

BAHRAIN

IMAGE: Shutterstock - Trabantos

Bahrain: The heart of the Gulf

With inward investment increasing by 161% to \$733 million in 2017, Bahrain continues to solidify its reputation as a strategic and business-friendly hub in the Middle East

Situated in the heart of the Persian Gulf, Bahrain is a hotbed for foreign investment and a hive of modernity. As a regional pioneer of smart economic diversification, the island nation is making substantial progress under its Economic Vision 2030 program. In 2017, for-

ign investments spanned several strategic growth sectors, including information and communication technologies, manufacturing, tourism and financial services.

This success is largely attributed to a highly supportive regulatory environment, advanced infrastruc-

ture, and a productive and talented workforce that "is among the most educated in the Gulf region," according to Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza, the country's Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs.

Companies act as key enablers

A preeminent success story, Aluminium Bahrain (Alba) recognizes the talents of the Bahraini people to the extent that 85% of its workforce is local. Alba is consistently ranked as one of the largest aluminum smelters in the world and 2018 is gearing up to be another extraordinary year of growth, with the development of its Line 6 Expansion Project.

Tim Murray, Alba's CEO, calls this a "game changer," that will transform Alba into the largest single-site aluminum smelter in the world. When complete, production capacity will reach 1.5 million

metric tons a year. Alba's leadership role in the kingdom's economy has long been recognized and has flourished under Murray. Its continuing importance is proven by its receipt of numerous awards in 2017, such as the Occupational Excellence Achievement Award from the US's National Safety Council.

Similarly, Hidd Power Company (HPC) is also a dynamic business and a major contributor to the kingdom's growth. HPC provides Bahrain with reliable water and power, and is amply meeting the increasing demands of a rapidly developing nation. HPC values its role as a steward of the environment. According to Executive Managing Director Yahya Bin Yunus, "By developing a strong culture of awareness and responsibility HPC inspires new generations to become environmentally conscious, thereby creating a successful social ethos of 'green living' for a cleaner, healthier Bahrain."

The company benefits from the support and experience of its three major international shareholders: Malakoff Corporation, Sumitomo Corporation and Engie.



HPC: A major contributor to growth in the kingdom

Empowering Bahrain by providing the increasing amounts of water and electricity it needs to thrive, as well as a cleaner and healthier environment

HPC

Hidd Power Company (HPC) | Tel: +973 1767 9479 | www.hpc.com.bh



A nation of innovators and entrepreneurs

Tamkeen's progress in driving economic growth and diversification by supporting Bahrain's private sector and citizens is putting the country's businesses on the world stage

November 2017 saw over 6,000 participants at Global Entrepreneurship Week in Bahrain — proof, says Dr Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi, CEO of Tamkeen, that it is, "A nation of innovators and entrepreneurs." During the event, it was announced that Bahrain will host 2019's prestigious

Around 10% of Bahraini businesses have been helped by Tamkeen.*

Dr Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi, CEO, Tamkeen

Global Entrepreneurship Congress, a result of the country's open attitude to global business and promotion of entrepreneurship, says Janahi.

Tamkeen, a public body set up in 2006, submitted the winning bid, as part of its role that, "Centers on contributing to the development of

Bahrain's private sector, to make it the engine of national economic growth," Janahi explains; "As the world moves towards significant economic transformation, with an emerging need to meet demands of new sectors, Tamkeen takes initiatives to meet the development requirements of both individuals and enterprises."

Working with various agencies and organizations, as well as advisory committees that enable input from the private sector, Tamkeen offers a wide range of programs for enterprises, in areas including business development, training and wage support. It also provides grants, investment and financial help for businesses. In addition, it trains and educates citizens to help them become the preferred option for employment in the kingdom.

The organization has already invested \$904 million into its programs



Dr Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi
CEO, Tamkeen

and the results are impressive. "Since 2007, around 10% of Bahraini businesses have been helped by Tamkeen and 56% of all newly registered companies. During 2015-17 alone, Bahraini commercial registrations increased by 28%," says Janahi. In addition, for every \$1 Tamkeen has spent, companies have been able to access \$13 in financing.

The organization has been equally effective for Bahraini citizens, Janahi notes: "37% of all individuals have passed through Tamkeen's training

initiatives, our employment schemes have generated over 9,000 jobs and there has been an average wage increase of 17%, due to our training and wage support program."

To ensure service quality, customer satisfaction and results, Tamkeen reviews its strategy regularly. 2018-20 will see it focused on diversification, accelerating delivery and sustainability, while investing more to develop Bahrain's business ecosystem, financing mechanisms, innovation, market expansion and training, for example.

Tamkeen is also reaching out internationally, especially to enterprises that can offer significant investment or technology transfer opportunities. "To maximize development of the economy, our investment support has been extended to domestic projects that are joint ventures with renowned international players," states Janahi. With Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2019 just around the corner, now is the perfect time for those players to find out more about the potential in Bahrain's pioneering private sector.

Contributing to the Kingdom of Bahrain's economic growth since 2007

Business Support



For every \$3 Tamkeen has spent, enterprises were able to access \$40 for financing solutions



Finance Scheme portfolio totals over \$1.8 billion



Over 45,000 enterprises served



Over \$904 million spent on developing the private sector



42%* of businesses witnessed an increase in net income under the Finance Scheme and Enterprise Support

Transforming telecommunications and fostering growth in Bahrain

Since 2010, VIVA Bahrain has been instrumental in providing the kingdom with the most advanced telecommunications services in the region

As the highest-ranked Arab state in the United Nations' ICT Development Index, Bahrain is a leader in telecommunications. With a nationwide 4G network, it has a mobile-broadband penetration rate of over 100% and almost universal internet use.

One company responsible for this is VIVA Bahrain, a subsidiary of Saudi Telecommunications Company, which launched in 2010. "We entered Bahrain with a vision to transform the national telecommunications landscape and lay a robust foundation for the future. Our success today is testament to that," notes VIVA's CEO Ulaiyan Al Wetaid.

Since entering Bahrain's telecommunications services sec-



Ulaiyan Al Wetaid
CEO, VIVA Bahrain

tor, VIVA has seen phenomenal growth and become market leader, thanks to "Unrivalled experience, knowledge and vision," says Al Wetaid. "In a dynamic industry like ours, we needed to invest heavily in infrastructural

development to adopt the latest technologies and smart solutions that help strengthen Bahrain's global position in telecommunications, and information and communications technologies."

Aiming to provide unique services, VIVA is often the first in Bahrain to offer the latest high-tech devices and has introduced a comprehensive wholesale and enterprise portfolio with national and international services.

"VIVA Bahrain has positioned itself at the forefront of innovation by providing a number of groundbreaking products and services to help individual and business customers. We are a smart-city enabler. We provide more than just products, we cre-

ate ecosystems that are helping the kingdom on its journey to gradually transform into 'Smart Bahrain,' Al Wetaid explains.

VIVA also boasts one of Bahrain's largest, most diversified sales and payment networks, he states: "We have a user-friendly web portal, 19 retail outlets, over 700 payment channels and a distribution channel with over 3,700 outlets throughout the country." This customer-centric approach has won international recognition at the Telecoms World Middle East awards and the Middle East Call Center Awards.

As well as having a positive effect on telecommunications, VIVA has a role in Bahrain's wider development, by investing in corporate social responsibility programs. It focuses on initiatives that support the community at large, enable society through technology, minimize environmental damage or provide education. As Al Wetaid says, "We are committed to the sustainable development of local communities and spreading our culture of innovation beyond our customers and across Bahrain."

we are Bahrain's Fastest Network

SPEEDTEST AWARDS 2017 BAHRAIN'S FASTEST MOBILE NETWORK

VIVA

The perfect islands for leisure and business visitors, as well as investors in tourism

Offering history, modernity, accessibility and value, Bahrain is now firmly on the map for tourism and events

Tourism in Bahrain is booming. The first nine months of 2017 saw 8.7 million visitors, 13% up on 2016, according to the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA). It is also an investment hotspot, with over \$13 billion being pumped into the sector by December 2017.

This is no surprise, as the only island-based country in the region offers diverse ecosystems on land and sea, plus a rich mix of historical sites and luxurious facilities. “When you stand in

our 4,500-year-old fort, you can see modern Bahrain. We have a spectacular contrast of old and new,” says BTEA’s CEO Sheikh Khaled bin Humood Al Khalifa.

The meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions sector in particular is flourishing. Al Khalifa believes this is because: “Bahrain is easily accessed and the ideal place to capture the regional market — you get Saudi and Kuwaiti audiences, for example, as well as the Bahraini one. Visas for business events are giv-



Sheikh Khaled bin Humood Al Khalifa
CEO, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority

en in advance and you can stay in excellent hotels for a much better price than elsewhere.”

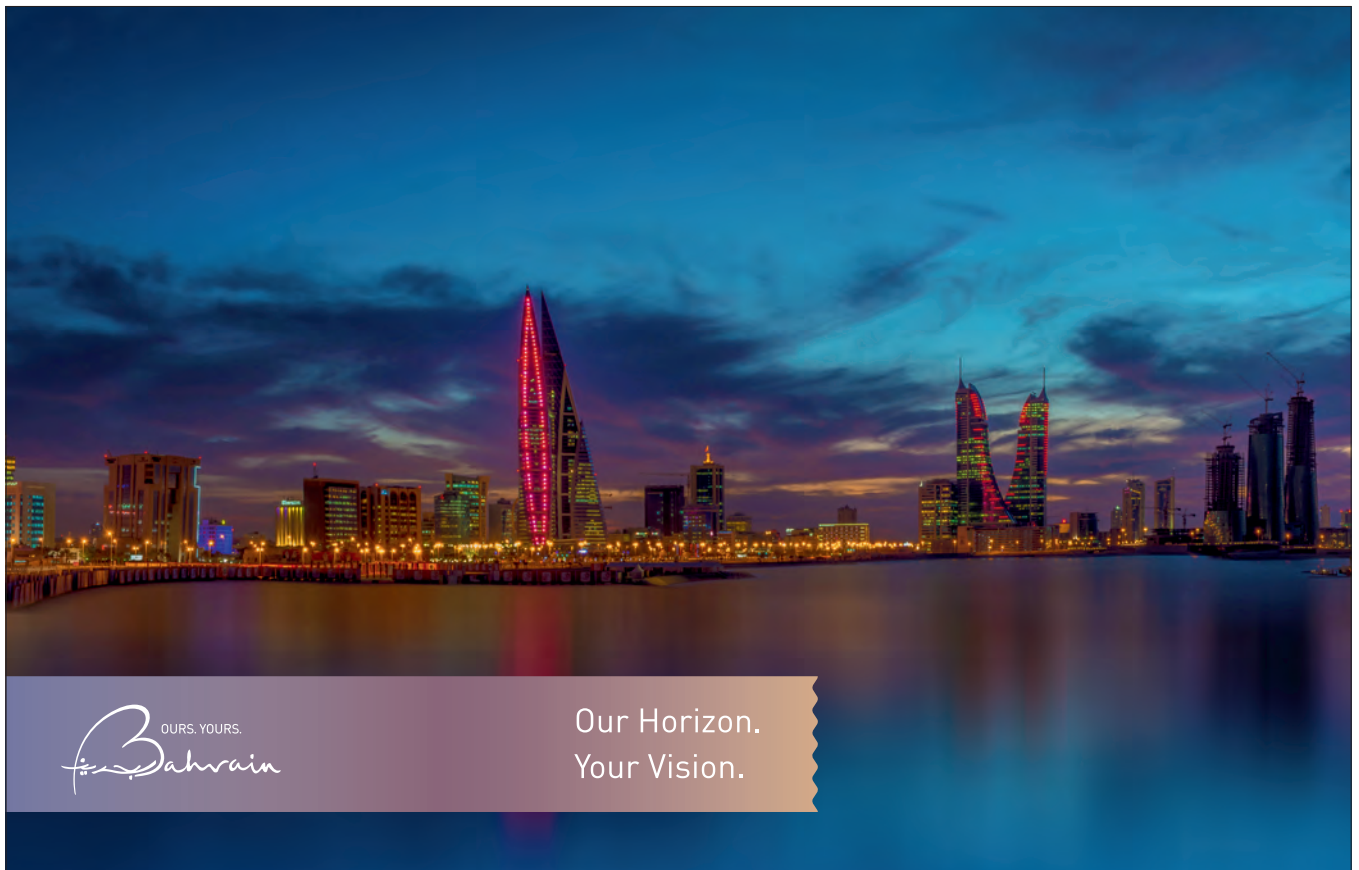
BTEA promotes and oversees tourism and events, and assists investors in the sector, with the aim of “contributing as much as possible to the Bahraini economy,” notes Al Khalifa; “Our strategy is based on four As: accessibility, accommodation, attractions and awareness.”

To improve access, the main airport is being expanded, port infrastructure upgraded and the causeway link to Saudi Arabia improved. “We are trying to open the doors and welcome everyone,” explains Al Khalifa.

Accommodation is seeing significant investment, with fifteen four and five-star hotels in development. These could be staffed by graduates from a new hospitality institute, which should encourage more Bahrainis into tourism, and develop the skills of local and international students.

Bahrain has many attractions, not least its annual Formula 1 Grand Prix, but it is investing in more. For example, a huge new exhibition and conference center, and luxury shopping malls are being built, the new King Abdullah Medical City will attract medical tourists and it has recently tendered four major beachfront development projects.

To increase awareness, the BTEA has opened seven international offices and is, “developing our international strategy, focused on where we have direct flights with Gulf Air,” says Al Khalifa. Part of this strategy will be to inform the world about what makes Bahrain so special: “The Bahraini people are our main asset. They are renowned for being hospitable, authentic and always welcoming.”



OURS. YOURS.
Bahrain

Our Horizon.
Your Vision.