

Qnbn connects Qatar for digital future

Mohamad Ali Al Mannai, CEO of Qatar National Broadband Network (Qnbn), discusses the organisation's role in supporting Qatar's digital agenda, and the benefits of high end fibre connectivity

What is the status of the Qnbn fibre network rollout at present?

Qatar National Broadband Network (Qnbn) and Malomatia successfully connected several government ministries as part of the Government Network Project.

Qnbn has connected several towers and compounds in the West Bay area, Msheireb Downtown Doha project, Barwa City, Barwa Commercial Avenue, and has completed so far six central offices across Qatar.

How much room for future growth and capacity is there built into the Qnbn network?

Qnbn was established by the Government of Qatar to meet demand for ICT infrastructure, specifically insufficient land-line capacity to meet future demand and growth. In this capacity, Qnbn is tasked with building a future proof network that is capable of providing exponentially high-speed communication to citizens and businesses alike.

As such, Qnbn's network can be credited with facilitating the growth of the overall telecom market in Qatar, helping to make Qatar a more attractive place to live and do business.

Is Qnbn intended to be a self-funding operation?

The intention was always for Qnbn to become a self-sufficient entity. As such, an amended license was issued to permit Qnbn to offer its products and services on a retail level to organisations that own or operate private networks. Since inception, Qnbn has contributed towards the growth of the ICT sector; and accordingly the government has encouraged increased private sector activity that has opened new opportunities for Qnbn to study partnerships.



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Al Mannai: Qnbn is committed to providing the highest quality of services to stakeholders.

What agreements do you have with operators and commercial third parties at present?

Qnbn has signed agreements with telecom service providers to enable them to deliver broadband services to their customers by using Qnbn's network.

Another similar set of agreements are also in place with telecom service providers that provide Qatar National Broadband Network with access to ducts and other passive telecommunications infrastructure.

A number of other major commercial agreements are currently in place with some of Qatar's best-known names in real estate development, healthcare, oil and gas, education, and government, such as Sidra Medical and Research Center, Qatar University, Qatar Petroleum, MEEZA, Barwa, Ezdan Properties and Msheireb Downtown Doha project, to name a few.

What is Qnbn's role in the Government Network Project? What progress has been made with GNP so far?

The Government Network Project (GNP) is a consortium between Qnbn and Malomatia [a system integrator]. The project aims to connect all ministries and government entities over a dedicated and secure communications platform.

The private network is expected to improve data sharing and enhance e-service security capabilities, while setting a common world-class standard in connectivity between all government ministries.

The project has made significant progress in just a few months and is already connecting many of the country's biggest government agencies. This rapid deploy-

ment is unprecedented in an industry where quality standards are paramount.

What is planned next for the Government Network Project?

In just a few months, the Government Network has connected many of the country's biggest government agencies. When complete, all government ministries will be connected over a dedicated and secure communications platform.

How does Qnbn work with government and other stakeholders to access their needs?

Qnbn is committed to delivering the highest standard of service to its customers, while forging a solid relationship that is based on a collaborative partnership approach. As such, Qnbn invests in carefully assessing each stakeholder's needs through extensive research, market assessments, expert discussions and conducting in-depth meetings with multiple relevant stakeholder groups. This tried and tested approach enables stakeholders to efficiently leverage high speed communication which meets their business needs.

What is Qnbn's role in helping ensure public safety?

Safety benefits resulting from broadband fibre optics include early warning public alert systems and disaster preparation programs, as well as back-up systems for public safety communications networks. Safety benefits can also be passed on to the public through instantaneous access to information in times of crisis and fibre networks' inherent signal security, making them difficult to tap.

Is Qatar National Broadband on track to meet the targets of the National Broadband plan?

Qnbn compliments each of the targets of the National Broadband Plan through its ability to provide end users with open and equal access to all telecom providers, and access to high-speed broadband through its state-of-the-art network which offers fiber with limitless speed.

Despite the challenges faced by Qnbn in its rollout plans, from network and duct sharing to stakeholder commitment, Qnbn is fully committed to supporting the targets set out in the National Broadband Plan.

As such, Qnbn has contributed towards the overall growth of the telecommunications market sector in Qatar, and supported the expansion of digital literacy by highlighting the many benefits of a broadband enriched society.

What is Qnbn's role in supporting the 2030 plan?

The four guiding principles of the Qatar National Vision 2030 for developing a thriving and sustainable national economy focus on human, social, economic and environment development and align closely with Qnbn's commitment.

By providing a state of the art fibre optic broadband network, the high-speed communications will improve the quality of life for Qatar's citizens.

In addition, it will enhance education services, be an engine for business growth and offer truly sustainable solutions that work to preserve the earth's resources and reduce Qatar's carbon footprint and help to make Qatar a more attractive place to live and do business. ■

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