

Unlock your GCC potential.

# Invest in Bahrain.



BUSINESS  
*friendly*  
BAHRAIN



**welcome**

**to Business Friendly Bahrain**

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# About Bahrain

# Invest where things move faster

Bahrain is more than a trading base. It's a strategic location from which to profit from the US\$ 1.5 trillion Gulf region, with its 54 million GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) and 450 million MENA (Middle East and North Africa) consumers\*.

We know how critical it can be to have first-mover advantage in any market. So we listen. We act collaboratively. We help prevent bottle-necks. And we provide a pro-business environment that helps you embrace emerging trends.

This is possible thanks to Team Bahrain, our unique approach to business that brings together the public and private sectors to help your business succeed.

The Kingdom has a history of regional firsts – from establishing formal education to adopting a cloud-first policy – making it a dynamic place to be.

**Agile, responsive, business-friendly.**  
**That's why you should choose Bahrain.**

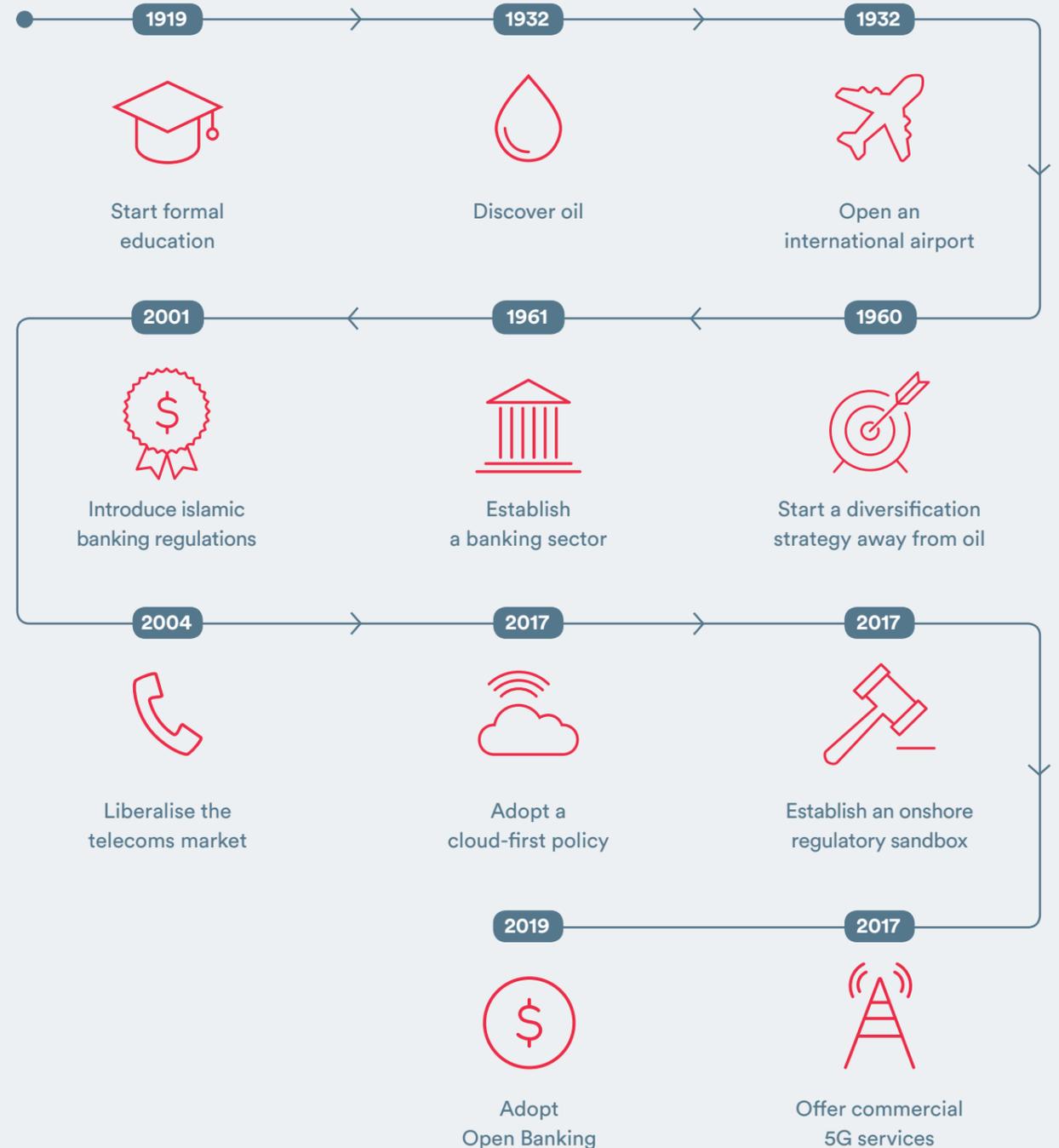
### Bahrain in brief

- 
770 km<sup>2</sup>  
 Size (similar to Singapore)
- 
1.5 Million  
 Population
- 
English & Arabic  
 Languages
- 
4% (2018)  
 FDI % of GDP

Information and eGovernment Authority

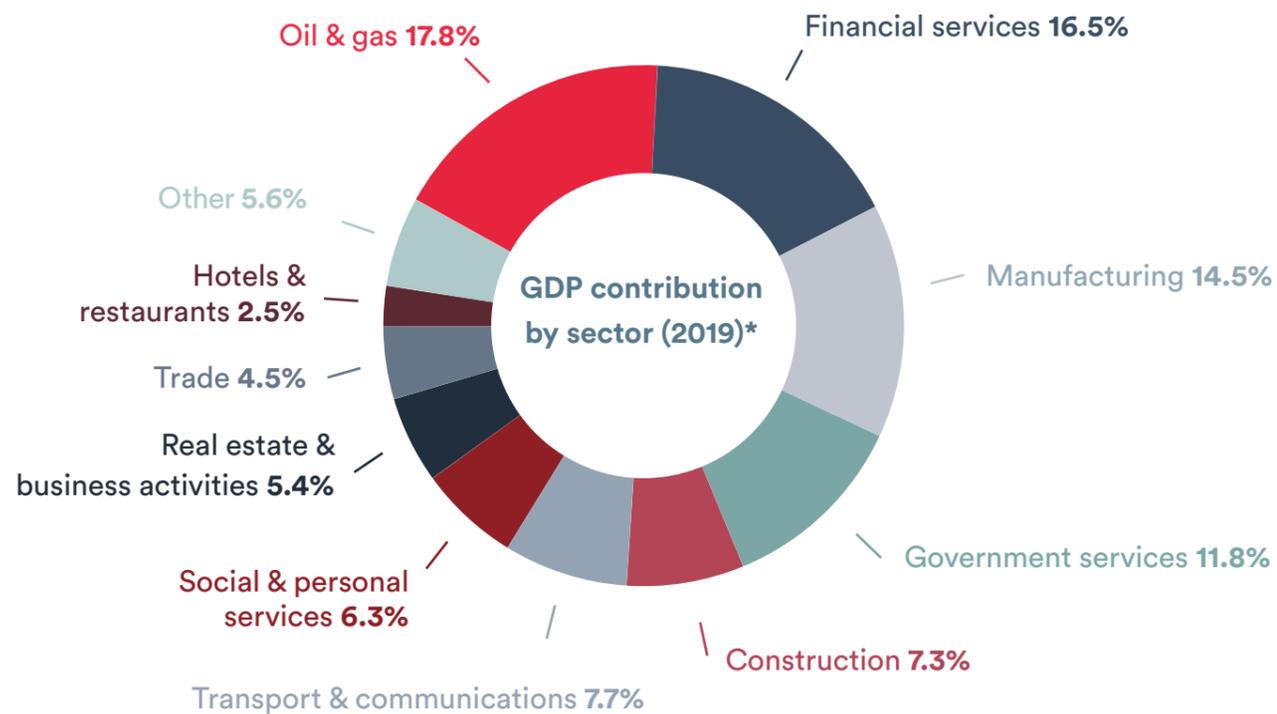
\*Projected to 2020. BMI Research

## Bahrain was the first country in the Gulf region to:



# Diversity and opportunity

Bahrain was both the first Gulf state to discover oil and to move away from it. Such a far-sighted approach has delivered a balanced economy in which more than 80% of real GDP is non-oil. This has helped avoid volatility and increased diversification, driving development of a wide range of private-sector industries.



\*Bahrain Economic Report, 2019

## Significant investment scope

Take advantage of opportunities across Bahrain's physical and digital infrastructure. In physical infrastructure alone, US\$ 32 billion has been earmarked for a decade to invest in transport, industrial and real estate projects.

### ✈️ Transport

#### Airport Infrastructure Development

Modernisation of the airport's infrastructure and cargo handling capacity.

- Increasing the airport's capacity from 8 to 14 million passengers p.a.
- Increasing cargo to 1 million metric tonnes p.a.

Investment value: **US\$1.1 billion**  
Completed: **2020**

#### King Hamad Causeway

Connecting Bahrain with Saudi Arabia alongside the King Fahd Causeway.

- Will include a road for vehicles and 2 rail lines for passengers and freight.
- Expected to result in 30%-50% lower import costs.

Investment value: **US\$3.5 billion**  
Completion: **2028**

### 🏭 Industrial

#### Alba Line 6

Development of Aluminium Bahrain (Alba)'s Line 6.

- The world's largest single-site smelter outside of China.
- Molten metal park currently under development.

Investment value: **US\$3 billion**  
Completed: **2019**

#### BAPCO modernisation & expansion

Modernisation and expansion of the BAPCO oil refinery.

- One of the biggest industrial projects in Bahrain history.
- Throughput to increase up to 380 thousand barrels/day (MBPD)\*\*

Investment value: **US\$4.1 billion**  
Completion: **2022**

### 🏠 Real Estate

#### Diyar Al Muharraq

Real estate development on Bahrain's north-eastern coastline. This is a 10 km<sup>2</sup> archipelago of seven man-made islands and 8 km of beaches.

The masterplan includes residential, retail, offices, education, healthcare, commercial and services plots.

Investment value: **US\$6 billion**  
Completion: **2025**

#### Bahrain Bay

A prestigious waterfront development in the heart of Bahrain's capital city that currently includes the Four Seasons Hotel, The Wyndham Grand Hotel and The Avenues Mall.

The masterplan includes additional hotels, restaurants, a public beach and other entertainment activities.

Investment value: **US\$2.5 billion**  
Completion: **2025**

\*\*Trade Arabia (2019)

# Our momentum

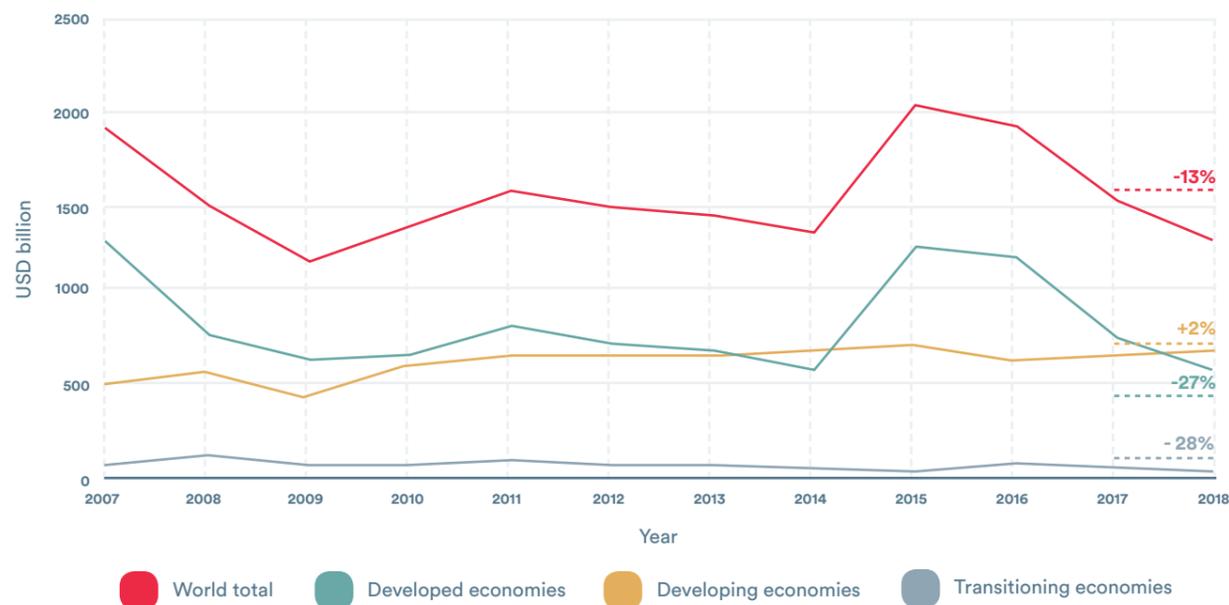
Bahrain constantly changes, improves and reinvents itself. This keeps our economy sharp, generates tangible benefits for international investors and unlocks future potential.

### Bahrain FDI Inflows

 **US\$ 1.51 billion (2018)**  
 **4% growth**

While global FDI inflows fell to US\$ 1.3 trillion from US\$ 1.5 trillion the previous year – the third consecutive annual decline, Bahrain is one of few countries to record continued positive growth: FDI inflows into Bahrain increased by 4% in 2018, reaching to US\$ 1.51 billion.

### Foreign direct investment inflows, global and by group of economies



\*United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

## Forward-thinking regulation

Bahrain's government is enacting reforms and regulations to promote growth and innovation while reducing risk for tech start-ups.

Most recently, the World Bank recognised that Bahrain has implemented the highest number of regulatory reforms designed to ease business operation.\*

<p><b>2017 - May</b></p> <p><b>Regulatory Sandbox</b></p> <p>Provides a virtual space for companies to test FinTech solutions without legal consequence before roll-out</p>	<p><b>2017 - October</b></p> <p><b>Crowdfunding 2.0</b></p> <p>The region's first regulation covering conventional and Shari'a-compliant financing-based crowdfunding to reduce minimum capital requirement and encourage business borrowing</p>	<p><b>2018 - May</b></p> <p><b>Reorganisation and Bankruptcy Law</b></p> <p>Bahrain is becoming the GCC's first to embed international insolvency provisions in its bankruptcy legislation</p>
<p><b>2018 - July</b></p> <p><b>Personal Data Protection Law</b></p> <p>Bahrain introduced its first nationwide standalone personal data protection law</p>	<p><b>2018 - June</b></p> <p><b>Health Insurance Law</b></p> <p>Commercialises public medical services in Bahrain</p>	<p><b>2018 - June</b></p> <p><b>Competition Law</b></p> <p>Promotes market competition by regulating anti-competitive conduct by companies, citizens and public authorities</p>
<p><b>2018 - November</b></p> <p><b>Electronic Transferable Records Law</b></p> <p>Bahrain was first to enact UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law) Model Law, boosting digital trade, FinTech, Blockchain and e-commerce</p>	<p><b>2018 - November</b></p> <p><b>Electronic Communications and Transactions Law</b></p> <p>Enables secure, seamless electronic interactions between businesses, citizens and public authorities</p>	<p><b>2018 - November</b></p> <p><b>Commercial Companies Law Amendments</b></p> <p>Strengthens corporate governance, giving investors greater flexibility and provides minority investors added protection and encouragement</p>
<p><b>2019 - February</b></p> <p><b>Crypto Asset Exchanges</b></p> <p>Enables the licensing and supervision of 'Regulated crypto-asset services' including trading, dealing, advisory and portfolio management services.</p>	<p><b>2018 - December</b></p> <p><b>Open Banking</b></p> <p>Mandates the adoption of open banking by all banks to enable new standards for digital banking services</p>	<p><b>2018 - November</b></p> <p><b>Cloud Computing Services to Foreign Parties Law (Data Jurisdiction)</b></p> <p>This 'data embassy' concept makes it possible to retain home country sovereignty over data</p>
<p><b>2019 - March</b></p> <p><b>Digital Financial Advice Regulations (Robo-Advisory)</b></p> <p>Enables the intelligent automation of 'financial advice' by specialized firms using of algorithms or AI.</p>	<p><b>2019 - June</b></p> <p><b>E-Notarization Regulations</b></p> <p>Enables the provision of notary services around-the-clock and remotely.</p>	<p><b>2019 - August</b></p> <p><b>CBB's Rules on Insurance Aggregators (InsurTech)</b></p> <p>Enables intermediaries to provide insurance quotes from several insurance companies under a single electronic platform or mobile device application</p>
<p><b>2020 - February</b></p> <p><b>Ratification of the UN's Convention on the use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts</b></p>		

\*Doing Business 2020, 190 economies

## Rapidly going digital

Our most recent advances are inevitably in technology, with Bahrain's economy moving swiftly to being fully digital with a focus on knowledge.

The launch of the Middle East's first hyperscale data centre in Bahrain by Amazon Web Services opens up new transformational sectors to investment and enhances many others. Moreover, the ease and reduced cost of storing data in the cloud will improve efficiency across the public and private sectors.

In addition, Bahrain is now recognised as having the Arab world's most comprehensive FinTech strategy that is already bearing fruit\*.

## How Bahrain ranks for digital

### Globally

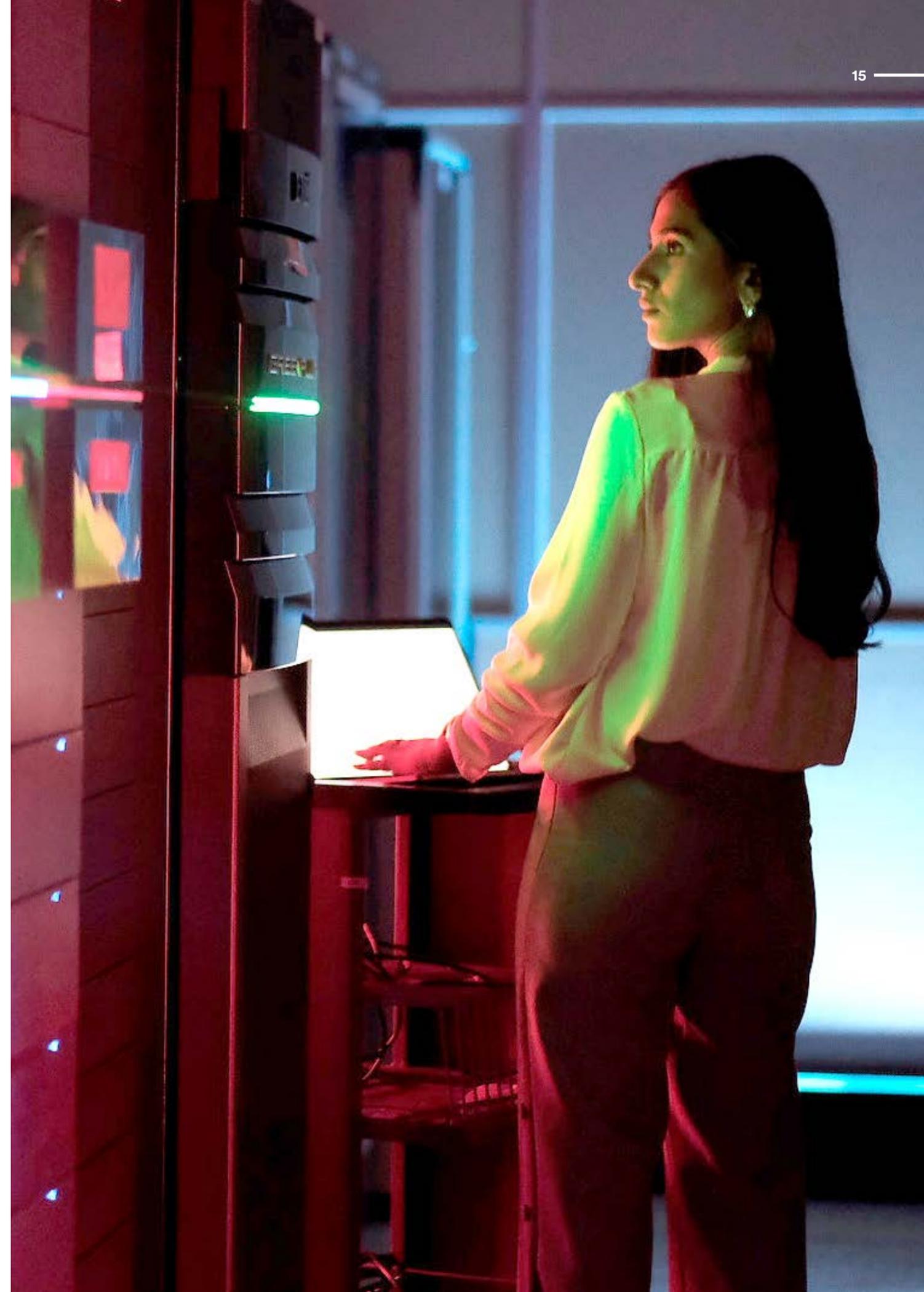
**4th** Internet users (percentage of population)  
*WEF Global Competitiveness Report 2019*

### In MENA

**1st** ICT Skills  
*Network Readiness Index 2019 by WITSA  
(World Information Technology & Services Alliance)*

**1st** 4G Mobile Network Coverage  
*Network Readiness Index 2019 by WITSA  
(World Information Technology & Services Alliance)*

**1st** Digital life  
*InterNations Expat Insider survey 2019*



# Why Bahrain

There are so many reasons why Bahrain makes perfect sense for investment – rationally, financially, practically and emotionally. We've summarised these reasons in six easy sections:



**Team Bahrain**



**Easy market access**



**Firmly pro-business**



**Competitive costs**



**Skilled, motivated workforce**



**High-quality lifestyle**

# Team Bahrain

Bahrain has built an agile ecosystem that allows the government to operate at the pace of the private sector. A key part of this is our 'Team Bahrain' approach, which brings together businesses of all sizes with key decision makers to quickly understand and respond to their unique needs.

It's an investor-centric process that has already helped the likes of Amazon Web Services, Bahrain FinTech Bay, Rain, Mondelez and SINC succeed in Bahrain.

## Coordinated and supportive

You will discover that Team Bahrain is all about working together. The Bahrain government has created an environment that draws together strategic bodies across the public and private sectors to solve problems and open up opportunities both for our economy and your enterprise.

## How Team Bahrain puts you first



### Collaboration

Your success is our success

Team Bahrain selects the most relevant experts, influencers and senior management for you. It creates opportunities and solutions so that your business will thrive.



### Agility

Creating first-mover advantage

Team Bahrain gives investors a competitive edge by opening doors and removing barriers. It connects clients directly to top government decision-makers and creates a future-focused mindset that embraces emerging trends and opportunities.



### Responsiveness

Simply, we listen

Team Bahrain is front-footed and action-oriented. We're receptive to the needs of investors, understand where challenges lie and are proactive in removing obstacles or creating business-friendly policies and initiatives.



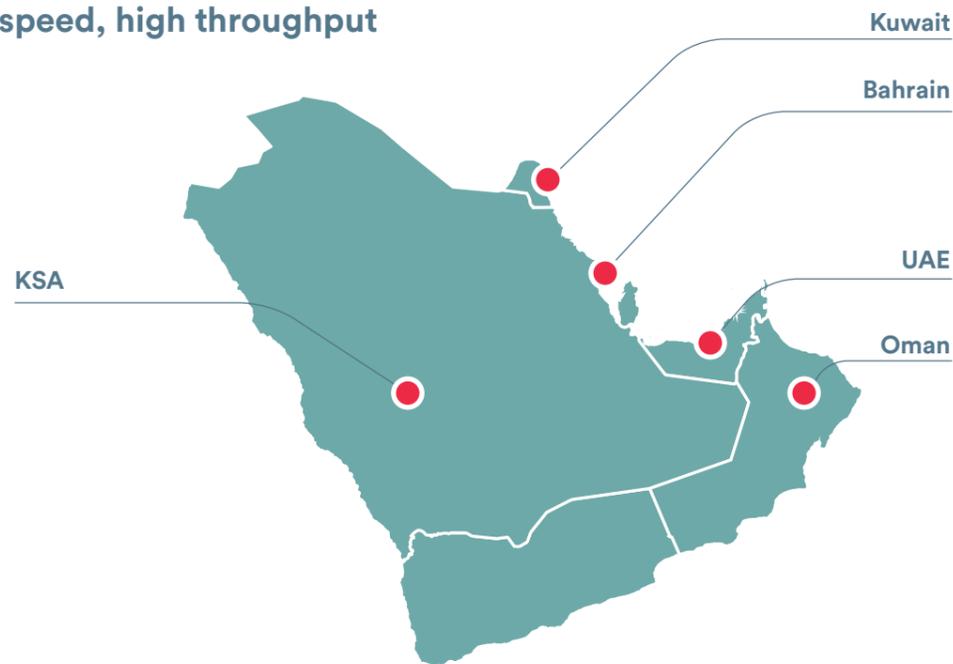
# Easy market access

Bahrain's central location in the Arabian Gulf puts you within reach of every Middle East market. Powerful bilateral relationships extend these advantages across the world.

## Regional connectivity

Distribute your products, innovation and services quickly and cost-effectively from an efficient physical hub.

## High speed, high throughput



	Khobar	Riyadh	Kuwait	UAE	Muscat
30 mins	4 hrs	4 hrs	8 hrs	12h 45m	
35 mins	45 mins	45 mins	45 mins	1h 30m	

## King Fahd Causeway



**30 mins**

from Bahrain to Eastern Province of KSA



**20,000+**

passengers daily



**1,000+**

trucks daily



## Planned King Hamad Causeway

Due for completion in 2028, the new bimodal causeway will further enhance the links between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia via road and rail.

## Bilateral agreements

Extensive trade agreements ensure smooth, tariff-free movement across the Arab world and with selected markets in Europe, Asia and North America.

Free Trade Agreements (FTA's)



**22** countries

Investment Protection & Promotion Agreements



**34** countries

Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements



**41** countries

## FTAs

### Arab countries



Saudi Arabia



UAE



Kuwait



Oman



Yemen



Algeria



Egypt



Iraq



Jordan



Lebanon



Libya



Morocco



Palestine



Sudan



Syria



Tunisia

### Rest of the world



USA



Singapore



Iceland



Liechtenstein



Norway



Switzerland

# Firmly pro-business

For more than 40 years, Bahrain has gone to great lengths to develop favourable conditions in which commerce can flourish.

## Key advantages for international investors include:

- An open, transparent environment where it is easy to transact
- True commercial freedom
- A mature regulatory framework
- The region's most lenient tax regime

### Highlights



**100%**

foreign ownership allowed in most sectors with no 'free zone' restrictions



**100%**

repatriation of capital, dividends and profits



**No**

corporation taxes



**No**

personal income taxes



**No**

wealth or withholding taxes



## Global recognition

Important bodies place Bahrain highly for its commercial environment.

### Globally

**1st**

**Regulatory framework and Shariah Governance**  
*Islamic Finance Development Report 2019*

**4th**

**Top business climate improver**  
*World Bank Doing Business Report 2020*

### In MENA

**1st**

**Investment Freedom**  
*Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom 2020*

**1st**

**Financial Freedom**  
*Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom 2020*

# Competitive costs

Total operating costs are designed to be leaner in Bahrain than in neighbouring economies, and companies can access government support for recruiting from Bahrain's talented local workforce. This provides scope for businesses like yours to invest in growth without compromising on quality and enjoy higher profits.

## Operating cost advantages

Total business costs are notably more competitive across key sectors than in other GCC cities.

### Logistics

Up to  
**43%**  
lower

### Manufacturing

Up to  
**33%**  
lower

### Financial Services

Up to  
**35%**  
lower

### ICT

Up to  
**20%**  
lower

KPMG Cost of Doing Business Reports:  
Manufacturing, Logistics (2019)  
Financial Services, ICT (2018)



# Skilled, motivated workforce

Bahrain has the people you need to take your business forward – skilled, trained and educated. At the same time, you have the flexibility to shape your workforce as you want using expatriate employees.

## Competitive national talent

You can recruit confidently on the ground in Bahrain. Our local workforce is widely regarded as one of the most skilled in the GCC. Bahrainis are highly educated – 78% of school leavers earn a university or polytechnic degree, rising to 89% in ICT – while many employees are trained at specialist institutions, such as in banking and finance.

A significant number of people take part in career progression and training initiatives; they can access wage support and generous subsidies towards professional certification and technical skills, helping reduce your employment costs.

## Bilingual

The workforce is bilingual in Arabic and English. This is vital for effective communication and customer-facing service in the GCC and beyond. Indeed, Bahrain ranks first across the Middle East in the Education English Proficiency Index (2019).

## Bahrain ranks strongly for talent

### In MENA

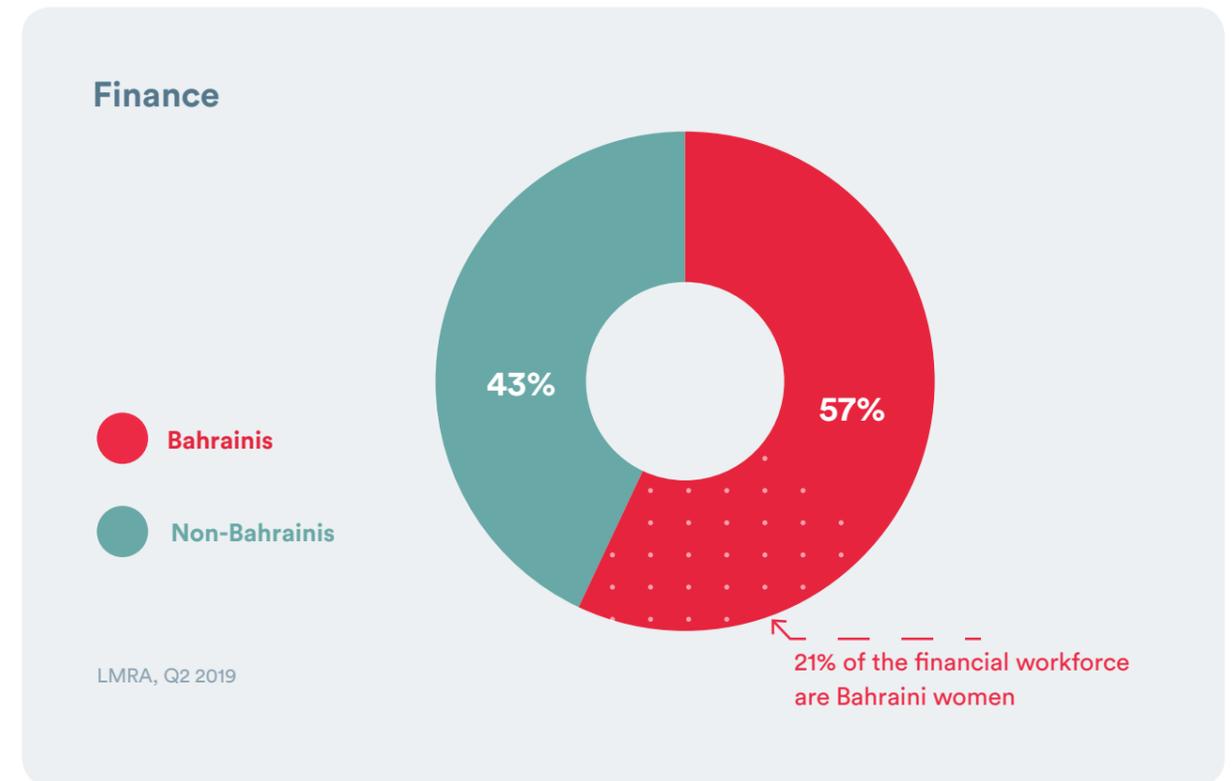
**1st** Languages  
*Expatriate Insider 2019: InterNations survey*

**1st** Human capital  
*The World Bank, 2018*

**1st** Labour market flexibility  
*WEF, Global Competitiveness Report 2019 (Ranked 7th globally)*

## Bahraini talent

Bahrain ensures you can tap into the widest possible talent pool. The Kingdom is unusual in the region in employing most of its nationals in the private sector, with good gender equality: no fewer than 40% of the total Bahraini workforce are women\*. This balance within the workforce is demonstrated particularly well by the financial services sector as shown below.



## Using your own talent

Despite having a high level of 'Bahrainisation' in the workforce, the Kingdom doesn't dictate the make-up of your staff, allowing you to create the best talent mix. Supportive labour laws mean that, if necessary, companies can hire a 100% foreign workforce.

And we make it simple for them to come. For tourist visitors, visas are available on arrival or online, while investors can secure a visa for up to ten years.

## Ease of obtaining a visa



\*LMRA, Q2 2019

# High-quality lifestyle

You will feel welcome in Bahrain. Our natural openness and warmth, combined with significant investment to the local economy, make for a desirable and affordable lifestyle. The atmosphere is relaxed and cosmopolitan in a place that readily becomes 'home from home'. As you'll discover, expats rate Bahrain highly in important surveys.

## Unrivalled education standards

Bahrain's education system is the Gulf's longest established, so it is no surprise that the quality of education is high. Your children will receive a fine education at all levels, right through from the Kingdom's 133 kindergartens to its wide range of universities. Naturally, there is a good variety of public and private schools, with many offering a choice of international curricula. In fact, the 2019 InterNations Expat Insider Survey ranks Bahrain first in MENA for quality of education, while WEF places Bahrain first globally for closing the gender gap in secondary and tertiary education in the 2018 Global Gender Gap report.

## Quality healthcare

Expats can expect a high level of healthcare in Bahrain, with easy access to skilled practitioners. Public healthcare is provided by around 24 primary care centres across the Kingdom and can be used by expats at nominal cost with a Population Registration Card. There is also a network of dental clinics and a large number of public and private hospitals with trained specialists and advanced facilities.

## Rich culture and leisure

Bahrain keeps you busy. Our authentic culture and millennia of history mean there is always a wide range of attractions and activities, from ancient sites to bustling souks. Equally, there's Formula 1™ Grand Prix racing, friendly cafés, modern shopping malls, indoor skydiving, golf and the world's largest underwater theme park for scuba diving. Visitors can even dive head first into Bahrain's famous pearl diving heritage with organised tours.

## A vibrant expat community

Expats from multiple countries comprise over half of Bahrain's total population, but they are far from isolated. While there are many national associations, such as The British Club, there's plenty of contact with other nationalities and, of course, Bahrainis. In fact, in the 2019 InterNations Expat Insider survey, 30% of the respondents (more than double the global average) say it is very easy to make local friends.

## How Bahrain ranks among expats

Globally

**1st** Reaching career potential  
*HSBC Expat Explorer 2019*

**1st** Work/life balance  
*HSBC Expat Explorer 2019*

In MENA

**1st** Expat destination  
*Expat Insider 2019: InterNations survey*  
7<sup>th</sup> globally

**1st** Family life  
*Expat Insider 2019: InterNations survey*

**1st** Top destination by jobs created  
*(per million population)*  
*IBM, Global Location Trends Report (2019)*





# Our Business Sectors

# Nine focus sectors, one aim

That's your business prosperity.

Central Gulf location, compact size, advanced physical and digital infrastructure. Bahrain knows its strengths, so we concentrate on sectors where we can offer investors the most rewarding prospects.

International companies agree. Many have embraced Bahrain's 'business-friendly' approach, creating regional centres of excellence in a wide range of fields.



Financial services



ICT



Manufacturing & industrial services



Transport, logistics & regional distribution



Tourism



Real estate



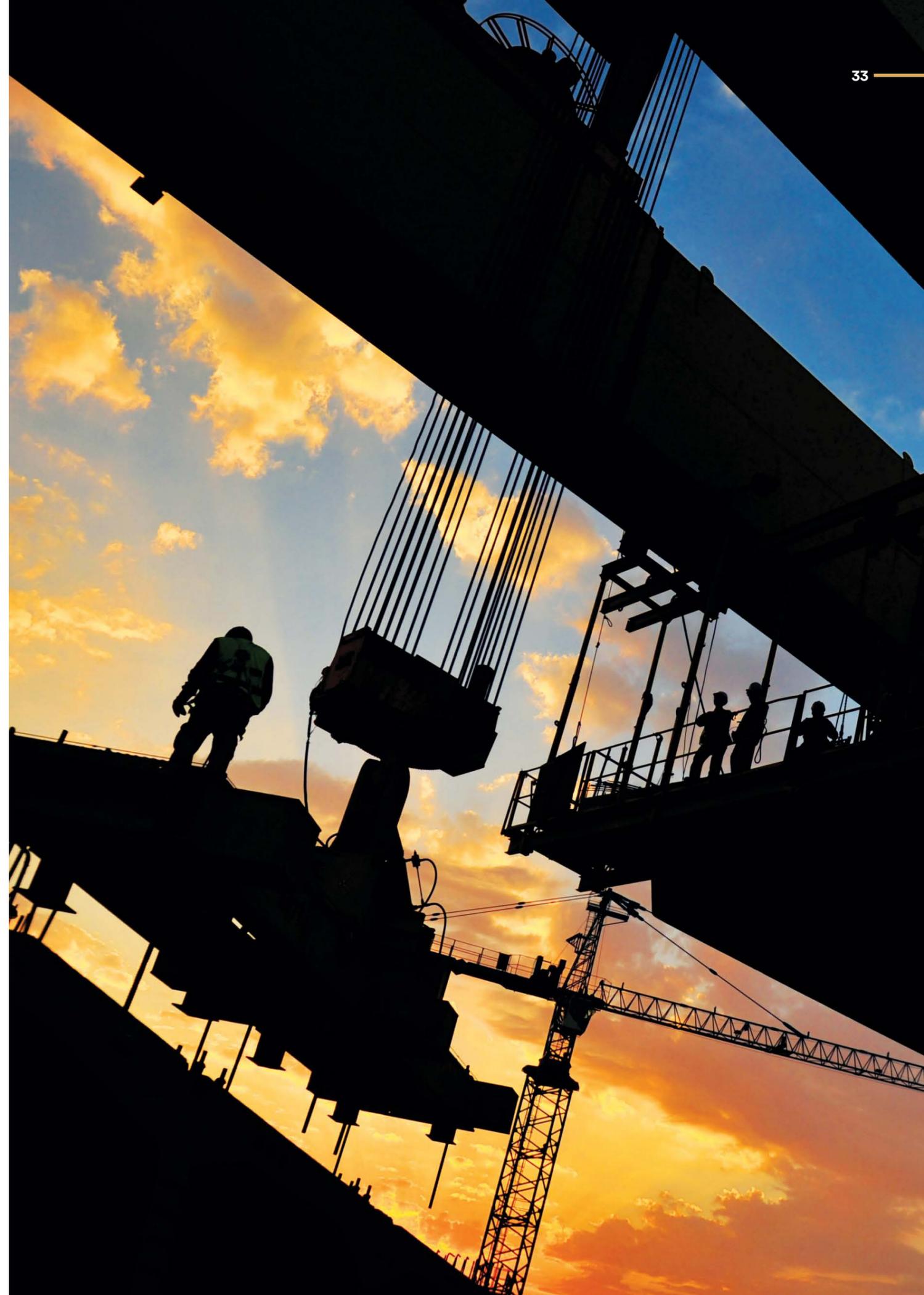
Education



Healthcare



Startups



# 1. Financial services

The GCC’s acknowledged financial capital, Bahrain has built a financial services sector comprising around 400 local, regional and global institutions.

For over 40 years, the sector has been guided by the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB), which fosters a robust regulatory environment. It is the largest non-oil contributor to Bahrain’s real GDP and continues to grow among international financial institutions keen to source effective solutions and value a progressive approach; Bahrain ranks first in MENA for finance freedom by the Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom 2020.

Bahrain is also home to MENA’s leading FinTech hub, Bahrain FinTech Bay, which provides tremendous facilities including dedicated coworking, innovation labs, advisory services and collaboration platforms. The transformation of Bahrain’s FinTech ecosystem has been driven by unmatched regulatory reform, paving the way for emerging industries including crowdfunding, InsurTech, robo-advice and crypto-asset platforms.

In particular, the CBB has been quick to embrace open banking, providing banks with a sound regulatory framework to evolve to meet a growing demand for digital payment services. Indeed, the number of digital wallet transactions has increased by 566.7% in 2019, showing that consumer spending habits in the Kingdom are changing rapidly.

In addition, the sector offers opportunities in ancillary services, banking, asset management, insurance and Islamic finance, where the Kingdom has ranked second globally and first in MENA for seven consecutive years in the Islamic Finance Development Report by ICD (Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector).

## Investment opportunities



Ancillary services



Banking



Asset management



Insurance



Islamic finance



### Success story: Souqalmal

Souqalmal, one of Dubai’s leading insurance comparison platforms, wanted to take its successful business model and scale up across the GCC, a region in which the use of comparison websites and the necessary accompanying regulations were not yet fully developed.

The EDB supported Souqalmal in their set-up in Bahrain which rapidly issued draft rules to enable the launch of insurance aggregators in the Kingdom. Just two months later, Souqalmal was granted regulatory approval and a license to launch its insurance comparison services in Bahrain and became the region’s first licensed e-broker.

“The process was incredibly simple because the EDB paved the way for us, arranging conversations and access with the CBB. The CBB were quick to understand our needs and more importantly, the necessary regulation. They made pioneering an entirely new set of regulations look so simple. We’ve only experienced that level of flexibility and agility in Bahrain.”

Ambareen Musa, Founder and CEO, Souqalmal



### Success story: Amazon Web Services (AWS)

AWS launched the first AWS Middle East infrastructure Region in Bahrain in July 2019.

The new Region serves businesses across MENA, providing flexible, secure, scalable and cost-effective IT infrastructure on a 'pay as you go' basis. Developers, start-ups and enterprises, as well as government, education and non-profit organisations can run applications and serve end-users from data centres in the Middle East. They can also drive innovation by deploying advanced technologies from the world's leading cloud service.

Bahrain offered AWS three key advantages: the opportunity to power AWS's facility using renewable energy; a wealth of international undersea cables for added 'redundancy', and a holistic ecosystem that was ready to support the infrastructure at every level. In turn, Bahrain will gain from growth spurred on by entrepreneurs and start-ups, as well as local development of cloud computing skills and technology education.

**“** We are excited about the launch of the AWS Middle East Region in Bahrain. The new data center region serves organizations of all sizes across the Middle East and North Africa, bringing unprecedented access to the most advanced cloud technologies to help drive innovation and support economic growth.

Zubin Chagpar, Head of the Public Sector for Middle East and Africa, Amazon Web Services

**”**

## 2. ICT

ICT has been a major priority for Bahrain over several decades: we were the first Gulf state to liberalise our telecommunications market, in 2004; today, the Kingdom ranks first among the Arab States in the most recent ITU ICT Development Index (2017).

Cloud traffic is growing faster in MENA than anywhere else in the world at 41% year on year. As the first Gulf country to adopt a nation-wide 'cloud-first' policy, Bahrain is ideally placed to take advantage of the opportunities this trend is creating in areas such as business services outsourcing, cybersecurity, digital entertainment and e-commerce.

One sector enjoying significant growth as a result of the pace of digital transformation in the region is gaming. MENA has the world's highest gaming and e-sports growth rate, with revenue set to top US\$ 3.9 billion by 2023 and a healthy average revenue per user of US\$ 181: three times higher than China. Bahrain is fast emerging as the gateway to this still largely untapped market of over 336 million gamers in Middle East and Africa with strong market conditions created by high mobile penetration, the roll-out of commercial 5G and a young, digitally adept population. The result is an ideal test bed for developers creating Arabic-first content and other digital entertainment.

According to the recent Network Readiness Index 2019 by WITSA (World Information Technology & Services Alliance), Bahrain ranks first in MENA in ICT skills, 4G Mobile Network Coverage and Internet access in schools. This success is built on a strong regulatory framework that is always evolving to the needs of business, most recently to include the provision of cloud computing services to foreign parties, and innovative data jurisdiction. With the cloud playing an important strategic role in the development of our digital ecosystem, Bahrain has also invested in a number of key educational and training initiatives to equip graduates with the specific skills demanded by employers in a cloud-first economy.

### Investment opportunities



Business services outsourcing



Cybersecurity



Digital entertainment



E-commerce

# 3. Manufacturing & industrial services

Bahrain's manufacturing sector is core to the Kingdom's economy: it represents around 15% of real GDP.

The key sub sectors with highly projected growth potential are export oriented FMCG and F&B production, downstream aluminum and high-end jewelry manufacturing.

The Bahrain International Investment Park (BIIP) spearheads the growth of the manufacturing and industrial services sectors. The park is strategically situated close to the Khalifa Bin Salman Port and other logistics processing zones thus making it an ideal location for manufacturing businesses that are poised to capitalise on the burgeoning regional consumer base. Around 115 multinational companies are based at the BIIP, with a diverse mix of foreign-direct investments and export-driven domestic projects operating at the park.

There is a wide range of advanced facilities including pre-built warehouses, land options and scalable office space for manufacturing and industrial services companies.

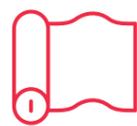
## Investment opportunities



FMCG



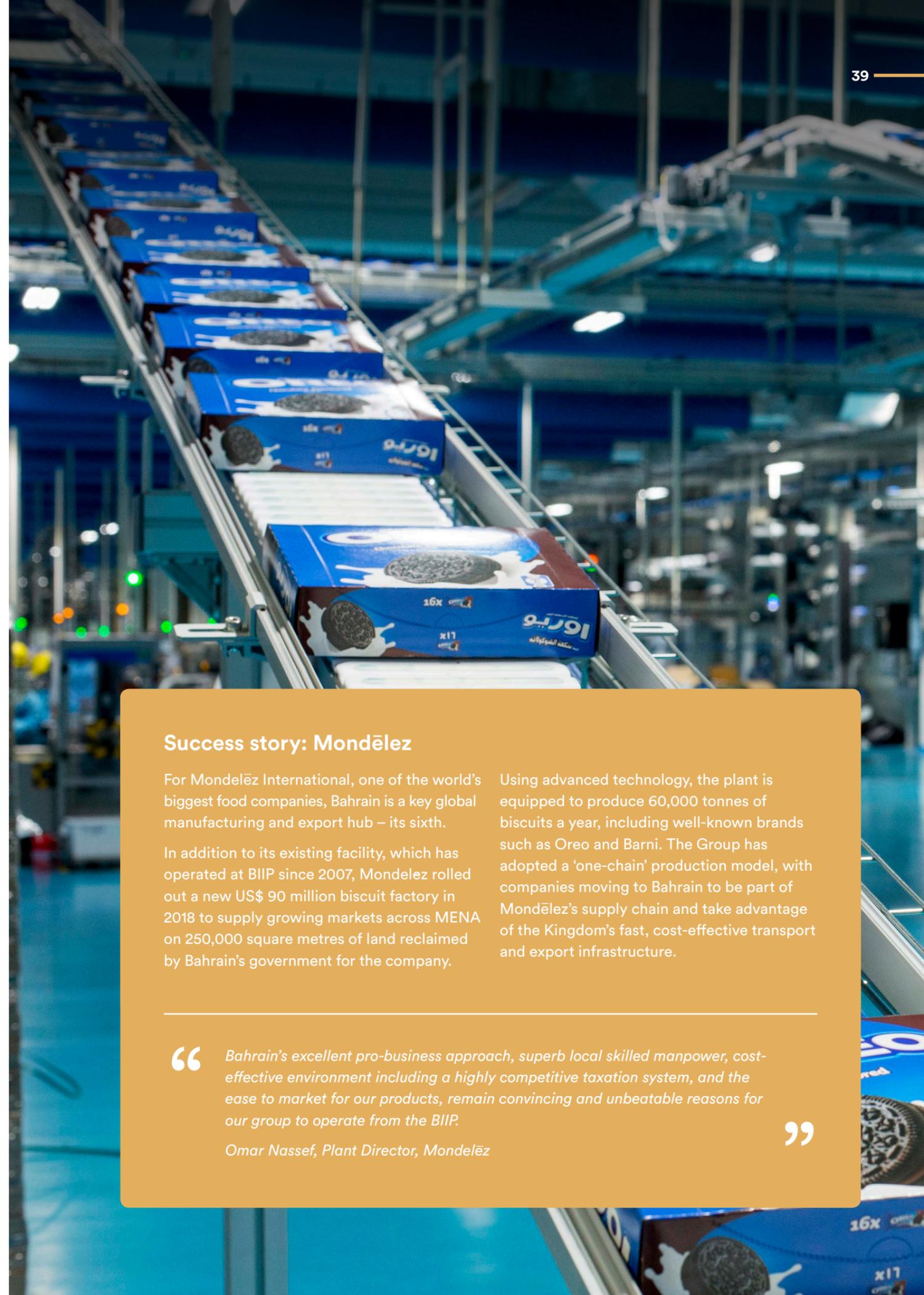
F&B



Downstream aluminum



High-end jewelry manufacturing



## Success story: Mondēlez

For Mondēlez International, one of the world's biggest food companies, Bahrain is a key global manufacturing and export hub – its sixth.

In addition to its existing facility, which has operated at BIIP since 2007, Mondelez rolled out a new US\$ 90 million biscuit factory in 2018 to supply growing markets across MENA on 250,000 square metres of land reclaimed by Bahrain's government for the company.

Using advanced technology, the plant is equipped to produce 60,000 tonnes of biscuits a year, including well-known brands such as Oreo and Barni. The Group has adopted a 'one-chain' production model, with companies moving to Bahrain to be part of Mondēlez's supply chain and take advantage of the Kingdom's fast, cost-effective transport and export infrastructure.

“ Bahrain's excellent pro-business approach, superb local skilled manpower, cost-effective environment including a highly competitive taxation system, and the ease to market for our products, remain convincing and unbeatable reasons for our group to operate from the BIIP.

Omar Nassef, Plant Director, Mondēlez

”



### Success story: Agility Bahrain

Agility is a global logistics company with US\$5.1 billion annual revenue and 26,000 employees in more than 100 countries. Agility's Bahrain business started in 2003 and currently employs 280 people. With extensive GCC operations, Agility chose Bahrain as a logistics hub due to its commitment to developing the logistics sector and its strategic location as a gateway to the GCC region with easy access to the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Moreover,

Bahrain has competitive operating costs, minimal restrictions on foreign investment and ownership and a favourable regulatory framework, which has created an ideal environment for international businesses, many of which Agility serves. Today, the company provides air, sea and road freight forwarding, warehousing and distribution, cross-border trucking, customs clearance and project logistics solutions.

“ As our operations have developed, Agility has relied on Bahrain's highly skilled and motivated workforce. This is highly attractive for international businesses like Agility who want to invest in and contribute to the growing Bahrain economy.

Baiju Thomas, CEO, Agility Bahrain

”

# 4. Transport, logistics & regional distribution

Our strategic location and capability as the Gulf's most efficient and connected hub, make us an attractive base for international transport and logistics businesses.

Bahrain ranks second in MENA in DHL's Global Connectedness Index. Moreover, companies can enjoy 'frictionless' throughput of goods: the Kingdom offers streamlined customs procedures, with both the GCC's fastest customs clearance times and shortest transit between seaport, airport and logistics zones. The result is the Gulf's most efficient and cost-effective logistics gateway, which offers direct access to the region's biggest market Saudi Arabia via the 25km King Fahd Causeway.

Saudi accounts for an impressive 30% of all online shopping revenues in the Middle East, making Bahrain a highly strategic location from which to service MENA's rapidly expanding e-commerce

market worth an estimated US\$ 248.8 billion by 2021. With a wide variety of location options on offer at both The Bahrain Logistics Zone (BLZ) and the newly expanded Bahrain International Airport, superior access to MENA's 4 million online shoppers is hard to find anywhere in the world. In addition, the country also offers opportunities to invest in courier and express, contract logistics and freight forwarding.

### Investment opportunities



Contract logistics



Courier and express



Freight forwarding



Regional e-commerce

# 5. Tourism

With over 5,000 years of history, Bahrain continues to attract visitors to explore its unique heritage that includes three UNESCO sites: our Pearling route, Bahrain Fort and A'ali Burial Mounds.

In 2018 alone we attracted 13.7 million tourists. That's nine times Bahrain's population who have taken advantage of our strong connectivity to main cities in the region and our enhanced visa policy, which offers visa on arrival to nationals from over 69 countries and the ability for those from 116 more to apply for a convenient e-visa.

The sector offers investment opportunities in sub-sectors such as beach & maritime, leisure & entertainment, events & festivals, flagship F&B and retail, transportation, ancillary services, and adventure. At the same time, we are boosting

tourism infrastructure directly with multiple projects in the pipeline, including a major airport modernisation programme, which will include a new passenger terminal that will boost passenger capacity by 40%. Furthermore, our national carrier, Gulf Air, is expanding its international destination network as well as enhancing its fleet with sleek, fuel-efficient Boeing 787 Dreamliners.

## Investment opportunities



Beach & maritime



Leisure & entertainment



Events & festivals



Flagship F&B and retail



Transportation



Ancillary services



Adventure



## Success story: Jarir Bookstore

Jarir Bookstore, one of the GCC's largest retail chains, is due to open its first branch in Bahrain during 2020. The Bookstore is part of Jarir Marketing Company, which is publicly listed on the Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul).

The new branch will create a significant number of job opportunities in the Kingdom and will offer books in English and Arabic, school, office and arts & and crafts supplies, as well as a wide range of consumer electronics.

Crucially, it is the anchor of a new commercial development being built by First Bahrain Real Estate Development Company (Bahrain First) in Seef District. This will provide more than 78,000 square feet of premium retail space, including cafés, restaurants, entertainment and shops with a mixture of outlets featuring attractive terraced views and outdoor seating.

“ Seef District is considered the prime tourism and commercial destination for residents and tourists in the Kingdom, and we believe this showroom will contribute to the overall sales growth of Jarir, which will reflect positively on our shareholders.

Nassir Al Ageel, COO, Jarir

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### Success story: Eagle Hills

Eagle Hills, a private Abu Dhabi real estate investment and development company, was formed with the aim to develop and revitalize cities and communities, in line with innovative lifestyle solutions, that meet the demands of modern living. In 2015, the company entered a joint venture with Diyar Al Muharraq, one of Bahrain’s leading developers, to create Marassi Al Bahrain, a unique beachfront lifestyle, business and leisure destination on 875,000m2 of reclaimed land – aimed at creating a sustainable township in Bahrain

Marassi Al Bahrain will include 6,000 residential apartments and will be home to 22,000 people. It is on course to combine tourism, retail, hospitality and residential spaces and features a 2 km beachfront promenade including 1 km of the white sandy Marassi Beach, beautiful mid-rise structures, green parks and walkways, two world-class branded beachfront hotels, restaurants and cafés, and a high-end Galleria shopping destination.

“ We look forward to providing Marassi Al Bahrain residents with a wide variety of residential, entertainment and leisure offerings, as we intend to have a positive impact on local communities while supporting the local economic growth for surrounding areas.

Eng Gim Hwee, General Manager of Eagle Hills Diyar

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# 6. Real estate

Bahrain’s real estate market is expanding with new developments springing up across the Kingdom.

Driven by regional population growth and young, affluent customers, local and international investors continue to invest in large-scale commercial, residential and mixed-use projects – particularly in our tourism, retail and leisure sub-sectors.

Commercial freedom gives developers control over business decisions. Bahrain offers the benefit of 100% foreign ownership, and there are no limits

on repatriating capital, profits and dividends. The launch of Bahrain’s Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) in 2018 has ensured that Bahrain is aligned to international best practice standards, bringing greater transparency and stability to the market.

### Investment opportunities



Large-scale commercial projects



Residential projects



Mixed-use projects

# 7. Education

The Kingdom has an unrivalled commitment to educational attainment, with the region's longest-established education system.

Our fast-expanding population is accelerating progress in private education, while a high mix of expats and the increasing desire of parents to spend on education make international curricula ever more popular.

GCC student numbers are expected to reach 15 million by 2020, promoting demand at all stages

of education. K12 (kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) is Bahrain's fastest-growing area; student numbers have increased by 36% since 2013 and no fewer than six new schools are in development. The Kingdom also offers opportunities for professional and executive training providers and in education support.

## Investment opportunities



Higher education



K12



Nurseries & kindergartens



Executive training institutes



R&D institutes

## Success story: Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI Bahrain)

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland is a not-for-profit health sciences institution that aims to improve all areas of human health worldwide. It focuses on research and education at all levels, from undergraduate to professional. In the Kingdom of Bahrain, RCSI Bahrain is licensed by the Higher Education Council as an independent private university.

Programme for 35 years. It invested US\$ 90 million to establish its first wholly owned subsidiary outside Ireland in Bahrain (which, like Ireland, is small and has a strong sense of community). RCSI Bahrain inaugurated its first class in 2004 and graduated the 1,800<sup>th</sup> student in 2018. Almost 67% of RCSI Bahrain's medical and nursing graduates work in Bahrain.

RCSI Bahrain has been supporting the Kingdom's Family Practice Residency

“ We are proud of building our success on attracting international students, which is important for Bahrain, but we are also proud of what we give back to Bahrain.

Stephen Harrison-Mirfield, RCSI Bahrain COO

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### Success story: Royal Hospital for Women and Children

Opened at the start of 2019, the Royal Hospital for Women and Children (RHWC) is the first private hospital of its kind in Bahrain. A US\$ 45 million investment, RHWC currently employs 325 physicians, allied health professionals and support staff.

The hospital's services include obstetrics & gynaecology, general women's health, paediatrics, gastroenterology, dermatology,

plastic surgery and dentistry, as well as nutrition and dietetics. RHWC also offers Bahrain's only private neonatal intensive care unit, which houses three cots but will soon expand to nine. Patients from across the GCC are already attracted by RHWC's skilled staff, highly advanced facilities and operating theatres, together with luxurious patient rooms and suites.

“ The Royal Hospital for Women and Children at Riffa, makes your life easy and happy. If you are looking for exceptional patient experience and excellent clinical care, there is no better option than The Royal Hospital for Women and Children. Offering complete and comprehensive healthcare solutions to women and childcare. The facility offers extensive range of round-the-clock medical services.

Pratheep Nair – Chief Financial Officer



# 8. Healthcare

Bahrain's healthcare sector has solid foundations, exciting growth opportunities, a centralised location and promising talent, making it the future of the healthcare industry in the Gulf.

Bahrain's healthcare sector is expanding rapidly, with a focus on centres of medical excellence.

The first phase of King Abdullah Medical City, a US\$ 270 million multi-use project, is due for completion in 2020 with a planned new teaching hospital. This is generating sub-sector opportunities and will create more than 800 medical jobs.

Alongside investment in state-of-the-art healthcare facilities, medical research is accelerating at a faster

pace than ever. Bahrain's National Genome Project, launched in 2019, promises to usher in a new era of molecular medicine and unlock invaluable insights about Bahrain's population.

With a market on the rise and a workforce ripe for development, now is the time to take advantage of healthcare investment opportunities in Bahrain.

### Investment opportunities



Wellness



Medical technology



Genome & precision medicine



Highly specialised services



Cosmetics



Rehabilitation



Research

# 9. Startups

Our own business ecosystem launched StartUp Bahrain, a community-led initiative that stimulates the country's entrepreneurial culture and engagement in line with the Economic Vision 2030.

Bahrain is the only Middle East country featured in Startup Genome's 2019 Global Startup Ecosystem Report and is recognised as one of the top 15 global ecosystems. In addition, the Kingdom is among the ecosystems 'to watch in FinTech' and in the top ten for the largest share of female founders.

Bahrain's startup ecosystem is now almost 200 strong and highly active, taking full advantage of our advanced digital infrastructure and opportunities to network and share ideas. No fewer than 11 private-sector partners joined in the last year, generating US\$ 15 million in investment.

## Powerful support

As well as government-backed seed grants and a regulatory sandbox for testing new concepts in the fintech space, more than 20 organisations provide funding and guidance. These range from accelerators and incubators, private-sector angel networks and equity finance companies, to venture capital specialists and high-net-worth individuals. Entrepreneurs can access everything conveniently via a single digital resource – [www.startupbahrain.com](http://www.startupbahrain.com).

**STARTUP  
BAHRAIN**  
Ecosystem



## Success story: SINC

SINC is a mobile time-tracking app from New Zealand that makes it simple for hourly workers in 'blue-collar' industries to get paid. Business owners can sign up for free, with tiered monthly plans for larger enterprises, while staff can accurately record their working hours via an easy-to-use interface.

After research trips to several countries, including the USA, Russia and Thailand, its

two co-founders moved across the world to join Bahrain's flourishing business community. To boost the app's growth, SINC entered the Flat6Labs accelerator programme. Since then, the startup has acquired more than 20,000 customers, mainly in the USA, the United Kingdom and Australia, with a high level of paying subscribers. It now plans an expansion into the rest of the MENA region.

“ Nowadays, the digital world is decentralised – we've got customers all over the world and we can run our business from anywhere. For us, the only thing that mattered was choosing the right place where we could grow in the right conditions. Bahrain has given us that opportunity.

Sam Dolbel, Co-founder and Chief Executive, SINC

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# Join a world-class business community

Bahrain's business ecosystem is made up of a thriving mix of leading companies, across a wide variety of sectors.





# The Bahrain Economic Development Board

# How to get started

The Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) is an investment promotion agency with the overall responsibility for attracting investment into the Kingdom and supporting initiatives that enhance the investment climate.

The EDB works with the government and both current and prospective investors to ensure that Bahrain's investment climate is attractive, to communicate the key strengths, and to identify where opportunities exist for further economic growth through investment.

## How we can help



### Feasibility

Analysis and information to support your investment decision



### Registration

A concierge service to streamline your market entry



### Aftercare

Long term support to make your business a success



# Let's talk

## Global footprint, local care.

We have representatives in 11 countries, so there's always an expert on hand to assist you. Contact us and our representatives will be delighted to answer your questions about investment.



1. Bahrain
2. United Kingdom
3. France
4. Germany
5. Turkey
6. Saudi Arabia
7. India
8. China
9. Hong Kong
10. South Korea
11. Japan

## Contact us

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 **EDB BAHRAIN**  
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BUSINESS  
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