

MultaQa Qatar 2008

**A legal view of recent trends and
developments in the GGC market**

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An overview of recent trends and developments

- **Financial Centre developments**
- **Other GCC regulatory developments**
- **Some trends**
- **Some challenges**

Financial Centre developments

■ QFC

- Retail business
- Substantial amendments to COND Rulebook
- Client classification procedures and controls
- Treating the customer fairly
- Increase in front-end paperwork and administration
- Consumer dispute resolution mechanism
- Pre-cursor to the integrated regulator?

■ DIFC

- Set up as a 'wholesale' centre
- Consultation Paper 52 (CP52): inspired by MiFID
- Client classification
 - Previous 'High net worth' (\$1m) with 'Professional' (\$500k) and Retail
- Insurance: replaces 'commercial' and 'individual' customers
- Potential retail dispute resolution scheme mooted

Other GCC developments

■ Saudi Arabia

- Ongoing authorisation of insurance companies and IPOs
- Licensing of branches?
- Exit date for unlicensed firms – deadline 13 March 2008
- Authorisation of intermediaries
 - Distinction between ‘registered’ and ‘approved’

■ Oman

- April 2007: Investment of assets of insurance companies
 - 75% Oman-based
- October 2007: Licensing insurance business
 - Includes foreign branches

■ UAE

- August 2007: New Insurance Law effective
- No sign of Insurance Commission as yet!

Some trends ...

- **Financial centres: the move to retail**
 - QFC's vision
 - DIFC's aspiration
- **GCC regulatory reforms**
 - Mixed effectiveness: UAE remains 'stillborn'
- **Growing international interest**
 - Media, conferences, new entrants
- **'Home-grown' players emerging and recapitalising**
 - QICI, Solidarity, Saudi market, others in the pipeline
- **Captives**
 - DIFC (4 licenses being processed), QFC (Heritage)

Some challenges ...

■ Conflict of laws

- QFC Tribunal v Qatar courts
- DIFC Court v UAE courts
- LCIA and other arbitration centres

■ Conflict of regimes

- Qatar's 'integrated regulator'
- DIFC and UAE regulator

■ Regional harmonisation

- Passporting rights
- A level playing field

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