BAHRAIN
For ITU Council

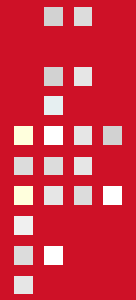
KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Candidacy for ITU Council Election 2022

The Kingdom of Bahrain is honoured to present its candidature for the ITU Council Election (Region E) for the 2023-2026 term having served as member of the Union since 1974.

Country Size

785.08 km^2



Population Region

1.5 million

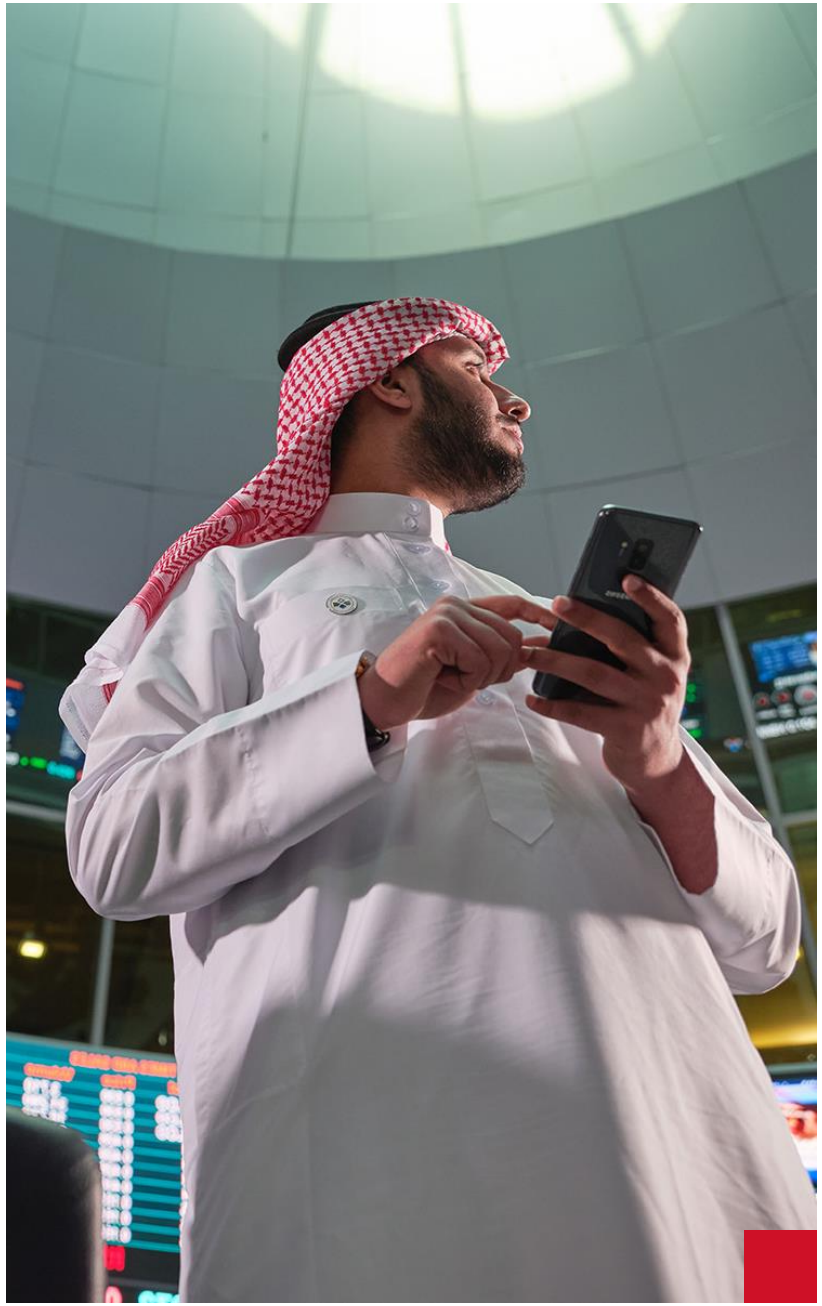
Our Commitment

As an island nation, Bahrain's presence on the ITU Council would bring something new to the community and diversify international representation with the track-record that the Kingdom has built in the ICT sector as well as our digital transformation which has received international recognition, establishing Bahrain as a regional pioneer in the process.

Rich in human capital and skilled talent, we are proud of our network and regulatory readiness, and excited to work with all ITU members to reduce digital gaps and move towards a global digital economy.

Bahrain has **solid common work policies with the UN** and several UN agencies across various economic sectors. This candidacy is a **further commitment to extend Bahrain's efforts to the telecommunications and ICT sector**, which has become a key enabler to economic growth and social development.

Through the ITU Council, we aim to contribute to developing the ever-changing global digital landscape and being part of achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals that also align with the Kingdom's strategic ICT priorities as part of Vision 2030.



A regional leader

Bahrain has ranked first in the Arab region in the ITU ICT Development Index (IDI) for several consecutive years and continues to be a regional ICT leader offering the most competitive and affordable ICT services, with operational savings of 30-40% compared to nearby countries.

Being the **first country in the GCC to deregulate its Telecommunication sector, adopt a Cloud-First Policy nation-wide and a plan to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2060**, it has contributed to Amazon Web Services' decision to set up its hyperscale Cloud Region in Bahrain, also the first in MENA. Similarly, China's Tencent Cloud also deployed its First MENA Region Internet Data Centre Hub in Bahrain.

The Kingdom's recently announced post-COVID19 Economic Recovery Plan 2022-2026 will also further build on a digital transformation that has already begun. As part of the plan, **the Kingdom aims to offer 100% national broadband network coverage and automate more than 200 additional government services in addition to over 560 government e-services currently provided.**

Already, Bahrain is seeing progress made on this front from both the public and private sectors. **The government has undertaken an initiative to train at least 20,000 citizens on cybersecurity**. In addition, the national labour fund, Tamkeen, who has supported more than 100,000 individuals, is set to train 1,200 Bahrainis in coding and emerging technology while the launch of Citi's Global Technology Hub will create 1,000 coding jobs in Bahrain over the next 10 years –further enriching the local tech talent supply.

Bahrain:
A Leader in ICT

1st Regionally

ICT Development Index by ITU for Four Consecutive Years **(2013 – 2017)**

5G

100% Network Coverage

Up to 2 Gbps Download Speed

Annual Sector

Revenue exceeds
USD 1.2 Billion

3.5% of GDP Contribution in 2020

BNET National Ultrafast Broadband

100% Businesses

81% Households

Sector Investments between 2010 - 2020

Exceeds
USD 2 Billion

Total Automated Government Services: 568

439 on national portal

19 on self-service kiosks

11 on smartphone applications

Sector Job Creation in 2020

71% Bahraini Nationals

33% Female Workforce

Bahrain:
A Leader in ICT

Mobile Broadband

+635%
Subscriptions since 2010

-42%
Prices since 2011

Fixed Wired Broadband

+141%
Subscriptions since 2010

-81%
Prices since 2013

Lowest Price in Arab Region
in 2020

Average Monthly Data Usage per Subscription

54
GB

+1250%
since 2010

Customer Satisfaction Index (2020)

88%
Internet Services

95%
Mobile Services

A Track Record in ICT

The Kingdom of Bahrain gained its independence 50 years ago, on the 16th of December 1971. But our ICT journey started almost 100 years before that, going as far back as 1864 when the nation was connected to the Indo-European sub-sea telegraph cable.

1931 — Introduction of telegraph and telephony services (by UK firm Cable and Wireless, an integral player in early development of local ICT sector)

1947 — 1st Telegraphic Office opens

1949 — Installation of Bahrain's 1st automatic telephone exchange

1969 — Bahrain enters age of satellite communication as Middle East's first satellite station is opened by the late Amir HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa at Ras Abu Jarjour

1975 — Bahrain joins ITU as member after its independence in 1971

1980 — 1st Digital Telephone Exchange

1981 — Establishment of Bahrain Telecommunications Company (Batelco) by legislative decree (18) of 1981

1985 — 1st Fibre Optic Cable installation

Early 1990s — Mobile Services launches in Bahrain

1995 — Internet launches in Bahrain and made readily available to citizens

1998 — 2G Mobile Technology

2003 — Introduction of competition in mobile telecoms through licensing of second mobile operator

Establishment of Bahrain's 1st Internet Exchange

2004 — 3G Nationwide Services

2008 — Issuance of Wimax licences and launch of Wimax internet services

2010 — Licensing of 3rd Mobile Operator

Availability of Fixed and Mobile Number Portability

2013 — Bahrain ranks 1st regionally in ICT Development Index, issued by ITU

1st Mobile Spectrum Award

2014 — 4G Nationwide Services

2015 — Bahrain maintains rank as 1st regionally in ICT Development Index, issued by ITU

ITU awards late Prime Minister, HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, ICT in Sustainable Development Award, in recognition of Bahrain's progress and harnessing of ICT within sustainable development

2016 — Government policy for single NBN infrastructure to deliver ultra-fast broadband products and services through separation of Batelco

Bahrain maintains rank as 1st regionally in ICT Development Index, issued by ITU

2017 — Bahrain maintains rank as 1st regionally in ICT Development Index, issued by ITU

2019 — **April :** 5G Spectrum made available to mobile network operators in 3400-3700 MHz band

May: Start of BNET operations as separate entity

July: 1st commercial 5G services

2020 — **June:** Fibre Broadband infrastructure passes more than 78% of households, 100% business premises

December: Achievement of Nationwide 5G services, becoming one of 1st countries in world with 5G download speeds exceeding 2Gbps

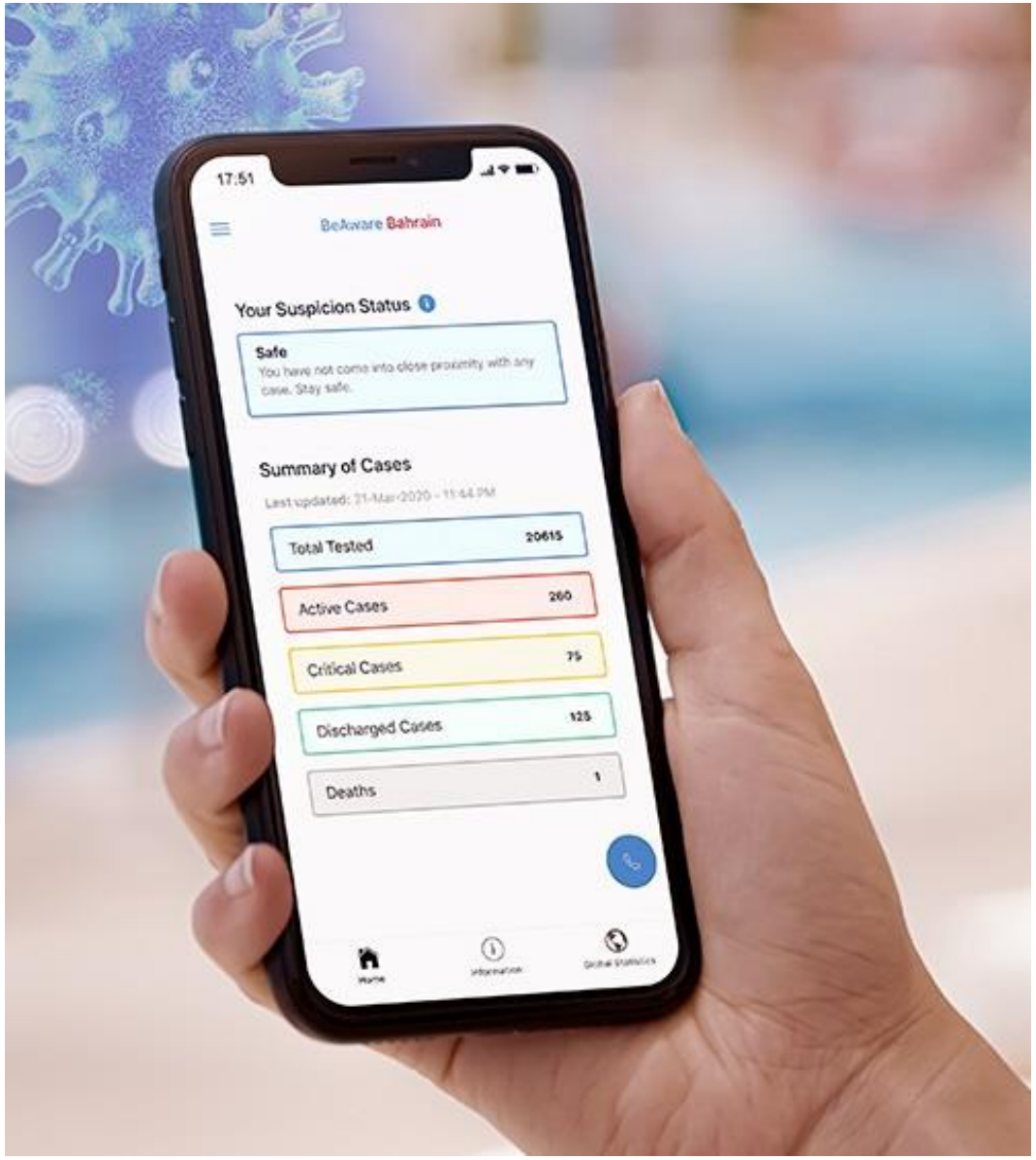
Globally recognized response to the pandemic

The Kingdom's strong digital connectivity stood Bahrain in good stead when the pandemic started coming into full force. Bahrain was able to quickly set up a dedicated National Taskforce and launch a tracing app "BeAware" to contain the spread of the virus and took measures to ensure that testing and quarantine facilities were set up without delay.

The Kingdom has one of the highest testing rates per capita in the world, garnering the recognition of the World Health Organization for its agile response. Bahrain was also the first Arab country to join the Solidarity Trial to find effective treatment for the virus.

To minimize disruption on society, Bahrain was able to support the transition of educational institutions to online learning – quicker than most countries in the world, thanks to the Ministry of Education's online cloud-powered education portal with 5.7 million users, 6600 lessons and 372 e-books as of April 2020.

Global supply chains have also been decimated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, Bahrain's MVC Global in partnership with Cox Logistics Group introduced a first-of-its-kind "SmartHub" logistics warehouse for pharmaceuticals and food to be headquartered in Bahrain and serve the GCC market.



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