

The dynamics of the Qatari economy in light of the digital transformation**ديناميكية الاقتصاد القطري في ظل التحول الرقمي****Kerroucha Imen¹, Sebbagh Rafika²**¹ University of Djillali Liabes (ALGERIA), imen.kerroucha@univ-sba.dz² University of Djillali Liabes (ALGERIA), rafika.sebbagh@univ-sba.dz**Received:** 06/07/2025**Accepted:** 22/12/2025**Published:** 31/12/2025**Abstract**

This study aims to showcase Qatar's path of digital transformation, considering it is an absolute necessity in light of the global scientific and technological progress. It also highlights the most important mechanisms and strategies adopted by the country to promote this transformation. The study concludes that the digital transformation in Qatar has witnessed remarkable progress, especially in recent years. The Qatari government has adopted innovative and sustainable strategies, with and purposeful effective national policies to support this transformation. This has positively impacted Qatar's position in global digital transformation indicators.

Keywords: digital transformation; digital assessment indicators; sustainable development.

JEL Classification Codes: L86, O33, O38, Q55.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على مسار التحول الرقمي في قطر باعتباره ضرورة حتمية في ظل ما يشهده العالم من ثورة علمية و تكنولوجية ، بالإضافة إلى إبراز أهم الآليات و الاستراتيجيات التي تعتمدها الدولة لتعزيز هذا التحول. و قد خلصت الدراسة إلى أن واقع التحول الرقمي في قطر يشهد تقدما ملحوظا خاصة في السنوات الأخيرة، حيث تبنت الحكومة القطرية استراتيجيات مبتكرة مستدامة ، إلى جانب سياسات وطنية هادفة و فعالة لدعم هذا التحول ، وقد انعكس ذلك إيجابا على موقع قطر في العديد من مؤشرات التقييم العالمية للتحول الرقمي .

كلمات مفتاحية: التحول الرقمي ؛ مؤشرات التقييم الرقمي ؛ التنمية المستدامة.

تصنيفات JEL : L86, O33, O38, Q55.

INTRODUCTION:

In the last decades of the twentieth century, many changes and transformations emerged as a result of economic and financial globalization and the technological development that contributed to the accelerated pace of growth in innovations and technological techniques. This development led societies to move towards the information age, which contributed to the emergence of many applications and new activities that rely mainly on knowledge and digitization as two key success factors. Digital transformation has become an imperative for many countries that are moving toward and seeking to use digital tools in various sectors.

Qatar is considered one of the countries that adopted digital transformation strategies as one of its priorities to keep pace with the global trends of rapid digital progress and to move from a traditional system to a digital system based on information technology in all its dimensions. Digital transformation has become one of the fundamental pillars for enhancing economic growth and achieving sustainable development. On this basis, we tried to use digital transformation evaluation indicators, which are among the most important criteria used to assess the level of digitization in various countries around the world. In this context, the problem of this study is defined as follows:

What is the position of the Qatari economy according to digital transformation evaluation indicators?

First: Study Hypotheses

- Adopting digital transformation strategies in the Qatari economy has had positive effects on many Qatari economic and social indicators.
- Qatar is witnessing significant progress in the field of digitization, especially in recent years.

Second: Study Objectives: Our treatment of this topic aims to reach several points, summarized as follows:

- Identifying Qatar's global position according to global digitization indicators;
- Understanding the effects of digital transformation on the Qatari economy.

Third: Importance of the Study: The importance of the topic lies in the attempt to understand the issue of digitization, which has become one of the most critical challenges for the Qatari economy at present, given the significant financial returns it can provide in the medium and long term, and the opportunities it offers to create wealth and alleviate many economic problems. Many countries have found in digitization a strategic alternative to achieve economic and social development, especially at the present time.

Fourth: Study Method and Tools: To be able to answer the research problem and test the validity of the study hypotheses, we followed the descriptive method, by studying the most important concepts related to digitization indicators that evaluate strategies for implementing

digital transformation in different countries. We focused on the Qatari economy by studying the effects of these strategies on various fields, especially the economic and social ones.

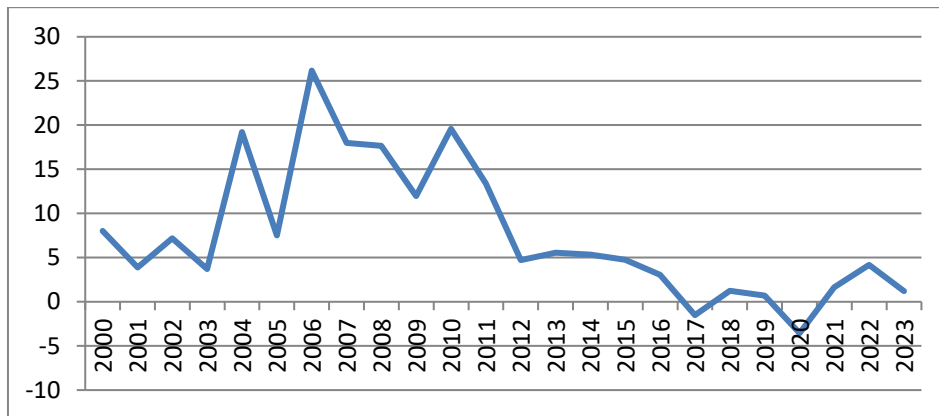
Fifth: Structure of the Research Paper: This research paper is divided into two main sections preceded by a general introduction. The first section discusses the reality of the Qatari economy through some economic and social indicators, while the second section evaluates the digital transformation of the Qatari economy through a set of evaluation indicators, mentioning the effects of implementing digitization on the Qatari economy.

1- The Reality of the Qatari Economy:

We will attempt to illustrate the reality and development of some key economic and social indicators in the Qatari economy.

First: On the Growth Rate: From the following chart, we note that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has gone through several stages, as it achieved increasing growth during the period from 2000 to 2006 due to the rise in energy prices (natural gas) (أخالص، 2015، ص. 105), of which Qatar is one of the largest producers in the world. In addition, economic reforms strengthened investments and the business environment in general. After this period, it has stagnated due to several factors which are highlighted in the global financial crisis of 2008 and the global health crisis in 2020 that led to an economic recession, in addition to regional and global geopolitical tensions during the last decades, Furthermore, the Qatari economy experienced the outcomes of the blockade imposed by some Gulf countries and Egypt during the period 2017–2021, which affected trade and investment. Nonetheless, Qatar had been able to manage the economic downturn through well-planned strategies; as a result it successfully overcame the crisis by strengthening domestic production, diversifying imports origins, and expanding global economic partnerships, which strengthened its resilience in the face of this challenge. (Albasoos, Hassan, & Al-Zadjali, 2021, pp. 162-163) Starting from 2021, the GDP recorded a noticeable increase, which is the result of numerous factors, the most important of which are the recovery of the global economy and the rise in energy prices again, as well as the growing contribution of non-oil sectors such as real estate, finance, and tourism. This came within the framework of the long-term national plan (Qatar National Vision 2030) to transform Qatar into a developed country capable of achieving sustainable development by 2030, also the Qatari government has invested and implemented many policies to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship, the private sector, and the development of human capital competencies. (Ben Hassen, 2023, p. 351)

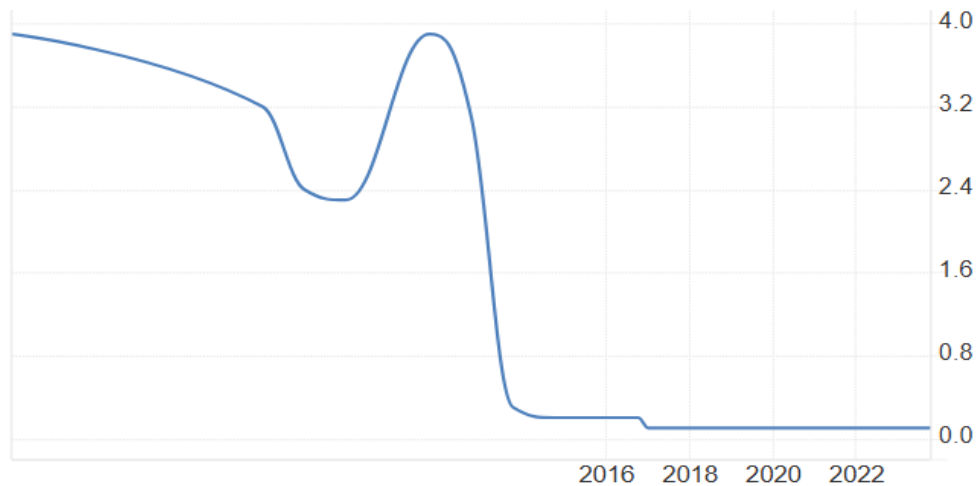
Figure No. (01): Growth Rate in Qatar during the Period (2000–2023) in Percentage



Source: Prepared by the two researchers based on World Bank statistics.

Second: Unemployment Rate: As a result of the policies adopted in Qatar, including stimulating economic activity by attracting foreign investors, the unemployment rate significantly decreased from 1.5% at the beginning of the 21st century to 0.3% in 2009 and to 0.1% in 2022.

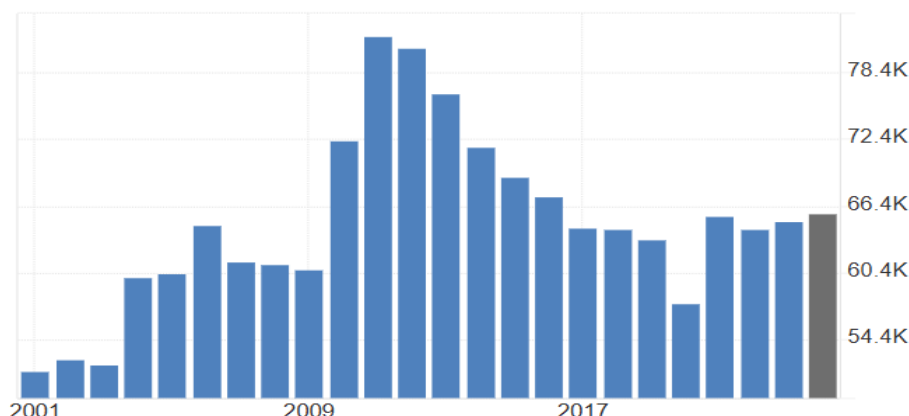
Figure No. (02): Unemployment Rate in Qatar during the Period (2000–2022) in Percentage



Source: Trading Economics: "Qatar – Unemployment Rate", available at: <https://ar.tradingeconomics.com/qatar/unemployment-rate>, Access date: (19/02/2025).

Third: GDP per Capita: Qatar has transformed from a low-income country to a higher-income country, as GDP per capita rose from 64,228.74 USD in 2000 to 65,111.03 USD in 2023. Qatar's GDP per capita is equivalent to 516% of the global average.

Figure No. (03): GDP per Capita in Thousand US Dollars (2000–2024)



Source: Trading Economics: "Qatar – GDP per Capita", available at: <https://ar.tradingeconomics.com/qatar/gdp-per-capita-ppp>, Access date: (19/02/2025).

2- Assessment of Digital Transformation and Its Impact on the Qatari Economy Through a Set of Indicators:

2-1 Assessment of Digital Transformation in the Qatari Economy

Through this section, we will attempt to explore the path of digital transformation in Qatar by identifying its position through various global digitalization assessment indicators, and we will address the impacts of implementing digital transformation on the Qatari economy.

First: Global Digital Quality Index: among the key indicators used to assess the level of digital transformation in both developed and developing countries is the Global Digital Quality Index. We will explore its main theoretical and practical foundations as follows:

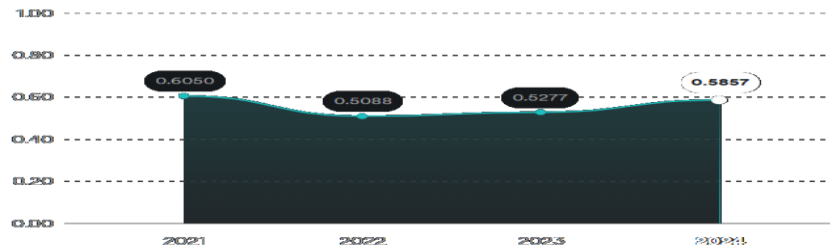
1. Definition of the Global Digital Quality Index:

It is a global survey on the quality of digital well-being across 121 countries. This index ranks countries by examining five main pillars that define the quality of digital life. These pillars are: Internet affordability, Internet quality, electronic infrastructure, cybersecurity, and e-government.

The five pillars of the Global Digital Quality Index are supported by 12 interconnected indicators that work together to provide a measure of overall digital quality of life. It is worth mentioning that the Digital Quality of Life Index also considers GDP per capita, although some countries enjoy better digital quality of life despite having a lower-than-expected GDP per capita. (Surfshark, 2025)

2. **Qatar's Global Ranking According to the Digital Quality Index:** Qatar is considered one of the top countries enjoying the highest digital quality of life, as illustrated in the following figure:

Figure No. (04): The Qatari Economy According to the Global Digital Quality Index (2021–2024)



Source: Surfshark (2025). *Digital Quality of Life Index 2025*; available at: <https://surfshark.com/research/dql/country/qa>; Visited: (05/02/2025).

As for Qatar, it ranked 39th globally in 2024 and 6th in Asia. What distinguishes Qatar is the very low cost of internet access, which has positively impacted the country's position according to this index. In addition, it also has other positive effects on the nation's digital well-being.

Second – The Digital Readiness Index:

The Digital Readiness Index plays a key role in enhancing digitalization and financial inclusion in Qatar through the investments made in digital infrastructure. This will be further explored below.

1. Definition of the Digital Readiness Index:

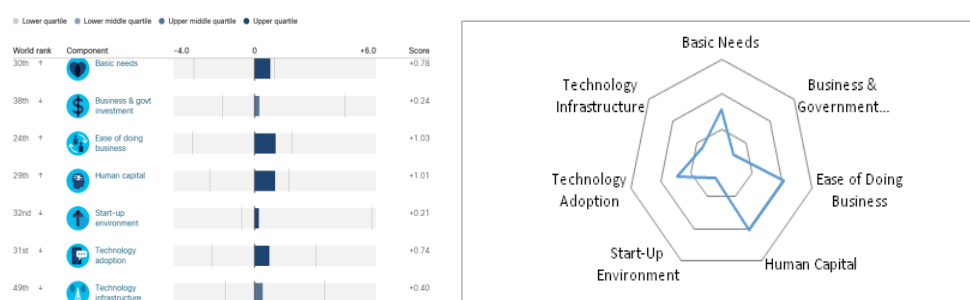
The Digital Readiness Index uses a comprehensive model based on seven components: technology infrastructure, technology adoption, ease of doing business, human capital development, business and government investment, basic human needs, and start-up environment. It is applied to 146 countries, with scores ranging from -1.89 to 2.37. The standardized score is used to calculate the index, where values represent the distance from the global average. For example, a country scoring "1.0" is one standard deviation above the average, while a country scoring "-1.0" is one standard deviation below the average. To obtain comparable scores for each country, it was necessary to use unified data points available for all countries, using the seven components.

2. Qatar's Position According to the Digital Readiness Index:

Based on the 2021 Digital Readiness Index published by Cisco, which reflects countries' progress in adopting digital technologies and their readiness for digital transformation, Qatar ranks 34th globally and 3rd in the Arab world after the UAE and Saudi Arabia, with a score of 0.73. This grade Qatar among the countries in the "Accelerate" stage showcases that it has made progress in adopting digital technologies, but still has significant opportunities to further accelerate and improve its digital readiness. This index reflects Qatar's digital environment that encourages innovation in the financial sector and contributes to expanding access to digital financial services.

On the other hand, as shown in the following figure, the index is based on seven sub-pillars: basic needs, human capital, ease of doing business, government and business investment, start-up environment, technology infrastructure, and technology adoption. We notice through the indicator that Qatar holds relatively high positions in some areas, such as human capital (29th globally) and ease of doing business (24th globally), which demonstrates a supportive environment for innovation and entrepreneurship. However, there are still opportunities for improvement in other sub-indicators. (Cisco, 2025)

Figure 05: Qatar's Digital Readiness Index (Cisco), 2021



Source :Cisco (2025). **QATR**. available at : https://www.cisco.com/c/m/en_us/about/corporate-social-responsibility/research-resources/digital-readiness-index.html#/country/QAT Visited:(05/02/2025).

Qatar's progress is not limited to the Digital Readiness Index alone, but is also clearly reflected in the Global Innovation Index, which measures the performance of economies in the field of innovation (السبتي, 2021, p. 219). According to the Global Innovation Index reports, Qatar has witnessed a remarkable improvement, moving from rank 70 in 2020 to rank 49 in 2024 (Dutta, Lanvin, León, & Wunsch-Vincent, 2024, p. 8). This reflects its commitment to developing policies that support the knowledge economy and enhance investment in modern technology.

Third – E-Government Development Index (EGDI)

The E-Government Development Index is one of the key indicators for measuring the level of digitalization of government services.

1. Definition of the E-Government Development Index (EGDI):

The EGDI, issued by the United Nations, is one of the global standards for measuring the performance of e-government and the extent of digital transformation in public services. It is based on three main components: Online service availability, Telecommunications infrastructure, Human capital. (E-Government Survey, 2024, p. 4)

2. Qatar's Position According to the EGDI:

The figure illustrates a noteworthy enhancement in the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) for Qatar during the period 2003–2024. As it increased from 0.41 in 2003 to 0.82 in 2024. This development reflects the government's ongoing efforts to adopt digital solutions, improve electronic services, or strengthen the infrastructure of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure.

Figure 06: Qatar's E-Government Development Index (EGDI) during the period (2003–2024)



Source:UN : E-Government Development Index. available at :<https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data/Country-Information/id/137-Qatar>. Visited:(09/02/2025).

It is also noted from Figure 6 that the sub-components of the E-Government Development Index for the year 2024 are decent as Qatar have well performed in all of them, as: The Human Capital Index scored 0.7114, reflecting significant investment in education and the development of digital skills. The Telecommunications Infrastructure Index recorded a high level of 0.9963, This showcases the reliable telecommunications networks infrastructure. The Online Services Index also showed an advanced level, reaching 0.7655, which reflects the development of digital services and the ease of access to them.

These confirm the preparations and capabilities of Qatar in utilizing technology in achieving public services that are efficient and effective, that contribute to Qatar's digital transformation aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030

Qatar had achieved advanced stages in digital transformation as a result of various strategies and policies. Qatar opts through digital transformation strategy (2023–2025) to achieve several goals and aspirations that aim at developing the digital economy and to modernize the government services and advanced technology simultaneously focusing on the main pillars which are:

- **Digital Services:** convert at least 95% of government services into digital platforms, to facilitate access and improving efficiency;

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- **Innovation and Investment** : encourage a favourable environment for local and foreign investment similar to supporting 54 start-up companies and encouraging innovation and research in new technologies;(حكومي, 2025)
- **Artificial Intelligence**: Utilizing AI in numerous fields to improve the productivity and enhance customer services; (MCIT, 2025)
- **Digital Workforce**: Training workforce to develop digital skills that ensure their adaptability to new technologies . (Mbgcorp, 2024)

In addition, part of Qatar National vision 2030 is the digital agenda 2030 which aims for

- Develop ICT infrastructure;
- Enhance digital government's efficiency and transparency;
- Form a digitally aware society through development of skills and training. (MCIT, 2023)

It is worth mentioning that the private sector in Qatar plays a fundamental role in promoting digital transformation, particularly through supporting small and medium enterprises(SME's) that are a central pillar in the Qatari economy, according to the statistics of 2022 SME's represents approximately 97 % of all companies registered in the private sector, and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has initiated the launch of digital programs and platforms aimed at developing digital infrastructure and cloud services. Giving their flexibility, SME's have been able to adopt emerging technology easily and contribute to digital transformation, which provides the private sector great opportunities for growth and competition in global markets.(وزارة الاتصالات و تكنولوجيا المعلومات ، 2024 ، الصفحات 5-7).

Even though Qatar has achieved many of its digital transformation goals it still faces many challenges including:

- **Cyber security**: The increasing reliance on technology showcases the growing risk of cyber attacks, fighting them necessitates effective strategies to protect sensitive data and important software systems;
- **New Technologies**: the emerging new technologies similar to Artificial Intelligence and machine learning form new challenges alongside with the necessity for upgrades and restructuring of digital infrastructure;
- **Legal and Legislative Challenges**: Local policies must be updated regularly to keep up with technological advancement and protect privacy
- **Organizational Culture Change**: Digital transformation entail a change in work culture, that might face resistance from businesses and individuals ;
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration**: Augmenting the collaboration between public and private sectors can be tough and face rejection which could alter the effectiveness of digital transformation strategies;
- **Financing and Investment**: small and medium-sized enterprises face difficulties in securing funding for digital transformation especially for. (Marsalqatar, 2023)

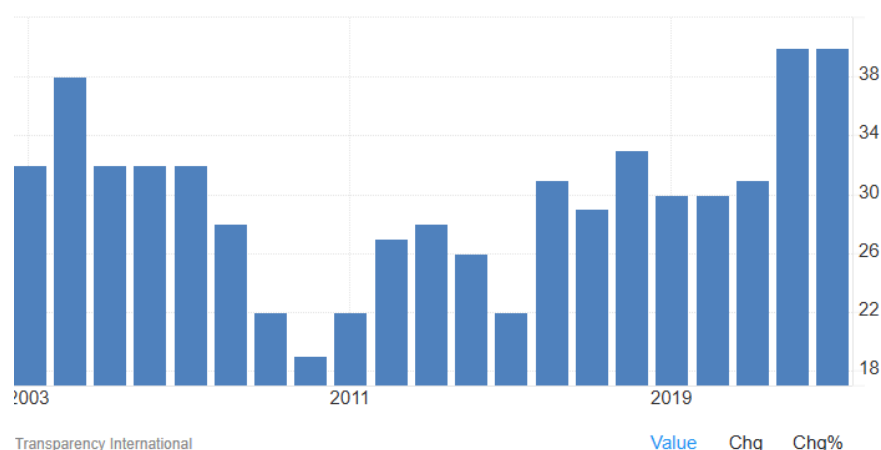
The digital Government Steering Committee goal is to address major challenges that face Qatar's digital transformation by implementing strategies and resolving execution obstacles and coordinates with government entities.

2-2 Impacts of Digitalization on the Qatari Economy

One of the most significant impacts of digital transformation on the Qatari economy can be identified as follows:

First : Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) in Qatar: Despite a decline in Qatar's overall CPI score, the country has improved its global ranking as a result of the anti-corruption strategy adopted by the Qatari government. This progress is illustrated in the following figure:

Figure (07): Qatar's Ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index during the period (2003–2024)



Source :Trading Economics: "*Qatar – Corruption Rank*", available at: <https://ar.tradingeconomics.com/qatar/corruption-rank>, Accessed on: (19/02/2025).

The 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) published by Transparency International shows that Qatar is ranked as the 40th least corrupt out of 180 countries. On average, Qatar has ranked 30th worldwide in the CPI from 2003 to 2024, with its best ranking recorded in 2010, when it reached the 19th position globally.

Second – Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI): Qatar has had a noticeable improvement in the Worldwide Governance Indicators, Simultaneously with the adoption of digital transformation strategies. This index, issued by the World Bank, is based on six dimensions of governance, namely: voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. (شطبي, 2023, p. 36)

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As shown in the following table, Qatar recorded high percentages in most sub-indicators, especially in political stability and government effectiveness, which attained 84.36% and 85.85% respectively in 2023. Digital transformation assisted in improving the efficiency of public administration and developing technologies, which in turn enhanced overall governmental performance.

This progression had a clear positive effect on the rule of law and regulatory quality as it achieved% 80.19and 81.13% respectively in 2023 the low score in corruption indicator showcases the role of digitalisation in the promotion of accountability.

Table No. (01): Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) for Qatar during the period 2013–2023

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Voice and Accountability	20.1 9	16.7 5	16.7 5	16.2 6	15.2 7	14.0 8	13.5 3	14.0 1	17.3 9	20.7 7	22.5 5
Political Stability	91.9 4	80.4 8	82.3 8	76.6 7	69.0 5	66.9 8	69.8 1	68.8 7		82.0 8	84.3 6
Government Effectiveness.	81.5 2	78.3 7	77.6 2	73.8 1	74.2 9	73.8 1	73.1 0	78.1 0	81.9 0	82.5 5	85.8 5
Regulatory quality	73.4 6	69.7 1	71.9 0	72.8 6	67.1 4	71.9 0	73.8 1	75.7 1	77.1 4	77.3 6	81.1 3
Rule of law	78.8 7	77.4 0	74.2 9	76.1 9	75.2 4	74.2 9	74.2 9	81.4 3	80.9 5	79.2 5	80.1 9
Control of corruption	81.5 2	80.2 9	77.1 4	79.0 5	74.2 9	75.2 4	78.5 7	77.1 4	78.1 0	79.2 5	75

Source: World Bank (2025). *Worldwide Governance Indicators for Qatar*. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators/interactive-data-access>. Accessed on: (19/02/2025).

Another mechanism that has contributed in adopting digital transformation and also helped control corruption is Qatar's desire and commitment to improving cybersecurity. This is evident by the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) issued by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). This index is based on five main pillars: legal measures, technical measures, organizational measures, capacity building, and cooperation. (ITU, 2017, p. 4) As shown in the following table, Qatar achieved an advanced ranking, moving from 25th place in 2017 to 17th place in 2018 with a score of 86, ranking third in the Arab world after Saudi Arabia and Oman. This ranking is supported by a strong legal framework and regulatory structure that focuses primarily on securing information infrastructure and national cybersecurity (ITU, 2018, p. 27). In 2021, Qatar rose to 94.5, and in 2024, Qatar was classified as a model country in the field of cybersecurity, achieving full scores in all five pillars of the index. This showcases its efforts to strengthen digital security and protect cybersecurity infrastructure.

Table (02): Evolution of Qatar's Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI)

	2017	2018	2021	2024
Index Value	67.60	86	94.5	100
Rank	25	17	27	Tier performance T 1

Source: Prepared by the two researchers based on the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) reports (2017, 2018, 2021, 2024).

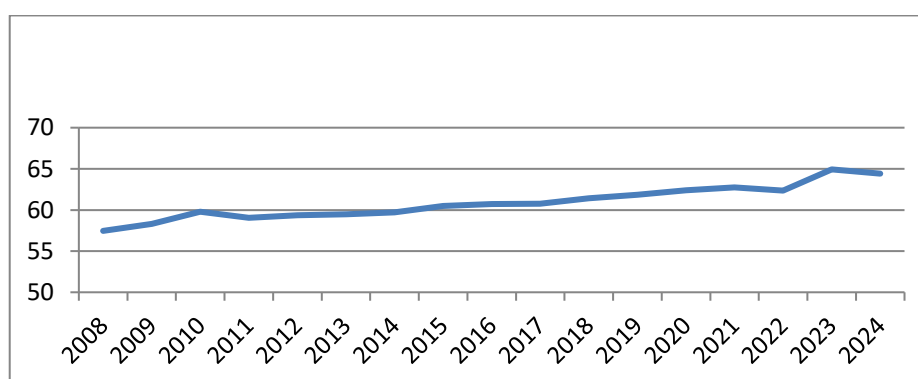
Third – Sustainable Development Index:

The Sustainable Development Index (SDI) measures the ecological efficiency of human development, recognizing that development must be achieved within planetary boundaries , it is a tool used to measure progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations in 2015.(SDI,2015)

As for Qatar’s position according to the Sustainable Development Index, the country places great importance on sustainable development and strives to achieve the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030, with a focus on transforming Qatar into an advanced nation capable of achieving sustainable development while preserving the environment and ensuring a decent standard of living for future generations. This is pursued through the following pillars: (البوابة القانونية القطرية, 2008)

- **Social development:** Building a just and safe society;
- **Economic development:** Achieving a diversified and competitive national economy that supports current and future progress;
- **Environmental development:** Emphasizing proper environmental management.

Figure No. (08): Evolution of the Sustainable Development Index of Qatar



Source: Prepared by the two researchers based on data from <https://dashboards.sdginde.org/rankings>, accessed on (07/30/2025).

As shown from Figure (8) the development of Qatar’s Sustainable Development Index, which is constantly increasing, as it has risen from 57.46 in 2008 to reach 64.43 in 2024. This

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reflects the improvement in Qatar's performance and the efforts made to achieve the goals of sustainable development, which align with Qatar Vision 2030, launched in 2008, through the adoption of many policies that promote sustainable development, such as enhancing digital transformation, relying on advanced technology and supporting the knowledge-based economy.

Additionally, as shown from the same Figure Qatar recorded a remarkable improvement in many of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2024, especially in Goal 09: industrial sector, innovation and infrastructure, as the sub-indicators demonstrate that 100% of the population has access to the Internet. In addition, it scored 3.8 out of 5 in the Logistics Performance Index, which reflects Qatar's success in digital transformation and providing advanced digital infrastructure. It also achieved an improvement in Goal 8: decent work and economic growth, as it recorded a low unemployment rate of 0.1% (SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT, 2024).

Conclusion:

Digital transformation is one of the most important strategies that countries seek to adopt due to its significance in keeping up with rapid global technological progress. It has become a main factor of development and sustainability.

Qatar is one of the countries that have shown huge importance to this transformation, having adopted comprehensive strategies to support digitalization and utilize modern technologies in its development plans. This is achievable by developing digital infrastructure, promoting of innovation and digital governance, and investment in human capital. These efforts have improved Qatar's in different global indicators, demonstrating the dynamism of the Qatari economy and its ability to adapt and evolve in the context of digital transformation, placing it among the ranks of leading countries.

The key lessons learned from this experience are that the success of digital transformation does not uniquely rely on adopting new technologies .But rather it must be fundamentally based on a clear national vision, the provision of a flexible legislative and regulatory environment that is able to keeps pace with current developments and invest in human capital. This improves the effectiveness of the transition and enables the achievement of development goals.

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