

JOSEPH ABRAHAM, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, COMMERCIAL BANK

How can lenders like Commercial Bank support the next stage of Qatar's economic journey?

Supporting the next stage of Qatar's economic journey is a priority for Commercial Bank, and we believe that the banking sector can play a pivotal role. We aim to provide tailored financial solutions that enable both local and international investors to participate in Qatar's economic development. This includes offering competitive lending terms, structured finance solutions, and investment advisory services to help businesses thrive and expand. We empower SMEs — which are vital drivers of economic diversification and job creation - by providing access to capital, financial advice, and specialised banking solutions. Commercial Bank's efficient and convenient digital platforms allow businesses and individuals to conduct financial transactions seamlessly. We aim to be a catalyst for economic growth, innovation, and prosperity in Qatar.

What is your bank's strategy for growth and development for the coming years?

Our approach is tailored to address both short-term challenges in 2023 and longer-term objectives. Building sustainable revenue streams not solely reliant on lending activities is one key pillar. This includes fees from various financial services and products that expand our revenue base. This diversification allows the bank to reduce risk and enhance its financial stability. Increasing low-cost deposits is another key pillar. Commercial Bank has achieved remarkable success in this regard through market-leading transaction banking initiatives and the popularity of its digital products. These initiatives contribute to a stable and cost-effective funding base. I would also mention our guiding principles — the 5Cs of Commercial Bank are Client Centricity, Creativity, Collaboration, Compliance and Corporate Earnings. We adhere to the 5Cs as the guiding principles for our actions and decisions. This framework ensures that the bank maintains a customer-centric approach and stays aligned with its core values.

What are some of the highlights from the

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bank's financial performance over the last year?

Commercial Bank achieved a consolidated net profit of QAR1.5bn for H1 2023 - an 8.5% increase on the same period in 2022. This growth in profitability is a testament to our ability to generate sustainable earnings. A significant contributor to our improved financial performance has been the growth in operating income. This expansion demonstrates our capacity to generate revenue through a diverse range of banking activities. Our ability to recover assets and mitigate potential losses has also played a pivotal role in enhancing our bottom-line performance. This highlights our prudent risk management practices. Commercial Bank has leveraged its strategic partnerships and investments in associates to contribute positively to our overall performance. These results not only highlight the bank's resilience but also showcase our ongoing commitment to operational excellence in alignment with Qatar's strong macroeconomic fundamentals.

What are the priorities for digitalization across the bank's products and overall operations?

In today's rapidly evolving financial landscape, banks that fail to innovate and adapt risk losing ground to more agile competitors. Recognising this, Commercial Bank has made digital transformation a central pillar of its five-year strategic plan. Over recent years, we have made substantial investments to reshape our revenue and cost structures, enhance the customer experience, and leverage digital innovation in both client-facing and operational aspects of our business. Our approach is geared towards delivering client-centric solutions through mobile engagement, innovative digital products and enabling self-service and on-demand services:

As part of these efforts, we have introduced cutting-edge solutions like Samsung Wallet and Apple Pay, which offer fast, secure, and convenient payment options for everyday transactions. In the competitive payments space, where fintech companies are making significant inroads, our aim is to simplify payment processes for consumers. Our solutions

blend advanced technology with a deep understanding of customer needs, ensuring a superior banking experience for every service.

We also pioneered with Lulu Group the first cashier-less check out system in Qatar and the Middle East powered by Commercial Bank payment systems. Our innovation has been recognized by multiple awards the latest being "The Top Innovation in Mobile Banking" award in the World by Global Finance, "The Most Innovative Bank" award in the Middle East by World Finance, and "The Best Corporate Mobile Banking App" award in the Middle East by Global Finance, and the "Best Customer Service Initiative" award in Qatar by International Finance.

Sustainability and ESG are becoming ever more important for the banking industry. How is your bank addressing these issues?

Commercial Bank is deeply committed to sustainability and ESG considerations, both as an integral part of our corporate strategy and as a reflection of our responsibility to our stakeholders. We have identified key sustainability topics that are highly relevant to our business and our commitment to a sustainable future. In line with Qatar's National Environment and Climate Change Strategy, we are intensifying our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint. Our goal is to achieve a 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions associated with our own operations by 2030 compared to 2021 levels. Furthermore, our commitment to ESG is reflected in our approach to lending and social and governance aspects. As an example, we are one of the few banks in the Middle East with a deferred bonus arrangements for senior executives which is a component of good governance. As part of our lending and investment activities, we have implemented a comprehensive methodology to identify and measure ESG risks associated with our customers. This demonstrates our dedication to responsible lending practices and aligns with our broader sustainability goals. ●



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