



**Ahmed Khaled  
Al Ghanim & Partner**  
chartered accountants

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# 1. Qatar Financial Centre Overview

The **Qatar Financial Centre Authority** (QFC Authority) is a business and financial centre located in Doha, Qatar, providing legal and business infrastructure for financial and other services.

The Qatar Financial Centre provides financial institutions and other business entities with a world class business platform situated in an economy founded on the development of its hydrocarbons resources. It has been created with a long-term perspective to support the development of Qatar and the wider region, develop local and regional markets, and strengthen the links between the energy based economies and global financial markets.

## 2. How it Works

The QFC works as an independent financial regulator, the QFC Regulatory Authority, and an independent judiciary comprising a Civil and Commercial Court and a Regulatory Tribunal. The QFC Authority is responsible for leading the expansion of Qatar's financial services sector and other business sector for developing relationships with the regional and global financial and business community.

## 3. Benefits of QFC

- ▶ Onshore Business and Financial Platform
- ▶ World Class regulator
- ▶ No restriction on currency used for trading
- ▶ Best in class legal, regulatory tax and business environment
- ▶ 100% foreign ownership
- ▶ Unlimited repatriation of profits
- ▶ Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Financial Centre of the Year

## 4. Permitted Activities

The QFC Law provides for a broad range of activities (Permitted Activities) to be conducted in or from the QFC. These activities are most commonly recognised as either constituting financial services (Regulated Activities), or professional services such as legal or accounting services found in support of financial services businesses and related corporate entities such as holding companies (Non-Regulated Activities).

The conducting of any Permitted Activities in or from the QFC can only be carried on by entities with a legal presence in the QFC and legal presence can only be established by incorporating an Limited Liability Company or Limited Liability Partnership with the Companies Registration Office (CRO), or by registering a branch of a non-QFC legal entity with the CRO.

Further, Permitted Activities can only be conducted if a License is granted for those activities by the QFCA. The licensing process is intended to ensure that only entities likely to contribute to the achievement of the QFC objectives are given the opportunity to operate within the QFC.

# 5. Licensing Category

## Regulated Activities

These are activities undertaken by financial firms (such as investment and retail banks, insurance companies, fund and wealth management firms, brokerage offices and securities operations). The first step in considering setting up in the QFC is to submit a business case to the QFC Authority Strategic Development Team to determine whether the proposal “fits” with QFC’s objectives.

## Non-regulated Activities

Permitted non-regulated activities were originally limited to activities in support of financial firms (e.g. services by accounting, audit and legal firms). The QFC subsequently introduced a number of changes to expand the scope of permitted non-regulatory activities to include services such as IP management and treasury for all sectors, and consultancy services in relation to Information Technology, real estate, recruitment and sports and event management. The opportunity now exists for a business that is not regulated and that might previously have set up contract specific temporary branches under Qatar state law, to incorporate within the QFC as a 100% foreign owned entity. The QFC is also available to Qatari investors and they can enjoy benefits similar to those awarded under the State Tax Law (i.e. exemption from CIT), provided the business is 90% Qatari owned.

# 6. Licensing Fee and Process

## Non - Regulated Activities

Applicants seeking a License to conduct Non-Regulated Activities in or from the QFC are required to pay an application fee of \$5,000.

## Regulated Activities

Regulated Activities	Fees
Deposit Taking Providing Credit Facilities Carrying out a Contract of Insurance Effecting a Contract of Insurance	\$40,000
Dealing in Investments (as principal)	\$25,000
Dealing in Investments (as agent) Providing Custody Services Managing Investments Advising on Investments Arranging Deals in Investments Arranging Credit Facilities Arranging the Provision of Custody Services Operating a Collective Investment Fund	\$10,000
Effecting a contract of insurance or carrying out a contract of insurance as a QFC captive insurer that is a protected cell company	\$8,000, plus \$1,000 for each cell
Effecting a contract of insurance or carrying out a contract of insurance as a QFC captive insurer that is not a protected cell company	\$5,000
Dealing in investments (as agent), managing investments, arranging deals in investments, advising on investments or assisting in the administration or performance of contracts of insurance, if carried on only for the purpose of insurance mediation business or captive insurance management	\$1,000



## 7. AGPCA Services

- ▶ Arrangement for an initial meeting with the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) Authority.
- ▶ Assist in preparation of a business case to the QFC submission
- ▶ Assist in preparation of all necessary forms required by the QFC Authority.
- ▶ Preparation of all requisite manuals to the QFC submission (e.g. Business continuity and Disaster recovery, compliance manuals, Anti Money Laundering Manuals etc.).
- ▶ Book keeping services for first 6 months of operation of the company. AGPCA also provide outsourced accounting services on contract basis.
- ▶ Assist to file necessary returns Quarterly, semi annually and Annually to the QFC.
- ▶ External Auditing Services.

# 8. KEY CONTACTS

Old Ghanim Ibin Manik Street,  
Building No 01, Floor No 03,  
Office No 305  
Doha, Qatar

Tel: + (974) 44350022

Fax: + (974) 44312221

E-mail:

sangeeta@agpca.com (Lead partner)

w.rahman@agpca.com (Auditor)