

DEBRIEF

Thought Leadership Circle: Accelerating Technology & AI Implementation

<p>5 Introduction</p> <p>6 ICT Development Index (IDI)</p> <p>7 Speakers</p> <p>8 Key Topics • Aligning Public and Private Efforts Toward Digital Transformation</p> <p>9 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</p> <p>14 Data, Analytics, Cybersecurity & Digital Tools</p>	<p>16 Global Cybersecurity Index 2024</p> <p>18 Challenges, Opportunities, and Outlook for Technology Adoption</p> <p>19 Fiber Development Index Analysis: 2023</p> <p>21 Summary • The Path Kuwait is Taking in Digital and Technological Advancement</p> <p>22 Roadmap to Achieve Kuwait's Digital Transformation Goals</p>
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INTRODUCTION

The Thought Leadership Circle Series event: "Accelerating Technology and AI Implementation," organized in collaboration with The Business Year and the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), provided a vital platform for transformative discussions on Kuwait's digital future. This gathering highlighted Kuwait's commitment to embracing innovation as a driving force for sustainable economic growth and development, and explored strategic investments in technology, the integration of AI into financial services, the advancement of digital infrastructure, and addressing the growing cybersecurity challenges in the digital age.

The roundtable discussion, held over a couple of hours at the Chairman's Club on the 9th of December, featured a diverse group of leaders from both the public and private sectors, including HE Omar Alomar, Minister of Communication Affairs; Mohammad Mulla Yaqoub, Assistant Director General at KDIPA; Abdullah Khaled Al-Ajmi, Acting Chairman at CITRA; Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Zain Kuwait; Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Jaber Al Sabah, Chairman of KBA; Ammar Abdullah Boumijdad, Country Head of Mashreq Bank Kuwait; Esam Al-Kheshnam, CEO of KNET; Shaymaa Al-Terkait, Country Manager of Google Cloud; Sundus Bushari, Managing Director of SAP; Hessa Almuziani, Manager of Information Systems and Operation Department at Central Bank; and Mohammed Al-Kharafi, COO of NBK Group.

HE Omar Alomar, Minister of Communication Affairs, emphasized that this event reflects Kuwait's commitment to becoming a regional hub for technology and innovation. "We believe in the power of collaboration to unlock opportunities," he stated, highlighting how the public and private sectors can unite with a shared vision for progress.

Under the leadership of His Highness Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, and the role of HE Omar Alomar, Kuwait is advancing its vision for a dynamic digital economy, which is a key pillar of Kuwait Vision 2035.

Through the cultivation of public-private partnerships, Kuwait aims to drive sustainable development, economic growth, and enhance the overall quality of life for its citizens.

مقدمة

في إطار سلسلة حلقات "قيادة الفكر: تسريع التكنولوجيا وتطبيق الذكاء الاصطناعي"، التي نظمتها هيئة تشجيع الاستثمار المباشر بالتعاون مع ذا بينزس بير وبحضور معالي وزير الدولة لشؤون الاتصالات، شهدت الكويت منصة حيوية للنقاشات التحولية حول مستقبلها الرقمي أكد الحدث على التزام الكويت بتبني الابتكار كمحرك رئيسي للنمو الاقتصادي المستدام والتنمية، حيث تم استعراض الاستثمارات الاستراتيجية في التكنولوجيا، وسبل دمج الذكاء الاصطناعي في الخدمات المالية، وتطوير البنية التحتية الرقمية، بالإضافة إلى مواجهة التحديات المتزايدة في مجال الأمن السيبراني في العصر الرقمي.

عقدت المناقشة المستديرة يوم 9 ديسمبر في نادي الرؤساء، بمشاركة نخبة من القيادات: في القطاعين العام والخاص، من أبرزهم: معالي عمر العمر، وزير الدولة لشؤون الاتصالات، محمد ملا يعقوب، نائب المدير العام في هيئة تشجيع الاستثمار المباشر، عبدالله العجمي، رئيس مجلس الإدارة بالوكالة في الهيئة العامة للاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات، نواف الغربلي، الرئيس التنفيذي لشركة زين الكويت، الشيخ أحمد دعيح جابر الصباح، رئيس مجلس إدارة اتحاد المصارف الكويتية، عمار بومجداد، رئيس مجموعة بنك المشرق في الكويت، عصام الخشنام، الرئيس التنفيذي لشركة كي نت، شيما التركيت، مديرة شركة جوجل كلاود في الكويت، سندس بوشهري، المدير العام لشركة اس آي بي في الكويت، حصة المزيني، مديرة إدارة نظم المعلومات والعمليات، بنك الكويت المركزي، محمد الخرافي، الرئيس التنفيذي للعمليات، مجموعة بنك الكويت الوطني.

أكد معالي وزير الدولة لشؤون الاتصالات، عمر العمر، أن الحدث يعكس التزام الكويت بأن تصبح مركزاً إقليمياً للتكنولوجيا والابتكار، مشيراً إلى أهمية التعاون بين القطاعين العام والخاص لفتح آفاق جديدة للنمو. وقال: "نؤمن بقوة الشراكة في تحقيق التحول نحو الاقتصاد الرقمي وتعزيز الفرص الواعدة". وأوضح معاليه أن الكويت وبقية دول المنطقة، بقيادة صاحب السمو الشيخ مشعل الأحمد الجابر الصباح، أمير دولة الكويت، تسير بخطى ثابتة نحو اقتصاد رقمي ديناميكي. يمثل ركيزة أساسية في رؤية الكويت 2035، حيث تتمتع هذه الرؤية حول تعزيز البنية التحتية الرقمية، وتمكين الكفاءات الوطنية، وتشجيع الابتكار في مجالات حيوية مثل الذكاء الاصطناعي، والتحليلات المتقدمة، والتجارة الإلكترونية.

من خلال تعزيز الشراكات الاستراتيجية بين القطاعين العام والخاص، تهدف الكويت إلى تحقيق تنمية مستدامة ونمو اقتصادي يساهم في تحسين جودة الحياة لجميع المواطنين، وجعل الكويت مركزاً إقليمياً رائداً في التكنولوجيا الرقمية والابتكار.

ICT Development Index (IDI)

Introduced in 2009 by ITU, the ICT Development Index (IDI) is a composite indicator, which initially aimed to measure the level of development of the ICT sector.

Source: The ICT Development Index 2024
Measuring digital development

IDI 2024 scores

Country	IDI score (2023)	IDI score (2024)	Change	Universal Score	Meaningful score
Kuwait	98.2	100	+2%	100	99.9
Saudi Arabia	94.9	95.7	+1%	94.7	96.8
Qatar	97.3	97.8	+1%	100	95.6
Bahrain	96.5	97.5	+1%	100	95.1
Oman	90.5	91.7	+1%	92.4	91
UAE	96.4	97.5	+1%	100	94.9

Indicator values and scores – IDI 2024

Country	Individuals using the Internet (%)	Households with Internet access at home (%)	Mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	Percentage of the population covered by at least a 3G mobile network	Percentage of the population covered by at least a 4G/LTE mobile network	Mobile broadband Internet traffic per mobile broadband subscription (GB)	Fixed broadband Internet traffic per fixed broadband subscription (GB)	Mobile data and voice high consumption basket price (as % of GNI per capita)	Fixed broadband Internet basket price (as % of GNI per capita)	Individuals who own a mobile phone (%)
Kuwait	99.7	99.4	151.5	100	100	664.5	10003.1	0.7	1.2	99.2
Saudi Arabia	100	100	126	100	100	420.7	6888.8	1.3	4.5	100
Qatar	100.1	96.2	174	100	99.8	138.4	7980.4	0.3	2	99.6
Bahrain	100	100	157.6	100	100	316.9	3092.5	1.7	3	100
Oman	97.8	97.1	115.9	100	99	73	4157.2	2	3.7	97.8
UAE	100	100	234.9	100	99.8	100.1	6614.6	1.1	0.7	100

Indicator values and scores by groups – IDI 2024

Group	Individuals using the Internet (%)	Households with Internet access at home (%)	Active mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	Population covered by at least a 3G mobile network (%)	Population covered by at least a 4G/LTE mobile network (%)	Mobile broadband Internet traffic per subscription (GB)	Fixed broadband Internet traffic per subscription (GB)	Mobile data and voice high consumption basket price (as % of GNI p.c.)	Fixed broadband Internet basket price (as % of GNI p.c.)	Individuals who own a mobile phone (%)
Africa	40.1	42.5	51.1	79.2	60	36.3	1204.7	14.3	80	61.8
Americas	77.2	69.8	74.5	94	86.7	96.1	2580.6	6.4	6.9	83.5
Arab States	72.8	75.1	87.3	90.4	79.3	129.2	3167.7	4.6	9.1	79.4
Asia Pacific	68.8	72	95.3	89	78.6	117.6	2485.5	4.9	8.1	77.9
CIS	77.6	82.4	95.1	95.2	89	115.5	1766.3	1.9	2.9	87
Europe	88.8	90.7	111.6	99.3	98.9	145.5	3500.3	0.7	1.2	94.4

SPEAKERS



**HE Omar
Saud Alomar**
*Minister of State
for Communication
Affairs*



**Mohammad
Mulla Yaqoub**
*Assistant Director
General for Business
Development, KDIPA*



**Abdullah
Khaled Al-Ajmi**
*Acting Chairman of
Board of Director,
CITRA*



**Sheikh Ahmad
Duaij Jaber
Al Sabah**
*Chairman,
KBA*



**Nawaf
Al-Gharabally**
*CEO,
Zain Kuwait*



**Esam
Al-Kheshnam**
*CEO,
KNET*



**Ammar
Abdullah
Boumijdad**
*Country Head,
Mashreq Bank Kuwait*



**Sundus
Bushahri**
*Managing Director,
SAP Kuwait,
MEA North*



**Shaymaa
Al-Terkait**
*Country Manager,
Google Cloud*



**Mohammed
Al-Kharafi**
*COO,
NBK Group*



**Hessa
Almuzaini**
*Manager of
Information Systems
and Operation
Department,
Central Bank of
Kuwait*

KEY TOPICS

**Aligning Public and Private Efforts
Toward Digital Transformation**

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs are a collection of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Source: UN

Kuwait ranking

Country ranking

111/167

Country score

63.8

Regional average

65.6

Sustainable Development Goal 9— Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure

	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Rural population with access to all-season roads (%)	86.4	2024	Yellow	Static
Population using the internet (%)	99.7	2023	Green	Improving
Mobile broadband subscriptions (per 100 population)	151.5	2022	Green	Improving
Logistics performance index: Infrastructure score (worst 1 - 5 best)	3.6	2023	Green	Improving
The Times Higher Education Universities Ranking: Average score of top-3 universities (worst 1 - 100 best)	30.5	2024	Green	Improving
Articles published in academic journals (per 1,000 population)	0.7	2022	Green	Improving
Expenditure on R&D (% of GDP)	0.1	2022	Red	Worsening

Digital transformation in Kuwait relies on effective collaboration between the public and private sectors. This alignment is crucial to fostering innovation, ensuring the responsible use of emerging technologies, and creating a sustainable digital ecosystem. Key discussions centered around the integration of AI, the creation of supportive regulations, and the importance of data sharing.

➤ **Public-Private Collaboration:** Digital transformation requires strong collaboration between the public and private sectors. The public sector provides the necessary regulatory frameworks, ensuring innovation is guided by clear rules. The private sector, on the other hand, brings technological expertise and solutions that drive digital progress. Together, these sectors can build a cohesive and efficient ecosystem, where innovation is encouraged without compromising security or standards. Public-private partnerships are crucial in accelerating digital transformation, improving services, and fostering economic growth.

- HE Omar Alomar, Minister of State for Communications Affairs, emphasized: "We need to ensure that the public and private sectors align in driving digital transformation, with clear regulations that support innovation without stifling it."

- Zain also highlighted the role of telecom in enabling sectors: "We see ourselves as the enabler of technology for all sectors, bridging the gap between the public and private sectors to ensure that every business can leverage the advancements in digital technology."



➤ **AI Integration:** AI should be integrated into broader digital processes, such as data analysis and decision-making, rather than being viewed as an isolated tool. Its role as an enabler of efficiency and innovation is evident in sectors like banking and telecommunications. AI allows businesses to optimize operations and enhance customer experiences by making data-driven decisions. Its integration across various industries will lead to more effective, efficient, and personalized services.

- HE Omar Alomar stated: "AI is not a stand-alone entity; it should be part of the overall digital engagement process, including data analysis and decision-making."

- Zain discussed: "Data fuels AI, and the telecom industry is sitting on vast amounts of data that we can use to enhance AI capabilities for the benefit of every sector. AI is not a tool, but the solution to many challenges faced by businesses today."



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