# Technology

*The Technology Group at Bank Albilad is a multifaceted division comprising IT Operations, IT Solutions and Delivery, the Data Management Office, and IT Governance.*

Throughout the past year, the group has focused on enhancing technological infrastructure to align with the bank's digital transformation goals, improving customer experience through innovative banking solutions, and optimizing operational efficiency via automation and process improvements.

Additional key objectives have included strict budget control for both CAPEX and OPEX, robust compliance with regulatory frameworks (notably SAMA ITGF and PDPL), and strategic alignment of IT services with the overall business strategy.

## 2024 Highlights

**PDPL Implementation**

**Trade Finance System Enhancement**

**Investment Wakalah (Zakat Non-Exempt) Product Launch**

**Achieved 100% Compliance with SAMA ITGF**

**Inaugurated a Tier 4 Data Center**

**Automated Compliance & Risk Management**

# A World-Class Data Center

*In a significant move underscoring the Bank's commitment to keeping pace with rapid technological developments, 2024 witnessed the inauguration of a new Tier 4 data center featuring advanced global specifications.*

This state-of-the-art facility ranks among the most cutting-edge and sophisticated in the financial services sector, bolstering the Bank's digital capabilities and playing a pivotal role in driving forward its digital transformation projects, whether by expanding internet banking services, providing integrated digital payment solutions, or ensuring the infrastructure is equipped to handle the latest financial technologies.

*Distinguished by its high reliability and uninterrupted service delivery, the center employs advanced duplication and backup systems that enable swift recovery of banking operations in any unforeseen circumstances.*

Its design is grounded in stringent security and cybersecurity standards, safeguarding customers' data confidentiality and supporting the continuous efficiency of the Bank's core systems around the clock. Future expansion and flexibility were also prioritized in its design, enabling the Bank to keep pace with the accelerating demand for digital services. Aligned with the Bank's commitment to environmental sustainability, the center incorporates highly efficient power and cooling management mechanisms that reduce resource consumption and minimize environmental impact.

This center is set to herald a significant leap forward in the Bank's digital transformation journey. It enables enhanced support for artificial intelligence technologies and big data analytics, equipping the Bank with greater capacity for informed strategic decision-making and personalized customer services. Furthermore, it accelerates the development of internal systems and applications, while creating a collaborative space for partners in both the financial and technological domains, thus fostering innovation and delivering agile, secure services.

*Through this initiative, the Bank affirms its ambitious drive toward comprehensive digital transformation, setting new standards in the financial services industry that respond to customers' aspirations and future requirements.*

# Key Achievements and Milestones

## Driving Business Efficiency and Innovation

Over the last 12 months, the Technology Group has delivered a 34% increase in Change Requests (CRs), significantly streamlining processes across various departments. Crucial projects such as the Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL) implementation and enhancements to the Trade Finance System have bolstered regulatory compliance and operational effectiveness. The launch of the Investment Wakalah product (Zakat Non-Exempt) has opened avenues for retail, SME, and corporate customers to invest seamlessly through the bank's digital channels, aligning with the broader aim of delivering innovative banking solutions.

## Strategic Data Management and Governance

*With the establishment of the Data Management Office, the bank has reinforced its commitment to data governance, ensuring accuracy, security, and compliance.*

This office focuses on implementing robust frameworks in line with PDPL and the National Data Management Office (NDMO) guidelines to elevate customer trust and drive business growth.

SAMA IT Governance Framework ✔

SAMA ANTI-FARUD Framework ✔

Business continuity ✔

SAMA Cybersecurity ✔

Saudi Central Bank

## Operational and Risk Management Enhancements

The Technology Group conducted comprehensive risk assessments for all critical applications, major CRs, and projects. These measures identified and mitigated potential threats, thereby protecting the bank's reputation and customers. Achieving 100% compliance with SAMA ITGF has not only improved service availability but also strengthened Bank Albilad's standing with regulatory authorities. Furthermore, detailed risk and control self-assessments of technology functions led to enhanced stability, timely audit observation closure, and notable cost savings.

## Vision 2030 and Shareholder Value

*The Technology Group actively contributes to Vision 2030 by supporting initiatives that promote digitalization, automation, and Saudization.*

Key achievements include facilitating REDF (Real Estate Development Fund) initiatives for diverse customer segments, focusing on regulatory compliance to reduce breaches, and innovating product launches on digital channels.

By automating processes, reducing operational costs, and improving overall service delivery, the Technology Group has directly bolstered the bank's performance. Through increased compliance and data privacy measures (PDPL), the bank has avoided substantial penalties—protecting shareholder interests and enhancing brand reputation. Additional measures such as establishing clear policies and procedures, optimizing resource allocation, and driving organizational resilience have further strengthened Bank Albilad's maturity, productivity, and value proposition.

# CSR and Sustainability Initiatives

Contributing to Bank Albilad's CSR goals, the Technology Group has taken tangible steps to minimize its carbon footprint, including promoting digital channels to reduce card and paper waste. The introduction of QR codes for accessing privacy policies has achieved 100% coverage across branches, reducing paper consumption while improving customer convenience.

*Nearly all work and communication within the department are handled digitally.*

The inauguration of a Tier 4 Data Center designed with smart energy management principles further underscores the bank's commitment to environmental sustainability.

The group's adoption of DevOps, automation, and RPA (Robotic Process Automation) not only drives operational efficiency but also limits resource consumption. Budget control measures, weekly progress reviews, and continuous upskilling initiatives ensure that the department's sustainability goals remain integral to daily operations and long-term planning.

By carefully monitoring IT expenditures, optimizing resource utilization, and maintaining regulatory compliance, the Technology Group has directly contributed to the bank's profitability and financial stability.

## Building Technical Expertise

Recognizing the importance of skills development, the Technology Group launched a technical career path initiative supported by 365 training courses, certification programs for AI technologies, and agile methodology workshops. Data privacy training and awareness were also prioritized, ensuring the team comprehends essential regulatory standards.

Cross-functional collaboration and open lines of communication promote a cohesive working environment. Regular town halls, acknowledgment of strong performance, and fair appraisals help maintain high levels of motivation and morale.

*This people-focused approach has led to a vibrant, supportive culture that aligns with Bank Albilad's overall strategic objectives.*

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# 365 training courses

## Elevating Governance Maturity

A major focus this year has been attaining a maturity level of 3 in the IT Governance (ITG) framework. Regular improvements in reporting, policy and procedure updates, and consistent refinement of incident, change, problem, and release management processes underscore the department's progress.

Future areas of improvement include IT Asset and Configuration Management, software license management, and identity and access management. By continually enhancing governance structures, Bank Albilad fortifies its technology environment against risks, maintains operational excellence, and reinforces stakeholder trust.

*With this approach, the technology division at Albilad Bank continues its leadership in digital transformation, enhancing innovation, and ensuring the provision of advanced technology solutions that support sustainable growth and are in line with Vision 2030.*