

Summary

Manama, Bahrain 8-10 May 2018

Future Flash: The Power of the Cloud

9 May

Key points

- The Cloud is a key element in sweeping technological changes on which Bahrain is keen to capitalise. The Kingdom has energetically supported a major inward investment by Amazon.
- As part of maximising Cloud-related opportunities, investors can gain outsized investment returns by engaging with amazing tech start-ups in the Gulf region.
- The shift of business processes to the Cloud is taking place at the same time as Gulf governments transition from being 'operators' to 'facilitators', which will open up commercial opportunities for Cloud-based service providers.

Synopsis

Bahrain recognises the opportunities of the Cloud and has developed a joined-up approach across government ministries to support a major inward investment by Amazon. The tech giant was attracted by the vision Bahrain displayed as well as the practical support for the huge number of details, including planning permissions and supplies by utilities. These details were addressed at a high level and with energy and coordination across departments and agencies.

Teresa Carlson, Vice President, World Wide Public Service, Amazon Web Services, said she was "inspired by the Gulf region". She is keen to support a culture of entrepreneurship and tech start-ups, and Amazon's presence in Bahrain will help to stimulate such a culture. Alongside this venture, it is important that more money from the Gulf region is invested in start-ups in the region. Investment opportunities in tech and the Cloud exist not just in Silicon Valley but also here in the Middle East.

Carlson also talked of "amazing" tech enterprises that are already in operation, run by young people in Bahrain and its neighbours. She highlighted the potential of computer science graduates from the region, of whom 60% are female. It's time to change the mindset about how to make money: it's no longer just from 'traditional' sources of wealth like construction, it's also from the Cloud and all the other technological opportunities.

Encouragingly, such a change in mindset is already in motion in the Gulf region. Alharith Alatawi, Chief Executive Officer, OneGCC, Bahrain, has first-hand experience of the increasing levels of interest in his company's Cloud-based services and solutions. The company's recent growth, driven by clients in the Gulf region, gives a glimpse of the potential.

Given the ambitions of Bahrain and its neighbours for a better future for young generations, and the fact that the future is bound up with technology and the Cloud, it's no surprise that a vision is emerging of a Gulf region where the Cloud will increasingly enable many new services and entrepreneurs.

In terms of concrete investment opportunities, a fortunate coincidence is that the Gulf's governments are transitioning from being 'operators' to 'facilitators' at the same time as the Cloud is allowing the rethinking of many processes. So the scenarios where innovative Cloud-based services can take over operations from shrinking governmental bureaucracies are clear.

Session panellists

Teresa Carlson, Vice President, World Wide Public Service, Amazon Web Services

Alharith Alatawi, Chief Executive Officer, OneGCC, Bahrain

Abdulrahman bin Mutrib, Group Chief Technology Officer, AlTayyar

H.E. Mohammed Al Qaed, Chief Executive, Information and E-Government Authority

Moderator: **Richard Quest**, Anchor, “Quest Means Business”, CNN International, United States

Disclosures

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