

Ahlibank 'ready to implement e-Salary system'

By Peter Alagos

Business Reporter

Ahlibank has taken "proactive" steps to ensure existing and new customers of its readiness and compliance with the state's much-anticipated Wage Protection System (WPS), a bank official has said.

Deputy CEO for Retail Banking Andrew McKechnie said "Ahlibank is ready" for the new wage protection scheme, and added that its systems will be WPS-compliant as early as October, a month prior to the November 2, 2015 implementation date set by government authorities.

He said the bank is currently finalising preparations to communicate vital information to its customers such as the required new standardised formats of wage distribution forms and additional steps for WPS-compliance.

The information will be published on Ahlibank's website, which will be updated "in the next few days," McKechnie said.

"We've been working with the Qatar Central Bank to make sure that our system is compliant and that we're ready to go. The key change is that customers, both existing and new, have to sign up with a new agreement; their current file format for processing payroll has got to be updated as well," McKechnie told *Gulf Times* yesterday.

He explained that under the new format, the number of fields to be filled out has increased: "And as a result, there's an additional step that needs to happen for banks as well. Previously, companies process the payroll through their own systems and then disperse.

"However frequent they process payroll, the additional step is that they also have to process it through the central bank's own WPS system, so it's done twice to make sure that it's compliant."

Aside from the new file formats, other vital information such as terms and conditions will also be published online,



Ahlibank deputy CEO for retail banking Andrew McKechnie.

McKechnie stressed.

McKechnie also emphasised that Ahlibank is giving existing customers two options to facilitate WPS compliance: "What we're doing proactively is contacting all existing corporate customers and tell them we can process it for you; we will approach them either through their relationship manager in corporate or if they post it through their current branch.

"Also, we can assist customers who are upgrading their corporate online banking facility to make sure that it is also WPS-compliant. Customers can process directly through a secure online banking capability as a corporate customer."

He added, "But the most important thing is making sure that there would be no confusion when customers approach our bank; we're happy to take existing customers and show them the new process and sign them up with great clarity. We'll put some steps on our website in terms of what customers need to do."

For new customers, McKechnie said Ahlibank can help them setup their payroll distribution: "If they have many employees, we will do bulk employee account opening at the same time; all we need is a list from their HR department. Clearly, that is subject to the normal bank account opening regulations of operating an account in Qatar but we can do that en masse."