

INVEST IN BAHRAIN

A DESTINATION FOR TOURISM GROWTH

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION & GROWTH

Bahrain was the first nation in the Gulf to shift away from an oil-reliant economy in the late 1960s guided by a strategic decision to focus on national economic growth and diversification to secure a more sustainable future. It has since achieved impressive strides — from 2003 to 2023, Bahrain's nominal GDP grew from USD 11 billion to USD 46 billion, marking a CAGR growth rate of 7% and surpassing the global rate of 5%. By working towards developing and attracting investment into non-oil sectors — namely financial services, manufacturing, logistics, information and communication technology (ICT), and tourism — Bahrain also diversified. The financial services sector overtook oil as the highest contributor to real GDP, standing at 17.7% in Q3 2024.

Bahrain continues to heavily invest in infrastructural advancement, prioritising digital transformation and reskilling its highly-skilled local workforce to bridge the global gap in talent.

By harnessing a curated approach known as #TeamBahrain, which champions connections between private and public sectors for business success, Bahrain has successfully fostered a business-friendly investment ecosystem. This ecosystem prioritises developing a robust, digitally ready economy and pioneering regulatory policies and legislative frameworks to help facilitate sustainable growth and support continual and consistent innovation.

As a result, Bahrain continues to attract leading players from around the world seeking a value-adding location to set up or expand. Bahrain's 2023 FDI stock relative to GDP is well above the global average rate at approximately 94.1% — a testament to the island nation's earned standing as a trusted destination of choice for regional and global investors.

A THRIVING BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Bahrain is home to a thriving business-friendly environment with progressive legislation and value-added benefits for investors, including:

- **Strategic location** & easy access
- **Competitive** operating costs
- A highly-skilled, **bi-lingual** talent pool
- **Progressive** visa policies
- **High quality of life**
- Open, **diverse** and cosmopolitan society
- **#TeamBahrain** links investors with key decision-makers

1st for Financial Attractiveness globally¹

1st for Financial, Investment & Trade Freedom in the Middle East and North Africa²

2nd for Digital Life in the Middle East and North Africa³

3rd for Finding Friends in the Middle East and North Africa³

3rd for Language Independent Ease of Living globally³

Sources: 1 AIRINC Global 150 Cities Index 2024, 2 Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom 2024, 3 InterNations Expat Insider Survey 2024, 4 The World Happiness Report — 2022 and 5 <https://www.evisa.gov.bh/>

770km²
AREA

1.6million
POPULATION

Manama
CAPITAL

English and Arabic
FLUENCY

VISION & OPPORTUNITY

HELP TOURISM PROSPER

EXPERIENCE THE PLACE REDEFINING HOW TO LIVE, WORK AND INVEST

Through 4,000 years of trading heritage, from the Dilmun civilization to the world-famous pearling industry and beyond, Bahrain has linked East and West for centuries. Today, Bahrain proudly stands as an emerging global tourism hub, offering highly attractive opportunities to live, work and invest against a truly idyllic Arabian island backdrop.

The nation's rapidly evolving tourism sector has seen contributions to overall GDP surge, target markets expand, and offerings continue to diversify — factors that have earned Manama the title of Gulf Tourism Capital for 2024 and firmly placed the island nation on the map.

Given its consistently high quality of life⁴, it's no wonder Bahrain has ranked as the world's 18th easiest place to settle in 2024³. The Kingdom is the place for unmissable events and experiences, appreciated by both international and regional visitors. For example, the nation is home to three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the Bahrain International Circuit — where in 2004, it became the first GCC country to host Formula 1 — and the Al Dana Amphitheatre, blending breathtaking architecture carved into Sakhir desert rock, with incredible artistic performances.

Many people choose Bahrain for work, and it's easy to see why. Tourism sector developments include world-class hotel chains and landmark projects like Exhibition World Bahrain — the Middle East region's largest exhibition centre. Bahrain International Airport (BIA)'s award-winning new terminal has also delivered far greater inter-regional connectivity and smoother travel for visitors to and from the Kingdom.

For those living and working in Bahrain long-term, the Kingdom offers visas to citizens from 208 countries, e-visas to visitors from 209 nations, and ten-year Golden Residency Visas to eligible expatriates and foreign investors⁵ — a scheme aimed at making Bahrain the ideal location for visitors and investors alike.

Today, Bahrain aspires to solidify its position as an international tourism gateway, aiming to deliver even more varied and incomparable leisure experiences, world-class hospitality, mesmeric island living standards, and financial attractiveness — all reinforced by an ambitious national tourism strategy supported by the Ministry of Tourism, the Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority (BTEA), and Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities.

Bahrain offers value-added opportunities for investment within the following tourism sub-sectors:



Resorts
Development



Entertainment &
Leisure



Flagship F&B
and Retail

LOCAL SUCCESS STORIES WITH GLOBAL IMPACT

Bahrain's successes are already evident in its current leisure and retail projects.

EMAAR
ENTERTAINMENT

EMAAR
ENTERTAINMENT

Emaar Entertainment is a leading developer and operator managing a world-class portfolio of attractions and exceptional experiences including At The Top Burj Khalifa, Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo, Reel Cinemas, KidZania® Dubai and Abu Dhabi, as well as Dubai Ice Rink, Sky Views Observatory, The Storm Coaster, Adventure Park by Emaar, and more.

Customer focused and committed to developing unparalleled leisure and entertainment choices, Emaar Entertainment is building its portfolio through strategic global alliances, joint ventures, franchises and licenses with premium brands in the UAE and the GCC.

AZADEA

AZADEA GROUP

Owning and operating more than 40 brand names and franchise concepts with over 700 stores spread across 14 countries around the region, premier lifestyle retail company, Azadea Group, has doubled its presence in Bahrain by opening around 25 outlets for new and existing brands in the Marassi Galleria Mall. With access to one of the region's highly-skilled bi-lingual workforce, the group's expansion marks yet another addition to Bahrain's robust tourism offerings.

Contact us

Whether you require support on key industry assessments, advisory on processes and requirements, or insight into where to establish a new global headquarters, the Bahrain Economic Development Board supports investors on their journey long after the first point of contact, nurturing long-term partnerships to ensure businesses remain successful.



Munther Al-Mudawi
Executive Director,
Business Development —
Tourism



hello@bahrainedb.com



+973 17589 999

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