

UAE FREE ZONES

INVESTOR'S GUIDE



Introduction

The region of UAE is a federation of seven emirates- Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain, Fujairah, and Ajman, which is in the Eastern part of Arab world. The region overlooks the Gulf of Oman to the East and Arabian Gulf on the North. UAE covers a total area of around 83,600 square kilometers, with many islands and coastal areas (consisting of mainly salt marshes). The inland is primarily desert, gravel plains, and sand dunes.

In UAE, the most populated emirates are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah, with more than 80% of the population belonging to these three emirates. The official language of the region is Arabic; however, English, Urdu, and Hindi are also widely understood. English is officially used for all the written business communications.



Population

The total population in the region is approximately 9.365 million in 2021 (Source: World Bank). This number has been increasing steadily over the past decade because of the improved health services and the current migration of expatriates. Despite the growth, UAE still has one of the highest per capita incomes around the world, which consequently increased the demand for many goods; hence, boosting the trade and related activities.



Economy

The economy of the UAE has been transformed from subsistence to a prosperous and one of the advanced societies of the world. The sudden explosion in the GDP started after the increase in oil prices and adverse condition of the oil market in the 1970s and 1980s. The government further adopted a controlled diversification policy that helped the non-oil sectors (ultimately trade as well) to rise.

Petroleum is the main dominant in the economy of the UAE; however, with the fast-paced modernization and economy, the Emirates is now opening opportunities for long-term investments by multinationals interested in entering the region of UAE and neighboring Middle East and North Africa's markets.

Tourism has been continuously helping with the transportation infrastructure and the government's intention to allow more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in certain sectors will help with promoting the growth in the retail sector.

Foreign Trade

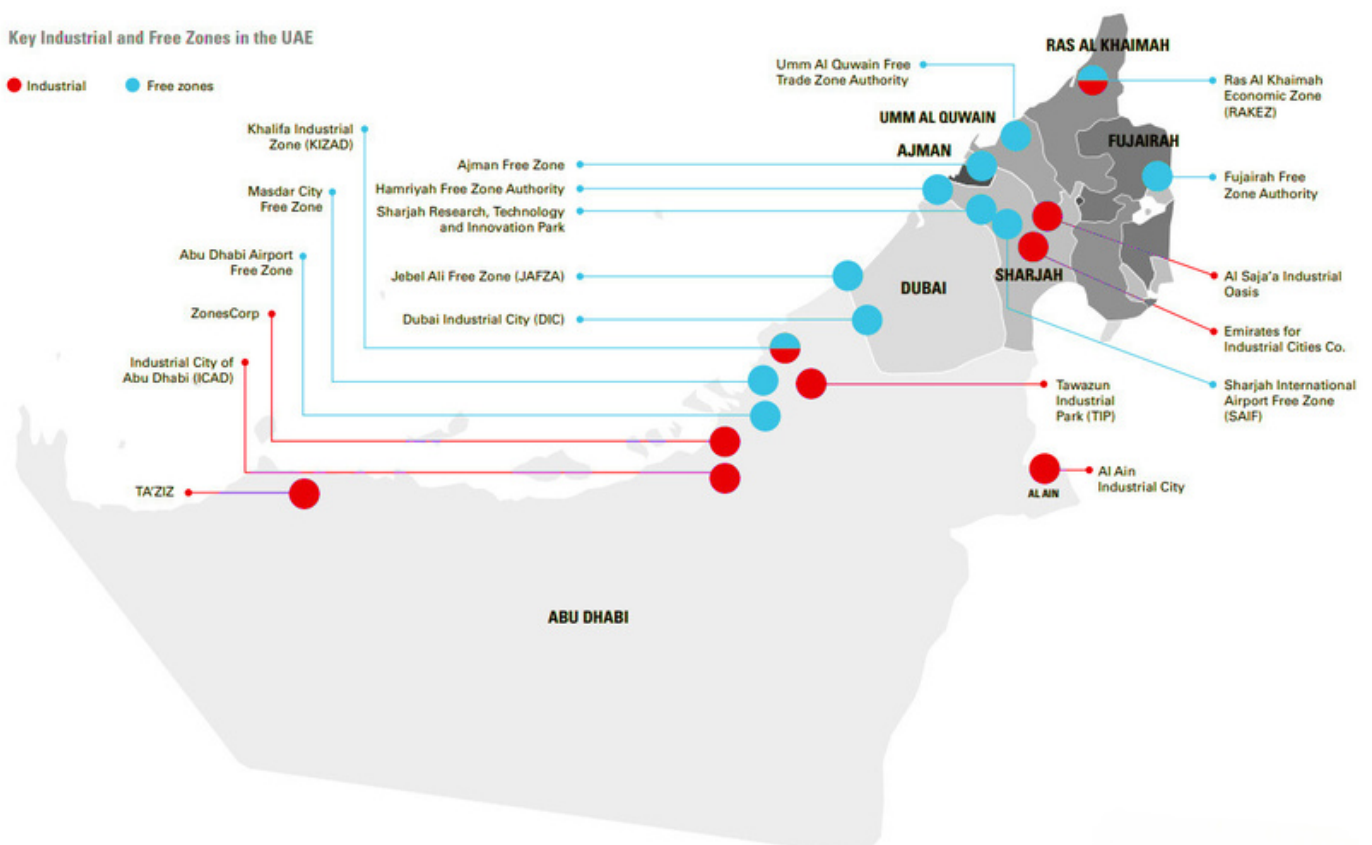
The foreign trade has noticeably increased before the growth rate in the region was affected by the recession. In order to maintain a consistent growth rate, the imports were pushed to escalate the re-export trade. This was further supported by the development of capital and consumption of goods.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The UAE's economy has expanded from last year by 7.6%, which is a double rise in the GDP recorded in 2021. The FDI of the region also hit the value of USD599 billion, up by 17% from the last year. Furthermore, IMF has predicted the real GDP to grow at the rate of 4.2 in the year 2023, which showcases a stronger rebound in the subsequent years.

Free Zones in the UAE

The Free Trade Zones (FTZs) are a true opportunity for the UAE to showcase the development and special area approach. There are over 40 of these economic areas where businesses can sell and trade their goods and services. Every zone has its unique benefits, including tax exemptions, recovery of capital and profits, and zero currency. These areas also offer 100% hassle-free foreign ownership of business.



Type of Free Zones

Other than the general greater benefits, free zones also offer specific industry-related perks such as freight, manufacturing, media, technology, or healthcare.

Generally, free zones comply with UAE license categories – industrial, commercial, and professional. The industrial license covers manufacturing and assembling, commercial includes all trading activities, and lastly, professional includes the service industries.

Freezone vs Mainland

UAE offers setting up of business in both the free zones and the mainland. If you are stuck in making a choice, here's a brief comparison of both to assist you in the decision:

| Features | Free Zone | Mainland |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Business Ownership | The UAE government allows for complete ownership, without the need of any local sponsor. | Full ownership is allowed in the UAE mainland as well; however, you do need a local sponsor or your activity need to be in the approved list of 100% ownership allowed. |
| Scope of Business | There are certain restrictions for the companies incorporated in the UAE free zones. The respective authority only allows business within the jurisdiction of particular freezone and outside UAE. | A business incorporated in the mainland is allowed to do business anywhere in the UAE market, which means they can conduct business activities both inside and outside of the UAE. |
| Office Space | There are no obligations for office space in the free zone. The offices can be formed inside or outside the premises. The UAE free zones also allow for virtual offices. | For a UAE mainland company, a minimum office space requirement of 140 sq ft. is mandatory based on office staff count. |
| Visa Eligibility | Free zones in the UAE have some restrictions on the number of visas. In most cases, the visas issued ranges from 1 to 6. The packages may vary with the zone jurisdiction. For more visa issuance demand, additional workspace will be required. | Mainland UAE has no restrictions for visa eligibility. The number of visas issued depends on the workspace. This means if the company requires more visas, they should have bigger work premises. |
| Company Audit | The financial audit report requirement depends on the free zone jurisdiction. Certain jurisdictions have exempted audit preparation. However, the FZE and FZCO entities should prepare year-end audit reports. | Company audit is mandatory for Mainland UAE. |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Capital Requirement | The capital requirement is determined by the Emirate in which the company is formed. | The capital requirement of the mainland UAE is determined by the legal structure. |
| Business Setup Approvals | Each free zone in the UAE has its own rules and regulations for company setup. Any external or government body approval is not required for company setup in the UAE free zone. | Approvals from different government bodies, like Department of Economic Development, Dubai Municipality, Ministry of Labor, etc. is required for company setup in mainland UAE. |
| Duty | No Duty | 0-5% Duty on imported goods. Duty exemption MOF is allowed for Raw material |
| Vat | No Vat (for gated freezone) | 5% Vat on imported goods |
| Corporate Tax | No Corporate tax if only import and reexport activity | Corporate tax 9% |

Advantages Of Setting Up a Business in a Free Zone

UAE free zones play an important role in attracting entrepreneurs to the region. Along with already attractive taxes and business environment, the free zones can help in reducing costs, streamline operations, and facilitate access to growing and bigger markets.

The top benefits of setting up a business in UAE free zones include:

Ownership

One of the biggest advantages of setting up a business in the free zone of the UAE is that you can keep the 100% ownership of your company. Moreso, you don't even need a local sponsor or a promoter to open a business in the free zone.

Ease of Doing Business

Setting up a business in UAE free zone is a simple process, with online applications on offer in many cases. As these areas are self-governing, there is no need to get any extra approvals to start trading. The zones also offer many workspace options, like private offices, coworking desks, warehouses, land, or factories for development, along with on-site leisure facilities and staff accommodation.

Once the business is set up in these areas, free zones can offer business support services, such as visa assistance, telecoms, mail handling, and more.

Tax Exemption

The UAE boasts a competitive tax regime, making it one of the few countries that levy 0% on personal and corporate income. However, it will add 9% corporate tax, starting from June 2023. Setting up a business in UAE's free zones enhances these benefits. All the companies in the free zone are exempt from customs tax and some of them do not have to pay VAT.

Access to Global Markets

With the tax exemptions, UAE free zones are very beneficial for those who want to trade with the markets worldwide. These economic zones are connected with land, air, and sea, so they are built for big import and export operations. These advantages are on top of the prime location of the UAE and its direct link to Europe, Middle East, Africa, Asia, to name a few for global trade.

More Business Opportunities

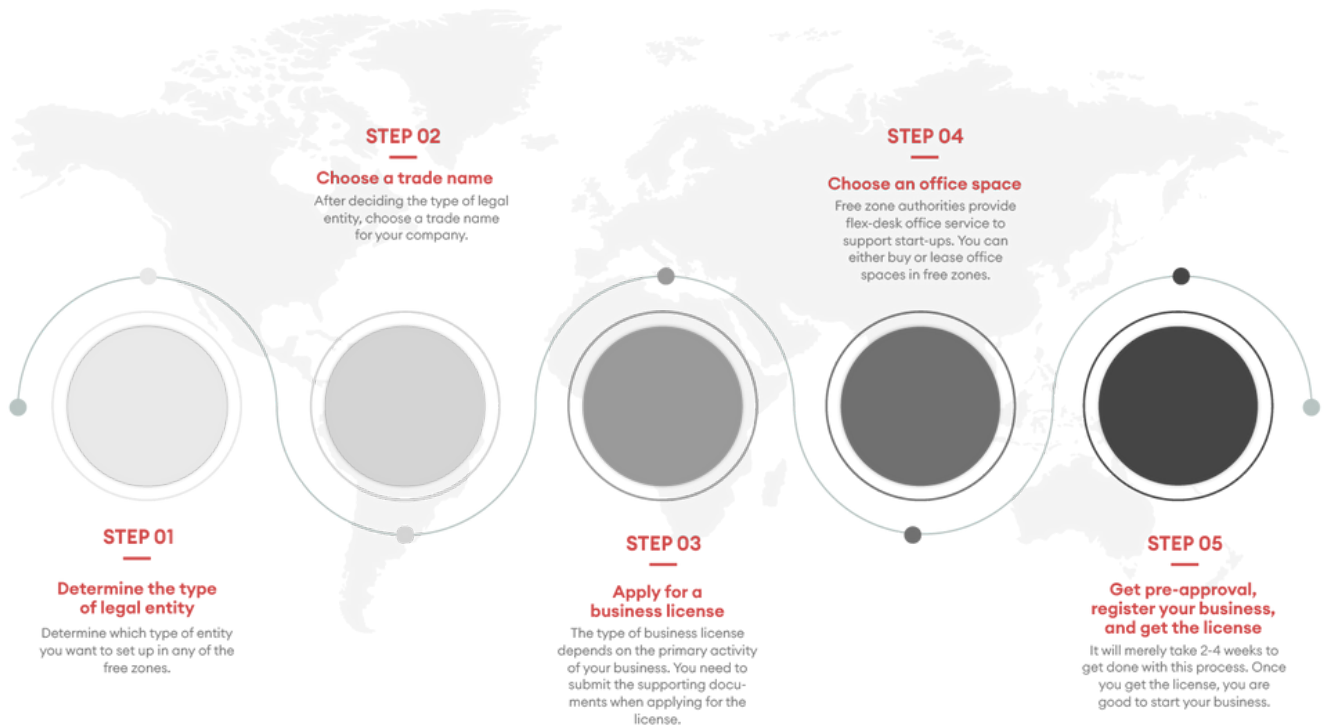
Free zones can cater to industry-specific support; however, the welcoming policy of many offers different opportunities. These economic zones are open to at least hundreds of business activities, potentially opening the door for many new markets and revenue streams.

Additional Benefits

Some additional perks of setting up business in UAE free zone include:

- Lower freight charges
- Inexpensive and abundant energy available
- Flexibility of 24/7 operations
- Up to 3-year UAE residence visa
- No restrictions on hiring expatriates
- Availability of freehold offices for lease or sale
- 100% free funds transfer, with no foreign exchange controls
- Streamlines and timely immigration process
- Liberal government policies and legal framework

Process to Set Up a Business in the UAE Free Zones



Choosing The Right Free Zone for Your Business

As with any business decision, there are several factors you need to consider while choosing the right free zone for your business, including:

Business Activities

While some free zones are open for everyone, there are some that are specific to industries, so the activities will play a major role in the business setup. Each free zone has its own specific set of activities that are allowed in the zone. The more activities you decide on, the more license will cost.

The industry-specific free zones can be beneficial, you can also consider networking and business opportunities at cross-industry locations.

Premises

Many of the free zones offer a variety of office spaces and business premises to help you get a good idea of what you need. If you have a service type business that has few employees, a private office may be enough. On the other hand, for the large-scale distribution or manufacturing businesses, a warehouse or factory space might be a good option.

Location

The location is a vital factor when picking a free zone for your business due to several reasons; the biggest one being its impact on the bottom line. Furthermore, the cost of the labor, accommodation, or business premises can be significantly different among the Emirates, which is why it is worth looking at different options.

Another aspect of location that businesses need to consider is whether they need to be closer to the sea or an airport. It is important to have a strategic transportation hub and routes to reduce the expenses as much as possible.

Services & Facilities

The facilities also vary between the different free zones. Some of them may offer common call or mail handling services, the others can provide many more services, including IT, marketing, and accounting, among others. Businesses should also check the other practical facilities, like internet speed, parking, or 24-hour access.

Share Capital Amount

One of the initial requirements of registering the company in any of the UAE's free zones is to deposit a share capital amount. This can be deposited in the company's account or the UAE Free Zone's account. You should know the required minimum share capital required for the specific business activity before setting up a business. The minimum amount differs in each free zone. There are two options available for share capital:

- Authorized: Where you don't have to deposit any share capital.
- Paid-Up: You need to deposit the amount and show the proof to Free Zone Authority.

Financial Statements

Some of the free zones in the UAE require the submission of financial statements, such as annual audit reports. In the DMCC, it is mandatory to submit an audit report at the end of each financial year, or as specified in a Memorandum of Association (MOA). Furthermore, the report should be submitted through one of the DMCC approved auditors. If the businesses submit these reports in a timely manner, they will be able to apply for business loans at local banks. However, failure to submit the report on time can result in serious penalties.

Setting Up a Business in a Free Zone

The process of setting up a business in UAE free zones is relatively easier. The procedure and steps involved in the process depend on the jurisdiction you choose. In the following section, some of the mandatory steps are mentioned.

Determining A Legal Entity

The first step in setting up business in the free zone is to decide the legal entity; businesses can set up one or two more types of companies:

- Free Zone Company (FZ Co.) or Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ LLC)

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Capital Requirement

The capital requirements vary in different free zones. Here are the details for some of the free zones in the UAE:

- No minimum capital required at twofour54 Abu Dhabi.
- In KIZAD, LLC can be formed with the minimum paid-up capital requirement of AED 150,000.
- In Dubai Airport Free Zone, the minimum share capital to form FZ Co. is AED 1000.
- In DMCC, AED 50,000 per company and AED 10,000 per shareholder are the minimum share capital to form a free zone company. If a business wants to get a General Trading License, they should have a minimum share capital of AED 1 million.
- In Hamriyah Free Zone, an FZE can be formed with a minimum share capital of AED 150,000.

Choosing A Trade Name

While the process of type of legal entity is on its way, the businesses should also decide on the trade name. The respective free zone authority or Department of Economic Development can help you find the permitted trade names or if the selected name is already registered.

According to instructions on twofour54's website, the trading name of a FZ-LLC should not include 'United Arab Emirates' and 'Abu Dhabi'. For DMCC, click [here](#) to see the trading name restrictions. In general, for Department of Economic Development (DED) to approve a trading name, following conditions should be ensured:

- The name shouldn't violate any public morals or orders of the country.
- Name should be followed by the legal entity form, i.e., LLC or FZE.
- The proposed name should not be registered before.
- It should be suitable for the activity type and legal status.
- The name should not be any name of religion, government authority, or name of any other

Get A Business License

The next step in the process is to apply for a business license application. Some basic documents required for this purpose are:

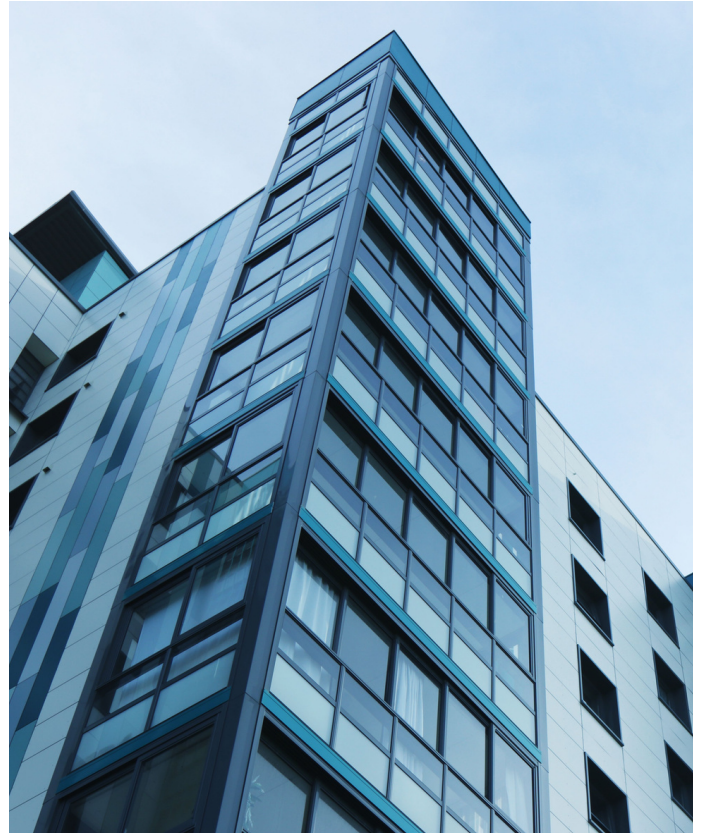
- Passport and visa copy
- For non-residents, the copy of entry visa stamp or Emirates ID is required
- In case of partners, their copy of passport and visa will also be required
- Two colored passport-sized photographs
- Additional documents may also be required, such as business plans and other company supported documents, like approvals from government entities or no-objection certificates.
-

These requirements can be submitted directly to the free zone, online, or via email.

Pick An Office Space

The free zones in the UAE offer the option of buying or leasing office space. The requirement for office space depends on the number of employees or the business activity of the company. Some of the options at different free zones are:

- In DMCC, a flexi desk of 23-30 sqm or 200-265 sqm is available. Furthermore, an option of 2000 sqm each for offices running on multiple floors is also available.
- In Dubai Airport Free Zone, you can choose among different packages, including 'Office Packages', 'Executive Office', and 'Smart Desk Office' package.
- Whereas, the Hamriyah Free Authority can offer more than 100 executive office suites, with size ranges of 15 to 42 sqm, containing conference or internet facilities.



Get The Pre-approvals (Business Registration and Licenses)

Free zone companies are governed by the respective free zone authority. To get approvals for setting up the business, certain documents are required; the list depends on the business activity, company type, and authority's requirement. In this section, we've listed general guidelines to help businesses set up their company.



Initial Requirements

For initial approvals, businesses are required to submit:

- Application form
- Business plan
- Existing trade license or registration certificate
- Colored copies of passports of shareholder and manager/director of the company
- Specimen signature of shareholder and manager/director of the company
- Audit financial reports of 2 years for corporate entities/certificate of reference from personal bank of the shareholder(s)
- NOC by the current sponsor
- Title Deed
- Letter of Intent
- Registry Identification Code Form (RIC) for Director or Manager

In the case of freelancers, the document requirements are less. For most cases, they just need to submit:

- An application for registration
- CV
- Bank reference letter
- Registry Identification Code Form (RIC)

Registration

After the initial approvals, the next step is paying the registration and license fee. The amount of fee depends on the kind of license requirement. For this step, businesses need to provide:

- Complete registration application
- Attested Board Resolution with the name of Director/Manager
- Attested Power of Attorney given to Director/Manager
- Attested Memorandum and Articles of Association
- Attested Specimen Signature of Director/Manager
- Passport size photo of Director/Manager (with white background)
- Share capital information

License and Visa Process

- First, the authority will prepare the lease agreement
- Then, trade license will be issued, and the visa process will start

Allowed Activities in Free Zones

The free zone authorities in the UAE allows you to perform the following activities:

- Importing the raw material for manufacturing
- Storage or warehousing for products
- Processing, assembling, and packaging of products
- Exporting final products
- Offer services

If a business has a service license, it allows the investors to carry out services specified in the license within the free zone. The consulting services that can be offered include finance, management, investment, labor relations, industrial development, and more.

Other services could also include logistics support that can carry out insurance, cargo, freight forwarding, and other similar services.

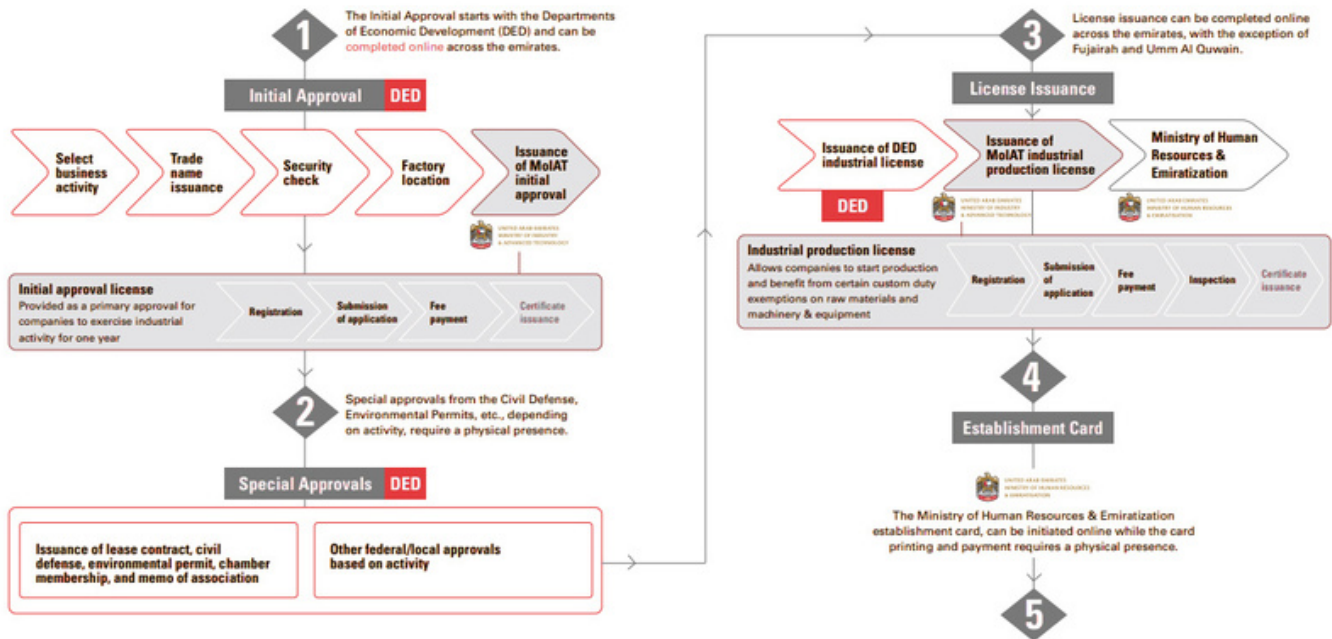
Type of Licenses

There are multiple license categories in the UAE freezones, which includes:

| License Type | Details |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Trading License | The trading licenses allow businesses to import raw materials, export, distribute, and store products specified in the license. |
| Service License | With this, the license holder can carry out different services that are mentioned in the license within the free zone. The services should comply with the license issued by the Economic Department or Municipality of relevant UAE's Emirate. |
| Industrial License | The industrial license allows the holder to import raw materials, process, manufacture, assemble, package, and then export the specified products to any country. |
| National Industrial License | This provides the holder with the same status as a UAE local. It requires that the company is registered with the national GCC country and has the majority ownership, 51% or above. Also, more than 40% of the manufacturing process should be in the free zone. |
| General Trading License | A General Trading License allows the holder to import, distribute, and store specified products in the license. |
| Professional License | These licenses are for people with certain professions, including IT, artisanal craftsmanship, technical services, consulting, medical services, printing, and many more. |
| Freelance License | Since the freelance community is increasing in the UAE, the government has created a license for freelancers to help them meet the sector's needs. |
| E-Commerce License | This type of license is for companies who want to engage in the e-commerce business, along with providing them with technical and marketing support. |
| Manufacturing License | This type of license is required to permit the companies in the free zone to manufacture products. |
| Warehouse License | This license helps to avail the warehousing facilities on lease in the free zone for the purpose of storage, packaging, and distribution. |

/ Industrial Licensing Journey

The Department of Economic Development (DED) is the local government body entrusted to set and drive the economic agenda for each emirate. The DED develops economic plans and policies, identifies strategic sectors, and provides services to domestic and international investors and businesses. The first step in registering an industrial company starts with the local DED of that emirate.



Popular Free Zones

Every free zone in the UAE has its unique set of features and benefits, and businesses can choose among them based on their requirements. However, based on the factors like quickest set-up time, cost-effectiveness, and growth, here are some top free zones that businesses can pick:

Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC)

This freezone is ideal for companies with trading and consulting activities. The license requirement for this economic zone is similar to the requirement of the Department of Economic Development. Furthermore, this is a preference for businesses who deal in precious metals, stones, etc.

Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZA)

JAFZA is the first ever free zone in the UAE that offers multiple benefits including vast territory, infrastructure, biggest seaport, and easy access. It is an ideal free zone for businesses that offers logistics, oil, and gas products.

Dubai Silicon Oasis

This free zone has an easy location and is cost-effective. It is an ideal location for call centers, tech start-ups, consulting, and engineering companies.

Ajman Free Zone Authority

The Ajman Free Zone Authority provides multiple installment payment plans and contains new warehouses and seaports. The location is an ideal option for small businesses, professionals, and trading companies.

Hamriyah Free Zone

The Hamriyah free zones offer easy visas with their own seaports. It is an ideal option for businesses who deal in oil and gas.

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Free Zones in the UAE

The different free zone in the UAE includes:

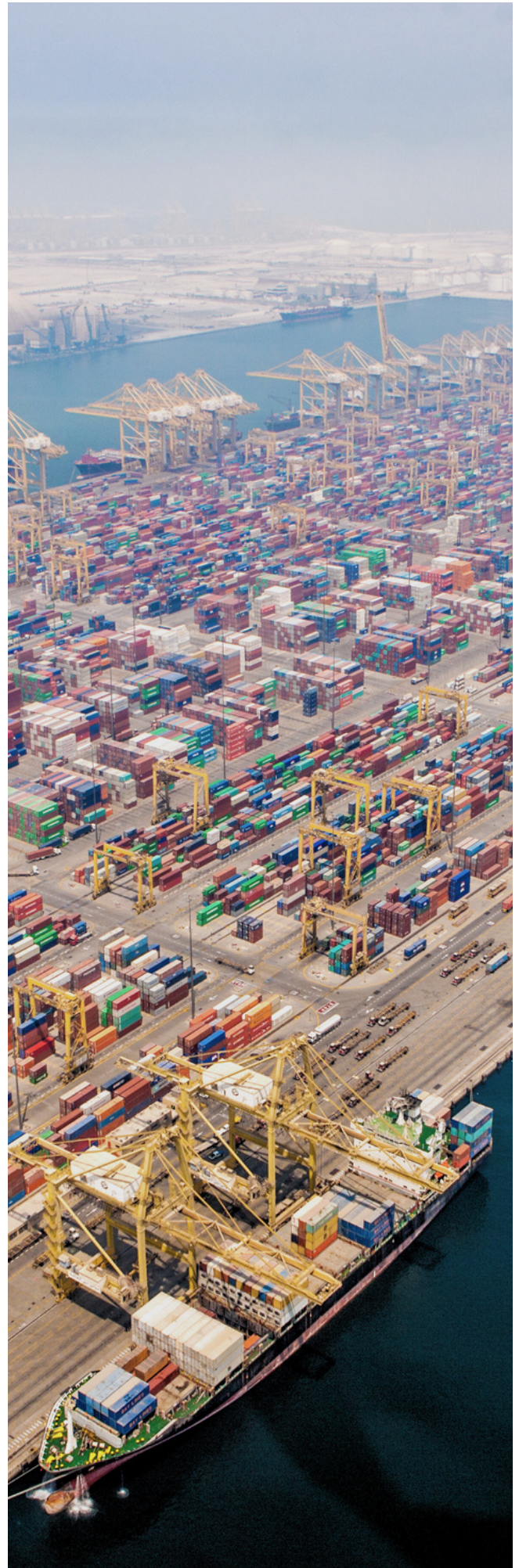
Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZA)

Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZ) is situated in Dubai and was established by decree No. 1 of 1985. It is known for being the world's largest man-made port. The primary purpose of JAFZA was to provide multinationals with a base for warehousing and distributing their products in the Gulf. However, over the years, JAFZA has expanded its range of industries from distribution to include manufacturing, trading, and services. It has become a market that covers regions beyond the Middle East, with over 7,000 companies, including several Fortune 500s.

Features

JAFZA offers various features, such as

- Excellent support services from Dubai ports authority's two modern terminals.
- Close proximity to the newly established Al-Maktoum international airport.
- Onsite facilities like the chamber of commerce, international banks, insurance companies, consultancies, etc.
- JAFZA allows mortgaging of company-owned facilities, excluding leased land, and lease periods of up to 10 years for trading and 15 years for manufacturing.
- The types of activities available at JAFZA include manufacturing, processing, assembling, packaging, import/export, distribution, storage, and services.



Forms of Registration

There are four forms of registration available at JAFZA, which include

- A branch of a foreign company
- A branch of a UAE company
- A Free Zone Company (FZCO) with no minimum capital requirement
- A Free Zone Establishment (FZE) with no minimum capital requirement.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|
| Land | Minimum 5000 sqm | 30-80 per sqm |
| Pre-built factories, warehouses, showrooms | 313-1110 sqm | 1,88000-666,000 per sqm |
| Offices | 27-100 sqm | 2,000-2,500 per sqm |

Other costs include:

- FZE Registration Fee – AED 10,000 (one time)
- FZCO Registration Fee – AED 15,000 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – AED 5,000 (one time)

The licenses required for JAFZA include,

- Industrial License - For 7-12 products and costs 5,500-9,000 AED per annum
- Trading License - For 7-12 products and costs 5,500-9,000 AED per annum
- General Trading License - It costs 30,000 AED per annum
- Logistics License (UAE-based company branch) - It costs 30,000 AED per annum
- Service License (UAE-based company branch) - It costs 8,000 AED per annum

Dubai Cars & Automotive Zone (DUCAMZ)

Dubai Cars & Automotive Zone (DUCAMZ) is an area established for the re-export of used cars to Asia and Africa. Located in Dubai, it encompasses a bonded area of one million square meters and provides easy access to airports and seaports in the region. Left-hand drive vehicles are exported locally, whereas right-hand drive vehicles are mainly exported to India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and other African countries.

Features

The zone features,

- Support services by the Government
- Competitive freight rates
- Solutions for administration problems

- Restriction-free zone for import of automobiles
- No import duties
- Hassle-free clearance from customs, port, police, and banks
- Reliable support systems

The facilities can be leased for 50 years, and the type of company activities would be limited to trading in cars only.

Forms of Registration

The forms of registration include

- A branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Company (FZCO) with a minimum share capital of AED 100,000
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE) with a minimum share capital of AED 1,000,000.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

The facility of showrooms with 10 sqm office is the only option available. As far as the other costs, these are some of the ones that businesses have to pay:

- Registration fee for FZCO – AED 20,000 (one time)
- Registration free for FZE – AED 15,000 (one time)
- Branch registration fee – AED 10,000 (one time)

The type of licenses required for DUCAMZ include Trading License that costs AED 12,000.

Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC)

The Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC) is a government entity established in 2002 with the goal of establishing a commodity marketplace in Dubai. The Centre offers a unique opportunity for participants in a wide range of metals and commodities industries, including the gold trade, diamond trade (housing a Diamond Exchange), and trading in other selected commodities. The DMCC offers ownership of business premises in addition to all other standard Free Zone services. DMCC's activities are organized into three main areas which are Gold and Precious Metals, Diamond and Colored Stones, and Commodities. The infrastructure at DMCC accommodates every facet of the business, including manufacturing, trade, education, certification, and technology. DMCC has strengthened Dubai's position as the leading regional center for bullion business by offering improved facilities to enterprises establishing themselves under the Centre's auspices.

To further boost the regional diamond trade, the Dubai Diamond Exchange (DDE) was established, which is the first WFDB (World Federation of Diamond Bourses) affiliated bourse in the Arab World. DMCC also formed the Dubai Gold and Commodities Exchange (DGCX) by entering into a joint venture between MCX (Multi Commodity Exchange of India) and FTIL (Financial Technologies India Ltd). DGCX provides advanced electronic infrastructure and an organized monitored environment. DMCC has implemented the Kimberley Process in the United Arab Emirates to streamline the trade with global standards and protect the legitimate diamond industry.

Jumeirah Lakes Towers (JLT) is also one of the designated areas within the Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC). The DMCC Authority (DMCCA) is the licensing authority for businesses operating in the Jumeirah Lakes Towers, which benefit from a Free Zone status, making JLT the first mixed-use Free Zone freehold development in Dubai. Out of the 79 towers, 3 towers have been developed by

DMCC: Almas, Au, and Ag Towers. The Almas Tower is the natural focal point of the development and houses the DDE and DMCC member businesses in the gold, diamond, energy, and commodities industries.

Features

- DMCC offers trading in various commodities. The list includes gold and precious metals, diamonds and colored stones, and other services complementing the main core business.
- DMCC offers a 50-year tax holiday.
- DMCC serves as the dedicated global hub for over 13,000 businesses and serves as the center of an inspiring property environment, setting standards in design thinking for the world.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Cost (AED/Annum) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Flexi Desk | 16,000-19,000 |
| Service Desk | 22,000-35,000 |
| Serviced Office | 35,000-70,000 |
| Leased Office – Core and Shell | From AED 60-150 per sq ft. |
| Leased Office - Fitted | From AED 75-180 per sq ft. |
| Leased Office in DMCC Community | From AED 10-100 per sq ft. |
| Office Security Deposit | 5% of the lease rental |
| Number of Visas Eligible | Per 9 sqm (one visa) |
| Registration Fees for General Trading | 10,265/30,265 |
| MOA issuing fees | 2,265 |

- The type of license required for this free zone includes:
- Specific Trading License that costs AED 20,265
- Service License that costs AED 20,265
- General Trading License that costs AED 50,265

Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZ)

Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZ) is wholly owned by the Government of Dubai and was established under Law No.2 of 1996 and its amendment No.2 of 2000. It is situated within the boundary of Dubai International Airport, making it a prime location for high-tech/IT products, luxury items, jewelry, light industry, and activities related to the aviation industry. DAFZ has attracted multinational companies from all over the world by offering an excellent incentive package, connectivity, and support, allowing them to establish regional offices in Dubai and take advantage of business opportunities throughout neighboring markets. Additionally, its proximity to one of the busiest airports in the world and its hosting of various world-class international business and commercial events gives investors a strategic advantage.

DAFZ offers an array of business services, including fast processing of paperwork, rapid customs clearance, valuable expertise amongst their staff, and an approach that facilitates business for tenant companies, leading to the loyalty and diversity of its clients, totaling around 1500 companies.

Features

- The free zone provides fast and efficient cargo clearance services within 8-24 hours.
- International Freight Forwarders and Logistics companies are located within its premises.
- DAFZ also offers online customer service (e-Services).
- The land offers easy access to the airport apron.

Forms of Registration

- Businesses looking to register in DAFZ can choose from three forms of registration:
- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Company (FZCO), which requires a minimum share capital of AED 1,000.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

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| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Light Industrial Units | 350 sqm | 800/ sqm |
| Offices | At Least 25 sqm | 1,800-2,200/ sqm |
| Smart Desk | Exclusive furnished desk space | 50,000 / annum |
| Business Enabled Office | 50 sqm | 4,000/month for branch and 12,000/month for FZE |

Other costs include,

- FZE Registration Fee – AED 10,000 (one time)

The license required for the DAFZ include,

- Industrial License – costs AED 10,000 per annum
- Trading License – costs AED 10,000 per annum
- Service License – costs AED 10,000 per annum

Dubai South (DS) or DWC

Dubai Aviation City Corporation (DACC) is a wholly owned government company established by Dubai Law No. 8/2006 to develop and operate Dubai South (DS). DS is a master-planned city centered around Al Maktoum International Airport, which is located in Jebel Ali, Dubai. The city aims to become a sustainable, smart, and inclusive society where happy, creative, and empowered people live, work and invest.

DS has a free zone for businesses operating in the aviation and logistics industries, and it is strategically located to facilitate easy imports, exports, and logistics operations through aviation, seaport, and road connections. The city is designed to support every conceivable kind of business and industry and is projected to sustain a population of one million and create 500,000 jobs.

The city has three main free zone areas: Dubai Logistics City, Dubai Aviation City, and Premium Business Park. Each zone offers a range of facilities and services, including warehouses, offices, and long-term leases of development land.

Features

- DS offers a variety of licensing options
- Flexible commercial lease terms
- Direct access to Al Maktoum International Airport
- DS has free zone status
- 100% foreign ownership
- No corporate tax
- No minimum share capital requirement

Forms of Registration

- Businesses looking to register in DS can choose from following forms of registration:
- Branch of a UAE or a foreign company
- Dubai World Central Limited Liability Company (DWC-LLC) with a minimum share capital of AED 300,000

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

- The license required for this free zone include:
- General Trading License – costs around AED 20,000
- Trading/Service/Logistics/Educational/Industrial - costs around AED 10,000
- Establishment card, P.O. Box, etc. - costs around AED 4,000
- Freelance Permit – costs around AED 7,020

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Executive Office or Smart Office | Multiple options | 29,900-125,000 |
| DS Headquarter (min 50 sqm office) | Multiple options | Rental cost: starts from AED 1,250/sqm Service cost: AED 250/sqm (electricity and AC included) |
| East and West Wing Buildings | Multiple options | Rental cost: starts from AED 800/sqm Service cost: AED 150/sqm (DEWA and District Cooling not included) |
| Warehouse | Varies with requirement | Starts from AED 600 sq/m |
| Land | Varies with requirement | 38-44/sqm |

Meydan Free Zone (MFZ)

Meydan is a significant new development in Dubai that includes the Meydan Free Zone and four sub-districts. Meydan City Corporation oversees the project, which features a world-class horseracing development with a grandstand, business and conference district, and a variety of state-of-the-art business parks, luxury waterfront developments, and shopping destinations.

Meydan Free Zone, located in the heart of Dubai, offers businesses a competitive advantage with affordable start-up costs, a prime location, and excellent incorporation facilities. It boasts an extensive transport network, cutting-edge telecommunications, a wide range of banking services, high-speed internet connectivity, and IT support by professionals worldwide.

Advantages

- Setting up in Meydan Free Zone offers many advantages, such as
- 100% business ownership for expats and sole shareholders
- The flexibility to operate through a flexi-desk
- A strategic location near Dubai Logistics Corridor
- A secure regulated environment
- A 50-year tax holiday on personal and corporate tax
- 100% capital repatriation
- The licensing and registration procedures are efficient
- Free zone offers manufacturing/industrial, trading, and service licenses

Forms of Registration

- Business operations in Meydan Free Zone can be structured as a
- Branch of a foreign/local company
- Free Zone Sole Establishment (FZE) with one shareholder
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ LLC) with two to seven shareholders
- For FZE and FZ LLC, a minimum share capital of AED 100,000 and a bank deposit of capital are required

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

- The facility and license cost at MFZ includes,
- One time registration fees for FZE and FZCO - AED 10,010
- Annual Flexi Virtual Office Lease - AED 6,000
- Every 3-year Visa cost (per visa) - Approx. AED 4,000
- Annual miscellaneous expenses – Approx. AED 2,000
- Annual Manufacturing/ Trading, Service License fee – AED 10,010

Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO)

Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO) is a unique industrial park, created by the Dubai Airport Free Zone Authority, aimed at advancing the semiconductor industry. With the aim of triggering a paradigm shift in the worldwide semiconductor industry, DSO represents a collaborative initiative that brings together decisive forces that have shaped the semiconductor industry. It covers an area of 6.5 million square meters and is the world's first and only purpose-built industrial park for the semiconductor industry.

DSO offers developed land for customized buildings as well as ready-built space that includes power, water, telecom, and datacom. It provides a comprehensive range of facilities required for success in today's fast-changing world. These include incubators, networking and outsourcing support, venture capital, consulting, and business linkups.

Features

- DSO features,
- A world-class campus with well-executed layout
- Plug-and-play facilities
- All-inclusive support facilities for IC companies
- Brings together all suppliers and service providers under one roof, providing cost and time savings
- Fosters a mutually supporting community that encourages joint projects and shared facilities
- Suitable for various types of company activities, including CAD/CAE companies, design companies, packaging companies, testing companies, and more.

Forms of Registration

- DSO offers four forms of registration:
- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Company (FZCO) with the minimum share capital of AED 10,000
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE) with the minimum share capital of AED 10,000

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Office | Min 50 sqm | Starts from 1,500/sqm |
| Warehouse | Min 366 sqm | 600/sqm |
| Land Minimum | 5000 sqm | Approx 150-250 sqm |

Other costs include:

- FZE Registration Fee – AED 5,000 (one time)
- The type of license required for this free zone include:
- Manufacturing license; costing AED 12,000/ annum
- Trading license; costing AED 12,000/ annum
- Service license; costing AED 12,000/ annum

Dubai Internet City (DIC)

Dubai Internet City (DIC) is one of the clusters within the Dubai Development Authority (DDA) Free Zone, established under Law No. 1 of 2000 of the Emirate of Dubai. DIC serves as a knowledge-economy ecosystem designed to support the development of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) companies. As the Middle East's largest IT infrastructure built within a Free Trade Zone, DIC is fully supported by the Government of Dubai, and its corporate laws empower companies within the community to grow.

DIC provides a strategic base for businesses targeting emerging markets, covering 1.6 billion people across a vast region extending from the Middle East to the Indian subcontinent, Africa, and the CIS countries. Over 1,600 businesses of all sizes, including Fortune 500 companies, SMEs, start-ups, and entrepreneurs, are currently located within the DIC community.

Features

- Features of Dubai Internet City include,
- State-of-the-art technology
- Top-of-the-line technical infrastructure
- Flexible office space
- Boasts the largest commercial internet protocol telephony system in the world
- Stringent cyber regulations
- A rich network of resources, partnerships, and ideas
- Companies can easily and quickly register and obtain licensing in DIC, and they have the option to lease for up to 20 years
- DIC supports various types of company activities, such as software development, business services, web-based and e-commerce, consultancy, education and training, sales and marketing, and back-office operations

Forms of Registration

- Businesses can register in DIC in the form of a
- Branch of a foreign company with no minimum capital required
- Branch of a UAE company with no minimum capital required
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ-LLC), with a minimum share capital of AED 50,000 and a maximum capital depending on authorities' review of the business plan.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Office | Starts from 40 sqm | 1,900/ sqm |

Other costs include,

- FZ-LLC Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)
- Freelance Permit – AED 7,500/annum

Dubai Outsource City (DOC)

Dubai Outsource City (DOC) is a Free Zone exclusively designed for outsourcing companies, providing them with a comprehensive infrastructure and environment to establish global or regional hubs that serve the worldwide market. This initiative is brought by Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone, and it is a unique business community that supports the growth and development of the region's outsourcing, shared services, and business process outsourcing sectors.

DOC is an initiative of Dubai Internet City, a state-of-the-art global hub in Dubai, and it serves as the perfect base for companies offering mid to high-end IT and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) services. The sectors covered include finance, accounting, IT, payroll processing, graphic design, engineering, biotech, R&D, and design. It also provides disaster recovery facilities for call centers located offshore in other parts of the world. The Zone caters to offshore requirements from Europe, USA, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa.

The infrastructure provided by DOC is custom-made to enable outsourcing companies to establish efficient operations and support their growth. The package of telecom services includes high-bandwidth connectivity, IP telephony, Automatic Call Distribution (ACD), Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and Predictive Dialing Systems, Satellite Communication Services, as well as technical and infrastructure support. These facilities form part of a plug-and-play infrastructure that enables offshore service providers to start operations quickly with minimal upfront investment.

Features

Features of Dubai Outsource City include

- 100% tax exemption
- 100% recovery of capital and profits
- Host of support services to eliminate problems faced by outsourcing companies and reduce operational hassles for outsourcing service providers. These support services include speedy incorporation and trade licensing, hospitality services, event management services, and more.

Forms of Registration

- There are three forms of registration available for companies looking to establish a presence in Dubai Outsource City:
- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ LLC) with a minimum share capital of AED 300,000

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|---------------|--------|------------------|
| Office | Varies | 105/ sq ft. |

Other costs include,

- FZ LLC Registration Fee – costing AED 3,510 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – costing AED 3,510 (one time)
- PSA Fee for each employee – costing AED 2,500 (one time)
- Outsource Activity – costing AED 15,000/ annum (one activity allowed in the segment)

Dubai Media City (DMC)

Dubai Media City (DMC) was established by the Emirate of Dubai's Law No. 1 of 2000. Over time, DMC has emerged as a significant global media hub, providing media-related businesses with a supportive environment and advanced infrastructure to operate worldwide from Dubai.

The government of Dubai fully supports DMC and has implemented Free Zone-specific corporate laws to enable companies to thrive. DMC fosters an environment that encourages companies and individuals to work together in harmony and with the freedom to create. DMC offers an advanced infrastructure that encompasses a global interconnected network, including satellites, computers, the internet, television, radio, journalism, cinema, and film production. Many international companies, including industry giants such as CNN, Reuters, Sony Broadcast & Professional, McGraw Hill Publishing, Bertelsmann, and MBC, have already established their presence in DMC, alongside regional companies and start-ups.

Features

DMC offers a range of features to its occupants, such as

- Most advanced scalable IT network
- Satellite uplink/downlink facilities
- Post-production studios
- Shared business centers
- Customer care center that provides technical and support services
- Special facilities for professional freelancer
- 50-year lease contracts for land and buildings
- The types of company activities supported by DMC include broadcast services, music, video/audio publishing, production and post-production, advertising agencies, studios, and more.

Forms of Registration

- There are three forms of registration available for companies:
- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ LLC). The minimum share capital required for FZ LLC is AED 50,000, and the maximum depends on the authorities' review of the business plan.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Office | 500 sq ft. onwards | 190/ sq ft. |
| Business Center | Differ | 350-450/ sq ft. |

Other costs include,

- FZ LLC Registration Fee – costing AED 3,500 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – costing AED 3,500 (one time)
- Freelance Permit – costing AED 7,500/ annum

Dubai Production City (DPC)

Dubai Production City (DPC) was established as a dedicated trade zone for media-related production activities, as part of the Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone and Sheikh Mohammed's vision to transform Dubai into a media hub. DPC offers a highly pro-business environment, complete technology, and community infrastructure to support and encourage the growth of media production.

DPC provides a unique cluster environment for media production companies from around the world to interact and collaborate effectively, with a focus on Graphic Art, Publishing, and Packaging. Companies joining DPC can benefit from 100% ownership and are exempt from most corporate and personal taxes, including those for machinery, equipment, raw materials, and spares. By co-existing in a single location, print companies can efficiently coordinate production activities with feeder companies like machinery and equipment providers and suppliers of raw materials and spares, while small and medium-sized businesses can reduce time and costs by availing several shared services.

DPC offers superior infrastructure for various activities, including leasehold land and distinct units for printing, production, and warehousing. Printing companies also have the option of taking multiple units or having a combination of both land and production units. The site's infrastructure includes renewable energy sources to ensure reliable and clean power, while promoting eco-friendly industrial environments through tested concepts and practices for recycling waste and utilizing each other's by-products.

DPC allows for the clustering of various activities, including Printing and Manufacturing Machinery, Printing Press, Packaging, Publishing, New Media like Digital and Interactive Game Development, Media Services, and Storage.

Features

The facilities include,

- State-of-the-art communications
- High-quality thermally insulated production units
- A complete facility for production operations
- Land lease for 30 years

Forms of Registration

- The companies can register as a
- Branch of a foreign or UAE company
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ-LLC), with the share capital dependent on the business activity, ranging from AED 50,000 to AED 500,000

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Office Space | Starting from 80 sq. ft | AED 95-200/ sq. ft |
| Warehouse/ Production Units (with attached offices) | Starting from 8,276 sq. ft | AED 55/ sq. ft |

Other costs include:

- Registration fee – AED 3,500 (one-time)

Dubai Studio City (DSC)

Dubai Studio City is a Free Zone that focuses on creating and providing a world-class infrastructure to facilitate the growth of the television, film, and music industries in the region. It is a part of the DDA Free Zone Cluster and is designed to accelerate the development of broadcast, film, television, and music production industries. The facility integrates every component of content production and broadcast under one roof, covering production, post-production, broadcast, equipment rental, freelancers, commercial offices, business centers, and satellite facilities, among others.

Dubai Studio City covers an area of 22 million square feet, which also includes residential areas, hotels, an entertainment center, film schools, and training institutes. This unique combination of world-class infrastructure, qualified professionals, and a unique networking environment makes it an ideal location for creative people to unleash their imagination. Dubai Studio City provides an industry cluster environment with excellent networking opportunities. Support services such as marketing and ancillary services are also available, making it an ideal destination for the audio-visual industry.

The audio-visual industry has undergone a revolutionary change over the past few years. With the rapid increase in the number of TV channels, TV content production and distribution have become the fastest-growing media industry. Technically advanced animation films are gaining popularity, and digital portable devices are reinventing the music industry. In this exciting scenario, it makes sound business sense to invest in a cost-competitive development like Dubai Studio City, which has the potential to make history.

Features

Dubai Studio City offers,

- Industry Cluster Environment
- Advanced And Scalable Telecoms and Broadband
- Networking Opportunities
- Creative And Innovative Energy in the Zone for New Ideas
- Commercial, Residential, Educational, And Recreational Facilities
- The Types of Company Activities Include TV And Radio Broadcasting, Broadcast Management, Filmed Entertainment, Film Production/Post-production, Sound Production, Various Production Services, Music, And Entertainment, Among Others

Forms of Registration

Dubai Studio City offers three forms of registration:

- A branch of a foreign company
- A branch of a UAE company
- A Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ-LLC). The share capital depends on the business activity and varies from AED 50,000 to AED 2,500,000.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|---------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Commercial | Starting from 500 sq. ft | AED 105/ sq. ft |

Other costs include:

- FZ-LLC Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)

Dubai Studio City (DSC)

Dubai Knowledge Park (DKP) is a free zone established in 2003 by TECOM Group, with a focus on Human Resource Management (HRM) and learning excellence. The goal is to develop the talent pool in the region and establish the UAE as a knowledge-based economy. DKP offers a variety of programs in HRM, Consultancy, Training and Personal Development, with top-class Business Partners providing diplomas and certificates of the highest caliber to students.

Flexible solutions are provided by DKP, with assistance from their innovative customer service team. DKP business partners have set up training centers, institutes and HR agencies to sustain and secure their market share in this booming sector.

Features

Dubai Knowledge Park offers,

- Government Support Services
- Conference Centers and Dormitories
- Multimedia Library and Other Common Facilities
- Facility Lease for Up To 50 Years.
- Company Activities Include IT And Media Corporate Schools, Executive Education Centre, HR Development Centre, Professional Training Centers, Vocational Training Centers, Assessment Centre, Testing Centre, Linguistic Institute, Innovation Centre, Academic Service Provider, School, E-learning Provider, And More

Forms of Registration

Forms of registration include,

- Branch of a foreign company (with no minimum capital required)
- Branch of a UAE company (with no minimum capital required)
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ-LLC) with a minimum share capital of AED 50,000.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Closed Office/Executive temp office | Differ | Starting from 60,000 |
| Commercial office (no furnishing) | No space limits | 190 sq. ft |
| Retail Office | Different sizes | 200 sq. Ft onwards |

Other costs include,

- FZ-LLC Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)
- Freelance Permit – AED 7,500/ annum

Dubai International Academic City (DIAC)

Dubai International Academic City (DIAC) is a unique initiative by Dubai Knowledge Park (DKP) aimed at developing the region's talent pool and accelerating its move into a knowledge-based economy. DIAC is the world's only free zone dedicated to international higher education and is located in Dubai Academic City. The DIAC campus spans 25 million square feet, providing an intellectually inspiring environment for students and faculty from premier international higher education institutions.

DIAC currently houses many international universities from diverse regions, including Australia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, Belgium, the UK and Ireland. However, the authority expects to further house 25 international universities to cater to more than 30,000 students in the future. These institutions offer a wide range of programs, including engineering, computer science, fashion and design, biotechnology, environmental studies, quality management, and business management programs.

The selection of international universities depends on a number of criteria, including university ranking, strength, and programs that correspond to the UAE's industry needs. Benefits for DIAC investors include 100% foreign ownership, 100% tax-free, and 100% repatriation of profits. DIAC offers many facilities, including areas dedicated to the international education zone, research and development centers, sports facilities, student unions, student and faculty accommodations, wellness centers, dining facilities, and entertainment venues, including movie theatres and gaming centers.

Features

Following are the features of this free zone:

- Government support services
- Wellness centers and facilities
- Sports centers
- Student accommodation
- Multimedia library
- The company activities include universities, college, library management, academic support, etc.

Forms of Registration

DIAC provides a range of forms of registration, including

- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ-LLC), with a minimum share capital that varies and depends on the authorities after reviewing the business plan.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Executive Offices (Furnished) | Less than 10 sq meter | 45,000 |
| Offices | 400-800 sq. ft | 150/ sq. ft |

Other costs include:

- FZ LLC Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)

Dubai Science Park (DSP)

Dubai Science Park (DSP) is the first community in the region that serves the entire value chain of the science sector as a Free Zone, and is dedicated to supporting scientific entrepreneurs, SMEs, and multinational enterprises. It is designed to cater to the needs of businesses and professionals working in life sciences, and fosters an environment that encourages scientific research, creativity, innovation, and passion. DSP provides office and laboratory space, robust infrastructure, and a vibrant community for residents, ensuring a supportive eco-system for businesses to flourish and bring about sustainable change and improvement to the world.

DSP is a unique destination for clean energy and environmental technology companies to operate, offering a fully integrated knowledge community that includes programs, services, partnerships, and amenities to support the success of environment companies and their employees.

DSP's infrastructure includes renewable and efficient water utilities and clean and efficient transportation facilities, and the park emphasizes the use of intelligent building systems, including energy management control, renewable energy production monitoring, fire alarm monitoring, and security systems. The park also prioritizes Clean Vehicle technologies, with circulation within the zone dedicated to green cars certification standards and a fully pedestrian-friendly area. It also features renewable and efficient utilities such as water conservation and reclamation, and gas/hydrogen infrastructure.

Features

Features of DSP include

- 100% tax-free and 100% foreign ownership
- No corporate tax or income tax for 50 years
- No customs duty
- Full currency convertibility
- Hassle-free company laws and legal framework
- The park is specifically designed to cater to the needs of businesses and professionals working in life sciences

Forms of Registration

Forms of registration include a

- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ LLC) with a minimum share capital of AED 50,000-300,000

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Land | Varies | Varies |
| Executive Office | 1000 sq. ft | 120-180 sq. ft |
| Service Office | Varies | 25,000-85,000 |
| Laboratory | Varies | 160/ sq. ft |
| Warehouse | Varies | 60/ sq. ft |

Other costs include,

- FZ LLC Registration Fee – AED 3500 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – AED 3500 (one time)

Dubai Science Park (DSP)

d3 is a community of creative individuals and businesses that are driving Dubai's transition towards an innovation-led economy. It seeks to inspire, engage and empower emerging talent while showcasing Arab creativity to a global audience.

This free zone is located adjacent to Dubai's Business Bay area and is spread over an area of over 25 million square feet. The goal is to attract leaders in the fashion, art, and design industries, including international brands, to establish Dubai as a regional hub for the sector. The ultimate objective of d3 is to be the hub of the Middle East's design scene, where local designers can collaborate with global brands and promote their creativity. The aim is to nurture local talent, hoping that the next global brand will emerge from Dubai.

While the construction of d3 is still ongoing, it is already accepting numerous applications for corporate entity registration and issuing licenses. Entities that are licensed before the completion of the d3 facilities can operate from offices located anywhere in Dubai until the physical launch of d3 takes place.

Features

- 100% foreign ownership and 100% tax-free
- No corporate or income tax for 50 years
- No customs duty
- Companies registered in free zones administered by TECOM or the DIFC can migrate to d3
- Businesses registered in d3 can apply for two licenses, enabling them to operate within d3 and the Dubai mainland
- On a case-by-case basis, d3 may allow 100% foreign ownership of restaurant businesses, and select venues may be awarded alcohol licenses

Forms of Registration

- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ LLC) - The minimum share capital varies from AED 50,000 to AED 100,000, depending on the authorities' review of the business plan

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Core and Shell Office | Starting from 1000 sq. ft | 180/sq. ft |

Other costs include:

- FZ LLC Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – AED 3,500 (one time)

Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC)

The inception of DIFC was the brainchild of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, who envisioned an international financial center in Dubai. DIFC is expected to contribute significantly to the GDP growth of Dubai, as well as that of the UAE and the region as a whole.

DIFC is classified as an "onshore" financial center that provides a platform for leading financial institutions and service providers interested in doing business in the region. It was established to position Dubai as a recognized hub for institutional finance and the regional gateway for capital and investment. Its objective is to play a pivotal role in meeting the growing financial needs and requirements of the region while strengthening links between the financial markets of Europe, the Far East, and the Americas. The DIFC is a Federal Financial Free Zone attached to the Government of Dubai, established in accordance with UAE Federal Law and by Dubai Law.

However, certain legal restrictions apply to authorized firms in DIFC, such as not being able to offer any products or services to the retail market, insurance activities in the UAE being limited to re-insurance, and DIFC entities being unable to take deposits or deal with any products or services in UAE Dirham. Moreover, all DIFC licensed entities must be resident in the DIFC, and if no space is available, they may apply to be resident in Dubai until space becomes available. While the DFSA permits a wide range of financial services to be carried out from within the DIFC, some restrictions apply.

DIFC offers internationally accepted laws and regulatory processes, a world-class, independent regulatory agency working alongside other financial regulatory agencies located in major global jurisdictions, a fully transparent operating environment complying with global best practices, a dollar-denominated environment, and an international stock exchange with primary and secondary listings of debt and equity instruments.

Entities can be set up in DIFC as

- Authorized firms
- Authorized market institutions
- Ancillary service providers

Forms of Registration

There are various forms of registration available. The types of legal entities that can be incorporated/registered in DIFC vary for financial services and non-financial services, and the principal forms of legal entities available within DIFC include

- Company Limited by Shares (LTD)
- Limited Liability Company (LLC)
- Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)
- Limited Partnership (LP)
- General Partnership (GP)
- Branch of a Foreign Entity (Recognized Entity)
- Representative Office

Facility Cost

The application fees for licensing vary depending on the types of financial services to be provided and the number of employees who will be Authorized Individuals. The highest application fee that can be charged is capped at US\$150,000. The application and license fees for this free zone includes:

- The Financial Services application fees range between US\$10,000 and US\$50,000, depending on the scope of the services a firm intends to offer.
- For each Authorized Individual, the application fee is US\$1,000, up to a maximum of US\$50,000.

Furthermore, fees for Retail Outlets and Corporate Entities include:

- The fee for reserving a name is US\$340.
- The fee for incorporating a Limited Liability Company is US\$3,400.
- The commercial license fee, payable upon incorporation and annual renewal, is US\$5,100.

Dubai Health Care City (DHCC)

The creation of Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC) was authorized by Decree No. 1 of 2003 with the aim of delivering exceptional healthcare services to individuals seeking medical care and wellness from the region, which includes GCC, Indian Subcontinent, Northern Gulf, Central Asia, the Levant, North and East Africa. The key objective of DHCC is to establish a world-class healthcare hub by bringing together healthcare professionals and service providers in Dubai.

DHCC provides specialized medical care in selected fields that are relevant to the health problems affecting patients in the area. The University Medical Complex is the core of the healthcare cluster economy and comprises a University Specialty Hospital, a Post-Graduate Medical School, Nursing School, and a Life Science Research Centre. These three components have enabled Dubai to take a leap forward in regional medical practices, developing a reputation for regional leadership through cutting-edge education and research, and becoming a global center of excellence in healthcare.

DHCC is an attractive destination for medical tourists, visiting physicians, conference attendees, postgraduate interns, and staff members. DHCC serves both medical and wellness clusters, with the latter focusing on long-term patient or customer health and wellness through a holistic approach that enhances quality of life.

Features

- Competitive operating costs
- Modern medical facilities
- Integrated healthcare community
- Specialized medical care
- Holistic centers, healthcare malls, and other supporting services
- Facilities available for lease or freehold basis
- The following activities are permitted within DHCC: wellness centers, nutrition centers, rehabilitation centers, health resorts and spas, health farms, research centers, pharmaceutical companies, private hospitals and clinics, nursing schools, science specialists, university complexes, tele-health and e-enabled services, etc.

Forms of Registration

Registration options include,

- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Company (FZ LLC) -share capital varies, depending on the type of project
- Clinical – Minimum AED 300,00
- Non-Clinical – Minimum AED 50,000
- Hospitals – AED 1,000,000, or as authority advises

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-------------------------|--------|------------------|
| Offices / Clinic Suites | Varies | 150-250/ sq. ft |
| Retail Unit | Varies | 275-400/ sq. ft |
| Land | Varies | Varies |

Other costs include,

- FZ-LLC Registration Fee – AED 3,500

The type of license required for this free zone include:

- Commercial License – costing AED 20,000/ annum
- Hospital License – costing AED 40,000-5000 (varies)
- Professional License – costing AED 15,000-20,000

Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC)

The Dubai World Trade Centre Authority (DWTC Authority) was founded by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister, Ruler of Dubai. The organization offers businesses a competitive and well-regulated ecosystem to operate in, both regionally and globally. As a public corporation with financial and administrative autonomy and full legal capacity, the DWTC Authority provides a flexible business-conducive environment in the heart of Dubai. The Free Zone is under the jurisdiction of the DWTC Authority and spans across locations within the Dubai World Trade Centre and the Dubai Trade Centre District. It currently houses over 100 commercial tenants, including international companies such as Shell, General Motors, and Halliburton, with an average occupancy of over nine years.

DWTC is adding three international Grade-A office buildings as part of its upcoming Dubai Trade Centre District (DTCD), which is a high-end mixed-use real estate development in the heart of Dubai's Power Corridor. DTCD will offer premium commercial and retail space and serve as a professionally managed destination that encourages global, regional, and local multinationals to establish their regional bases in Dubai. The development is located between the iconic Dubai World Trade Centre and Jumeirah Emirates Towers and has achieved LEED® Gold precertification from the US Green Building Council.

Features

The Free Zone provides numerous benefits for businesses, such as

- 100% foreign ownership
- 100% repatriation of capital
- Zero income tax for 50 years
- Zero corporate tax for 50 years
- No export taxes
- No restriction on currency and repatriation of funds
- No restriction on hiring foreign employees
- No restraints over the capital nationality
- Freedom to initiate multiple options for legal operating structures
- Flexibility to determine prices of services or products and the desired profit margin
- Additionally, the free zone provides a one-stop-shop service that offers a variety of government services, including company registration, licensing, visa, and other services.

Forms of Registration

The Free Zone offers a simplified incorporation process and provides a highly competitive, single point of contact operation for corporations. The types of companies that can be formed at DWTC Free Zone are

- Free Zone Establishment (FZE)
- Free Zone Company (FZCO)
- Branch of an L.L.C.
- Branch of a Foreign Company

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| No Serviced Office | 800-2500 sq. ft | 170/ sq. ft |
| Serviced Office | 160-400 sq. ft | 350/ sq. Ft (approximately) |

Other costs include,

- FZE Registration Fee – AED 10,000
- FZC Registration Fee – AED 15,000
- LLC/ Foreign Co. Branch Registration Fee – AED 5,000
- Business Operating Permit Fee – AED 5,000
- Renewal – AED 2,000
- Annual Recurring Cost – AED 27,300

The type of license required for this free zone include:

- Commercial License – costing AED 25,000
- Professional License – costing AED 25,000
- Regular trading/ consulting License – costing AED 28,300

Dubai Textile City

The Dubai Textile Village free zone was established by a partnership between TEXMAS and Dubai Port and Customs Authority to facilitate the textile industry in the Emirate and beyond. DTC offers warehousing, showroom, and office space, with access to top-notch logistics infrastructure, including two 40-foot bays for each warehouse, easy airport and port access, and ample free parking. The free zone, located in Al Awir, allows textile fabrics to be stored for extended periods without incurring the current 5% customs duty. Members of the DTC also receive support from Dubai Ports and Customs, who help with visa requirements.

Features

Businesses can take advantage of features like

- Easy setup and 24/7 assistance
- 100% ownership
- No intermediaries
- Stable legal system
- Low operating cost
- Easy access to ports, airports, and Emirates
- Gated and secure areas

Forms of Registration

Corporate structures available include,

- Free Zone Limited Liability Company
- Free Zone Company
- Branch of a Foreign or UAE Company

Facility Cost

- Costs vary depending on the activity type and jurisdiction, and setting up a textile trading business can cost as little as AED 7,000.



Free Zones in Sharjah

The different free zone in the UAE includes:

Sharjah Airport International Free Zone (SAIFZ)

The establishment of Sharjah Airport International Free Zone (SAIF Zone) dates back to 1995, when it was founded under Emiri Decree No. 2. SAIF Zone's strategic location on major trade routes connecting East and West provides businesses with exceptional global transportation links, including sea, land, and air connections to a market of over 1.4 billion consumers. This market includes GCC and Arab World member states, Iran, CIS countries, the Asian Sub-continent, and parts of Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. SAIF Zone is situated near Sharjah City, Sharjah International Airport, and Port Khalid, and it also has a secondary seaport in the Gulf of Oman at Port Khor Fakkan to enhance its location further.

Features

Features of SAIF Zone include

- A 25-year lease period
- SAIF zone is the world's first ISO certified airport free zone
- Only emirate with seaports on both the east and west coasts
- Ability to engage in various business activities, including manufacturing, processing, assembling, packaging, import/export, distribution, and storage services.

Form of Registration

Additionally, SAIF Zone has several forms of registration available, including

- A branch of a foreign company,
- A branch of a UAE company,
- A free Zone Company (FZCO) with a minimum share capital of AED 150,000
- A Free Zone Establishment (FZE) with a minimum share capital of AED 150,000

It is important to note that there is no need to deposit capital into a bank account for registration.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Land | Minimum 2500 sq. m | 25/ sq. m |
| Executive Offices | Minimum 9 sq. m (unfurnished) | 15,650 |
| Office Facility | Exclusive desk facility | 10,800 |
| Suite | Minimum 21 sq. m (furnished) | 28,650 |
| Factory/Warehouse | 125-600 sq. m | Ranges from 48,000- 190,300 |

Other costs include,

- FZE/FZCO Registration Fee – AED 5,000 (one time)
- Branch Registration Fee – AED 5,000 (one time)

The type of license required for this free zone include:

- Industrial License – costing AED 7,500-10,000
- Commercial License – costing AED 7,500-15,000
- Service License – costing AED 7,500
- General Trading License – costing AED 15,000
- Real Estate License – costing AED 15,000
- Aviation/ Shipping License – costing AED 15,000
- Oil & Gas – costing AED 15,000
- Freight Forwarding & Cargo Handling – costing AED 8,500

Sharjah Media City (SHAMS)

In January 2016, Sharjah Media City (SHAMS) was established by His Highness Dr Shaikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, through Emiri decree No. 10 of 2016. Its objective is to become a regional media center, and it is situated in the emirate of Sharjah, which is renowned as the cultural capital of the UAE. SHAMS, which opened in 2017, aims to be a premier destination for media and creativity in the region, with a mission to facilitate entrepreneurial growth and create a lively ecosystem for innovation to flourish.

As a world-class Free Zone hub for innovation, SHAMS offers specialized facilities to those who want to start and launch their businesses, setting the industry benchmark for service and support. SHAMS is a dynamic initiative that fosters strong links with its talented workforce, providing legal independence over licensing and media regulations, while adhering to the laws of the UAE and Sharjah. SHAMS prides itself on its smart innovative services and holistic community-focused approach, with a keen emphasis on nurturing local talent and producing localized content.

Features

- Shared desk facility with a maximum of 6 visas allocation.
- No deposit requirements.
- Investor visas available, with no age limits.
- Corporate Directors may be appointed to your company.
- Companies have limited liability.
- Capital and profits may be repatriated in full.
- 100% foreign ownership permitted.
- No corporate or personal income tax.
- Situated 5 minutes from Sharjah Airport and 25 minutes from Dubai Airport.

Form of Registration

- SHAMS LLC (with one or up to 50 shareholders)
- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a locally incorporated company

Facility and Types of Licenses

- SHAMS offers four facility options:
 -
 - Dedicated Desk
 - Shared Desk
 - Dedicated Office
 - Shared Office

The type of license required for this free zone include:

-
- Service/ Trading License (Activity Type 1 – Specific) - costing AED 11,500-25,000/ annum
- Service/ Trading License (Activity Type 2 – General) - costing AED 16,500-30,000/ annum

Sharjah Publishing City Free Zone (SPCFZ)

In 2017, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qassimi, the Ruler of Sharjah, established Sharjah Publishing City by Royal Decree. This world-first free zone exclusively serves the publishing industry and is managed by Sharjah Book Authority, a specialized branch of the Sharjah Government overseeing projects related to the ruler's vision for the Emirate. Companies in the publishing sector can enjoy independent ownership and operation while benefiting from tax-free privileges at SPCFZ. Besides, businesses can choose from a wide range of activities.

Features

- 0% taxation
- 100% business ownership
- 100% capital repatriation
- Full range of business activities related to publishing and printing
- Wide range of facilities, including furnished and unfurnished offices and storage available
- Prime central location with access to all emirates, Gulf Corporation countries, and close proximity to sea and airports

Form of Registration

- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Company (FZCO) – 2 to 7 shareholders
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE) – 1 shareholder

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Starter Package (for UAE Residents and GCC Citizens only) - no visa | Flexi Desk | 6,500 |
| Start-up Basic (1 visa) | Smart Office (40 hours/month) | 17,500 (cost of 1 visa included) |
| Premium Office (5 visa allocation) | 25 sq. m (unfurnished) | 25,250 |
| Platinum Office (5 visa allocation) | 25 sq. m (furnished) | 29,000 |

Sharjah Research, Technology and Innovation Park (SRTI Park)

The Sharjah Research, Technology and Innovation Park (SRTI Park) aims to become a leading research and innovation center in the UAE. Established in 2016 by royal decree of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the UAE and Ruler of Sharjah, the Park is located between Sharjah Airport Road and the University City Road. SRTI Park, managed by the American University of Sharjah Enterprises (AUSE), seeks to foster an innovation ecosystem that supports Research and Development and promotes triple helix collaboration among industry, government, and academia. Its thematic focus areas are water technology, renewable energy, environmental technology, digitization, Industrial Design 4.0, and Transportation & Logistics. SRTI Park continues to attract and host knowledge-intensive businesses and aims to enhance the area's attractiveness by providing significant residential opportunities for companies located in the free zone.

Features

- Features of SRTI Park include,
- Cost-effective licensing and leasing space
- Access to a pool of talented professionals and students from the university city
- Freedom to repatriate capital and profits
- Accessibility to local, regional, and international markets
- Fast-track business establishment
- 0% taxation
- 100% foreign ownership
- 100% exemption from corporate and personal income taxes

Form of Registration

- Forms of registration available in SRTI Park are
- Branch of a foreign company
- Free Zone Company (FZCO) with 2 to 5 shareholders and minimum capital of AED 150,000
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE) with 1 shareholder and minimum capital of AED 150,000

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Cost (AED/annum) |
|---|------------------|
| Women in Innovation (includes lounge confined for women, professional network, no visas) | 9,000 |
| First Step Hi-Tech Office (innovation lounge, professional network events included, no visas) | 15,000 |

| | |
|--|--|
| Maktabi Co-Working Space (designated desk, shared working space, furnished area, 24/7 security, free wi-fi, meeting rooms, receptionist, parking space, and 3 visas included) | 25,000 |
| Start Up Office (furnished office with 3 desks, private working area, free wi-fi, meeting rooms, 24/7 security, parking space, receptionist, and 6 visas included) | 40,000 |
| SME Office (furnished office, 4-6 desks, private working area, free wi-fi, meeting rooms, 24/7 security, parking space, receptionist, and 8 visas included) | 42,000 |
| Ecosystem Office (fitted & furnished office, 4-6 desks, private working area, free wi-fi, meeting rooms, 24/7 security, parking space, receptionist, and 10+ visas included) | 75,000 |
| Innovation Office (shell and core included along with working area as per the client requirement, private working area, free wi-fi, meeting rooms, 24/7 security, parking space, receptionist, and visas as per client requirements) | Cost includes, Lease area (800/sqm) License fee (AED 10,000) Registration fee (AED 5000) Lease Fee (AED 10,000) Other additional expenses |
| Innovation Plot (allocated plot in prime Sharjah location for developer and retailer to lease land, visa included as per the client's requirements) | Cost includes, Lease area (30-100/sqm) License fee (AED 10,000) Registration fee (AED 5000) Refundable deposit (applicable) Other expenses |

Hamriyah Free Zone (HFZ)

Business owners who are interested in the thriving market of Hamriyah Free Zone can enjoy several benefits. Established in 1995, the free zone has played a crucial role in the development of the industrial sector in the UAE and is now home to several companies. Over the years, it has become one of the fastest-growing Free Zones in the UAE, attracting more than 6000 companies in industries such as oil and gas, marine, manufacturing, and related sectors.

Features

- Among the benefits of Hamriyah Free Zone are:
- Renewable 25-year land lease options
- Easy leasing options for office and warehousing facilities
- Access to the seaport
- Accommodation and medical facilities
- First-class transport system with access to an international airport
- Low-rate electricity and a large supply of skilled labor
- Hamriyah Free Zone offers an advanced and continuously improving telecommunication system

Form of Registration

- Among the benefits of Hamriyah Free Zone are:
- Renewable 25-year land lease options
- Easy leasing options for office and warehousing facilities
- Access to the seaport
- Accommodation and medical facilities
- First-class transport system with access to an international airport
- Low-rate electricity and a large supply of skilled labor
- Hamriyah Free Zone offers an advanced and continuously improving telecommunication system

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (in AED) |
|---------------|---------|--|
| Warehouse | 400 sqm | Package: 135,000 Industrial License: 3,500 Service Fee: 5,250 Incorporation Fee: 9,000 Refundable Deposit: 5,000 |
| Warehouse | 600 sqm | Package: 170,000 Industrial License: 3,500 Service Fee: 5,250 Incorporation Fee: 9,000 Refundable Deposit: 5,000 |



Ajman Free Zones

The different free zone in the UAE includes:

Ajman Free Zone

The formation of the Ajman Free Zone was authorized by the Emirate of Ajman's Law No. 3 of 1996. Due to its location at the entrance of the Arabian Gulf, Ajman Free Zone has a strategic advantage in serving both Eastern and Western markets. Additionally, Ajman's proximity to Sharjah and Dubai provides easy access to the two international airports and four ports. Around 1,400 companies are located in the Free Zone currently.

Features

- A cost-effective wage structure and easy access to a large workforce
- No service charges or hidden fees
- Lease periods up to 20 years
- Wide range of company activities, including manufacturing, processing, assembling, packaging, import/export, distribution, and storage services

Form of Registration

- Branch of a foreign or UAE-based company
- Free Zone Company (FZCO) – minimum share capital of approximately AED 185,000 (US\$ 50,000)
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE) – minimum share capital of approximately AED 185,000 (US\$ 50,000)

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size/Activities | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-------------------|--------------------|--|
| Business Center | 1-3 activities | 13,535-16,135 (package includes rent charges and other service charges) |
| Business Center | General Trading | 18,735 (package includes rent charges and other service charges) |
| Business Center | E-Commerce License | 19, 635 (package includes rent charges and other service charges) |
| Office | 1-3 activities | 21,625- 24,225 (package includes rent charges and other service charges) |
| Office | General Trading | 26, 825 (package includes rent charges and other service charges) |
| Executive Offices | | 28,000 onwards |
| Land | Minimum 2,000 sqm | Starting from 20/sqm |
| Factory/Warehouse | 100-645 sqm | 38,000 onwards |

Other costs include:

- Freelance Package – costing AED 5000-6000
- FZE/FZCO Registration Fee – no charges
- Refundable deposit for Executive Offices and Warehouse Facility (AED 5,000)

The type of license required for this free zone include:

- Industrial License – costing AED 7000/ annum
- Trading License – costing ranges from AED 3000-5000/ annum (depending on the number of items)
- Service License – costing AED 5000/ annum
- General Trading License – costing AED 7000/ annum

Ajman Media City Free Zone

In 2018, Ajman Media City Free Zone entered the UAE market as a company formation option, quickly gaining popularity due to its affordable packages. Unlike Ajman Free Zone, AMC has a focus on media-related activities and does not offer warehouses or land for lease. However, it does provide a unique QR code on licenses to verify authenticity and build trust with customers for online businesses.

AMC offers 7 packages, ranging from a free option to those with over 5 resident visa allocations. Business setup consultants in Dubai can handle the registration process for interested parties, with a license issued within 24 hours through the online registration portal.

Features

- The benefits of registering with AMC include
- 100% foreign ownership
- No company or personal income tax
- Multiple business activities under one license,
- Freedom to use capital and profits
- Quick and simple visa service
- Starting cost for setting up a business with AMC is AED 8500

Form of Registration

- The companies in AMC can be registered as,
- One Owner Company (FZE)
- Multiple Owner Company (FZC)
- Branch of a Foreign Company
- Subsidiary of a Foreign Company
- Branch of a Local Company

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | License | Cost (AED) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Dedicated shared desk space (1 visa) | Trading/Service License | 11,952.50 |
| Dedicated shared desk space (2 visa) | Trading/Service License | 15,102.50 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Dedicated shared desk space (3 visa) | Trading/Service License | 18,252.50 |
| Dedicated shared desk space (5 visa) | Trading/Service License | 26,555 |
| Flexi Desk (No visa) | Trading/Service License | 15,100 |
| Flexi Desk (1 visa) | Trading/Service License | 25,569 |
| Flexi Desk (2 visa) | Trading/Service License, | 32,770 |
| Flexi Desk (3 visa) | Trading/Service License | 48,487 |
| Executive Office (4 visas) | Trading/Service License | 52,326 |
| Executive Office (5 visas) | Trading/Service License | 56,278 |



Fujairah Free Zones

The different free zone in the UAE includes:

Fujairah Free Zone (FFZ)

The Emirate of Fujairah established Fujairah Free Zone in 1987 under Law No. 6. The Free Zone's location next to the Port of Fujairah provides companies established there with easy access to all Arabian Gulf ports, as well as Fujairah International Airport, which is the only airport serving the UAE East Coast and Northern Oman. Investors have multi-access to neighboring and global markets by land, sea and air.

Fujairah Free Zone provides efficient and cost-effective investment facilitation, with a lease period of up to 15 years. Types of company activities include manufacturing, processing, assembling, packaging, import/export, distribution, and storage services.

Features

- Features of Fujairah Free Zone include,
- Multi-access to neighboring and global markets by land, sea and air
- Efficient and cost-effective investment facilitation, and a lease period of up to 15 years
- Fujairah free zone provides efficient and cost-effective investment facilitation
- Types of company activities include manufacturing, processing, assembling, packaging, import/export, distribution, and storage services.

Form of Registration

- Forms of registration include,
- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Company (FZCO) - minimum share capital is AED 150,000
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE) - minimum share capital is AED 150,000

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size/Activities | Cost (AED/annum) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Small Office | 20 sqm | Starting from 25,350 |
| Flexi Desk (1 Visa) | Varies | 19,600 |
| Virtual Office (No Visa) | Varies | 16,200 |
| Factory/Warehouse | Starting from 500 sqm | Approx. 230/ sqm |
| Land | Minimum 500 sqm | Starting from 20/sqm |

Other costs include:

- FZE Registration Fee – AED 5,000 (one time)
- Refundable Security Deposit – AED 5,300 for virtual offices, AED 10,000 for flexi desk, and AED 15,000 for office)

The type of license required for this free zone include:

- Industrial License – costing AED 5,000/ annum
- Commercial License – costing AED 2,500/ annum
- Service License – costing AED 5,000/ annum
- General Trading – costing AED 5,000/ annum
- Real Estate Investment – costing AED 40,000-45,000/ annum
- Real Estate Investment & Development – costing AED 50,000/ annum

Fujairah Media Zone (FM Zone) / Creative City

Fujairah has made a name for itself in the media industry with its "Creative City", a rapidly expanding media hub that is attracting media professionals and companies alike. Fujairah Media Inc. (FMI) was established as a broadcasting organization for the Emirate of Fujairah, also known as Fujairah Media (FM), and is a joint venture between Fujairah Cultural Authority and Arab International Media Services FZ LLC. The FM has seven creative zones, each designed with the necessary services and features for the respective activities.

The Free Zone is a 200,000 square meter complex located alongside Fujairah highway, connecting to Emirates Road. The FM authority is currently providing office facilities at the prominent Fujairah tower to issue licenses. The FM zone enjoys a tax-free status, 100% foreign ownership, full repatriation of capital and profits, quick approval procedures, and other benefits that come with Free Zone status. Freelancers can also register in the Free Zone.

Features

- Seven creative zones designed for different activities.
- Targeting local and regional clients.
- Focus on smaller businesses and freelancers.
- Emphasis on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).
- Established "Jebalcom", a terrestrial digital broadcasting (DVB-H) platform in the Middle East.
- Home to 13 channels broadcasting in various languages.
- Production facilities available.

Form of Registration

- Forms of registration include,
- Branch of a company that is at least two years old
- Free Zone Company (FZCO) with a minimum share capital of AED 150,000
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE) with a minimum share capital of AED 50,000
- Freelancer (no capital required)

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size/Activities | Cost (AED/annum) |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Commercial License (0-2 visas included) | Varies | 14,000-20,000 |
| Freelance company (4 visas included) | Office Desk | 25,000 |
| Baby Business (6 visas included) | Office Desk | 28,000 |
| Genuis Package (15 visas included) | Office Desk | 35,000 |
| Land | Varies | Quote available on request |

Other cost includes,

- e-channel registration - AED 2,225
- Annual fee for renewal of e-channel registration - AED 1,125

The type of license required for this free zone include:

- Service License – costing AED 13,500/ annum
- Freelance License – costing AED 12,000/ annum
- Premium Service License – costing USD 12,000/ annum

International Free Zone Authority (IFZA)

The International Free Zone Authority (IFZA) is strategically located in the dynamic business and commercial hubs of the UAE, offering a range of flexible business setup solutions that capitalize on the UAE's strategic location, world-class infrastructure, and business- and tax-friendly environment. IFZA provides a variety of license options to meet the diverse business setup needs of small local ventures and large international businesses alike.

IFZA is known for its unmatched customer focus, positioning it as one of the most trusted independent Free Zones in the UAE, providing personalized services to help businesses grow. With over 1000 business activities, IFZA offers an array of Licenses within four distinct categories: Consultancy, Service, Trading, and Holding, each specifically designed to define your client's business function.

Features

- 100% foreign ownership
- Physical presence not required during incorporation
- All Licenses will be issued as a Limited Liability Company (LLC)
- Wide range of business activities available including Consultancy, Service and Trading
- License upgrades and downgrades are allowed
- No paid-up share capital requirement
- No NOC required from current visa sponsor
- No mandatory office space requirements (all Licenses include an Office Rental Agreement) and Virtual Dubai office concept available
- Visas are valid for 3 years
- Standard packages accommodate up to 6 visas, additional visa eligibility can be applied for

Form of Registration

- Forms of registration include,
- Branch of a foreign company.
- Branch of a UAE company.
- Free Zone Company (FZCO) - minimum share capital is AED 150,000
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE) - minimum share capital is AED 150,000

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Particulars | Frequency | Cost (in AED) |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| PO Box Charges | Annual | 1,050 |
| Immigration/Establishment Card | Once in three years | 1,600 |
| Immigration (Pre-Approval) | Once | 500 |
| E-Channel Registration | Once | 2,200 |
| Miscellaneous Expenses | Once | 1,000 |

- The type of license required for this free zone include:
- Commercial License – price ranging from AED 11,500 to 29,500/ annum
- Service License – price ranging from AED 11,500 to 29,500/ annum
- Trading License – price ranging from AED 11,500 to 29,500/ annum



Umm Al Quwain Free Zones

Umm Al Quwain Free Zone

The Umm Al Quwain Free Zone is situated on the western coast of the UAE, in the Emirate of Umm Al Quwain (UAQ), established under UAQ decree No. 2 of 1987. The Free Zone area is spread across 118,000 square meters of land, and its quay wall stretches over 845 meters, with 400 meters having the capacity to handle ocean-going vessels.

Features

- The Free Zone specializes in light industrial development, with a focus on activities such as manufacturing, processing, assembling, packaging, import/export, distribution, and storage services.
- Leases for business activities in the Umm Al Quwain Free Zone can extend up to 15 years

Form of Registration

- Forms of registration available in the Umm Al Quwain Free Zone include setting up
- A branch of a foreign company
- A branch of a UAE-based company
- A Free Zone Company (FZCO) with a minimum share capital of AED 300,000
- A Free Zone Establishment (FZE) with a minimum share capital of AED 300,000

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Land | Varies | 20-30/sqm |
| Micro Business Lyte (No Visa) | | 8,000 |
| Warehouse | Starting from 100 sqm | Starting from 35,000 |
| General Trading/ Premium Lyte (2 Visas) | | 20,500 |

- Other costs include:
- FZE/FZCO Registration – AED 2,000 (one time)
- e-channel Registration – AED 7,100
- Renewal of e-channel Registration – AED 1,150
- The type of license required for this free zone include:
- General Trading License – costing AED 5000/annum
- Management and Consultancy – costing AED 5000/annum
- Service License – costing AED 2000/annum

Umm Al Quwain Free Zone

The Umm Al Quwain Free Zone is situated on the western coast of the UAE, in the Emirate of Umm Al Quwain (UAQ), established under UAQ decree No. 2 of 1987. The Free Zone area is spread across 118,000 square meters of land, and its quay wall stretches over 845 meters, with 400 meters having the capacity to handle ocean-going vessels.

Features

- The Free Zone specializes in light industrial development, with a focus on activities such as manufacturing, processing, assembling, packaging, import/export, distribution, and storage services.
- Leases for business activities in the Umm Al Quwain Free Zone can extend up to 15 years

Form of Registration

- Forms of registration available in the Umm Al Quwain Free Zone include setting up
- A branch of a foreign company
- A branch of a UAE-based company
- A Free Zone Company (FZCO) with a minimum share capital of AED 300,000
- A Free Zone Establishment (FZE) with a minimum share capital of AED 300,000



Ras Al Khaimah Free Zones

Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone (RAKEZ)

In April 2017, Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone (RAKEZ) was established under the vision of His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, United Arab Emirates Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, to merge and manage the specialized zones and clients of both Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone (RAK FTZ) and RAK Investment Authority (RAKIA). RAKEZ is currently one of the largest economic zones in the region, spanning over 33 million square meters of land, housing over 13,000 companies from more than 100 countries, and representing over 50 sectors.

Building on the foundation of RAK FTZ in 2000 and RAKIA in 2005, RAKEZ is dedicated to providing clients and investors with a cost-effective and world-class economic zone. It offers customizable packages and services, state-of-the-art facilities, and a strategic location that connects investors to growing markets in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, South, and Central Asia.

RAKEZ offers a wide range of business and industrial facilities, value-added services, and specialized zones such as RAKEZ Business Zone, Al Hamra Industrial Zone, Al Ghail Industrial Zone, Al Hulaila Industrial Zone, and RAKEZ Academic Zone, catering to various sectors including trading, services, consultancy, manufacturing, logistics, and academic institutions.

Features

Features of RAKEZ include,

- 100% ownership
- Fast and efficient business setup processes
- Self-service customer portal
- Connectivity to major logistical hubs and multilane superhighways
- Accessibility through a network of international regional offices
- RAKEZ also provides on-site staff and labor accommodation, one-stop-shop facility for services, and easy access to markets across the Middle East, Europe, North Africa, and Asia regions

Forms of Registration

- Forms of registration in RAKEZ include,
- A branch of a foreign or UAE company
- Free Zone Company (FZCO) with a single shareholder with minimum share capital of AED 100,000 or 500,000 (for General Trading)
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE) with 2 to 5 shareholders, with minimum share capital of AED 100,000 or 500,000 (for General Trading & Real Estate License)

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| License Type | Facility | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Commercial | Flexi Desk, Flexi Office, Standard Office, Executive Office | Starting from AED 15,000 to 45,000 |
| Service | | |
| General Trading | | |
| E-Commerce | | |

RAK Maritime City Free Zone (RAKMC)

The establishment of RAK Maritime City (RAKMC) as a Free Zone was authorized by the Emiri Decree in December 2009, which also defined the boundaries of the new maritime city. RAKMC Free Zone provides a range of benefits, such as international port facilities, tax advantages, and a cost-effective, secure, and transparent business environment with customizable solutions.

The Free Zone is divided into areas for retail, warehousing, cargo handling, industrial production, manufacturing, tank storage, shipbuilding, and repairs. FZE and FZC entities can be incorporated in each zone, and trading licenses, work permits, and UAE residence visas are available. With extensive land expansion opportunities for businesses, excellent access to multiple markets, low operating costs, and comprehensive business support, RAKMC is a premier gateway to the region.

Features

- RAKMC Free Zone provides licenses for FZE and FZCO, and also issues work permits and residence visas.
- The Free Zone is classified into two plot types: those with a linear quay length and direct water access, and those located away from the harbor area without water access.
- RAKMC is divided into zones for specific uses, such as retail, warehousing, cargo handling, industrial production and manufacturing, and shipbuilding and repairs.

- Plots are available with a minimum size of 25,000 sqm, but those with an exclusive berth or jetty of 100 linear meters require a minimum leased area of approximately 40,000 sqm.
- Lease agreements for 25 years are offered and renewable for another 25 years, and longer leases of up to 99 years may be considered.

Forms of Registration

- Forms of registration in RAKEZ include,
- Branch of a foreign company
- Branch of a UAE company
- Free Zone Company (FZCO)
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE)

Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone (RAKFTZ)

Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone (RAK FTZ) is a preferred destination for investment due to its low living cost and business expenses. It was founded in 2000 and presently hosts more than 8,000 firms from over 100 nations operating in 50+ sectors. Investors are drawn to the cost-effective business environment of RAK FTZ, which allows them to maximize their profits. The free zone's proximity to Dubai is another advantage.

Features

- Complete exemption from UAE taxes, including corporate tax, income tax, and VAT.
- 100% ownership by expatriates.
- No requirement for a local sponsor.
- Confidentiality (RAK FTZ is a non-signatory to any information exchange with national tax authorities, unlike European or UK overseas territories).
- No minimum capital required for offshore company incorporation, and no need to disclose paid-up capital to authorities.
- A sole shareholder, director, and secretary can set up a RAK Offshore Company.
- Remote registration (JAFZA Offshore requires a minimum of two directors' presence).
- No physical presence is necessary in the UAE.
- Quick company registration in two working days upon receiving all documents.
- A corporate bank account may be opened in a variety of major foreign currencies in the UAE. Note that the Central Bank Regulation on corporate account procedures requires you to come to the UAE as deemed necessary for bank account opening.
- No annual audit is necessary.
- The UAE is not on the OECD blacklist of tax havens or the FATF blacklist.

Forms of Registration

- The companies can apply for the following types of registration at this free zone:
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE)
- Free Zone Company (FZC)
- Branch of a Foreign Company
- Branch of a UAE Company

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/year) |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Warehouse Technology Park | 150/205/300/416 sqm | 280-320/m2 |
| Industrial Park (Warehouse) | 150/205/300/416 sqm | 200-230/m2 |
| Industrial Park (Land) | Varies | 35-50/m2 |
| Technology Park (Land) | For all plots | 35-50/m2 |

Other costs include:

- Registration fee for FZE & FZC – costs AED 7000 (one time)
- Studio apartment – costs AED 24,000/year
- Staff accommodation – costs AED 2,500- 3,000/month

The type of licenses required for Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone (RAKFTZ) includes:

- Commercial License – AED 3,650
- Industrial License – AED 5,000
- Consulting & Service License – AED 7,500
- General Trading – AED 15,000

Ras Al Khaimah Media Free Zone

Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) Media City offers exceptional investment opportunities and benefits for media-oriented business owners and investors. Launched in 2006 as a Dubai Media City alternative, it has become a leading entertainment hub. RAK Media City is under the RAK Free Trade Zone (RAKFTZ) authority, which provides world-class facilities, pre-built offices, and media-related business licenses at a lower cost compared to Dubai free zones, attracting business owners. In recent years, RAK Media City has experienced unprecedented growth in its media industry sector. The media-friendly environment and regulations provide media companies with complete freedom to produce films, radio, and television shows.

Features

- RAK Media City offers a range of benefits for companies, including
- Full ownership by foreign investors
- Unrestricted flow of capital and retention of profits
- Waiver of customs duties on all goods imported and exported
- Speedy immigration procedures
- No currency limitations
- Exemption from corporate and personal income taxes

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED/year) |
|------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Flexi Desk | Varies | Starting from AED 6000 |
| Commercial Space | Varies | Starting from AED 45,000 |

Other costs include,

- Single Entry Visa – starting from AED 1,500/year
- Multi-Entry Visas – ranges from AED 2,500 – 4,000/year

The following licenses are required in this free zone:

- Commercial License – AED 15,000 to 25,000/year
- Service License – AED 15,000 to 25,000/year
- Freelance License – AED 7,500 to 10,000/year
- Media License – AED 20,000 to 30,000/year
- E-Commerce License – AED 15,000 to 20,000/year
- Dual License – AED 20,000 to 30,000/year

Ras Al Khaimah Investment Authority (RAKIA)

The RAK Investment Authority (RAKIA) free zone was established with the goal of creating a diversified, multi-lateral economy that attracts investors from various backgrounds and industries. Over the last decade, RAKIA has become a melting pot for entrepreneurs, offering a balanced economy and phenomenal growth opportunities.

RAKIA's reputation has grown, attracting financiers from international and local markets and improving the level of infrastructure and living standards for those living in the area. In addition to its strong reputation, RAKIA offers a range of features to its customers, including investment consultancy, advisory services, equity participation, and fund raising.

Features

- Complete foreign ownership
- Complete repatriation of capital and profits
- Full exemption from corporate and personal income taxes
- Exemption from import and export taxes
- No foreign exchange controls
- Avoidance of double taxation with several countries
- No restrictions on expatriate hiring
- Liberal labor laws
- Up to 30% lower business costs compared to other locations in the region
- One-stop-shop for all investor needs
- A well-developed industrial infrastructure
- Cost competitiveness and logistical advantages
- Comprehensive master planning for growth
- A stable government and policies that are friendly to investors

Forms of Registration

- The companies can register as,
- An Establishment
- Limited Liability Company (LLC)
- Free Zone Establishment (FZE)
- Free Zone LLC (FZ LLC)
- Branch of a Foreign or Local Company

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility Type | Size | Cost (AED) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Flexi Desk (Commercial - FZE) | 1 visa eligibility | 19,800 |
| Flexi Desk (Commercial - FZE) | 2 visas eligibility | 24,500 |
| Flexi Office (Commercial - FZE) | 2 visas eligibility | 22,400 |
| Standard Office (Commercial - FZE) | 3 visas eligibility | 30,500 |
| Executive Office (Commercial - FZE) | 3 visas eligibility | 40,500 |

Other costs include,

Freelance Permit – AED 9,520 (1 year package)

Freelance Permit – AED 14,820 (2 years package)

Immigration Pre-Approval – AED 250 and AED 1,000 for 4 applicants and above

Power of Attorney (per person) - AED 1,500

The following licenses are required in this free zone:

- Commercial License
- Individual/Professional License
- Consultancy/Services License
- Educational License
- Industrial License
- Media License
- General Trading License
- E-Commerce License
- Tourism License



Abu Dhabi Free Zones

Abu Dhabi Airport Business City

Abu Dhabi Airport Business City (Business City) is responsible for operating Airport Free Zones, Logistics Park, Business Parks, Business Centers, and One Stop Shop Services. These are part of Abu Dhabi's initiative to establish itself as a dynamic business center that supports the Abu Dhabi 2030 Economic Vision. Business City's jurisdiction covers over 10.6 square kilometers around Abu Dhabi International Airport, which includes five commercial districts: Logistics Park, Business Park, Destination Village, Al Falah District and Airport City.

Business City's goal is to promote Abu Dhabi's economic development by offering investors numerous benefits such as tax exemptions and 100% foreign company ownership. The creation of the Free Zone is a significant milestone in Abu Dhabi's plan to become a dynamic business center. The Free Zone will ensure Abu Dhabi International Airport becomes a thriving cargo and business hub, thereby generating increasing non-aeronautical revenues.

Business City provides customers with a wide range of Free Zone services, including company registration, licensing, leasing, and rapid visa processing for employees, and many other high-quality services within a One Stop Shop environment. Business City offers a variety of facilities and infrastructure, including warehousing units, commercial offices, furnished facilities within a fully serviced business center, plots of land for development, and a full range of essential ancillary amenities to serve everyday business needs.

Features

- Benefits of Business City include,
- 100% corporate tax exemption
- 100% import and export exemption
- 100% personal income tax exemption
- 100% foreign company ownership
- 100% repatriation of capital and profits

Benefits

- Additionally, Business City offers,
- One-stop-shop administration services
- Fast and efficient cargo clearance services
- International freight forwarders and logistics services
- Online customer service
- Land with easy access to the airport apron
- On-site customs inspection
- 24-hour facility access

License Cost

- The type of license required for this free zone include:
- Industrial License – costing AED 7,500/annum
- Commercial License – costing AED 7,500-15,000/annum
- Service License – costing AED 7,500-15,000/annum

Twofour54 Media Free Zone

Twofour54 Abu Dhabi is a media zone situated in one of the world's rapidly growing media markets, offering several economic advantages to firms such as simple licensing and business setup services, a tax-free and stable environment with 100% company ownership. The name twofour54 represents the geographic coordinates of Abu Dhabi (24° North, 54° East), and it is a unique media zone that supports companies and professionals in seizing current and future media sector opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa region. The establishment of twofour54 has opened up new industry opportunities for the region, providing a cooperative and well-equipped environment for local, regional, and international companies from the film, broadcast, digital, publishing, and music industries. The advanced ecosystem of twofour54 offers production facilities, infrastructure, training, and a new business incubator, all in one location, to create world-class Arabic content for its 300 million Arab audience.

Twofour54 is located near Khalifa Park in Abu Dhabi and has identified a 200,000 sq.m waterfront site in the Mina Zayed area for its permanent campus, which will be completed within five years. Twofour54 is based on four pillars within a campus-style environment that fosters cooperation and creative partnerships among participating companies. Media Zone Authority - Abu Dhabi (MZA) is responsible for the establishment and registration of firms in twofour54 Abu Dhabi, a media and entertainment hub.

Several big, small, regional, and international media companies have chosen to establish their businesses at twofour54 Abu Dhabi, including BBC, CNN, FOX Television, National Geographic Channels, Sky News Arabia, Cartoon Network, Ubisoft, Bayt.com, Rotana Studios, Financial Times, Image Nation, PublicisLive, Flash, Jawaker, and Abu Dhabi Media.

Features

- Features of twofour54 include,
- 100% company ownership in a stable and tax-free environment, with no restrictions on capital movements
- 0% import tariffs
- 100% exemption from personal and corporate income tax
- a 30% cash rebate on international film and TV production expenses
- a transparent licensing process with Media Zone Authority - Abu Dhabi and quick and easy setup with twofour54 government and travel services, which offers government relations and visa processing for firms and their staff
- Additionally, the on-site vocational media training academy offers media-related courses and customized training solutions for organizations
- Twofour54 is centrally located at the crossroads of the Middle East, European, and Asian markets, with a strong global logistics and transport network, and it is only 5 hours from 25% of the world's population
- Twofour54 also provides access to industry news and market research

Forms of Registration

Twofour54 media and entertainment hub offers four types of setups:

- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ-LLC)
- Branch
- Freelance
- Start-Up

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Types of Setups | License Fee | Registration Fee (one time) | Office Space |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| FZ-LLC/Branch | AED 10,000-25,000 | AED 2,500 | Starting from AED 50,000/annum |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------|------------------|
| Hot-Desk (Business Center Facility) | AED 10,000 | AED 2,500 | AED 30,000/annum |
| Emirati Entrepreneurs & Khalifa Fund | AED 10,000 | AED 2,500 | Virtual |
| Freelancer (individuals only) | 6 Months: AED 1,250 1 Year: AED 2,500 | N/A | Virtual |

Other costs include:

- e-channel Registration – AED 7,100
- Annual Renewal e-channel Registration – AED 1,150

Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (KIZAD)

KIZAD is an industrial hub located in Abu Dhabi that offers a complete package of integrated trade and logistics. KIZAD is a significant component of the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 which aims at ensuring sustainable growth of the emirate's economy and the well-being of its citizens. KIZAD's mission is to set new benchmarks for industrial zone infrastructure, environment, and operations. KIZAD is situated near Khalifa Port, which is one of the world's most advanced deep seaports and boasts world-class infrastructure. The hub offers multimodal connectivity through air, road, sea, and rail networks. KIZAD's masterplan covers a 410 sq. km. greenfield development that is designed to ensure socio-economic sustainability and long-term industrial growth.

The zone has an internal road network and connections that are already built, with primary and secondary networks providing direct access to and from Khalifa Port and connecting to the main highway. Utility corridors are designed across the zone to allow provisions for power, potable water, telecom, sewerage services and special utilities such as industrial water and feedstock. The zone's infrastructure is designed and built to facilitate future rail connectivity through dedicated rail corridors, which allow integrating rail freight facilities into operating plans.

KIZAD offers value creation through its integrated service offerings that span multiple industries, including aluminum, steel, metal products, paper & packaging, food processing, pharmaceutical & healthcare equipment, polymer converting, and automotive spare parts. KIZAD's hybrid model of free zone and non-free zone solutions includes land leasing, pre-built warehouses, free zone offices, pre-built light industrial solutions, and business district centers.

Features

KIZAD delivers several unique benefits, including

- An extensive size, world-class infrastructure
- Free zone and non-free zone solutions
- Dedicated investor support
- Tax-free environment with competitive operating costs
- A strategic location with access to regional and international markets
- The KIZAD masterplan offers proximity to suppliers, customers, and other business efficiencies, ensuring that manufacturing, trade, and logistics derive long-term advantages
- The hub's world-class infrastructure provides the necessary internal transportation, as well as water and electrical power at a competitive rate

Forms of Registration

- KIZAD offers various forms of registration, including Limited Liability Company, Branch of a UAE company, and Branch of a foreign company.

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Zone | Plot Size | Cost (AED/annum) | Office Space |
|---------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Free Zone | Standard Industrial Plots | 31/sqm | Starting from AED 50,000/annum |
| Domestic Zone | Standard Industrial Plots | 26/sqm | |
| Free Zone | Standard Industrial Plots | 33/sqm | |
| Domestic Zone | Standard Industrial Plots | 28/sqm | |

Other costs include:

- Initial Approval – AED 450/annum
- Immigration Card – AED 1,000/annum
- Other costs include:
 - Initial Approval – AED 450/annum
 - Immigration Card – AED 1,000/annum
 - e-channel Registration – AED 7,100
 - Annual Renewal e-channel Registration – AED 1,150
- The type of license required for this free zone include:
 - Industrial, Commercial, and Trading License – costing AED 5,000
 - General Trading License – costing AED 15,000

The type of license required for this free zone include:

- Industrial, Commercial, and Trading License – costing AED 5,000
- General Trading License – costing AED 15,000

Masdar City Free Zone

Masdar City is a sustainable city that hosts the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), making it the first global cleantech cluster to be situated in one of the world's most sustainable cities. The city spans over 6 square kilometers and is located close to Abu Dhabi International Airport, about 17 km from downtown Abu Dhabi. It has become a worldwide center for marketing, servicing, and demonstrating renewable energy and sustainable technologies, as well as research and development and investment in these fields.

Masdar City has a primary focus on attracting firms and pursuing research in four areas of the cleantech industry that are relevant to its climate and geography. These areas are solar, green building, water and power storage. The secondary focus is on smart grids, efficient appliances, electric vehicles and waste. To set up in Masdar City, companies and organizations should identify the specific sector in which they will operate. The identified sectors are:

- Energy Generation
- Regional Headquarters
- Energy Storage
- Consultancy
- Energy Transmission and Distribution
- Organic Products
- Energy Efficiency Equipment
- Non-Profit Organization
- Air and Environment
- Cleantech and ICT
- Water and Wastewater
- Marketing
- Recycling and Solid Waste
- Business Information
- Transportation
- Human Resources Development
- Green Building
- Service Providers

A one-stop-shop for companies in the sector, Masdar City offers fast and easy set-up procedures without the need for a local sponsor. The presence of the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, which boasts some of the most advanced laboratories in the region, provides opportunities for piloting and testing new technologies and ideas. The institute is the world's first graduate university focused on renewable energy and cleantech and produces some of the best graduates in the industry.

Features

Masdar City provides an array of features and benefits, such as

- Quick and easy set-up with a one-stop-shop for registration, government relations and fast-track visa processing.
- It offers 0% import tariffs
- 0% taxes on companies and individuals
- No restrictions on capital movements, profits or quotas
- 100% foreign ownership
- No currency restrictions
- Ability to hire expatriate staff
- It also offers a gateway to the middle east and Asia's market opportunities
- An outstanding logistics network incorporating air, sea, road, and rail
- A safe and friendly working environment
- High quality of life
- The opportunity to maximize corporate social responsibility objectives
- Intellectual property protection framework

Forms of Registration

Masdar City provides various types of operating licenses, including the

- Branch of a foreign company/UAE-based company (including companies incorporated in other UAE special economic zones)
- A Special Economic Zone Limited Liability Company (SEZ LLC) with corporate shareholders
- A Special Economic Zone Limited Liability Company (SEZ LLC) with individual shareholders

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-------------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Flexi Desk (1 Visa) | Virtual | 13,500 |
| Workstation (1 Visa) | Desk | 20,000 |
| Executive Office (3+ Visas) | 20 sqm | 2,400/ sqm |
| Commercial Office (10+ Visas) | 100 sqm | 1,700/ sqm |

Other costs include:

- Security deposit of 2 months' rent for all offices
- FZ LLC/Branch Registration Fee – AED 5,000 (one time)
- e-channel Registration – AED 7,100
- Annual Renewal e-channel Registration – AED 1,150

The type of license required for this free zone include:

- Package A – 2 activities from any segment
- Package B – 5 activities from any segment
- Package C – 10 activities from any segment
- Package D – for UAE nationals 5 activities

Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM)

Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) is a distinguished International Financial Centre situated in the UAE's capital city, established by the UAE Federal Decree. ADGM operates across the entirety of Al Maryah Island, covering 114 hectares. The island is strategically located in Abu Dhabi with exceptional connectivity to the business district, residential areas, cultural and entertainment islands, and Abu Dhabi's International Airport. ADGM comprises three independent authorities, the Registration Authority (RA), the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA), and ADGM Courts, all of which ensure the business-friendly environment operates in line with international best practices, recognized by major financial centers worldwide.

ADGM plays a pivotal role in Abu Dhabi's Economic Vision, serving as a catalyst for the growth of its dynamic financial services sector. ADGM operates on a premise of long-term partnership and collaboration, locally, regionally, and internationally. This confidence is born out of ambition rather than necessity, with a blueprint of exchange between the UAE and the world beyond. Since its launch in October 2015, ADGM has quickly gained global recognition for its responsive and progressive business-friendly ecosystem, introducing many 'firsts' both regionally and globally. As a catalyst for growth, ADGM delivers value to its clients, peers, and contributes to Abu Dhabi's ambitious growth plan and strategy.

Features

Some features and benefits of ADGM include,

- Access to a robust ecosystem of finance, services, and talent
- Home to the world's leading professionals
- Common law directly applied providing high levels of legal certainty
- Independent ADGM courts
- Use of standard form transactional documentation for increased efficiency
- Additionally, ADGM is a tax-friendly environment, with 0% direct tax
- No withholding of taxes
- No restrictions on repatriation of profits
- Access to a growing number of double tax treaties
- A fully digital application process
- Grade 'A' offices, modern infrastructure
- Global connectivity through world-class airlines, leading hotels, healthcare, and lifestyle amenities

License Categories and Costs

- Category A: Financial Services – starting from USD 15,000
- Category B: Non-Financial Services – starting from USD 10,500
- Category C: Retail – starting from USD 6,500

Abu Dhabi Airport Free Zone (ADAFZ)

The Abu Dhabi Airport Free Zone (ADAFZ) is a prime example of the UAE's thriving business environment, with each emirate striving to enhance its presence and attract entrepreneurs looking to set up businesses in UAE free zones. The ADAFZ was created as part of the Abu Dhabi Business Centre's efforts to promote significant development in the Emirates Aviation sector. The Abu Dhabi Airport Free Zone is a comprehensive business park located near the Abu Dhabi International Airport, developed by SkyCity, a subsidiary of the Abu Dhabi Airports Company. It offers standard free zone benefits, such as world-class infrastructure, tax exemptions, 100% foreign company ownership, and more, to investors in Aviation, Airport services, Aerospace, Logistics, Cargo and Freight sectors.

Features

- Financially and strategically significant free zone in the UAE
- Encompasses more than one square kilometer
- Its administration includes five commercial districts: Logistics Park, Business Park, Destination Village, Al Falah District, and Airport City
- The free zone offers extensive warehousing, fully serviced office solutions, and other unique advantages
- The free zone's all-inclusive environment also includes recreational, residential, retail, and lifestyle facilities
- Companies have access to a genuinely empowering platform in the heart of one of the world's fastest-growing economies, with easy access to a market of over 4 billion people across the Middle East and Asia Pacific.

Forms of Registration

- Abu Dhabi Airport Free Zone (ADAFZ) provides various types of operating licenses, including the
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ-LLC) Corporate – AED 4,000
- Free Zone Limited Liability Company (FZ-LLC) Individual – AED 4,000
- Branch of a Foreign Company – AED 2,750

Facility Cost and Types of Licenses

| Facility | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|----------------------------|--------|------------------|
| Executive Desk (1 Person) | 8 sqm | 20,220 |
| Executive Office (3 visas) | 18 sqm | 75,400 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|
| Flexi Desk (1 person) | Varies | 10,000 |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|

Other costs include:

- Registration Fee (New) - AED 7,500
- Registration Fee (Branch) - AED 5,000
- The license cost is as follows,
- Industrial License – AED 7,500
- Specific Trading – AED 7,500
- Oil and Gas – AED 10,000
- Real Estate – AED 15,000
- Aviation – AED 15,000
- General Trading License – AED 15,000
- Freight Forwarding – AED 8,500

Abu Dhabi Ports Company (ADPC) Free Zone

The establishment of Abu Dhabi Ports Company (ADPC) in 2006 was one of the largest projects in the UAE. ADPC was formed with the aim of increasing trade and inbound investment to contribute to the prosperity of Abu Dhabi. It is responsible for regulating all the trade and overseeing the master development of the Khalifa Port.

The primary objective of ADPC is to foster sustainable growth that enhances and diversifies the economy of Abu Dhabi by developing its infrastructure, real estate, and business services in partnership with the private sector. The Khalifa Port, located between Dubai and Abu Dhabi in Taweelah, covering an area of 2.7 square kilometers, is the first semi-automated port in the UAE. It is equipped with integrated information and communication technology (ICT) and automated marine services that benefit companies utilizing the port. With connectivity to 52 international maritime ports and access to around 4.5 billion people in four different time zones, Khalifa Port provides a wide and robust network for trading. It currently supports over 20 shipping lines. However, it's essential to note that it does not regulate the Oil & Gas and Military ports.

Features

- World-class integrated ports and industrial zone services
- Support in realizing the Abu Dhabi Vision 2030
- Long-term relationships with leading local and international customers
- Sustainable development, including the preservation of local values and meeting community needs
- Foreign hiring options
- A commitment to safety and security, without compromising operational efficiency
- Integrity and adherence to fair ethical standards
- Long-term economic viability

License Type and Cost

- Pest Control & Ship Sanitation License – AED 10,000
- Stevedore Operations License – AED 10,000
- Small Port Business License – AED 5,000
- Ship Repair License – AED 10,000
- Ship Survey License – AED 10,000
- Contracted Tour Operator License – AED 5,000 (1-5 vessel calls)

Industrial City of Abu Dhabi (ICAD)

The UAE has always been a center for business activities. To further encourage innovation and foreign investment, the authorities in the country have established special economic zones that offer businesses a chance to thrive with minimal processes and expenses, making it easier to set up a business in UAE free zones.

The Abu Dhabi Free Zone, Industrial City (ICAD), comprises several clusters, and each of them provides various benefits. With tremendous opportunities for both heavy and light industries, ICAD is a popular free zone. There are over 355 manufacturing companies in Abu Dhabi Industrial Free Zone, which employ over 30,000 individuals. It is divided into five different industry clusters, namely:

- ICAD I - This zone covers an area of 14km² and includes heavy-to-medium manufacturing, engineering, and processing industries such as metal products, construction materials, fibreglass, and plastics assembly.
- ICAD II - It comprises light-to-medium manufacturing, engineering, and processing industries such as wood processing, engineering, oil and gas, construction materials, and chemicals.
- ICAD III - This zone caters to light-to-medium engineering and processing businesses that have an international focus. Wood processing and engineering, chemicals and plastics, construction materials, high-tech industries, food, and textiles are the key target sectors for this zone.
- ICAD IV - It caters to light-manufacturing and technology-based industries.
- ICAD V - This zone is for automobile or automotive manufacturing-based industries.

Features

- Granting industrial licenses
- Providing suitable land and areas for factories
- Offering customs exemptions for imported goods, equipment, and machines used by the factories
- Resolving any obstacles that may arise during industrial projects
- Providing a cultural center, hotel, and other necessary facilities at ICAD
- Coordinating with various sectors, businesses, and industrial investors to establish the best investment opportunities at ICAD
- Promoting industrial plants and their products through a comprehensive promotion plan
- Offering residential units with services and facilities at attractive rental prices

Facility Cost

| Facility | Size | Cost (AED/annum) |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Warehouse | 3000 sq ft. | 135,000 |
| Warehouse | 6000 sq ft. | 200,000 |
| Warehouse | 8000 sq ft. | 300,000 |
| Commercial Space (shop) | 600 sq ft. | 44,000 |

Other costs include:

- Initial approval, new license, registration – costs AED 13000 annually
- Entry Permit – costs AED 751.5 (one time)
- E-channel charges – costs AED 2100 (once)
- Residence visa – costs AED 2249 (every 3 years)
- Security deposit – costs AED 1000 (refundable)

Higher Corporation for Specialized Economic Zones (Zones Corp)

The Abu Dhabi free zone is home to more than 600 world-renowned global companies from various sectors. To promote the development of industrial cities, the Higher Corporation for Specialized Economic Zones (Zones Corp) was established in 2004. Zones Corp has created six top-notch industrial zones that now contribute to half of Abu Dhabi's manufacturing GDP.

This free zone has attracted substantial foreign direct investment and has played a significant role in developing the industrial landscape of the Emirate. Attractive incentives from the government, visionary leadership, pro-business environment, and state-of-the-art infrastructure make Zones Corp a preferred location for investors to establish their businesses. The Abu Dhabi Zones Corp serves as a hub for several training centers, ensuring that companies that register here have access to skilled and trained staff and team members.

Features

The following are some benefits of investing in this free zone:

- Full repatriation of profits and capital
- 0% tax
- Duty-free import of raw materials and machinery
- Favorable business environment
- Operational synergies from the co-location of similar industries
- Hassle-free labor procedures
- Provision of sound investment advice to clients
- Proximity to Abu Dhabi Airport and Jebel Ali Airport
- Cluster-based zoning model that allows for full integration within the industry value chain, deriving synergy benefits.

Forms of Registration

The companies can register in the following forms:

- General Partnership Company
- Limited Partnership
- Partnership (limited with shares)
- Limited Liability Company
- Private Joint Stock Company
- Public Joint Stock Company
- Branch Office
- Local Establishment
- Joint Venture Company

In conclusion, the free zones in the UAE region offer a range of benefits for businesses looking to establish themselves in the Middle East. From 100% foreign ownership and repatriation of profits to tax exemptions and advanced infrastructure, these free zones provide an ideal environment for companies to operate in. Whether it is for manufacturing, media, or other industries, there are several options to choose from with unique features and advantages. With stable governments, investor-friendly policies, and a skilled labor force, the UAE free zones continue to attract businesses from around the world and play a crucial role in the growth of the region's economy.

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