



6th CEOS AND ISLAMIC FINANCE LEADERS' ROUNDTABLE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ENABLERS AND PROSPECTS

Are Qatari Financial Institutions
Ready to Embrace FinTech?

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

9:00 – 11:30 am (GMT +3)

Online

Executive Summary

Financial Technology (FinTech) encompasses advances in technology and changes in the business model that can transform the provision of financial services via innovative instruments, channels, and systems. With the global FinTech investments reaching USD 133.5 billion in 2019, unwavering at USD 105.4 billion during the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, and USD 98 billion in the first half of 2021, it is reasonable to believe that FinTech will spearhead and shape the transformation of financial services in the future.

Despite this positive growth in global FinTech Investments, the MENA region only accounted for less than 1% of the global investments. Many world economies' transitioning to a post-pandemic 'new normal' are creating new opportunities for FinTech development worldwide since FinTech not only simplifies the process of financial transaction but also reduces transaction cost substantially.

In fact, although the adoption of technology by various institutions was slowly rising before COVID-19, the pandemic has accelerated its mass adoption and the extensive use of technology by financial service providers, especially banks via digital and contactless payments due to a considerable shift towards online commercial activity as well as social distancing practices.

To capitalize on FinTech benefits, global mainstream financial institutions have focused on structuring technology-driven financial services: e-wallet, digital banking, digital payments, digital savings, InsurTech, WealthTech, RegTech, etc. Qatar has also made significant progress in structuring and developing a sustainable and globally competitive FinTech ecosystem since the formation of the Qatar National FinTech Taskforce in 2017.

Accordingly, Qatar is committed to a National FinTech strategy to diversify its economy that was effectively commenced with the establishment of Qatar FinTech Hub (QFTH) in April 2020.

Since QFTH's inception, it has partnered with several globally established FinTech hubs to facilitate the exchange of FinTech solutions and bring in international FinTech companies from these hubs to operate in Qatar.

However, for the Qatar National FinTech strategy to succeed, it is essential for Qatar's local and international financial institutions to adopt FinTech innovation in their provision of financial services harmoniously. This is because a delay in adopting technological advances is likely to throw Qatar's ambition to become the leading financial hub in the Middle East.

Therefore, it is important for the FinTech stakeholders in Qatar to address relevant questions such as:

1. What is the degree of penetration of the conventional and Islamic financial industry in the growing FinTech market?
2. Is technology going to narrow the division between Islamic and conventional finance in the future? And how will that benefit Qatar's economy?
3. Are Qatari financial institutions fully ready to embrace FinTech?
4. What makes a booming FinTech hub in the global FinTech race?
5. Is attracting foreign FinTech companies through the depth of venture capital and breadth of business opportunities viable for Qatar's business climate?
6. What are the key developments for a central bank digital currency and its relevance in the post COVID-19 monetary environment?
7. What have Qatari regulators done to enable and expedite financial institutions adoption of FinTech? What more can and should be done?

With this backdrop, this roundtable entitled 'Digital Transformation Enablers and Barriers' aims to advance the Qatar National FinTech strategy and the Qatar National vision 2030 by fostering an open dialogue among industry leaders, regulators, and academia while providing an opportunity for students to become more involved in the industry.

With this goal in mind, the roundtable is inviting regulators, practitioners, and academicians to participate in discussion to:

- ▶ Understand on-the-ground realities and challenges
- ▶ Work together to expedite the enablers of FinTech digital transformation while also reducing its barriers.
- ▶ Encourage a more robust economy that meets the needs of all segments of society and promotes Qatar to become the financial hub in the Middle East.

Roundtable Agenda

9:00 – 9:30 am	OPENING SESSION Welcome Address Dr. Emad El-Din Shahin Dean, College of Islamic Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University Keynote Address Mr. Yousuf Mohamed Al-Jaida Board Member and Chief Executive Officer Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) Authority Roundtable Moderator's Remark Dr. Ahmet Faruk Aysan Professor and Program Coordinator for Islamic Finance and Economy, College of Islamic Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University
9:30 – 10:45 am	ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 1: Qatar National FinTech Strategy – An Overview Digital Transformation Enablers and Barriers – Talent and Capital <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Examining the current ability to attract, develop, and retain talent in key domains of finance, technology, and entrepreneurship is crucial for a FinTech plan to succeed on a global scale.▶ Likewise, access to seed and scale capital for start-ups to develop and grow their ideas - to where they can raise investment - whether from private investors, governments, or corporates is a key driver of FinTech activity across different hubs.
10:45 – 11:30 am	ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 2: Digital Transformation Enablers and Barriers – Demand and Regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Demand drives supply in the FinTech space. The more financially literate its consumer and the more established its financial services industry, the more likely it is for the economy to have a stronger FinTech market. This is because consumers within those markets are less averse to trying new financial products and services.▶ Governments and regulators need to strike a balance between promoting innovation and market competition, while protecting investors and consumers.

Organizer Profile

About Hamad Bin Khalifa University

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF), was founded in 2010 as a research-intensive university that acts as a catalyst for transformative change in Qatar and the region while having a global impact. Located in Education City, HBKU is committed to building and cultivating human capacity through an enriching academic experience, innovative ecosystem, and unique partnerships. HBKU delivers multidisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs through its colleges and provides opportunities for research and scholarship through its institutes and centers.

About College of Islamic Studies

HBKU's College of Islamic Studies (CIS) was founded to become a beacon for contemporary Islamic scholarship and thought, and a platform for meaningful intellectual and cultural dialogue on Islam and Muslims. Through its five academic offerings and four research centers, the college seeks to address some of the most pressing questions facing Muslim communities today, both locally and globally. Through its offerings, the college strives to advance a better understanding of Islam and its social dimensions and to produce graduates who can contribute and excel in a rapidly changing world.

About Center For Islamic Economics & Finance

The Center for Islamic Economics and Finance (CIEF) is one of the research arms of the College of Islamic Studies, at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha. It is dedicated to the study of relationships between Islamic faith and economic phenomena and the effect on the behavior of individuals, institutions, and markets by broadly examining Islamic perspectives on production, redistribution, and exchange through an interdisciplinary approach. Over the years, CIEF has organized several roundtables and conferences, namely:

Roundtables

1st CEOs Roundtable (Nov 2015): *Islamic Finance: Expectation and Reality*

2nd CEOs Roundtable (2016): *Financing Infrastructure Projects What Role for Islamic Finance*

3rd CEOs & Islamic Finance Leaders Roundtable (Nov 2017): *Islamic Finance, FinTech, and Cryptocurrencies*

4th CEOs & Islamic Finance Leaders Roundtable (Nov 2018): *Corporate Social Responsibility in the Financial Sector*

5th CEOs & Islamic Finance Leaders Roundtable (Nov 2019): *Social Financing Models*

Conferences (in partnership with QFC)

ICIF (Intl Conf on IF) 2017 – *Shari'a Governance in a Globalized World*

ICIF (Intl Conf on IF) Dec 2018 – *Global Conference on Awqaf*

ICIF (Intl Conf on IF) Feb 2020 – *Circular Economy: Towards Impactful, Sustainable & Value-based Intermediation*

ICIF (Intl Conf on IF) April 2021 – *Sustainability & the Fourth Industrial Revolution*

Conferences (in partnership with Harvard)

Harvard University Muslim Alumni Islamic Finance Conference: *Sustainable Development Goals: What Role for Islamic Finance?* October 2016, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Harvard University Muslim Alumni Islamic Finance Conference: *Islamic Finance and Business: Capital, Commerce, and Careers*, October 2018: Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Workshops (in partnership with SOAS-University of London)

Feb 2018 *Challenging the Shari'a Compliance of Islamic Finance Products*, London, U.K.

Feb 2019 *Responsible Investment, Value-based Intermediation and the Future of Islamic Finance*, London, U.K.

Feb 2020 *Islamic Social Finance and SDGs*, London, U.K.