



# Bahrain for financial support services

## Give your support business the edge in the Middle East's financial capital

Bahrain enables you to take advantage of the increasing importance of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) markets among financial institutions.

Many organisations are adopting a flexible approach, with back- and mid-office support often located in a different location to their front office function.

### Bahrain's financial support services

- 93 Insurance ancillary providers
- 19 Currency exchange services
- 8 Financing companies
- 6 Card processing service providers
- 6 Payment service providers
- 3 Fund administrators
- 3 Trust service providers
- 2 Micro-finance institutions

## A highly-skilled workforce

Bahrain's commitment to education and gender equality provides unrivalled availability, with the region's most skilled local workforce, which is growing at 3% a year.

Bahrainis are highly motivated: around 78% of school leavers go on to gain a university degree and many train at specialist bodies such as the Bahrain Institute for Banking and Finance.

## Multilingual, multicultural

The diversity of Bahrain's society offers significant advantages. Bahrainis share Arabic accents and cultural similarities with their GCC neighbours, making conversation and communication easy.

Our community is truly cosmopolitan; the use of English is widespread, enabling you to pursue and service a back-office support business in English-speaking markets.

In addition, since expatriates from many countries represent 58% of Bahrain's population, we offer capability in Hindu, Farsi and Urdu among others.

## Easy access to the region's institutions

From Bahrain you will be able to service financial institutions in centres such as Dubai, Doha, Abu Dhabi, and especially Saudi Arabia, which is the Gulf's largest economy with a GDP of USD 653 billion and 3.4% growth.

Our strategic location in the heart of the Gulf puts you within an hour's reach of major cities from Bahrain International Airport. By road, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia is a mere half-hour drive across the King Fahd Causeway.

Bahrain also offers advanced networked communications. Not only are we globally connected by five international high-bandwidth fibre optic undersea cables; our highly liberalised and advanced ICT infrastructure enables you to collaborate seamlessly across company and customer sites. The quality of Bahrain's networking capability is well recognised, ranking 29<sup>th</sup> globally for network readiness and 1<sup>st</sup> for mobile coverage<sup>1</sup>.

## ❖ Full range of support opportunities

Support services within the financial sector have contributed strongly to Bahrain's success as a leading regional financial services centre. The Kingdom hosts the region's highest concentration of licensed financial institutions and benefits from the skills of more than 160 ancillary service providers and specialised licensees.

Insurance offers particular opportunities, as it is in constant need of brokers, actuaries, insurance consultants and loss adjusters.

With the sector's continued growth, there is scope for further potential in areas as diverse as payment services, claims processing, third-party administration, fund administration, settlement and custody.

## ❖ Free economy, cost-effective operation

Bahrain's economic freedom has led us to be exceptionally pro-business. For support functions like yours, this means low operating costs and minimal taxes. Total operating costs are among the region's lowest – at around 30% less than neighbouring hubs – including employment and real estate costs.

Most business activities benefit from 100% foreign ownership, and you can fully repatriate capital, profits and dividends. Moreover, there is no income tax or capital gains tax for you or your company.

## ❖ Robust regulation

Our rigour ensures that you operate in a stable, secure environment. Bahrain's single regulator, the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) is the region's mostly highly regarded. It continuously enhances Bahrain's mature, proven regulatory framework and leads efforts towards regional standardisation. The CBB has a detailed rulebook relating to financial support services.

## ❖ You are well supported, too

Bahrain makes it quick and straightforward to set up and operate. As well as guidance from the Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB), other government agencies are here to help. Bahrain's Labour Fund, Tamkeen, for example, focuses on development of the private sector and enhancing the employability of Bahrainis. It does this through enterprise solutions – marketing and IT infrastructure support, plus equipment and salary subsidies – and through funding development and training programmes for individuals. Recently, Tamkeen has enabled several entities, including Citi and Gulf Air, to open contact centres in Bahrain.

### Who's here

**Cigna SAICO Benefit Services:** Provides world-class health insurance administration services

**BENEFIT:** Operates Bahrain's national electronic network for financial transactions

**Arab Financial Services (AFS):** Offers PCI-compliant card payments and outsourced consumer finance

**NEC Payments:** Provides secure transactions across different devices and platforms including payment cards, ATMs, mobile and online banking

**Invita:** Provides multilingual contact centre services

**Payment International Enterprise:** A leading specialist in pre-paid, mobile and NFC solutions in Bahrain

**Sadad:** Facilitates and streamlines a wide range of payment transactions within Bahrain

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### CONTACT US

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