strategy 2018-2023 was created as a blueprint to this end, determining the country’s vision to provide basic and strategic food commodities at an appropriate cost and high quality, and it focuses on three main pillars: international trade and logistics, domestic markets enablers, and strategic reserves. ✖

# food ON THE TABLE

The Minister of Municipality has helped Qatar make great progress in the last few years, including the development and implementation of a national food security strategy, local production, internal supply chains, and strategic warehousing.



Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Subaie  
MINISTER OF MUNICIPALITY

## *New projects to grow green food using treated water*

## *Increasing the productivity of agricultural crops, fattening, milk, poultry, and fish*

### BIO

Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Subaie was appointed Minister of Municipality in 2018. He also continues as Managing Director & CEO of the Qatar Railways Company, having held these positions since 2011 and 2017, respectively. He was the group CEO of Barwa from 2011 to 2014. Prior to joining Barwa, he was CEO of Smeat, an affiliate of Qatari Diar Group. He also held various leadership and senior project management positions between 1996 and 2008 with KAHRAMAA. Al-Subaie is a board member and chairman of the executive committee of Qatar Rail and chairman of Al Meera Consumer Goods Company. He has served on the boards of many high-profile organizations. Al-Subaie holds an MBA and a bachelor's in electrical engineering.

What are the ministry's main strategies to promote "Made in Qatar" products as well as agricultural self-development?

Food security initiatives contributed to Qatar's leading position in the Arab world in the global index for 2021. The ministry praised the waste treatment and recycling projects, rehabilitation and management of transfer stations, projects for planting green food using treated water, producing concentrated feed, fresh fish, and fresh shrimp, as well as an integrated program for food waste, and the initiative to enhance the capabilities of research stations and agricultural laboratories. There are initiatives in the field of urban planning, including the development and implementation of an integrated national plan for infrastructure at the state level. The ministry has and will continue of implementing the national food security strategy according to what is planned and hoped, pointing out that significant progress has been achieved in the pillars of that strategy, which include local production, internal supply chains, foreign trade and logistics, and strategic warehousing. We should be aware of the support of the private sector to participate in food security projects and encourage national investments, pointing out that the Ministry of Municipality has put forward many agricultural projects during the past periods to private investors in order to achieve self-sufficiency rates determined by the food security strategy. In the axis of domestic production, 2021 witnessed the achievement of most of the targeted self-sufficiency rates of agricultural commodities for which Qatar has a comparative advantage in production, such as vegetables, table eggs, and red meat, with self-sufficiency rates of 46%, 36%, and 18%, respectively, in 2021. As for fresh poultry, dairy, and its products, since 2019, Qatar has been able to achieve self-sufficiency for all its needs of these food products. Dairy production in Qatar increased from 60,000 tons in 2017, with a self-sufficiency rate of only 28%, to reach 230,000 tons currently. With a self-sufficiency rate of more than 106%, Qatar has also achieved a major productivity boom in the production of fresh chicken, as its production increased from 11,000 tons in

2017, representing 50% of local consumption, to reach currently about 28,000 tons a year, covering more than 124% of the Qatari market consumption of fresh chicken.

How does the ministry deal with waste management in different sectors?

Among the most important plans and programs of the Ministry of Municipality for this year: waste treatment and recycling initiatives, through the implementation of the integrated national program for solid waste management, and a project to rehabilitate and manage transfer stations, and in the field of agriculture and food security we have many initiatives and projects, including: the national honey bee program, agricultural projects using treated water, concentrated feed production, agricultural support for farm and ranch owners, projects to increase the productivity of: agricultural crops, fattening and red meat, table eggs, fresh milk, fresh poultry, camel milk, fresh fish, fresh shrimp, as well as an integrated food waste initiative, an initiative to enhance the capabilities of research stations and agricultural laboratories, and an initiative to develop farms and farm complexes. As for initiatives to beautify cities and green spaces that are implemented in coordination with the Public Works Authority, they include: a database initiative for sustainable plants, preparing a regulation for roof gardens, an initiative to use treated sewage water and natural manure in planting trees, and an initiative to develop a plan to increase parks and green spaces designated for recreational activities.

What are the municipality's plans to prepare Qatar for the FIFA World Cup 2022?

The ministry is working on initiatives such as preparing public gardens to receive the public, food security plans to accommodate the demand for food from local and imported production in coordination with the relevant authorities, ensuring smooth delivery of technical and public services through various municipalities, and developing a plan to establish, equip and operate an operations center to enhance the level of cybersecurity. ✖



# OVERARCHING *goals*



Hassad Food is the country's food and agribusiness investment arm and supports food security.

Mohamed bin Badr Al-Sadah  
CEO,  
HASSAD FOOD

**What strategies has the company undertaken to developing this goal recently?**

Hassad Food is a fully owned subsidiary of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) and are considered the country's investment arm in food and agribusiness sectors. Our investments portfolio is quite diverse and are aimed at supporting the country's food security initiatives. We invest in businesses that bring strategic and commercial value to the country—we work toward becoming a strategic architect by acquiring minority shares in international and local strategic investments, as well as play an investment operator role for most of our local investments.

**One of the investment principles of the company is to invest in businesses that bring strategic value to Qatar's food security initiatives. What main features do you look for when making an investment in an international company?**

When approaching a new investment there are several investment principles that guides us, such as investing in businesses that bring strategic value to Qatar's food security objectives. We also look to achieve a balance between impact and financially-driven investments. Moreover, all investments must be independently operating assets with positive financial profiles, and we invest in sectors that clearly shows healthy and sustainable growth profiles in the near future.

**Hassad Food has announced that it is exploring investment opportunities in different countries in the fields of grain production, meat processing, and agriculture technology. Could you tell us more about your strategy to keep expanding your global footprint?**

Over the past few years, we have managed to establish a great foundation with our global and local investments. We are not limited geographically, and we always look to grow and secure other investments in line with our investment strategy and principles, as well as our targeted investment segments such as: grains and seeds production, protein production and processing, dairy, aquaculture, innovative

farming technologies, food safety and quality testing, fresh produce, and food supply chain and logistics.

**What have been the results of Hassad Food's investment in technology to overcome some of the environmental challenges that are unique to Qatar?**

Hassad constantly seeks to support the research and development efforts. We regularly collaborate with local and international institutions in R&D projects, with the aim of finding innovative solutions to the current challenges to boost the local agricultural sector and support it in achieving self-sufficiency. Moreover, several of our targeted investment fields are indeed related to technology, as well as research and development—we also promote the use of technology in our existing operations. In late 2019, we collaborated with distinguished international and local entities to the launch Qatar's first pilot water saving greenhouse at one of Hassad's greenhouses in Al Shahaniya. Year after year, the pilot greenhouse is showing great results in yield and water consumption for fresh vegetables cultivation.

**According to the Global Food Security Index, Qatar ranked fourth in the region and 37th overall. Where do you see room for growth or opportunity in the horizon marked by the Qatar National Vision 2030?**

All areas related to Qatar's food security are relevant and shall be addressed; however, R&D, as well as farm support services and enhancement of logistics and infrastructure, are key areas of focus.

**What are Hassad Food's priorities for 2022?**

We would like to announce that we will soon start developing two new fish markets in Al Khor and Ruwais areas to support in achieving self-sufficiency. We are committed to continue expanding our international and local investments portfolios, as well as develop and enhance operations in all the fields that we are currently present. ✖

## BIO

Mohamed bin Badr Al-Sadah joined Hassad Food as CEO in 2017. He holds an engineering degree from the University of Arizona in the US. He has extensive experience in different fields acquired from working across various sectors, like oil and gas, investment, and telecoms. Al-Sadah currently holds a number of other senior positions including chairman of Widam food, vice chairman of Baladna, vice chairman for the Arab Qatari Company for Poultry Production (AlWaha), board member of the Qatar Development Bank, board member of the Arab Co. Livestock Development, and vice chairman of International Seafood Company (Oman). Previously, Al-Sadah was with Vodafone Qatar and the Qatar Investment Authority.

# relentless FOCUS

Baladna is a 100% Qatari company that has played a major role in ensuring food security for the population for years.

Ramez Al-Khayyat  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
BALADNA



**Baladna recorded a market share growth compared to the same period last year. Which new product lines were created to achieve this goal?**

As part of our ongoing expansion efforts, which have established Baladna's position as the market leader in dairy and beverages in Qatar, we continue to develop new products that appeal to our diverse consumer base. Our recent increase in market share has been driven by several factors, including our growing cheese dip, cream, and yogurt lines. Our increased focus on hotel, restaurant, and catering (HORECA) channels, which we have increasingly tapped into since 2019, has also delivered higher market share throughout the last year.

**What methods does the company apply to fulfill the concepts of sustainable agriculture and "clean farming?"**

Since entering Qatar's food production sector in 2017, Baladna's relentless focus on delivering freshness and nutritional value means our produce is synonymous with premium quality. Underpinning this is Baladna's deep commitment to locally-sourced, sustainable production. For example, we are dedicated to preventing water and resource waste in our production processes. Therefore, we apply a rigorous green strategy model in our approach to wastewater management, composting, and reusable materials. Baladna also creates organic compost fertilizer out of its animal waste, which we sell to local farmers to reduce reliance on nitrate-based fertilizers. We have recently made significant investment to improve and expand our wastewater treatment facilities, working in partnership with Veolia Water Technologies. This will ensure treated water is reused within the farm—another step in generating sustainable

value for our shareholders and ensuring long-term food security for Qatar.

**What strategies have you employed in R&D given the introduction of more sophisticated industry technology?**

We always pack the highest-quality nutrients into each Baladna product, and we will not compromise on this. As part of this quality commitment, our R&D approach uses proven technologies that ensure the highest level of quality and food safety in all new Baladna products. For each new product line, we purchase and install the latest technological advancements within our production plants, including from GEA, Tetra Pak, SPX, and other leading suppliers. Each of our products adhere to all globally recognized food quality and safety standards, as used across the US and Europe. To date, our approach has seen us introduce a range of new ingredients and nutrients to the local market, including high-quality probiotics, super fruits, and reduced-sugar products.

**To what extent is Baladna committed to tackling the challenges of food and water waste in Qatar and the Gulf?**

Waste management is an integral part of dairy farm operations. With more than 24,000 cows, Baladna's scale and production capacity poses a potential challenge in terms of food and water waste. Following the expansion of the farm, our liquid waste quantity, as well as the usage of clean water, has naturally increased. Therefore, Baladna has invested significantly in introducing a wastewater treatment plant, which will ensure treated water is reused within the farm. Currently under construction, the second phase of the wastewater treatment plant is due to be completed by mid-September and

commence full operations by the end of 2022.

**What are your main aspirations and expectations for the next 12 months?**

Baladna continues to go from strength to strength. As a proud 100% Qatari brand, we want to set new milestones on Qatar's road towards achieving the highest levels of food security, sustainability and quality, based upon locally-sourced food products whose quality and taste can compete regionally and globally. Currently, we have over 3,000 points of sale, enabling us to deliver 268 products to the consumer. For the coming year, we continue in our commitment to sustainable growth, driven by exciting new product lines, including yogurt, cheese and juices. Naturally, with the FIFA World Cup 2022 coming to Qatar, we expect an unprecedented uptick for our HORECA channels, and we look forward to introducing many thousands of football fans to our range of delicious product offerings. ✖

#### BIO

A business leader with a wealth of experience in operations, risk management and development, Ramez Al-Khayyat is a second-generation entrepreneur with years of executive experience with his family's contracting company. He has grown his group of companies into a diverse business conglomerate and employs over 60,000 experts and tradesmen worldwide. Al-Khayyat is Vice Chairman & Group CEO of Power International Holding.



Ihsan Alkhiyami  
CEO,  
ALWATANIA INTERNATIONAL  
HOLDING COMPANY (AWIHC)

## MUCH *in store*

AWIHC is playing a key role in helping Qatar ramp up food storage capacity and prepare for future crises.

**How is AWIHC handling logistics in a post-COVID-19 scenario, and how has Qatar's effective management of the pandemic helped local companies working in the sector?**

We have been in business since 1964, and we operate in various sectors such as FMCG distribution, food logistics, food production, retail, and real estate development. In my opinion, Qatar has been among the most successful countries in managing the COVID-19 crisis. Things are moving in the right direction as evidenced by the events taking place. The country successfully held the 2021 FIFA Arab Cup, an experience that paves the way for an extraordinary FIFA World Cup in 2022. At AWIHC we are seeing a recovery in the food service sector and burgeoning activity with more business and orders coming our way. We are optimistic about the developments for 2022 and business appears to be moving in the right direction.

**Qatar expects a great number of visitors to the FIFA World Cup. How are you preparing for this peak in demand?**

AWIHC is working to expand its capacity through new warehouses so that it is ready for the anticipated rise in demand for food storage. The number of visitors remains to some extent uncertain due to COVID-19, but we are getting ready ahead of time with our suppliers and partners.

**What is the current status of the Qatar National Food Security Program (QNFSP), and how has AWIHC participated?**

Part of the QNFSP plan has been to ensure Qatar has certain strategic food stocks in place in the event of further lockdowns or a shortage. Certain items were designated as strategic stocks, and our group is a strategic stock supplier. We have signed contracts to supply the government with key products such as

rice, oil, and meat. The government has a strategic stock list that includes items such as rice, sugar, oil, meat, chicken, and frozen vegetables to ensure there is no shortage of basic products in the event of a crisis.

**Which projects mark AWIHC's expansion in Qatar?**

AWIHC is pursuing the production chain in the advanced local production of food products. The facility we are investing in will serve for the production of processed meat, the repacking of pulses and sugar, and the production of fresh juices, sandwiches, salads, and ready meals. We expect the local market to be able to absorb this demand. However, we are looking to export to nearby markets should there be demand. Along with this, we are working on facilities that enable more local production of staple goods such as fresh chicken or vegetables. Our first goal today is the local market and our second exports. Made in Qatar products receive support from government, the regulators, and the consumer as well. Indeed, we see those products winning a larger market share as the local market grows. AWIHC is proud to be a part of this movement.

**What is your general message regarding AWIHC's presence and growth in Qatar?**

We feel lucky to be operating in Qatar, given its relatively strong economy, and we believe we are moving in the right direction. AWIHC is working to be a part of Qatar National Vision 2030. For now, the group will make its own contribution to a successful 2022 and our plan is to be a part of the growing economy. One of the challenges we need to overcome is inflation due to the rise in global logistics prices and commodities. Hopefully, this is a temporary obstacle, but, being a global issue, it seems set to require more time to overcome. ✖

### BIO

Ihsan Alkhiyami is a member of the Qatari Businessmen Association. Born in 1966, he completed his bachelor of computer science at the University of Texas at Dallas in 1987. He also holds a master's in business administration. Alkhiyami is the Managing Director and CEO of AWIHC.



# Al Meera الميرة

Your Favourite Neighbourhood **Retailer** الأكثر تميزاً وقرباً



## The leading retailer of choice in Qatar

With 17 years of excellent service delivery, Al Meera has remained in the forefront of retail supply in Qatar boasting the widest network with over 60 branches and the largest market share with presence in every neighbourhood. Our shopping-friendly stores bring the convenience of a grocery store to every location in addition to MAAR mini markets situated in select metro stations, wholesale markets and the floating marketing. We maintain the highest standards in quality and service at our stores by not only bringing to our shelves fresh, local, and imported products but as well as everyday essential items at a great value and most recently the much-demanded FIFA licensed products. We constantly customise, improve and upgrade our stores to meet our customers' expectations and ever-changing needs in every aspect of the shopping experience. Thus making Al Meera Qatar's favourite neighbourhood retailer.

# one Shop FOR ALL

Al Meera is expanding capacities in order to be ready for the World Cup, and is also busy supporting local producers.

Yousef Ali Al Obaidan  
CEO,  
AL MEERA



**How has Al Meera been involved in different initiatives in terms of food security, and how has it diversified its source markets to count on a wider variety of suppliers?**

Fortunately, Al Meera has a wide and solid base of suppliers, which has helped during the difficulties that we faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and they are ready to support us in future peak periods, such as the one expected with the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Al Meera started to recognize that there may be complications importing items that our customers need, and therefore we approached all local suppliers to ensure that we would not run low on product supplies in addition to ensuring availability in our own warehouses. In this regard, Al Meera has expanded its warehouse space to store more products and has hired an increasing number of charter flights to keep our stocks ready. Given the current international logistical issues especially after the pandemic, certain products are also low in supply and experience a high demand from locals and residents within the country. Yet, due to our network of suppliers and our chartered flights, Al Meera has kept at least a month supply stored in the event of shortages in the market.

**Many local suppliers are bringing forward the Made in Qatar brand for staple food items. How is Al Meera working with local producers?**

For national security purposes, it is important to help local companies that are getting established and setting up their food manufacturing capacities. All organizations, and especially a national company such as Al Meera, have a social responsibility to provide local companies a space where they are able to display their

products and expand. Our aim is to not only list their products with us, but also to make their businesses sustainable.

**How would you assess Al Meera's standpoint on digitalization, and how do your different initiatives in this field help you better reach out to end consumers?**

Personally, this has been my focus since I joined the company as CEO. Al Meera is now developing its ERP system and working to this end with leading companies around the world. On the consumer side, our website and application are being revamped, to enhance the customer journey online for our online shoppers. Globally, online ordering has become the trend and, year after year, we work on developing ourselves further on the digital end to make sure customers are easily navigating with access to everything they need. Additionally, we have also installed self-checkout counters for customers to enjoy in select branches and will continue to expand this service, so they don't need to wait in line especially when they have few purchases. The new Al Meera mini mart in the Qatar Energy Headquarters only relies on self-checkout counters. We are also further digitalizing the experience for our loyalty members, who already participate in digital raffles regularly, where they can transfer points from our partners digitally to expedite their redemptions at Al Meera.

**How is Al Meera getting ready for the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the expected peak in demand during the months of celebrations?**

Al Meera has signed agreements to be the first distributor of official FIFA-licensed products in our industry and continues to have exclusivity on certain merchandise across our sector, joining hands

with two local companies that supply us with official licensed products across Al Meera branches all over Qatar. With over 60 Al Meera branches, customers have easy access to products to support their favorite team and to experience the excitement that comes along with this amazing event. With the number of fans, volunteers, and players expected, amongst others, World Cup demand will create shortages so we have planned ahead and, accordingly, expanded the warehouses again to ensure availability of products for everyone. We have been working for almost two years to prepare for this big event. Additionally, Al Meera will have special variety of products for the different nationalities that will travel to Qatar for the event. In all, Al Meera is considered to have the largest market share in Qatar and we are present in every community around the country, and there a few branches that will open prior to the event as well. ✖

#### BIO

Yousef Ali Al Obaidan brought a vast array of experience to his position, having previously held several senior executive roles across Qatar's largest establishments. A graduate in finance from California State University and a holder of a master's in integrated marketing and communications, his career spans inspiring portfolios in Qatar's business and investment sector.

## FOCUS

Food security

# FOOD IN THE BASKET

Qatar has achieved one of the highest levels of food security in the world thanks to robust supply chains, increased homegrown capacity, and the smart management of food reserves.

**ON JUNE 5, 2017**, when the news of an imminent diplomatic crisis made headlines, and the blockade was effectively formed, the issue of food security quickly came to the foreground. Given the geopolitical situation of Qatar, many worried about food imports.

As it happened, Qatar leveraged on its extensive diplomatic relations and business ties to remedy the situation, and no major food crisis was reported during the blockade, which lasted for exactly four years. However, the incident started a nationwide dialogue about the importance of food security in Qatar, especially given the country's limited homegrown capacity for many food items. Since then, several milestones have been achieved in terms of food security. Local production of strategic food commodities has grown considerably, and a more robust network of bulk transportation has been developed using new air routes and sea lanes.

Also of note was the development of Qatar's national food security strategies (2018-2023), which lay down the most optimal courses of action to lower the risk of food shortage under different scenarios. Among other things, the strategy documents some of the heuristics that Qatari decision-makers learned during the challenging experience of the blockade. The food security strategy proposes a handgun of pillars, the most important of which is to "ensure that trade routes are diversified so that risk-exposure is limited," while having a "contingency plan for alternative routes as needed." This was achieved by launching several maritime trade routes to the Indian subcontinent, Africa, and Latin America over the last five years.

Furthermore, as a major aviation hub operating one of the best flag carriers in the world, Qatar also came to rely on air cargo. Consequently, Qatar Airway Cargo has been growing quickly since 2017, achieving a global market share of 8% in air cargo transportation worldwide. The airline currently serves some 65 freight destinations, transporting food commodities and medicine, among much else. Incidentally, Qatar Air Cargo's increased capacity came in handy during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the airline transported over 600 million doses of vaccines.

Another pillar emphasized in the national food security strategy is the "effective cultivation of crops, meat, and fish within the confines of Qatar's resource base to ensure a stable source of per-

ishables in times of crises." The problem is that self-sufficiency in many agricultural products seems impossible for Qatar, given its climate and type of soil. However, large-scale greenhouse agriculture may be possible using a specific method that suits the country's climate. Agrico, a local agricultural development company, tried to come up with just the right solution. "No one had the right technology for Qatar because not much research had been done locally by major companies," says Nasser Al Khalaf, Agrico's managing director.

The company has tried to operate large greenhouses exclusively designed for Qatar. "Through our own research and work, and after some years, we succeeded in producing every type of vegetable year-round. We have also changed the specifications of greenhouses themselves. We changed the concept of cooling and of the materials used," adds Al Khalaf to TBY. Using custom-built greenhouses, Agrico and other market players have increased Qatar's self-sufficiency in vegetables and fruits to over 50%.

Whether food commodities are produced locally using high-tech or imported through diversified trade routes, the nation must maintain strategic reserves of food items. After the shock of the blockade began to wear off in late 2017, Qatar began investing in its strategic food reserves. "The state also launched an electronic system to manage and monitor the strategic stocks, with the aim of activating the partnership between the government and private sectors," according to the Gulf Times. By keeping track of food commodities in storehouses across the country, the Ministry of Commerce will always be able to track the pattern of consumption for each commodity. This will enable officials to negotiate import deals well in advance and, therefore, at more reasonable prices.

Two events in 2017 and 2020 effectively served as wake-up calls for Qatari officials to increase the level of food security. Now, with a diversified supply chain of food items, an increased production capacity for many agricultural products, and an AI-powered system of stockpile management in place, Qatar is more prepared than ever for all contingencies.

This has become all the more timely, as the world is once again witnessing alarming developments such as a war in Europe and the possibility of an economic crisis. ✖





Naif Alhanzab  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
QATAR AGRICULTURAL  
DEVELOPMENT COMPANY  
(QADCO)



Nasser Al Khalaf  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
AGRICO

## FARMS

Qatar is able to boast of strong self-sustainability in agriculture as a result of government initiatives and the hard work of the sector's top players.

**How has the company developed in recent years amid the push for self-sustainability that resulted as a result of the recent blockade?**

**NAIF ALHANZAB** QADCO was established during an extremely critical time of political blockade and has faced the challenge of leading in the agriculture scene. It has not participated in the economy for very long, nor was there much know-how in the local agriculture scene. However, all the challenges in the region gave us great motivation and by watching and learning from best practices in the sector, we were able to evolve at a faster pace. In addition, we had the support of the government, because all this came in line with the country's strategic initiative of food security and under Vision 2030.

**NASSER AL KHALAF** The blockade did not affect us excessively, as Qatar was not dependent on neighboring countries for agriculture. Agrico has developed its own system for manufacturing locally in Qatar and the system has been patented in 2017. We did not believe that anyone had the right technology for Qatar because not much research had been done locally by major companies in terms of greenhouse technology. Through our own research and work, and after some years, we succeeded in producing every type of vegetable year-round. We have also changed the specifications of greenhouses themselves. We changed the concept of cooling and of the materials used. In order to change that, we knew that we would be hard pressed to get anyone to manufacture something so tailor made for Agrico, which would be but a small client for major companies around the world. And so we had to establish our own factory for these greenhouses and started our own supply chain with links from around the world. Since 2015, our supply chain has been fully independent without depending on any neighboring countries. When the blockade began in 2017, it did not affect us significantly other than logistics at the beginning. There

may have been some aftershocks, but they were temporary, taking a few weeks to work through.

**How are you looking to expand your operations?**

**NA** One of our beliefs is that for every action, there is a formula that we have to follow. Finding the new formula for us is using the right techniques and the best research in order to get higher yield per hectare. We continuously invest in experimenting and trying new crop plantations. In fact, we have already succeeded in producing new varieties, and that is reflected in the increase of our product portfolio over the last few years. QADCO is always coming to the market with new products, and sometimes even in the same variety, such as colored cauliflowers and special types of melon, for example.

**NAK** We are focusing more on not expanding production, but on sharing and exporting our technology with different investors. That said, we are focused on developing and operating farms and marketing their products locally and internationally. Up until today, we have developed four different major farms in Qatar using Agrico's technology and knowhow, and they are 100% operated by us to ensure a high yield and high-quality product in the market. As a family we have been in the food trading for many generations, distributing products after harvest as well. We began exporting our technology, including the development of an agriculture project in Oman. We are also negotiating in Kuwait as well and are at an advanced stage in negotiations with Malaysia and South Australia. These countries with hot climates are quite interested in the technology we are offering. Hopefully soon, Oman will be the first to receive our technology as an export from Qatar. It will be the same concept whereby we come in as a developer, then operator, and then handle marketing at the same time. ✖

We at Lulu have always been trying to widen our network, expand our range, innovate our promotions and improve our service so that shoppers who come to our 18 stores in Qatar daily, get exactly what they want.

Ranked as No.1 Hypermarket Chain in the region by PlanetRetail UK.

- 
- 01 • Lulu Hypermarket D-Ring Road
  - 02 • Lulu Hypermarket Al Gharafa
  - 03 • Lulu Centre Al Rayyan Road
  - 04 • Lulu Hypermarket Al Messila
  - 05 • Lulu Express Al Rayyan Road
  - 06 • Lulu Hypermarket Barwa City
  - 07 • Lulu Hypermarket Al Khor
  - 08 • Lulu Hypermarket Al Wukair
  - 09 • Lulu Express B-Ring Road
  - 10 • Lulu Hypermarket West Nuaija, Al Hilal
  - 11 • Lulu Hypermarket Al Meshaf, Al Wakra
  - 12 • Lulu Hypermarket Bin Mahmoud
  - 13 • Lulu Express DECC Station, Doha Metro
  - 14 • Lulu Express Lusail City
  - 15 • Lulu Hypermarket Abu Sidra Mall, Bu Sidra
  - 16 • Lulu Hypermarket Salwa Road, Al Aziziya
  - 17 • Lulu Express Education City, Doha Metro
  - 18 • Lulu Hypermarket Ain Khaled

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# taking THE LEAD

LuLu Group International is looking to set an example for other corporates in terms of taking real and lasting steps to reduce its impact on the environment.

Mohamed Althaf  
DIRECTOR,  
LULU GROUP INTERNATIONAL



**LuLu Hypermarket set a benchmark for the company's carbon reduction targets and circular economy best practices (by 50% before 2030). What strategies are you following to cope with this goal and enhance a greener ecosystem?**

Whilst most of the establishments in the retail industry during the last couple of years have based their focus on developing business strategy for expansion, LuLu Hypermarket is looking forward to setting an example by achieving another milestone in the best practices of circular economy by accomplishing its ongoing efforts to reduce energy, water, and waste and incorporate sustainable practices into its operations. A leading retailer exercising sustainable best practices, LuLu paved the way in its commitment to sustainability by taking real and demonstrable measures to protect the environment and contribute to reducing carbon emissions and food waste. The recipient of the Sustainability Award 2019 at the Qatar Sustainability Summit, LuLu has highlighted its efforts to promote environment-friendly practices in its operations and 18 stores in Qatar and in the community at large. The conglomerate has strong CSR policies to bring a reduction in the increased environmental concerns. LuLu Group has framed its own strategy on sustainability, which is put into practice in all its retail units and supply chains worldwide. LuLu is deeply committed to reducing its impact on the environment and taking real and lasting steps to ensure this. As part of our commitment to Vision 2030, we have been actively working to reduce carbon emissions, reduce food waste, and promote healthy eating. As part of its ongoing efforts to reduce energy, water, waste and to incorporate sustainable practices, LuLu Group has achieved sustainable operations certification for vari-

ous outlets in Qatar. A team under Director at the helm was formed with a broader vision to reduce carbon footprint by 50% before 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. The project and the operations team started working on this broader dream by taking appropriate measures of studying and identifying the areas for reduction opportunities in energy, water, and waste.

**What steps are crucial for reducing energy, water, and waste management in Qatar?**

LuLu Hypermarket is always in the forefront to implement circular economy's best practices by accomplishing its ongoing efforts to reduce energy, water, waste, and to incorporate sustainable practices into its operations. Recently, LuLu Group Qatar has received the prestigious Tarshheed Award for Sustainability and Energy efficiency in the commercial sector from the Prime Minister of Qatar HE Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdul Aziz Al Thani at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the National Program for Conservation and Energy Efficiency (Tarsheed) organized by Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa). LuLu has adopted two methodologies for efficient energy and emission management: energy conservation by enhancing energy efficiency and decarbonizing operations. In order to achieve future water security, we are committed to adopt and implement innovative ideas and inventions that minimizes our water footprint. And when it comes to effluent discharge, we are compliant to all national and local regulations of the country by subcontracting it to approved contractors. With a view to reduce the waste being dumped to landfill and recycle more, waste generated in our operations are segregated at the source and

being transferred to approved contractors. Special attention is done to reduce the wastage, recycle whatever possible and eliminate hazardous waste being disposed of to the environment.

**LuLu Group opened on its 18th hypermarket in Qatar. Which are your plans of future expansions?**

Qatar is gearing up for the mega sporting event, and also for the Asian Games 2030. The group is planning to open more stores at Barwa Al Khor, Giardino Mall at The Pearl Qatar, Barwa Madinat, and Doha Metro, Airport Station before FIFA World Cup 2022, and four more stores after the World Cup. We are confident of the upward development trajectory of the nation. We promise to match our capacity and vision with that of Qatar's blueprint for a bright future. ✖

#### BIO

Mohamed Althaf is the Director of LuLu Group International. Besides his responsibilities in retail, he also oversees the group's export and distribution operations in the US, UK, Europe, and Australia. He holds a postgraduate with a qualification in law and intellectual property rights. He is an alumnus of the University of Delhi and Said Business School, Oxford University. He has a doctorate from European University of Paris in global business management and completed a master class in circular economics from the University of Exeter. He is a member of various retail and international business forums. He is also an invitee and guest speaker at SelectUSA Investment Summit, Washington DC, World Economic Forum, World Retail Forum, The Institute of Export & International Trade, U.K., and various exclusive workshops and seminars organized by the US Commercial Service.



# A NEW WAY of seeing things



Enbat Holdings is disrupting the narrative in Qatar with a diverse group of vegan companies that are focused on ethical and sustainable products and supplies.

Ghanim Al-Sulaiti  
CEO & FOUNDER,  
ENBAT HOLDINGS

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**Ethical, vegan,  
and sustainable**

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**Long-term  
growth plans**

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**Targets all its  
companies to  
be zero waste by  
2023**

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#### BIO

Ghanim Al-Sulaiti is a young Qatari entrepreneur passionate about creating a positive impact on society by promoting a plant-based lifestyle. He founded his first business—Evergreen Organics—in 2016 and now has over 10 projects currently live or under development seeking to be vegan, sustainable, and promote a healthier lifestyle. He has worked extensively with local schools and regional organizations such as Qatar Foundation, Ooredoo Doha Marathon, Qatar National Library, Qatar Financial Center, and the Qatar Investment Authority, producing educational programs to change the status quo. He holds a BSc in civil engineering from Drexel University in the US.

**What was the vision that led to the establishment of Enbat Holdings, and what values does the company want to promote?**

Enbat Holdings started almost five and a half years ago, and the idea came from a place of passion for veganism, health, and wellness. It also started prior to that after I had to change my lifestyle and go vegan around eight years ago. I wanted to create something that I related to while educating others about what I had learned. That is when the concept for Evergreen Organics started. Enbat was already created as a head company, but it was not active yet. I started other vegan businesses with Botany, Thalaheen, Mylk, and Green and Go. Enbat came to fruition one year ago, because it made sense to have a holding company and showcase our ethics and values. Enbat Holdings is a family of vegan companies that are ethical and sustainable. We do business the good way. We want to disrupt the narrative in Qatar because the way people conduct business in Doha is focused only on money and profit. We are working slightly differently because sustainability is our priority. I would rather not make money if sustainability cannot be achieved.

**The Vegan Alchemist is a fully vegan and organic brand founded in Qatar. What steps are a must in the process of creating these products?**

The Vegan Alchemist is part of the Botany brand, which is a skincare brand that I launched in 2017 with the idea of creating an alternative option for people to use skincare products that are completely vegan and fully plant based. They are natural, organic, and sustainable products that come in reusable glass bottles. My goal with Botany was for the consumer to understand every single ingredient when they read the label. Every ingredient in our products is a vegetable, fruit, nut, seed or an oil. The process for creating these products requires a great deal of research about the benefits of these ingredients and how they actually provide benefits

to people. The idea behind Botany was to focus on simplicity and design at the same time.

**How did four-year economic blockade represent a silver lining for Enbat Holdings?**

The blockades actually increased our sales because the whole country stayed here, and there was great support for local businesses. This experience also created an opportunity for me to start Papercut Factory, an eco-friendly packaging service. This started on the third day of the blockade. We had a packaging shortage in Evergreen and needed packaging. I started a small workshop to make handmade bags for Evergreen. From that point on, more companies wanted bags, and since 2017 we have been serving 500-plus companies. What started as a small workshop of 150sqm is now a 3,000sqm factory that is fully automated. Papercut offers an alternative for takeaway products made from corn stalks, PLA, or compostable materials, not plastics. We recently started giving a discount to encourage customers to create zero waste. If a customer brings in their own containers, they immediately get a 10% discount. I want to increase this to 20% by the end of this year.

**What are Enbat Holdings' future aspirations?**

Our goal is to be a 100-year-old company. We are interested in creating a legacy with long-term growth. We want to end up as a company that spurred a movement and made money while doing so. We now have seven companies, and every year we want to add at least one or two more. We can control what types of supplies we use by having our own supplies. We can create eco-friendly products and endless options. Even the simplest thing like the ink that we are using is all plant-based. We are now changing the tape in our factory to one fully made from recycled paper. We will continue to change every single aspect of our concept. It is a significant challenge and a big headache, though it continues to inspire us. ✖



A date palm plantation

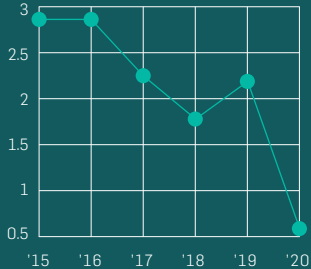




# A view of the National Museum of Qatar in Doha at sunset

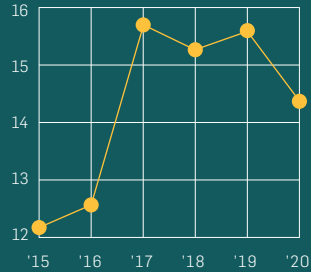
## TOURIST ARRIVALS (MILLIONS)

SOURCE: WORLDDATA



## TOURISM RECEIPTS (USD BLN)

SOURCE: WORLDDATA



## NON-GCC ARRIVALS BY COUNTRY, 2019 (TOP 5)

SOURCE: QATAR NATIONAL TOURISM COUNCIL

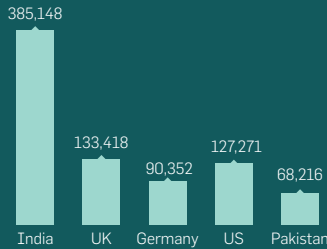


Image: HasanZaidi





# Culture & Tourism

## HOST WITH THE MOST

**Q**atar is busy building a reputation as a global tourist destination, seeking to leverage its unique local heritage to create unique experiences.

Sheika Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, recently spoke at the Qatar Economic Forum 2022, telling attendees that, “We want to introduce the world to Qatar in a very authentic way. People want unique experiences and that is exactly what our exhibitions will offer. Visitors will have the chance to learn about the Arab world and its diversity.”

In arts, Katara Studios and Qatar National Library (QNL) have developed programs to support and educate local and international talent. “Over the years, QNL has become a melting pot for various cultures convening together as one, for the common purpose of education and knowledge sharing. It is the regional hub of knowledge, research, and access to Islamic history and culture,” said Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kawari, President of QNL, told *The Business Year* in an exclusive interview.

Elsewhere, as regional tensions diminish and Qatar gears up to host the FIFA World Cup 2022, the Gulf country has enjoyed a promising influx of visitors, recording a 25% increase in May 2022 when compared to pre-pandemic levels. The country is preparing to welcome around 1.5-2 million fans over the course of the competition, with most staying within the compact city of Doha. However, it will not just be football keeping fans entertained, with a range of projects developed to keep tourist dollars flowing even after the last match has ended. New developments include thematic parks, new island destinations, cruise ship facilities, desert camping venues, beachfront resorts, and more.

MICE tourism is also booming, with Qatar Tourism creating the Qatar Business Events Calendar, which it hopes will become a reference for both locals and international visitors for business events in the country.

Looking to the future, Qatar aims to welcome more than 6 million visitors per year by 2030. The World Cup, in that regard, is just the beginning. ✖

# KNOWLEDGE *sharing*



Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari  
MINISTER OF STATE, QATAR &  
PRESIDENT,  
QATAR NATIONAL LIBRARY (QNL)

QNL has grown to become a cultural center, knowledge hub, heritage preservation center, and promoter of international community development.

## BIO

Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari is a Qatari diplomat, statesman, and intellectual. He was the Minister for Culture, Arts, and Heritage of Qatar from 2008-2016 and was previously the ambassador of Qatar to France, the US, UNESCO, and the UN. Al-Kuwari holds a bachelor's degree in Arabic and Islamic studies from Cairo University and a master's degree from Saint Joseph Jesuit University in Beirut. He also studied political philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris and completed a PhD in political science at the University of the State of New York in Stony Brook. He has published numerous books on cultural diplomacy, and his work has been translated into several languages.

**QNL was opened in 2017. How has it evolved in recent years to become a flagship representation of Qatar's cultural landscape?**

Since its inception in 2017, QNL has been on a mission to preserve the nation's and region's cultural heritage and enable citizens to positively influence society by creating an exceptional environment for learning and discovery. From its architecture to the interior design, facilities and services, QNL perfectly embraces both traditional and modern elements. Over the years, QNL has become a melting pot for various cultures convening together as one, for the common purpose of education and knowledge sharing. It is the regional hub of knowledge, research and access to Islamic history and culture. With a wide variety of events and workshops taking place throughout the year, the library is one of the most visited places by knowledge seekers, new residents, students, and researchers. QNL caters to all expatriates by offering a myriad of blended learning opportunities that are interest specific. While QNL develops innovative programs to boost knowledge, promote learning and amplify research studies, it also provides innumerable opportunities for community members to learn more about Qatari and Arab culture. For example, the Ramadan months are filled with events, workshops and sessions that cater to all ages and educate participants on the true meaning of Ramadan, stories of local culture, interactive sessions on cuisine, and craft work that represents Arab traditions. QNL also hosts one of the world's largest online repositories devoted to Middle Eastern history and culture—the Qatar Digital Library (QDL). QDL provides researchers with free online access to a wealth of historical source materials on the politics, people, places, trade, culture, and customs of the Gulf region and the wider Middle East.

**How is QNL strengthening cultural relationships with other countries?**

International community development and knowledge expansion are at the heart of QNL's strategy and collaboration with global libraries, archives, educational institutions and cultural centers. Given QNL's aim to promote learning among its communities, we are constantly on

the lookout to expand our collections. Through its range of regional and international partnerships, QNL plays a central role in sharing the cultural legacy of the Arab world and building bridges between Qatar and the wider world to increase cultural understanding. Book donations are one of the many ways in which QNL exchanges knowledge with libraries worldwide. Every year, we receive thousands of books that cater to all ages and span science, technology, education, medicine, culture, history, languages, geography, politics, and more. We are grateful to the various embassies and institutions that help to enhance our collections and unlock new horizons for our readers and visitors. As one of the leading regional cultural hubs, we also support in rehabilitating cultural and educational spaces in neighboring countries to preserve their heritage for future generations. QNL also invests efforts in raising awareness of antiquities trafficking around the world with a focus on the Middle East and urgent areas that need attention, such as Afghanistan. In addition, we have developed partnerships and agreements with key institutions around the world, including the British Library, Ottoman State Archives, Bibliothèque National de France, National Archives of Netherlands, National Library of Netherlands, National Library of China, National Library of Turkey, National Library of Azerbaijan, National Library of Gambia, Russian Presidential Library, National Library and Archives of Iran, University of Liverpool, French Diplomatic Archives, New York University, UNESCO, Springer Nature, Centre Français d'Archéologie et de Sciences Sociales in Kuwait, Qatar Foundation International, Società Dante Alighieri in Italy, National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), National Library of Kuwait, and the National Library of Moldova, and the British Council Qatar. QNL is also an active member of the Digital Library Federation, a global organization comprising 190 institutions committed to building and improving digital librarianship. The invitation-only membership comes in recognition of the library's ongoing commitment to the digital preservation of Arab heritage and culture. ✖



Ahmed Al Baker  
CEO,  
KATARA STUDIOS

#### BIO

"From dream to reality" was the title of Ahmed Al Baker's TED speech in 2010, in which he spoke about shifting his career from the oil and gas industry to the film industry. Now, more than a decade later, he has worked on two sci-fi series as a showrunner and director. He has also produced a number of international events, short films, feature films, music videos, animations, documentaries, and TV programs so far, gaining international recognition for himself and Katara Studios in the process.

#### How has Katara Studios worked to represent the Middle Eastern culture in the last few years?

Katara Studios was established to join the independent film industry in Qatar. We created this company to service international productions and local productions to keep the work in the country. We also wanted to create a company that becomes a one-stop shop for filmmakers. We want to have all kinds of world-class deliveries under one roof. Katara Studios with its facilities is unique in terms of what it offers worldwide and in the region because of the deliveries that it includes under one roof. It is a Dolby-certified facility. At the same time, we offer studio space like never before. We have a studio that fits 120 musicians and the second-largest microphone collection in the world. The industry is growing slowly, and we are laying down the groundwork for that foundation. We are working with all the entities in Qatar that are trying to capitalize on

the FIFA World Cup to open up to the world. Our core people are filmmakers and musicians. We want to create our own original content and have a department called Katara Studios Originals in which we create our original shows and films that we distribute worldwide.

#### Katara Studios has directed both the animated film and the official soundtrack for FIFA World Cup 2022. What is the narrative behind these productions?

We are extremely proud of this partnership and the trust that Supreme Committee has in Katara Studios. The opportunity that we have been given to be a part of this massive undertaking is extremely interesting. It gave us this opportunity to engage our core Qatari creative team. This brings authenticity to the type of products that will go out and represent the World Cup. We want to demonstrate that we have a society with a synergy that is moving forward. We felt the first song would introduce different feelings with the goal of bringing people together. That is what the World Cup is all about. The upcoming songs will feature artists from across the world that will excite the audience. ✖





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# luxury DEFINED

Millennium Hotel Doha is in a prime location to benefit from, and enhance the overall quality of, the upcoming World Cup.



Josiane Jabre  
GENERAL MANAGER  
MILLENNIUM HOTEL DOHA

**Millennium Hotels and Resorts has a unique range of global properties across Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. To which extent do Qatar's hotels play an important role for its clientele?**

The Millennium Hotels and Resorts Asia, Middle East, and Africa have an important role in the region, especially now heading toward the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Doha. So far, we have three properties under our Umbrella: Millennium Hotel Doha, Millennium Central Doha, and Kingsgate Hotel Doha. Millennium is an international brand, which gives a familiar spirit to its clientele coming from abroad and add a great deal of value. Now, with the FIFA World Cup 2022, more people will come to know about this brand.

**Millennium Hotel Doha is a luxury boutique that offers the warmth of Arabian hospitality through its style and facilities. How does the hotel differentiate itself from other locations in the city?**

Millennium Hotel Doha is a five-star hotel. It attracts a different type of clientele, regardless of whether they are here for leisure, business, or other purposes. We are located in close proximity to touristic areas and attractions such as Msheireb, Corniche, and sports stadiums, which attracts leisure travelers. Furthermore, with Al Sadd area being a business district, the hotel is able to attract a large number of business travelers.

**Millennium Hotel seamlessly blends Middle Eastern hospitality with Western comfort. What experiences do you aim to offer your guests?**

We always welcome our guests in our five-star budget hotel in a welcoming and friendly way. We make sure that they come as guests and leave as family. We have a beautiful renovated spa where guests can enjoy massage treatments, an indoor pool, Jacuzzis for both men and women, a barber shop, and a ladies' beauty salon. Furthermore, we will soon open our signature Lebanese oriental restaurant, which many people await, Em Sherif Café, and that will definitely add a great value to our property.

In addition, we have a Ballroom, Simsima, which has been the venue for weddings, graduations, private dinners, and more.

**What factors play the biggest role in the Qatari tourism sector?**

There are many tourist areas in the process of being built up as we speak. The Corniche, for example, will present an amazing attraction for both residents and visitors. The Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) and the government have spared no expense, from infrastructure to the opening of several different hubs such as Msheireb, Souq Waqif, Lusail City, and Place Vendôme Mall. These are beautiful attractions that Qatar is putting in great effort into to make them a reality. Hopefully, before FIFA World Cup 2022, many more will be completed. In addition to that, needless to say that the best hospitality that the visitors will experience in Doha, and especially at Millennium Hotels and Resorts.

**What are your plans for Millennium Hotel for next year after the FIFA World Cup?**

FIFA will definitely open our eyes to many opportunities; people will know more about Qatar in particular, and the whole GCC in general. Many visitors who had not even heard about Qatar before will come to participate in the FIFA World Cup 2022; therefore, they will better understand this destination, and this will definitely impact us positively as hotels. As such, as Millennium Hotel Doha, we are keen that we will preserve a positive culture, & lead by example. We will certainly ensure that everybody leaves happy after experiencing the unique hospitality and services available at our Hotels in Doha. It is also our job to spread awareness about the different aspects in Qatar, such as activities, touristic places and business hubs around the hotel. This will create a word of mouth, hoping that more people will come back as visitors or for business later on, which will lead to business opportunities, as well as touristic and economic growth in the market. ✖

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**5-star budget hotel**

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**Asian hospitality with western comfort**

**BIO**  
Josiane Jabre is a proactive, focused, and committed professional with extensive experience in the hospitality sector. She has over 20 years of quality hospitality experience and has worked with well-known upmarket hospitality brands and has been instrumental in seven pre-opening properties. She is currently General Manager of Millennium Hotel Doha.



# STAMP *of luxury*



With two luxury hotels expected to open in Qatar in early 2022, Katara Hospitality is fully focused on being ready for the World Cup and beyond.

Andrew Humphries  
ACTING CEO,  
KATARA HOSPITALITY

***Katara Towers, Lusail Marina District presenting the first Fairmont Hotel and Raffles Hotel in Qatar***

#### BIO

Andrew Humphries has held the position of Acting CEO since 2019. Prior to that, he was COO of Katara Hospitality. His career has been spent with some of the world's best-known hotels, including The Savoy and Athenaeum hotels in London, Royal Pavilion and Glitter Bay Resorts in Barbados, and most recently with Yas Viceroy Abu Dhabi. Prior to his time in Abu Dhabi, Humphries spent over 16 years with Four Seasons, where he held the position of regional VP and GM of the Four Seasons Resort Nevis, West Indies and, prior to that, regional VP and GM of the Four Seasons Hotel Amman, Jordan. A graduate of Bournemouth University in the UK, he advanced his professional education at the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University in the general manager's program.

**Despite the pandemic, Katara has announced that new hotels will be opened. How would you classify these new openings?**

50% of our hotels are in Qatar. We are an international hospitality real estate owner, and specifically for Qatar we have a diverse portfolio, including some major projects that are ongoing or recently opened. The most recent hotel that we have opened is Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas, which will be a cornerstone of the 2022 hotels. It is the first real resort in the country. The other beach hotels are all in the city, so they are a mix of corporate and leisure. However, Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas is the first true resort in the country and is a spectacular addition to the landscape. It opened in January 2021 and will be a major draw for the international tourist market. Again, that is something that is relatively new to Qatar, so it is a groundbreaking resort. We also have what was the Gulf Hotel under full refurbishment, which is an extremely large project close to the airport. It will reopen in 2022 and will be a great addition. It is an excellent location, near the airport, and it will be a major World Cup venue because of its proximity to one of the stadiums. Then, we have the Lusail Twin Towers, which are in effect two hotels in one. There is the Fairmont Hotel in one tower and a Raffles Hotel in the other, and both are Accor brands, so we are extremely excited to be moving ahead with those. Those will be handing over construction by 1Q2022, and both hotels will open around July 2022 well in time for the World Cup. Those two hotels and that destination will be the VIP hotels for FIFA, so we are extremely proud of that too.

**How was the idea put together, and how will this hotel complement the already luxurious existing hotel landscape in Qatar?**

The concept has always been to have two hotels, one in each tower, with one larger with about 361 rooms and a much smaller one of about 132 suites only. They are both brands that sit underneath Accor. Fairmont typically operates larger luxury hotels, and the larger hotel fits perfectly in there. There is no Fairmont currently in Qatar, though it is a strong brand in the Middle East. Raffles is relatively new to the Middle East, though it is a true luxury brand. We own the Raffles in Singapore, the parent hotel that started it all many years ago, and we also have two other Accor hotels in Paris and New York. We know the brand well and are extremely comfortable and pleased with our collaboration with Accor.

**How is Katara Hospitality preparing for the final run up to the FIFA World Cup 2022?**

We are involved in the FIFA projects, and completing those projects is key for us to deliver some of the hotels that the country needs. All these projects will be ready for the World Cup. We are working with some of the key hospitality providers that provide hospitality within the stadiums pre- and post-match to provide some of their catering services. Overall, we are working closely with the Supreme Committee, and we are one of the key supporters of the World Cup. We need to deliver on behalf of the country. Our real focus is getting these projects done and being fully ready for the World Cup and beyond. Post World Cup, we also have a big focus in the coming years because there will be a significant supply of hotel rooms in the market. We need to make sure our businesses are right sized for that as well. It will be a big transition from being full and having that entire infrastructure working and then being much quieter for the initial period after the World Cup. ✖



# a way OF LIFE

Qetaifan Projects is developing Qetaifan Island North, with a state-of-the-art water park, a luxury hotel, and entertainment options.

Hesham Sharaf  
COO,  
QETAIFAN PROJECTS



**Qetaifan Projects' main objective is to build cities of sustainable and intelligent infrastructure. How has the company supported Qatar's economic vision?**

Qetaifan Projects officially launched in 2018, although the preparations began in 2013. Qetaifan Projects' first and main development is Qetaifan Island North. Every meter was designed and studied economically and architecturally to meet Qatar's National Vision 2030. The core of the island is family entertainment and creating an attraction for families, whether they are residents, nationals, or tourists. The main attractions in the island are the water park and the canal. The rest of the island was based on what we call in real estate, highest and best use analysis. Every element within the master plan is based on market demand and the right absorption model. It is a full city with all the amenities required by the end user. For example, we have entertainment, hotels, hospitality, as well as a medical center and a school. This vision not only aligns with Vision 2030 but the World Cup as well. We are creating the ultimate tourist destination, and a full urban wild plant city that meets all the requirements of every single tenant of all ages. This includes the smallest community criteria.

**How has this project redefined the real estate development in the country?**

Our main target is the end user: the tenant. Unfortunately, the target for many real estate developers in the Middle East is the investor; however, if we focus on the small tenant, the investor that built the tower will earn profit. Our approach is to properly study the econo-

my, based on the urban and master plan. This includes what the market needs and requires. Then, we design the architecture and choose the theme we want. There is something called the Hedonic model that outlines the value of a property based on its proximity to the right amenities. However, real estate has not been done this way in the majority of the Middle East. This is how we differ from other real estate developers.

**What can tourists expect from Qetaifan Island North?**

We are the developers of the main attractions on the island, which includes a hotel operated by Rixos. There is also a 207,015 sqm waterpark "Meryal", built on the theme of oil and gas discovery in Qatar. There is also a canal that will have many family-friendly activities in addition to a daily live entertainment show. There will also be a beach club operated by Azure Rixos with all the facilities that you could find in a hotel. We aim to be operational by including all assets and the canal, in time for the World Cup. This means 75% of the infrastructure will be ready, including all the main roads, landscape, and hardscape, so people can start to visit the island. We will also have a Fan Camp, a temporary solution during the World Cup in collaboration with the Supreme Committee.

**Qetaifan Projects recently unveiled Les Vagues residences by Elie Saab. How will it define the new standards for modern luxury living in Qatar?**

This project is done in conjunction with Dar Al-Arkan, a publicly listed Saudi real estate development company, and we

are the partners in this development. There are five low-rise buildings located on the marina promenade with an expected number of 350 units. The whole interior design and architecture is done by Elie Saab. This is his first real estate project in Qatar. Elie Saab is a world-renowned designer and has redefined designs that matches the Arab culture and has a feminine touch. Qetaifan projects always strives to create something unique and not just for commercial value. Real estate is not just a product; it is an ongoing relationship, and we are selling a lifestyle. Owning a property is one thing, but the quality of life there is more important. We want to make sure the end-users are happy and comfortable where they live. ✖

#### BIO

Hesham Sharaf was appointed COO of Qetaifan Projects in 2017, where he oversees the company's daily operations and the development management of Qetaifan Island. For over than 10 years, he had worked for several prestigious government institutions in Qatar as a real estate development and investment advisor/director, namely Amiri Diwan, Aspire Foundation, Katara Projects, Aspire Katara Investment, Barwa, and Qatari Diar. He brings over 20 years of a wide spectrum of experience from investment banking, management consultancy, and real estate development. Sharaf has degrees in political economy and economics from the American University in Cairo/ University of California LA and has several professional certificates.









# HIGH QUALITY *guaranteed*

Estithmar casts a wide net and is contributing to projects from the World Cup to wider sustainability initiatives.

Henrik H Christiansen  
GROUP CEO,  
ESTITHMAR HOLDING



**In April 2021, Estithmar Holding announced a strategic reorganization of its businesses, amalgamating 45 different companies. What strategies is Estithmar employing in order to boost value for its shareholders and long-term diversification objectives?**

Our approach is to always put the customer at the center of everything we do and to relentlessly seek ways to deliver value. As a business, it is, therefore, critical that we understand our customers. Our philosophy is to work in partnership and communicate and build trust with both our customers and our supply chain partners toward achieving the best outcomes for all parties.

**Estithmar Holding recently announced that several of its subsidiaries have established companies in different sectors including tourism, entertainment, hospitality, and catering. What is the rationale behind the group's investment in these sectors?**

Estithmar's origins are rooted in construction and industry, and so naturally we have an established presence in these areas; however, as part of our growth strategy, we are looking to capitalize on emerging opportunities in complementary sectors such as private healthcare and hospitality, both domestically within Qatar and across the GCC. These sectors offer a natural extension of the group's diversification strategy and will reduce our exposure to any market fluctuations.

**Estithmar has always been involved in a variety of partnerships with banks and financial institutions. What advantages can we expect from PPPs and how will they enhance the organic growth of the group?**

We see PPPs as the natural next step in developing large projects across the GCC and a key part of the delivery of Qatar National

Vision 2030. As mentioned above, we view partnerships with all of our stakeholders as a means of ensuring the group's profitable growth for years to come.

**Lusail Winter Wonderland, the new project of Estithmar Holding, is world-class theme park set to be an important leisure destination. How will it contribute significantly to attracting regional tourists to Qatar and create a whole new experience?**

As part of Qatar's long-term economic development strategy, tourism is already becoming an increasingly important part of the national economy. Having the opportunity to develop destinations like Lusail Winter Wonderland is very exciting and one we have grasped with both hands. With 1.5 million people expected to visit Lusail Winter Wonderland annually, we believe it will become a highly popular destination not only for Qatari citizens, but crucially for the steadily increasing number of international tourists visiting the country.

**What has been the group's contribution to the World Cup?**

Outside the construction phase of the stadiums, several of the companies under Estithmar Holding are heavily involved in the delivery of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Reflecting Estithmar's diversified expertise, our companies are delivering high-quality services across security, logistics, catering, hospitality, events, entertainment, and more.

**As a group involved in hundreds of projects across different sectors of the economy, how are you committed to improving eco-friendly practices as a constructor, contractor, and provider of services?**

We are constantly exploring different op-

portunities to improve the environment through our work. Each of our businesses are all looking at best practices from other parts of the world to see if some of these can be implemented here in Qatar and the GCC. Our modular construction approach, whereby the majority of the building is manufactured in a factory environment and then transported to site, is a good example. By using a controlled factory manufacturing environment, we not only limit delays in onsite construction, but also guarantee a higher-quality product, with waste significantly reduced and materials easily recycled where waste does occur. It is a highly sustainable method of construction that we view as a core component of our growth plans.

**Heading into 2023, what are the group's primary objectives?**

Our objective is to continue to grow profitably in Qatar and internationally and we are excited by the road ahead. We are currently working on our 2023-2025 business plans, which will determine the group's trajectory going forward. We strongly believe that the expertise that Estithmar has demonstrated in Qatar will add value to our growing roster of clients abroad, thereby supporting our continued growth. ✖

#### BIO

Henrik H Christiansen has an executive MBA and studied a DBA at the University of Liverpool. He is an accomplished, charismatic, and driven leader, determined to implement positive change in large organizations, supported by significant industry experience and a solid academic background.

# AL MAHA

ISLAND LUSAIL



## Endless Fun and Leisure

Al Maha Island is the next popular destination for Qatar tourism. It sits on a **230,000 sqm** island comprising of entertainment attractions and high-end hospitality services. This is the finest getaway combining travel and leisure all in one place.

 **Estithmar**  
Holding Q.P.S.C.



# GROWTH *opportunities*



Tarek M. El Sayed  
CEO & MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
AL RAYYAN TOURISM  
INVESTMENT COMPANY (ARTIC)

ARTIC's current investment portfolio comprises over 35 renowned properties in the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, and North America.

## BIO

Tarek M. El Sayed is a qualified chief executive with strategic vision to oversee the operations of large conglomerates with global operations. He has been CEO & Managing Director of ARTIC since 2017 and Chairman of Seldar Misr since 2013. He held the position of board member & managing director of Aamal Company Q.P.S.C from 2007-2016 and was Group CFO for Al Faisal Holding Company from 2001-2010. He started his career with Arthur Andersen in Egypt and KSA. El Sayed holds a bachelor of sciences degree in accounting from Cairo University, a master's high diploma in banking and finance from the Arab Academy (Egypt) and a certified public accountant.

**Can you describe the evolution of ARTIC since its inception?**

ARTIC started its activities in Qatar in the early 2000s with a modest portfolio of two hotels, one of which was Rydges Hotel in the Al Bida' district, which was later demolished as part of the area's redevelopment. In 2003, ARTIC embarked on an ambitious project City Center phase 2 and 3, which comprised building five hotel towers directly connected to the City Center Shopping Mall. These hotels are the Marriott Marquis, JW Marriott Marquis, Rotana City Center, and Le Meridian Hotel City Center. This vital project is not only important for ARTIC's evolution, but it has also changed the landscape of the West Bay area and set higher standards for the local hospitality industry.

**ARTIC is continually expanding its investment portfolio through acquisitions or property development. How does the company continue to deliver enhanced asset quality and diversification?** Our strategic investment approach is aligned with our long-term goals. At ARTIC, we consider ourselves buyers, not sellers—buying assets to hold them, to reposition them, if necessary, to keep investing in them, and to increase their operational efficiency so they can perform effectively. We have a very thorough evaluation process when assessing potential investments, but at the same time we are quick decision-makers enabling us to seize the right opportunities as and when they arise. In addition to our hotel portfolio, we have a number of other key investments that align with our strategy and add value to our investment portfolio, including retail complexes, branded residential developments and hospitality-related services.

**How valuable are international partnerships to ARTIC, and what is the role of these alliances in your long-term investment and growth?**

ARTIC enjoys strong relationships with some of the most renowned hotel operators in the world, including Four Seasons, Hilton, Radisson, Hyatt, and Marriott International. These operators use their extensive insight and experience to manage and operate ARTIC's hotel portfolio. Our successful relationships have resulted in expanding areas of cooperation, for ex-

ample our branded residential project in Egypt includes two Marriott brands, Ritz Carlton Residences and JW Marriott Residences. ARTIC is ranked the third-largest company worldwide in terms of assets operated by Marriott International, reflecting the geographical expansion we have achieved with Marriott over the years. We value our relationships and support each other to grow and achieve the best possible outcomes.

**What other sectors is the company aiming to invest in?**

We are continually searching for growth opportunities that align with our investment strategy and provide synergies and profit opportunities across our operations. We have recently expanded into branded residential properties which combine hospitality and residential living. We also have investments in retail and commercial complexes that are strategically located near our hotel properties.

**How has ARTIC prepared for the FIFA World Cup 2022?**

ARTIC will play a vital role in providing accommodation for guests, players, and sports delegates for the duration of the event. We currently have 6,400 rooms worldwide, of which 3,200 are in Qatar. Qatar is well-positioned to benefit from the additional exposure this global event will provide. Its high-quality infrastructure, accessibility, economic stability, and safety all contribute to its position as a unique destination. Qatar's tourism sector will continue to flourish after the World Cup and beyond, supported by an exciting pipeline of investment opportunities that will enable us to expand our investment in the local hospitality sector.

**What are your main objectives for next year?**

We always seek to be pioneers in the sectors we operate in, introducing new concepts and adding sustainable value to our investment portfolio. We are looking forward to serving Qatar in the best possible way during the World Cup through our unique hotel portfolio, and we also look forward to expanding our investments across the globe, as suitable opportunities arise. ✖





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**Robert Hall**  
GENERAL MANAGER,  
DOHA FESTIVAL CITY



**Sean Kelly**  
PROJECT DIRECTOR,  
PLACE VÊNDOME

# ENTERTAINMENT HUBS

The changing face of retail and tourism has meant that malls are constantly updating their offerings and marketing to continue to engage with their customers.

**What is the mall's strategy to inspire the trust and loyalty of local and international clients?**

**ROBERT HALL** We consider ourselves a genuine brand, and we are passionate about what we do. We have a great deal of belief in our business. Retail is still relevant. And in that context, we have created a close harmony and forged a close relationship with our consumers. We understand that consumers are all different, which means different things and different expectations. Our aim is to be constantly relevant and to adapt to change.

**Can you tell us about the international brands Place Vendôme has attracted to Qatar?**

**SEAN KELLY** We have 40 of the world's leading luxury brands already underway on site such as Christian Dior, Louis Vuitton, Cartier, Gucci, and Yves Saint Laurent, to name a few. Part of our attraction is the design, and brands can see how they fit within our environment. They are extremely pleased with the project thus far. The other part is our ownership, which has a history with all of those brands. Both parties respect the commitment that has been made and the previous track records.

**Can you tell us about Festival Cares and the contribution of the mall to the community?**

**RH** "Festival Cares" is the language that came out of COVID-19; it was a language that became clear to us based on our correspondence with customers through social media. We know that when people return to shopping malls, they would gather in those areas. The design of Festival City is extremely modern in terms of the heights of the ceilings, the width of the corridors, and the quality of the air conditioning systems within the mall. We have over 127 stations where guests can use hand sanitizers. There are checks at all entrances as well. We spend over QAR1 million every month on the sanitization of the mall. The response from our customers has been positive, because our footfall increased in many markets that we deal with. Trade increased in many areas within the mall. We continue to maintain that level of attention to cleanliness. We have also done more

work to develop relationships with numerous charities and organizations in Qatar. We have improved our sustainability measures by working hard at recycling what we can, though it still needs to be developed further in Qatar. Today, food is composted onsite, water is recycled onsite, and energy use is controlled through various air-conditioning systems while keeping a clean air quality and balance. We are advancing on cardboard recycling and are working with glass and plastics recycling as well.

**What will be Place Vendôme's relationship with tourism be like?**

**SK** About one year ago, the leadership of this country decided the national tourism body needed to be revamped and change its approach to be more integrated with business. We have worked with the Qatar National Tourism Council to understand how we can be an attractive element and part of Qatar's tourism infrastructure. For example, a delegate representing the Chinese market wanted to know if we had an application for the mall and hotels and if that would include a Chinese-language option. We are seeing huge positives. At the moment, we are looking to the future and planning for a great deal of potential international tourism. While the bigger plan includes attracting tourism from Russia and China, the targeted countries are those around us that have easy access to Qatar. We want to be a part of the tourism infrastructure. To that end, all our communications are for local, interregional tourists as well as broader international tourists. The infrastructure and level of service is the same for all. The integration of the hotels with the mall and combining those both with our entertainment facility will be a key hook to attract more people. The integration of all our assets will create that one-size-suits-all destination. Meanwhile, the FIFA tournament will be the first compact World Cup, meaning a team can stay in one hotel and only travel up to 50 minutes for each game. Typically, there is more travel between matches to different hotels, which can be a logistical nightmare. The same idea is true for our tourists, who do not need to change hotels in order to see everything Qatar has to offer. ✖

# BE THERE OR BE SQUARE

Doha will capitalize on the legacy of the World Cup to transform itself into a MICE tourism hub.

**A PARTICULAR TYPE** of event tourism has risen in popularity in recent years in the Gulf region. Meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) tourism brings together people who primarily have a business to attend to but would not say no to some fun while at it. A MICE tourism destination needs to have as many conference rooms and exhibition halls as its beaches and eateries. The city of Doha has both. Doha has been a major business hub for years, with some 90% of the visitors to the city originally coming for business purposes. But the city also has an endless list of leisure and recreational activities to offer.

In terms of accommodation, the hospitality sector has created over of 13,000 new hotel rooms during its preparation for the FIFA World Cup 2022. Qatari investors in the hospitality sector are determined to keep the infrastructure after the World Cup, putting it to other uses once the event is over. “The hospitality sector in Qatar is seen to expand growth opportunities beyond the World Cup with the government infusing huge investments to further develop the tourism sector, considering it as one of the key economic drivers of the country,” noted the Gulf Times in a 2021 article. Fortunately, there is a niche in tourism that perfectly suits Doha. The city’s geographical location, as a layover destination between Europe and Asia makes it the perfect MICE destination. Doha is already the city where many people make their connecting flights while en route to Asia, Oceania, and Africa, as the city is truly located at a sweet point.

One of the airlines that uses Doha’s Hamad International Airport (HIA) as its aviation hub is the country’s own flag carrier, Qatar Airways, which serves an increasingly internationalized clientele. The Doha-based airline flies to and from 160 cities across the five continents, which makes Doha an even more perfect place for MICE tourism. To encourage the number arrivals, Qatar has relaxed its visa policies ahead of the World Cup, which allows more people from around the world to attend exhibitions, events, or meetings held in Doha.

The country’s tourism authority is aware of Doha’s situation as a global stopover destination and is trying to encourage business travelers to “make the most of [their] stopover in Qatar” by experiencing the city’s leisure offerings as well as its business ecosystem. The local tourism industry has come up with a number of value packages

which combine a business trip to Doha with many aspects of a leisurely holiday. A package offered by the Visit Qatar initiative, for instance, encourages business or stopover travelers to get “a taste of local culture, desert adventures, world-class shopping, fine dining, and much more.” It is highly likely that those who get a taste of Qatar during a business trip will return for long holidays.

The city has an exciting array of exhibition centers. The Doha exhibition and convention center (DECC) located in the West Bay is constantly upgraded to keep up with the highest standards. Strategically located at the heart of Doha’s business district, DECC is conveniently close to a cluster of fine hotels and is often frequented by influential businesspeople from all over the world. The Qatar national convention center (QNCC) was opened in Al Rayyan in 2011. QNCC brings together “a wide variety of corporate and cultural events under one roof,” including “prestigious international events, world-renowned artists, and some of the distinguished personalities.”

Qatar is not focused only on high-profile events such as the World Cup. The country is volunteering to host all sorts of events, exhibitions, and trade shows which can have a reasonable attendance. And Qatar is winning many of them thanks to its developed infrastructure. In 2023, for instance, Doha will host the Bureau International des Expositions’ 2023 World Horticultural Exposition under the theme of “Green Desert, Better Environment.” Other events scheduled to take place in Doha in 2022 include the International Conference on Environment and Natural Science (August), the Cyber Security Summit (September), and the World Financial Symposium (September), among many other

Doha was an upstanding MICE tourism destination even before bidding to host the World Cup. The sector had discovered the logic in combining business events with shopping, leisure, and recreation quite early on, when foreign businesspeople started to drop by in a growing number. The World Cup, however, has thoroughly upgraded the nation’s hospitality sector, and much of the increased capacity will be maintained after the World Cup. Doha’s luxurious way of life, high level of connectivity to the world, and welcoming attitude to foreign visitors will secure its position as an ideal MICE tourism destination when the World Cup is finally over. ✖



## INTERVIEW



## ABOVE *the rest*

Focused on providing the ultimate level of care and comfort to its guests, Ezdan Hotels offers five-star service at all its locations.

### BIO

Wael El Telbany is a seasoned hotelier with more than 20 years of experience in the hotel industry. He is the Hotels Group General Manager of Ezdan Hotels Company under the Ezdan Holding Group. Prior to joining Ezdan Holding Group, he used to work with Katara Hospitality, formerly Qatar National Hotels Company, for almost nine years. He started his career at the Oberoi Hotels & Resorts before joining Starwood, now under the umbrella of Marriott.

Wael El Telbany  
HOTELS GROUP  
GENERAL MANAGER,  
EZDAN HOTELS

**What makes Ezdan different from other locations in the country, which heritage does it aim to transmit?**

Ezdan Hotel West Bay (EHWB) is strategically located in the heart of Doha and stands among the premier business establishments in Doha Qatar. It boasts of a total of 3,000 units, the biggest number of rooms in Doha. It gives our guests the enchanting views of the Arabian sea and flourishing city of Doha, especially at night. The property is few blocks away from many shopping malls, few steps away from some government institutions, and close proximity from a metro station and other iconic landmarks in Doha. The location does not only give convenience to our valued guests, but also offers wide range of accessibility in and out of Doha. Hence, making Ezdan Hotel West Bay as one of the best and most sought-after hotels in downtown Doha. Ezdan Palace meanwhile is the first five-star luxury hotel added to Ezdan Hotels portfolio and considered as the jewel of Ezdan. It is just between the old and new Doha and few kilometers away from Hamad International Airport. Ezdan Palace is just across the street from Ezdan Mall and close to different malls such as Ezdan Mall, Landmark Mall, and Doha Festival City where our guests can go on a great shopping spree.

**How did the group deal with the pandemic?**

During the pandemic and in response to the government's call in keeping the health and safety of our valued guests, we demonstrated our full support and commitment by adhering to requirements and restrictions set forth by the authority to prevent the spread of the virus. First and foremost is the full vaccination of all our frontliners, practicing proper hygiene and sanitation, observing social distancing, and wearing masks all the time to prevent the spread of the virus. We also deemed it important to continuously educate our team regarding COVID-19.

Another breakthrough was when we received the certification from the Qatar Clean Program, making Ezdan Hotel as one of the safest hotels to stay in Doha. At the height of the pandemic, we also adopted a "Green Zone" theme where we carefully chose the staff who would assist with the needs of our quarantined guests in Towers 1 and 2. They are fully vaccinated and housed in the same tower as the guests. This further ensures the health and safety of our quarantined guests.

**How would you define the experience that the guests for Ezdan Hotel receive when staying in your facilities?**

We live by our infinite motto and mission of providing the best service to our valued guest. Ezdan Hotel West Bay offers comfort and excellent experience to our guests, from the heart-warming services and smile of our staff to the different amenities that make their stay enjoyable and worthwhile. Through the years, we have built a thriving community in Ezdan Hotel, where our guests from different nationalities and all walks of life continue to enjoy the amenities that further make their stay easy, convenient, and enjoyable. As a seasoned hotelier, customer service and guest satisfaction are our utmost goal. More happy and satisfied guests easily convert to long-staying and loyal guests, which means more revenue.

**How is Ezdan Hotels preparing to host the most awaited FIFA World Cup 2022?**

For the 2022 FIFA World Cup, Qatar is in full swing in its preparation to host the greatest football event in the world. Since then, all the hotels in Doha including Ezdan Hotels have invested a lot of time, effort, and resources to meet the standard of compliance set by the Supreme Committee. For few years now, we have been constantly communicating with various agencies of the FIFA World Cup 2022 to wherein 80% of the total room inventory will be allotted for the FIFA World Cup. ✖



EZDAN HOTEL  
WEST BAY TOWERS

FEEL AT HOME



Ezdan Hotel West Bay is a member of Ezdan Holding Group and is considered the largest hotel in the State of Qatar.

Ezdan Hotel West Bay Towers brings together a combination of spectacular views and a premium location in comfortable settings. The property boasts of Hotel rooms and Serviced apartments to cover long and short stay accommodation requirements.

Located in West Bay in the heart of the new business district and offers a wide range of services and amenities such as an 'Olympic' swimming pool, a health club, international restaurants, supermarket, ladies & gents hairdresser saloon and supermarket. In addition to a fully equipped convention center offering contemporary meeting space that consists of seven halls with the latest audiovisual equipment intended for ceremonies, seminars, and business meetings.

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Mikel Ibrahim  
GENERAL MANAGER,  
MONDRIAN DOHA



Sheikh Mohamed Nasser  
CHAIRMAN & OWNER,  
SAPPHIRE PLAZA HOTEL

# HOTELS

The upcoming FIFA World Cup 2022 will give hotels a great opportunity to showcase their luxury offerings and Arabian hospitality to guests and entice them to return to Qatar again and again.

What differentiates your destination?

**MIKEL IBRAHIM** We have worked hard to raise great awareness in the city because it is the first Mondrian in the Middle East, and it is a flagship for the brand in Doha and the Middle East. We wanted to redefine the meaning of lifestyle in the region. We sought to continue the meaning of the brand, from nightlife—which is where everything started—from entertainment, food and beverage, and the rooms. The journey of this hotel was designed by Marcel Wanders and is a blend of the East and West. It has an Alice in Wonderland feeling that makes guests feel that anything is possible, from the staircase to the lobby. We also want these expectations to be realized, not only from a design perspective, but also throughout guests' journeys. We complement this with our offerings, which is extremely challenging in this market. We need to maintain momentum all the time and be consistent, from parties and DJs, to celebrities, menus, amenities, and packages to constantly wow our guests. The surprise element is something that we are always working on. This is how it all started; without looking at the competition, we wanted to be at the forefront. The success of this hotel lies in how one identifies the vibes of the Mondrian and its different approach.

**SHEIKH MOHAMED NASSER** Sapphire Plaza Hotel is in the middle of Doha; it is near almost everything in Doha. We have one of the largest lobbies in Doha among four-star hotels. The inspiration comes from a combination of Andalusian and modern hotels. Guests can find an Andalusian style in our lobby and a modern style in the rooms. Our vision is to provide our guests with a five-star experience, from service to technology. In addition, safety and security is our top priority. We understand that five-star hotels can be expensive for some people and not everyone can afford to stay in a five-star hotel. Sapphire Plaza Hotel provides five-star services with an affordable four-star room rates.

Mondrian Doha has partnered with Fire Station to collaborate for an Artists in Residence program. How does this cultural initiative support

local Qatari artists and provide them with a platform?

**MIKEL IBRAHIM** We want to encourage a community footprint, where we have initiatives to encourage new artists to display their work. This exposure is one of the best things we have done in the last year. We have been able to bring a different vibe to the hotel, and we are part of exposing this beautiful work to the world. This is important for us. There is another initiative we are working on to drive collaborations with local initiatives, and there are others coming as well.

Qatar is on the verge of more tourist traffic as getting ready for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. How will Sapphire Plaza Hotel advantage from this event?

**SHEIKH MOHAMED NASSER** We are extremely pleased and honored to have FIFA World Cup in Qatar. It will be the first time it is held in the Middle East. We are aiming to present services and experience for our guests to enjoy the World Cup and Doha in a complete package. This is what we want: a strong brand by services, not by name.

What other advantages does the World Cup bring?

**MIKEL IBRAHIM** We are working on satisfying the locals and all the expats with different offerings. October 2022 will be our fifth-year anniversary, and we have a new campaign called "A New You." After two years of COVID-19, we want people to appreciate the smaller details and blessings in their life. We have emerged as a new person who is motivated, excited, and driven. This is why everything you want to see as coming up is under the slogan "A New You."

**SHEIKH MOHAMED NASSER** Personally, the World Cup will give us the opportunity to offer a new experience to us. This will be a major event, one of the largest events in the world. The event will give us an opportunity to be well known and will have a huge responsibility to maintain the same success and aim for more. ✖



# recipe FOR SUCCESS

The first Qatari hotel brand to operate in and outside Qatar, Retaj Hotels has experienced significant success as a result of its dedication to guests' satisfaction and genuine Arabian hospitality.

Sheikh Nayef bin Eid Al-Thani  
CHAIRMAN,  
RETAJ GROUP



**Retaj Hotel and Hospitality combines hotels, resorts, and residences, providing a wide and customized portfolio. What have been its main advancements in the advent of the FIFA World Cup 2022?**

As we are rapidly approaching the most anticipated football event in the world that will be hosted by Qatar, we have witnessed an increased demand for all sorts of accommodation types, not only from football fans looking to visit Qatar and enjoy this major event and festive season, but also from investors and property owners seeking operators to manage their properties during and beyond the World Cup. Our renowned standing and experience in managing and operating hotels and resorts in and outside of Qatar for over a decade now played an important role in signing new agreements to manage and operate new properties in Qatar.

**What strategies have been key to succeed in the rapidly growing Qatari marketplace?**

In line with Qatar Tourism Strategy 2030, which sets an ambitious target to attract over 6 million international visitors a year by 2030, making Qatar the fastest-growing destination in the Middle East, Retaj Hotels and Hospitality is keen to play an active role in line with Qatar's strategy. We are expanding in the local market relying on our different brands ranging from residences, budget hotels, four- and five-star hotels, and resorts, and our diverse brand portfolio enables us to expand rapidly pace to meet with our expansion strategy within the local and international markets.

**What experience do you aim to offer your guests?**

Retaj Hotels and Hospitality is one of the leading companies in its field, renowned for delivering Arabian hospitality. Ever since Retaj Group established the brand Retaj Hotels, the first Qatari hotel brand to operate in and outside Qatar, it has experienced great success in not only the local market, but also at the regional and global levels. We provide services and exceptional experiences that make guests feel they belong to the distinguished Retaj family. Our philosophy is simple—we strive to provide our guests, clients, and stakeholders with a dynamic experience that is comfortable, customized, and unparalleled. What makes a hotel and hospitality management company a leader in its field is its dedication and the will to offer state-of-the-art hotel facilities, extraordinary guest services, innovative experiences, guest satisfaction, and special attention to shareholder's stakes. Our success is based on our unique methodology that combines years of experience, efficiency, world-class professionalism with the uniqueness of genuine Arabian hospitality.

**How would you define the main challenges for the hospitality sector in Qatar?**

Globally, the pandemic has caused an unprecedented disruption to tourism, with a massive fall in international demand. We worked closely with the government during the early days of the pandemic, and when the Discover Qatar program for quarantine was introduced, we enrolled most of our properties in the

program. This contributed to positive financial results in 2021, though the one thing we are most proud of is retaining our main assets: our team members. Now, we are faced with a new challenge, global inflation, which will negatively affect consumer behavior toward travel and leisure. We are an agile group of companies and have adapted to the pandemic and its repercussions. We are sure we will adjust and adapt to this new challenge as best we can as well. It will not deter us from reaching our brand expansion and financial goals.

**What are your main aspirations to achieve in the next 10 years?**

Our focus has always been on expanding into new markets and increasing our footprint worldwide, and we accordingly plan to be present in all international tourist destinations soon. ✖

#### BIO

Sheikh Nayef bin Eid Al-Thani is the Chairman of Retaj Group of companies and holds a master's degree from AASTMT in Cairo. He is also a member of the board of directors of several companies in Qatar.

# Retaj Hotels & Hospitality...

## We welcome the world

Our hotels and resorts span across three continents, located in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, Comoros Islands, Turkey, and soon in Egypt, Sudan, Bangladesh and Georgia.



RETAJ

للفنادق والضيافة

HOTELS & HOSPITALITY





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Mohamed Chebil  
GENERAL MANAGER,  
THE CURVE HOTEL

## A DOHA *experience*

The Curve Hotel ensures each guest receives a five-star welcome when staying in its distinctive blend of comfortable and luxurious rooms.

### How does The Curve Hotel differentiate itself from other hotels in the city?

The Curve Hotel is primarily a business hotel; however, we attend to every guest whether they are on a business trip (or leisure) traveler, event attendees, families, or relocating to build a new life in Qatar. Its core is to service guests with that convenience of seamless transition to Doha. The location amongst others is pure advantage for any guest as the hotel is a few steps away from various agencies and offices as being in the central business district, less than 1km from the Qatar Exhibition Center and a 10-minute walk to City Center mall, while Souq Waqif is only 6km away. The Curve Hotel is surrounded by premium locations overlooking the Arabian Gulf. It is located at Diplomatic Street, West Bay Doha. More importantly, the hotel has comfortable modern interiors with a bonus of views of the Arabian Gulf. With 602 hotel apartments, guests can choose from spacious studio, one and two-bedroom apartments. There is a selection of restaurant outlets located at the ground floor, the rooftop is equipped with a modern gym, swimming pool, which is breathtaking. Our strategy is simple, and we consistently exert all efforts to meet and exceed our guest' expectations. This is key to being our guests' preferred hotel: a home away from home.

### How are you encouraging trust and loyalty in your guests?

We make sure to welcome our guests and meet their expectations for The Curve Hotel to provide a high level of services. Then, it is important to remain consistent and stay true to the service we provide. That consistency develops trust and loyalty. Loyalty is very important to us, as it not only provides a stable business but also new business through referrals and excellent feedback. All of our selected staff are experienced in their respective positions; that is one of our business strategies to guarantee that we can meet our guests'

needs. We capitalize on our staff's experience because this includes their skills in relationship building. Management makes sure that the staff understands that meeting guests needs contribute to their loyalty and how this is valuable to everyone. We constantly reinforce our staff with the necessary skills in order to be able to manage any requirement or situation they may have with our guests. Scenarios are regularly discussed in department meetings in order to regularly have transfer of knowledge. The Curve Hotel sustains its principles of providing a consistent high level of service, which is the key to continued dynamism in terms of visitor numbers. It is more important to keep and maintain existing guests, as apart from representing stable business, their satisfaction also helps bring in new business opportunities.

### What experience do you aim to offer your guests?

We place top priority to each guest an impeccable experience, and our staff plays a big role in the overall experience. We offer an iconic blend of comfort and luxury to be available for them at any time, listening to their wants, needs and taking immediate action. We encourage our staff to provide amazing guest service, be original and authentic. We ensure for them a regular training session, and we introduce an employee of the month regularly, in order to give the extra motivation for providing guests with a first-class stay.

### How will The Curve Hotel benefit from the FIFA World Cup 2022?

Being Qatar the first Arab country to host FIFA, we are proud to take part of this historical event, it will be a moment of networking with potential clientele on both B2B and B2C for future business along the pipeline. Qatar is emerging as an event hub in the region and their presence will contribute on the touristic economy in creating a landmark for the country in attracting visitors and foreign investment. ✖

#### BIO

Mohamed Chebil is General Manager of The Curve Hotel.

# SAPPHIRE PLAZA HOTEL

Your most expedient and luxurious choice for both business and family travels. Feel the difference.

Discover the true meaning of hospitality at Sapphire Plaza Hotel, a 4 stars hotel located in the heart of Doha. Combines style & innovation to create a completely new experience. An experience that offers an array of services and features designed to meet the evolving needs of today's travelers.

Sapphire Plaza Hotel offers 174 guestrooms and suites that are designed to meet your personal elegance and preference. With a unique ambience, these rooms and suites are testaments to unparalleled personal service in addition to many other amazing features. Guest will feel completely at home in our spacious rooms and suites with its lavish furnishings and exquisite décor inspired by the finest Arabic traditions.

The Sapphire Plaza Hotel offers an impressive portfolio of choices from classy meetings, conferences, corporate function and social events. The hotels convenient and strategically location in Doha make it the choice venue for our guest. The elegant designed multi-level conference hall includes a beautiful Banquet Hall and 1 meeting room which can cater to your every need. All meeting and functions space are equipped with modern and comprehensive facilities to ensure that your experience is seamless one.



## Sapphire Café

Connect with friends – celebrate while savoring light snacks with a selection of heavenly baked cakes and pastries at Sapphire Café. After a day full of tension at work or a tiring day exploring the beautiful sights of Qatar, the lobby lounge or the garden seating area of the cafe provides an ideal place for guests and locals to enjoy and unwind, serving your most favorite drinks and snacks.

*Open daily from 11:00 AM – 12:00 MN*

## Al Maha Restaurant

Discover our excellent on-site dining options at the Sapphire Plaza Hotel. Enjoy International Cuisine at Al Maha Restaurant as we entice your breakfast, lunch and dinner with our superb selection of our buffet menus in addition to ala carte service. Special gatherings like birthday celebration or family dinner may be arranged as well.

*Open daily from 06:00 AM to 10:30 PM – All day dining*

19 Al Reem Street, Al Rayyan Road, Doha, Qatar (P.O. Box 8113)

+974 4033 7000 info@sapphire-hotels.com

www.sapphire-hotels.com

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@sapphireplazahotel  
@sapphireplazahotel







## COVID-19 SNAPSHOT (AS OF JULY 2022)

SOURCE: QNB

Total cases	<b>383,807</b>
Deaths	<b>679</b>
Total doses given	<b>6,981,756</b>
People fully vaccinated	<b>2,646,568</b>

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## ESTIMATED GROWTH IN HOSPITAL BEDS

SOURCE: QNB

2018	<b>3,800</b>
2033	<b>5,700</b>

Current number of beds per 10,000 people	<b>16.3</b>
OECD average	<b>47.9</b>

The Sidra Medical and  
Research Center within the  
Education City complex





# Health

## HEALTH HUB

**Q**atar is just within the top-50 global destinations ranked within the 2021 Medical Tourism Index. Indeed, in recent years the country's health system and infrastructure has undergone a decisive digital transformation and received an investment boost in healthcare facilities and R&D.

Qatar National Vision 2030, a wide-ranging blueprint for economic growth and diversification, gives significant attention to "wellbeing" amongst the population, as does the Health Strategy 2018-2022, itself a facet of the wider Vision 2030. The strategy laid out several priority areas, including the enhancement of a skilled national workforce, the encouragement of affordable and effective services, the development of preventive healthcare, and a more robust research environment.

And medical tourism itself has become a key goal of Qatari authorities in recent years. Public and private institutions, such as Hamad Medical Corporation, Sidra Medicine, and Al Ahli Hospi-

tal, are working together to expand specialized services in the community and optimize information systems, telemedicine, and digital health solutions, as well as to increase the appeal to foreign patients. Dr. Ziyad Hijazi, Chief Medical Officer of Sidra Medicine, told TBY that, "We have the best airlines in the world, and are keen to bring patients to our hub and yet even before we extended an international arm, we had significantly advanced Qatar's healthcare status by offering complex surgeries in Qatar."

Elsewhere, Dr. Hanan Mohammed Al-Kuwari, Minister of Public Health, and Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the WHO, recently inaugurated new WHO offices in Qatar to strengthen bilateral cooperation and support the achievement of the country's health goals, at the same time contributing to regional and global public health works.

Other recent developments include the launch of the eHealth initiative by the Ministry of Health, which seeks to boost preventative care. ✖

## INTERVIEW



Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari  
MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## HEALTH *and wealth*

After the successful delivery of the previous two national health strategies, the Ministry of Public Health is looking beyond, at preventative care, advanced medical treatments, and more specialized facilities.

### BIO

Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari was appointed Qatar's Minister of Public Health in 2016. She is also Managing Director of Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), a position she has held since 2007. She is the chairperson of numerous boards, including the Academic Health System International Advisory Board and the Hamad Healthcare Quality Institute International Advisory Board. Al Kuwari is also a co-chair for the Joint Advisory Board of Weill Cornell Medicine and vice chair for the Qatar Precision Medicine Institute Board. Following completion of a bachelor's degree and master's degree in healthcare management, she obtained a PhD in healthcare management from Brunel University in the UK.

**How is the Ministry of Public Health and other stakeholders in the country working to provide health services for the large number of visitors expected for the FIFA World Cup 2022?**

Across our healthcare system, we have an important role to play in supporting the successful delivery of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Clinical and support teams from across the healthcare system will work collaboratively to provide medical and other support services to teams and the expected 1.5 million travelling fans. During FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, we will provide medical services across a range of venues, including stadiums, fan zones and fan villages, training fields and hotels. We are also working to ensure capacity is boosted across our urgent and emergency care services to cope with the influx of visitors during the tournament. Qatar has a wealth of experience in hosting high-profile sporting events in recent years and our healthcare teams have played an important role in supporting the successful running of these tournaments. In recent years, healthcare teams have been involved in large-scale tournaments hosted in Doha, including the 2019 FIFA Club World Cup, IAAF World Athletics Championships 2019 and the FIFA Arab Cup 2021. The significant growth and expansion of Qatar's healthcare system over the past decade means we are in a strong position to deliver high-quality health services to support Qatar's successful hosting of the World Cup.

**What is your opinion on the overall progress of raising awareness of healthy lifestyles and preventive care in Qatar society?**

In recent years the Ministry of Public Health and healthcare partners have prioritized raising awareness of healthy lifestyles and encouraging people to take proactive steps to support their health and prevent disease. Indeed, Qatar's National Health Strategy 2018-2022 and Public Health Strategy 2017-2022 both place high priority on preventive healthcare and supporting people to take control of their own

health. Across the public healthcare sector, we have delivered a wide range of awareness campaigns in recent years targeting some of the most prominent lifestyle diseases. Our campaigns have focused on stroke, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, tobacco cessation, and many other health areas. In October 2021, the Ministry of Public Health signed a three-year partnership with the World Health Organization, FIFA and Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy and the to make the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 a beacon for physical and mental health promotion, and a model for ensuring future mega sport events are healthy and safe. Through this partnership, we will use the World Cup as a catalyst to promote healthy behaviors with a focus on four key health areas: physical activity, healthy eating, mental health, and tobacco.

**What are the Ministry of Public Health's main priorities for the next 12 months?**

In addition to our role in supporting the delivery of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, over the next 12 months the Ministry of Public Health will provide the direction for a range of key initiatives. The National Health Strategy 2018-2022 will conclude at the end of this year, and we are currently working on the development of Qatar's third national health strategy. The new strategy will build on the achievements delivered to date under previous strategies and provide the strategic direction to ensure we continue our journey of healthcare improvement. Our recent growth and expansion has been remarkable; since 2016, Hamad Medical Corporation has opened seven new hospitals across the country and since 2018 Primary Health Care Corporation has opened six new advanced health centers, increasing access to primary care services in the community. We are committed to continuing this expansion and across our healthcare system we have plans in place to open more new specialist medical facilities and introduce new advanced treatments and technologies. ✖

# future HEALTH

Qatar Biobank was established in 2012 to enable researchers to discover and develop new healthcare entrepreneurship and further Qatar's research community.

Asma Al-Thani  
VICE CHAIRPERSON,  
QATAR BIOBANK

**What does it mean for the country to have realized a project such as Qatar Biobank?**

Biobank was established to help decision-makers in Qatar's health sector to make best use of resources to improve services within the country. In addition, from the outset, the vision of Qatar Biobank was to address quality personalized healthcare, developing its own resources and awareness programs and helping the government with its population-based cohort programs. Qatar Biobank is a center within Qatar Foundation and was created in collaboration with Hamad Medical Corporation and the Ministry of Public Health to enable local scientists to conduct medical research on prevalent health issues in Qatar. It is also a platform that will make vital health research possible through its database of samples and information on the health and lifestyle of a significant portion of the Qatari population. Qatar Biobank, Qatar's long-term medical health initiative, was created to give Qatar's people a greater chance of avoiding serious illness and promote better health for future generations.

**How is Qatar Biobank shaping research in Qatar to deal with health issues among the population?**

Our customers are academic research institutes that rely upon our extensive experience to pursue their own research. In addition, we help the Ministry of Public Health in publishing reports such as like population medicine. Our other program is focused on the Qatar Precision Medicine Institute (QPMI), which has been nurtured by the Qatar Genome Program. Researchers and representatives can access and utilize our data, while our local partners help our customers conduct their research.

**How does Qatar Biobank position the country in terms of biomedicine?**

Biobank is considered a leader in its field as well as the Qatar Genome Program. We work closely with EuroBioBank, the European biobanks network, as a member counselor. And we are active in most of their steering committees and scientific committees at conferences in Europe. Qatar Biobank is now well-known in Europe. We exchange invitations with academic programs to appear as speakers and enjoy solid relationships with international partners. By taking the initiative, Qatar has gained international recognition in the field, and this will be further enhanced in the medical arena as our data translates into specific health treatments for individuals. We collaborate regularly with 13 institutions in Qatar and 16 institutions from abroad, most being world-class universities.

**As chairperson of the Qatar Genome Program Committee, how does the program contribute to the flourishing of a solid research community in Qatar?**

Qatar Biobank was established in 2012 to enable researchers to discover and develop new healthcare entrepreneurship to personalize healthcare. From the start, Her Highness Sheikha Moza considered personalized healthcare a national priority. Later, the Qatar Genome Program was launched in 2013, and the first samples were sequenced in 2015. We made many sequences widely available and established a consortium of over 150 local scientists, grouped by areas such as heart disease, pharmacogenomics, cardiovascular, and other 13 groups. We are proud to have recently published articles in highly advanced areas, among which was the landscape of the Arab Genome. There is information from Europe and Asia in this field but nothing from the Arab region. Ultimately the aim of personalized care is to protect and provide service geared to-

wards the population.

**What are Qatar Biobank's priorities for 2022?**

The priority is to continue efforts toward becoming a sustainable system. One of our achievements is collaboration to establish the Qatar Personalized Medicine institute. The project aims to plan better health services based on actionable information. On top of this, we considered wellness analysis, focusing on genetic variants related to wellness activity—the type of food to improve health, cutting caffeine intake, and exercises suitable for a genetic profile. We are planning activities surrounding the World Cup to raise awareness of illness prevention and improve the overall well-being of the Qatari population. ✕

## BIO

Asmaa Al-Thani is professor of virology at the biomedical sciences department in the College of Health Sciences with a joint appointment to the Biomedical Research Center (BRC), Qatar University, and adjunct professor of microbiology and immunology at Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar. In addition, she holds the portfolio of vice president for health and medical sciences, QU Health. This follows a record of accomplishment in establishing the academic and research infrastructure for biomedical sciences at Qatar University, including founding dean of the College of Health Sciences and the founding director of BRC. Her contributions to the national landscape of biomedical research includes her roles as vice chairperson of the Qatar Biobank Board, chairperson of the National Qatar Genome Committee, and establishing the National Reference laboratory-COVID-19 Unit. Al-Thani is also an active researcher and widely published author in her field of expertise.





**Ziyad M. Hijazi**  
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER,  
SIDRA MEDICINE



**Khalid Al-Emadi**  
CEO,  
AL AHLI HOSPITAL

## HOSPITALS

With a combination of cutting-edge equipment, high-end services, and international medical experts, hospitals in Qatar are becoming the first choice for both Qataris and medical tourists.

**What have been Sidra Medicine's latest achievements in research and technology?**

**ZIYAD M. HIJAZI** Sidra Medicine as a facility fully opened in 2018, having first launched its outpatient clinics in 2016. We are primarily a women's and children's hospital, and our remit is built on our three pillars of education, research, and clinical care. For a hospital that opened only in 2018, we have made great strides in our approach to providing innovative and groundbreaking care for women and children in Qatar. Needless to say, our hospital boasts cutting-edge equipment from X-ray machines, CT scans, and MRIs to laser technology and even robotics. Sidra is a digital institution, with paperless medical records, and is connected to Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC).

**What sets Al Ahli Hospital apart from other medical institutions?**

**KHALID AL-EMADI** The basis of institutional success is teamwork, continued perseverance, and excellent strategic planning. The management team of Al-Ahli hospital has always worked with these principles in mind and have continued to invest in the team and infrastructure

to place the hospital and the service we provide at the forefront of medical care in the private health sector. It has not been easy as we faced many challenge in terms of logistics human resources and capabilities but with good strategic planning have prevailed.

**What role do you play in terms of medical tourism in Qatar?**

**ZMH** We are well positioned to support medical tourism, and it is something that I helped establish at Sidra Medicine. When I was in the US, I had many patients from all over the world come to Chicago for treatment. When I relocated to Qatar, my goal was for people get access to my specialist skills as an interventionist, wherever I was based. Therefore, we opened an international office and began promoting our specialist services to neighboring countries. Each year, our International Patients Services team works with families who travel outside of their home country to receive specialized care at our hospital. In line with our multidisciplinary approach to care, we apply the latest techniques and work in collaboration with other specialties and experts to offer hybrid procedures. We are also pleased that Qatar Tourism Authority

have featured our hospital in its medical services section to highlight the top-quality medical services that Qatar has established in the country.

**Al Ahli Hospital has a significant number of international doctors and consultants. How does this facilitate the flow of skills and knowledge into the country?**

**KAE** We as a hospital realized very early that skill mix of international and local doctors improves knowledge and thus services offered to our patients. Al-Ahli hospital has always strived to attract world-class doctors and consultants with excellent work etiquette. In doing so, we have also listened to international doctors and introduced technology to continue to improve our services in keeping with modern health trends. We developed and introduced an integrated electronic medical system for recording patients' medical data, requesting investigations, and other services, and this has helped us be efficient and provide a seamless service.

**How important are partnerships to the hospital?**

**ZMH** Our major healthcare partner is HMC; before Sidra Medicine opened, all pediatric services were based at HMC, and after we opened, all the tertiary and specialist pediatric services were transferred to Sidra Medicine, except for secondary pediatrics, which is under HMC. We have formed a committee called the Joint Partnership Committee (JPC) consisting of leaders from Sidra Medicine and HMC who discuss all avenues of collaboration between the two institutions to help advance the healthcare network for patients and families in Qatar. We also welcome students and residents from Weill Cornell-Medicine in Qatar, Qatar University, and the University of Calgary.

**What are the hospital's main objectives looking ahead?**

**KAE** The main objectives of Al-Ahli Hospital moving forward is to continue to provide the best care for our patients in line with the national health strategy. As a hospital we have allocated a significant amount of our budget to improve and expand our premise and car parking facilities to provide for our patient and staff. We are also working toward increasing our staff to cater adequate the various discipline of medicine and surgery. Thus far we have to remain at the forefront of changing medical care. ✖



Mohammed Ali Saada  
CEO,  
MARBLE MEDICAL CENTER

**Marble Medical Center was established to provide top medical services to the Qatari population. How would you define the standards of your facilities?**

We started the facilities in 2016 as a dental center. I am a dentist specializing in oral surgery, and therefore that was my first approach. We always offer the best instruments and latest machines in terms of the technology. Our clients were more than satisfied, and they started asking for more service that we could provide. In 2018, we opened up our derma section to provide cosmetic and laser treatments for face. After that, we started with gynecological services in 2019. In 2021, we selected Lusail as our second location and opened our doors. Our goal is to have a small-scale hospital. We have all specialties for dental, dermatology, lasers and facials. Later, we started with more specialties like ENT, pediatrics, and family medicine to cover patients of all ages. To monitor and diagnose illness, we have a medical

laboratory for all blood tests, X-rays, and so on. We also provide cosmetic and plastic surgery, which is in high demand in the market. We recently also opened a nutrition clinic that looks after the diet of patients after surgeries. Recently, a new law was passed in Qatar mandating medical insurance for everyone. Therefore, we have gotten in contact with insurance companies in order to prepare new contracts. We have already signed with main global insurance companies such as Globnet, Next Care, and AXA, among others.

**What are Marble Medical Center's main objectives for 2023?**

I am planning to have a hospital, and not only a one-day surgery center. My objective is to have Marble Hospital with all specialties and all in one building, not as a part of a tower or a branch. We also have a plan to open more branches outside of Qatar. The hospital here covers close to 80% of all patients, all disease, and all ages; our patients do not need to go anywhere else. Also, we also do house calls. We always focus on being close to our patients and adjusting to their needs both on a medical and personal note. We are focused on our patients no matter who they are. ✖

#### BIO

Mohammed Ali Saada holds a master's in implantology from University of Munster with a specialization in oral and maxillofacial surgery. He has 30 years of experience in oral diseases, malformations of the teeth, gums, jaws, fillings, veneers, and so on as well as dental surgery under general anesthesia.



Dafna  
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Lusail  
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## MARBLE MEDICAL CENTER

SURGICAL OPERATIONS  
RADIOLOGY & LABORATORY  
PLASTIC SURGERY  
DERMATOLOGY & LASER  
DENTAL SURGERY & IMPLANTS  
ORTHODONTICS  
ENT  
GYNECOLOGY & OBSTETRICS  
NUTRITION & DIETETICS  
MEDICAL RECREATION  
FAMILY MEDICINE CLINIC  
PEDIATRIC CLINIC  
PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC  
ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY  
PHYSIOTHERAPY



## PRIMARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT (2020, %)

SOURCE: UNESCO

MALE 102.24

FEMALE 105.72

TOTAL 103.92

## TERTIARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT (2020, %)

SOURCE: UNESCO

MALE 8

FEMALE 58.8

TOTAL 20.8

## NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES

SOURCE: TBY RESEARCH

2014	16
2020	32



A classroom pictured in Doha on the first day of reopening post lockdown, September 2020





# Education

## EDUCATION FOR ALL

**I**n October 2021, the Amir of Qatar issued an order reshuffling the cabinet and appointing the first female Minister of Education and Higher Education, Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi, who previously served as President of Pre-University Education at Qatar Foundation from 2016 to 2021.

Qatar's investment in education is commensurate with its ambitious development plans to transition into a knowledge-based economy. In the 2020 budget, investment in education represented approximately 10% of its overall expenditures and stood at QAR22 billion (USD6.1 billion), one of the highest in the MENA region. Major projects in the education sector currently underway include expansion in schools, universities, and other educational facilities.

Today, the education sector has a vibrant mix of public and private K-12 schools as well as higher education institutions. There are about 322 registered private schools and kindergartens, with varying curricula, including international curricula and schools serving diverse communities.

Also, Qatar has nearly doubled the number of licensed colleges and universities over the past five years to about 30, both public and private. Taking advantage of its large ecosystem of world-class universities, Qatar-based educational institutions have the opportunity to cater to an increasing number of students coming from countries around

the world, but especially those in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. "This plays out through a bigger strategy for the country in terms of being an international hub at a regional and global level. Qatar went through a major reform project for all levels of education, and the establishment of the Education City was part of that strategy. We want to build an ecosystem, not only in terms of attracting students to study in Qatar, but to stay in Qatar once they graduate through different ways," said Hassan Rashid Al-Derham, President of Qatar University.

With this as a backdrop, Qatar is seeking investors to be part of this growing and vibrant sector. Qatar's priorities include establishing new K-12 private schools and universities, as well as training and vocational centers. There are many benefits that make Qatar an attractive investment opportunity. There is a growing market for international private schools at all educational levels. While private schools are licensed and regulated, school operators are able to set their own curricula and do their own hiring.

In addition, investment laws have specified 100% ownership by individuals or companies wanting to establish and run educational institutions in Qatar. And under a newly amended law on foreign direct investment, non-Qatari investors can get help in securing land for their schools and are exempt from duties on equipment imported into the country. ✖



Hassan Rashid Al-Derham  
PRESIDENT,  
QATAR UNIVERSITY



Ahmad M. Hasnah  
PRESIDENT,  
HAMAD BIN KHALIFA  
UNIVERSITY (HBKU)

## UNIVERSITIES

Higher education institutions in Qatar are focused on supporting the development of the country and actively contributing to achieving the objectives of Vision 2030.

**How would you assess the role of the institution in empowering women through education?**

**HASSAN RASHID AL-DERHAM** Since its establishment in 1977, the role of Qatar University has grown from building human capacity in Qatar to become a leading provider for higher education in the country. Today, we have reached a point where we provide about 85 different academic programs, with 45 undergraduate, 27 master's, and eight PhD programs, four diplomas, and a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD), with some programs completely dedicated to women rather than men. Our student population is 70% female now, entering all colleges. They have access to everything that is on offer, and they also gain sponsorship for elite universities abroad in North America and Europe through Qatar University. Many of our Qatari faculty members are women. Almost 50% of our hires are women. We also run programs with prep schools and high schools to encourage female students to join STEM programs so that when they finish high school they can enter programs in science, technology, math, and engineering. We are extremely

proud of what we have achieved so far to date.

**AHMAD M. HASNAH** In recent history, the first female minister in the entire GCC region was in Qatar, and it was Sheikha bint Ahmed Al Mahmoud, the Minister of Education in 2003. Education is where change starts. As a university, we look at empowering women in a multi-dimensional approach. In general, we have more women in our programs than men. We also provide opportunities for women to be active researchers and faculty members, and we encourage them to participate in all spectrums at the university. We have two female deans, and we want to provide opportunities and support for women to grow within the university. We have internal programs to identify policies we need to change and to highlight the challenges women face so we can adapt and provide the required support. Another important dimension is engaging with society. The university is working to be on the frontline of communicating with society and being an active member in relation to policy papers and discussions of topics that are relevant for the development of women in society.

**How is international cooperation integrated with your activities?**

**HRAD** As an institution, we have six values. We always work to emphasize the way that we do business here. One is diversification; we are proud to be perhaps the only national university with about 35% of the student body coming from different nationalities. The same goes for our faculty, with over 70% of them non-Qatari. This strategy is extended to our collaborations with international universities, research institutes, and research centers. Qatar University has a center for Gulf studies, which provides a master's and PhD program. It is a unique program for studying the Gulf region, and we have students from all over the world pursuing those degrees. There are also other initiatives such as teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers. It is one of the best centers in the world for training and teaching students in Arabic. For many years, Qatar University was in the top universities for international outlook because of its large network, collaboration, and research output. When our researchers publish in international scientific journals, they do so jointly with colleagues from other universities abroad.

**AMH** From its inception, one of the founding principles of the university has been to forge partnerships. We live in a global world, and most research challenges require collaboration to achieve the objectives. For example, we work with NASA and Caltech on a multi-year project to screen underground water, its dynamics, as well as the effect of climate change on sea levels and what it means for Qatar and the region. We also build relationships with pharmaceutical companies to allow our students to understand the business aspect of the industry. We also work in research and innovation in different areas such as defense, solar energy, air quality, and many others. We are here to support the development of the country and to actively contribute to achieving the objectives of Vision 2030. The second dimension is helping start-ups, supporting students who are entrepreneurs in order to create jobs, and we encourage our students and faculty to become entrepreneurs. We also work with Qatar Development Bank to complete that cycle from the initial idea to the start-up. ✖

# BRAIN BOXES

How has Qatar Foundation helped shape the human capital of the nation?

**IN KEEPING WITH THE QATAR NATIONAL VISION 2030**, the state of Qatar is determined to turn into a knowledge-based economy soon, which is impossible without a pool of human capital with diverse skillsets. Universities have traditionally been in charge of training a nation's skilled workforce and equipping them with the right knowhow. Although Qatar's higher education sector is formed of an exciting mix of public, private, and international institutions—of which more shortly—Qatar Foundation (QF) plays a pivotal role in keeping the sector vibrant.

QF was launched as a nonprofit in 1995 by the royal family of Qatar, including the QF's visionary and architect, HH Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser. Over the years, QF has tried to make a difference by making education more accessible than ever for young Qataris. Many of QF's initiatives are intended to complement the education sector of the country, focusing on those aspects of societal and personal development which usually remain unaddressed in traditional schools and colleges. Such community development initiatives “provide a platform to fully engage communities on the ground and build programs that develop our nation as a whole,” according to QF.

QF indeed has a point. Our way of life and the way we see the world have undergone huge changes over the last couple of years. The kind of technical knowhow that is offered at colleges and universities is insufficient to train the human capital that an aspiring knowledge-based economy such as Qatar will need in the coming years. In a world that develops at an ever-accelerating pace, raw information is freely accessible to all, and mediocre jobs are increasingly entrusted to artificial intelligence, the workforce needs a new set of skills: to think critically about any issue at hand, to think on one's feet under pressure, and to contribute something to the community that computers and robots just cannot.

A variety of initiatives launched by QF are trying to address this need. QatarDebate, for example, “seeks to promote the culture and use of debate, open dialogue, and discussion as effective academic and personal development skills amongst secondary and university students.” By simultaneously developing the participants' critical thinking skills as well as the culture of dialogue, initiatives such as QatarDebate can truly train the kind of leaders and decision-makers that a knowledge-based economy at the dawn of 2030 requires. Some 900,000 students in Qatar have so far participated in at least

one of the initiatives offered by QF, which given the population of the nation's student body means almost all Qatari students have benefited from at least one of QF's programs over the last decade.

All that said, to boost a nation's human capital, mainstream academic education cannot be neglected either. And it is not! Qatar is home to several types of universities. In terms of traditional state universities, the country has institutions such as the Qatar University (QU). As the nation's oldest seat of higher education and the only public university in the country, QU has trained many of the current civil servants, public figures, and business leaders since its establishment in 1973. After a structural reform in the mid-2000s, QU sets great store by original research, aiming “to increase visibility of the original research and scholarly works.” Over the years, QU researchers have come up with a number of remarkable ideas. It was QU scholars, for instance, who for the first time talked about the risks of a hydrocarbon-based economy, long before “diversification” became a buzzword in the region.

QF has completely influenced the higher education sector in yet another way. In 2003, QF inaugurated its Educational City in Al Rayyan. The project houses overseas campuses of eight major institutions of higher education, including six American, one British, and one French universities. The Education City is organized in such a way that each satellite university mainly focuses on one area. While Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar trains the future health-care providers, the Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar is essentially an art school, and the Texas A&M University at Qatar focuses on engineering programs.

Satellite campuses of international universities speed up the process of knowledge transfer by attracting faculty members and students from all over the world. They may, thus, end up training not only the Qatari citizens, but also a wave of Qatari-educated expats who know the local community and its needs very well. What is more, international universities have slightly adjusted their curricula specifically for the needs of Qatar and its human capital. “HEC Paris in Qatar acts as an accelerator of careers. If someone is on the path of being an entrepreneur, a top manager, a CEO, or sitting on a board of directors, our school can accelerate that transition by giving them the tools, techniques, and skills that are required,” according to Pablo Martin de Holan, dean of HEC Paris in Qatar, who recently spoke with TBY. ✖



# ENABLING INSTITUTIONS

Looking toward the future and the need for more international partnerships and cooperation as well as soft skills, these institutions provide their students with more than just education.



Michael Trick  
DEAN,  
CARNEGIE MELLON  
UNIVERSITY IN QATAR  
(CMU-Q)



Pablo Martin de Holan  
DEAN,  
HEC PARIS IN QATAR



Amir Berbic  
DEAN,  
VCUARTS QATAR



Ivan Ninov  
EXECUTIVE DEAN,  
AL RAYYAN  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
(ARIU) IN  
PARTNERSHIP WITH  
UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

**WE STRIVE** for a balance at CMU-Q of Qatari citizens, Qatar residents of other nationalities, and international students. A diverse student population is a critical element in an undergraduate education. In university, students are exposed to different viewpoints, and they learn to share their perspectives with those from different backgrounds. We typically have a student population that includes about 40% Qatari citizens. Of the remainder, about half are Qatari residents and the other half international students. In this academic year, our students come from 53 different countries. CMU-Q and Qatar Foundation have had a partnership in education since 2004, and one of our shared goals is to empower women through education. Each year since we opened, more than half of our students have been women.

**GENDER DIVERSITY** and inclusion are important topics for business around the world, and a subject of study in our programs. HEC Paris in Qatar works to ensure women rise to leadership positions if that is what they want to do, and ensure women are well skilled to perform at their best in the labor market, especially taking into consideration the scarcity of well-developed talent and the need for qualified and motivated people everywhere. Beyond that, HEC Paris in Qatar acts as an accelerator of careers. If someone is on the path of being an entrepreneur, a top manager, a CEO, or sitting on a board of directors, our school can accelerate that transition by giving them the tools, techniques, and skills that are required. For the ambitious individual's career progression, HEC Paris in Qatar is the place to be.

**IT IS AN EXCITING TIME** for Qatar. In recent years, we have seen so many activities in the creative industry here. There is the Msheireb area, which has incredibly new developments such as the Doha Design District and M7. There are a number of galleries opening up in the country and there is an active auction house through which our graduates have marketed their works of art. There are also many institutions working in the sector, and we are well integrated with them. Additionally, Qatar Media City is being established, and we want to be part of that story as well. There are exciting activities happening on the research front, and we are at the forefront of research activity within our own disciplines and in interdisciplinary, collaborative research endeavors that benefit from involvement and the expertise of designers, artists, and art historians. VCUarts Qatar already has an international reputation.

**EDUCATION** is among the key priorities for Qatar. The next natural step in educational sector development is internationalization and attracting more international students. However, Qatar needs to put in place an attractive student visa scheme. The current objective is to build campuses for educational and training facilities, but international students also need affordable accommodation. Many people have heard about the quality of education in Qatar. However, there is still the operational dimension that requires improvement. We are keen to attract international students from the region and a wider geography. Indeed, we have had some students from Asia, the US and Europe. Another positive consideration for Qatar's educational sector is that the country has many employment opportunities for high-performing graduates.



Brian Buckley  
PRINCIPAL &  
PRESIDENT,  
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UNIVERSITY OF  
ABERDEEN



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PRESIDENT,  
QATAR FINANCE AND  
BUSINESS ACADEMY  
(QFBA)



Jeremy Brown  
PRESIDENT,  
GLOBAL STUDIES  
INSTITUTE

**AFG COLLEGE WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN** is technically the first British university partnership in Qatar aside from Qatar Foundation. The Ministry of Education wanted more choice, and a British education tends to be a top choice for Qatari nationals, who feel a strong bond between the two countries. We successfully opened the campus in 2017, starting with a small number of students across 200 undergraduate programs, mainly offered through the business school at the University of Aberdeen. We had approximately 130 students when we started and have grown exponentially since then. We initially focused on business, though we also offer more programs that complement all areas of education. Our strategic plan is to offer a full range of university programs. Business management is an important field in this country, and Qatar is extremely entrepreneurial; business activities here, whether small, large, or family led, make up the focus and drive the agenda here.

**QFBA** in collaboration with Northumbria University launched a new master's program in finance. We started it in 2018, and the aim is to grow the capacity of QFBA from a training academy into a higher education institution. Through that partnership, we offered our first bachelor's program, which has since grown to become four bachelor programs. We also offered our first master's program, and we aspire to offer more. The rationale behind it is the gap in the market. We look at the needs of the labor market and the economy to determine if it requires such a program. We identify demand and if there are people in Qatar who are interested in taking that kind of program. We only offer programs when the supply is low, and the need and demand are high. In 2017, we conducted a feasibility study and found that a low supply, high demand, and great need for financial-related bachelor programs.

**GLOBAL STUDIES INSTITUTE** plays an intermediary or a liaison type role, working with several international universities to offer their programs in select fields to students in Qatar. Our partner institutions provide opportunities for people who want to further their education by pursuing university degrees either directly or via transfer programs. We have found a niche where there is a need for higher education in certain fields, and we provide students with a quality education without having to leave Qatar. The Global Studies Institute is also an enabler to advance professional development in business, as a teacher in one of the local schools or other myriad options in response to national need.





كبيرف

THE CURVE



## Panoramic View, Memorable Moments



The Curve Hotel is the perfect destination to embrace all that the city has to offer. This luxurious and modern hotel transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary with its amenities and special offers as it allows guests plenty of opportunities to indulge and relax. An ideal place to settle in as a resident or alternatively enjoy for a short stay, it offers various options to suit different lifestyle needs.



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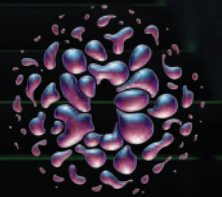
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