

## Questions for construction companies regarding working conditions in Qatar

Note: Question 11 provides the company with the opportunity to describe challenges confronted in the areas covered by the preceding questions

1. **Social responsibility or human rights policy:** Does your company have a publicly-available commitment to human rights or to social responsibility? If so please share the link.

*"We are Responsible to Our Society and Our Era."*

Yapı Merkezi always considers the progress of world civilization while realizes projects of universal dimensions.

<http://www.ym.com.tr/icerik/48/33/we-are-responsible-only-to-our-society-and-our-era.aspx>

### Operations in Qatar

2. **Scope:** Please describe the nature and scope of your company's operations in Qatar.

Yapı Merkezi has been engaged with the construction of underground metro project with the Joint Venture partners in Qatar since March 2014.

3. **Sub-contracting:** How many workers do you hire directly and how many are sub-contractors?

We have a joint venture project in Qatar so that the Joint Venture employs 2,218 workers directly and 2,512 workers via sub-contractors, while Yapı Merkezi employs 318 workers directly, as of June 2015.

4. **Health and safety:** In direct operations and in contracts with sub-contractors:

a) What is the company's approach to ensuring workers' health & safety in Qatar?

We are committed to the prevention of injury and illness on our construction sites, strive for the continued improvement in occupational health and Safety management, in an environment that is characterised by openness honesty integrity, and teamwork.

In order to achieve this, A Health and Management System is implemented that complies with all current and local health and safety legislation and in line with Qatar Construction specification 2010 (QSC 2010) and OHSAS 18001:2007. This must ensures that by assessing risks and providing and maintaining adequate control measures, risks to employees and others either eliminated or reduced to a minimum and a safe environment is created.

b) Have you established occupational health and safety committees, and if so, do these have worker participation?

We are on the process of establishing health and safety committee with the workers participation in joint venture project.

c) how many accidents and fatalities have taken place on site in the last two years?

There have been no serious accidents and fatalities on Yapı Merkezi Qatar's sites since the company began operations in Qatar in March 2014.

- 5. Conditions of employment:** In direct operations and in contracts with sub-subcontractors, labour suppliers and joint ventures, please describe the company's policy and practice on:
- a) Contracts - ensuring they are in a language the worker understands and are not modified upon the worker's arrival in Qatar

Employment contracts are written both in English and in Arabic and available in the native language of the candidate upon their request.

- b) Timely payment of wages

Wages are paid once a month to all employees regularly and timely through bank transfer. State of Qatar enforced the Labor Law by amendments in 2105, which also includes the payment of workers through direct bank deposits.

- c) Issuing ID and health cards for workers

Yapı Merkezi makes all arrangements in order to obtain Qatari ID and Residence Permit for any employee who enters into Qatar. Health cards arrangements take place once the Qatar ID procedure is completed.

- d) Ensuring adequate worker accommodation

Workers are accommodated in rental Labor Compounds that satisfy the Qatar Law requirements. In addition, Yapı Merkezi together with the Joint Venture partners is investing for a brand new Labor Accommodation with the standards above Qatar Law described in Qatar Foundation Standards.

- e) Passport retention - ensuring workers can store passports in a safe place and have access

Workers have both options that they may keep their passports with themselves or they may choose to give their passport to company in order to keep safely while having access to them anytime upon their request.

- f) Issuing of exit permits for workers who wish to leave the country

Our Administration department issues exit permits to workers, electronically through the e-government services, upon their leave applications is received, according to the company's internal procedures.

**6. Recruitment agencies:**

- a) What process does the company go through to recruit migrant workers?

Our Joint Venture management requires approval from relevant Qatar authorities and the Embassy of the country from which we intend to recruit, with the assistance of the agencies in Qatar. The selected agency then arranges a recruitment schedule and advertises in the recruitment country to attract the candidates. Based on the schedule, HR and Technical representatives travel to recruitment country for the selection.

Candidates are assessed on technical expertise and experience. Salary offers are based on ability and seniority made to candidates in presence of agency representative who countersigns the acceptance. The offer and contract is in English and its translation is available to the candidate's native language.

The Agency provides complete list of the selected candidates who are screened medically in their home country to confirm that they will meet the Qatari Health Check requirements.

Visas are applied for after medical screening. Once approved, visas will be forwarded to Agency in order for them to get the approval from the recruitment country's legal authorities and complete the formalities. The JV books flights for workers once they are ready to travel.

New arrivals are met at the airport and taken through the orientation basics at their accommodation. Health and safety inductions are site-specific and take place once the new worker is assigned a project with in two days of their arrival in Qatar.

b) Which recruitment agencies does your company regularly work with to hire workers? Please list names and contact details of the recruitment agencies

<u>NAME OF AGENCY</u>	<u>CONTACT PERSON</u>	<u>EMAIL ADDRESS</u>
AMBE INTERNATIONAL	Amal Saxena	<a href="mailto:amal@gulfpersonnel.com">amal@gulfpersonnel.com</a>
AL VAKIL INTERNATIONAL	Salman Vakil	<a href="mailto:salman@alvakil.net">salman@alvakil.net</a>
VICTORY COSMIC OVERSEAS PVT LTD	Fouad Abu Hanna	<a href="mailto:alkarim.qatar@gmail.com">alkarim.qatar@gmail.com</a>
SUN & COMPANY PVT LTD	Bigyan Pradhan	<a href="mailto:bigyan48@yahoo.com">bigyan48@yahoo.com</a>

c) Does the company take steps to ensure that recruiting agencies it may deal with do not charge recruiting or placement fees? If workers have been charged fees, does the company compensate them for this expense on arrival in their position?

It is a legal requirement to recruit via recruiting agent, the legal entity approved and required by most host governments. We inform both recruiting agencies and the candidates that there should not be any replacement or recruitment fees charge to candidates during the recruitment trips. Should our company become aware of such fees, then the charging agencies are no longer selected.

d) Does the company have a policy on the indirect employment of workers by business partners?

Company demands the same quality standards from the business partner for indirect employment and it is applied to Joint Venture partners and subcontractors.

## 7. Freedom of association:

a) Does your company have organizational-level policies and procedures in place on freedom of association for workers?

Company encourages its workers to express their opinions freely.

b) How does the company implement such policies in a context where local law restricts the ability of migrant workers to form or join trade unions, such as in Qatar?

Company plans to form of a joint committee with representatives of its workforce and Joint Venture management, which would not be restricted by Qatar Law.

**8. Grievance/remedy:**

a) Does the company have a grievance mechanism that is accessible to workers directly employed by you and working indirectly for you via business partners - in their own language?

Workers have direct access to HR department during working hours. In addition, the grievance boxes will be available in the workers accommodation, which is under construction by the Joint Venture.

b) How do you ensure that workers are aware of its existence?

HR department will inform workers as soon as they arrive in Qatar and there will be visible notices in the new accommodation.

c) How do you ensure that workers do not face retaliation from supervisors or others for raising grievances?

By direct contact with the workers in the monthly visits to their accommodation by HR representatives from Joint Venture.

d) What processes do you have in place to address and remedy grievances?

Once HR is informed of grievances, Joint Venture management initiates the remedy procedures to meet the standards.

**9. Public engagement:**

a) Who in your leadership is responsible for ensuring compliance with policies and procedures related to human rights in Qatar?

Fanis Stratopoulos  
HR & Administration Manager  
ALYSJ Joint Venture  
Fstratopoulos@goldlinemetro.qa

b) Who should be contacted if workers or civil society groups have questions or concerns about your company's Qatar operations? Please provide contact information.

Kamil Basakci  
F&A Manager  
Yapı Merkezi Qatar Branch Office  
kamil.basakci@ym.com.tr

**10. Engagement with Qatari government:**

a) Does the company engage the Qatari government to encourage enforcement of the labour law in areas such as passport and fee retention?

Yes, we have emphasised the subject to our Client who is a part of Qatari Government, to enforce the labor law in passport and fee retention areas.

b) Has the company raised concerns with the government about elements of the “kafala” sponsorship system that restrict workers’ ability to change jobs or leave the country?

Yapı Merkezi is supporting the worker’s ability to change jobs and/or leave the Country and raises the concerns to the client in the meetings.

**11. Challenges:** Please describe any challenges your company is encountering in the areas described above.

It is our ongoing concern to satisfy the regulations of Qatar Labor law and welfare standards. As an international contractor in our project in Qatar with the joint venture partners, it is our responsibility to have the organization, facilities and procedures in place in order to ensure Qatar Laws and standards are satisfied.

**Further information and guidance:**

[OCED Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises](#)

[UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)