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Qatar's AI advantage will be built at home and scaled abroad



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Executive Summary

Qatar has an opportunity to tap into a domestic AI market worth more than US$2 billion by 2030 to build products, intellectual property, and expertise that can be sold across the region [1].

Strategy& analysis identifies four markets behind that figure: AI platforms, at about US$700m; AI products, at about US$500m; professional services, at about US$400m; and AI infrastructure, at about US$400m. Together, these markets are projected to grow at a compound annual rate of more than 25% between 2025 and 2030.[2]

That gives Qatar a home market large enough to do more than buy technology. Government, government-linked entities, and priority industries can provide customers for new AI products, while local technology companies use those deployments to build reusable software, increase sector expertise, and strengthen intellectual property.

Compute and data center capacity are part of the equation. The commercial value of such capacity rises when it supports products that can be used by a second customer, then a third, without starting again each time. For Qatar, a useful test of AI investment is how much installed technology becomes something that can be sold again.

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Using domestic demand to build products

Qatar's compact size can shorten the distance between an AI idea and a paying customer. Large buyers, researchers, and regulators can be brought together to address a defined problem, helping resolve technical and regulatory questions early. Public services and smart cities, energy and industrial operations, financial services, healthcare, and logistics all present problems for which local data, regulations, or sector knowledge can shape the solution.

The starting point should be a small number of projects with enough demand to justify investment and enough similarity across organizations to support reuse. A deployment for one ministry, bank, hospital, or industrial operator becomes more valuable when the software, model, workflow, or data architecture can be adapted for the next customer.
In government and regulated sectors, local hosting, data controls, and sector-specific requirements can also shape what gets built. Products designed to meet those requirements can travel because many of the same constraints apply to customers elsewhere in the Gulf.

Singapore offers a useful comparison. Its Sectoral AI Centre of Excellence for Manufacturing brings together government, industry, and researchers to develop AI solutions for shared manufacturing needs, including predictive maintenance, operations optimization, and quality assurance. It also develops standardized models for common use cases that can be reused across companies.

The test is repeatability. If the second customer needs a complete rebuild, the first deployment has created an experience rather than a product. Procurement can reinforce the importance of repeatability by defining reusable components, data rights, and intellectual property ownership at the start, alongside the outcome required from the first use case.

Giving national technology companies distinct roles

Repeatable products are easier to build when the roles of the players around them are clear. Qatar already has many of the underlying components. The internet exchange point (IXP) Doha IX provides a carrier-neutral commercial internet exchange for local and international traffic[3]. Syntys has expanded carrier-neutral hyperscale data center capacity in Qatar, taking its live IT capacity in the country to 26 megawatts (MW)[4]. Qai has a mandate to develop and operate AI infrastructure and systems in Qatar and internationally[5]. Ooredoo is deploying locally hosted sovereign cloud and AI services for government and enterprise customers[6].

Those capabilities point to a practical division of roles rather than fixed mandates. Connectivity providers can focus on interconnection. Data center operators can provide AI-ready physical capacity. Qai can concentrate on sovereign infrastructure, strategic compute, and reusable AI capabilities. Market-facing technology companies can take proven platforms and services into government and enterprise accounts. Government entities and sector leaders identify the problems that need to be solved as well as provide the data and operational knowledge that make those products useful.

Defining these roles does not require consolidation. Overlap can preserve competition and choice; the priority is to connect these complementary capabilities into an integrated ecosystem that can develop, commercialize and export AI solutions at scale. The commercial mechanics need the same attention as the technology. Infrastructure access, technical interfaces, customer handoffs, product ownership, revenue sharing, and the rights to jointly developed intellectual property all influence whether a successful deployment can be repeated elsewhere.

02

Capacity should follow that logic. Market research firm Arizton projects that Qatar's co-location market could use approximately 120 MW of IT power capacity by 2030[7]. Strategy& analysis of publicly announced developments as of July 2026 indicates an estimated 20 percent gap between that projected requirement and the announced pipeline[8]. The gap is commercially useful only if workloads develop alongside it. A megawatt is capacity; a product used by several customers is a commercial asset.

Some model and platform capabilities will still be more efficient to access internationally. Qatar can concentrate local investment where sovereignty, Arabic-language capability, sector knowledge, or intellectual property creates a reason to build locally. The stronger global partnerships will also transfer expertise, support co-development, and leave behind ways to support the next customer via reusable technology, intellectual property, or commercial rights.

Building for the next customer

Regional sales need to be designed into the first deployment. Qatar's international networks make it possible to involve overseas customers before the product is finished. Ooredoo, for example, operates in eight markets in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia[9]. Those relationships can test whether a Qatari use case solves the same problem elsewhere. Before a major AI project goes live, the commercial model should answer four questions:

- Which components can be reused?
- Who owns the intellectual property?
- Who maintains the product road map?
- Which customers outside Qatar face the same problem?

Some uses will travel better than others. Sovereign deployment for regulated sectors, Arabic-language applications, and sector-specific solutions in energy, financial services, and logistics all address needs shared across Gulf markets. Qatar can use domestic customers to test whether those propositions work in practice before committing more capital to regional expansion.

That process changes how success should be measured. Megawatts installed, partnerships signed, and pilots launched show activity. Better measures of commercial progress include products reused across multiple customers, intellectual property owned or co-owned in Qatar, the share of domestic AI workloads served locally, regional customers won, and export revenue generated.



Conclusion

Owning every layer of AI is unnecessary. Qatar already has a domestic market large enough to act as a customer base and proving ground. The task is to make that demand do more than buy technology. Each major deployment should solve a local problem and leave behind something that can be sold again. That is how demand at home can create products built in Qatar and sold beyond it.

Endnotes

[1] Strategy& market-sizing analysis based on IDC, “Worldwide AI and Generative AI Spending Guide—2024” and Statista Market Insights, “Artificial Intelligence¬—Qatar,” updated March 20, 2025 (https://www.statista.com/outlook/tmo/artificial-intelligence/qatar/?srsltid=AYCX9vKHKVB5DKlSKQw9EGsBsbg__ABeshvbYN3FY1KfhbUO4aKxmkQB). The four market estimates and growth rates cited in the article are Strategy& calculations based on these sources and related analysis.

[2] Singapore Economic Development Board / A*STAR, “New AI Centre of Excellence to Drive Innovation in Manufacturing,” September 26, 2024 (https://www.edb.gov.sg/en/news-and-insights/new-ai-centre-of-excellence-to-drive-innovation-in-manufacturing).

[3] Ooredoo Qatar, “Ooredoo Launches Doha IX, Qatar’s First Commercial Internet Exchange Point in Partnership with DE-CIX,” September 30, 2025 (https://www.ooredoo.qa/web/en/press-release/ooredoo-launches-doha-ix-qatars-first-commercial-internet-exchange-point-in-partnership-with-de-cix/).

[4] Syntys, “Ooredoo Group Announces Syntys Acquisition of Q Data Facilities in Qatar,” January 2026 (https://syntys.com/newsroom/ooredoo-group-announces-syntys-acquisition-of-q-data-facilities-in-qatar).

[5] Government Communications Office, State of Qatar, “Qatar Launches Qai to Power Its Global AI Ambitions,” December 8, 2025 (https://www.gco.gov.qa/en/media-centre/top-news/qatar-launches-qai-to-power-its-global-ai-ambitions/).

[6] Ooredoo Qatar: “Ooredoo Qatar Announces Strategic Partnership with Oracle to Deploy Oracle Alloy Sovereign Cloud and AI Platform,” December 1, 2025 (https://www.ooredoo.qa/web/en/press-release/ooredoo-qatar-announces-strategic-partnership-with-oracle-to-deploy-oracle-alloy-sovereign-cloud-and-ai-platform/).

[7] Arizton, “Qatar Data Center Colocation Market—Supply & Demand Analysis 2025–2030,” September 2025. The report forecasts 120 MW of utilized IT power capacity in 2030 (https://www.arizton.com/market-reports/qatar-data-center-colocation-market).

[8] Strategy& analysis based on the 2030 utilized IT power capacity forecast and publicly announced Qatar data center developments as of July 2026.

[9] Ooredoo Group, “Annual Report 2025,” February 9, 2026. Group overview lists operations in Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Palestine, Maldives, Algeria, and Tunisia (https://www.ooredoo.com/2025-annual-report/).

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