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Kuwait Rewrites Its Business Rules

2026 Reforms Signal a Shift from Rentier Economy to Direct Investment

PART - 2

The Times Kuwait Report

Kuwait's 2026 economic and regulatory reforms signal a significant shift in how businesses operate, attract investment and participate in the country's development. As the government moves towards greater transparency, accountability and productive private-sector participation, traditional commercial agency models are giving way to new opportunities built around direct investment, technical expertise, strategic partnerships and innovation.

Foreign companies face a fundamental change in market-entry strategies

One of the most important consequences of the reforms is the need for international companies to reconsider their traditional approach to entering the Kuwaiti market.

Historically, appointing a local commercial agent was often the preferred route for overseas manufacturers and service providers.

Local agents provided market knowledge, distribution networks, administrative support and access to customers. For many international businesses, this arrangement offered a relatively straightforward way of operating without establishing a substantial local presence. However, the emerging regulatory environment places greater importance on direct corporate accountability and transparent ownership.

The Project Consultancy Company report identifies three alternative operating models.

Direct investment through KDIPA

- **The first is direct registration through the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA).**

This provides a route for qualifying foreign investors to establish a more direct presence in Kuwait, subject to the applicable investment approval and licensing requirements. A properly structured investment can give foreign companies greater control over operations, ownership and contractual responsibilities.

It also provides a clearer framework for demonstrating compliance with corporate and beneficial ownership requirements.

Technical partnerships with Kuwaiti companies

The second model involves partnerships with established local companies based on their actual technical and operational capabilities. Under this approach, the value of the Kuwaiti partner would increasingly be determined by its ability to provide specialised services, local expertise, infrastructure, workforce capabilities and project execution.



Kuwait's 2026 reforms are reshaping the business landscape, opening new investment opportunities while challenging traditional commercial agency models. Foreign companies must adapt, while Kuwaiti businesses are encouraged to focus on technical expertise, innovation and productive investment.

The relationship would move away from merely providing commercial access towards delivering measurable business value.

This could create opportunities for Kuwaiti companies to evolve from traditional trading and agency businesses into specialised service providers and technology partners.

Structured subcontracting

- **The third model is subcontracting under a principal contractor.**

International companies could participate in large projects through technically defined subcontracting arrangements, provided these comply with applicable procurement and contractual rules.

The report also refers to a 30 percent revenue-sharing BOT renewal model announced for 23 state-owned projects.

Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) arrangements allow private-sector participants to develop or operate projects for a defined period before transferring them to the state or another designated entity under the agreed contractual structure. Such arrangements could provide an alternative mechanism for private-sector participation while allowing the government to retain a share of the economic benefits.

The underlying message is that international businesses will increasingly need to demonstrate what they contribute to Kuwait's economy rather than relying primarily on representation agreements.

Five sectors that could benefit from the changing investment environment

While the reforms could create challenges for traditional commercial operators, they also present opportunities for international companies with specialised expertise.

The Project Consultancy Company briefing identifies five sectors with particularly strong potential.

1. Energy transition and renewable energy

- **Kuwait's long-term economic diversification strategy requires the development of renewable energy and more sustainable infrastructure.**

The country's significant solar energy potential creates opportunities in solar power generation, energy storage, grid modernisation, smart energy management and associated engineering services.

International companies with experience in renewable energy infrastructure, project financing and advanced technologies could play an important role.

The transition also creates opportunities in energy efficiency, emissions management and industrial decarbonisation. For Kuwait, the challenge is not simply to attract foreign technology but to develop the technical and institutional capacity necessary to implement projects effectively.

2. Food security and strategic storage

- **Food security is another important area of opportunity.**

Kuwait's dependence on imported food makes the development of reliable supply chains, strategic storage facilities and modern distribution infrastructure an important national priority. The briefing highlights grain silos, cold-chain infrastructure and supply-chain modernisation as areas where international expertise could be particularly valuable. Investment opportunities could extend to temperature-controlled warehouses, automated storage systems, food processing, logistics management and digital supply-chain monitoring.

The development of a stronger food-security infrastructure would also support Kuwait's broader objective of improving economic resilience against international supply disruptions.

3. Healthcare technology and digital health

- **Healthcare is undergoing a period of technological transformation, creating opportunities for companies specialising in digital infrastructure and advanced medical systems.**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Who Holds the Key?

Kuwait Opens the Door to Open Banking



By Legal Counsel Suha Alsahli
Emtithal Law Firm
Special to The Times Kuwait

A Kuwaiti customer may soon be able to see all her bank accounts in a single app, track her spending, compare banking products and pay a merchant directly from her bank account, without ever opening her bank's own app.

This became possible in November 2026. On 11 November, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) issued Decision No. 87/500/2026, updating the instructions regulating electronic payment. The next day, CBK announced the final version of its Open Banking regulatory framework, following review of the feedback received on the draft released in June 2025.

The commercial scope is broad. According to CBK, open banking in Kuwait covers a consolidated view of customers' accounts at local banks, spending tracking, saving and spending plans, facilitating loans and letters of guarantee, initiating payment orders, and comparing banking products.

For fintechs, this opens a new market. It also introduces one of the more demanding entry requirements in the region.

When an app reads your bank account

Consider an app that shows a customer her salary account at one bank and her savings at another on a single screen. Under the updated instructions, this is an Account Information Service (AIS). Now suppose the same app lets her pay her children's school fees directly from her bank account. That is a Payment Initiation Service (PIS). Both are now regulated activities under the instructions and may be offered through registration with CBK.

Choosing the right door

The instructions create two categories of open banking provider. An AIS provider must be a shareholding company with minimum capital of KD 100,000. A PIS provider must also be an, with minimum capital of KD 500,000, and may offer AIS, PIS or both. The structure closely resembles the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's. There, SAMA requires paid-up equity of at least SAR 1 million for a payment initiation licence, alone or combined with account information services, and SAR 500,000 for an account information licence. Both frameworks ultimately trace back to the European Union's Second Payment Services Directive (PSD2), which first brought account information and payment initiation services under regulation and gave licensed providers a right of access to customers' bank data. Kuwait now joins that lineage, adapted to its own market and with a notably higher threshold for entry.

Consent is the currency

Open banking in Kuwait rests on customer consent. The instructions define consent as explicit, clear, prior and specific. It must be given for a defined purpose and period, and the customer may withdraw it at any time without preconditions. The obligations run in both directions. Article 39 binds open banking



The Central Bank of Kuwait's November 2026 Framework Creates a New Market for Fintechs

providers as well as the entities that hold and manage customer data to CBK's rules on how consent is created, verified, revoked and renewed, and to CBK's API technical specifications. Here, regional comparison raises questions Kuwaiti providers will need to answer. Saudi rules prevent banks from requiring a commercial contract with an open banking provider before granting access to payment accounts. They also require such providers to hold professional indemnity insurance or a comparable guarantee. Kuwait's instructions address neither point directly. For fintechs, the answers will impact both their negotiations with banks and their risk exposure.

Test Run Requirement

Registration does not end with the application file. Applicants must now complete a pilot launch under a CBK-approved plan before registration is finalised. Applicants for open banking services must also submit detailed descriptions of their use cases, data sets and access rights. They must file diagrams of fund flows, of how participants identify one another, and of service flows. Once registered, they must maintain independent risk, compliance, internal audit, information security and AML/CFT functions, supported by audit and risk committees.

Unlike the 2023 instructions, which allowed three months for compliance, the update takes effect from its publication in the Official Gazette.

Who holds the key?

Open banking promises Kuwaiti consumers greater convenience and Kuwaiti fintechs access to a new market. It also brings structural decisions to the front of the process: selecting the appropriate licence, designing consent mechanisms that meet regulatory standards, and establishing the right relationships with the banks that hold customer data.

Holding a CBK licence does not, in itself, confer the right to offer open banking services. The instructions draw distinctions between categories of payment and e-money providers, and not every existing registration will extend to these new activities. For an established fintech, the threshold question is whether its current registration accommodates open banking, or whether a restructuring or a new application will be required.

For fintechs considering Kuwait's open banking market, the prudent first step is a careful review of their business model, licensing position and consent design, to determine whether their current structure is built to meet CBK's open banking requirements.



Albania eyes EU membership, seeks stronger economic, cultural ties with Kuwait

The Times Kuwait Report

Albania remains committed to joining the European Union, which is a central priority of its foreign policy, while seeking to expand cooperation with Kuwait in economic, investment, tourism, cultural and educational sectors, says Albanian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Ilir Hysa.

Speaking on the occasion of "Albania European Week 2026", which coincides with the Albania's national celebrations in November, Ambassador Hysa said the event offers an opportunity to highlight Albania's history, European identity, development and future aspirations, while strengthening friendship and cooperation with Kuwait.

The Ambassador said Albania celebrates November 28 as Independence Day and Flag Day, commemorating the declaration of independence in 1912 under national leader Ismail Qemali in the city of Vlora. November 29 marks the country's liberation from Nazi occupation in 1944.

The two occasions represent important milestones in Albania's history and its journey towards freedom, independence and the establishment of a modern state. They also reflect the importance attached to sovereignty and freedom in the country's national identity, he added.

On bilateral relations, Ambassador Hysa expressed

Ambassador Hysa praises Albania's longstanding friendship and cooperation with Kuwait, stresses his country's interest in expanding ties across several fields, particularly trade, investment, tourism, culture and education.



Albania's appreciation for its longstanding friendship and cooperation with Kuwait, stressing his country's interest in expanding ties across several fields, particularly trade, investment, tourism, culture and education.

He said relations between the two countries offer opportunities to strengthen people-to-people contacts and broaden areas of mutual cooperation. He also highlighted the role of Kuwaiti media in introducing Albania to local audiences and showcasing its historical, cultural and tourism attractions.

Located in the Balkans, Albania offers scenic landscapes, attractive coastlines and a rich cultural heritage. Its traditions of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence also form an important part of its national identity, making it a destination that deserves greater recognition among Kuwaiti visitors, he said.

The ambassador noted that Albania European Week provides an opportunity to increase media coverage of the country in Kuwait and strengthen direct engagement with local media institutions, helping introduce modern Albania, its European integration journey and opportunities for closer bilateral cooperation.

Ambassador Hysa said by underscoring the importance of building stronger bridges of communication and understanding between the two peoples, wishing Kuwait and its people continued progress and prosperity and expressing hope for further growth in bilateral relations.

ALSAYER Group honors winners of 19th Toyota Dream Car Art contest



ALSAYER Group celebrated the national winners of the 19th Toyota Dream Car Art Contest during an award ceremony held at its Head Office in the Kuwait Free Trade Zone. Jointly organized by Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L. and the Corporate Excellence Department, the ceremony brought together ALSAYER management representatives, winners, parents, teachers, and members of the community.

The global contest attracted 260,000 entries from children aged 15 and under across 87 countries and regions. Through imaginative artwork, participants presented creative visions for the future of mobility, including concepts addressing environmental challenges, pollution, sustainability, and community well-being.

During the ceremony, ALSAYER Group honored Kuwait's national winners and recognized the important role of parents and educators in encouraging creativity and supporting young talent.



The event was attended by Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager of Corporate Excellence; Shibu Mohamed, CSR Manager; and Mohamed Yousif Elsaadawi, Toyota Showroom Sales Manager. Members of the judging panel included artist and educator Jawaher Al-Muhanna and Hanouf Al-Morjan.

19th Toyota Dream Car Art Contest – Kuwait National Winners

Category A: 8 years and under

- Mahanikka Karthikeyan, 6 – Disaster and Emergency Management Car
- Dakshith Patkar, 7 – Car for the Future World
- Saathvic Sridhar, 6 – O3 Car

Category B: 8–11 years

- Rithikka Jayaraj, 9 – Evo 26
- Rohan Khatri, 10 – Life Saver Smart Car
- Jiaa Bhavya Sandesara, 9 – Fern Finder

Category C: 12–15 years

- Aarya Rajeev, 13 – Toyota Lunar Tide Maneuverer
- Jelnar Kamal Hana, 14 – Heading of Hope
- Dimple Khatri, 13 – Neuro Steady Car

Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, said:, "Since 2004, the Toyota Dream Car Art Contest has inspired millions of children worldwide to imagine the future of mobility.

ALSAYER Group is proud to support this meaningful initiative in Kuwait, empowering young talents to express their ideas while developing creativity, innovation, sustainability awareness, and problem-solving skills. These young participants represent a future generation capable of creating a positive and lasting impact."



City Hypermarket Launches City Club Rewards Program

City Hypermarket has launched its new rewards program, City Club, at an event held at its Salmiya store in the presence of Mr. Nasser Adel Alghanim, Chief Executive Officer of City Hypermarket, reflecting the company's ongoing commitment to delivering an exceptional shopping experience that combines savings and rewards. The program offers members exclusive discounts on thousands of products, along with the ability to earn points and redeem them as shopping vouchers, in-store and through the app and website.





Women diplomats unite in Kuwait to advance global solutions and leadership

The Times Kuwait Report



Women diplomats, academics and experts came together in Kuwait to highlight the growing role of women in shaping solutions to global challenges, as the African Women Diplomats in Kuwait (AWDK), in partnership with the Embassies of Canada and Australia, organized a seminar titled Women Leading Global Solutions.

Held on November 24 at the Australian University of Kuwait, the seminar brought together distinguished women leaders and specialists to explore how women's participation in diplomacy, governance, science and education can translate into meaningful leadership and practical solutions to shared global challenges.



The event underscored the importance of moving beyond women's participation towards greater representation in decision-making and leadership, while promoting collaboration across cultures, institutions and national boundaries.

Speaking on behalf of AWDK, H.E. Haja Ishata Thomas, Ambassador of the Republic of Sierra Leone, emphasized the importance of the partnership with the Canadian and Australian embassies in advancing education, diplomacy and women-led solutions.

She noted that women are increasingly taking leading roles in addressing global crises and that international cooperation provides an important platform for sharing knowledge, experience and innovative approaches.

Welcoming the participants, H.E. Amanda Riethmuller, Ambassador of Australia to Kuwait, commended AWDK for its initiative and leadership. She highlighted how women around the world are combining their knowledge, creativity and determination to develop and implement solutions to pressing global problems. The seminar featured six distinguished speakers representing diverse professional backgrounds and areas of expertise. They included Ms Suha Al-Sahil, Legal Practitioner at Emitthal Law Firm; H.E. Haja Ishata Thomas, Ambassador of Sierra Leone; H.E. Ghada Hatim Eltahir, United Nations Secretary-General's Representative and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait; Prof. Judith Mavodza, Doctor of Literature and Philosophy in Information Science; Ms Thurayya Bakour, Director of TASTAKEL Organisation; and Dr Fajer Bin Rashed, Assistant Professor at the Australian University.

Their presentations covered a wide range of subjects, including law, diplomacy, renewable energy, climate change, artificial intelligence, reconciliation and peacebuilding, as well as social and emotional learning in higher education.

The discussions highlighted the importance of bringing together different areas of expertise to address complex challenges, while emphasizing the contribution women can make through research, innovation, leadership and community engagement.

The seminar also paid tribute to Kuwait's strategic vision and the pioneering Kuwaiti women diplomats who have made history, recognizing their contribution to strengthening the country's international engagement and advancing women's leadership.

An interactive question-and-answer session allowed participants to engage directly with the speakers, exchange perspectives and explore practical approaches to the issues discussed.

Delivering the closing remarks, H.E. Tara Scheurwater, Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait, thanked AWDK for its initiative and leadership, as well as the Australian Embassy, the Australian University of Kuwait, the speakers and participants for their collaboration.

She emphasized that women are not simply contributing to solutions to global challenges but are increasingly leading and shaping them. She reaffirmed Canada's commitment to supporting women's leadership, promoting equal opportunities and strengthening partnerships that translate ideas into meaningful action.

The seminar reinforced the importance of cooperation between diplomatic missions, academic institutions and women's networks in building inclusive approaches to global challenges.

It also demonstrated how platforms such as AWDK can encourage cross-border dialogue, strengthen professional networks and create opportunities for women to contribute their knowledge and leadership to issues extending far beyond national boundaries.

PAAAFR to permanently shut down Al-Rai bird market from Dec 1



The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources will begin procedures to permanently shut down the bird market in Al-Rai from December 1, citing environmental violations and concerns over public health and safety.

Acting Director General Fay Al-Masbahi issued Administrative Decision No. 970 of 2026, ordering the evacuation of the market, removal of violations and handover of the affected premises to specialists from the authority's Animal Health Department. Shop owners have been instructed to vacate their premises and hand them over without any contents, in coordination with the relevant authorities. The decision gives a maximum of two months from its issuance to complete the evacuation and handover process.

The authority will also coordinate with the Ministry of Finance to terminate all existing licences in accordance with applicable regulations. The closure is aimed at addressing environmental and health concerns and safeguarding the safety of market visitors and workers.



Japan eyes stronger defence, energy partnership with Kuwait

The Times Kuwait Report

Japan and Kuwait are preparing to launch a new defence and security dialogue in the near future, while the two countries are also expected to announce a fresh agreement on joint oil stockpiling in Japan in the coming days, Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Kenichiro Mukai said.

Ambassador Mukai also said Japan was is to strengthen cooperation with Kuwait across defence, security, energy, oil, electricity and critical infrastructure, as the two countries seek to further deepen their comprehensive strategic partnership.

Speaking on the sidelines of a reception hosted by the Japanese Embassy to welcome Japan's new defence attaché to Kuwait, Colonel Takaki Arima, the ambassador said the proposed defence and security dialogue will provide an avenue for the two sides to discuss issues of mutual interest and strengthen coordination amid regional and international challenges. He said Japan is also seeking to expand its partnership with Middle Eastern countries through a new initiative announced by the Japanese prime minister to enhance economic resilience and energy security in the region.

The initiative is expected to open wider avenues of cooperation with Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council countries, particularly in addressing economic and energy-related challenges.

Ambassador Mukai said the initiative will focus on sectors including oil, electricity and critical infrastructure, with projects designed for the medium- and long term and developed in coordination with the Kuwaiti government. On oil cooperation, the ambassador referred to a telephone meeting held earlier this month between Kuwait's oil minister and Japan's economy minister, during which the two sides underscored the importance of oil storage cooperation and strengthening oil supplies from Japan to Kuwait.

He disclosed that Kuwait and Japan were preparing to announce a new agreement on cooperation involving joint oil stockpiling in Japan in the coming days. Details, including the quantities of oil involved, would be announced separately at a later stage.





Japan and Kuwait are preparing to launch a new defence and security dialogue, while an agreement on joint oil stockpiling is expected soon, signalling a fresh push to deepen strategic ties and expand cooperation in energy, electricity and critical infrastructure.

Ambassador Mukai stressed that defence and security cooperation remained an important pillar of bilateral relations, expressing hope that the new dialogue would be launched soon to provide a framework for discussions on security developments and shared concerns.

During the reception, the ambassador highlighted the longstanding friendship and defence cooperation between Kuwait and Japan, expressing appreciation for the efforts and dedication of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces in defending the country since the outbreak of the war in February this year.

He welcomed Colonel Arima, who assumed his duties last summer as a non-resident defence attaché based in Qatar. Col Arima previously served in Kuwait from 2017 to 2020, a period during which he helped strengthen trust and friendship between the two countries.

Ambassador Mukai said growing global security challenges made closer cooperation among countries more important than ever, expressing confidence that the Japanese-Kuwaiti partnership would continue to strengthen in the coming years. He also thanked the Kuwaiti side for its support and cooperation with the new defence attaché and his colleagues.

Arima: No country can face emerging security challenges alone

Colonel Arima, said the international security environment was becoming increasingly complex, with rapidly evolving challenges requiring greater cooperation and collective efforts to maintain peace and stability.

He cited the war in Ukraine, the military conflict involving Iran in the region this year, and Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia as examples of the security challenges facing the international community.

Col Arima said rapid advances in artificial intelligence, unmanned systems, cyber technologies and space capabilities were reshaping the nature of defence and security, requiring countries to strengthen cooperation to address emerging threats.

He stressed that no country can tackle all new security challenges on its own, reaffirming Japan's commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and its contribution to international peace as a nation committed to peace.

"Japan will continue to uphold these principles and work with Kuwait to support a free and open international order," he said, expressing respect for Kuwait's leadership and appreciation for its role in promoting regional peace and stability.

Recalling his previous assignment in Kuwait, Col Arima described it as one of the most enriching periods of his professional career, saying he and his wife had built friendships in the country that continued to this day. He noted that 2026 marks the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of Japan's Self-Defense Forces, while recalling the historical significance of Japan appointing its first military attaché to Kuwait following the deployment of Japanese Self-Defense Forces personnel to Iraq in 2003.

Col Arima expressed appreciation for the Kuwaiti Armed Forces and officials who had contributed to strengthening bilateral ties, and voiced his commitment to further developing friendship and defence cooperation between Kuwait and Japan in the years ahead. The reception was attended by Brigadier Sheikh Mishal Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, representing the Kuwaiti Armed Forces, as well as a number of military and security officials and accredited military attachés.

10 Years of Innovation: BSK Celebrates a Decade of Partnership with MIT

The British School of Kuwait reaffirms its long-standing academic collaboration with one of the world's leading technology universities

As The British School of Kuwait marks ten years of collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the achievements of its students take centre stage, with an ambition to see many more BSK students experience MIT during this milestone year.

Over the past decade, The British School of Kuwait (BSK) has continued to encourage students to look beyond the classroom, challenge conventional thinking and explore new possibilities through its annual MIT Challenge.

This November, Year 12 students Ali Saleh and Manal Farrukh added their names to BSK's growing list of successful MIT Challenge participants, earning the opportunity to travel to Boston and experience one of the world's leading centres of innovation and research.

Selection for the MIT trip is a competitive process, with students from schools around the world demonstrating their creativity, critical thinking and ability to develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges.

Once again, two BSK students have been selected for this prestigious MIT programme. This tremendous achievement reflects the talent, creativity and determination of BSK students, and that their hard work is now earning international recognition.

A Week of Discovery, Innovation and New Perspectives

During their visit to Boston in November 2026, Ali and Manal participated in a series of activities designed to challenge their thinking and introduce them to emerging areas of science and technology.

The students explored the MIT Robotics Club, learned how biological research drives scientific innovation at the Synthetic Biology Laboratory, and collaborated in a UN Climate Action Simulation. They also tried digital design and hands-on engineering at the MIT Maker-Space Hub and met MIT PhD candidate James Dingley to learn about space robotics.

The trip also enabled students to engage with peers from around the world and to see how curiosity and collaboration can lead to meaningful discovery.









Ten Years. One Ambition

As BSK celebrates this important milestone, it has set its sights on an ambition that reflects the achievements of its students over the past decade.

Seven BSK students have travelled to MIT. The school is aiming for even more students to experience MIT during the tenth anniversary year and beyond, extending the impact of a programme that has encouraged young people to explore their potential and pursue new challenges.

Looking Ahead: Inspiring the Next Generation

The achievements of Ali Saleh and Manal Farrukh are a reminder of what can happen when students are encouraged to be curious, ambitious and willing to challenge themselves. As BSK looks ahead, the school remains committed to providing opportunities that connect classroom learning with real-world experiences, helping students develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to shape their futures.

KISR develops technology to boost vegetable yields, cut water use by 40%

. . . offers potential solution to two major challenges facing Kuwait's agricultural sector -- water scarcity and poor soil quality.







The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has developed an agricultural technology that significantly improves sandy soil, increases vegetable crop productivity and reduces irrigation water consumption by 40 percent, offering a potential solution to two major challenges facing Kuwait's agricultural sector: water scarcity and poor soil quality.

The research, led by Dr Hanaa Bourzouk, a research scientist at KISR's Environment and Life Sciences Research Center, focuses on using organic soil conditioners under controlled irrigation to improve soil properties, enhance crop yields and support sustainable agricultural production and food security.

The project, titled 'Reclaiming farm soil with organic soil conditioners to conserve water, leading to increased vegetable production', was implemented at Al-Enmaa Company's farm in Wafra. It addressed the limited capacity of sandy soil to retain moisture and nutrients, alongside the scarcity of irrigation water.

The study involved applying organic soil conditioner at a rate of 10 tons per hectare and using drip irrigation to supply 60 percent of the crops' water requirements. The results were compared with crops grown under identical irrigation conditions but without the soil conditioner.

The findings showed substantial improvements in vegetable production. Cabbage yields increased by 406 percent, cauliflower by 275 percent, broccoli by 226 percent, okra by 122 percent, lettuce by 85 percent and tomatoes by 17 percent compared with crops grown without the organic conditioner.

The technology also improved water productivity, measured by the quantity of produce obtained per cubic metre of irrigation water. Tomato productivity increased from 6.12 to 14.36 kilograms per cubic metre, lettuce from 3.72 to 13.79 kilograms and eggplant from 2 to 4.60 kilograms.

> *The project, titled 'Reclaiming farm soil with organic soil conditioners to conserve water, leading to increased vegetable production', was implemented at Al-Enmaa Company's farm in Wafra.*

Dr Bourzouk said the results demonstrated the potential to increase agricultural output while reducing water consumption. The organic conditioner improves the soil's ability to retain moisture and nutrients, creating better conditions for plant root development.

The project also demonstrated the potential to recycle agricultural waste, including crop and vegetable residues as well as sheep and camel manure, into high-quality organic fertiliser. The process involves controlled decomposition through ventilation, moisture regulation and periodic turning.

Laboratory analyses showed that the resulting fertiliser contained 55 percent organic matter and 30 percent organic carbon, together with high levels of nutrients essential for plant growth and low concentrations of heavy metals, supporting its potential application in agriculture.

Dr Bourzouk said the integration of organic soil improvement, controlled irrigation and agricultural waste recycling offered a promising approach to addressing Kuwait's agricultural challenges. The approach could improve natural resource efficiency, rehabilitate farmland and advance circular economy practices in the agricultural sector.

She stressed the need for further studies to assess the technology's long-term field performance, establish optimal application rates and evaluate its economic feasibility and potential for wider adoption across local farms.

The project reflects KISR's efforts to develop science-based solutions for sustainable agricultural production, more efficient water use, agricultural waste utilisation and stronger food security in Kuwait.



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Kuwait Opens a New Chapter in Digital Banking with Open Banking Regulations

Open banking could encourage competition, support the development of innovative financial products, improve access to financial information and create more integrated payment experiences for consumers and businesses.



By Ahmed Elsalakawy
Senior Legal Counsel, Dr. Yaqoub Al Sanea & Partners Law Firm and Legal Consultancy
Special to The Times Kuwait

Kuwait is taking an important step towards the future of digital finance with the introduction of a comprehensive regulatory framework for open banking. Through Resolution No. 87/500/2026, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has expanded its existing electronic payment regulations to accommodate new financial services, creating opportunities for greater innovation while strengthening regulatory oversight and consumer protection.

Issued on 11 November 2026 and published in Issue No. 1818 of the Official Gazette on 22 November 2026, the Resolution introduces a regulated framework under which authorised service providers can access customer banking information and initiate payments, subject to the customer's explicit consent and compliance with prescribed regulatory requirements.

The updated Instructions comprise 47 articles across six chapters and operate alongside the final Open Banking Regulatory Framework. While the Instructions establish the registration and licensing requirements for service providers, the accompanying Framework sets out the technical, security and operational standards governing these activities.

The development represents more than a regulatory update. It establishes a new foundation for cooperation between banks, financial technology companies and customers, potentially reshaping how financial services are accessed and delivered in Kuwait.

Understanding what open banking means

At its core, open banking allows customers to authorise regulated third-party providers to access specified banking information or initiate payments through secure application programming interfaces (APIs).

Article 1 of the updated Instructions recognises two principal categories of services.

Account Information Services (AIS) allow customers to view, share, aggregate and display financial information from different bank accounts through a single platform. These services can help individuals obtain a consolidated picture of their finances, monitor spending patterns and make more informed financial decisions. Importantly, they do not involve executing transactions on the customer's account.

Payment Initiation Services (PIS) enable customers to initiate payments directly from their accounts held with local banks through an authorised third-party provider, without having to use the bank's own payment channels to initiate the transaction.

These services could support the development of financial management applications, account aggregation platforms, spending analysis tools and new payment solutions. They may also facilitate certain lending and guarantee-related transactions.

However, the introduction of open banking does not mean that technology companies automatically gain access to bank accounts. Access remains conditional on registration, regulatory approval, successful testing and compliance with the CBK's technical and security requirements.

Customer consent becomes central

One of the most important elements of the new framework is the emphasis placed on customer consent. The Instructions define consent as an explicit, clear, prior and specific authorisation allowing a provider to access banking information or execute payments on a customer's behalf for a defined purpose and period. Customers must also be able to withdraw or revoke their consent at any time without preconditions.

Article 39 requires banks and authorised open banking providers to comply with procedures governing the creation, verification and withdrawal of consent, authentication renewal and the applicable API technical specifications.

This has significant legal implications for service providers. A general acceptance checkbox embedded within lengthy terms and conditions may not adequately demonstrate the required



consent. Businesses will need clearly documented and auditable consent processes that establish precisely what information can be accessed, for what purpose, for how long and how permission can be withdrawn.

Consent must therefore be treated as an essential part of the service architecture, rather than merely a contractual formality.

New licensing categories and capital requirements

The Resolution also expands the regulatory classification of electronic payment service providers.

Where the 2023 Instructions recognised five categories, the updated framework introduces two additional and independent categories for open banking activities, bringing the total to seven.

Both new categories require applicants to be established as joint stock companies.

The minimum capital requirements are:

Account Information Service Providers: KD 100,000, with permission to provide account information services.

Payment Initiation Service Providers: KD 500,000, with permission to provide payment initiation services, account information services or both.

Small electronic payment service providers are not permitted to offer either of these open banking services.

The application process also requires applicants to provide detailed information about their proposed business activities, including intended use cases, data sets, access permissions and service flows. Under Articles 15 and 16, applicants must submit a five-year strategy and describe their proposed operational model.

Final registration also requires a commitment to undertake pilot testing in accordance with a CBK-approved plan.

Existing payment obligations remain in force

Although open banking is the headline development, the Resolution also retains important requirements already established under the 2023 Instructions.

Articles 24 and 26 address several existing obligations, including the requirement to credit collected funds to the payee's account by the end of the next business day, obtain the CBK's prior written approval for fees and commissions, and disclose applicable charges before payment.

The rules also continue to address the segregation of customer funds and the regulation of buy-now-pay-later services. The significance of the latest Resolution is therefore not that it replaces the existing electronic payment regime, but that it incorporates open banking within a broader regulatory structure while maintaining established safeguards for payment services.

What businesses need to consider

The updated Instructions introduce several requirements that businesses should carefully examine when reviewing their operations, commercial agreements and regulatory exposure.

Settlement arrangements: Settlement must take place through local bank accounts. The addition or replacement of a settlement bank requires the CBK's prior written approval.

Ownership and governance: Applicants must disclose shareholders holding more than five percent, individuals exercising effective control and beneficial owners. The application must also include a recent certificate from the Criminal Enforcement Prosecution identifying any final judgments issued against partners, where applicable.

Record retention: Relevant records must be retained for at least five years after the contractual relationship ends, subject to any longer period required by law, a regulatory request, an ongoing dispute or an investigation.

Transitional arrangements: Existing limited-purpose electronic money service providers must apply for CBK approval within 180 days from the issuance of the Instructions, in accordance with Article 12.

These provisions underline the importance of reviewing not only licensing arrangements but also internal governance, documentation, banking relationships and contractual obligations.

Where the legal risks emerge

The introduction of open banking creates new opportunities, but it also introduces legal and operational risks that must be addressed before services become commercially operational.

For banks, a key challenge will be determining which customer information and services can be made available through APIs and establishing clear contractual arrangements with authorised providers. Particular attention must be given to responsibility for unauthorised or erroneous payments, data breaches, system interruptions and fraud.

For fintech companies, regulatory compliance must begin well before the launch of a product. Selecting the appropriate registration category, meeting capital requirements and establishing suitable corporate governance structures are essential first steps. Equally important are arrangements covering customer consent, data privacy, cybersecurity and relationships with participating banks and technology providers.

Merchants and digital platforms will also need to reconsider their payment agreements. Contracts should address not only transaction fees and settlement timelines but also the segregation and transfer of customer funds, refunds, service disruptions and liability arising from unauthorised transactions.

These considerations are particularly relevant in investment and acquisition transactions involving financial technology businesses. Regulatory registration, CBK approval and successful pilot testing may need to be incorporated as conditions precedent where they are fundamental to the proposed business model.

Legal readiness will shape the next phase of digital finance

The Central Bank of Kuwait's Resolution No. 87/500/2026 marks a significant development in the country's financial regulatory landscape. By establishing a regulated route for open banking, Kuwait is creating opportunities for greater collaboration between traditional financial institutions and emerging fintech businesses.

The potential benefits extend beyond convenience. Open banking could encourage competition, support the development of innovative financial products, improve access to financial information and create more integrated payment experiences for consumers and businesses.

However, the success of this transition will depend on more than technological capability. Strong regulatory compliance, transparent customer consent, effective data protection, cybersecurity safeguards and clearly defined contractual responsibilities will be essential to building trust in the new ecosystem.

For banks, fintech companies, merchants and investors, the central consideration is no longer simply whether a new financial service can be developed. It is whether the business is legally structured, appropriately authorised and operationally prepared to deliver that service within the regulatory framework.

Kuwait's open banking journey has begun. The opportunities are considerable, but legal preparedness will be fundamental to turning regulatory reform into sustainable financial innovation.





Young Ambassadors Programme enters fifth season, nurturing Kuwait's next generation of global leaders

The Times Kuwait Report

The fifth season of the Young Ambassadors Programme was officially launched at UN House in Kuwait on Monday, 23 November, bringing together the United Nations, diplomatic missions, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and students in a renewed commitment to international cooperation, education and youth engagement.

Now entering its fifth season, the initiative provides students with opportunities to explore international affairs, gain firsthand exposure to diplomacy and develop a deeper understanding of global challenges.

This season focuses on United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG 12) – Responsible Consumption and Production, encouraging participants to examine how everyday choices, resource management and consumer behaviour influence environmental sustainability and the wellbeing of future generations.

The initiative is organised through cooperation between the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and the Embassies of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates, with the continued support of Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ceremony was attended by UN Resident Coordinator H.E. Ghada Eltahir; Canadian Ambassador H.E. Tara Scheurwater; UAE Ambassador H.E. Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi; British Deputy Ambassador Stuart Summers; and Counselor Abdulmohsen Al-Mansour, Assistant Deputy Foreign Minister for International Organisations, alongside diplomats, programme partners, educators and students.

Youth participation in a changing world

Addressing the gathering, UN Resident Coordinator H.E. Ghada Eltahir described the fifth season as a reflection of the shared belief that young people should have opportunities to understand the world, engage with its challenges and contribute to shaping its future.

She emphasised that the programme brings diplomacy, leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals closer to young people's everyday lives.

Referring to the UN Youth2030 strategy and the Pact for the Future, Eltahir highlighted the importance of involving young people as partners and agents of change, while ensuring that institutions listen and respond to their perspectives.

She noted that meaningful change depends on cooperation between individuals, governments, businesses, schools and communities.

Responsible consumption: From global goals to local action

This season's focus on SDG 12 addresses one of the most pressing challenges facing societies: balancing economic activity and consumption with the responsible use of finite resources.

Eltahir drew attention to global food waste, noting that households worldwide discard the equivalent of more than one billion meals daily, even as hundreds of millions of people continue to experience hunger.

The challenge is particularly relevant to Kuwait, where each resident generates approximately 1.6 kilograms of waste daily, nearly twice the global average, according to figures cited in her remarks. She explained that responsible consumption extends beyond reducing waste to rethinking how products are designed, manufactured, used and disposed of. Products built to last, materials that are reused and businesses that view waste as a resource are essential elements of the circular economy. These principles, she noted, complement Kuwait Vision 2035, particularly its Sustainable Living Environment pillar. Participants will be encouraged to consider practical measures such as reducing food waste, conserving water and electricity, recycling and making more responsible purchasing decisions.



Six-month initiative brings together students for diplomatic exposure, international cooperation and practical action on sustainability

Canada highlights mentorship and practical learning

Canadian Ambassador H.E. Tara Scheurwater described the programme as an important platform for international cooperation and leadership development, noting that its previous four seasons had established a strong foundation for engaging students with global affairs.

She explained that participants selected from public and private schools across Kuwait would benefit from mentorship, diplomatic placements, workshops and networking opportunities over the six-month period.

These experiences will provide firsthand exposure to the work of embassies and international organisations while strengthening communication, negotiation, collaboration and conflict-resolution skills.

Scheurwater encouraged participants to remain curious, stay open to different perspectives and translate their knowledge into action. She stressed that meaningful solutions often emerge through collaboration and an understanding of different experiences.

She expressed appreciation to Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office for their continued support, acknowledged the British Embassy's longstanding leadership and welcomed the UAE Embassy as a new partner in Season Five.

She also recognised InfoCap Associates, the programme's implementation partner, for delivering and guiding the initiative for the third consecutive season.

UAE emphasises diplomacy beyond government relations

UAE Ambassador H.E. Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi highlighted youth engagement as an important component of modern diplomacy, stressing that international relations extend beyond government-to-government interactions to creating opportunities for people to connect and build lasting relationships.



Recalling the UAE Embassy's participation in the programme's second edition, he cited the experience of a Kuwaiti student who was given an opportunity to observe the work of the diplomatic mission during preparations for COP28 in 2023.

The Embassy has maintained its relationship with the former participant, demonstrating, he said, that such initiatives should create lasting opportunities rather than end with a single experience.

He also recalled the UAE Embassy's coordination of engagements during the Kuwait visit of Emirati astronaut and UAE Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr. Sultan Al Neyadi, including meetings with universities and the Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre.

Such encounters, he said, encourage young people to recognise what education, courage and determination can achieve.

He urged participants to apply their knowledge to challenges such as reducing carbon emissions, advancing clean energy, protecting the environment and improving people's lives. He also highlighted the value of bringing together students from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds to exchange ideas and build friendships.

Kuwait reaffirms commitmen to sustainable development

Speaking on behalf of Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Counselor Abdulmohsen Al-Mansour welcomed the fifth season as an example of constructive partnership between Kuwait, the United Nations and friendly countries.

He reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to investing in young people as essential partners in development and drivers of innovation.

Highlighting the season's focus on SDG 12, he stressed that sustainable development requires translating policies into responsible practices that promote efficient resource use, reduce waste and improve production and consumption patterns. He noted that these objectives are consistent with Kuwait's efforts to build an informed and responsible society and strengthen contributions towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in line with Kuwait Vision 2035.

Addressing participants, Al-Mansour encouraged them to explore dialogue, negotiation and diplomacy and exchange perspectives with their peers. He emphasised that diplomacy is not limited to representing nations at international forums but is fundamentally built on dialogue, mutual understanding, respect for different perspectives and collective efforts to find solutions.

Turning knowledge into action

Over the coming six months, participants will engage with diplomats and international professionals through workshops, field visits and mentoring activities, culminating in a final project that translates their learning into practical proposals.

With responsible consumption and production as its central theme, projects may explore waste reduction, recycling, resource conservation and greater awareness of sustainable practices in schools and communities.

The programme's multicultural dimension is equally important. Bringing together students from different schools, nationalities and backgrounds encourages cultural understanding and appreciation of international cooperation.

Kuwait and Indonesia explore stronger defence ties and migrant worker protection

The Times Kuwait Report

Kuwait and Indonesia have discussed expanding bilateral cooperation in defence, energy, trade, investment and the protection of Indonesian workers employed in Kuwait, as the two countries seek to strengthen their longstanding diplomatic and economic partnership.

The discussions took place during the second meeting of the Kuwait-Indonesia Joint Committee held in Jakarta on Thursday, November 26, co-chaired by Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his Indonesian counterpart, Arrmanatha Nasir.

The meeting reviewed the existing framework of bilateral relations and explored opportunities to deepen cooperation across several strategic sectors. Senior officials from both countries participated in the discussions, which also examined ways to strengthen engagement between their respective ministries and government institutions.

According to Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Vahd Nabyl, the meeting provided an important opportunity to advance cooperation beyond diplomatic engagement at the ministerial level and encourage more direct collaboration between technical ministries.

Among the key areas discussed were defence cooperation, oil and gas, trade, investment, healthcare, agriculture and air connectivity. Both sides also explored mutual recognition of halal certification and certificates of seafarer competency, measures that could facilitate trade, professional mobility and economic exchanges.

Focus on protection of Indonesian workers

The protection and welfare of Indonesian nationals working in Kuwait also featured prominently in the discussions, particularly healthcare professionals employed in the country.



Both countries seek to expand cooperation across strategic sectors while strengthening the protection and welfare of Indonesian workers in Kuwait.

The issue reflects the importance both governments attach to ensuring that overseas employment opportunities are supported by appropriate safeguards, fair working conditions and mechanisms to protect workers' rights.

The discussions build on earlier efforts to strengthen employment cooperation. In September 2026, Indonesia's Minister for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, Mukhtarudin, met Kuwait's Ambassador to Indonesia, Khalid Jassim Alyassin, to discuss updating the labour cooperation memorandum of understanding signed in May 1996.

At that meeting, both sides explored opportunities to expand the recruitment of skilled Indonesian professionals in Kuwait, particularly in healthcare, hospitality, sales and the oil and gas sector.

Kuwait had indicated its interest in increasing the number of Indonesian workers, while Indonesia emphasised the importance of skills development, appropriate training and stronger protection mechanisms. The Indonesian government has also been exploring ways to modernise the existing labour cooperation framework to reflect changing employment requirements and provide stronger guarantees for migrant workers.

Broader strategic partnership

Beyond labour cooperation, the latest Joint Committee meeting highlighted the potential for stronger economic and strategic engagement between Kuwait and Indonesia.

Both countries recognise opportunities to expand cooperation in energy, investment, agriculture and trade, while improved air connectivity could further encourage tourism, business exchanges and people-to-people relations.cThe two foreign ministers also exchanged views on regional and international developments, particularly the situation in Palestine and broader Middle East concerns.

They discussed the importance of closer coordination on issues of mutual interest and reaffirmed their shared commitment to supporting peace and stability through diplomatic engagement and international cooperation.

The meeting concluded with the signing of the minutes of the second session of the Kuwait-Indonesia Joint Committee, providing a framework for continued dialogue and follow-up on the areas discussed.

The latest engagement marks another step in strengthening relations between Kuwait and Indonesia, which established diplomatic ties on February 28, 1968. As both countries seek to diversify their economic partnerships and expand cooperation across strategic sectors, the renewed dialogue offers opportunities to translate longstanding friendship into more practical outcomes for their governments, businesses and citizens.

LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait Launches Super Friday Promotion with Discounts of Up to 70% Across All Categories

LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait has launched its much-awaited Super Friday promotion, powered by Huawei, offering customers a week of exciting shopping opportunities with discounts of up to 70% on selected products across a wide range of categories. Running from 25 November to 1 December, the campaign features attractive deals on electronics, fashion, lifestyle products, home appliances, groceries and everyday essentials across all LuLu Hypermarkets in Kuwait.

The promotion was officially inaugurated on 26 November by popular Tech and lifestyle vloggers Ms. Noura Belalif, Ms. Sarah Faisal and Mr. Mohammed Almeer, alongside Mr. Sreejith, Director of LuLu Kuwait, and Mr. Sakeer Hussain, Regional Director, in the presence of senior management representatives, participating brand partners and invited guests.

Tech enthusiasts can enjoy significant savings across the electronics, IT, gaming and mobile sections, with discounts of up to 70% on selected home appliances, electrical products, toys, personal care products and IT accessories. Special offers on selected television models, audio devices, wearables, gaming accessories and mobile phones provide customers with an excellent opportunity to upgrade their gadgets and home entertainment systems at attractive prices.

Fashion enthusiasts can take advantage of a flat 50% discount on selected garments, along with the Big Brand Sale featuring popular international brands such as Reebok, Puma, Skechers, Woodland, U.S. Polo Assn. and GAP, with savings of up to 70% on selected styles. Additional attractive offers on ladies' bags, luggage and travel accessories further enhance the fashion shopping experience. Customers can also enjoy discounts of up to 60% on selected spectacles and sunglasses from leading international brands. The LuLu Exclusive Styles campaign further offers discounts of up to 50% on selected Police products.







As the winter season approaches, LuLu has introduced special prices on seasonal essentials, including winter protectors, blankets and other winter products, helping customers prepare the cooler months while enjoying great value.

The Super Friday promotion also brings attractive offers, with discounts of up to 50% on selected products from LuLu's grocery range. Special deals on fresh fruits and vegetables, food products, pantry essentials and everyday household necessities ensure savings on products that customers need every day.

Through the Super Friday campaign, LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait continues to reinforce its commitment to providing quality products, a wide range of choices and exceptional value. With exciting deals across multiple categories, the promotion offers customers an opportunity to enjoy a rewarding shopping experience throughout the week.

Georgia woos Kuwait with tourism, investment and daily flights, visa-free access





The Times Kuwait Report

From snow-capped mountains and lush valleys to historic towns, Black Sea coastlines and a rich culinary heritage, Georgia is stepping up its appeal to Kuwaiti travelers, while also seeking to turn growing tourism interest into wider investment and business partnerships.

With visa-free access for up to 360 days and direct air links set to expand, the country is positioning itself as an increasingly accessible destination for Kuwaitis and residents, offering both holiday experiences and emerging business opportunities.



Georgian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Noshrevan Lomtatidze described Kuwait as a key international partner, saying relations between the two countries are built on friendship and growing cooperation across multiple sectors. He noted a noticeable increase in Kuwaitis travelling to Georgia, supported by easier travel arrangements, direct flights and visa exemptions.

Flights operated by Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways to Tbilisi and Batumi, coupled with visa-free entry for Kuwaiti citizens and residents of Kuwait for up to 360 days, have helped facilitate travel and boost tourism exchanges, the ambassador said. He welcomed the growing interest among Kuwaitis in exploring Georgia's natural, cultural and tourism attractions.

Ambassador Lomtatidze was speaking at the "Georgian Tourism Roadshow – Kuwait 2026", organised by the Georgian Embassy in cooperation with the Georgian National Tourism Administration on Sunday, November 22, at JW Marriott Hotel, under the theme "Discover Georgia's Beauty, Culture and Business Opportunities".

The event brought together representatives of the Georgian National Tourism Administration, Georgian tourism companies and professionals from Kuwait's travel, tourism and hospitality sectors. The participation of tourism officials and Georgian companies was aimed at introducing the country's tourism potential to the Kuwaiti market and opening broader avenues for cooperation with Kuwaiti companies in tourism, hospitality and hotel services, the ambassador said.

Natural beauty, heritage and UNESCO sites

He expressed hope that the event would help establish new commercial partnerships and expand cooperation between the two countries. Highlighting Georgia's diverse landscape, Lomtatidze said the country offers everything from towering mountains to subtropical coastal areas, alongside rich cultural heritage and internationally recognised cuisine.

He said Kuwaiti visitors frequently share photographs showcasing Georgia's scenic landscapes, including green mountains, rivers, waterfalls, historic castles, churches, mosques and heritage sites, reflecting the country's wide-ranging appeal.

Georgia is also home to several UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the historic monuments of Mtskheta, Upper Svaneti and Gelati Monastery, which reflect the country's rich civilisational and cultural history. The ambassador said Kuwaitis' growing openness to new travel experiences presents an opportunity to strengthen tourism and economic ties. He encouraged Kuwaiti businessmen, citizens and residents to visit Georgia, explore its leisure and holiday attractions and consider investment opportunities, particularly in the hotel and real estate sectors.

He also highlighted Georgia's business-friendly environment and deeply rooted hospitality culture, expressing confidence that the roadshow would bring tourism and investment opportunities closer to Kuwaiti companies and foster direct engagement between businesses in both countries.

Georgia attracts 7.8 million international visitors

Eleni Chichvili, marketing project coordinator at the Georgian National Tourism Administration, presented the country's tourism potential, noting that Georgia welcomed more than 7.8 million international visitors in 2025, with over 76 percent expressing an intention to return.

Georgia's air connectivity is also expanding, with 82 airlines linking the country to 125 destinations across 40 countries, strengthening accessibility for international travellers.

Chichvili highlighted the variety of experiences available, ranging from winter tourism and ski resorts, including Gudauri, Bakuriani and Mestia, to adventure and eco-tourism, as well as wellness destinations such as Borjomi and Abastumani.

She also showcased Georgia's cultural and culinary heritage, including its approximately 8,000-year-old winemaking tradition, historical landmarks, traditional cuisine, music and folk dancing. The country is working to develop sustainable year-round tourism by upgrading infrastructure and diversifying tourism experiences and products, she said, adding that Georgia offers options for visitors seeking nature, outdoor activities, winter sports, history, culture, food and wellness.

Jazeera Airways to operate daily Tbilisi flights

Vinod Viswanathan, sales head at Jazeera Airways, outlined the airline's connectivity between Kuwait and Georgia, stressing the importance of direct flights in facilitating travel and encouraging tourism between the two countries. Jazeera Airways currently operates four weekly flights between Kuwait and Tbilisi and plans to increase the frequency to daily flights from mid-December 2026. The airline also operates weekly flights to Batumi.

The Georgian Tourism Roadshow – Kuwait 2026 is part of the embassy's and the Georgian National Tourism Administration's efforts to promote the country's tourism destinations, investment and business opportunities, attract more Kuwaiti citizens and residents, and strengthen partnerships between tourism and hospitality businesses in both countries.

The ambassador concluded by thanking attendees and expressing hope that the event would provide a comprehensive picture of Georgia's tourism, cultural and business attractions and serve as another step towards expanding cooperation with Kuwaiti partners.



Francophonie is a dynamic Platform for dialogue and cultural cooperation

The Times Kuwait Report





His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah has described Francophonie as a dynamic international platform for communication, cultural exchange and cooperation, stressing that Kuwait's longstanding relationship with the French language reflects deep-rooted educational and cultural ties that extend far beyond annual celebrations.

Speaking in French at a reception held under his patronage at the residence of French Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Olivier Gauvin, Sheikh Nasser highlighted the growing global importance of Francophonie and Kuwait's longstanding engagement with the language, despite the country not yet being an official member of the International Organisation of La Francophonie.

The reception, held to mark International Francophonie Day, brought together ambassadors of member states, diplomats, education officials, representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, writers, artists, politicians, media representatives and French speakers.

Sheikh Nasser noted that 2026 marks the 38th anniversary of the official launch of International Francophonie Day and the 56th anniversary of the establishment of the International Organisation of La Francophonie. Kuwait's annual celebrations, which began regularly in the early 2000s, have developed into a month-long programme featuring French spelling competitions, film screenings, sporting events and discussions at Kuwait University.

Tracing the organisation's origins, he recalled how a group of non-French leaders, including former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, Senegalese President Léopold Sédar Senghor, Niger's President Hamani Diori and Cambodian leader Norodom Sihanouk, proposed bringing French-speaking countries together under a common framework in the late 1960s. Their initiative led to the signing of the Niamey Convention and the establishment of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation on March 20, 1970.

Francophonie's global reach continues to expand

Sheikh Nasser said the number of French speakers worldwide has reached approximately 396 million, compared with earlier estimates of 321 million, and is projected to rise to 590 million by 2050. More than 170 million people across five continents are currently learning French.

He identified Africa as the main driving force behind the language's expansion, accounting for around 65 percent of French speakers worldwide. Projections indicate that nine out of every 10 French speakers in the future will be African. The Democratic Republic of Congo has also overtaken France as the world's largest French-speaking country, with an estimated 68 million speakers.

He stressed that Francophonie's contribution extends beyond culture to political cooperation, education, economic development and sustainability. The organisation has supported democratic transitions, human rights, election monitoring and mediation in political disputes, notably through the 2000 Bamako Declaration, which linked participation in the Francophone community with commitments to democracy and human rights.

In education and research, the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie has developed into an international network of more than 1,000 universities and research institutions across over 110 countries, supporting scholarships, student exchanges and joint scientific research.

Sheikh Nasser also highlighted initiatives to improve teacher training, the role of TV5Monde in promoting Francophone cultural productions and efforts to protect cultural diversity through the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The Francophone Games, held every four years, bring together young people through sporting and artistic competitions.

> *Francophonie should not be viewed as competing with or replacing English, but as complementing it through linguistic and cultural diversity.*

He said the organisation also promotes trade, investment, youth entrepreneurship and digital transformation, helping developing countries modernise their economies and public services.

French complements English in a multilingual world

Describing French as an important language of intellectual and cultural development, Sheikh Nasser highlighted its contributions to political thought, constitutional principles, legal systems, freedom, citizenship and human rights. He also referred to its influence on philosophy, literature, theatre, cinema and visual arts, including the Négritude movement, which helped reaffirm African identity.

Although English has become dominant in business, finance, technology and international communication, French continues to play an important role in philosophy, literature, critical analysis and diplomacy.

He emphasised that learning French alongside English provides additional cultural and professional advantages and opens opportunities in regional and international institutions. Francophonie, he said, should not be viewed as competing with or replacing English, but as complementing it through linguistic and cultural diversity. Multilingualism and dialogue among civilisations remain essential to building a more open and peaceful world.

French gains a strong foothold in Kuwait

Ambassador Gauvin said Francophonie has become a vibrant reality in Kuwait, reflecting the longstanding historical and cultural relations between the two countries.

More than 50,000 Kuwaiti students learn French every year, supported by approximately 1,400 teachers and the authorities' commitment to maintaining the language in the national education system.







Recalling historical commercial links between Kuwaiti pearl traders and French jewellery houses, Gauvin noted that Cartier jewellers, who purchased pearls from Kuwaiti sailors, could hardly have imagined that Kuwait would one day become home to another kind of jewel – the French language.

French-language education in Kuwait dates back to the 1960s, when the language was introduced into government secondary schools. The 1969 educational, cultural and scientific cooperation agreement between Kuwait and France laid the groundwork for further collaboration and the establishment of the Voltaire Institute, which became the foundation of the French Institute in Kuwait.

The French Lycée, established in the 1980s, now enrols more than 1,000 students of different nationalities, while Kuwait University's French Department also contributes to promoting the language.

Gauvin commended the Ministry of Education and French-language teachers, particularly the efforts of Anwar Al-Radwan, Director of the French Language Technical Guidance Department, in expanding French-language education to include Grade 10 from the current academic year.

He said the worldwide Francophone community brings together more than 400 million people, with the number expected to reach 600 million by 2050. French proficiency gives young people wider opportunities in education, employment and international cooperation, strengthening their competitiveness in the global labour market.

The ambassador also highlighted Francophonie's values of solidarity, tolerance, justice and inclusion, as well as its contribution to diplomatic dialogue, multilateralism, peace and stability.

Reviewing the month-long celebrations in Kuwait, he said the programme featured sporting, literary, cinematic and poetry events, culinary activities and educational gatherings. Visits by ambassadors from Tunisia, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland and Armenia to government schools teaching French were also part of the programme.

He thanked the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, private-sector partners and sponsors for supporting Francophone initiatives.

Teachers build bridges between cultures

Anwar Al-Radwan highlighted the important role of French-language teachers in strengthening cultural understanding and relations between Kuwait and France.

She described teachers as bridges connecting languages, cultures and values, stressing that language learning involves more than translating words and requires an understanding of cultural context, meanings and expressions. She said teachers play an essential role in preparing a generation that is open to the world, capable of communication and appreciative of cultural diversity. She also praised secondary school administrations that hosted Francophone delegations, describing the visits as valuable opportunities to strengthen educational exchanges and friendship between Kuwait and France.

The reception concluded with artistic performances, including an original piano composition by Kuwaiti student Sharifa Al-Otaibi of Al-Jazair School and a violin performance by Maria Artinian.

'Education' eyes new digital system to monitor exam committees



The Ministry of Education is considering introducing a unified electronic system to manage school examinations, streamline the formation of examination committees and monitor their operations, as part of its broader push towards digital transformation and improving administrative efficiency across the education sector.

The proposal, being studied by the General Administration of Educational Regions in coordination with the General Administration of Technology and Information Systems, seeks to digitize the procedures involved in forming examination committees, scheduling their work, assigning supervisors and observers, tracking attendance and preparing reports, notifications and analytical data through a single integrated platform.

The proposed system will replace scattered spreadsheets and separate lists with a unified database, helping standardize procedures, simplify committee formation and ensure the distribution of supervisors and examination staff according to defined rules and requirements.

It will also establish an electronic record documenting attendance, changes in assignments and other procedures, allowing officials to retrieve information and generate reports and performance indicators more efficiently and accurately.

The initiative is expected to strengthen transparency and accountability by documenting every modification to committee arrangements, including the identity of the person responsible and the date of the change. The database could also serve as a reference for evaluating performance, assessing staffing requirements and monitoring the progress of examinations at both school and educational district levels.

LuLu Hypermarket Unveils 'WOW Style & Beauty ' with Exclusive Offers



LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait is set to bring an exciting celebration of beauty, glamour, and exceptional value with its special 'WOW Style & Beauty'- world of wellness, promotion running from November 25 to December 1 across all its outlets in Kuwait, featuring exclusive offers of up to 60% off on selected products, exciting brand promotions, and interactive experiences for shoppers across Kuwait.



The promotion was officially launched on 26 November at LuLu Hypermarket Al Rai, welcoming an exciting gathering of glamorous beauty vloggers, prominent beauty influencers, fashion enthusiasts, and popular lifestyle content creators, alongside LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait's management team, participating brand partners, and invited guests. The presence of these influential personalities added a touch of glamour and excitement to the occasion, creating a lively atmosphere and setting the stage for a spectacular celebration of beauty, fashion, and lifestyle.

The special promotion transforms LuLu Hypermarket outlets into vibrant beauty destinations, offering customers an opportunity to explore an extensive range of cosmetics, skincare, fragrances, personal care, and wellness products from leading international and regional brands. As part of the promotion, customers can enjoy discounts of up to 60% on selected international branded perfumes, bringing an exciting opportunity to explore an impressive collection of fragrances at attractive prices. Shoppers can also benefit from special Buy 2 Get 1 Free offers on selected products from popular brands including Nivea, L'Oréal, Garnier, Johnson's, and Listerine.

The promotion also features discounts of up to 60% on selected personal care products, while popular skincare brands such as Neutrogena and Clean & Clear are offering discounts of up to 40% on selected products.

Customers can explore an impressive selection of renowned beauty and personal care brands, featuring specially curated offers across multiple categories. From everyday skincare essentials and luxurious fragrances to makeup favorites and personal grooming products, the promotion brings together quality, variety, and value. Adding excitement to the promotion, participating brands are showcasing their latest products through exclusive in-store activations, interactive demonstrations, and engaging customer experiences. Beauty experts and brand representatives are available to introduce shoppers to new products, share skincare recommendations, demonstrate makeup techniques, and provide personalized beauty advice.

The 'Style & Beauty' promotion is sponsored by leading international, including P&G, Unilever, Nivea, Johnson's, Colgate, L'Oréal, Garnier, Dabur, Head & Shoulders, Gillette, Dove, Lux, and Yardley. Their participation further enhances the promotion, bringing together an exceptional portfolio of trusted beauty, skincare, fragrance, and personal care brands under one roof.

Union OF EUROPEAN FLAVOURS

40 Anniversary of EU-Kuwait Relations

As part of a series featuring recipes from European Union member states, The Times Kuwait continues with the 5th edition, showcasing the cuisine of Cyprus.



Halloumi, Watermelon And Mint Salad

A delightful summer salad featuring halloumi, the world-renowned traditional cheese of Cyprus, paired with refreshing watermelon and fragrant mint.

Serves: 6 people
Preparation time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 5 minutes
Total time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 120 g halloumi cheese
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 500 g fresh watermelon, cut into cubes
- 12 fresh mint leaves, thinly sliced
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced

PREPARATION

- Cut the halloumi cheese into slices or cubes.
- Heat the olive oil in a frying pan over medium heat.
- Fry the halloumi for approximately 2–3 minutes on each side, until golden brown.
- Arrange the watermelon cubes in a serving bowl or on a platter.
- Add the thinly sliced onion and fresh mint leaves.
- Top with the warm, golden halloumi and serve immediately.



ASEAN Diplomats discover Kuwait's rich history during visit to Al-Salam Palace Museum

The Times Kuwait Report



To foster deeper cultural exchange and international cooperation, the ASEAN Committee in Kuwait (ACK), under the Chairmanship of the Royal Embassy of Cambodia, organized today a high-level diplomatic study tour to the historic Al-Salam Palace Museum.

The delegation comprised the Ambassadors, Chargés d'Affaires a.i., and diplomatic officials from the resident Embassies of ASEAN Member States in Kuwait. The visit offered the ASEAN diplomatic corps a firsthand look at Kuwait's rich heritage, historical milestones, and architectural legacy, fostering deeper cultural understanding between the ASEAN community and the State of Kuwait.

The ASEAN diplomatic delegation was warmly received by Sheikh Ahmed Salah Al-Sabah, Supervisor of the Al-Salam Palace Museum and Historical Documents. During the tour, the ASEAN diplomats were briefed on the museum's collections, which reflect Kuwait's history and its rulers, as well as the museum's main sections, including the Kuwait History Museum, the Al-Salam Palace History Museum, and the Museum of Civilizations that Have Inhabited Kuwait's Land.

On behalf of the ACK, His Excellency CHHAY Makara, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the State of Kuwait and current Rotating Chair, expressed sincere appreciation during the tour to the management and team of the Al-Salam Palace Museum for opening their doors to the ASEAN diplomatic community in Kuwait.

"It is a privilege to explore the historical treasures preserved at the Al-Salam Palace Museum," His Excellency stated. "The visit has offered us profound insight into the history of the State of Kuwait and the visionary leadership that shaped this great nation. Activities like today's visit not only strengthen the bond within our ASEAN family in Kuwait, but also reinforce the warm friendship between ASEAN and the State of Kuwait."

Kuwait Rewrites Its Business Rules

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The report refers to the deployment of a hospital information system at Al-Amiri Hospital as an example of the wider digital transformation taking place within the healthcare sector.

Future opportunities could include electronic medical records, hospital management platforms, telemedicine, artificial intelligence-assisted diagnostics, healthcare data management and integrated patient information systems.

International technology providers could work with Kuwaiti healthcare institutions to improve efficiency, service delivery and the management of medical resources.

The development of digital health infrastructure could become an important component of Kuwait's efforts to modernise public services.

4. Defence and security

- **Defence and security remain important areas for international cooperation.**

The briefing notes that exclusive representation arrangements may remain viable in certain defence procurement activities because defence contracts can be subject to exemptions from standard agency rules.

This creates a distinction between ordinary commercial procurement and specialised defence-related arrangements.

Opportunities could include advanced security systems, surveillance technologies, defence equipment, cybersecurity, communications infrastructure and technical maintenance services.

However, companies operating in this sector will need to pay particular attention to the specific procurement rules, licensing requirements and applicable exemptions.

5. Sukuk and project finance

- **The fifth area identified is Islamic finance, particularly sukuk and project financing.**

As Kuwait seeks to diversify its funding mechanisms, sukuk could play an increasingly important role in financing infrastructure and development projects.

International financial institutions, investment banks, legal advisers, asset managers and specialised financial consultants could find opportunities in structuring and arranging these instruments.

Sukuk, which are structured to comply with Islamic finance principles, provide an alternative mechanism for raising capital and financing assets or projects.

The development of this market could strengthen Kuwait's position as a regional centre for Islamic financial services and attract greater international participation.

The risks: Transition will not be without disruption

Despite the opportunities, the transition towards a more rules-based business environment is unlikely to be straightforward.

The briefing identifies five principal risks that companies should monitor.

Implementation delays: Government departments, ministries and tender committees will require time to adapt to the new regulations. This could lead to inconsistent interpretation and implementation during the initial transition period.

Companies may experience delays in licensing, tender approvals and contractual clearances.

Legal exposure through existing partners: The introduction of criminal liability for commercial concealment makes it essential for foreign companies to review existing agency and partnership arrangements before February 2027.

A foreign company could potentially face legal exposure if its local partner is involved in an arrangement that violates the new legislation.

Supply-chain disruptions: Smaller commercial agents and intermediaries may decide to exit the market or may find themselves unable to operate under the revised regulatory framework.

This could create gaps in distribution, equipment maintenance, after-sales services and last-mile delivery.

Companies with the financial strength and technical capability to establish compliant alternatives could benefit from these disruptions.

Financial and currency-related risks: Greater reliance on Future Generations Fund financing could introduce a closer relationship between Kuwait's fiscal position and the performance of global investment markets.

Although the arrangement may reduce dependence on domestic bank financing, it also makes the management of sovereign wealth and fiscal stability increasingly important.

Reputational and governance risks: International businesses are subject to growing scrutiny from regulators, shareholders and headquarters regarding transparency, ownership structures and compliance.

Association with a non-compliant local commercial arrangement could create significant reputational damage.

What businesses should do now

For companies already operating in Kuwait, the reforms require more than simply updating commercial licences or reviewing individual contracts.

They call for a comprehensive assessment of business structures and operating arrangements.

Existing foreign companies should review their agency agreements, beneficial ownership records, management structures, financial arrangements and contractual responsibilities.

They should establish whether their actual business practices are consistent with their registered corporate structures.

International companies considering entering Kuwait should assess whether direct KDIPA registration, a technical partnership or a properly structured subcontracting arrangement offers the most appropriate route.

Local businesses, meanwhile, should consider how they can move beyond traditional agency and trading activities by developing specialised technical services, distribution infrastructure, maintenance capabilities and operational expertise.

For both foreign and Kuwaiti companies, investment in compliance systems, professional management and transparent corporate governance will become increasingly important.

The report recommends three overarching safeguards: clean registration, documented ownership and contracts structured on the assumption that the new regulatory framework will remain in place.

Kuwait Vision 2035: From distributing wealth to creating value

The wider significance of the reforms extends beyond the immediate business environment.

Kuwait Vision 2035 seeks to transform the country into a regional financial and commercial centre, strengthen the private sector, attract international investment and reduce dependence on oil revenues.

Achieving these ambitions requires more than infrastructure spending and the introduction of new laws. It requires a fundamental change in the relationship between the state and the private sector.

A productive private sector must be capable of generating independent economic activity, creating employment, introducing technology, developing skills and competing internationally.

For decades, government spending and oil revenues provided the foundation for much of Kuwait's commercial activity. The emerging reform agenda suggests a desire to make private-sector participation more direct, accountable and productive.

The state is not withdrawing from the economy. Rather, its role appears to be evolving from primarily distributing economic opportunities towards exercising greater direct participation, ownership, contracting and revenue-sharing.

This is an important distinction.

Kuwait's economic transformation is therefore not simply about liberalisation or privatisation. It is about redefining how economic value is created, who participates in the market and under what conditions.

A defining moment for Kuwait's business community

The 2026 reforms could mark one of the most consequential changes to Kuwait's commercial environment in recent decades.

For foreign companies, the traditional model of relying heavily on local agents and commercial intermediaries is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain in areas affected by the new rules.

For Kuwaiti businesses, the challenge will be to evolve from representation-based operations towards businesses built on technical expertise, service delivery, innovation and productive investment.

For the government, the challenge will be to ensure that the new regulatory framework is implemented consistently, transparently and efficiently without discouraging legitimate foreign investment or disrupting essential commercial services.

There are also important questions surrounding the pace of implementation, the treatment of existing contractual arrangements and the precise scope of exemptions under the new legislation. These will need clear answers from the relevant authorities.

Ultimately, the success of Kuwait's reform programme will depend not merely on the number of laws introduced but on whether these measures translate into a more competitive, diversified and productive economy.

The country's ambition is clear: to move beyond an economic model predominantly sustained by oil revenues and government spending towards one in which private enterprise, foreign investment, technology and specialised expertise play a much greater role.

For businesses willing to adapt, Kuwait could offer significant opportunities.

For those that continue to rely on the traditional rules of engagement, the coming years may prove considerably more challenging.

The message emerging from Kuwait's 2026 reforms is unmistakable: the market remains open, but the rules of participation are changing.



Journalism Can Be More Than AI Fodder



Ryan Powell
Director of Media Innovation at the International Press Institute

A healthy information environment depends on supply and demand for quality inputs. To remain competitive and independent in an AI-powered ecosystem, news outlets, publishers, research institutes, and NGOs will need to develop their own skills and tools for establishing where information comes from and whether it can be trusted. Otherwise, they will lose the independence they need to set their agenda in dialogue with audiences and serve the public interest.

In September, unredacted files from The New York Times' lawsuit against OpenAI and Microsoft revealed what one of Microsoft's own senior scientists called the use of copyrighted material to train AI models the "largest theft of labor in human history."

Publishers are beginning to push back. According to NewsGuard, 67% of the most-engaged news sites now block crawlers from accessing archives of their content, and the lawsuits are piling up. But blocking is a defensive position, and it leaves an important question unanswered: What could publishers do with those archives themselves?

A news outlet's archive is one asset AI companies cannot replicate. In Guatemala and South Africa, media organizations and nonprofits have stopped treating their archives as just something to maintain. They're building chatbots that answer farmers' questions, tools that let local readers dig into procurement databases, and systems that sort thousands of reader comments a week.

How much influence media outlets have over information markets depends on their capacity to innovate. The problem is that Big Tech still sets the incentives. Publishers are taking LLM developers to court while trying to track where their content ends up and find ways to charge bots and AI agents for access.

> *As AI fundamentally alters the information environment, news publishers risk becoming little more than content suppliers for Big Tech. To avoid that fate, many are drawing on their archives and expertise to develop AI tools that allow them to operate and compete on their own terms.*

Organizations with deep content archives and a willingness to experiment are already using AI to gain competitive advantages that were previously out of reach. For decades, news organizations have competed on the quality of their journalism and sources. But with information more plentiful than ever, they are looking for ways to build trust and reach new audiences. As the economics of information change rapidly, some are selling real-time data and analysis that clients can act on or tapping into crowd-powered prediction markets.

But where does that leave publishers whose value lies in authorship and community? Around the world, independent publishers are developing AI tools of their own, running models locally and carefully mapping their data architecture. They are also training models only on verifiable proprietary data and exploring community-based, open-source, and commercial uses early in product development.

These investments are creating new revenue streams, from native advertising and sponsorships to in-house AI tools. Food for Mzansi, an agriculture-focused publisher in South Africa, has developed Agri-Pulse 360, an AI ecosystem that provides small-scale commercial farmers with round-the-clock access to practical advice. Drawing on the organization's eight-year content library with thousands of articles, the chatbot uses retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) to answer farmers' questions and will eventually be available through WhatsApp. Agri-Pulse 360 can also be used to generate TikTok reels and track newsletter subscribers' reading habits.

Food for Mzansi wants to attract advertisers through a native advertising tool it calls "Solution Moments." It is also seeking pilot sponsorships from major brands for AI-generated technical workflows and aims to automate client promotions within targeted newsletters.

In Guatemala, independent news outlet Ojoconmipisto and data provider Sociedad.info launched Pin Local, an AI tool that draws on government-spending records to produce personalized weekly newsletters. Ojoconmipisto's journalists do the reporting, and Sociedad.info's AI searches its public-procurement database for information relevant to readers in each of Guatemala's 22 administrative regions. The same system could work with data from other countries and allow the organization to sell customized reports on individual procurement contracts.

In Argentina, fact-checker Chequeado is using AI to sift through the thousands of comments it receives from readers each week. Its tool, Nunchi, uses enterprise models to classify these comments by sentiment and intent and then ranks them by relevance. It was even trained to understand humor and irony. Editors get a Slack brief twice a day with recurring topics and questions that haven't been covered. They can also use a dashboard to see how audience interest is shifting over time.

In Colombia, Cuestión Pública has built six Model Context Protocol (MCP) servers that connect to 13 public-procurement databases, a national business register, and its own reporting archive. The system lets users explore records covering nine million companies, daily political events, and politically connected individuals in a single conversation. Cuestión Pública also tracks token use live on its site. It previously relied on the speed and usability of a chatbot but is now focusing on generating more value through a tool that supports accountability reporting. The organization also plans to release a privacy-focused version as a paid service.

What drives these projects is the search for new revenue streams beyond traditional news products. Some publishers are attempting to earn audience loyalty by building direct relationships with their readers, while others treat information as a liquid commodity, selling it to AI firms by the unit.

Either way, publishers need to understand how their content is being used and retain control over it. To compete in this emerging landscape and avoid being relegated to content suppliers for Big Tech, they need the freedom to experiment and the resources to develop and scale new products on their own terms.

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