

## QNBN: CHANGING LIVES IN QATAR

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*Ahmed Al-Sulaiti, Chief Technical Officer, Qnbn, talks about how Qnbn's vision and initiative will bring about radical changes in Qatar through enhancing life in all its facets.*

### **Can you briefly tell us how the initiative was created?**

Qatar National Broadband Network, known as Qnbn, was initiated by the government of Qatar and ictQatar to meet the 2015 ICT strategy in realization of Qatar's 2030 vision. This visionary and collaborative approach is very crucial to the future development of the country and the telecom market in Qatar in general as it will provide the nation-wide high-speed broadband fiber access to both residential users as well as businesses and enterprises.

Qnbn will be focused on the deployment of a passive network infrastructure

providing equal and open access to operators to offer choice for the end-user whilst efficiently leveraging existing and new infrastructure in Qatar. Qnbn aims to achieve 95% coverage across the country in line with the Qatar ICT Strategy in 2015.

The project also aims at preventing duplication of civil works and investments.

Moreover, major projects and developments are planned for Qatar in the coming years so the infrastructure has to be ready and strong enough. In 2015, Qatar will be hosting the World Men's Handball Championship, and in 2022 we will be hosting the World Cup.

### **How is this plan contributing to the development of Qatar's telecommunications market?**

Fiber to the Home (FTTH), is a vital catalyst for economic growth. This project will make speeds exponentially faster while at the same time all types of users will benefit from enhanced delivery of communication services, cost savings, increased competitiveness and improved sustainability.

I believe that our fiber optic broadband network will change how people perform their daily tasks and will empower and strengthen businesses across the nation. At home or in the office, people will be able to enjoy next generation services and connectivity. High speed access will definitely accelerate business development, thus providing new opportunities for innovation, expansion and e-commerce. By focusing and investing in the network infrastructure, we will be able to make fiber optics a must-have option to the citizens of Qatar. In addition, telecom operators will be able to focus on investing in innovation in terms of product content and service development. FTTH will accelerate growth and encourage innovation to help build a viable digital future for the country and thus boost economic development and growth.

### **What can you tell us about the roadmap of deployment? Did you face any challenges?**

In order to deploy the network without duplication while at the same time meet all the requirements of the aggressive plan we set, we cannot but face challenges. However, by working closely with operators we can overcome any challenge. Only through coordination and prior agreements we can get to achieve our goals without duplications especially when it comes to using the ducts of the operators with whom we work. For example, we signed an agreement with Qtel, now Ooredoo. As per this agreement, Ooredoo will supply Qnbn with duct network access and access to other passive telecommunications infrastructure over the next 20 years with fixed rates.

We also signed another wholesale agreement with Vodafone. This agreement was the first of its kind as it enables a licensed telecom operator to use Qnbn's network to deliver telecom services to customers, and is thus an important step towards establishing Qnbn's commercial offering in Qatar.

### **What are the main benefits consumers will feel after completion of the network?**

With this project underway and with the rollout of fiber optic network, users all over Qatar will be able to enjoy the fastest internet speeds. They will be able to download big audio and video files in just a few minutes as an example. Fiber broadband will make the future of communications. It will boost businesses as well as improve government, healthcare, environment, households, real estate, education and public safety services across the nation for a better quality of life for everyone.

This plan will provide everyone with affordable prices nationwide, high speeds and just one piece of passive network which is purely fiber optic network.

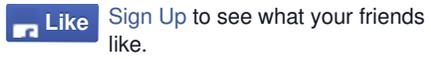
### **The government of Qatar is known as an initiative taker. What is the feedback from this initiative which is directly targeted at broadband?**

In addition to the fact that our initiative finds solid ground in the 2030 vision, we have the full support of the government when it comes to deploying this network. The government fully understands the importance of this project and how it can support all facets of life on a daily basis. This support acts as one of the key pillars of this vision.

### **What is your final message?**

In the coming few years, we expect to cover 95% of the residential areas and 100% of the enterprise sector.

In the meantime, we need to make sure that all stakeholders understand the importance of our project as we need their support along with the operators to meet this strategic project and achieve our plan.



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