

INVEST IN BAHRAIN

A DESTINATION FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES GROWTH

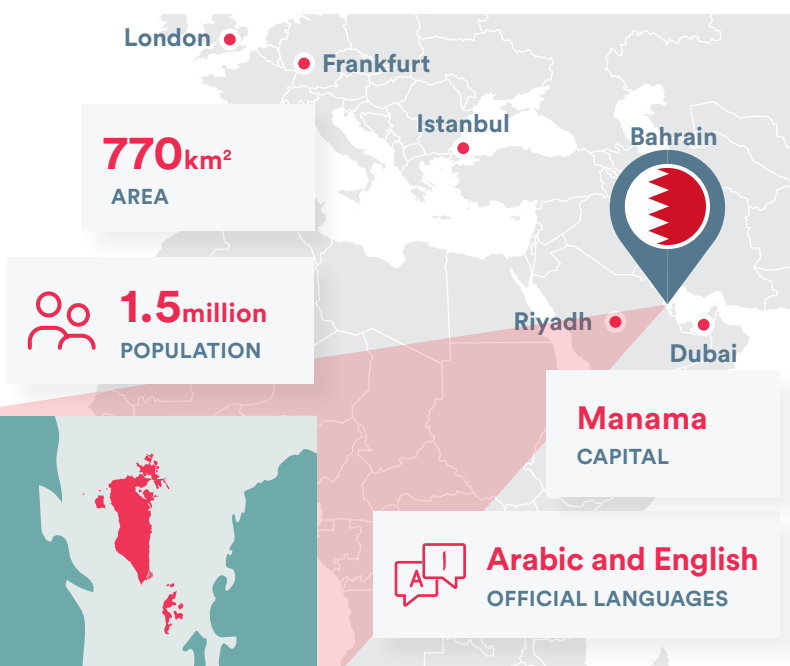
ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION & GROWTH

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 43 billion marking a CAGR growth rate of 7% – 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. As of 2023, the financial services sector overtook oil as the highest contributor to real GDP, standing at 17.8% in 2023.

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

By harnessing a curated approach known as **#TeamBahrain**, which champions the private and public sectors working closely together to create an innovative environment for businesses to succeed, Bahrain has successfully fostered a business-friendly investment ecosystem, prioritising the development of a robust, digitally ready economy and consistently pioneering regulatory policies and legislative frameworks.

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 99.7% – 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:

- **0%** corporate tax
- **Lowest** operational costs in the region²
- A highly-skilled, **bi-lingual** talent pool
- **Financially liberal** legislation
- **100%** foreign ownership in most sectors
- **Tailored incentives**, programs and wage subsidies for the local workforce
- **High employee retention rate**
- **World-class** ICT infrastructure
- **#TeamBahrain** links investors with key decision-makers

- 1st** for Financial Attractiveness globally³
- 1st** for Financial Freedom in the Middle East and North Africa⁴
- 1st** for Finance Skills in the Middle East and North Africa⁵
- 2nd** for Talent Pool Investment in the Arab World⁵
- 1st** Gulf nation to issue nationwide finance and equity-based crowdfunding regulations through the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB)

Sources: 1 Information & e-Government Authority, Ministry of Finance & National Economy, UNCTAD, IMF 2 KPMG's Cost of Doing Business in the GCC Report - Financial Services 2022 3 AIRINC's Global 150 Cities Index 2023 4 Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom 2024 5 The Institute for Management Development's World Talent Ranking 2023

LEADING THROUGH INNOVATION IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

PIONEERING A DIGITAL FIRST FINANCIAL SECTOR

Bahrain's financial services sector comprises a balanced portfolio of leading international conventional & Islamic banking institutions alongside new financial players, including crypto assets, fintechs, digital payment providers, liquidity providers, and firms specialised in cybersecurity, reg-tech, and insure-tech.

With over 100 years of experience, the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB), a singular financial regulator, has driven the evolution of Bahrain's financial services ecosystem with its own dedicated Fintech Innovation Unit, and continues to pioneer new regulations in crypto assets and open banking. The CBB's Regulatory Sandbox, the Middle East and North Africa region's first onshore regulatory sandbox, enables both local and global fintech and digital players to test out new technology-based solutions and services within a safe, partially deregulated environment ensuring market readiness and compliance.

Bahrain has undertaken digital transformation initiatives across sectors, bolstered by progressive legislation and technology-driven priorities. This has fostered a robust digital economy enhanced by electronic government systems and networks.

Bahrain offers value-added opportunities for foreign investment within the financial services sector as a whole, with specialised focus on the following business lines:

 Fintech	 Digital Banking
 Investment Business Firms	 Insurance & Reinsurance
 Global Business Lines & Technology Hubs	 Crypto Assets

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. Get in touch to learn more about Bahrain's exceptional investment opportunities.



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LOCAL SUCCESS STORIES WITH GLOBAL IMPACT

GLOBAL TECH HUB



Citi chose Bahrain to host the first Global Technology Hub of its kind in the region in 2021 owing to the depth and diversity of Bahrain's talent, earning a pledge of hiring 1,000 coders – the Hub currently hosts leading international top coders that are working side by side with highly-skilled, bi-lingual Bahraini coders collaborating to deliver solutions to serve Citi's global client base.

“The pace of automation & digitalisation accelerated rapidly in the past two years across the financial industry. Our new technology hub in Bahrain will allow us to rapidly scale to meet increasing global client demand for electronic solutions.” — *Michel Sawaya, Citi Bahrain CEO*

PWC MIDDLE EAST

Marking a new milestone for the island nation's financial services sector, PwC Middle East's latest regional service centre is set to strengthen PwC's global network. Located at the heart of the Gulf and providing an accessible gateway into Saudi Arabia, Bahrain is strategically placed to facilitate the regional success of the new service centre. Thanks to a world-class infrastructure and a talented workforce that merges local insight with global perspectives, Bahrain continues to create global success stories and support the expansion plans of leading industry players.

“Beyond its competitive operating costs and strategic location providing facilitated access to serve the region, Bahrain's highly talented bi-lingual workforce is an undeniable asset against the backdrop of a growing economy that is witnessing impressive and consistent growth.” — *Hani Ashkar, Middle East Senior Partner at PwC Middle East*

