

BENEFIT Sharpens Bahrain's Fintech Edge with AI

SMEs get innovation boost

- AI to drive growth
- SME-first payment tools
- Global expansion in sight

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Bahrain's national payments leader BENEFIT has unveiled a bold AI-driven roadmap for 2025-2026, signalling a strategic push to reinforce the Kingdom's fintech leadership with cutting-edge payment services and SME-first innovations.

Announced during the Central Bank of Bahrain's 'FS Horizons: Doubling Down on Digital' event, the new strategy prioritises secure, efficient, and inclusive financial infrastructure while integrating artificial intelligence, data monetisation, and



cross-border interoperability.

AI and SME focus

Among the key pillars of the plan are partnerships with ar-

tificial intelligence firms to enhance payment systems, customised tools for small and medium-sized enterprises, and expansion of real-time inter-

national payment capabilities through regional collaborations. BENEFIT also aims to drive regional competitiveness by enhancing its data monetisation

strategy and delivering seamless customer experiences that adapt to evolving financial behaviour.

Regional ambitions

The strategy includes a strong international component, with the company preparing to launch its services in select overseas markets. This move is expected to position Bahrain as an exporter of fintech infrastructure and innovation.

During the announcement, Ms. Shafaq Al Kooheji, Assistant General Manager of Payment Services at BENEFIT, said the roadmap builds on Bahrain's strong digital base. She highlighted a major milestone from 2024, with instant payment usage reaching 23 transactions per person per month.

Future outlook

Mr. Abdulwahed AlJanahi, Chief Executive of BENEFIT, said the new strategy reflects the company's commitment to advancing Bahrain's digital financial landscape while fostering a

cashless economy and nurturing fintech talent. He emphasised the importance of an integrated ecosystem tailored to both individual and institutional needs.

The roadmap's rollout is expected to bolster Bahrain's fintech credentials and inspire further digital transformation across the region.

Bahrain recorded one of the highest rates of instant payment usage in the GCC in 2024, with 23 transactions per person per month, underscoring rapid digital adoption in the Kingdom.



Batelco by Beyon Unveils Voya, a Seamless Data Roaming eSIM

Activate simply. Roam easily. No bill shocks

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Batelco by Beyon unveiled its latest connectivity solution, Voya, a data roaming eSIM service tailored for today's modern-day travelers that value being connected. The Voya eSIM service is a first of its kind for Batelco and Bahrain, and is available to users worldwide, from all telecommunication companies, not just to Batelco's customers. The announcement which was made at an event hosted in City Center was attended by media representatives and executives from Batelco and featured a live demonstration of the easy eSIM activation process.

Batelco's Voya eSIM enables quick, reliable, and flexible roaming. Users can download an affordable data roaming plan directly to their phone without the hassle of needing to exchange a SIM card, making it easy for customers to stay connected while traveling. Starting from as low as BD2, users can activate the data roaming service in just a few minutes through the Batelco App or



website and enjoy uninterrupted data access across more than 140 global destinations.

As an eSIM service, Voya is accessible to everyone, anytime, on any eSIM compatible device. Activation is effortless, users can simply enter their email address to set up a new roaming eSIM and can then enjoy seamless connectivity wherever they go! Additionally, users can easily switch between multiple networks at their destination offering stronger connectivity and flexibility. To further enhance the value proposition, Batelco is offering complimentary travel insurance for a promotional period, adding peace of mind to every journey.

Commenting on the launch, Aseel Mattar, General Manager Consumer at Batelco, stated: "As part of Batelco's strategy to lead in digital innovation and enrich customer experiences, we are proud to be the first in Bahrain to introduce an eSIM service of this kind. This solution empowers customers with excellent roaming options, usage control and global reach at highly competitive rates."

"We are committed to delivering unmatched value, connectivity, flexibility, and peace of mind to our customers. The Voya eSIM service is the perfect travel companion for both frequent flyers and casual travelers requiring reliable communication without the traditional hassles of roaming. Our latest offering is a bold step forward in positioning Batelco as a leader in smart connectivity solutions," she added. The Voya product launch is part of Batelco's broader commitment to expanding its digital services portfolio and supporting the Kingdom of Bahrain's vision for smart, borderless connectivity.



Yusif bin Abdulhussain Khalaf, Minister of Legal Affairs and Acting Minister of Labour, received Saqib Rauf, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Bahrain. Minister Khalaf highlighted the deep-rooted Bahrain-Pakistan ties, emphasising the commitment to further enhancing joint cooperation in various domains. On his part, the ambassador underscored his country's keenness to continue supporting areas of mutual cooperation, expanding opportunities for the exchange of expertise. He wished Bahrain continued progress and prosperity.

X chief Yaccarino steps down after two years

San Francisco, United States

Linda Yaccarino resigned yesterday as CEO of X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, after two years at the helm of the Elon Musk-owned company.

In a statement posted on the platform, she said she had decided to step down following what she described as "two incredible years" leading the company through a major transformation.

No reason was given for her exit, but the resignation came as Musk's artificial intelligence chatbot Grok was under fire for anti-Semitic comments that praised Adolf Hitler and insulted Islam in separate posts on the X platform.

Yaccarino -- a former NBCUniversal advertising executive



Linda Yaccarino

-- took over as X's CEO in June 2023, replacing Musk who had been serving in the role since his \$44 billion acquisition of Twitter in October 2022.

Her appointment came as Musk sought to focus on product development while bringing in an experienced media manager to restore advertiser confidence.

The company has faced significant challenges since Musk's acquisition, including an exodus of advertisers and

concerns over content moderation policies.

Yaccarino's background in advertising was seen as crucial to rebuilding business relationships.

In her statement, Yaccarino praised the "historic business turn around" achieved by the X team and suggested the platform was entering "a new chapter" with xAI, Musk's artificial intelligence company.

xAI in March acquired X in an all-stock deal that valued the social media platform at \$33 billion, making it a subsidiary of Musk's AI company.

"X is truly a digital town square for all voices and the world's most powerful culture signal," she wrote, adding that she would be "cheering you all on as you continue to change the world."