

THE REPORT

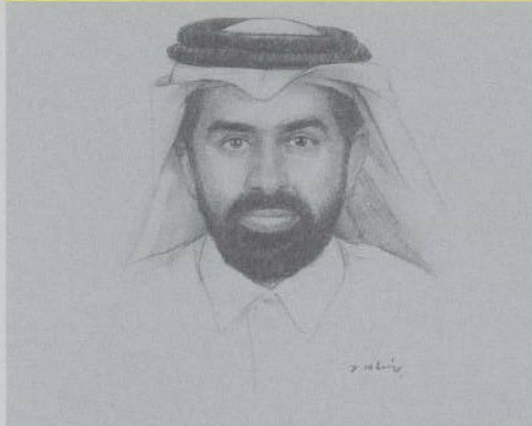
Qatar 2014

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Saleh bin Mohamed Al Nabit

National strategy midterms

OBG talks to Saleh bin Mohamed Al Nabit, Minister of Development Planning and Statistics

How is the ministry prioritising development of the pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030)?

AL NABIT: In December 2013, the ministry published a mid-term review of the National Development Strategy 2011-16 (NDS), which contains numerous initiatives in the areas of social, human, environmental and economic development designed to help our country progress towards QNV 2030. Together with key stakeholders, we are taking stock of the strategy's progress, relevance and applicability. The review helps prioritise NDS activities over the remaining three years.

What are the main objectives or initiatives being implemented for the NDS in 2014?

AL NABIT: The NDS has set out a comprehensive agenda in these four development areas, including 14 sectors. Many important and diverse initiatives are under way. In health care, there is a new emphasis on developing primary care, which recently saw the creation of the Primary Healthcare Corporation. In economics, there is a drive towards modernising the state's budgetary processes, spearheaded by the Ministry of Finance. In the environmental area, there is a new focus on conserving water resources and meeting security threats. Cutting across all these areas are efforts to modernise public sector institutions and expand their capability.

As 2013 marks the halfway point for the NDS, how do you assess the progress of developments so far?

AL NABIT: I am heartened by the progress achieved to date, especially given that this is Qatar's first such strategy. The NDS has raised awareness of important issues that Qatar will need to address if it is to realise the ambitions of QNV 2030, and it has succeeded in galvanising actions in key areas. Qatar now has a national strategy to guide its research efforts. Institutions like Qatar Development Bank and Enterprise Qatar are bringing relevant services within reach of small and medium-sized enterprises. We are also beginning to see improvements in the use of our precious resources, such as

greatly reducing water leakages. But we have also found that some of the changes set out in the NDS are more difficult to execute than perhaps we first anticipated. During the review we have taken a fresh look at these challenges and identified ways in which we can strengthen implementation.

Which goals for economic diversification have been realised and which need more attention? Have particular industries benefitted from the NDS?

AL NABIT: Out of 15 targets set out in the NDS in this area, almost one-third have been achieved to date. The NDS does not aim to pick or promote particular industries; rather, it focuses on building and enabling an environment where winning activities can emerge. The NDS shifts the emphasis beyond narrow industrial policy, and toward the challenge of building and diversifying a portfolio of assets in human, institutional, financial, physical and environmental capital that will well serve future generations of the state.

What is the role of statistical reporting in encouraging development and attracting foreign direct investment? Is the ministry trying to improve this?

AL NABIT: Quality information is essential to making good decisions, both in the public and private sectors. Qatar is continually developing its statistical systems so that they comply with globally accepted standards, in terms of definitions used, data collection methods, and disclosure of information. We are constantly working to improve the quality of our statistical products and outputs in ways that will enable foreign investors and other stakeholders to assess accurately what is happening in the economy, and allow decision-making processes to occur in the most informed way.

"Qatar Economic Outlook", a report released biennially by the ministry as a free download from our website, puts Qatar's economic performance and outlook into full view. We believe investors will find this useful when assessing investment opportunities in Qatar.