



**MEDIA & PRODUCTION
SECTOR IN QATAR**
CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT SERIES

2021



QDB

بنك قطر للتنمية
QATAR DEVELOPMENT BANK

CEO'S MESSAGE



Abdulrahman Hesham Al-Sowaidi

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As part of Qatar's efforts to develop its private sector and bring progress to the country's Entrepreneurship, SME, and Innovation Ecosystems towards the realization of its national vision for 2030, Qatar Development Bank (QDB) continues to advance its role as the Entrepreneur's and SME's growth partner from ideation to fruition.

QDB continues to make strides in its transformation and reinvention journey while meeting the aspirations of Qatari business owners throughout their journey with a multitude of symbiotic initiatives and growth platforms that perpetually expand possibilities for forward-looking SMEs and entrepreneurs and empower them to play an even bigger role in Qatar's transformation into a diversified knowledge-based economy and a global leader in business and innovation.

In line with its objectives to establish reliable data and analysis as a prerequisite for the formation of new ventures on a sound and viable business basis, and extend meaningful support to Qatari entrepreneurs, QDB has published a series of five current state assessment reports across service sectors. To bring a fresh new outlook on potential services and arms entrepreneurs with relevant information and perspectives that can be leveraged to enter those sectors and their niches with confidence.

This report covers Qatar's Media & Production sector with a focus on the rise of digital media, on-demand content, and the advancement of next-gen data and digital entertainment technologies. Globally, digital advertising revenue overtook traditional advertising revenue in 2019; and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 6.6% between 2020 and 2024. The sharp rise in preference for on-demand content, and the simultaneous growth of on-demand content providers hold promising spots. OTT, across the world, is forecast to expand at 10.4% CAGR between 2020 and 2024, whereas traditional television and home video is estimated to grow at 0.4% CAGR during the same period.

Qatar is stepping up to the global stage, establishing itself as a prominent figure in the media and production business and capitalizing on these dramatic shifts in the industry. As an advanced urban state with more than 60% of its population aged 13-44, Qatar offers a vast and fast-evolving digital media market. Having paved the way for 5G adoption and AR and VR technologies as early as 2018, Qatar outperforms both world and regional averages when it comes to internet and smartphone penetration. The presence of both domestic and multinational media companies' further cements Qatar's strategic significance at the global level.

With the economy projected to emerge from the pandemic in a position of strength and as consumers continue to embrace new-age digital platforms, discretionary spending is likely to cross pre-COVID-19 levels by 2024, spurring the demand for digital media and entertainment services.

I invite readers to go through the report to gain valuable insights and in-depth knowledge and understanding of this sector's prospects.

Abdulrahman Hesham Al Sowaidi
Acting Chief Executive Officer



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CEO's Message.....	3
Table of Contents.....	5
Appendix: Glossary of Terms.....	8
Introduction.....	9
Local Ecosystem.....	10
Value Chain.....	12
Sector Market Drivers.....	13
Global Trends and Related Regional Adoption.....	16
COVID-19 Impact.....	24
SWOT Analysis.....	25
Conclusion.....	26



LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1: Qatar Historical and Forecast Population (Mn)	13
Chart 2: Qatar Population Split by Age Group (000's, 2020)	13
Chart 3: GDP Per Capita and Disposable Income Per Capita (QAR 000's)	14
Chart 4: Consumer Expenditure on Leisure and Recreation Per Capita (QAR)	14
Chart 5: Qatar Internet Penetration (% of population)	15
Chart 6: Qatar Smartphone Penetration (% of population)	15
Chart 7: Global Media Advertising Revenue (USD Bn)	16
Chart 8: MEA Media Advertising Revenue (USD Bn)	17
Chart 9: Qatar Media Advertising Market (QAR Mn, 2019)	18
Chart 10: Evolution of Global TV Market (USD Bn)	18
Chart 11: Evolution of Global and Regional Ott on-demand Services	18
Chart 12: Evolution of MEA TV Market (USD Bn)	19
Chart 13: Number of OTT Subscribers in Qatar by Platform (000's)	19
Chart 14: Global Arabic Language Feature Films Released (# of movies)	21
Chart 15: Monthly Podcast Listeners (Mn)	22
Chart 16: Global Podcast Advertising (USD Mn)	22
Chart 17: Global VR Revenue (USD Bn)	23

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Media Ecosystem in Qatar	11
Figure 2: Expansion of 5G Technology	15
Figure 3: Increasing Demand for Arabic Content	20
Figure 4: Qatar Feature Film Titles	21
Figure 5: SWOT Analysis	25

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Glossary of Terms	8
Table 2: Value Chain	12





APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Table 1: Glossary of Terms

AR	Augmented Reality
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MEA	Middle East and Africa
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
OTT	Over-The-Top media services
QAR	Qatari Riyal
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
VR	Virtual Reality



INTRODUCTION

QDB has embarked key service sectors on a journey to achieve the National Vision 2030 and National Development Strategy 2018 -2022 objectives. As a result, to accomplish a diversified economy that gradually reduces the dependence on hydrocarbon industries, enhances the role of private sectors and maintains its competitiveness through sustainable development and localization of services in the state of Qatar.

Although the Services Sector is well-established in the region, preference is mostly given to international service providers. Focused sectors were assessed to highlight the asymmetrical deployment between services that are being offered locally and services sourced from outside.

The Media and Production report is part of the 5 series of the Current State Assessment publication, this subsector was selected following a strict sector filtering and prioritization framework based on presence of local champions, sector size, growth and scalability as well as existence of opportunities emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond the assessment of the sector, QDB has studied local gaps in the local market for Media-related services and subsequently identified investment opportunities for new services.

LOCAL ECOSYSTEM

Qatar's media landscape is governed by a host of regulators and licensors.

- **Regulators** institute new policies, guidelines and regulations for broadcast, digital and print media. There are three public bodies.
 - **Qatar Media Corporation** is the official broadcasting authority of Qatar, which oversees media services across numerous television and radio channels in the country.
 - The **Ministry of Transport and Communications** maintains oversight of Qatar's ICT sector and land, maritime and air transport. The Ministry's affiliate, the **Communications Regulatory Authority**, is the independent communications regulator. The latter's remit extends to ICT sectors, postal services and digital media.
 - The **Government Communications Office** is the primary source of news and information about the Government of Qatar and is responsible for presenting an accurate image of Qatar to the world by showcasing its contributions to various fields.
- **Licensors** issues and renews licenses for television and radio broadcasting, radio spectrum and publishing. The **Ministry of Culture and Sports** performs the role of media licensing in Qatar. The Ministry is the sponsor and regulatory body of Qatar's cultural and sports sector; focused on reviewing and updating the legislative structure, and developing general policies for Qatar's culture, sports and youth.

The marketplace comprises key actors like agents and creative houses, producers and publishers, content distributors and advertising agencies.

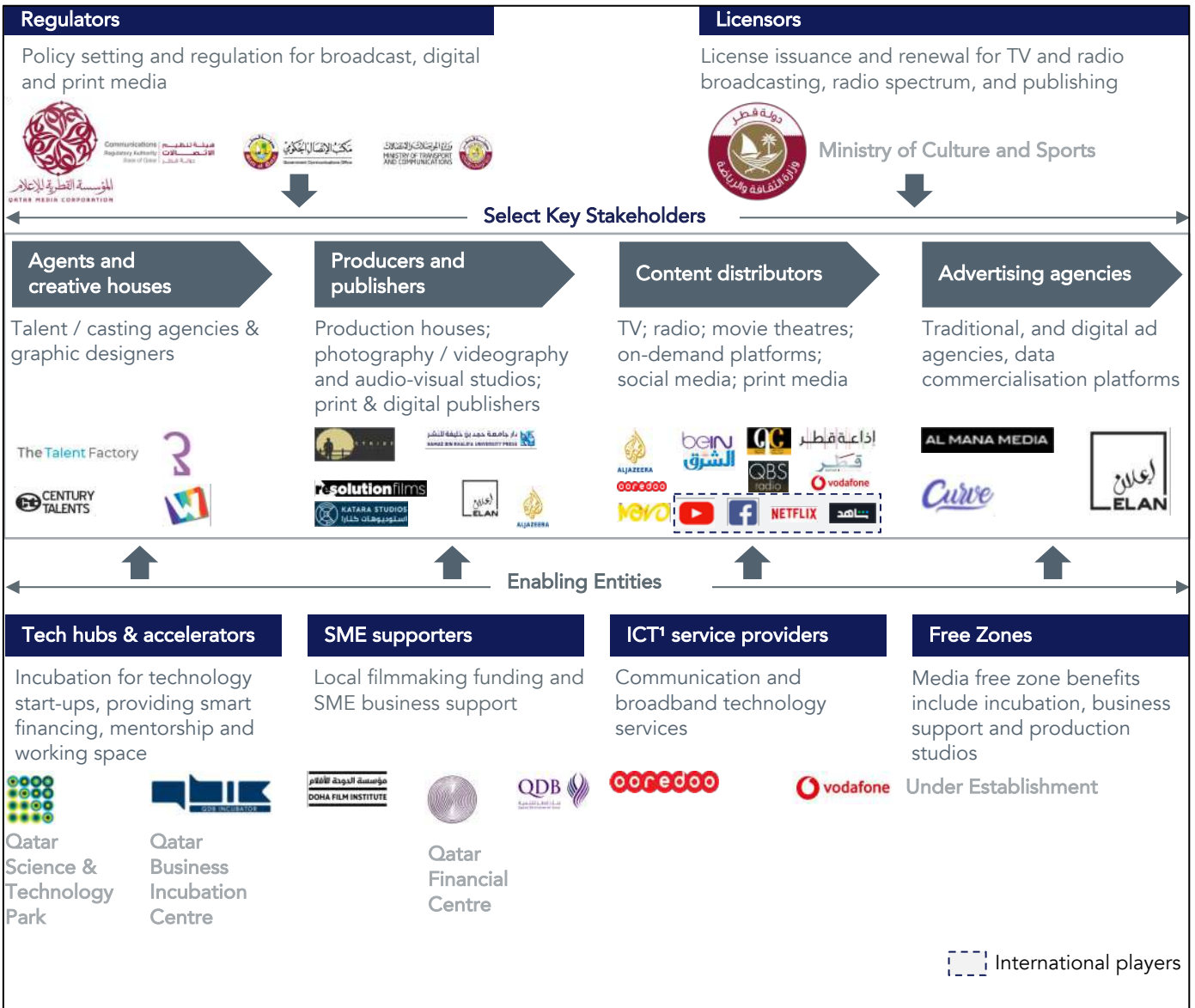
- **Agents and creative houses** include talent/casting agencies and graphic designers
- **Producers and publishers** consist of production houses, photography/videography and audio-visual studios, and print and digital publishers.
- **Content distributors** address television, radio, movie theatres, on-demand platforms, social media and print media.
- **Advertising agencies** span traditional and digital ad agencies, and data commercialisation platforms.

Some of the entities that facilitate the growth of these stakeholders are tech hubs and accelerators, SME supporters, ICT service providers and the Qatar Free Zones.

- **Tech hubs and accelerators** incubate technology start-ups, extending smart financing as well as mentorship and working space. This is particularly beneficial for agents and creative houses.
- **SME support** in the form of funding to local filmmakers and SME businesses stimulate the growth of producers and publishers.
- **ICT service providers** offer communication and broadband technology services – crucial for the expansion of content distributors.
- **Qatar Free Zones** help promote incubation, foster production studios and impart business support for media-related activities. Qatar's Emir issued a law, in 2019, on the establishment of a **Media City** in the country. Some of the incentives at the Media City include 20-year tax exemptions and 100% foreign ownership. Additionally, the Cabinet approved a new law regulating press, media activities, publications and arts and passed it to the Shura Council, replacing previous laws on publications, regulation of advertising, public relations and artistic production and works.













Figure 1: Media Ecosystem in Qatar



VALUE CHAIN

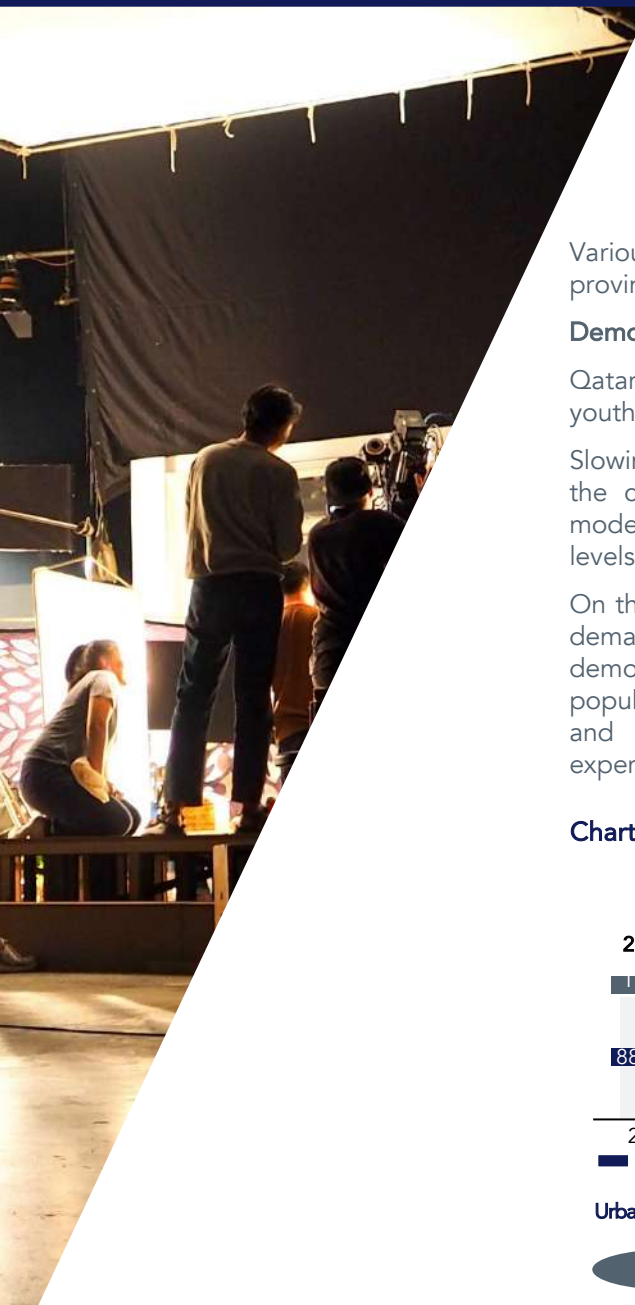
Table 2: Value Chain

Analysing Qatar's media value chain helps identify and understand the key services and stakeholders involved. The value chain is spread across five core segments, with both local and global companies firmly entrenched across the spectrum.

Segment	Description	Activities/Services involved	Global players*	Local players*
Content creation	Influenced by peers, media or marketing campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graphic design Casting agencies 		
Content production	Writing and developing visual content for videos, books/e-books, movies and news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printing Publishing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> print media (books, newspapers, journals, periodicals, etc.) software (games, etc.) audio (sound recording, podcasts, etc.) Production and post-production of motion pictures, videos (including VR) and television programmes Photography Independent journalists and editors 		
Content distribution	Promoting and distributing content to audiences through multiple media formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motion picture, video and television programme distribution Radio broadcasting Television programming and broadcasting Subscription video-on-demand and transactional video-on-demand streaming Audio streaming News agencies 		
Content and data commercialisation	Turning data into assets and deriving insights to monetise them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising (traditional and digital), including programmatic advertising and media placement 		
Content consumption	Supporting platforms through which audiences can consume media content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motion picture projection, including operation of fixed, permanent and temporary movie theatres 		

*Non-exhaustive

SECTOR MARKET DRIVERS



Various attributes pertaining to Qatar's socio-economic development are proving conducive to the media sector's future growth and potential.

Demographic dividend [↔ Neutral impact]

Qatar's population is forecast to grow modestly at 0.2% CAGR, with a high youth population supportive of the media market

Slowing growth in population (0.2% CAGR) and lower inflow of expats into the country (-0.1% CAGR), following COVID-19, is expected to have a moderate impact on media demand – before reclaiming the pre-pandemic levels by 2024.

On the other hand, Qatar's highly urbanised population will continue to fuel demand for media services. Furthermore, the country's large young demographic (aged 13-44), currently representing ~63% of the total population, will propel demand for OTT, animated content, video gaming and VR, especially as they increasingly value convenience and user experience.

Chart 1: Qatar Historical and Forecast Population (Mn)

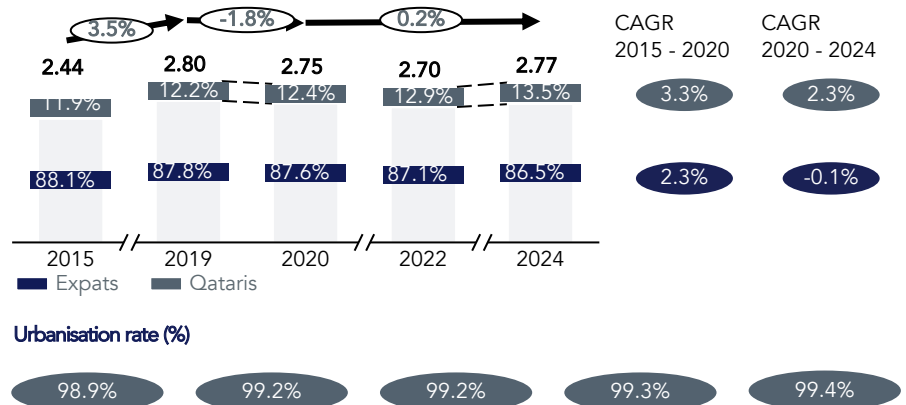
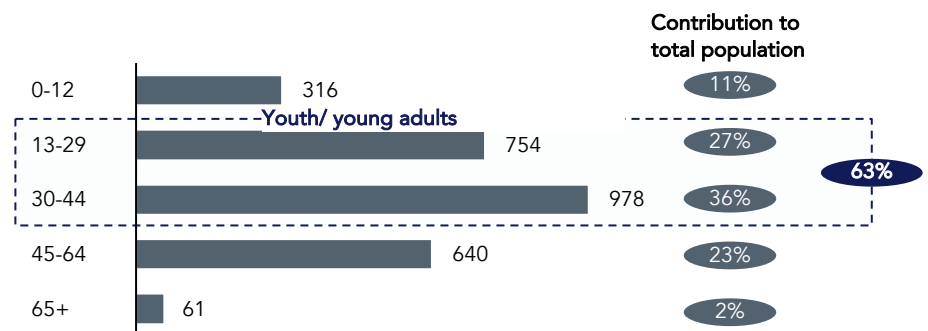


Chart 2: Qatar Population Split by Age Group (000's, 2020)



Consumer Spending [↑ Positive impact]

The recovery of consumers' spending power is expected to drive expenditure on media equipment and services

Private consumption and per capita GDP are expected to match pre-pandemic. In the longer term, the Government's initiative to attract more expats, coupled with the increasing participation of women in the workforce and the ease of the blockade from neighbouring countries, is likely to drive disposable income and GDP growth – thereby underpinning higher expenditure on media equipment and services.

Qatar's per capita GDP is forecast to rise at 5.1% CAGR between 2020 and 2024 – this directly translates into a 5.8% CAGR increase in per capita disposable income during the same five-year period. A higher purchasing power is likely to encourage discretionary spends on entertainment avenues like pay-TV, film tickets and trade shows. Such leisure and recreational expenditure are projected to increase at 6.2% CAGR between 2020 and 2024.

Chart 3: GDP Per Capita and Disposable Income Per Capita (QAR 000's)

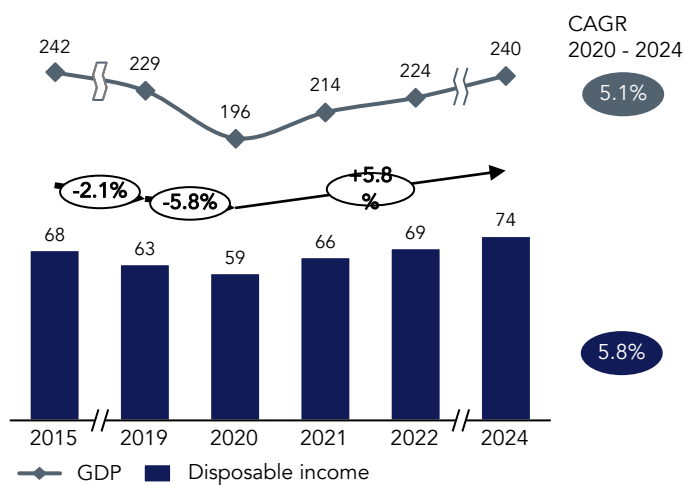
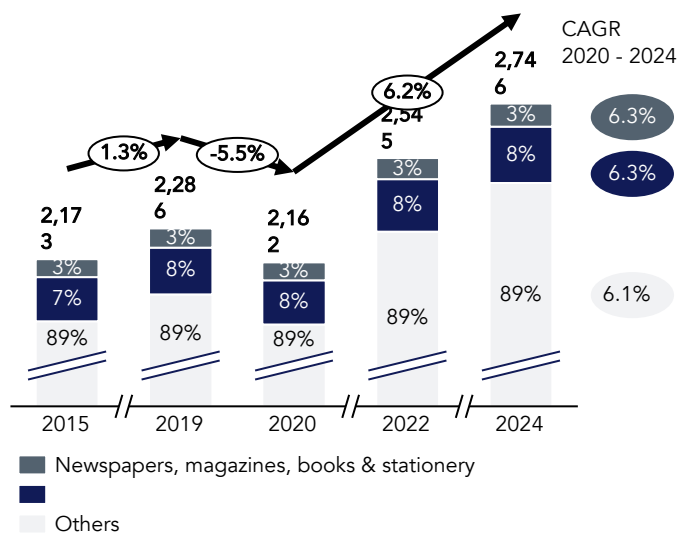


Chart 4: Consumer Expenditure on Leisure and Recreation Per Capita (QAR)



Access to internet and smartphones [↑ Positive impact]

The rise in internet and smartphone penetration in Qatar will further support the media market growth

Qatar has one of the highest internet and smartphone penetration rates in the world at 93% and 99%, respectively.

Chart 5: Qatar Internet Penetration (% of population)

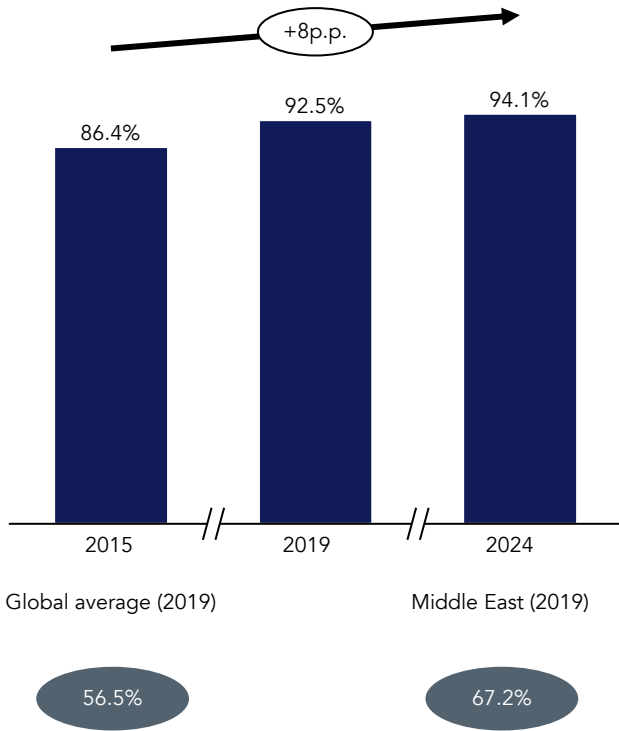
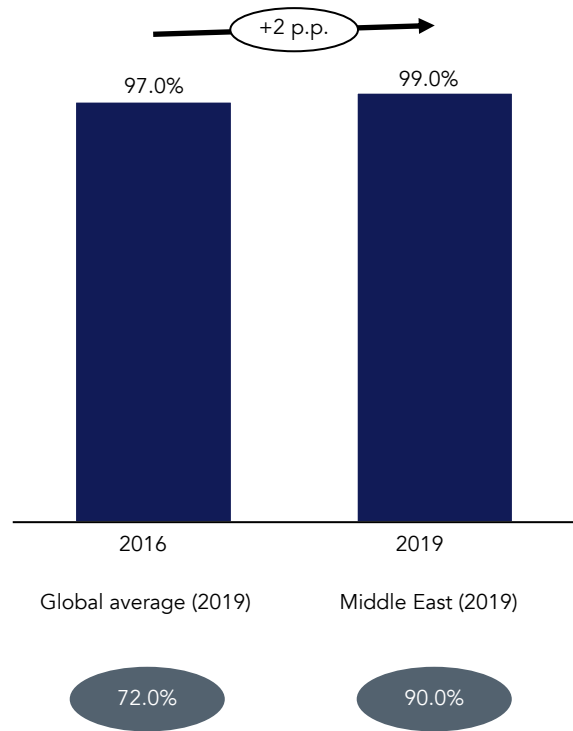
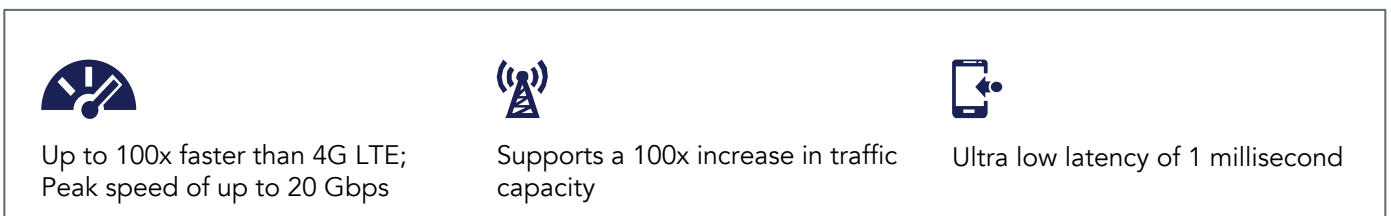


Chart 6: Qatar Smartphone Penetration (% of population)



By 2025, the coverage of 5G is expected to span 45% of the world, connecting over 1.7 billion devices to high-speed mobile data. Qatar was the first country in the world to start rolling out the 5G network in 2018, providing the necessary infrastructure and foundation to introduce new waves of innovation, including AR and VR.

Figure 2: Expansion of 5G Technology



Greater internet penetration and sweeping technological advances are together boosting the shift in media consumption to digital platforms in Qatar.

GLOBAL TRENDS AND RELATED REGIONAL ADOPTION



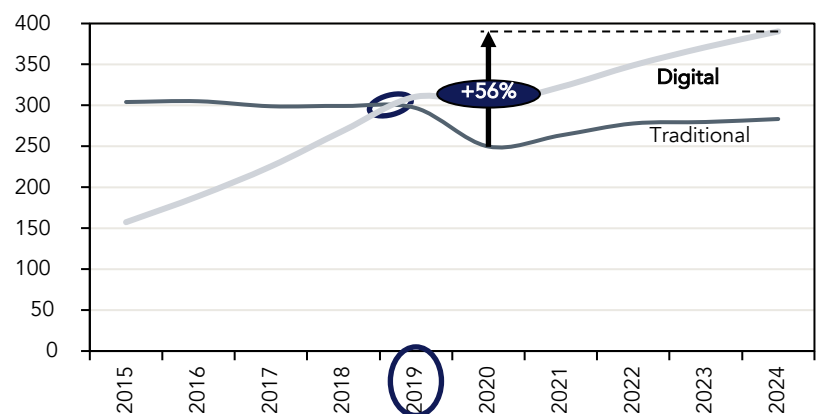
The last decade has seen the global media and entertainment industry undergo structural changes due in no small part to the digital revolution. The pandemic served to fast-track what was already in motion. Qatar's media industry is promptly evolving into a vibrant hub in tandem with global trends.

1. Rapid Expansion of Digital Media

Global Adoption

- World over, the paradigm shift in consumer preferences towards digital media platforms is accelerating the growth of digital advertising. As a result, global digital advertising revenue surpassed traditional advertising revenue in 2019; and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 6.6% between 2020 and 2024.

Chart 7: Global Media Advertising Revenue (USD Bn)



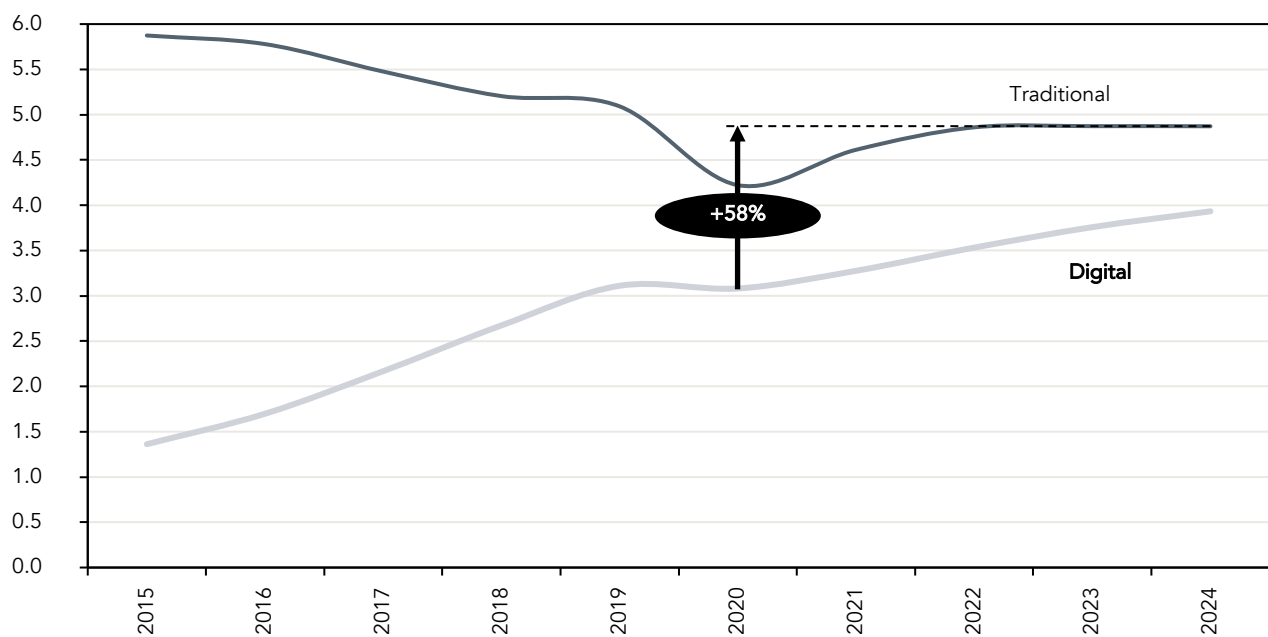
- International media players are, thus, sharpening their focus on personalised and programmatic advertising. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) was one of the first industry players by going 100% programmatic in 2015. Real time access to the CBC's users, which represent ~37% of Canada's digital population, is extremely crucial.
- The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has slowly adopted programmatic advertising owing to initial concerns about privacy. It undertook a massive training programme to improve sales proficiency across 12 markets. Programmatically-traded, data-led advertising comprises almost 75% of digital revenues for UK's Channel 4. A mandatory sign-in process allows Channel 4 to track consumers based on age, gender, location and interests across all devices.
- STV was the first UK broadcaster to introduce dynamic ad insertion to live channels, allowing them to benefit from the additional insights. STV partnered with SpotX to help monetise their digital app, STV player.

- Hong Kong's myTV SUPER recently teamed up with Nielsen to deploy a Data Management Plan (DMP). The DMP is designed to identify the right targets effectively and efficiently across consumer traits.
- In New Zealand, TVNZ partnered with Fairfax and MediaWorks to launch a joint programmatic ad service – this step up was deemed vital to align with changing industry trends.

Regional Adoption

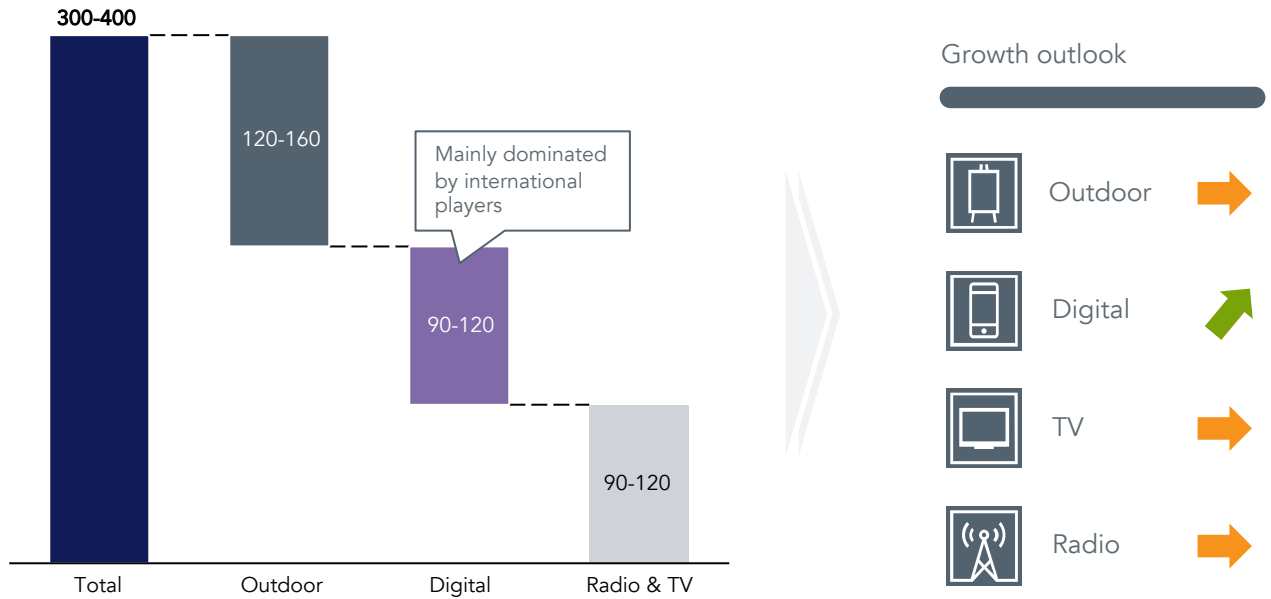
- The MEA region witnessed an upward trend too, with a CAGR of 22.9% between 2015 and 2019. While digital still has room for growth, MEA digital advertising is expected to surpass traditional advertising (which is projected to flatten) over the coming years.

Chart 8: MEA Media Advertising Revenue (USD Bn)



- Elevison Media, a leading Out-Of-Home (OOH) UAE firm – in partnership with programmatic Digital Out-Of-Home (DOOH) company, Lemma – launched its first programmatic DOOH campaign in Dubai for Microsoft's Azure's 'Global cloud. Local Presence' brand message. The partnership utilised Elevison Media's premium network of large format digital screens and Lemma's programmatic DOOH platform to enhance relevant exposures, through targeted impressions and dynamic ads rendered on 36 large format screens across Dubai International Financial Centre.
- The local players in Qatar are adopting a similar approach. Even as print and outdoor advertising continue to be important advertising channels, digital advertising is progressively gaining ground over its traditional counterparts. Moreover, the development of a sophisticated advertising market in Qatar has precipitated the demand for digital expertise, drawing in international advertising firms into the country.

Chart 9: Qatar Media Advertising Market (QAR Mn, 2019)



2. Fast - Growing OTT Market

Global Adoption

- Deeper internet penetration and smartphone accessibility, as well as the rise of on-demand content providers (like Netflix and StarzPlay) have together augmented the demand for video-on-demand and OTT services.

Chart 10: Evolution of Global TV Market (USD Bn)

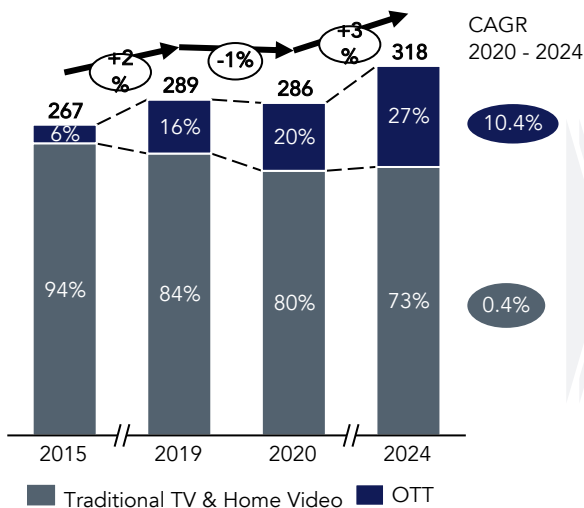
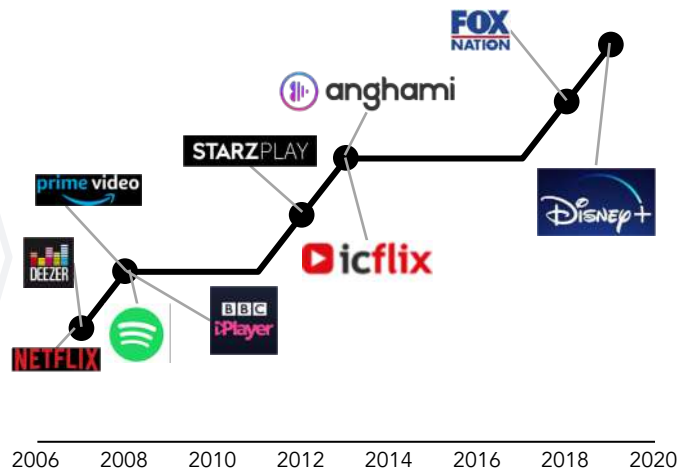


Chart 11: Evolution of Global and Regional OTT On-demand Services



Regional Adoption

- Large OTT players, in a bid to maintain their regional market shares, are creating and commissioning new and localised content to update their library.

Chart 12: Evolution of MEA TV Market (USD Bn)

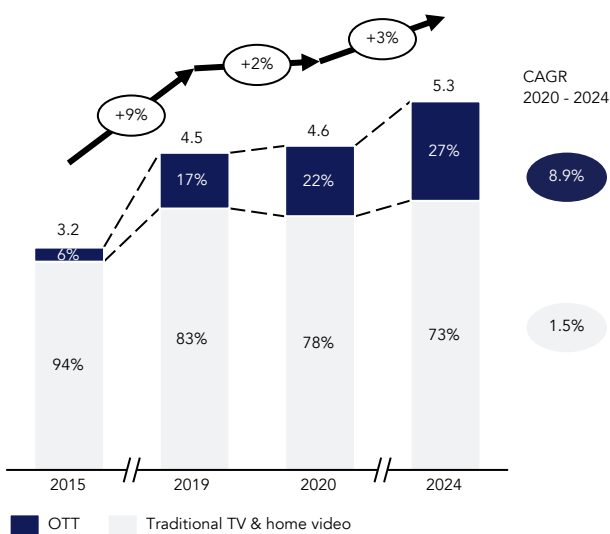
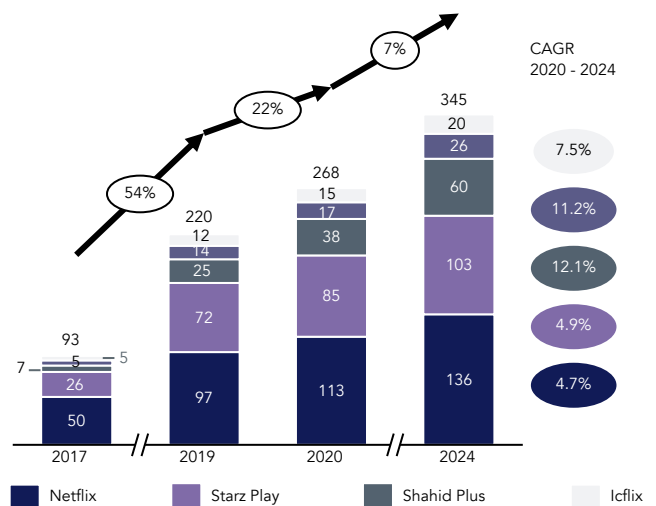


Chart 13: Number of OTT Subscribers in Qatar by Platform (000's)



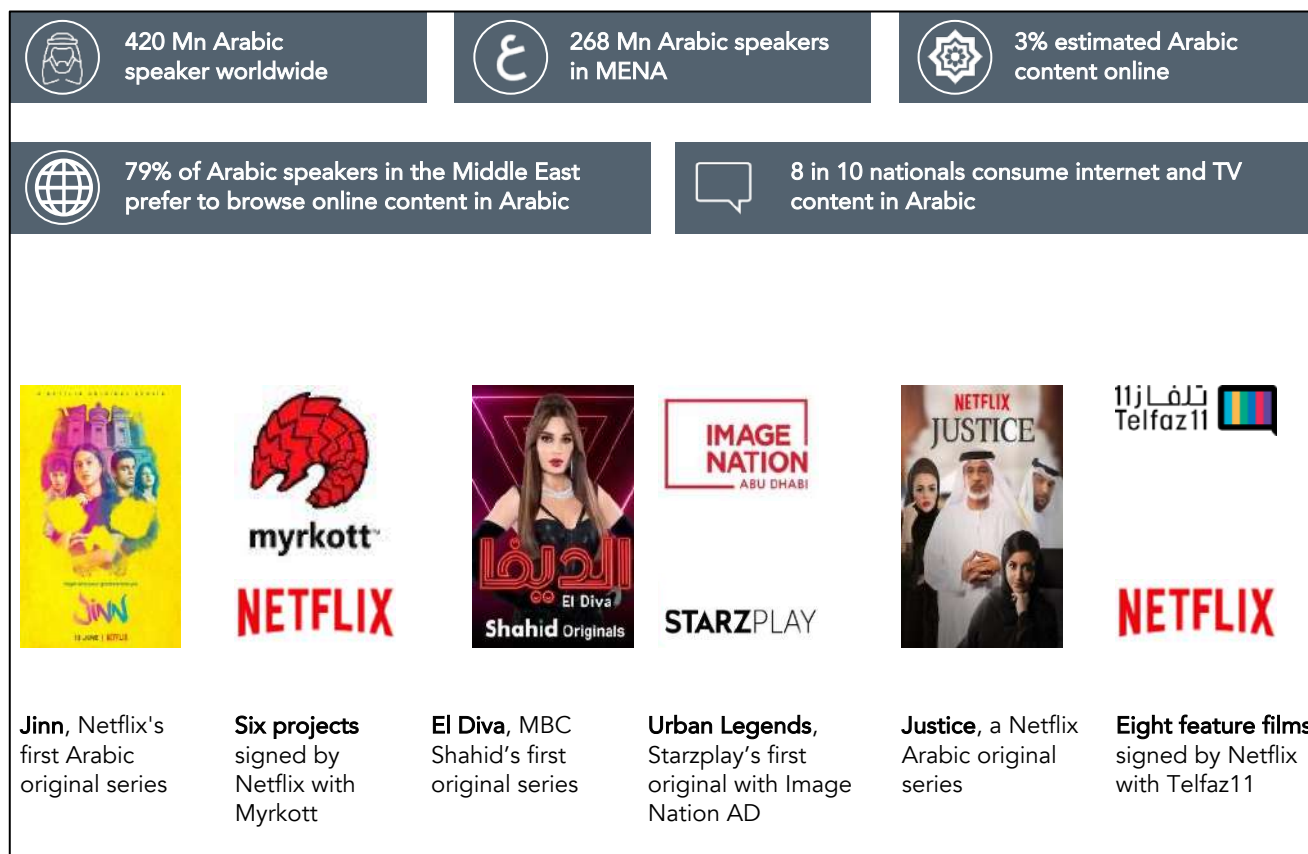
- For instance, in the MEA region, Netflix has inked multiple deals with local production companies, such as Whispers in partnership with Saudi Entertainment Phenomena Company, and Drama Queen with OKWRD and ASAP Productions in Egypt. Netflix also announced 10 new series and films in Turkey.
- MBC Group's Shahid launched its originals unit and offers subscribers with the world's largest library of Arabic content.
- beIN launched a video-on-demand service providing subscribers with premium sports content.
- Lionsgate's StarzPlay is the largest subscription-video-on-demand regional service in the MENA region with ~1.5 million subscribers. It renewed its multi-year deal with Saudi Telecom (STC)-owned Intigral to make its service available to STC's broadband users as well as STC's Jawwy TV OTT platform subscribers.
- At the same time, non-mainstream global production houses are also keen to partner with regional players to develop content for their local market. Manga Productions (subsidiary of the Mohammed bin Salman Foundation) is collaborating with Japan-based Sumitomo Group to air Saudi-anime series Future's Folktales in Japan.
- Qatar's OTT market expanded considerably in recent years. The number of OTT subscribers in the country shot up by 22% between 2019 and 2020, as people spent more time at home due to the pandemic. Subscription in the next four years is expected to increase at a CAGR of 7%, with Netflix continuing to dominate the market.
- Further, partnerships with telecom companies act as another key driver of market entry and expansion in Qatar. Orbit Showtime Network (OSN) has signed a partnership with Vodafone Qatar providing its OTT content to Vodafone customers. Leading Indian film entertainment company, Eros International signed a partnership with Ooredoo in 2020 to provide its OTT content to Ooredoo customers. Netflix, too, partnered with Ooredoo bringing its streaming services to Ooredoo's users in 2020.

3. High Demand for Arabic Content

Global Adoption

- OTT players and production houses are introducing more and more Arabic programs and films in their portfolio, to address the upswing in demand for Arabic content among Arab nationals. There is a steady pipeline of Arabic language projects across OTT platforms; these include: Jinn – Netflix's first Arabic original series; El Diva – MBC Shahid's first original series; and Urban Legends – StarzPlay's first original with Image Nation AD; among others.

Figure 3: Increasing Demand For Arabic Content



Regional Adoption

- Qatar has been an active player in Arabic film production, supporting local and regional talents. The Doha Film Institute has so far produced 44 Arabic films, accounting for more than half of the total movies produced in the country.

Chart 14: Global Arabic Language Feature Films Released (# of movies)

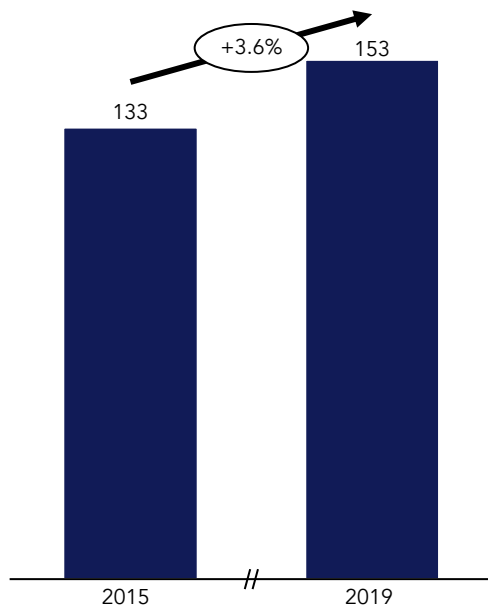
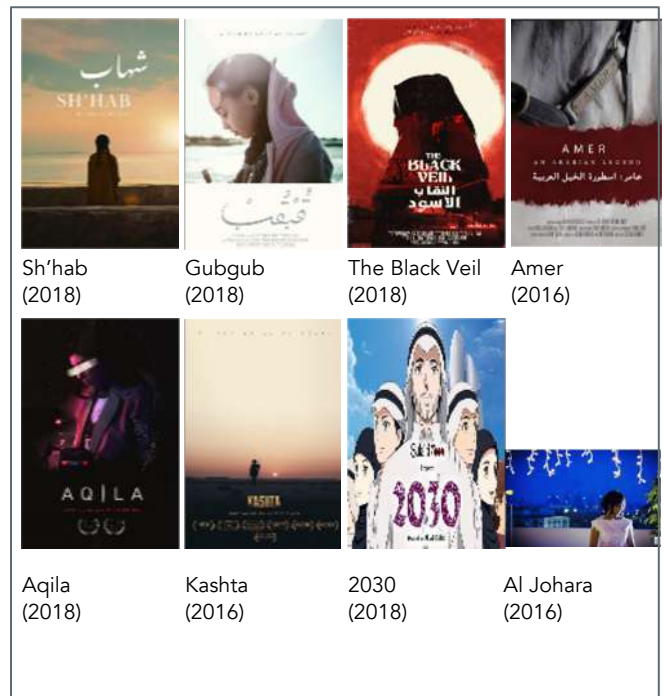


Figure 4: Qatar Feature Film Titles

Non-Exhaustive



4. Entry of New Content Formats

Global Adoption

- Podcasts are becoming increasingly relevant to engage a younger audience. This, in turn, is providing an opportunity for media players to diversify their revenue streams (by way of advertising, sponsorships and subscriptions).

Chart 15: Monthly Podcast Listeners (Mn)

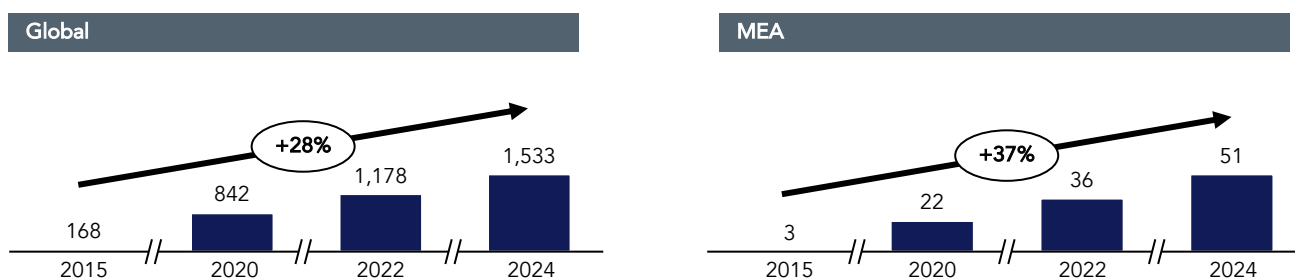
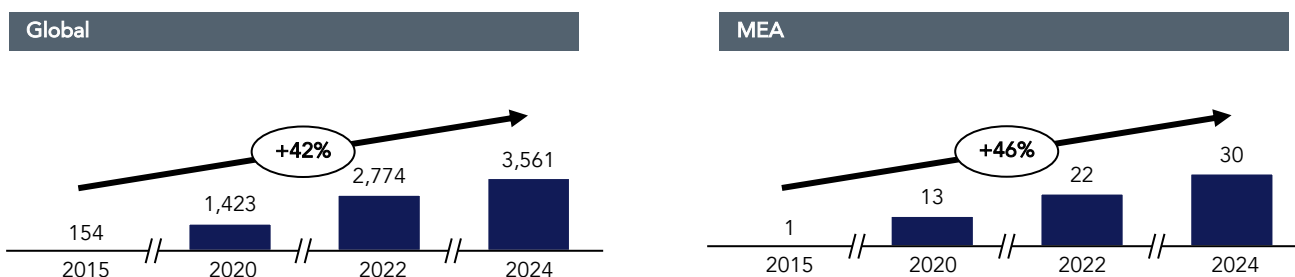


Chart 16: Global Podcast Advertising (USD Mn)



- Multiple players recently entered the podcast market through portfolio diversification, acquisitions or partnerships.
- The BBC is a market leader in the podcast industry with multiple award winning podcast and radio offerings.
- Spotify acquired seven podcast companies, reflecting its commitment to building its network and reputation in the industry.
- The New York Times, in 2020, acquired the podcast production company, Serial Productions – continuing its expansion into audio journalism.

Regional Adoption

- As one of the first large movers in the Arabic podcast market, the Al Jazeera Media Network launched a new Arabic podcast service in Qatar in 2019.
- The Arabian Radio Network (ARN) is complementing and enhancing its online streaming and smartphone apps with podcasting, blogging and active social media.
- Gulf News' 'Dirhams & Dollars' podcast includes various subjects, such as news, entertainment and sports.
- The National launched nine podcasts spanning different topics including news, business and economics.

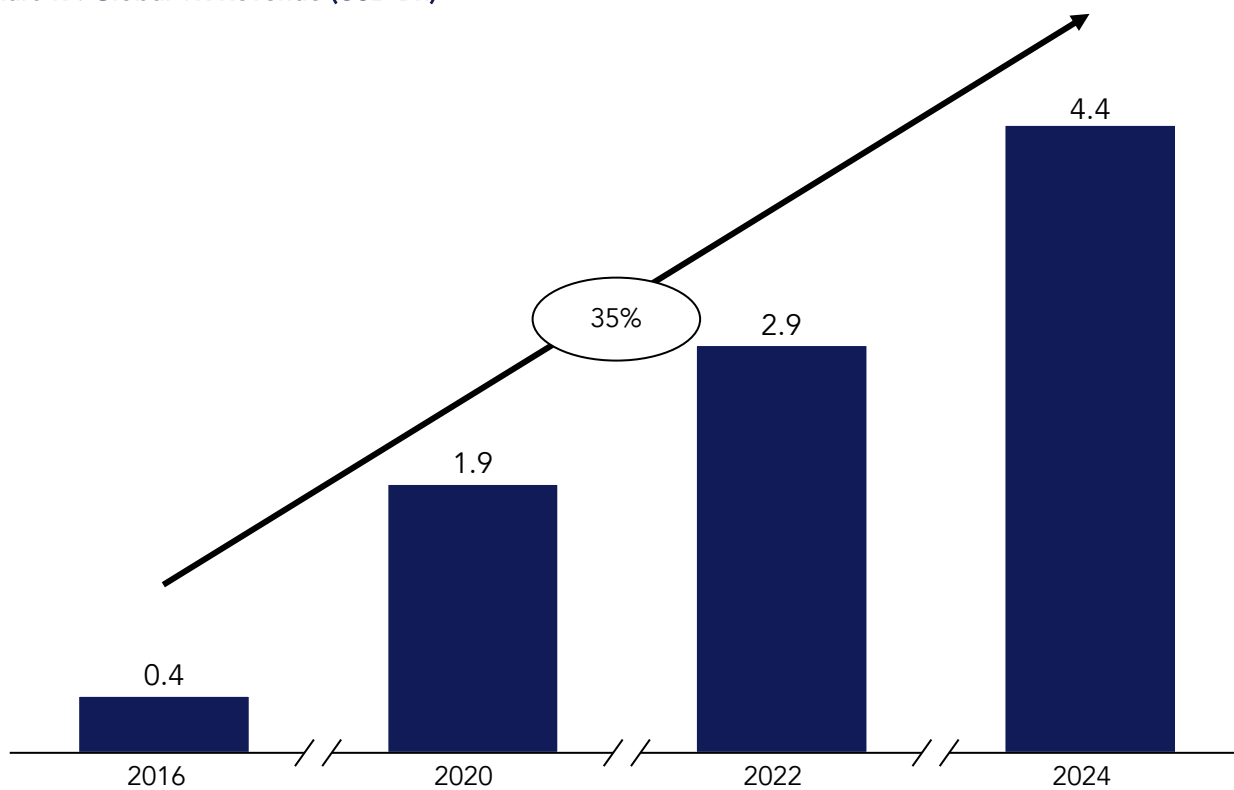


5. Emergence of AR/VR Content

Global Adoption

- With a global revenue of ~US\$1.9 billion in 2020, AR and VR are reshaping the media sector – from advertising and gaming to movies, live event broadcasting and entertainment at large.
- For instance, Pepsi installed a screen and a camera at a typical London bus station to overlay virtual objects onto a real-life camera view.
- The American fashion magazine, W partnered with a visual effects production studio, The Mill to feature AR content on its cover.

Chart 17: Global VR Revenue (USD Bn)



Regional Adoption

- Key media players in Qatar, such as beIN and Al Jazeera, have introduced VR/AR content as part of their service bouquet.
- beIN sports launched 'connect', an immersive VR experience that enables fans to watch live games from home with an in-stadium experience.
- Al Jazeera launched Contrast VR, a new immersive media studio that brings to life 360-degree video, VR and AR.
- Zero Latency opened its VR gaming centres in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, offering gamers a free-roam VR experience. Qatar Airways adopted an in-flight VR entertainment system for business class travelers onboard select flights.

COVID-19 and the associated home confinements brought forth an unprecedented social disruption around the world. At-home data usage soared, while traditional/out-of-home entertainment options declined. OTT services witnessed a surge in new subscribers and video-on-demand consumption. While some of these developments are expected to be short lived, some are likely to last longer.

Short Term Impact

OTT Video Services are Filling Entertainment Hours

OTT video services emerged as the top entertainment choice, driven by increased time at home. The top seven subscription video-on-demand platforms (excluding Amazon Prime Video) reported an increase of ~75% in daily signups during the first week of lockdowns.

Decline in Traditional Pay-TV

Cinemagoers resorted to OTT video platforms as an alternative channel for viewing new films, which were directly launched on these platforms.

Decline in Cinema Audience

Cinemagoers resorted to OTT video platforms as an alternative channel for viewing new films, which were directly launched on these platforms.

Increase in Financial Instability

Pandemic-induced financial difficulties adversely impacted the price sensitivity of some consumers; these groups were less likely to subscribe to multiple television content packages or platforms.

Long Term Impact

Cultural Shift to OTT Video

The OTT culture has transformed the media landscape. The current environment may create a step change in the usage of OTT video platforms, particularly given that global subscription fees range between US\$8-US\$16/month.

Delay in New Content

New productions and projects, which were delayed due to the pandemic, may spill over into the next 1-2 years.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Figure 5: SWOT Analysis



STRENGTHS

- Presence of global media organisations (e.g. beIN, Al Jazeera) positions Qatar as a strategic player in the international media sector
- The Doha Film Institute plays a major role in promoting Qatar as a leading Arabic and non-Arabic film production player
- One of the highest internet / smartphone penetration in the world supports high growth in digital media consumption



WEAKNESS

- Limited specialist skills such as equipment maintenance in domestic job market
- Limited offering of emerging tech-enabled services by local players
- High reliance on international and regional Arabic OTT distribution platforms



OPPORTUNITIES

- Establishment of the Media City with "free zone" incentives can attract entrepreneurs and foreign players into Qatar
- Growth in OTT in the region is leading to demand for Arabic content which Qatar can tap into
- Establishment of media accelerator to develop entrepreneurship in the sector with funding support and mentorship from large buyers (e.g. beIN)



THREATS

- Presence of other well established media zones in the region increases competition requiring strong incentives to attracting foreign media companies / SMEs
- Presence of high-quality service offerings regionally can limit competitiveness of local media and advertising service providers



CONCLUSION

Over the last decade, Qatar has evolved into a prominent voice in regional media markets. A young, tech-savvy demographic, a swiftly developing ICT landscape and extremely high levels of internet and smartphone connectivity, along with the strong government support for economic progress founded on knowledge, entrepreneurship and innovation – ensure that Qatar is home to a vibrant media ecosystem.

In the wake of COVID-19, the cultural shift from linear television towards OTT is clear. Notably, all media segments were impacted adversely in 2020 due to COVID-19 except OTT and video games. MEA is forecast to be the fastest-growing region as untapped emerging segments like cinema and audio fuel growth.

Looking ahead, Qatar's media sector presents a plethora of opportunities for SMEs and the local market across services like digital media and programmatic advertising agencies, content localisation, podcast streaming, smart language solution and talent sourcing platforms. The sector will be a key enabler in realising the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Qatar Second National Development Strategy.

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About Qatar Development Bank

Qatar Development Bank (QDB) was founded by Emiri Decree to grow Qatar's private sector and diversify its economy. His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, identified these as vital tasks in developing Qatar into a modern state. Since its establishment in 1997, QDB has been at the forefront of these efforts. It has worked with thousands of Qatari entrepreneurs and enterprises and has provided investment and guidance to brand-new start-ups and well-established corporations. QDB has built a reputation for identifying promising investment opportunities. Its focus is on growing SMEs in key sectors by offering several services via a single window to support expected growth. Through smart, targeted financing products and advisory support services, QDB is nurturing a sound and sustainable knowledge-based economy for Qatar.

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