

Title:	Terms of Reference for the Group Audit Committee of the Board (ACB)
Approved by:	Board of Directors
Date of Approval	12 December 2021
Date of Last Review	14 October 2024
Date of Next Review	every 3 years upon election of new Board or earlier for regulatory or strategic changes

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#### **SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

#### **PURPOSE**

The Audit Committee ("ACB" or "Committee") is a committee of the Board of Directors of MAR Group for the purpose of reviewing and monitoring financial reporting, internal control systems, audit responsibilities and internal and external audit matters. The purpose of these terms of reference ("TORs") is to govern the functioning of the Committee and articulate its roles and responsibilities.

### **SCOPE**

These TORs are binding for the Group and its employees.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

Word/Term	Definition	
MAR/Bank	Masraf Al Rayan Q.P.S.C	
Group	MAR and its subsidiaries inside and outside Qatar	
AOA	Articles of Association	
AGA/EGA	Annual General Assembly/Extraordinary General Assembly of	
	Shareholders	
Board	Board of Directors of Group	
Board-subcommittees	Any committee formed by the Board	
EXCOB	Executive Committee of the Board	
CRC	Compliance and Risk Committee of the Board	
ACB	Group Audit Committee of the Board	
CGNRC	Corporate Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee of the Broad	
GM, GIA	General Manager, Group Internal Audit	
EXCOM	The Group Executive Committee of the Management	
GRC	Group Risk Committee of the Management	
GSIC	Group Special Investigations Committee of the Management	
CIC	Credit and Investment Committee of the Management	
GALCCO	Group Assets, Liabilities and Capital Committee of the Management	
GSSC	Group Security Steering Committee of the Management	
GICTSC	Group Information, Communication and Technology Steering Committee	
	of the Management	
GCEO	Group Chief Executive Officer	
GCBO	Group Chief Business Officer	
GCFO	Group Chief Finance Officer	
GCOO	Group Chief Operating Officer	
GCRO	Group Chief Risk Officer	
GHTFI	Group Head of Treasury and Financial Institutions	
GCHRO	Group Chief Human Resources Officer	
GHCO	Group Head of Compliance and AML Officer	
CG	Corporate Governance	
QCB	Qatar Central Bank	
QFMA	Qatar Financial Market Authority	
QSE	Qatar Stock Exchange	



GM	General Manager		
SEO	Senior Executive Officer		
CCL	Qatari Commercial Companies Law No. 11 of 2015 amended by law No (8) of 2021, as amended form time to time		
TORs	Terms of Reference		
DOA	Delegation of Authority Matrix and Policy approved by the Board		
CS	Company Secretary		
NED	Non-Executive Director/Board member		
IND	Independent Director/Board member		
SSB	Sharia Supervisory Board		

### **LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

These TORs are in accordance with the Corporate Governance provisions stipulated under QCB Instructions to Banks, QFMA Corporate Governance Code, CCL and international Corporate Governance standards and practices applicable on banks and shareholding companies.



# **SECTION 2 – TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1.	CONSTITUTION AND MEETINGS		
1.1	Formed by: Board of Directors of the Group		
1.2	Reporting line: The Committee Chairperson shall report directly to the Board.		
1.3	<b>Members:</b> ACB shall comprise three members from the Board of Directors. The Chairperson of the Committee must be an Independent Director and shall be nominated by the Chairman of the Board. Majority of members must be Independent and Non-Executive Directors. (Hereinafter individually referred to as a "Member" and collectively as "Members").		
	The Chairman of the Board shall not be a member of the Committee. Members of the Committee shall not be member of any other Board sub-committee. All members should be financially literate at their time of appointment and at least one Member, preferably the Chairperson, should have significant, recent and relevant financial experience. In all cases, no person who works for or had worked for the external auditors of the company during the last two years, may be member of the Committee.		
	Appointments to the Committee shall be for the duration of the directorship term of the members unless it is otherwise decided by the Board, provided the Member remains independent and/or non-executive director during such term.		
1.4	Delegations: In the absence of any Member, he/she may appoint another Member as his/her delegate. This must be communicated in writing to the Secretary prior to meetings to be recognized by the Chairperson. An appointed delegate representing an absent Member shall have a voting right equivalent to such absent Member unless such absent Member decides otherwise in writing to the Secretary.		
1.5	Quorum: At each meeting, 2 Members present (of which at least must be the Chairperson or his/her appointed delegate) shall form a quorum. Attendance may be in person or by any other electronic communication means. A Member may also attend by written proxy, provided, however, that proxy is issued only to an attending Member and that no Member shall deputize for more than one Member. In such case, the deputy shall have two votes and in case of equal division of votes, the Chairperson shall cast the deciding vote. Proxies shall be duly recorded in the minutes and maintained in the Company Secretary files.		
1.6	Decision Making (IN MEETINGS ONLY NOT IN RESOLUTIONS BY CIRCULATION): Majority of Quorum. In case of equal votes, the Chairperson or his/her appointed delegate shall have a casting vote. In cases where only two Members are present, decisions shall be made unanimously. In the event where there is any conflict of interest between the Committee's recommendations and the Board's resolutions, including the refusal of the Board to adopt the Committee's recommendation on the external auditor, the Board should include in the annual Corporate Governance Report a comprehensive statement clarifying the recommendations and the reason(s) for not observing such recommendation.		



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1.7	Secretary: Company Secretary or his/her delegate.
1.8	Frequency of Meetings: Once every two months with at least 6 meetings a year. Additional meetings may be called, as and when required by the Chairperson, any Member, Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Board, any Board member, GCEO, the GM-GIA, GCRO, GCFO, Group Legal Counsel, Group Head of Compliance and AML, Members of SSB, person in charge of Corporate Governance and the External Auditor.
1.9	<b>Notice of Meetings:</b> Meetings of the Committee shall be summoned by the Company Secretary or his/her delegates at the request of any of its Members or at the request of external or internal auditors, or at the request of other persons stated in paragraph 1.8 if they consider it necessary. Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the form of meeting (physical or electronic/virtual), venue (for physical meetings), contact details (for virtual/electronic meetings via any platform), time and date together with an agenda of items to be discussed shall be forwarded to each Member and any other person required to attend, no later than five working days before the date of the meeting. Supporting papers/pack shall be sent to Members and to other attendees as appropriate, at the same time. Notices and packs may be sent by e-mail, fascimile or post mail.
1.10	Permenant Attendees (without voting rights):  - GCEO - GCFO - GM, GIA - External Auditors  Ad Hoc Attendees (as and when required and without voting rights): - Any other person from inside or outside the Bank by invitation from any Member of the Committee. This must be communicated in writing to the Secretary prior to meetings to be recognized by the Chairperson.
1.11	Minutes: The Secretary shall minute the proceedings and resolutions of all meetings of the Committee including a summary of the discussions, the decisions taken and the information on which the decision was based, recording the date and names of those present or in attendance in person or by proxy as well as the absentees. Attendance via teleconference or telephone or any other modern communication tool that allows a member to efficiently participate in the meeting is permissible. Non-physical attendance shall be explicitly recorded in the Minutes. Dissenting opinions of ACB members shall be recorded in the minutes. The Secretary shall ascertain, at the beginning of each meeting, the existence of any conflicts of interest and minute them accordingly. A conflicted Member may not deliberate or vote on an agenda item to which he/she is conflicted. The Minutes of a meeting will be circulated via e-mail or facsimile transmission for the members' review and shall be signed jointly by the Chairperson, the Secretary and all Committee's members attending that meeting at the next meeting of the Committee. Extract of minutes, copies of resolutions or minutes of resolutions shall be valid if signed solely by the Chairperson, a Member or the Secretary. The Minutes of the meeting or summary of main resolutions passed by the Committee shall be reported to the Board following each meeting of the Committee by the Chairperson or the Company Secretary. The Minutes or summary of main resolutions passed by the Committee shall be included in the agenda of the first meeting of the main Board immediately following the Committee meeting, whether for information of or formal endorsement by the Board of the resolutions passed by the Committee.
1.12	<b>Resolutions by Circulation:</b> Resolutions by circulation are those decisions passed by the Committee when no meeting is taking place. In order for a resolution by circulation to be valid, it shall satisfy the below conditions as a minimum requirement:



- a) It shall be triggered in emergency cases only i.e. when a decision needs to be made within 48 hours or for any other reasonable justifications. In no event whatsoever the Committee is permitted to pass resolutions by circulation of more than 10% of its overall activity during a year. Any Member of the Committee to which a request is sent for resolution by circulation may call the Committee for a meeting to discuss the concerned request. In this event, the request must be considered on hold and the Secretary is obliged to call the Committee for a meeting to resolve on the request sent by circulation;
- b) It requires unanimity of the Members i.e. the request sent for a resolution by circulation <u>must</u> be approved by <u>ALL</u> Members of the Committee. If for any reason whatsoever a Member remains silent, declines or refuses to sign a resolution by circulation, the request must be considered on hold and the Secretary is obliged to call the Committee for a meeting to resolve on the request sent by circulation;

A resolution by circulation may be passed by one or more of the following means:

- 1. By email circulation: in this event, the Secretary shall (i) send a request for approval to ALL Members of the Committee including sufficient supporting documents that ensure the Member takes an informed decision; (ii) minute the resolutions of the Members- such minutes may take the same form of the minutes of meeting provided that it clearly states that the resolution was passed by email circulation (iii) enclose to the minutes such supporting documents circulated in the email together with the approval emails received from the Members (iv) maintain the same in the secretary files; and/or
- By circulation of a written resolution in one copy to all the Members of the Committee or by drafting the resolution and circulating more than one copy so that all of the signatures of the Members of the Committee are collected on all or some of these copies which are compiled together and deemed to be one copy signed by all the Members of the Committee;

Any resolution passed by the Committee through any of the means from (1) to (2) above shall be (i) deemed to be valid as if it had been taken in a meeting of the Committee duly held; (ii) received from all Members of the Committee in any writing form (including emails) in order to be effective; (iv) shall be deemed effective starting from the date of last approval received from a Member and (iii) reported to the earliest meeting of the Committee for endorsement and to be included in the official minutes.

The Secretary shall communicate any resolution passed by circulation by the Committee to concerned stakeholders, as and when necessary. For the purpose of such communication, the Secretary or his/her delegate may (i) communicate such resolution through a simple briefing email to the concerned stakeholder; and/or (ii) provide a copy of the minutes of resolution/extract of minutes to the concerned stakeholder.

- **Advice:** ACB may seek appropriate independent professional advice at MAR expenses as and when it considers it necessary.
- **Training:** The Members will be given induction and continuing training, which should cover, among other things, the role of internal and external audit.
- **Board Meeting Attendance**: The Chairperson, or in his/her absence, his/her delegated deputy, must attend the Board Meeting at which the financial statements are approved.
- **AGA Attendance:** The Chairperson, or in his/her absence, his/her delegated deputy, must attend the AGA prepared to respond to any shareholder questions on the Committee's activities.



1.17	<b>Authority</b> : The Committee is authorized to seek any information it requires from any employee of the Group in order to perform its duties and to call any employee to be		
	questioned at a meeting of the Committee as and when required.		
2.0	RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES		
2.1	ACB is authorized by the Board to:		
	Financial Reporting		
	Oversee and review the accuracy and validity of the annual, semi-annual and		
	quarterly financial statements of the Group and recommend for the approval to the Board;		
	2. Monitor integrity of the financial statements, preliminary results announcements and		
	any other formal announcement relating to financial performance;		
	<ol> <li>Provide opinion on significant changes to financial policies, financial reporting issues, interpretation of financial standards and any other matters brought for its consideration;</li> </ol>		
	4. Review significant financial returns to regulators and any financial information		
	contained in certain other documents, such as announcements of a price sensitive nature prior to submission or publication.		
	5. Review and challenge, where necessary:		
	The consistency of, and any changes to, accounting policies both on a year on year		
	basis and across the Group;		
	<ul> <li>The methods used to account for significant or unusual transactions where different approaches are possible;</li> </ul>		
	Whether the Bank has followed appropriate accounting standards and made		
	appropriate estimates and judgments, taking into account the views of the external auditor;		
	<ul> <li>The clarity of disclosure in the Bank's financial reports and the context in which statements are made;</li> </ul>		
	All material information presented with the financial statements, such as the		
	operating and financial review and the corporate governance statement (insofar as it relates to the audit); and		
	<ol><li>Receive reports from subsidiary audit committees in accordance with the Group policies;</li></ol>		
	<ol><li>Consider, review and follow up on External Auditor's reports and notes on the Group financial statements;</li></ol>		
	8. Approve policies and charters related to accounting and finance.		
	Internal Control		
	<ol><li>Ensure that Management has developed and following an adequate internal Control system.</li></ol>		
	10. Discuss internal control systems with the management and ensure that the		
	management performs its duties towards the development of an adequate and		
	effective internal control system;  11. Understand the controls and processes implemented by management to ensure that		
	the financial statements derived from the underlying financial systems, comply with		
	the relevant standards and requirements, and are subject to appropriate		
	management review;		
	12. Evaluate the overall effectiveness governance, risk management frameworks and		
	internal control and consider whether recommendations made by the internal and		
	external auditors have been implemented by management;		
	13. Consider how management is held to account for the security of computer systems and applications and other emerging technology risks including cybersecurity, and		
	the contingency plans for processing financial information in the event of a system		



- breakdown or to protect against computer fraud or misuse;
- 14. Examine investigation results related to the internal control issues assigned by the Board or executed by the committee under the approval of the Board.
- 15. Enquire of the GCEO, and any other member of the senior management as to the existence of any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the group's systems and controls that may adversely affect the operation of the Group;
- 16. Review and approve Internal Control over Financial Reporting (ICOFR) policy and procedures and recommend the annual ICFR report for Board approval
- 17. Review External Auditor's management letter and management's response to the auditor's findings and recommendations;
- 18. Receive QCB Inspectors' Report, review the remarks and violations and ensure the implementation of adequate mitigation actions. Ensure a documented response is prepared by senior management and sent to QCB on time;
- 19. Understand financial reporting risks that may be threats to the Group and periodically assess if management is adequately managing such risks;
- 20. Review statements of internal control systems to be included in the Group's annual report prior to endorsement by the Board and the external auditors;
- 21. Ensure that a whistleblowing system is being adopted and review the Group's arrangements for its employees to raise concerns, in confidence, about possible wrongdoing in financial reporting or other matters;
- 22. Ensure that whistle blowing process is regularly communicated and well understood within the Group and that such process allows proportionate and independent investigation of such matters and appropriate follow-up action, all in accordance with the Group Whistle-blowing Policy.
- 23. Ensure that Senior Management establishes system of controls and regularly review rules and standards to minimize risks resulting from conducting transactions with the related parties and avoid conflict of interests or abusive related party transactions.
- 24. Ensure that controls related to environmental and other climate-related financial risks, and social responsibility are developed based on impact assessment on the bank's activities and related business plans;
- 25. Ensure coordination with Board Risk and Compliance Committee with regards to assessment of risk management and internal control systems.

#### **Internal Audit**

- 26. Approve the appointment and removal of the General Manager-Group Internal Audit function; subject to QCB prior approval of the appointment;
- 27. Consider and approve the remit of the internal audit function and ensure it has adequate resources to enable it to perform its function effectively and in accordance with the relevant professional standards;
- 28. Ensure that the internal audit function complies with ethical and other professional standards as may be required by local regulations and professional governing bodies while conducting their duties and responsibilities;
- 29. Discuss impairments to objectivity that may be facing IA.
- 30. Ensure fairness and make independent assessment of the performance, remuneration and bonus of the GM-GIA and the audit department;
- 31. Discuss, approve and monitor the following:
  - Annual internal audit plan and any subsequent amendments based on the Risk Assessment.
  - o The Internal Audit strategy,
  - Group Audit Methodologies,
  - o Internal Audit Budgets and resources plan,
  - o Internal Audit Training Plan,
  - o Internal Audit Succession Plan and
  - o Annual Objectives for GMGIA and his team
  - o GMGIA Job description evidence that the board evaluated the qualifications and



- competencies required for the role.
- External Quality Assessment for GIA
- IA non-audit services (if any)
- 32. Ensure the internal audit function is not subject to undue influence and check with the GM-GIA whether any difficulties were encountered in exercising any of the functional duties and responsibilities, or any restrictions on the scope of activities or access to requested information, and disagreement with management on any significant issue;
- 33. Review promptly all reports on the Bank from the internal auditors;
- 34. Review and monitor management's responsiveness to the findings and recommendations of the internal auditors;
- 35. Meet the GM-GIA, at least once a year, without management being present, to discuss management's remit and any issues arising from the internal audits carried out; Holding such meetings is considered a leading governance practice. Such meetings often occur as a private or closed session following a normally scheduled Committee meeting.
- 36. Ensure the GM-GIA has direct access to the Chairperson of the Committee and the Committee members through the Company Secretary;
- 37. Monitor and review the effectiveness of the Group's internal audit function in the context of the Group's overall risk management system;
- 38. Give due consideration to laws and regulations applicable Group wide and ensure these are covered within the internal audit programs;
- 39. Oversee any investigation of activities which are within its terms of reference and act as a court of the last resort;
- 40. Approve policies and charters related to internal audit and internal control

#### **External Audit**

- 41. Consider and make recommendations to the Board, to be put to shareholders for approval at the Annual General Assembly, in relation to the appointment, reappointment and removal of external auditor; subject to QCB prior approval;
- 42. Oversee the selection process for new auditors and if an auditor resigns, the Committee shall investigate the issues leading to this and decide whether any action is required;
- 43. Adopt a contracting policy with the external auditors, provided that all issues requiring any special measures and recommendations on the procedures or steps to be followed are presented to the Board;
- 44. Approve audit and non-audit fees and services with the external auditors, if any, as well as oversee the external auditor's performance;
- 45. Supervise and track the independence and objectivity of the external auditors and discuss the nature, effectiveness and scope of the auditing process with them, in accordance with the international auditing standards and other regulatory requirements;
- 46. Oversee the relationship with the external auditor including (but not limited to):
- Approve their remuneration, whether fees for audit or non-audit services and that the level of fees is appropriate to enable an adequate audit to be conducted;
- Approve their terms of engagement, including any engagement letter issued at the start of each audit and the scope of the audit subject to annual delegation from AGA;
- Assess annually their independence and objectivity taking into account relevant local professional and regulatory requirements and the relationship with the auditor as a whole, including the provision of any non-audit services;
- Satisfy itself that there are no relationships (such as family, employment, investment, financial or business) between the auditor and the Bank (other than in the ordinary course of business) which may result in bias or potential conflicts of interest;



- Agree with the Board to a policy on the employment of former employees of the Bank's auditor, then monitoring the implementation of this policy;
- Monitor the auditor's compliance with relevant ethical and professional guidance on the rotation of audit partners, the level of fees paid by the Bank compared to the overall fee income of the firm, office and partner and other related requirements;
- Assess annually the qualifications and expertise or external auditors as well as the resources and effectiveness of the external audit process which shall include a report from the external auditor on their own internal quality procedures;
- Meet regularly with the external auditor, including once at the planning stage before the audit and once after the audit at the reporting stage;
- Meet the external auditor at least once a year, without management being present, to discuss their remit and any issues arising from the audit;
- Ensure the external auditors have access to the Chairperson of the Audit Committee and the members as and when required through the Company Secretary.
- Review and approve the annual external audit plan and ensure that it is consistent with the scope of the audit engagement;
- Ensure appropriate coordination between internal auditors and external auditors and availability of the necessary resources;
- 47. Review the findings of the audit with the external auditor. This shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- A discussion of any major issues which arose during the audit;
- · Any accounting and audit judgments;
- Levels of errors identified during the audit and the effectiveness of the audit;
- 48. Review any representation letter(s) requested by the external auditor before they are signed by management;
- 49. Approve policies and charters related to external audit including but not limited the annual external audit plan.

#### Internal Sharia Audit and Sharia Supervisory Board

50. Ensure coordination with the Sharia Supervisory Board on any audit issue related to Sharia matters;

#### General

- 51. Exercise authorities vested in it under the Board-approved DOA and the Board-approved policies;
- 52. Have access to sufficient resources in order to carry out its duties, including access to the company secretariat for assistance as required:

#### REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

- 53. Submit quarterly reports on its activities and decisions to the full Board
- 54. Make whatever recommendations to the Board deemed appropriate on any area, including internal control and governance issues, within the remit of the Committee where action or improvement is needed;
- 55. Compile a report to shareholders on the activities of the Committee to be included in the Bank's annual report.
- 56. Consider and examine such other matters as the Board requires, the Committee considers appropriate, or which are brought to its attention, and to make recommendations or reports to the Board as appropriate;
- 57. Review, at least once a year, its own performance, constitution and terms of reference to ensure it is operating at maximum effectiveness and recommend any changes it considers necessary to the board for approval



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3.	COMPENSATION		
3.1	ACB Members shall be compensated for their services as per the Board Remuneration Policy. Committee members cannot receive any compensation from the Bank except for the sitting fees and annual remuneration they receive for their services as members of the Board or the Committee and except for reimbursement of their expenses, if any.		
4.	DISCLOSURE		
4.1	ACB TOR will be made available internally on Intranet or externally (on website, if so required by any regulation). The membership of the Committee and a description of its duties and activities during the year shall be disclosed in the Annual Report of the Group.		
5.	AMENDMENTS TO TERMS OF REFERENCE		
	ACB must review, at least annually, these TORs. Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Board to approve any immaterial amendments to these TORs. Exceptions or material amendments to these TOR to be approved by the Board. Materiality is defined as per DOA. A Request for Approval must be submitted to Company Secretary to process any amendment.		



## **SECTION 3 – DOCUMENT GOVERNANCE**

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

TOR Owner:	Board of Directors	
TOR Custodian:	Company Secretary- Corporate Governance	

# **VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY**

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Description of Change
V.0	12 December 2021	Board of Directors	New release
V.1	21 March 2023	Board of Directors	Revised TOR upon election of new Board for 2023-2025. For details, refer to Board Minutes dated 21 March 2023.
V.2	14 October 2024	Board of Directors	Revision in light of new GIAS requirements and other regulatory requirements. P TOR review frequency to be every 3 years upon election of new Board. For details, refer to relevant RFA maintained in ComSec files.