



# Qatar Central Bank

Procedures to combat the risk of  
coronavirus covid-19 pandemic  
outbreak





Emergency  
procedures  
to combat  
the spread  
of Covid-19



Loans and  
Liabilities of  
sectors  
affected due  
to  
Procedures  
taken to  
combat the  
spread of  
Covid-19



Compliance  
with the  
payment of  
salaries to all  
employees in  
time, and  
enabling them  
to transfer their  
money without  
any delay



Exchange  
Houses  
temporary  
shutdown



"Qatar  
Mobile  
Payment  
System"  
(QMP)



Qatar  
extends  
QR3 bn  
guarantees  
to local  
banks



National  
Guarantee  
Program  
to support  
the  
Private  
Sector



20 % of  
the total  
staff  
number  
shall  
remain  
working  
from  
office



Providing  
Banking  
Services  
for  
Domestic  
Workers



## Emergency procedures to combat the spread of Covid-19



QCB issued a circular to all financial institutions in 12-3-2020 to comply with the following procedures:



Review and activate business continuity plans in anticipation of interruption to the usual business activities in every financial institution according to the instructions and guidelines issued by QCB and in accordance with any directives issued by the official authorities in the State.



Evaluate business continuity plans according to the emerging scenarios from the stages of the pandemic and the potential business risks.



Evaluate the ability to implement the scenarios established during appropriate stages to ensure that business continuity in accordance with each of scenarios in a manner that would ensures that there would not be any significant interruption to business occurring at any time.



Evaluate the availability of adequate alternative work sites to implement business continuity plans in accordance with the assumed scenarios.



Set the necessary plans on the possibility of working remotely using the appropriate electronic means in cases where the main or subsidiary sites of the institution are not able to work and raising employees' awareness in this regard.





6

Urge customers through text messages (SMS) to take advantage of electronic payment means via smart phone applications, online banking or any other relevant means to complete their banking transactions without the need to visit the institution or its branches except in cases of extreme necessity, while raising customers' awareness and urging them to use bank cards instead of cash.



7

Evaluate the adequacy of the IT infrastructure proactively and testing its ability to counter potential electronic attacks and its ability to enhance dependence on financial and banking services remotely



8

In terms of the Ministry of Public Health guidelines, provide sterilization/sanitizing and health protection requirements to all employees and customers including dealing through ATMs and POS machines.



9

All financial institutions must strictly comply with these instructions and any other instructions issued in writing or through media by QCB, the Ministry of Public Health, or any other official concerned authorities in Qatar.





## Loans and Liabilities of sectors affected due to Procedures taken to combat the spread of Covid-19

QCB issued a circular to all banks in 22-3-2020 to comply with the following :

1 Postpone the repayment of loan installments due and interest/returns on those loans for the affected sectors, for a period of 6 months from 16/3/2020 for desiring customers with low interest/return and without charging any commissions or delayed fees and without any adverse impact on their credit rating.

2 A repurchase window (Repo) with an amount of fifty billion Qatari riyals, at a zero interest rate, is allocated for the purposes of providing liquidity to banks at a zero cost that enables them to commit to reducing the interest / return rate on the customers of the affected sectors and to those who benefit from the decision to postpone repayment and sanctioning new loans without fees or commissions to clients of the affected sectors with an interest / interest rate not exceeding 1.5%, provided that these loans are repriced after the end of a period of 6 months as from 16/3/2020 or the end of the repo facilities mentioned in this item or by a notice from Qatar Central Bank, whichever being announced first.

3 Cancellation of POS fees and ATM withdrawal fees





Compliance with the payment of salaries to all employees in time, and enabling them to transfer their money without any delay



QCB issued a circular to all banks and exchange houses in 24-3-2020 to comply with the following:



Set work plans to work remotely through the electronic services and KIOSKs.

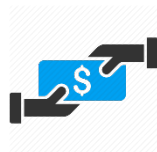
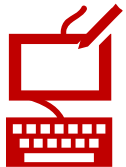


Cancel all fees and commissions charged for using payment systems between banks and exchange houses in Qatar.



Communicate with customers of commercial companies (whether registered or not under the Wages protection system WPS) and ask them, if they desire, to make lists of names of their staff desiring to transfer money to their countries, including the details of each transfer. These companies shall transfer the salary amount on behalf of their staff. The sender's name during the transfer must be the same name of the employee requesting for transfer not the name of the company where he works. Banks and exchange houses may not conduct any transfer unless they receive the lists of names signed by the company's owner.





4 Obtain QCB non-objection on E-KYC system before registering customers for the first time.

5 Provide money transfer service through ATM machines.

6 Provide money transfer service through applications on mobile phones for all customers regardless to the amount of the salary.

7 Promptly announce the available electronic services provided by the financial institutions in different language and through all possible means of information so as to reach all customers.

8 No fees or commissions shall be charged on external transfers while the fees and commissions charged by the outside correspondent shall be collected if any, otherwise, no fees or commissions shall be collected from customers on money transfer transactions.

## Exchange Houses temporary shutdown

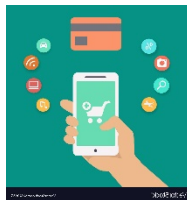
QCB issued a circular to all exchange houses in 25-3-2020 to comply with the following :

All exchange houses and their branches operating in Qatar shall be temporarily shutdown as from 26-3-2020 until further notification.



Money transfer service on electronic platforms shall be provided.

Plans to work remotely using electronic means shall be implemented.



Electronic services shall be launched and communicated in different languages so as to reach all customers.







## "Qatar Mobile Payment System" (QMP)

QCB has launched the "Qatar Mobile Payment System" (QMP), which provides :

a new and safe method for immediate electronic payment, after completing the infrastructure and all the requirements of the central system for electronic payment at the State level, according to international best practices in the field of mobile payment services.



To make payments easily and quickly, QCB has issued unified specifications and standards for the QR code that enables users to make payments by scanning the response code (QR Code) through the mobile phone at points of sale and public transportation.

The system aims to:



Enable the user to use the electronic wallet on his or her mobile phone to carry out electronic payments from one person to another and pay the purchase price.



Enable conducting withdrawals and cash feeds for electronic wallets in an instant, round the clock (24 hours a day), seven days a week.



Enable the opening of electronic wallets for all users alike, which contributes to enhancing financial inclusion in the State.





## Qatar extends QR3 bn guarantees to local banks



Upon the directives of the Amir HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to support the economic and financial sector within the framework of the precautionary measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), and to support and provide financial and economic incentives worth QR75 billion for the private sector,

QR 3 bn guarantees have been allocated to local banks .



The guarantees were in line with the support package for granting soft loans without commissions or fees for the affected companies to support salaries and rents through guarantees issued by Qatar Development Bank (QDB) to banks operating in the State of Qatar



**بناءً على توجيهات صاحب السمو لدعم القطاع الاقتصادي والمالي**

**رئيس الوزراء يوجه بتخصيص 3 مليارات ريال ضمانات للبنوك المحلية**

**قروض ميسرة وبدون عمولات أو رسوم للشركات المتضررة**

**دعم الرواتب والإيجارات عبر ضمانات يصدرها بنك قطر للتنمية**

**مصرف قطر المركزي وقطر للتنمية سيحددان المعايير والآليات اللازمة للتنفيذ**

المتضررة لدعم الرواتب والإيجارات عبر ضمانات يصدرها بنك قطر للتنمية للبنوك العاملة في الدولة وسيسدد مصرف قطر المركزي بالتعاون مع بنك قطر للتنمية المعايير والآليات اللازمة للتنفيذ.

ضمانات للبنوك المحلية بما قيمته 3 مليارات ريال قطري. وأوضح مصرف قطر المركزي في بيان له، أن مبلغ الـ 3 مليارات ريال يأتي ضمن حزمة الدعم لمنح قروض ميسرة وبدون عمولات أو رسوم للشركات

(كوفيد-19)، وتوجيه سموه بدعم وتقديم محفزات مالية واقتصادية بمبلغ 75 مليار ريال قطري للقطاع الخاص، وجه معالي الشيخ خالد بن خليفة بن عبدالعزيز آل ثاني رئيس مجلس الوزراء وزير الداخلية بتخصيص

الوحدة - قننا: بناءً على توجيهات حضرة صاحب السمو الشيخ تميم بن حمد آل ثاني أمير البلاد المفدى «حفظه الله ورعاه» بدعم القطاع الاقتصادي والمالي في إطار الإجراءات الاحترازية لمكافحة انتشار فيروس كورونا

**بناءً على توجيهات حضرة صاحب السمو**

**3 مليارات ريال ضمانات للبنوك**

رئيس الوزراء يوجه بتخصيص المبلغ كضمانات للبنوك المحلية

المبلغ ضمن حزمة الدعم لمنح قروض ميسرة وبدون عمولات أو رسوم للشركات المتضررة.

بستهدف دعم الرواتب والإيجارات عبر ضمانات يصدرها بنك قطر للتنمية

مصرف قطر المركزي بالتعاون مع بنك قطر للتنمية سيحدد المعايير والآليات اللازمة للتنفيذ.

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## National Guarantee Program to support the Private Sector

Referring to the directives of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of The State of Qatar, "may God protect him", with regard to circular [No. MH / 5/2020], and within the framework of the efforts taken by the state to confront the economic effects of the emerging Covid-19 virus; it has been decided to launch a national guarantee program to respond to the repercussions of the emerging corona virus "Covid-19" to support private sector companies affected by the current conditions to enable them to obtain the necessary and immediate finance needed to pay the salaries to their employees and pay rents if any. The following are the details of the program:

**1** The companies that benefit from the program: The companies that are wholly owned by the private sector and affected economically due to the new Corona virus as defined by Qatar Development Bank, with the exception of the contracting, construction and real estate companies.

**2** The concerned banks: These are the conventional and Islamic banks operating in Qatar that hold the account for WPS the Wage Protection System for beneficiary companies

## COVID-19 NATIONAL RESPONSE GUARANTEES PROGRAM

Financing WPS Staff Payroll & Rental Fees





The concerned banks must accept the finance applications for finance submitted to them by the beneficiary companies and the benefits shall be granted according to the following conditions and guarantees:

The maximum funding limit for a single company and its group of subsidiaries is QR 7.5 million, payable over three months, with a maximum of QR 2.5 million per month.



Providing a guarantee of 100% of the total financing by the Qatar Development Bank on behalf of the Government of Qatar without the relevant banks bearing any fees or commissions.

The finance is to be paid over a maximum of three years, starting from the last installment of finance, so that the first year will be a grace period.



Banks calculate interest / return on balance of the finance as follows:

At a rate not exceeding 1.5% for the first half six months (the grace period) to be paid by Qatar Development Bank and borne by the government of the State of Qatar.



At a rate not exceeding (1% + QCB Lending Rate) from which the Qatar Development Bank pays a value of 1.5% and is borne by the government of the State of Qatar and any excess over 1.5% shall be paid by the customer during the second half of the first year (grace period).

A rate not exceeding (2% + QCB Lending Rate) borne by the customer and paid with the monthly installments during the remaining two years shall be without the support of the government of the State of Qatar.



## Managing the National Guarantee Program:

Qatar Development Bank will manage the National Guarantee Program to support the private sector and issue the related guidance in this regard.



## 20 % of the total staff number shall remain working from office

As per the cabinet's decision related to the latest developments on combating the spread of COVID-19 virus, and to continue the previous decisions and precautionary procedures and actions taken towards the same end, all financial institutions operating in Qatar shall comply with the following:

20 % of the total staff number shall remain working from office while 80% shall work remotely from their homes.

Working time for the staff shall be 6 hours starting at 7:00 am until 1:00 pm, and working hours for QCB payment systems shall be reduced to start at 7:00 am till 12:30 pm.





3

Meetings shall be held remotely via IT devices and if necessary no more than five persons maximum in a meeting shall be allowed.

4

Call center shall continue working round the clock 24 hours per day

5

Back-offices shall work on demand

6

For opening branches in the afternoon time, it shall be determined upon the bank's decision and notification of QCB provided that safety procedures are taken.



## Providing Banking Services for Domestic Workers

Within QCB's initiative to provide banking services to all segments of society, including domestic workers, with the aim of promoting the principle of financial inclusion in the country and facilitating access to their wages, it was decided that all banks should provide banking services to the domestic workers according to the following:

1. Allowing the employers to issue a rechargeable Payroll card in the name of the domestic worker through Internet banking and mobile applications.

2. Allow the cardholder to make payments on points of sale (P.O.S), withdraw from ATMs, make transfers and pay expenses through online banking and mobile applications, and also allow the card balance to be credited by transferring from the employer's bank account.



3

No fees or charges shall be charged for issuing the card to the domestic worker.

4

The card is issued without the requirement of minimum balance. The original Qatari ID, passport and mobile phone number of the domestic worker must be reviewed.

5

The card shall be sent to the domestic worker by post with a signed undertaking from the employer to receive the card and undertaking to deliver it to the domestic worker. The card will be activated after a phone call made by the domestic worker and confirm that he received the card.

6

Ensuring that the employer cancels the card immediately after the contract between the employer and the domestic worker expires, and the remaining balance in the card is settled in favor of the worker.



7

Providing the necessary protection to the cards from frauds.

8

All transactions conducted through the payroll card issued to domestic workers must be through NAPS the national network.

9

Applying the principle of financial literacy by providing the necessary guidance and spreading awareness to the domestic workers by several means and languages, especially with regard to how to use electronic banking services and the awareness necessary to reduce card frauds.

10

Banks are required to comply with the instructions of the Qatar Central Bank issued to banks until September 2013 and any the subsequent instructions thereof, instructions of anti-money laundering and terrorist financing, and instructions of modern technology risks and taking into account the requirements of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs issued in this regard.

