

# **New GCC rules for employers, Part 5 – minding your Bs and Qs (Bahrain & Qatar)**

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This is the last in our short series on sweeping changes to employment and immigration rules due in the GCC in 2023.

## **Bahrain**

### **Digitalisation of the Residence Permit**

- In April 2022, The Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA) launched a new e-service, which issues digital residence permits through the Kingdom of Bahrain's National Portal. The new e-service replaced the process of residence permits being evidenced through a printed residence permit sticker in their passport. This change has formed part of Bahrain's digital transformation of immigration processes, aligning with other GCC countries such as the UAE that have sought to digitise elements of the immigration process, such as the removal of physical passport stamping.

## **Qatar**

### **New Social Insurance Law**

- On January 3, 2023, the Qatar Law No. 1 of 2022 (the Social Insurance Law) came into effect, which governs pensions and retirement.
- Currently, social security provisions apply to Qatari citizens and some GCC nationals employed by ministries, public institutions, agencies, joint stock companies and others as determined by the Council of Ministers at the General Retirement and Social Insurance Authority (GRSIA). The Social Insurance Law, however, broadens the scope of the social security rules, which will extend to employers in the private sector that hire one or more Qatari citizens. The new provisions will also apply to employers in the private sector, whether the employer is established through the jurisdiction of the State of Qatar or in one of the relevant

non-state jurisdictions (e.g. the Qatar Financial Center).

- We are expecting implementing regulations for the Social Insurance Law that will clarify various aspects of the law; however, we understand the GRSIA is already accepting employer applications for registration.
- We recommend employers undertake the following actions:
  - seek confirmation of whether their employees are eligible for social security and, if so, register them via the GRSIA accordingly;
  - review and identify employment contracts and any corresponding policies that may apply to eligible employees, and assess whether changes need to be implemented to reflect any arrangements under the Social Insurance Law (any such changes should form part of an individual consultation process with employees to seek their respective consent); and
  - review also their accounting and payroll functions to ensure there is a process in place and sufficient budget to facilitate employer contribution costs.

[View New GCC rules for employers Part 1 here.](#)

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