

Tax newsletter

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Landscape

In our June 2025 edition of Grant Thornton's regional monthly Tax Newsletter, we provide the latest news updates affecting International Tax, Corporate Tax, Transfer Pricing, and Indirect Taxes in the UAE and across the Middle East region.

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UAE updates

Corporate Tax & Transfer Pricing

UAE Federal Tax Authority (FTA) issues new Corporate Tax guidelines for Partnerships and Family Foundations

On 10 June 2025, the UAE FTA announced Decision No. 5 of 2025, dated 19 May 2025, which outlines updated compliance procedures for Unincorporated Partnerships (UPs), Foreign Partnerships, and Family Foundations (FFs) under the Corporate Income Tax (CIT) framework. This decision, replacing FTA Decision No. 16 of 2023, will come into effect on 1 July 2025.

Key highlights:

- **Authorised partner requirement:** If a UP is not considered a taxable entity, its partners must appoint an authorised representative to handle tax matters with the FTA. This person must register the UP for tax purposes.
 - If the UP's first financial year ends before
 1 July 2025, registration is due by 31
 August 2025.
 - If it ends after that date, the deadline is three months from the end of the first financial year of the Unincorporated Partnership.
 - **Annual declaration:** The authorised partner must also file an annual declaration detailing each partner's share of taxable income.
 - This must be submitted within nine months from the end of the relevant Financial Year of the Unincorporated Partnership.
 - For financial years ending on or before 31 March 2025, the deadline is 31 December 2025.





- **Foreign partnerships:** If a foreign partnership is treated as a UP, the UAE-based taxable partner must include the required declaration when submitting their own tax return.
- Electing taxable status: Partners can choose to have their UP treated as a separate taxable entity.
 - This election must be made before the end of the relevant Financial Year of the Unincorporated Partnership.
 - o If submitted by 31 December 2025, the FTA may allow retroactive application for earlier tax periods.
 - In such cases, a CIT return must be filed by 31 December 2025 for any period ending on or before 31 March 2025.
- **Family Foundations:** These entities, along with any wholly-owned subsidiaries, may apply to be treated as UPs.
 - Once approved, they must confirm annually that they meet the conditions outlined in Article 17(1) of the CIT Law.
 - The confirmation deadline is nine months after the tax period ends, or by 31 December 2025, for periods ending on or before 31 March 2025.

To access the guidelines, please click <u>here</u>.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>; and our Transfer Pricing team – Tax Director <u>Anna Nikolayko</u> and Tax Manager <u>Shiyu Renkey</u>.





UAE Ministry of Finance (MoF) issues Cabinet Decision No. 96 of 2025 on REIT Corporate Tax exemption criteria

On 23 May 2025, the UAE Ministry of Finance issued Cabinet Decision No. 96 of 2025, amending the listing requirements for Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) to qualify for exemption as Qualifying Investment Funds (QIFs) under Article 10(1) of the UAE Corporate Income Tax Law (Federal Decree-Law No. 47 of 2022).

Background timeline:

- On 5 April 2025, Cabinet Decision No. 34 of 2025 replaced Decision No. 81 of 2023, introducing updated QIF and Qualifying Limited Partnership (QLP) regulations effective from 1 January 2025.
- It set out the conditions for REITs to apply for QIF status through the Federal Tax Authority (FTA).
- One key condition in Article 4(1)(b)(1) required REITs to list at least 20% of their shares on a Recognised Stock Exchange, with restrictions on related parties acquiring those shares.

Amendment under Decision No. 96:

- Temporarily lowers the listing threshold to 10% for REITs that list their shares between 1–31 May 2025.
- This replaces the previous 20% requirement set under Decision No. 34.
- The new threshold took immediate effect on 23 May 2025 and applies retroactively to tax periods starting on or after 1 January 2025.

You can access the full text of Cabinet Decision No. 96 of 2025 here.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>; and our Transfer Pricing team – Tax Director <u>Anna</u> <u>Nikolayko</u> and Tax Manager <u>Shiyu Renkey</u>.





UAE expands scope of Corporate Tax exemption to include foreign entities wholly owned by certain exempted entities

The UAE Ministry of Finance (MoF) has issued Cabinet Decision No. 55 of 2025, which outlines new exemptions from Corporate Tax under Federal Decree-Law No. 47 of 2022 on Corporate Taxation. This decision broadens the exemption criteria to include foreign entities that are fully owned by specific exempt persons, such as government bodies, government-controlled entities, qualifying investment funds, and public pension or social security funds, provided they meet certain conditions.

Previously, only entities incorporated within the UAE qualified for exemption. Foreign entities, even if wholly owned by exempt persons or operating through UAE branches, were excluded. By extending the exemption to eligible foreign entities, the decision promotes tax neutrality between domestic and foreign structures owned by exempt persons. It also strengthens the UAE's appeal as a hub for holding companies and aligns global standards for fair and competitive tax systems.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez</u> <u>Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>; and our Transfer Pricing team – Tax Director <u>Anna Nikolayko</u> and Tax Manager <u>Shiyu Renkey</u>.





UAE Federal Tax Authority (FTA) issues guide on taxation of Family Foundations

On 28 May 2025, the FTA released a new guide titled CTGFF1 – Taxation of Family Foundations, providing much-needed clarity on the treatment of Family Foundations under the UAE Corporate Tax Law (Federal Decree-Law No. 47 of 2022).

Family Foundations are legal vehicles, commonly used for wealth preservation and succession planning. According to Article 17(1) of the UAE CIT Law, such structures may qualify as Family Foundations if they meet certain criteria.

Importantly, these foundations do not need to be established in the UAE. Foreign foundations, including those operating within UAE Free Zones, may also fall under this classification for UAE tax purposes.

Key highlights from the guide

- Family Foundations can apply to be treated as Unincorporated Partnerships, enabling fiscal transparency—meaning the foundation itself is not taxed, but the tax liability passes through to the beneficiaries or owners.
- In multi-tier structures, entities owned by a Family Foundation must independently meet the Article 17 conditions to qualify for transparent treatment. These entities must also refrain from commercial activity.

What the guide covers:

- o Eligibility requirements for fiscal transparency
- o General tax treatment of Family Foundations
- o Tax impact on beneficiaries and related entities
- o Compliance, registration, and ongoing obligations

The guide also includes examples, case studies, and diagrams to assist with practical understanding and compliance.

To access the guide, please click <u>here</u>.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriguez Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>; and our Transfer Pricing team – Tax Director <u>Anna Nikolayko</u> and Tax Manager <u>Shiyu Renkey</u>.



UAE MoF issues guidance on Mutual Agreement Procedure (MAP)

UAE MoF recently issued guidance on MAP to inform taxpayers about its purpose, the circumstances under which it can be applied, the required documentation for submitting a MAP request, and the procedural steps involved.

The eligibility and process include the following:

- **Eligibility:** If taxpayers believe that actions by one or both contracting states result in taxation not in accordance with the double tax agreement (DTA), as per some of the examples provided above, a MAP claim can be filed by the taxpayers with the UAE Competent Authority (UAE CA).
- **Time limit to file MAP claims:** MAP claims must generally be filed within three years from the first notification of the action causing the dispute under DTA. However, if a Taxpayer determines the probability of an issue under DTA, a MAP claim can still be filed.
- **Domestic remedies:** Taxpayers cannot pursue MAP and domestic legal remedies simultaneously. However, MAP claims can be filed while domestic remedies are still available to avoid time-bar issues.

It is recommended that taxpayers review applicable DTAs for conflicts and time limits, consider domestic remedies, prepare a comprehensive and well-supported MAP submission, and maintain timely, transparent communication with the UAE CA throughout the process.

To access the guide, please click <u>here</u>.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>; and our Transfer Pricing team – Tax Director <u>Anna Nikolayko</u> and Tax Manager <u>Shiyu Renkey</u>.





Value-added tax (VAT)

The Federal Tax Authority ('FTA') releases VAT Public Clarification (VATP044) on the VAT accounting requirements for concerned services

On 26 May 2025, the FTA released Public Clarification 'VATP044' regarding the requirements to account for output VAT and issuance of tax invoices in respect to Concerned Services along with the documentation required for recovering input VAT. This clarification aims to provide guidance on the VAT implications for imported services in the UAE.

VAT on imported services:

- Taxable persons receiving concerned services from outside the UAE must account for VAT on these services if the place of supply is in the UAE.
- These services are considered taxable supplies unless exempt if supplied within the UAE.

Output tax and invoicing:

- Registrants must account for output tax and issue tax invoices for the concerned services.
- Where sufficient records are maintained, Taxpayers may apply for an administrative exception precluding the need to issue a tax invoice.

Administrative exceptions:

In cases where issuing a tax invoice for imported services is impractical, the FTA may allow other records to serve as the supplier's invoice providing that the following aspects are included:

- 1. The name and address of the supplier of the Concerned Service, e.g. a foreign entity supplying the Service from outside the UAE,
- 2. The name and address of the Recipient,
- 3. The date the document was issued,
- 4. The date the Service ended,
- 5. Description of the Service supplied,
- 6. Consideration for the supply, including the relevant currency and, where applicable, payment terms.

Input tax recovery:

- Registrants can recover input tax if the services are used for making taxable supplies.
- Proper documentation, such as the supplier's invoice, must be retained.

Should you need any further clarification and details regarding this update, please contact our Tax Director <u>Harsh Bhatia</u> or our Tax Associate Director <u>Charlotte Stanley</u>.



Customs and excise tax

The Federal Tax Authority ('FTA') releases Decision No. 6 on understanding the standards, controls and procedures for dealing with natural shortage of excise goods

Effective from 1 July 2025, the FTA has issued Decision No. 6 of 2025 to provide clear guidelines on handling natural shortages of excise goods within designated zones. This decision outlines the standards, controls, and procedures that warehouse keepers and taxable persons must follow to ensure compliance.

Key definitions:

- Natural shortage: A shortage in the quantity of excise goods during production, storage, or transportation within the designated zone, beyond the control of the taxable person due to the nature of the goods.
- **Independent competent entity:** Approved laboratories that determine the permissible percentage of natural shortage.



Standards and controls:

1. Determination of permissible shortage:

- Each warehouse keeper or taxable person must determine the permissible percentage of natural shortage for each excise good within the designated zone.
- A report from an Independent Competent Entity must be obtained and retained.

2. Documentation requirements:

- Detailed explanations of the manufacturing process and stages where natural shortages may occur.
- Production formulas, expected shortage percentages, and supporting documents for previous periods.
- Manufacturing equipment data and operating manuals.



3. Inspection and reporting:

- Requests for inspection by the Independent Competent Entity must cover at least six previous months.
- Changes affecting the percentage of natural shortage must be reported within 20 business days.

4. Validity and renewal of reports:

- Reports are valid for one year and must be renewed annually.
- The percentage of natural shortage stated in declarations must not exceed the percentage in the valid report.

Procedures:

1. Submitting requests:

- Warehouse keepers and taxable persons must submit requests to the Independent Competent Entity with required documents.
- Retain and submit documents proving natural shortage to the FTA.

2. Notification and declarations:

• Notify the FTA of natural shortages through declarations, ensuring the percentage does not exceed the latest report.

Approval of independent competent entities:

- A committee within the FTA will review and approve entities to determine permissible natural shortage percentages.
- The FTA will publish a list of approved entities.

Transitional provisions:

Reports issued within six months from the effective date are valid for one year from the decision's effective date.

Should you need any further clarification and details regarding this update, please contact our Tax Director <u>Harsh Bhatia</u> or our Tax Associate Director <u>Charlotte Stanley</u>.



Tax treaties

Poland and the United Arab Emirates sign exchange of notes to tax treaty

On 24 February and 18 April 2025, Poland and the United Arab Emirates exchanged official notes amending their 1995 tax treaty. This exchange confirms that the Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company is recognised as a governmental institution. As a result, it is eligible for specific tax exemptions under the treaty, including those related to dividends (Article 10) and interest income (Article 11).

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R.</u> <u>Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>.



Cambodia and the UAE continue tax treaty negotiations

Officials from Cambodia and the United Arab Emirates held a meeting on 16 May 2025 to advance talks on establishing an income tax treaty. The discussions also covered aspects of the UAE's new corporate tax system. If concluded, this would mark the first tax agreement between the two nations, which would still need to go through finalisation, signing, and ratification before taking effect.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>.



Tax treaty between Papua New Guinea and the United Arab Emirates under negotiation

Officials from Papua New Guinea and the United Arab Emirates met on 15 May 2025 to strengthen bilateral ties, according to a statement from Papua New Guinea's Department of Prime Minister & National Executive Council. The discussions included ongoing negotiations for an income tax treaty and other bilateral agreements. If concluded, this would be the first such treaty between the two nations and would require finalisation, signing, and ratification before becoming effective.

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Russian government approves pending tax treaty with the United Arab Emirates

On 29 May 2025, the Russian government approved a draft law to ratify a new income and capital tax treaty with the United Arab Emirates. Originally signed on 17 February 2025, the treaty will take effect after both countries exchange ratification instruments and will apply starting from 1 January of the following year. Once implemented, it will replace the 2011 agreement, which had a narrower scope limited to income and gains involving government-related financial and investment entities.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>.





Amending protocol to tax treaty between Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates has entered into force

The amending protocol to the 2011 tax treaty between Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates entered into force on 5 May 2025. The protocol, signed 5 November 2022, is the first to amend the treaty and includes the following changes:

The preamble is replaced in line with BEPS standards;

- Article 3 (General Definitions) is updated with respect to the definition of the term "competent authority" for Switzerland;
- Article 7 (Business Profits) is amended with the addition of a new paragraph 7 providing that a Contracting State shall make no adjustment to the profits that are attributable to a permanent establishment of an enterprise of one of the Contracting States after 5 years from the end of the taxable year in which the profits would have been attributable to the permanent establishment, although this provision does not apply in the case of fraud, gross negligence, or willful default;
- Article 9 (Associated Enterprises) is amended as follows:
 - Paragraph 2 is replaced, including new provisions regarding appropriate (corresponding) adjustments by a Contracting State where an adjustment has been made in the other State; and
 - A new paragraph 3 is added, providing that a Contracting State shall not include in the profits of an enterprise, and tax accordingly, profits that would have accrued to the enterprise but by reason of the conditions referred to in paragraph 1 (non-arm's length) have not so accrued, after 5 years from the end of the taxable year in which the profits would have accrued to the enterprise, although this provision does not apply in the case of fraud, gross negligence, or willful default;





- Article 22 (Elimination of Double Taxation) is amended with the addition of the provision that the
 exemption provided in Article 22(1)(a) shall not apply to income derived by a resident of Switzerland
 where the United Arab Emirates applies the provisions of the treaty to exempt such income from tax
 or applies the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article 10 (Dividends) to such income (withholding tax of
 5% or 15%);
- The first sentence of paragraph 1 of Article 24 (Mutual Agreement Procedure) is replaced, providing that where a person considers that the actions of one or both of the Contracting States result or will result for that person in taxation not in accordance with the provisions of the treaty, that person may, irrespective of the remedies provided by the domestic law of those States, present the case to the competent authority of either Contracting State (originally just the State of residence); and
- A new Article 26A (Entitlement to Benefits) is added to the treaty, providing that a benefit under the treaty shall not be granted in respect of an item of income or capital if it is reasonable to conclude, having regard to all relevant facts and circumstances, that obtaining that benefit was one of the principal purposes of any arrangement or transaction that resulted directly or indirectly in that benefit, unless it is established that granting that benefit in these circumstances would be in accordance with the object and purpose of the relevant provisions of the treaty.

The protocol generally applies from 1 January 2026. However, the changes to Article 9 (Associated Enterprises) and Article 24 (Mutual Agreement Procedure) apply from the date of the protocol's entry into force, without regard to the taxable period to which the matter relates.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>.





KSA updates

Tax treaties

Croatian parliament approves pending tax treaty with Saudi Arabia

On 6 June 2025, Croatia's parliament passed legislation to ratify its first income and capital tax treaty with Saudi Arabia. Originally signed on 4 December 2024, the treaty will come into effect once both countries complete the exchange of ratification documents.

Should you need any further clarification and details regarding this update, please contact our GT KSA Tax team – Head of Tax Adel Douglas or Tax Director Mohammad Huwitat.





Oman updates

Tax treaties

Luxembourg's Council of State approves pending tax treaty with Oman

On 3 June 2025, Luxembourg's Council of State gave its approval for ratifying the pending income and capital tax treaty with Oman. Signed on 16 October 2024, this marks the first such agreement between the two nations. The treaty will come into effect after both countries exchange ratification documents and will be applicable starting 1 January of the following year.

Should you need any further clarification and details regarding this update, please contact our Head of Advisory – GT Oman <u>Badar Al Hashmi</u>.



Czech Republic and Oman conclude negotiations for new tax treaty

On 22 May 2025, representatives from the Czech Republic and Oman finalized negotiations by initialing a new income and capital tax treaty. A similar agreement was initialed back in 2012 but was never signed. The newly agreed treaty still requires formal signing and ratification before it can take effect.

Should you need any further clarification and details regarding this update, please contact our Head of Advisory – GT Oman <u>Badar Al Hashmi</u>.

Tax treaty between Kazakhstan and Oman signed

On 29 May 2025, officials from Kazakhstan and Oman signed an income tax treaty. The treaty is the first of its kind between the two countries and will enter into force after the ratification instruments are exchanged. Details of the treaty will be published once available.

Should you need any further clarification and details regarding this update, please contact our Head of Advisory – GT Oman <u>Badar Al Hashmi</u>.



Kuwait updates

Tax treaties

Kuwait Council of Ministers approves pending tax treaty with San Marino

On 5 May 2025, Kuwait's Council of Ministers approved the ratification of its first income and capital tax treaty with San Marino. Originally signed on 27 September 2024, the treaty will come into effect after both countries exchange ratification documents and will be applicable starting 1 January of the following year.

Should you need any further clarification and details regarding this update, please contact our GT Kuwait Tax Team – Tax Partner <u>Hazem Al-Agez</u> or Tax Manager <u>Karim Ezz El-Din</u>.

Austria authorises signing of protocol to tax treaty with Kuwait

On 4 June 2025, Austria's Council of Ministers gave the green light to sign a protocol amending its 2002 income and capital tax treaty with Kuwait. This is the first time the treaty has been revised. The protocol must still go through formal signing and ratification before it becomes effective.

Should you need any further clarification and details regarding this update, please contact our GT Kuwait Tax Team – Tax Partner <u>Hazem Al-Agez</u> or Tax Manager <u>Karim Ezz El-Din</u>.





Qatar updates

Corporate tax

Qatar provides tax exemption for capital gains from restructuring transactions

On 25 May 2025, Qatar's General Tax Authority announced the Cabinet's approval of a resolution granting capital gains tax exemptions for certain restructuring activities. These exemptions apply to gains from intragroup corporate restructurings and asset transfers or exchanges within holding companies. While not explicitly mentioned, the measure also appears to cover capital gains linked to public listings. Further implementation details are expected to be released later.

For further information, please click <u>here</u>.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>.





Tax treaties

Tax treaty between Kuwait and Qatar signed

On 1 June 2025, Qatar's General Tax Authority <u>announced</u> that Qatar and Kuwait have signed their first income tax treaty. The agreement will take effect once both nations exchange ratification documents. Further details will be released when available.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez</u> <u>Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>.

lvory Coast's National Assembly approves pending tax treaty with Qatar

On 21 May 2025, Ivory Coast's National Assembly (lower house of Parliament) approved the ratification of the pending income tax treaty with Qatar. The treaty, signed 7 December 2022, is the first of its kind between the two countries and will enter into force after the ratification instruments are exchanged.

Should you need any further clarifications or details regarding this information, please contact our International Tax team – Partner <u>Anuj R. Kapoor</u>, Tax Director <u>Isabel Rodriquez</u> <u>Alonso</u>, or Tax Managers <u>Gel Vallar</u> and <u>Tammy Jones</u>.



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