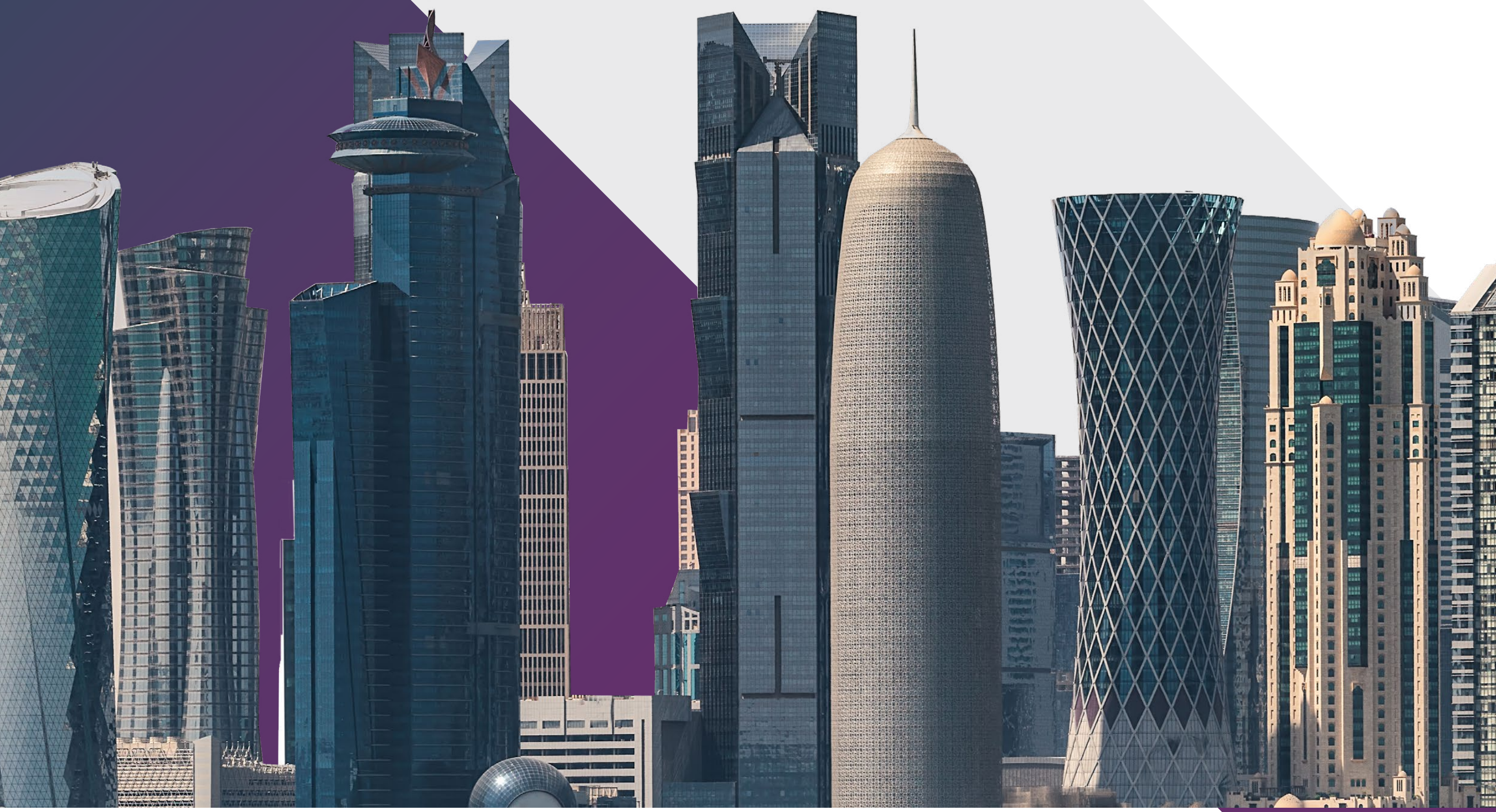
SETTING UP YOUR BUSINESS **IN QATAR**

YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
TO GETTING STARTED

invest Qatar

CONTENTS



01. Introduction

Every successful business must adopt a long-term perspective to achieve its most ambitious goals and realise its potential. In a rapidly challenging world, a like-minded partner is essential to success. The most important partner a business can think of is the country where you choose to set up your business. A supportive and stable environment lays the foundation for growth, innovation and long-term success, making your host country your most important partner in realising your ambitions.

Qatar boasts a stable and resilient economy. Strategically positioned at the gateway between East and West, it has a combined GDP of $8.5 trillion within a 3,000 km radius. Ranked third for entrepreneurial activity in the Arab world and fifth globally in GDP per capita, Qatar offers unmatched opportunities.

With award-winning infrastructure, a young and highly educated talent pool, a supportive business environment that includes up to 100% foreign ownership, 0% income tax, 10% corporate tax and an unparalleled lifestyle as the safest country globally with one of the world's best healthcare systems, Qatar is the best home for your business in the Middle East.

1.1 **Invest Qatar** – Your reliable partner in growth

The Investment Promotion Agency Qatar (Invest Qatar) drives investment under the Invest Qatar brand, serving as a trusted concierge for businesses exploring investment opportunities in Qatar. It supports investors through an integrated business ecosystem, offering bespoke assistance from initial exploration to expansion tailored to their unique goals. Invest Qatar provides information on the business environment, market opportunities and support for foreign direct investors, including setup assistance and facilitation services. Qatar is committed to building a diversified, knowledge-based economy aligned with the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030), attracting international expertise and talent.

Our platforms

Invest Qatar works closely with peer organisations, international partners, licensing platforms and key stakeholders to exchange expertise, foster cooperation and establish partnerships that enable investors to create their next success story.

Key national platforms

وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
State of Qatar • دولة قطر

مركز قطر للمال
Qatar Financial Centre

QFZ
هيئة المناطق الحرة - قطر
Qatar Free Zones Authority

المدينة الإعلامية
Media City
Qatar قطر

Services and opportunities offered by Invest Qatar Gateway

Companies Directory

- Explore a network of companies operating in Qatar and learn about the services and opportunities they provide
- Request introductions to companies you wish to partner with
- Showcase your locally established company to gain visibility among other businesses and foreign investors

Support Services

- Discover business support service providers to assist with setting up and growing your business
- Request services and communicate directly with service providers through the platform
- Promote your business services to grow your customer base

Tenders

- Gain access to public sector tenders from Monaqasat
- Explore tenders posted by private companies on the platform
- Post your tenders to attract bidders

Opportunities

- Explore public-private partnership (PPP) opportunities in Qatar
- Get matched with opportunities based on your company profile and preferences
- Post opportunities to find business partners or to raise or invest capital

Investor Relations

- Connect with the investor relations team at Invest Qatar through message or by booking a meeting
- Receive assistance with setting up and growing your business in Qatar
- Get matched with real business opportunities tailored to your industry and interests

Other Services

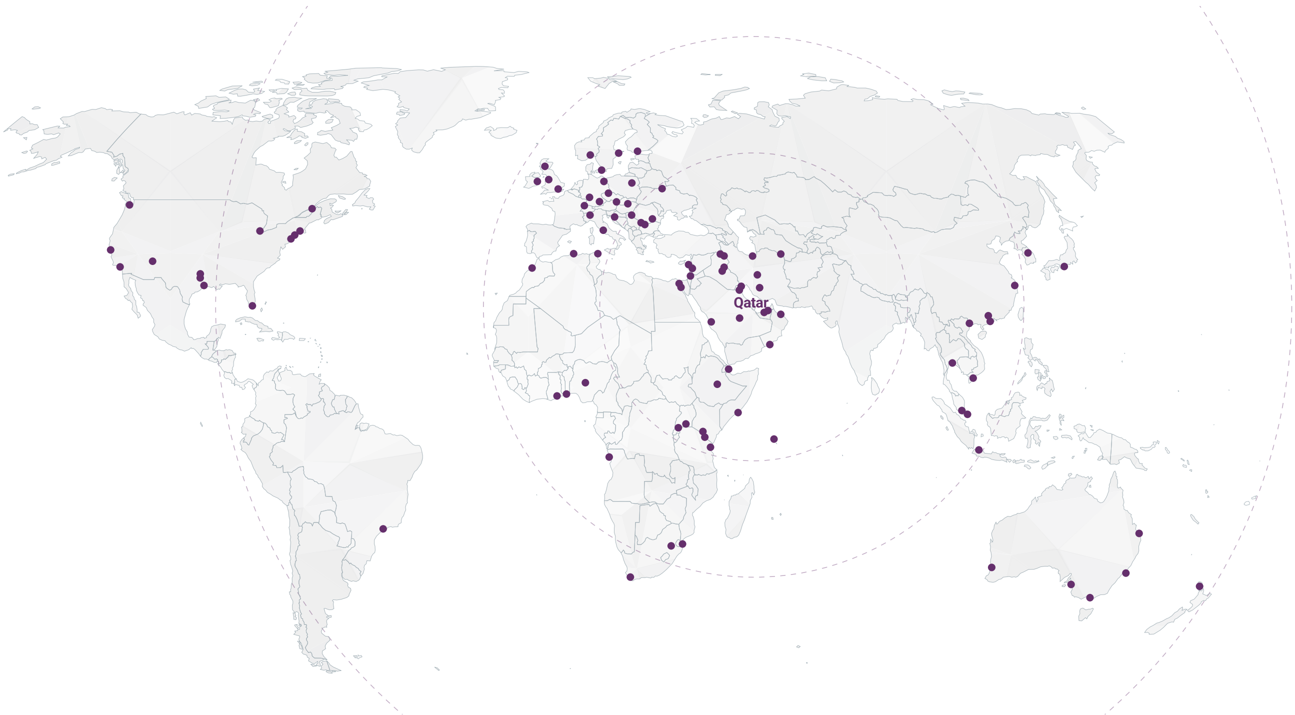
- Business registration with licensing platforms
- Corporate bank account opening with parenting banks
- Application for incentives supporting business operations
- Access telecom offerings and IT/WI FI setup across service providers

Find out more here: gateway.invest.qa

1.2 Why set up in Qatar?

Facilitating seamless access to global markets

Located at the gateway between East and West, Qatar offers unparalleled market access and connectivity.



$8trn

in combined GDP and 2.5bn people all within a 3,000km radius of Qatar

80%

of the world's population is within a six-hour flight

170+

international flight destinations through Qatar Airways

60

international ports connected through Hamad Port

1st

ranked airport, airline and cargo airline of the year 2024 with a capacity of more than 65m people and a cargo capacity of 7m tonnes a year

5th

5G Leadership Index with 99% internet penetration

A resilient and stable macroeconomic environment

Qatar offers a stable and resilient economy, supported by superior credit ratings and stable GDP growth. With the Qatari Riyal pegged to the US dollar, investors benefit from enhanced stability, confidence and predictability.

The country's economic diversification strategy and investments in infrastructure have been key drivers of growth and will continue to propel the economy forward.

AA
credit rating according to S&P, Fitch and Aa2 from Moody's

5th
highest GDP per capita globally

4.2%
average GDP growth in the last 15 years

1.7%
average inflation rate since 2020

0.1%
unemployment rate, the lowest globally

4%
Third Qatar National Development Strategy (NDS3) GDP target by 2030

Pro-business environment and top investment destination

Qatar enables global business growth through reforms, support and a strong financial sector.

Competitive regimes, in terms of regulation, procedures, taxation incentives and immigration among others

Up to 100% foreign ownership with a robust and efficient legal framework

Competitive tax regime

Extensive international investment agreements with China, Germany, France and more

2nd

in Business Efficiency in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (IMD World Competitiveness 2025)

2nd

most Competitive Arab country and 9th globally in the World Competitiveness Index (IMD Competitiveness ranking 2023)

1st

globally in entrepreneurial intentions (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2024/2025)

1st

globally in General Infrastructure in the Global Innovation Index (WIPO 2023)

7th

in Government Efficiency Globally

Home to skilled talent and a world-class knowledge ecosystem

Qatar's R&D ecosystem attracts top global talent driven by advanced education, research and corporate excellence.

1st
globally in Talent Attraction of International Students (INSEAD 2023)

1st
globally entrepreneurial employee activity in Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM 2023-2029)

1st
in the GCC for higher education (GKI, 2023)

Top 10
most attractive countries for foreign talent (brain gain) (INSEAD's Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2023)

2.28m
economically active people (NPC, Labour Force, as of Q4 2024)

~94.4%
of the economically active labour force are expatriate (NPC, Labour Force, as of Q4 2024)

79%
labour force work in the private sector (NPC, 2023)

0.1%
unemployment rate in Qatar (NPC)

81%
of the total labour force are between 15-44 years (NPC, Q4 2024)

QAR 12,416
average monthly wage for total wage-earning workers (NPC, Q4 2024)

A modern and safe place to live

Qatar seamlessly blends rich Arabic heritage and modern culture, making it an appealing home and ideal destination for investors, expats and visitors, as well as a welcoming environment to raise families and develop thriving communities.

3rd

safest country in the world as per Numbeo safety index (Numbeo, 2024)

1st

in the MENA region in the Global Peace Index (Global Peace Index 2023)

2nd

lowest cost of living in the GCC

Top 10

place to live and work globally (HSBC Expat Explorer 2021 Survey)

Top healthcare

has one of the best healthcare systems, advanced hospitals and medical research facilities

2030 Asian Games

home to international sporting events

94

nationalities live and work in Qatar

02. Registering your business in Qatar

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the Invest Qatar licensing platforms, detailing the registration process, required actions and the necessary documentation to establish a business under these platforms. The information is organised as follows:

Qatar's business landscape provides foreign companies with various business structures to operate in the country. You can select the most suitable structure for your business from the options below.

Table 1. Summary of available business structures in Qatar across platforms

Business Structure	MoCI	QFC	QFZ	MCQ	QSTP**
Limited Liability Companies (LLCs)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Branches of companies		✓	✓	✓	✓
Limited liability partnerships		✓		✓	✓
Limited partnerships	✓	✓		✓	✓
Companies Limited by Guarantee (LLC(G)s)		✓		✓	
General partnerships		✓		✓	✓
Foundations and trusts		✓		✓	✓
Partnership company	✓				✓
Joint liability company	✓				✓
Holding company	✓				✓
Public shareholding company	✓				✓
Private shareholding company	✓				✓
Commercial representative offices	✓				✓
Professional office/ professional firm	✓				✓
Sole proprietorship	✓				✓

*Media City Qatar - the application process is hosted and completed by QFC
** QSTP - the registration process is hosted by MOCI or QFC

2.1 Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI)

وزارة التجـــــــــارة والصناعـــــــــة
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
State of Qatar • دولـــة قطـــر

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) oversees Qatar's commercial and industrial sectors, promoting investments, supporting exports, and regulating businesses and markets.

Under Article 4 of Law No. (1) of 2019, which regulates the investment of non-Qatari Capital in economic activities, non-Qatari investors are permitted to own up to 100% of capital in most sectors in Qatar. Exceptions include banking and insurance (unless exemptions are granted), commercial agencies and other sectors stipulated by the Council of Ministers.

Access MoCI's comprehensive business activity list open for foreign investors.

Support offered by MoCI

Single window: A unified and integrated electronic platform to streamline approval and licensing procedures for business establishment.

Up to 100% foreign ownership: Non-Qatari investors can own the entirety of their business in most sectors.

Land allocation: Land can be leased or granted usufruct rights for foreign investors to establish investment projects.

Income tax exemptions: Available in accordance with the controls, procedures and periods stipulated in the income tax law.

Customs fees exemptions: Exemptions apply to the imports of necessary machinery, equipment and raw materials.

Capital transfers: Foreign investors can freely transfer any amount related to their investment to and from any external destination without delay.

Ownership transfer rights: Investors are entitled to transfer the ownership of an investment to any other investor or assign ownership to a local partner.

The Single Window

The Single Window offers a comprehensive and streamlined solution for foreign companies to establish their presence in Qatar. The process takes two days and costs QAR 2,200. Through this service, investors can obtain all the necessary licenses in a single transaction, including trade names, commercial registration, commercial permits, establishment IDs, tax cards and labour approvals, enabling them to commence business activities seamlessly.

MoCI registration and licensing steps

- Reserve a **Trade Name**
- Issuance of a **Commercial Permit (CP)**
- Issuance of **Establishment Card**, also known as **"Company Computer Card" (EID)**
- **Fill out the application and attach all documents**
- **Pay fees electronically** on the Single Window portal
- Issuance of **Commercial Registration (CR)**
- Issuance of **Regulatory Permits** (extra approvals are required on selected business activities)
- Issuance of **Tax Card**
- **Sign the MoA document** digitally on the Single Window portal or by booking an appointment
- **Receive the certificates and original copies** electronically through the single window

MoCI registration documents required and costs

Registering a business with MOCI involves the completion of a set of requirements for both the company and the individuals involved.

The main registration documents required:

- Trade name reservation
- Parent company official documents
- Copy of authorised person's or representative's passport
- Beneficial owner declaration form
- Owners' or partners' consent letter
- Completed establishment request application
- Power of attorney for the company's representative
- Proof of identity for the general manager (copy of Qatari ID or passport)
- Business plan

All documents must be attested and translated into Arabic.

For a comprehensive establishment check: Service Details (sw.gov.qa)
For a factory establishment check: Service Details (sw.gov.qa)
For other services including renewals, issuance, cancellation, adding and replacement check: Services (sw.gov.qa)

Process

1.

Fill out the application and submit it electronically through the Single Window Website https://investor.sw.gov.qa/

2.

Submit all required documents and any other documents requested during the application review period.

3.

Once the establishment process is completed and the licensing is obtained by user, then users can move forward with opening a bank account and complete any additional approvals based on the business activity.

The MoCI has recently decreased the fees significantly for various commercial registration services.

Business registration and licensing fees:

Fees	MOCI
Application	Minimum QAR **500***
License (annual)	Minimum QAR **500***
Comprehensive establishment	Cost (Approx.) QAR **2,200**
Factory establishment	Cost (Approx.) QAR **3,200**

*Costs depend on company structure and type of business activity

Find out more here: **moci.gov.qa**

Single window: **Services (sw.gov.qa)**

2.2 Qatar Financial Centre (QFC)

مركز قطر للمال
Qatar Financial Centre

The Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) serves as a globally recognised platform for businesses, providing a distinct legal, regulatory, tax and business framework. It plays a significant role in advancing the economic growth and diversification objectives outlined in the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030).

With the extensive array of legal and regulatory services offered by the QFC, both regulated and non-regulated entities can establish or expand their business operations in Qatar. These services align with international best practices, facilitating a favourable environment for domestic and international companies to thrive.

QFC allows up to 100% foreign ownership, 100% repatriation of profits and requires a competitive rate of 10% corporate tax on locally sourced profits.

Companies that register under the QFC are allowed to carry out a variety of regulated and unregulated activities:

Regulated activities:

- Banking insurance/reinsurance
- Alternative finance
- Representative office
- Asset management
- Islamic finance
- Fund administration, fund advisory and fiduciary businesses

Non-Regulated activities:

- Corporate solutions
- HNI/family offices
- Professional and business services
- Companies limited by guarantees

Find out more here: **qfc.qa/en/registering-a-company/what-we-license**

Core focus sectors

Financial services

Sports

Digital and media

Support offered by QFC

Up to 100% foreign ownership

Independent court, regulatory tribunal and dispute resolution centre

100% repatriation of profits

Competitive tax system

Unique administrative employment dispute resolution centre accredited by the International Labour Organization (ILO)

A legal, judicial and regulatory framework based on English common law and international best practice

Trade in any currency

QFC Introduced platinum on-boarding services for entities seeking speed, precision and premium experience. A fast-track incorporation for companies within QFC in as little as one hour upon final application submission. This paid services enables one-hour incorporation, activated upon submission of the final online application, with the computer card and tax card issued within the same hour for Qataris residents.

QFC registration and licensing steps

1. Expression of Interest in the QFC

You can initiate your expression of interest in setting up an entity under the QFC by completing the 'Start Your Setup' form (qfc.qa/en/register-a-company). Alternatively, contact QFC's Business Development Team at +974 4496 7836 or via email at businessdevelopment@qfc.qa.

Based on plans and business operations, QFC's Business Development Team will confirm if your operations are aligned with 'QFC Permitted Activities', as defined by the QFC Financial Services Regulations (FSR) and if your entity is considered to add strategic value to the State of Qatar and the QFC. If your proposed activities are approved, a member of QFC's Financial Sector Office (FSO) will guide you through the process of obtaining the required authorisation from the QFC Regulatory Authority (QFCRA) (qfcra-en.thomsonreuters.com/rulebook/financial-services-regulations-0) and will intermediate with the QFCRA, before proceeding with the rest of the application for the certificate of incorporation or registration. QFC's FSO team can be reached at +974 4496 7651 or via email at fso@qfc.qa.

2. Complete Single Online Application

If your proposed business operations align with the 'QFC Permitted Activities', you will receive a link to QFC's secure portal, where you can complete the online Application for Registration and License. Upon submission, QFC will review and assess your application and all supporting documentation. Your dedicated QFC Business Development Representative will coordinate any remaining follow-ups to ensure a smooth process. Once all QFC requirements are satisfied, your application will be approved (refer to No. 1 in the appendix). All applicants are required to provide beneficial ownership information at the time of making an application for registration and licensing (refer to No.2 in the appendix).

3. Certificate and Scope of License Issued

Once your application is approved, you will receive the Licensing and Registration Certificates, the Scope of License for your QFC entity and the Licensing Letter (refer to No.3 in the appendix).

4. Post-registration process

After registering with the QFC, ensure the following steps are completed:

- Access the QFC E-service portal within the first month.
- Set up a bank account and apply for a computer card to initiate the immigration process.
- Establish your office in a designated QFC building.
- Display a staff privacy notice to comply with data protection regulations.
- Complete the Conduct of Business Policies and Procedures Checklist.
- Register online for tax and obtain your tax card.
- Submit the Senior Executive Function (SEF) full residency and Professional Indemnity Insurance within three months.
- Provide a copy of the Registered Office Agreement.
- Submit your Ultimate Beneficial Ownership (UBO) annual report on the registration anniversary.
- File your annual tax return and financial statement within six months after the accounting period.

Required QFC registration documents and costs

The required documents for registering a business under QFC vary based on the type of selected business structure. Below are the key documents necessary to establish a Limited Liability Company (LLC) and a branch.

For Limited Liability Company (LLC):

- Completed application form (online)
- Signed declaration and consent form
- Copy of the incorporator's current certificate of incorporation or registration in its place of origin
- Copy of the constitutional document of the incorporator (Note: If the document is not in the English language, a certified translation by a professional translator must be provided).
- A copy of the resolution of the board of directors

For a branch:

- Signed declaration and consent form
- Documentary evidence of financial strength, including but not limited to the last two years of audited financial statements of the non-QFC company/parent entity
- Certified copy of the non-QFC company's current certificate of incorporation or registration in its place of origin or a document of similar effect
- Certified copy of the constitutional document of the non-QFC Company (e.g., articles of association, partnership deed or member's agreement). If the document is not in English, a certified translation by a professional translator must be provided
- Certified copy of the resolution of the members of the non-QFC company

Business registration and licensing fees:

Fees	QFC
Application	QAR **1,800**
License (annual)	QAR **1,800**

Find out more here: **qfc.qa**

2.3 **Qatar Free Zones Authority** (QFZ)

The Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZ), established in 2018, oversees and regulates world-class free zones in Qatar. It leverages the country's strategic position as a global industrial and logistics hub with a thriving economy.

Unlike many free zone developers, QFZ oversees Qatar's free zones as an independent regulatory body, providing a one-stop shop for the entire business set-up and management process.

The Airport Free Zone at Ras Bufontas

- Covers 4km^2, located directly adjacent to world-renowned Hamad International Airport (HIA), providing unrivalled access to air transportation and short export turnaround times
- Has direct access via the Doha Metro

The Port Free Zone at Umm Alhoul

- Spans 32km^2, situated near Hamad Port, one of the world's largest greenfield ports, providing an optimal location for industries that benefit from access to sea freight and shipping routes
- Includes MARSA, a fully integrated maritime ecosystem with facilities supporting activities such as boat building, maritime research, recreational yachting and water sports
- Offers a wealth of resources and connectivity, already capturing 27% of trade in the GCC region

Core focus sectors

Trade, logistics and exports

Manufacturing and chemicals

Emerging technology

Find out more here: **qfz.gov.qa/industries/**

Support offered by QFZ

100% foreign ownership

Corporate tax exemptions for renewable 20-year periods

- Zero customs duties
- Zero individual income tax

Access to investment funding

No restrictions on capital repatriation

Qatar’s double taxation treaty network with 65+ countries

Robust data protection and intellectual property laws

Flexible structuring options, including branch or LLC setups

QFZ registration and licensing steps

The QFZ investor onboarding journey is structured as a fully integrated, step-by-step procedure and is designed to get the business operational as quickly as possible. The investor relations and business development teams at QFZ work closely with the regulatory division to ensure a seamless setup experience.

QFZ's Business Setup Journey

QFZ's business setup journey is divided into a three-step process:

1. **Business contact**
The business development team at QFZ initiates the onboarding process and provides support with:
   - Application inquiry and assessment
   - Property terms and solutions
   - Visa allocations
   - Entity registration
   - Lease agreement
   - Licensing of your business

2. **Handshake**
The business development team hands over the pre-required registration forms along with confirmation of lease signing, license issuance and regulatory compliance for review. This cues the QFZ investor relations team's 'Handshake' process, which includes:
   - Approval of customer information
   - Assistance with business and work visas
   - Issuance of a Qatar Identification Card (QID)
   - Support with obtaining a driving license
   - Bank account set-up

3. **Road to operations**
Upon completion of the Handshake process and receipt of building permit approval, investor relations will provide a formal hand-over to the construction team, who will complete the final stage of the journey with:
   - Building and environmental permits
   - Customs and tax file setup
   - Property management services and 5G connectivity

Find out more here: qfz.gov.qa/investors/set-up-a-new-company/

QFZ registration: Required documents and costs

Incorporating a Limited Liability Company (LLC) within the Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZ) is open to one or more applicants. To complete the process, investors are required to:

- Complete the prescribed application form
- Copy of the incorporator's current certificate of incorporation or registration in its place of origin
- Submit a copy of the Articles of Association signed by all the shareholders
- Provide any additional information requested by the authority

Incorporation will result in the issuing of a dated certificate, the allocation of a QFZ registration number and the inclusion of the company's name and number within the QFZ register.

An authority will not consider the company to have a legal personality unless it has both received a certificate and been included on the register. The certificate will be deemed as conclusive evidence that the company has been incorporated for QFZ purposes.

Business registration and licensing fees:

Fees	QFZ
Application + Registration Fees	LLC – QAR **6,000** Branch – QAR **4,000**
License (annual)	LLC – QAR **5,000** Branch – **QAR 5,000**

Find out more here: **https://qfz.gov.qa/**

2.4 Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP)

The Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) plays a key role in providing companies looking to expand to the region with the infrastructure and the tools they need to develop tech-based, innovative and entrepreneurial solutions.

As a free zone and technology park, QSTP hosts leading global tech companies, mentors and supports a network of start-ups and rising tech ventures, and has a value chain of acceleration, incubation and funding programmes.

QSTP is committed to fostering a thriving technology, innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Qatar.

Permitted Activities:

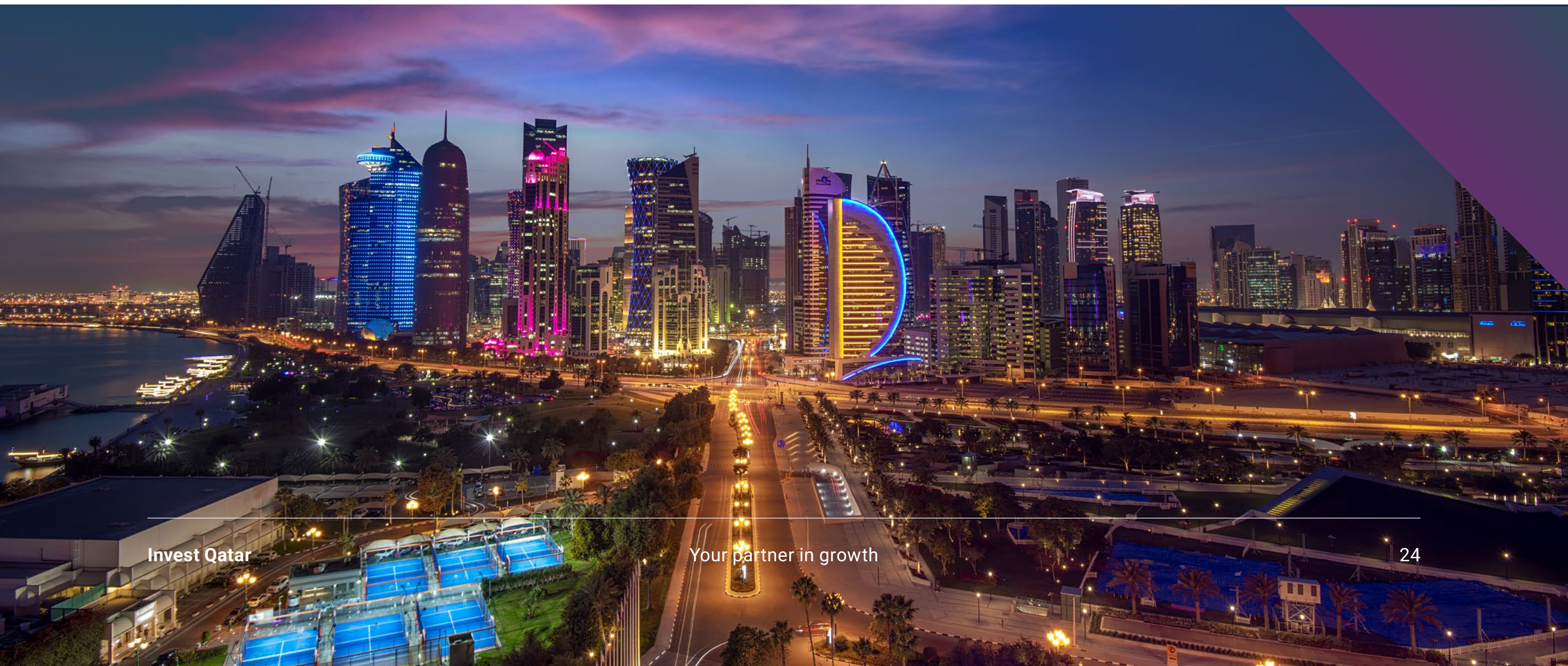
- Technology (product and/or process) development
- Low volume, high value-added specialist manufacturing
- Technology-related consulting services
- Research and development
- Education and/or training
- New business creation and/or development

Core focus sectors

- Energy
- Environment
- Health
- Information, communication and technology (ICT)

Any other activities aligned with these four core sectors.

Find out more here: qstp.org.qa/free-zone/how-to-apply/



Support offered by QSTP

Quick company formation	Up to 100% foreign ownership
Exemption on corporate and personal income tax	Exemption on customs duties
No restrictions on the repatriation of capital, profits or salaries in any currency	State-of-the-art facility and infrastructure
Meeting and conferencing facilities equipped with the latest audio-visual systems	On-site tier 3 data centre with advanced fibre optic network
Dedicated member services help desk	On-site cafes, restaurants and postal services

Business structures available under QSTP

The types of business structures you can register under Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) align with those offered by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) and the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC). These include limited liability companies and branch entities.

QSTP registration and licensing steps

Currently, QSTP does not offer in-house registration services. Businesses can register under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) or the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) by following their respective steps and requirements outlined earlier.

Find out more here: **qstp.org.qa**

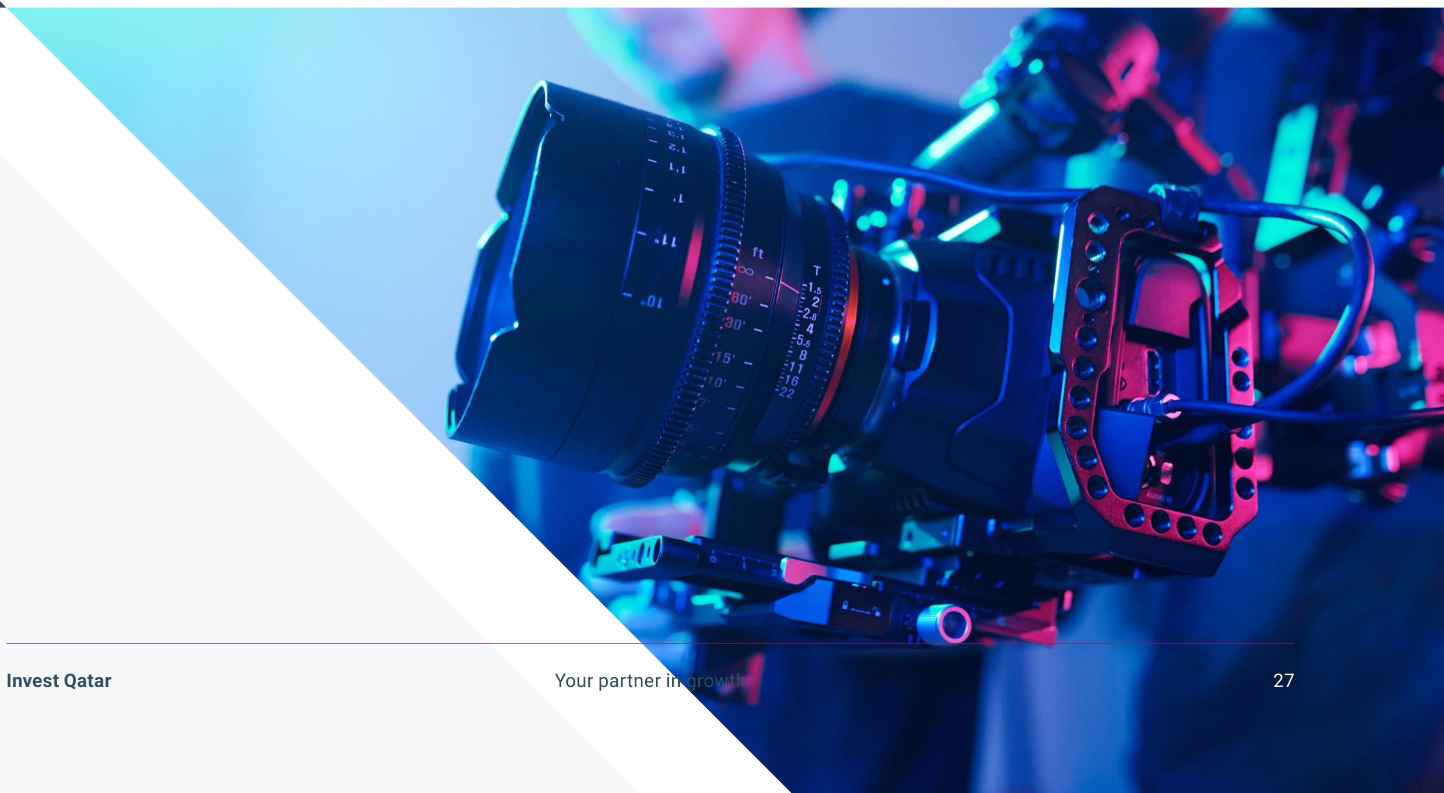
2.5 Media City Qatar

Established by Amiri Decree No. (13) of 2019, Media City Qatar (MCQ) is dedicated to fostering the growth and development of the media industry. Its goal is to position Qatar as an international hub for businesses, organisations, entrepreneurs, innovators and creative talent with a focus on traditional and digital media, technology, communications, and research and development.

Media City Qatar aims to accelerate the evolution of regional media and create a powerful and innovative ecosystem, where exceptional ideas and content thrive. Guided by its three-pillar mandate as a cluster regulator, developer and investor, Media City Qatar drives growth in the media industry and contributes to Qatar's economic diversification.

More than a licensing platform, Media City Qatar provides support to companies and professionals to achieve success through a strong regulatory ecosystem, talent development, financial incentives and support networks.

By cultivating a vibrant ecosystem, it brings together the world's most innovative and successful media businesses, start-ups and industry professionals, establishing Qatar as a media hub in the heart of the Middle East.



Core focus sectors

- Regional TV/video production and aggregation
- Content aggregation for over-the-top (OTT) platforms
- Regional news and magazines (e) publishing
- Gaming studio for developers
- Home to user-generated content creatives
- Innovation center for national champions
- Hub for global films and series production
- Gaming studios and bases for large businesses
- Innovation hub for media technology

Support offered by Media City Qatar

Supportive Regulatory Environment

- Seamless procedures for commercial licenses in Qatar with up to 100% foreign ownership
- An independent regulating entity that regulates the media activities for licensed companies in line with international best practices
- Issuance of permits to perform media activities in the country
- Supportive initiatives to incubate and accelerate media startups

Financial Support

- Ease to perform financial and banking transactions for capital and profits
- Grants and cash rebates for local production activities
- A gateway for local and regional investment and partnership opportunities

Modern business environment

- Modern offices and facilities equipped with state-of-the-art media equipment
- Flexible workplace for small companies, entrepreneurs and content creators
- Specialised media events, workshops and trainings in addition to opportunities for knowledge exchange
- Business development and marketing teams to support licensees' operations and facilitation
- Government coordination services, logistics support and travel services
- Provision of content and operational guidance tailored to the needs of international media companies

Businesses with activities relating to the below can register to get a license from MCQ and they include:

- Ease to perform financial and banking transactions for capital and profits
- Grants and cash rebates for local production activities
- A gateway for local and regional investment and partnership opportunities

Registration and licensing steps

1.
Submit your interest

Begin by completing the "Start A Business Form". Once submitted, a business development team member will contact you to schedule a meeting to discuss your interest and provide more details about Media City Qatar.

2.
Complete the comprehensive application

Submit the comprehensive online application hosted by Qatar Financial Centre (QFC).

3.
Issue license

Once approved, your licence will be issued, allowing you to officially start your business operations.

Business registration and licensing fees:

Fees	MCQ
Application + Registration Fees	QAR **1,800**
License (annual)	QAR **1,800**

Find out more here: **mediacity.qa**

03. Land, spaces, utilities and network operators

3.1 Land and office spaces provided by our platforms:

To support businesses, licensing platforms offer land, office spaces and utilities to meet a variety of needs.

Qatar Financial Centre (QFC)

QFC offers tailored workspace solutions to its clients at special rates. With a range of QFC-designated locations in Doha, firms can choose office spaces that best suit their unique business requirements. As an onshore financial centre, QFC is not restricted to a single geographical area. Its strategically selected locations across Doha allow firms to operate from some of the city's most prominent business locations.

An example is the QFC Tech Circle, located on the ninth floor of QFC Tower One. It is a flexible co-working space that supports early-stage digital and fintech companies from Qatar and abroad to operate with ease and at a reduced cost. Tech start-ups benefit from access to two co-working passes, with additional guest or visitor passes available upon request for meetings. They enjoy free utilities, including power and Wi-Fi, as well as complimentary facilities such as tea, coffee and other amenities. These offerings significantly reduce operational costs, allowing start-ups to focus on growth and innovation.

Find out more here: **qfc.qa/en/operating-with-qfc/designated-office-premises**

Qatar Free Zones Authority

QFZ provides office space, warehouses and land options available at highly competitive rates.

- Land from $2.75 per m2 per year
- Offices from $29 per m2 per month
- Fitted from $34 per m2 per month
- Industrial Units from $96 per m2 per year

Find out more here: **QFZ.gov.qa/resources/faq/**

Qatar Science & Technology Park

QSTP provides an ideal environment and world-class facilities for entrepreneurs and companies to develop their technology and deliver them to regional and global markets.

Innovation Centre (IC)

The IC building provides fully furnished, ready-to-occupy offices starting at 45m2. It also houses QSTP's incubator centre that accelerates the establishment and growth of promising tech start-ups.

Tech Buildings

A collection of two-story buildings perfectly suited for medium and large companies. Spaces are available in increments of 500m2 and can be customised to suit tenants' specific needs.

Single User Buildings

Entire buildings are designed and built to meet the specific requirements of individual companies.

Incubation Centre

The QSTP Incubation Centre focuses on accelerating the establishment and growth of tech start-ups through incorporation in the QSTP Free Zone.

Find out more here: qstp.org.qa/free-zone/facilities-services/

3.2 Water and electricity:

KAHRAMAA is Qatar's sole transmission and distribution system owner and operator for water and electricity. It has successfully fulfilled its aim of providing quality and sustainable water and electricity for better living in Qatar.

Find out more here: km.qa

3.3 Network operators, internet and SIM card providers:

Qatar has two main internet and SIM card providers: Ooredoo and Vodafone. Both providers operate submarine cable landing stations in Qatar, ensuring high-speed and reliable internet connection. For more information on their services, please visit their respective websites.

Ooredoo: ooredoo.qa

Vodafone: vodafone.qa

04. Taxation and customs

4.1 Taxation

In Qatar, foreign investors can operate under two tax regimes:

1. The state regime:

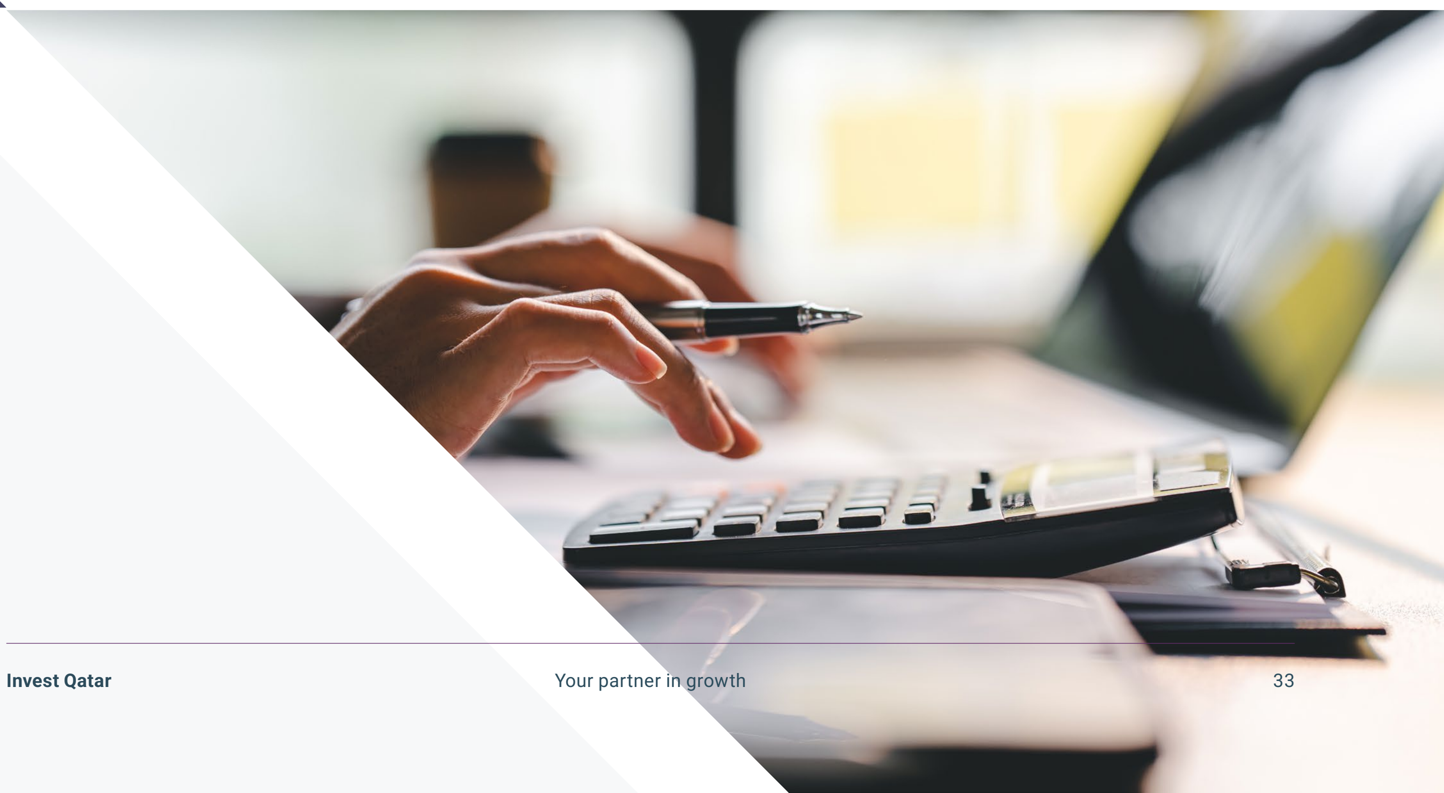
- This serves as the foundational framework for the majority of businesses conducting operations within Qatar.

Find out more here:
almeezan.qa

2. The QFC tax regime:

- This delivers clear regulations and transparent administrative processes tailored for international financial and service companies. Its key benefits include fair legislation and efficient processes, advance rulings, tax exemptions and concessions, no individual taxation and access to double taxation agreements.

Find out more here:
qfc.qa



How is company tax calculated?

A company (or individual) is required to pay tax on income that has been generated from sources in the State of Qatar during the previous tax year. This total state income includes:

- Operating any commercial activity within the state
- Executing contracts, whether fully or partially within the state
- Income from properties in the state; including income from selling stocks, company shares or individual companies that own real estate assets within the state
- Services provided by the main company, branches or related firms
- Income on loans provided by the state

Total state income, which is earned through the exploitation, exploration or production of the state's natural resources, may be subject to additional taxation under the Double Tax Agreement (DTA) with the company's country of registration. Qatar has favourable DTA's with over 70 countries, reducing the tax burden for eligible businesses and promoting international trade and investment

Tax exemptions

Tax exemptions in Qatar apply to the following:

Profits and revenues from Public Treasury Bonds, Development Bonds and Public Corporation Bonds

Dividends and other income from shares that comply with conditions set out in Law No. 24 of 2018 on Tax Income

Small handcraft businesses with three employees or less

Income of companies working in agriculture, fisheries, aerial and maritime transportation, on condition of reciprocity

Qatari legal persons residing in the state

Taxation under QFC

The Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) operates its own tax regime contained in the QFC tax regulations and rules.

The key highlights are summarised below.

Tax rate and basis:

- Locally sourced profits of the QFC entities are subject to 10% corporate income tax. Profits arising from service activities in Qatar but used outside Qatar may be excluded from the tax base as non-local source profits.
- Unregulated QFC limited liability companies with a minimum 90% Qatari ownership benefit from a 0% concessionary corporate income tax rate. No tax exemption on the profits of Qatari partners in joint ventures is available where the Qatari ownership in the entity is less than 90%.
- Accounting standards: Entities must generally draw up accounts using IFRS or other acceptable GAAP; however, they can choose their own tax year with an initial period of up to 18 months.

Find out more here: **qfc.qa/en/operating-with-qfc/tax**

Qatar's low taxation environment makes it an attractive destination for expatriates and businesses alike, fostering a favourable climate for living and conducting business.

4.2 Customs

Customs law

Qatar's customs law regulates the import and export of goods through its ports. At the same time, the GCC customs union enforces a common external tariff, unified customs laws and eliminates barriers for intra-GCC trade. The General Authority of Customs oversees compliance with these laws for all travellers and businesses.

Customs clearance

The State of Qatar's regulations must be adhered to when regarding the customs clearance of goods. All goods must be recorded on a customs declaration form and a manifest to be submitted to GAC upon arrival. Failure to comply with the customs law may result in legal consequences.

Find out more here: **customs.gov.qa**

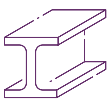
Customs clearance single window 'Al-Nadeeb'

'Al-Nadeeb' is an online portal that simplifies the customs clearance procedure for importers and clearing agents. Users can check information about tariffs and calculate duty. Registered login users, including approved trade brokers, importers and exporters, may perform some other tasks online, including accessing customs data and records, making duty payments and completing customs transactions.

Customs Duty Charges

All goods imported into the State of Qatar are subject to customs duties based on a percentage value of goods (typically 5%) or a per-unit basis. The value of goods is calculated in accordance with the regulations set out in the customs and ports law.

General Cargo:
5%



Steel:
20%

Urea and ammonia:
30%

Cigarettes, tobacco and its derivatives: 100% or QAR 1,000 per 10,000 cigarettes, whichever is higher

Exempted goods

Certain goods are exempt from customs duties in Qatar, including personal effects, household items, imports by charitable organisations and returned goods. Diplomatic and military exemptions also apply. Additionally, goods cleared for 'free zones' and duty-free shops are not subject to customs levies. Goods in transit may be accepted, without payment of duty, at designated stations.

Find out more here: **customs.gov.qa**

05. Legal services

Qatar's judicial system is based on a civil law tradition, featuring several specialised courts to ensure a comprehensive approach to legal matters. The Court of Cassation serves as the highest appellate court, primarily tasked with reviewing the proper application of legal principles rather than the merits of a case. The Court of Appeal, on the other hand, is responsible for reviewing judgments from lower courts, specifically the Court of First Instance.

Find out more here: **الرئيسية (sjc.gov.qa)**

This system includes specialised courts for commercial, criminal, family and administrative labour disputes, ensuring a comprehensive approach to legal matters. Qatar's legal framework places a strong emphasis on fairness and justice, with Islamic principles playing a significant role, particularly in personal and family law matters.

Find out more here: **الخدمات الإلكترونية للمجلس الأعلى للقضاء (sjc.gov.qa)**

Furthermore, the Qatar International Court and Dispute Resolution Centre (QICDRC) is a specialised court within the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), handling claims that fall within the QFC jurisdiction, which operates under a common law framework. The QICDRC operates as both a court and an arbitration centre, handling a variety of cases, including commercial, civil and administrative disputes.

Find out more here: **Welcome to QICDRC | QICDRC**

Qatar Investment and Trade Court is dedicated to focusing on resolving legal issues and disputes related to commercial papers, bank operations, finance and investment companies' disputes, maritime sales, electronic commerce, transport contracts, supply contracts and orders, commercial mortgage, commercial agency, bankruptcy, intellectual property, business and industry contracting, building and construction contracting, insurance, commercial companies, service contracts, publishing and media disputes. The court has a fully automated system and is distinguished by flexible procedures for settling disputes that meet all modern international standards, protect rights, enhance transparency and equal opportunities for all.

Find out more here: **TAQADI (sjc.gov.qa)**

06. Banking

Qatar Central Bank (QCB) oversees monetary policy and financial regulation in Qatar, ensuring the stability and security of the financial system. The QFC Regulatory Authority (QFCRA) regulates financial services within the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC). Qatar's banking system adheres to international standards, offering high security and stability. It ranks 1st in the Arab world and is among the top globally on the Financial Development Index.

Consumers and businesses have a wide choice of local and international banks to serve their everyday needs.

- Business owners who register their entity through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) using the single window platform can now open a bank account through single windows once they have obtained their commercial registration. Companies must ensure that they meet the bank's regulatory requirements and have the required documents prior to setting up for bank account.

Banks in Qatar offer a wide range of services, including accounts, loans, money transfers via SWIFT, credit cards, overdrafts, payment processing, safety deposit boxes, insurance and investment advice. They also provide innovative electronic banking, with extensive ATMs for utility payments, internet and mobile banking, contactless payments and various merchant electronic payment options.

Currently, 17 banks operate in Qatar, with over 200 local branches providing convenient access to banking services.

5

National banks

4

Islamic banks

8

International banks

For the list of national, foreign and Islamic banks in Qatar, please refer to qcb.gov.qa

Opening a bank account is easy. In order to simplify services to the public, MoCI in cooperation with QCB, provides the service of opening a bank account directly after issuing the commercial registration by reducing the necessary conditions and requirements.

Generally, the following documents are required for a business bank account:

- Commercial registration
- Article of associations with amendments, if applicable
- Commercial license
- Copy of Qatari IDs and passports (for non-Qataris only) of all partners and authorised signatories

Documents required for personal savings or current account:

- Original passport with a copy
- A copy of the visa page to prove the residency
- An official employment letter from the employer (or sponsor) stating the salary, signed by the employer and employee (not required for a savings account that requires a minimum balance)
- Two passport-sized photographs
- A filled-out and signed bank account application form
- Qatar ID

07. Hiring in Qatar

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) provides a digital platform to hire people with a streamlined process. Under the Qatari Labour Law, employers are encouraged to prioritise Qatari nationals during hiring in both public and private sectors. Non-Qatari workers can be employed after obtaining a work permit as per the rules and procedures prescribed by the MoL.

To facilitate residency procedures, the MOI has established Qatar Visa Centres (QVCs) in eight countries, including India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Nepal. These centres ensure a seamless process where individuals can complete biometric enrolment, medical examinations, and work contract signing in their home countries before arriving in Qatar[1]. To learn more about hiring, please check our "hiring in Qatar" guide in the last section of this report.

1 Qatar Visa Center, "Visa Center (QVC)," www.qatarvisacenters.com, acce

08. Key government entities

General Tax Authority

GTA manages tax transactions in Qatar, promoting tax awareness and compliance while ensuring governance and transparency.

Find out more here: **gta.gov.qa**

Ministry of Labour

MOL enhances the labour sector by ensuring a safe work environment, enforcing labour law and increasing national workforce participation in the private sector.

Find out more here: **mol.gov.qa**

Ministry of Interior

MOI ensures national peace and security, issues travel documents and supports expatriates relocating to Qatar.

Find out more here: **portal.moi.gov.qa**

Ministry of Public Health

MOPH examines incoming travellers and certain residents to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, aiming for a disease-free society.

Find out more here: **moph.gov.qa**

09. Costs of doing business in Qatar

Costs		Platforms		
		MOCI	QFC	QFZ
Starting a business[2]	Application	No fee required	QAR **1,800** - **[USD 500]**	QAR **300**
	Registration	QAR **500**	No fee required	QAR **6,000**
	Licensing	QAR **500**	QAR **1,800** - **[USD 500]** annually	QAR **5,000** annually
Property rental[3]	Office space	250 sqm office (QAR **13,000-20,000**)		
Utility	Electricity[4]	(1-4,000) kWh * **0.13** QAR/kWh (4,001-10,000) kWh* **0.17** QAR/kWh (10,001-9999999999) kWh* **0.22** QAR/kWh		
	Water	(1-50) m3* **6** tariff (51-999999) m3 * **8.6** tariff		
	Other[5]	**Internet** 150 Mbps = **1,099** 300 Mbps = **1,799** 600 Mbps = **1,999** 1Gbps = **2,199** **Business landline** - **150** monthly Cooling costs - One tonne of refrigeration = **0.3161** Gas (super) - **2.1**		
Taxes	Corporate tax	10%[6]		
Car registration		Private passenger cars and light vehicles cost QAR 100 annually, while taxis and limousines cost QAR 200. Private transport vehicles for goods and animals cost QAR 150. Construction and agricultural vehicles have a higher fee of QAR 2,507		
Labour	Minimum wage[8]	Minimum monthly basic salary - QAR **1,000** Food allowance - QAR **300** Housing allowance - QAR **500**		
Credit and financial	Opening a bank account[9]	Free of costs for all account types yet have a deposit requirement determined by the bank.		
Immigration costs [10]	Computer card	New - QAR **600** / Renewal - QAR **500**		
	Business visa	New (5 working days) - QAR **500** / 30-day extension - QAR **300**		
	Medical checkup	Non-professional medical checkup - Three working days - QAR **200**		
	Employee residence permit	Employee (new) One year validity (with medical checkup) - Seven working days - QAR **3,500** Employee (new) Two years validity (with medical checkup) - Seven working days - QAR **4,500** Residence permit - Employee (without medical checkup) (new) One year validity - Five working days - QAR **2,750**		

2 Costs are approximate and depend on the company structure and activity type.
For MOCI setup costs use Single Window search menu, which provides the exact costs based on the business activity: Home (sw.gov.qa) [24]
For other setting up a business costs such as (trade license, company seal) contact the licensing platforms directly
3 Rental costs are dependent on size and location hence a range is provided
4 Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation Kahrama for electricity and water costs [9]
5 Internet and business landline costs from Ooredoo [15]. Qatar Cool for cooling costs [19]
6 Taxes are taken from General Authority in Qatar and Qatar Financial Center
7 Car registration costs are taken from the Ministry of Interior
8 Government Communications Office for minimum wage [7]
9 For opening a bank account costs Qatar National Bank [20]
10 Immigration costs are provided by Qatar Financial Center, Business Acquisition Team

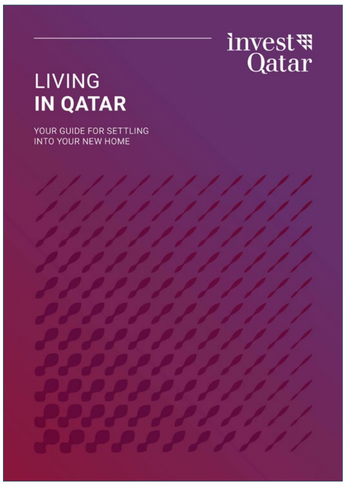
10. Conclusion

The ‘Setting Up Your Business in Qatar’ guide offers a comprehensive introduction to starting your business in Qatar for expatriates. For more information, please visit our website.

More information on Qatar

1. Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) www.moci.gov.qa
2. Investment Promotion Agency Qatar (Invest Qatar) www.invest.qa
3. Ministry of Labour (MOI) www.moi.gov.qa
4. Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) www.qfc.qa5. Startup Qatar. www.startupqatar.qa
6. Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) www.edu.gov.qa

Hiring and living in Qatar



Living in Qatar

Hiring in Qatar

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11. Appendix

1. You can view a short tutorial about the online application for registration and license with the QFC here: youtube.com/watch?v=20kUjnaTIJo&ab_channel=QatarFinancialCentreAuthority

2. You can find an overview of QFC's beneficial ownership regime here: youtu.be/wAJSTT034QQ

3. You can track the status of your application through the QFC Client Portal here: qfc.qa/en/operating-with-qfc/client-portal

HOW INVEST QATAR CAN HELP YOU

Invest Qatar works closely with you to understand your objectives, connect you with the right stakeholders and resources and support you through the investment process to ensure your long-term success in Qatar.

Our Services

- Information on the business and regulatory environment
- Information on investment opportunities
- Connections to relevant organisations in the investment ecosystem
- Support for investors, from set-up assistance to facilitation of incentives
- Introduction to strategic partners

QATAR, EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES AWAIT

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