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أفيريوس للإستشارات وتطوير الأعمال  
Business Advisory and Services

# Transforming the Public Sector in Qatar Through Innovation

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## ■ Introduction

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The public sector serves as the backbone of society, providing crucial support and services essential for communities' well-being. However, as the public sector grapples with complex macro issues, such as public service delivery challenges, there is a growing need for innovative solutions that can help improve efficiency and optimize resources. This is particularly important given that the public sector operates to create a "common good," which requires a well-trained and skilled workforce.

In Qatar, the public sector is an integral part of providing indispensable support and services, focusing on the well-being of communities, both nationals and residents as it embraces innovation and cutting-edge technologies that enable drive efficiency and optimize resources. Focussing on this initiative is highly critical as the public sector must keep up with the private sector's pace in innovation and transformation.

Several factors serve as an impetus for this transformation. Firstly, the challenges in public service delivery to meet the growing needs of the population with diverse socio-economic conditions is a driver of innovation. Secondly, the government's ability to support companies such as test-beds for technology proofs-of-concept, pilots for prototypes, and early adopters of new products and solutions. Furthermore, Qatar's vision for a sustainable and diversified economy stipulated in the Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030 enhances the delivery of public services. This vision is aimed at many private firms offering innovative solutions that are creating a combination of applying global trends in local contexts through their innovation partners.

In summary, the public sector is a vital unit of society, and it must embrace innovation to optimize resources and improve efficiency. By learning from successful private sector experiments and adopting a dynamic and responsive approach, the public sector can overcome the challenges it faces and continue to provide essential services to society understanding that the public sector is a starting point in seeing opportunities for innovation.

This report presents an overview of the future of public sector innovation in Qatar. The second section highlights innovation practices in Qatar, while the third section delves into the individual and organizational capabilities required to embrace innovation. The report culminates with recommendations for accelerating the Middle East's innovation process.

## ■ Qatar's Public Sector Future, The Importance of Innovation

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The public sector's concept of innovation encompasses a broad range of possibilities, from unique organizational management and employee incentivization methods to innovative communication strategies within government entities. Ultimately, public sector innovation involves generating, cultivating, and implementing inventive ideas that lead to tangible societal gains through creativity and an entrepreneurial mindset. Governments and public institutions worldwide are continually pushing the envelope by developing ground-breaking systems for social security and healthcare provision, introducing online platforms and smart card technology, implementing public health initiatives, and introducing inventive incentives aimed at reducing carbon emissions.

The future of public sector innovation is closely tied to the digitalization of government practices, known as Hukoomi. This involves the use of digital technologies and products by the public sector, to address the need for digital transformation and innovative practices. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a global upscaling and integration of innovation in public service delivery, particularly in Qatar, with innovation playing a crucial role in economic recovery strategies, logistics and supply chain management, digital healthcare partnerships, and collaborations such as developing the Ehteraz application to combat serious outbreaks.

In addition, adopting clean energy practices and promoting zero-carbon emissions by 2050 is another significant trend in government and economic policy focussed by the State of Qatar. To measure the performance of energy innovation systems, governments are increasingly seeking innovative solutions to prioritize technologies and benchmark progress on an international level. They are continually enhancing their tracking frameworks for energy transition, which can serve as a reference for practitioners and experts in the public, private, and research sectors. Innovation in public service delivery is pivotal in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015. The public sector is the world's largest service provider, with 35% of the 169 SDG targets related to the public sector. Therefore, governance transformation and sustainable development are necessary prerequisites for governments to innovate institutions, systems, and processes.

Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation Council (QRDI) have envisioned the landscape in 2030 as an integrated system that facilitates the mobility of people, capital, and ideas that translates ideas into successful commercialization. Furthermore, it includes enhancing and encouraging the role of businesses engaged in RDI activities and bolstering the country's innovation competitiveness in the long run.



The QRDI 2030 strategy was framed with extensive collaboration and consultation with the Council members, where the priority areas of the strategy are aligned to energy, health, resource sustainability, society, and digital technology. This initiative is to bring together the RDI stakeholders from government, industry, and academia to work together and collaborate for future RDI activities in Qatar. QRDI has coined the term “golden triangle” which refers to the coordination of government, industry, and academia that is a basis of Qatar’s RDI future.

The successive National Development Strategies (NDS) are important building blocks in the innovation ecosystem at the national level that strive towards QNV 2030. The third NDS (2023–2030) focuses on achieving the four pillars of economic, social, human, and environmental aspects after the successful completion of the second NDS. In his interview in early 2023, His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that the Government emphasized that the third phase of NDS would improve the level of services provided to generate revenues and enhance its resources including ensuring the highest levels of training and job-opportunities to the population. Furthermore, it would “include ambitious plans aimed at reaching a goal better than where we are today.”

The Third National Development Strategy aims to develop and maintain Qatar’s readiness to confront challenges and propel the State of Qatar into the ranks of developed nations by 2030. Furthermore, the seventh strategic outcome of NDS 3 is about achieving government excellence, thereby positioning Qatar as a world-class provider of government services to citizens, residents, businesses, and other organizations. This strategy also aspires to establish Qatar as a leader in effective, efficient, and transparent governance. To achieve this, several tracks are being pursued, with a primary focus on developing, designing, and delivering government services by strengthening core capabilities in innovation and digitization.



## ■ Public Sector Innovation Practices in Qatar

Developing effective strategies for fostering innovation in the public sector is dependent on several factors, including the prevailing economic conditions and the existing innovation practices within the sector. By analysing the various stages of innovation, suitable methods can be planned and implemented. To successfully navigate the innovation process, public sector organizations need to address each stage, which may require unique methods and cultural adaptations, and ultimately integrate them into a cohesive innovation system.

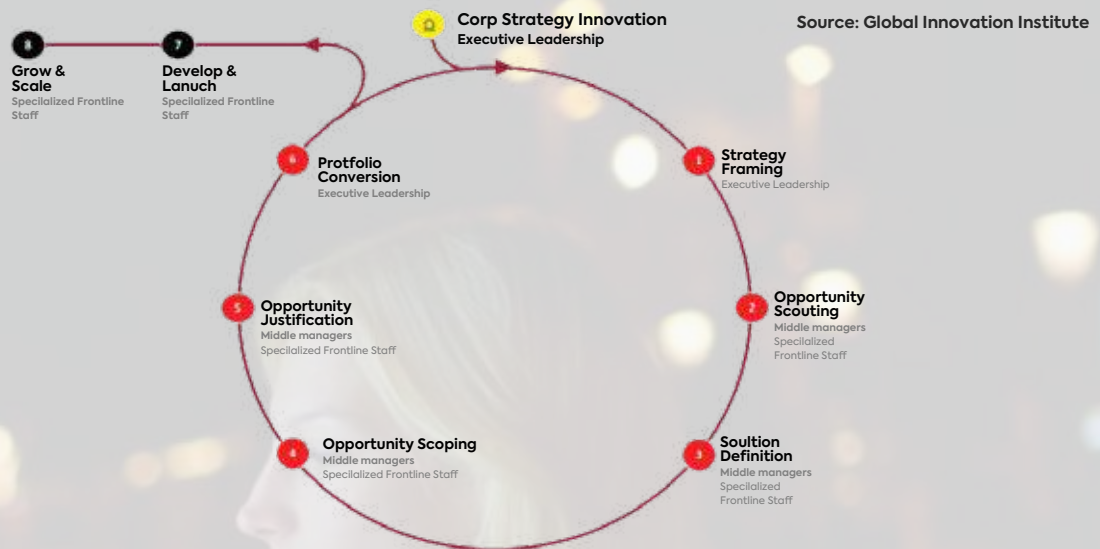
While real innovations may not consistently follow a linear progression, the spiral model remains a valuable framework for approaching the necessary methods and abilities required at each phase. Despite occasional setbacks, deviations, or advancements, this model offers a systematic approach to the innovation process.



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## Stages of Innovation



The journey of innovation commences with exploring innovative solutions to address existing problems by strategic framing and meticulous scouting for opportunities. This is an intricate process that involves defining the proposed solutions and rigorous justification of the identified opportunities. It is imperative to seamlessly integrate the solutions into the existing portfolio by facilitating organic growth followed by embarking on the development and launch of the innovation initiative. Through the orchestration of these steps, organizations can effectively and seamlessly navigate through a transformative innovation journey.

There are many countries adopting innovation and innovative practices to foster growth in different economies. The public sector organisations in Qatar have also developed many innovative solutions over the years in various undertakings such as:

### 1. Pursuit to Qatar National Vision (QNV) of 2030

QNV emphasizes the importance of innovation and technology that helps in achieving Qatar's development goals. There are several initiatives to promote innovation in public sector organisations

### 1.1 | Strengthening institutional capacity

Developing institutional capacity is one of the key factors that facilitate innovation. This includes initiatives for capacity building, and promoting a culture of innovation within government agencies and organisations.

### 1.2 | Promoting collaboration

There has been rising significance for partnerships and collaboration with private sector academia and civil society to foster innovation through identifying and implementing innovative solutions. The government of Qatar has been encouraging several public-private partnerships to promote innovation.



### ■ 1.3 | **Research and Development**

The Government of Qatar recognises that education and research are the drivers of innovation under Qatar National Vision (QNV 2030). The heavy investment in research particularly in science and technology has led to the establishment of world-class educational institutions and improvement of current institutions like Qatar University, Qatar Foundation and Qatar Science and Technology Park. The research, development and innovation ecosystem of Qatar under QRDI encourages collaborations among innovative businesses and commercialisation. The QRDI 2030 strategy is established through extensive collaboration among government, industry and academia, which forms the 'golden triangle'. This initiative envisions the development of Qatar's competitiveness.

### ■ 1.4 | **Digitalised service delivery**

The TASMU Smart Qatar initiative with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology was established to transform Qatar into a world-class smart city with the latest digital solutions that aim to increase and improve Qatar's competitiveness by international standards. This initiative is a starting point for all start-ups, SMEs and MNCs to foster innovation. In addition, there are several initiatives to digitalise public service delivery such as the e-government portal.

### ■ 1.5 | **Entrepreneurship**

Qatar has established several programs and initiatives to support startups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and budding entrepreneurs including funding, mentorship and access to facilities and resources through centres like Qatar Business Incubation Centre (QBIC), Qatar Development Bank (QDB) as a part of the QNV 2030.



## 2. Unseen to seen

Qatar had adopted the open government initiative to become more transparent, accountable and responsive to the general public as a part of the Qatar Digital Government of 2020 Strategy. This initiative aims to achieve “Increased Government Openness” as one of its major objectives. As a part of this strategic initiative, Qatar has been involved in e-participation that incorporates e-information to provide access to information, e-consultation by engaging and encouraging deeper contributions to public policies and services, e-decision making by empowering people through co-design and co-production of both policy options and delivery modalities. The National Development Strategy prioritizes transforming Qatar into a knowledge-based economy to drive growth and promote a culture of innovation.



## 3. Leveraging opportunities

Information and Communications technology in Qatar is encouraging several digital initiatives in the wake of the Qatar National Vision of 2030. Furthermore, the FIFA World Cup 2022 led to the development of a smart city with technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), 5G and artificial intelligence to promote sustainability and mobility. The development of the Lusail City project is one of the major success stories during the World Cup. Qatar is also looking to leverage opportunities in areas such as e-sports subsequent to the World Cup 2022.

Several innovative initiatives gained popularity in the hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022 and brought Qatar to centre stage. The Al Rihla World Cup ball was equipped with an Adidas Suspension System that contains an inertial measurement unit (IMU) that accurately detects tight offside incidents. The stadium cooling technology was one of the most sophisticated innovations that deployed an air-circulation technique that maintained the temperature at the stadiums. Assistive Technology such as Bonocle and Feelix Palm made the World Cup inclusive and accessible to the visually impaired without compromising on the real experience. Qatar aimed at delivering sustainable tournaments by using renewable energy. One such solution was the development of El Palm, that are charging docks equipped with energy from wind turbines and solar panels.

## 4. Digitized world

Governments are increasingly exploring ways to leverage technology to improve policy and legislation by making them machine-readable. The Ministry of Transport and Communication attaches particular interest and importance to digital government and cyber security initiatives. In line with Qatar Digital Government 2020 Strategy, Qatar Digital Government supports agencies to encourage digital transformations that enable better interaction by the public with the government. As cybersecurity threats increase at a rapid pace, the Ministry has launched initiatives with the sole responsibility to protect Qatar's critical ICT infrastructure and systems.

## 5. Cross-border solutions

Cross-border innovation solutions provide a comprehensive approach to implementing policies and delivering innovative services aimed at scaling up novel solutions for various issues. For instance, the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) is a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship that develops cross-border solutions through collaboration with international partners. The Park and Free Zones have contributed to the development, implementation and commercialization of new products, services and technologies.

The Msheireb is one of the successful models for transforming and implementing smart city applications through public-private partnerships with the objective of transformation to smart cities. Qatar reiterated the strategic initiative for building smart cities under the vision of a "Sustainable Future of Resilience". In addition, there are several international conferences such as the World Economic Forum and United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals Summit, represented by Qatar that enable business leaders to share ideas and collaborate on cross-border solutions.

## 6. Investing infrastructure

Projects such as Hamad International Airport, the Qatar rail network and the development of Lusail City were heavily invested in by the Government of Qatar after recognising that the emphasis on infrastructure is critical to supporting innovation in the public sector. Furthermore, as sustainability is heavily prioritised by most economies, NDS also focuses on reducing carbon emissions and preserving natural resources to support sustainability.



## 7. Economic diversification

The second National Development Strategy of Qatar aimed to diversify the economy and reduce Qatar's dependence on hydrocarbon resources. Public sector innovation can support the growth of non-oil sectors and the development of new, unique and diverse industries. The energy sector in Qatar is constantly evolving to more sustainable and alternative sources of energy to satisfy local energy demand. Qatar's key, effective and sophisticated environmental institutions like the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) focus on applied research, technology innovation and entrepreneurship and the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute (QEERI) addresses national priorities related to water security, energy and environment are involved in projects delivering cleaner burning and new and sustainable ways of producing energy. The usage of energy-efficient solar PVs in the operations of Msherieb Downtown, and the eco-friendly transportation solutions in the construction of Lusail City are a few examples. The Qatar Green Building Council is constantly deploying environmentally sustainable practices for the design and development of sustainable infrastructure. Qatar has been conducting long-term research to address environmental priorities in the energy sector such as the reduction of methane, collaborating with strategic partners to integrate carbon capture and storage technologies that aim to reduce greenhouse emissions by 25% by 2030, according to the Paris Agreement.

## 8. Bridging the Gaps and Pioneering Innovation

The contributions of Qatar Airways cannot be overlooked in the Qatari innovation ecosystem. The ground breaking Q-suite cabins are one of the most renowned innovative features. Furthermore, Qatar Airways received prestigious awards such as the Aviation and Hospitality Innovation Award in 2017 from The Telegraph magazine for its luxurious tourism offerings which motivated them to maintain its title as the 'World's Best Business Class through its unwavering commitment to innovation in aviation. In 2019, Qatar Airways became the first airline to implement an innovative three-year foam washing system for aircraft engines. In addition, they are also the first passenger airline to employ natural gas-derived fuel and partnered with the European Airbus team in the development of the Airbus A350. This aligns with Qatar's broader innovation efforts in bridging the gaps.

The Qatar Open Innovation Program, launched by the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council (QRDI) stands at the forefront of promoting innovation in Qatar. While aiming to bolster and foster innovation in Qatar, this pioneering initiative nurtures the local innovation ecosystem for future growth. QRDI collaborates with government entities across five major areas of driving innovation, increasing productivity and creating new employment opportunities.

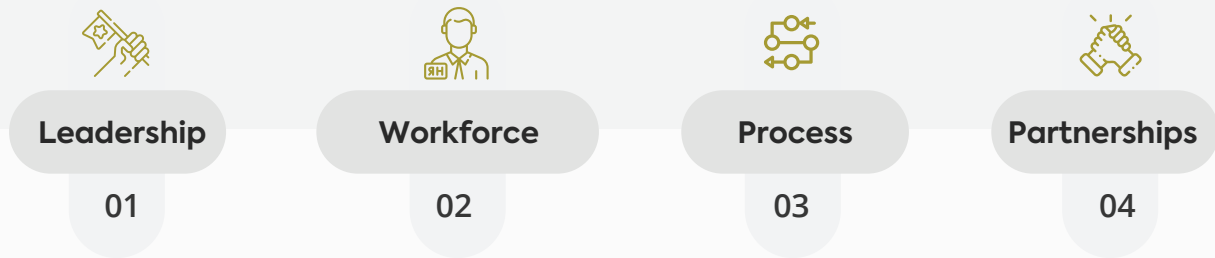
Furthermore, this initiative aims to bring together a pool of research and development experts and specialists within the corporate and government sectors to enhance their competitiveness and growth by developing and adopting innovative technological solutions. It also encourages local organisations to engage in pilot research and development.

The Qatar Open Innovation Program also provides a wide scope for start-ups affiliated with universities with five out of thirty-one proposals submitted in partnership with these institutions. Through partnerships and licensing, this initiative enables the sharing of the inventions of universities with local companies. Additionally, the program allocates a new budget for technology development grants within Qatar through continuous expansion over the years.

Qatar Open Innovation Program serves as a prominent catalyst in advancing Qatar's innovation ecosystem through extensive collaboration with stakeholders in the key sectors. Furthermore, it supports the adoption of innovation and facilitates the development and piloting of innovative solutions through the connection of start-ups, SMEs and other local organisations.

## Individual and Organizational Capabilities to foster innovation

Establishing a culture of innovation within the government is imperative for driving progress in the public sector. This is accomplished through four fundamental pillars:



Effective and capable leadership is crucial for promoting and embracing innovation in the long run. Therefore, employee training and development programs should focus on equipping the workforce with the necessary skills and competencies to support innovation-driven leadership. To revolutionize policymaking and enhance public service, an innovative process is essential, which can be incorporated through the blend of innovation in the planning and quality departments of organisations. Finally, partnerships between the public sector and larger entities can establish standards that support long-lasting change.

### Four pillars of innovation—Creating a culture

Leadership	Workforce	Process	Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include experimentation and technical literacy in the C-suite level.</li> <li>• Hold leaders accountable through performance targets and evaluation of organizational culture.</li> <li>• Take advantage of tools such as 360 feedback tools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovate hiring with expert assessment and regular applicant updates.</li> <li>• Reduce time-to-hire with shared assessments and practices.</li> <li>• Improve shared assessments and attract diverse candidates, plus create tours of duty for industry experts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with diverse government customers to improve program design and incentivize their feedback.</li> <li>• Create responsive structures in the public corporations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve data sharing via APIs and research agreements.</li> <li>• Engage the public in program design and evaluation through various entry points.</li> <li>• Develop innovative funding strategies for government R&amp;D.</li> <li>• Cultivate partnerships between government levels.</li> <li>• Facilitate shared processes and technical solutions across government levels.</li> <li>• Host annual conferences to showcase innovation successes and promote collaboration.</li> </ul>



Numerous institutions aim to enhance individual proficiency and establish corporate competencies to facilitate a culture of innovation that results in amplified expansion, competitiveness and effectiveness. **Global Innovation Institute (GInI)** is one of the world's most widely recognised institutes promoting innovation in diverse sectors and industries. It aims to advance individual careers and transform organizational achievements by advancing the profession of innovation leadership. Their established range of services includes professional development, training and certification, innovation maturity assessment and accreditation, and networking and consulting. In addition, GInI has collaborated worldwide with multiple universities, government institutions and non-profit organizations to address their intricate organizational challenges using innovative strategies.

### Building a culture of innovation necessitates cultivating both individual and organizational competencies

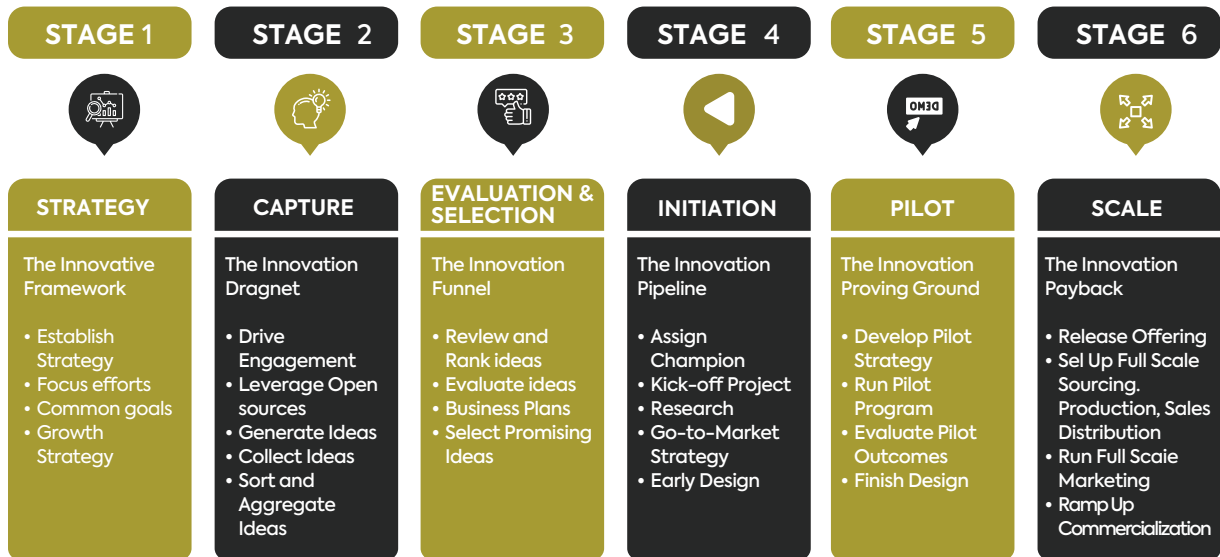
Building a culture of innovation necessitates cultivating both individual and organizational competencies. At the individual level, the augmentation of curiosity, problem-solving skills, creativity and knowledge is developed through training, development and certifications that enhance adaptability. It fosters self-assurance and stimulates the drive for ongoing learning in risk-taking.

Organizational vision and practices are the foundation of the right adoption and execution of innovation. It is imperative to conduct a thorough evaluation of the organisation's structure, capacity, scope of work, complexity and current structure. Organisations at the C-suite level can furnish the right strategy and methodology to implement innovation by collaborating with adept business professionals and experts.



## ■ Conclusion

Adopting the right innovation strategy and framework is imperative for the successful implementation of innovative practices in any type of organization. Different innovation management frameworks can be adapted to enable a smooth transition to a culture of innovation within the organization, depending on its type and size. Global Innovation Institute (GII) has developed the **GII Innovation Management System™ (InMS™)** – an innovation framework, reflecting a six-stage funnel and pipeline process.



Source: Global Innovation Institute





## The broad framework can be customized according to the type, system, budget, and scope of the organization.

As part of the **GInI Innovation Strategy**, public organizations can deploy various types of growth vehicles, including but not limited to:

1. **Internal Research and Development** – This includes setting up centres of excellence and developing product and technology roadmaps. This fosters a culture of innovation within the public sector that helps drive transformation.
2. **Partnerships** – The partnership with private sector companies depends on their unique objectives, benefit/drawback profile, and intended outcomes. However, this can encourage innovation by creating a space for experimentation and creativity.
3. **Corporate venturing** – Public sector organizations can invest in different startups or ventures based on costs, risk profile, and the intended outcomes to promote innovative investments.
4. **Public Engagement**- Engaging the public through open innovation challenges, citizen feedback mechanisms and co-creation initiatives can ensure that public services are responsive to their needs.
5. **Collaboration with academia and industry**- Qatar has a strong research and development ecosystem that promotes collaboration and exchange of ideas and expertise with academia that drives innovation.
6. **Taking roles**- The Central agencies can play the role of stewards in recognising, supporting and leveraging activities that are of strength to a particular sector or organisation. Furthermore, greater opportunities for the employees in the practice of innovation within the sector can help in building and executing initiatives. The practice of cross-agency leadership can establish deploying talents from within the sector and help in identifying how other parts of the system can contribute to a broader innovation agenda.

To support and drive the innovation strategy, GInI has developed the **GInI Enterprise Innovation Architecture (EInA)** model as the innovation engine required to create a culture of innovation, with its leadership mandate to innovation, organizational structures it uses, the roles and responsibilities it calls upon, and the processes it employs – all to ensure a constant flow of open, divergent ideas for new business opportunities.



To measure the level of **Innovation Maturity** in public, private or non-profit organizations, GInI, through third-party independent consultants, conducts maturity assessment review and process that encompasses three areas of the innovation program, covering the innovation strategy, the enterprise innovation architecture, and the innovation outcomes.



The **Certified Government Innovative Organization (CGInO)** accreditation establishes that your organization has demonstrated a certain level of maturity and capability concerning being able to consistently deliver on short, medium, and long-term innovation and growth endeavours. This distinguishes your organization among its peers as being capable of delivering leading-edge value and customer experiences to its constituents and benchmarks your current status to the most innovative organizations globally.

GInI's certifications and accreditations are highly respected and reflect the latest and most effective methods, trends, and strategies in innovation leadership.

In addition, QRDI has been articulating National Development strategies and expanding research based on corporate innovation, SME product innovation, multinational R&D Innovation centres, Government support, R&D-based start-ups, Venture Capital, corporate venture funds, start-up accelerators and incubators. The Middle Eastern region has abundant untapped resources that public organizations can deploy to adapt to the changing environment and provide services to the public.

**It is time for the public sector in Qatar to accept and embrace innovation and lead the way to a better and brighter future.**



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## ■ About Averroes

Averroes is a certified partner of the Global Innovation Institute (GINI) and a provider of consulting services and training in the field of innovation. We are an international consulting company with local roots that provides services to clients in various sectors, including public, private, and non-profit. Our consulting services focus on strategy, innovation, institutional excellence, institutional development, institutional change and transformation, business development, financial consulting, beneficiary research, and customer experience. We implement our services using the best international practices.

Averroes has a passionate team with extensive global experience and a keen understanding of local culture. Our mission, culture, and people are dedicated to providing the highest value to our customers and working collaboratively with them to solve their most difficult problems.

We customize all of our consulting work to perfectly fit the needs of our clients and the reality of their business environment. We address our clients' situations and needs with the greatest possible flexibility and determination, offering innovative solutions to their toughest challenges. We provide practical solutions that make every output we offer unique and client-specific.

Our philosophy is based on working jointly with our clients, allowing for the greatest possible knowledge sharing, transfer, and internal capacity building within the boundaries of our clients' organizations.

We aspire to deliver lasting improvements and achieve sustainable results.

### ■ How can we help?



- Develop institutional capabilities in the field of innovation and provide training programs accredited by the Global Innovation Institute.
- Assess the level of institutional maturity in the field of innovation.
- Develop innovation strategies and methodologies.

### ■ Disclaimer



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The beginning of a sustainable  
shift towards a brighter future

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