



News from Mauritius

Global Business & Financial Services

FSC: Financial Services (Crowdfunding) Rules 2021

In line with its strategy to sustain the growth of the FinTech ecosystem in Mauritius, the Financial Services Commission (FSC) has introduced the Financial Services (Crowdfunding) Rules 2021. In a bid to cater for this new licence, the following rules have also been introduced and amended respectively:

- The Securities (Exemption) Rules 2021
- The Financial Services (Consolidated Licensing and Fees) Rules 2008

(The above-mentioned rules will collectively be referred to as the “Rules” hereinafter)

The Financial Services (Crowdfunding) Rules 2021 aim to establish a comprehensive regulatory framework on par with international best standards and practices with a view to improve access to this novel form of finance for individuals, entrepreneurs, as well as Small and Medium Enterprises (“SMEs”) operating in or from Mauritius. As such, these will work in parallel with the Financial Services (Peer-to-Peer Lending) Rules 2020¹ which follow a near similar approach in terms of financial access.

Click [here](#) to access the communique from the FSC for more information

Stay tuned for our upcoming newsletter, which will cover the salient requirements for this specific licence under the Rules.

¹ We communicated on the issue of the Financial Services (Peer-to-Peer Lending) Rules 2020 in one of our past publications. Have a look at it [here](#)

FSC: Launch of FSC One platform

The use of technology in the financial services sector has been on the rise and in a bid to accommodate this global phenomenon, the Financial Services Commission (FSC) launched the FSC One Platform on 12 August 2021 in the presence of eminent political figures as well as key industry players. The event was also virtually attended by more than 250 participants.

The FSC One Platform will facilitate the transition to online means of licensing by initially proposing a seamless processing of applications and will help applicants in tracking the authorisation process. Then at a later stage, it will provide an optimised process for the filing and conduct of oversight of FSC’s licensees. Further to the Financial Action Task Force’s March 2021 Guidance on risk-based approach by supervisors, the swift implementation of this digital platform is testament to the institution’s readiness and capacity to comply at best with the guidance of international standard-setting bodies.

This coordinated vision from the FSC and key industry players has now been set in motion and is expected to improve ease of doing business in Mauritius, thus consolidating the country’s position as an International Financial Centre of high repute.

For more information, access the full communique from the FSC [here](#)

FSC & ARCA sign Cooperation agreement

On 9 August 2021, the Financial Services Commission (FSC) released a communique to inform its stakeholders of the recently signed cooperation agreement with the “Autorité de Régulation et de Contrôle des Assurances” of the Democratic Republic of Congo (ARCA).

This agreement aims at promoting effective collaboration and information exchange between the two institutions. It also aims at enhancing the regulatory and supervisory frameworks regulating the insurance, captive insurance and reinsurance sectors of the respective countries in addition to combatting money laundering.

Access the full communique from the FSC [here](#)

Mauritius FATF Updates

We communicated in one of our past publications¹ the decision of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to carry out an on-site visit to Mauritius further to the country having substantially completed its action plan at technical level. The purpose of the visit will be to assess the implemented measures outlined in the Progress Report submitted by the country in April 2021.

Prior to the arrival of the FATF delegates on 13 September 2021, Mauritius had submitted the relevant clarifications with regard to the ‘immediate outcomes’ from the latest Progress Report submitted in July 2021. It is crucial to highlight that Mauritius has reiterated on multiple occasions its commitment to address the deficiencies in its AML/CFT regime and has taken the necessary steps to consolidate the local legislative and regulatory framework.

Indeed, the recent upgrade to a more positive rating of three of the FATF Recommendations on Technical Compliance by the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) bears evidence of the sustained effort put in by the Government and concerned parties in reinforcing our regulatory framework:

- Recommendation 8 (Non-Profit Organisations): from Non-Compliant to Largely Compliant;
- Recommendation 24 (Transparency and Beneficial Ownership of Legal Persons): from Partially Compliant to Largely Compliant; and
- Recommendation 33 (Statistics): from Partially Compliant to Compliant.

Further to this re-rating, Mauritius is now Compliant or Largely Compliant in 39 out of the 40 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendations on Technical Compliance with only Recommendation 15 (New Technologies) rated as Partially Compliant.

We remain confident that the progress achieved by Mauritius so far will be recognized by the FATF inspection team and that this will set the country on the road to its removal from the FATF Greylist, and an ensuing delisting from the EU Blacklist.

We further endeavor to keep our valued clients updated about the outcome of the FATF delegation visit.

¹ Access our FATF Greylist/EU Blacklist newsflash [here](#)

Banking & Finance

BoM: Key Repo Rate maintained at 1.85%

Further to a meeting held by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on 4 August 2021, the Bank of Mauritius (BoM) has announced that it is keeping the Key Repo Rate (KRR) unchanged at 1.85% per annum.

The BoM projects real GDP growth of 5.5% for Mauritius in 2021 and has also observed that domestic inflation is on the rise due to supply-side pressures which is in line with global inflation and is expected to be transient in nature.

A careful monitoring of the global and domestic situation, along with an expected economic recovery partly due to the re-opening of borders for international travel, has led to this decision by the MPC, which deemed the current monetary policy stance to be appropriate and supportive of our economic recovery.

More information on the KRR can be accessed [here](#)

Mauritius admitted to GFXC's Global Index of Public Registers

On 15 July 2021, the Public Register for banks licensed in Mauritius by the Bank of Mauritius (BOM) was admitted to the Global Index of Public Registers. The Public Register is hosted by the Mauritius Bankers Association Limited (MBA) and provides a record of local market participants who have shown their commitment to adopting the good practices set forth in the FX Global Code. Being only the 17th country to be admitted to the Global Index of Public Registers, Mauritius consolidates its position as a solid and transparent jurisdiction adhering to the best banking practices and principles.

The Global Foreign Exchange Committee (GFXC) introduced the Global Index of Public Registers with a view of providing an official list of all banks worldwide who adhere to the FX Global Code. The FX Global Code represents a set of global principles of good practice in the foreign exchange market. These principles were brought forward through a collaboration between central banks and Market Participants across 20 jurisdictions and are considered a fundamental benchmark for integrity and effective functioning of the wholesale foreign exchange market.

You can access more information on the Global Index of Public Registers and the FX Global Code [here](#)

International Benchmarks

Global Mobility Report Q3 2021: Mauritius maintains favourable position in Africa and Worldwide

International travel is finally picking up after having faced a sustained and lengthy slump due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In its latest Global Mobility Report¹, Henley & Partners provides exclusive insight into what is to be expected of this steady recovery.

Despite having gone down a spot in the global ranking from 30th in Q2 2021 to 31st in Q3 2021, Mauritius still holds the second most travel friendly passport in Africa behind Seychelles (28th) providing visa-free/visa-on arrival access to 146 destinations.

The full report, which gives further details on how global disparities in vaccination programs and economic recovery contribute to the current mobility trend, can be accessed [here](#)

¹ We communicated on the Global Mobility Q2 2021 report in our May news release. Have a look at it [here](#)

Nomad Beach Index 2021: Mauritius takes the 8th spot

Hong Kong-based consulting firm, Nomad Capitalist, has recently come out with its 2021 Nomad Beach Index (the "Report"). The Report sets out to rank the best beaches in the world, on the basis of not just beauty but also on how well-suited they are for globally mobile investors and entrepreneurs especially in an era where digital nomads are no longer confined to their desks and are able to work from anywhere in the world.

The Index aggregates data from more than 30 sources and ranks a total of 36 beach destinations - on a scale from 1 to 50 - based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Weightage in overall score
Beauty	30%
Services	20%
Taxes	20%
Immigration	20%
Safety	10%

As the only African country rated in the Report, Mauritius positions itself at the 8th spot, tied alongside four other destinations: Dominica, St. Lucia, Ambergris Caye - Belize & Isla Colon - Panama. The island consolidates its position as an attractive work and live destination for foreign nationals.

Indeed, the government introduced the Premium Visa in October 2020 with the objective of granting certain categories of foreigners with the opportunity to reside in Mauritius for a one-year period and which can be renewed thereafter. The Premium Visa is primarily targeted at repeat tourists, retirees and digital nomads intending to work remotely from the island.

In addition, with the recent enactment of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2021 (“Finance Act 2021”), several measures to encourage foreign investors and professionals to work and live on the island are now being implemented. Click [here](#) to access our latest newsletter, “Re-opening up to the World”, which gives more details on the proposed measures.

Should you like to receive more information about the Premium Visa and the various types of Occupation and Residence Permits that are available to foreign nationals, please write to our Relocation Team at relocation@intercontinentaltrust.com

The Nomad Beach Index 2021 can be accessed [here](#)

Travel & Tourism

Mauritius lifts travel ban for South Africa and Brazil

Ahead of the full reopening of borders on 1 October 2021, the government has taken the decision to lift the longstanding travel ban for the following categories of travelers:

1. Passengers from South Africa and Brazil; and
2. Passengers who have transited through these countries 15 days before entering Mauritius.

This decision came into effect as from 9 September 2021.

Easing of travel protocols for vaccinated travelers as from 1 September 2021

Starting as from 15 July 2021, Mauritius has begun welcoming travelers back for resort tourism as part of its two-phased reopening strategy. The national vaccination campaign set forth by the local government has garnered major success so far; indeed, more than 65% of the population has received their first dose of vaccine and over 55% has been fully vaccinated. As such, the Mauritian government has taken the decision to ease out travel protocols as follows:

	As from September	As from October
Vaccinated travelers	Quarantine period reduced from 14 days to 7 days*	No Quarantine
Unvaccinated travelers	Quarantine period of 14 days will still apply	

*subject to a negative PCR test on Day 7, tourists will be free to explore the island.

With the recent launch of Odysseo, the largest oceanarium in the Mascarene Archipelago, Mauritius is leaving no stone unturned in building on its strength as a tourism destination of choice to attract visitors.

Click [here](#) to access our last publication where we communicated on the re-opening of Mauritian borders.

News from Seychelles

News tidbits from Seychelles

Private Pensions: Exemption on Tax

On 6 August 2021, the Seychelles Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Trade announced that a tax exemption will be applied to private pension benefits.

Private pension schemes - which are completely separate from the contribution made to the Seychelles Pension Fund - are common incentives implemented by companies for their employees who consider it a supplement they can benefit from either on retirement or upon leaving the company. Owing to the Income and Non-Monetary Benefits Tax Act, taxes are currently levied on private pension benefits twice; in fact, private pensions are taxed progressively on the benefits that an employee goes home with as well as on the payments made by the employer. As such, the exemption will eliminate the double taxation on private pensions.

The Government hopes that this amendment encourages more companies to offer their staff the option to contribute in a private pension while aiming to foster a culture of saving among individuals.

Seychelles reopens its shores to cruise ships in November 2021

After a hiatus of nearly 18 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Seychelles is set to welcome back its first cruise ship on 14 November 2021. The decision to resume cruise ships arrival came about following joint efforts from the Health authority, the Tourism department and the Port authority to instate new procedures for safe operations. Initially, Seychelles will only be welcoming smaller vessels with a maximum of 300 passengers.

The Principal Secretary for Civil Aviation, Ports & Marine, Mr. Alan Renaud, comments on the two-pronged approach, in the form of a COVID-19 Company and Cruise Ship Checklist for cruise ship operators and in parallel a COVID-19 Port Management Plan for the authorities, which will bring about a sustained control on incoming vessels in an effort to avoid another outbreak.

The above standards have been developed under the guidance of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention Control (ECDC) and endorsed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), and clearly defines the roles of all concerned parties in the implementation of the new procedures.

For any additional information please contact us.

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