



Dubai International
Financial Centre

Dubai International Financial Centre

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Why MEASA

Opportunities in a Connected Ecosystem

The Middle East, Africa and Asia (MEASA) markets are typified as young, ambitious, urban and growing in size – quickly. Digital penetration is high, and economies are becoming increasingly diversified and led by innovation.





Opportunities in a Connected Ecosystem

The MEASA region's combined
\$7.4 trillion
GDP holds huge investment opportunities

MEASA is home to three billion people – **a vast source of human capital**

40% of the population of the MEASA regions are under the age of 25 – **human capital and ambition on a massive scale**

The Middle East, Africa and Asia regions have Dubai at its heart, with the **DIFC as the leading financial centre in the Middle East**



Financial Services Market of the Future



3X Growth

As a combined market, MEASA has grown three times faster than developed markets over the past 20 years – and is projected to **grow by 4.6% per year** over the next five years.

7% Annual Growth

Economic expansion fuelled by strong growth in financial services – up by 7% per year since 20: 40% higher than the global average.

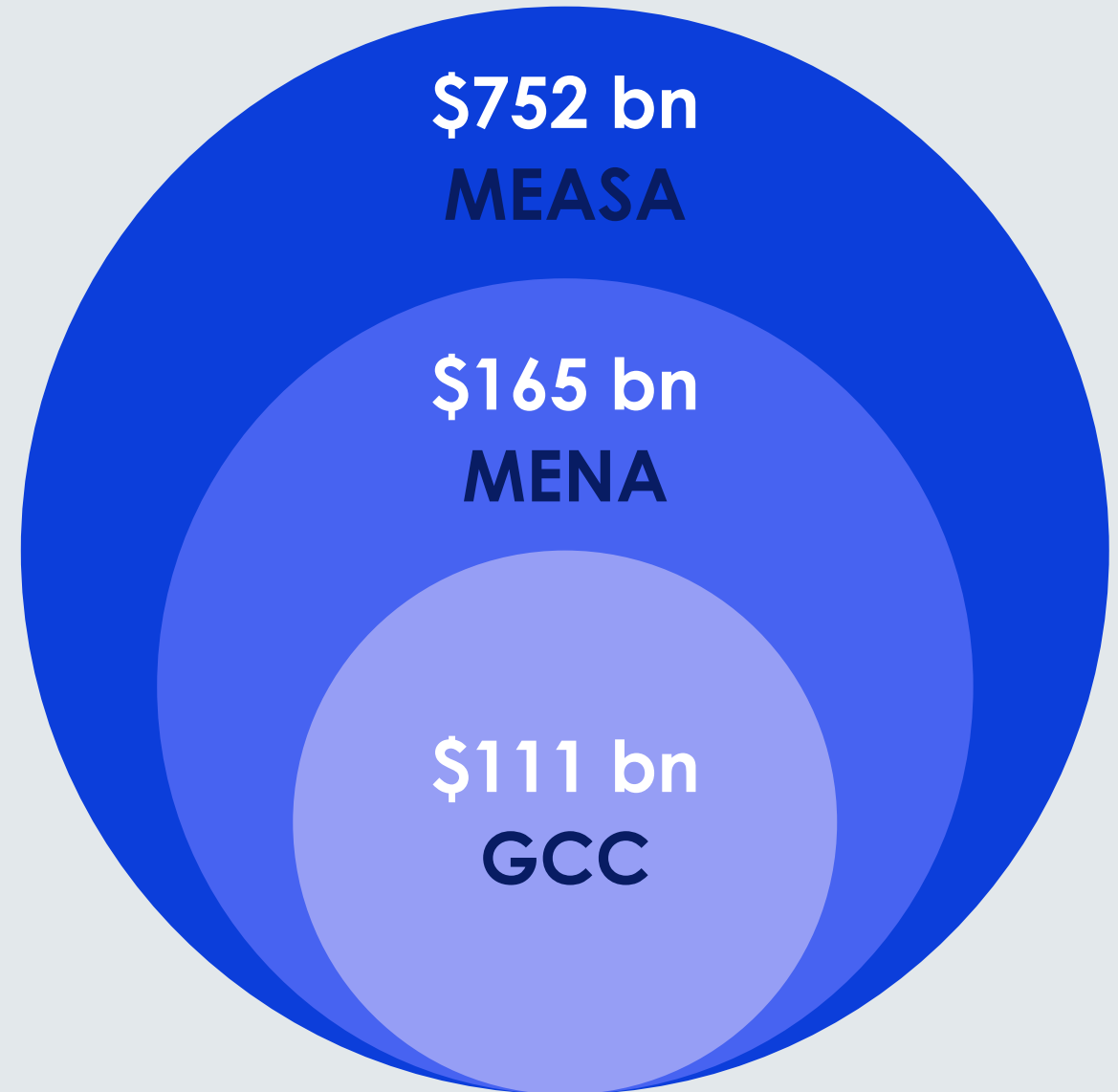


Financial Services Market of the Future



Major GDP Contributor

In 2018, the financial services sector across MEASA contributed \$752 billion to combined GDPs. Within MENA the industry was worth \$165 billion in 2018, while in the GCC it contributed \$111 billion.

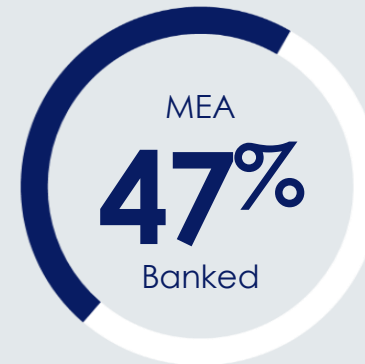




Financial Services Market of the Future



There is a massive opportunity in mature and emerging markets to serve the banked and unbanked. In South Asia, **only 69% are banked – providing enormous opportunities for traditional and FinTech providers.**



In the MEA region (excluding the GCC), **only 47% are banked – considerable opportunities to tap into a massive population of banked and unbanked.**



Untapped Potential for Profit

FinTech investment in the MENA region grew by **66%** between 2014-2019, compared to a global average of 26%.

Outpacing Global FinTech Growth

The MENA region and the UAE are the **global epicentres of the FinTech revolution.**

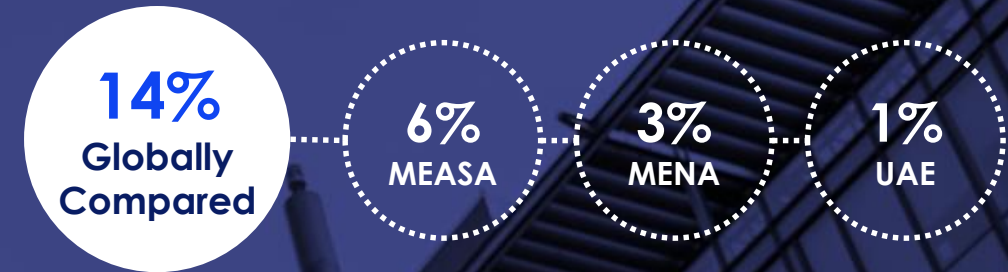
In the UAE, investment in **FinTech grew by 64%**

Untapped Potential for Profit

Underpenetrated sectors

Dubai is a top 7 HNWLI destination – but 75% of their money is managed and deployed offshore.

Wealth management is under-penetrated in MENA and the UAE:



Projected annual growth of corporate banking revenues until 2024:



Investment in Fintech in MENA and UAE:





Untapped Potential

Growth Potential



Mobile

Population

As the world's largest outward remittance market, MEASA has an incredibly mobile population **representing a fluid and ever-changing customer base.**



5 Hour

Flight Radius

Within MEASA there are 2.2 billion people all within a **5-hour flight radius of Dubai.**



4.6%

Growth

Projected annual GDP **growth of 4.6%** from 2019 – 2024.



Untapped Potential

Strong ROI and higher than average growth prospects



50%

Higher Bank Return

Bank return on equity in the MEASA region is 50% higher on average than in Europe and the USA.



33%

Higher Average Margin

Average margin on core financial products is 33% higher than the global average.

Why Dubai





Why?



Because Dubai is the geographic hub between East and West, North and South, **two thirds of the world's entire population can reach Dubai within an 8-hour flight.** That's the vast majority of business travellers and tourists.



For residents and businesses, Dubai offers incredible opportunities for investment – a geographic gateway to Asian, European and African markets. A diversified, forward-looking economy, extraordinarily advanced infrastructure.



Dubai has over \$80 billion of investment pegged for 2021 – including \$34 billion for clean energy projects, \$20 billion for renewables, \$11 billion for aviation R&D, \$5.5 billion for space sector investment and \$1.6 billion for innovation incubators.



Zero per cent income tax.



Diverse

Dubai is home to over 2.8 million residents, made up of more than 200 nationalities, all thriving in a city that welcomes over 14.3 million tourists every year.

This diversity is a central facet of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum's vision for a modern, dynamic and outward looking city – a diversity that is reflected in the DIFC, where 2,400 people live, work and play.





Connected

Dubai is the economic and geographic centre of gravity for markets from London to Singapore, Cape Town to Sydney.

Europe

Every week, **more than 150 flights** head to European destinations alone – that's over 20 a day just to European cities.

Asia

Direct connections to 65 destinations via 29 airlines every single day – including places as far apart as Jakarta, Islamabad, Beijing, Taipei, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Lahore, Bangkok and Tokyo.

Africa

14 airlines are flying to 25 destinations from Luanda to Casablanca, Tunis, Nairobi, Cairo and every other primary market in between.



Perfectly Situated

Dubai's place on the map makes it the de facto hub between all major markets – and Dubai has the infrastructure to back it up. **That's why over \$350 billion of trade flows through Dubai's air and seaports every year.**

**+\$350 Bn
of trade flow**





Perfectly Situated

Dubai serves **more than 180 shipping lanes**, while its Jebel Ali port is the **9th biggest in the world**. Dubai International Airport is the world's busiest in terms of passenger numbers. **Over 3.5 million tonnes** of airfreight moves through Dubai International Airport every year.



+180
shipping lanes



9th
biggest port in the world:
Jebel Ali Port

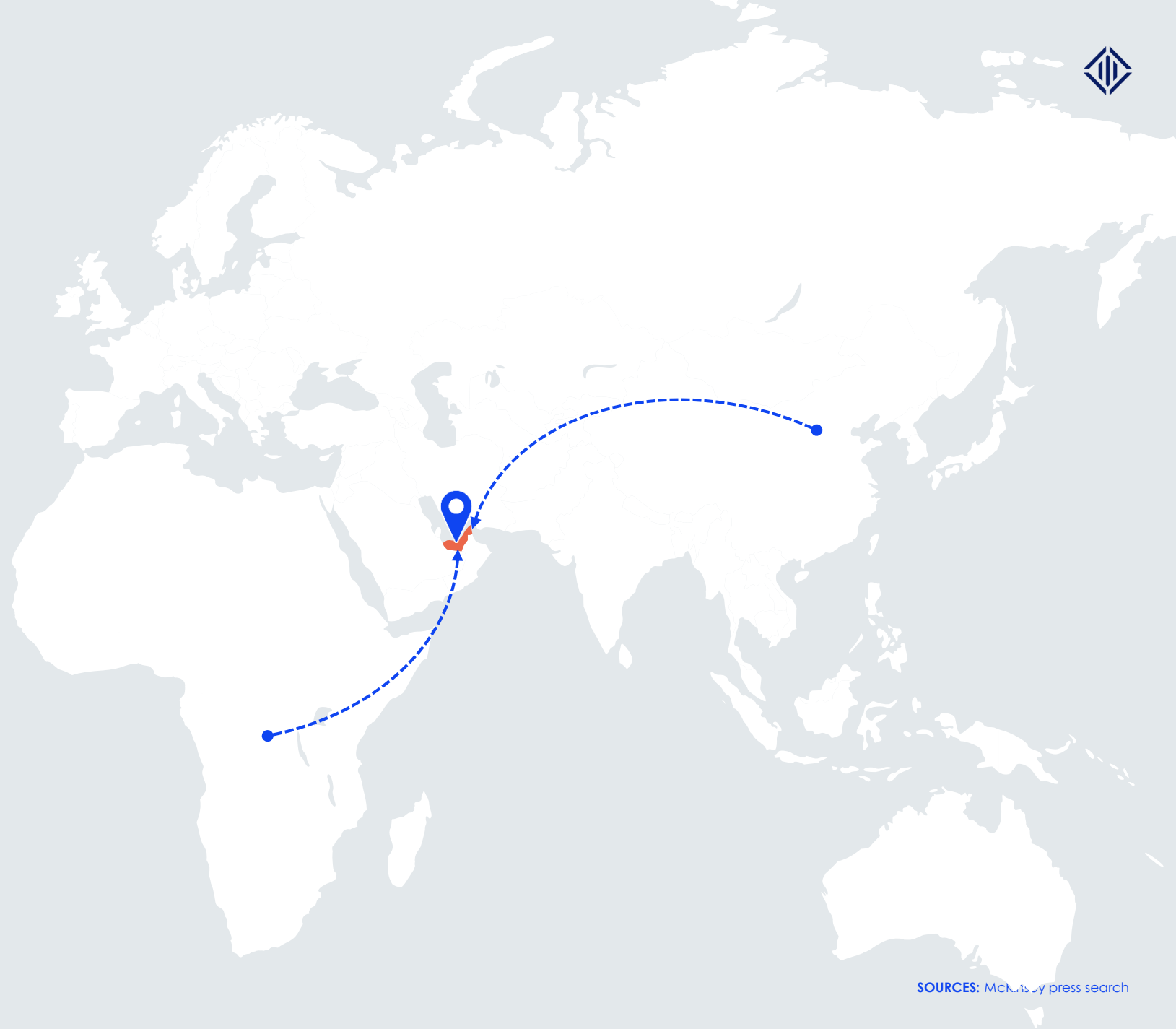


+3.5m tonnes
of airfreight through Dubai
International Airport



Perfectly Situated

Dubai's location and the infrastructure it provides make it the first-choice hub for more than **\$90 billion of China-Africa trade** – while **60% of all of China's overseas trade** passes through the city's ports.



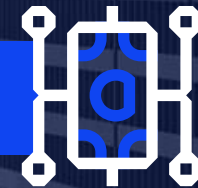


Advanced

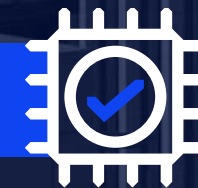
Dubai is ranked 1st in the world for mobile network coverage and the city's IOT (internet of things) sector contributes \$4.8 billion to its GDP. Moreover, by 2029 100% of the city's services will be 'smart'.



1st ranked
in the world for mobile
network coverage



\$4.8 bn
contributed by the IOT
(internet of things)
sector to Dubai's GDP



100%
'smart' city services
by 2029



Advanced

Dubai also ranks as the most **liveable city in the MENA region** with amongst the highest quality of life in the world.

1st in MENA
Mercer Quality of Living Index

1st in MENA
EIU Global Liveability rankings

4th Globally
Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index

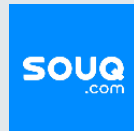
2nd Globally
CBRE Retail Brand Destination Rankings



Notable Investments



Acquired by Uber for
\$3.1Bn in 2019



Acquired by Amazon for
\$580 Mn in 2017



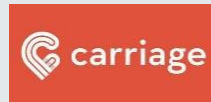
Acquired by Emaar for
\$151 Mn in 2017



Acquired by Rocket Internet
for **\$169.5 Mn** in 2015



Acquired by OLX for
\$190 Mn in 2018



Acquired by Delivery
Hero for **\$100 Mn** in 2017



Closed **\$142 Mn** funding
round in 2018



Valued at **\$2.2 Bn** after
IPO in 2019

The image is a full-page graphic with a blue monochromatic theme. The background is a photograph of a modern, multi-story building with a grid-like facade, overlaid with a digital grid pattern. On the left side, the text "Why DIFC" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. The right side of the image is dominated by a complex digital interface, resembling a data dashboard or a futuristic control panel. This interface includes several sections with text and data points: "ANALYSIS PROCESSING NODE" at the top left, "DATA POINT 002-34" below it, and "ACCESS POINT 234-87" and "ACCESS POINT 557-25" at the top right. There are also sections for "SYSTEM ANALYSIS", "DATA POINT 002-34", and "ETA 024-53". The interface is filled with various numbers, codes, and small icons, giving it a high-tech, data-driven appearance. At the bottom right, there is a circular progress indicator with four segments, labeled "DATA - ANALYSIS", "51.00", "10.97", and "78.67". The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and futuristic, emphasizing technology and data.



Benefits

DIFC offers all the advantages you'd expect to see in a financial free zone – business-friendly regulatory framework, tax free income and more:



0%
personal
income tax



0%
tax rate
on profits



ZERO
currency
restrictions



100%
foreign
ownership



No Restriction
on capital
repatriation



Benefits

Choosing the DIFC delivers connectivity, straddling key time zones and protecting businesses through robust regulations.



LOCATION

DIFC has been developed around **state-of-the-art infrastructure and is in a prime central location** – only a 15-minute drive to Dubai International Airport.



GLOBAL HUB

The Centre is internationally recognised as **a globally competitive hub**, placing **8th** amongst the most recent Global Financial Centres Index alongside global powerhouses such as New York, London, Hong Kong and Singapore.



REGULATOR

The DFSA operates a **robust regulatory framework** DIFC Courts **ensure the highest international standards of legal procedure**



DIFC ROLE

The DIFC's growth strategy reflects its commitment to companies operating there **by expanding in size by a factor of three and investing in its role as driving the future of finance**



Strength in Numbers

Since its establishment in 2004, DIFC has solidified its position as **a top global business destination** attracting:

17
of the top 20 world
banks

7
of the top global
law firms

9
of the top 20
wealth and asset
management firms

5
of the top 10
global insurance
and reinsurance
companies



Strength in Numbers

DIFC is on course to triple in size by 2024, with incredible new infrastructure bandwidth and an even bigger global footprint - **cementing its place as a first-choice international hub.**



3X
Growth
by 2024





Strength in Numbers

The DIFC's strength comes from its scale – and the thriving community it offers. Its unique lifestyle offering, which includes an outstanding commercial and residential environment, boasts 7 residential towers, 2 5-star hotels, 7 renowned art galleries; and 112 retail outlets with another 200 on the way.



7

Residential towers



3

5-star hotels



7

Renowned art galleries



112

Retail outlets with another 200 on the way

Regulation & Legislation



The laws establishing the DIFC Courts were designed to ensure the highest international standards of legal procedure, ensuring that the DIFC Courts provide the certainty, flexibility and efficiency expected by the global institutions operating in, with and from Dubai and the UAE.



The Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA) authorises and registers institutions and individuals who wish to conduct financial services within the DIFC. It enforces uncompromisingly high regulatory standards, works with the Central Bank to detect and prevent money laundering and fraud; and enforces the Law and Rules that apply to all regulated participants within the DIFC



DFSA & DIFC Common Goal

Although operating independently, the DIFC Authority, the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA) and the DIFC Courts serve a common goal: **to reinforce the DIFC's principles of integrity, transparency and efficiency.**

DFSA & DIFC Courts
Common Goal

Integrity

Transparency

Efficiency



Why DFSA is important for DIFC

The Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA) is **the independent regulator of financial services** conducted in and from the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC).

DFSA's regulatory mandate covers:

- Asset Management
- Banking and Credit Services
- Securities
- Islamic Finance
- Custody and Trust Services
- Commodities Futures Trading
- Collective Investment Funds
- International Equities Exchange
- International Commodities Derivatives Exchange
- Insurance & Re-Insurance



Why DFSA is important for DIFC

In addition to regulating financial and ancillary services, the DFSA is responsible for administering Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) legislation that applies to Financial Institutions and certain professions and businesses in the DIFC.

Please refer to the DFSA's website for more information.

The DFSA implemented the Collective Investment Fund regime in 2006, focused on maintaining alignment with international standards.

The DFSA introduced a risk-based approach towards its fund regime with three fund categories: Public Funds, Exempt Funds and Qualified Investor Funds.

The DFSA regime also allows both Domestic Fund Managers and External Fund Managers to manage DIFC domiciled Funds.



Infrastructure

DIFC's infrastructure is as aesthetically captivating as it is breath-taking in size and sophistication.

Advanced ICT Platform

The Centre's world-class IT infrastructure serves the business requirements of global and regional companies with a resilient and dynamic infrastructure that mitigates risks and provides maximum uptime. That's thanks to DIFC's advanced ICT platform, which includes four state-of-the-art data centres.

4,154,057sq.ft Occupied Space

The DIFC district features ultra-modern office space, retail outlets, cafes and restaurants, art galleries, residential apartments, public green areas and hotels. As of 2019, DIFC boasts 4,154,057 sq. ft of occupied space.

Seamless Connectivity

The Centre's integrated Gate District, Gate Village and Gate Avenue ensure seamless connectivity and accessibility to a full range of professional, residential, and entertainment amenities throughout.

Foundations at DIFC



Foundations at the DIFC

The DIFC Foundations regulatory regime allows high net worth individuals (HNWI), family and corporate entities to preserve and manage their wealth.

A Foundation is also a great platform for family succession and tax planning; asset protection, corporate structuring and for public interest purposes (excluding charities).

Establishing a foundation offers a degree of certainty that assets will be distributed in accordance with the Founder's wishes after his or her passing.



Foundations at the DIFC

Why have a Foundation?

- A Foundation operates like a common law trust yet enjoys similar benefits to those enjoyed by companies
- The DIFC's robust regulatory framework provides for international best practice and enables the Foundation to have a legal personality (unlike a Trust)
- Foundations provide for the clear separation of liabilities and asset control
- DIFC allows for asset protection – protecting the rights of beneficiaries and preserving a Foundation's assets from bankruptcy claims or other eventualities



Why Foundations at The DIFC?

Foundations Regime

- Locally based option available
- Full protection of the Foundation's arrangements
- In-built governance controls to safeguard a Founder's wishes
- Digital registration process
- No attestation required for documents
- Allows for migration from other jurisdictions into the DIFC
- Availability of a variety of complementary legal structures



How to apply

The requirements will depend on the type of legal structure selected. ROC handbooks can be found [here](#) and the templates in this section can be found [here](#)

If all of the requirements are in order the commercial license may be issued within five business days.



Step 1

Application

The application form will be sent to the Registration Review Committee (RRC) for evaluation and provisional approval. RRC can take around 3 business days to provide its feedback

An extra requirement for getting set up is that **you need to have a physical presence in the DIFC**



Step 2

Registration

if the applicant has received an RRC provisional approval, the applicant will be given access to the client portal to finish registration with the Registrar of Companies (ROC) office.



Application Fees

| Service | Fees |
|---|--|
| Registrar of Companies | |
| Name Reservation | \$200 |
| Application for Registration | |
| For a Foundation | Nil |
| Operating License fees upon Registration | |
| For a Foundation | \$200 |
| Government Services | |
| New Establishment Card Fees (if applicable) | |
| Normal | \$618 |
| Express | \$656 |
| Personnel Sponsorship Agreement Deposit | \$680 |
| Data Protection | |
| Entity does not intent to process personal data | Nil |
| Prior to or immediately upon personal data processing | \$1,000 (Financial) \$500 (Non-Financial) |
| Permit to transfer personal data outside DIFC under Article 12(1)(a) of the Data Protection Law | \$250 (Financial) \$150 (Non-Financial) |
| Permit to process sensitive personal data under Article 10(2) of the Data Protection Law | \$250 (Financial) \$150 (Non-Financial) |



If you'd like to find out more about how you can get up and running in the DIFC, we'd love to hear from you. **Just contact a member of the team at bdcsp@difc.ae**