

17 April 2020

Circular on the provision of services to the public by Credit Institutions during the COVID-19 period

Due to the COVID-19 situation, banks in Malta and Gozo have had to make a number of changes to the way they provide their services in order to ensure ongoing service to their customers. Staff have been diverted from duties in branches to support call centres, phone and digital banking services as customers make the switch from using branches to other online banking channels.

As a result, the banks have made a number of changes to their branch network and opening hours, including reduced hours, rotational opening or closure of some branches to ensure business continuity. However, in agreement with the MFSA, each bank is maintaining as a minimum, 50% of its normal week-day branch capacity with 25% on Saturdays. ATMs and paying in machines for cheques are available for use as normal across the board.

The MFSA encourages banking customers to use phone or digital banking services offered by their bank. But if customers feel the need to visit a branch, the MFSA recommends that customers try to do so on weekdays rather than weekends when more queues are expected. Customers should also observe the social distancing measures recommended by the health authorities when queuing outside branches.

The COVID-19 solutions adopted by banks balance the need for branch network and service re-alignment, business continuity, customer shifts to phone and digital banking, and the needs of their own workforce, some of whom are required to stay at home in line with health authorities' recommendations.

Banking customers may refer to [the list of branches available](#), provided by the Malta Bankers Association, in order to locate the nearest branch to their locality. There will be at least one branch and/or agency open on a Saturday in Gozo.

The Central Bank of Malta [issued Directive 17 on 25 March 2020](#) introducing temporary measures to help alleviate the pressure on encashment of cheques.