

DIFC

Prosperity Across Generations: Unlocking the power of DIFC for families

CEO's **Message** 3

Our **Proposition** 4

Family Arrangements Regulation 12

DIFC **Family Wealth Centre** 14

Why DIFC**?** 17

Start your DIFC Journey 19

References 20

Acknowledgements 21



CEO's **Message**

For generations family businesses have been the bedrock of global economies and here at DIFC we recognise their extraordinary impact. Families think in generations, not quarters. More than just economic engines, they embody principles like long-term vision, governance, innovation, adaptability and a commitment to community, making them ideal stewards of our sustainable future.

For 20 years we have partnered with family-led institutions by understanding their unique needs, and building an ecosystem to support their multi-generational success. We were pioneers in introducing world-class innovative structures and laws in the GCC region specifically catering for succession and legacy planning and we continue to adapt and evolve alongside our partners. We strive to not just to adhere to global best standards but to set those standards for others to try and emulate.

In March 2023 we unveiled the DIFC Family Wealth Centre ("DFWC"), the first dedicated platform of its kind committed to providing the tools and resources you and your family need to thrive in an ever-changing and more complex world. Whether you are a single-family office, an investment holding company, a trust or a foundation – the DFWC is here to help and empower you.

We understand that your priorities extend beyond wealth preservation. From navigating technological disruption, managing geopolitical risk to upskilling your next generation, we stand ready with solutions. To manage these ever-increasing opportunities and concerns, we harness the collective power of our ecosystem, including professional talent, professional advisors, education solutions (DIFC Academy), and a thriving start-up community (Innovation Hub, Fintech Hive, and LEAP) to holistically address your needs.

DIFC is home to over 600 family-businesses under our wing and broadly consider a worldwide haven for UHNW families. We share your pride in this legacy and we remain committed to its future. As a top 20 city for hosting highly affluent families and founders, we understand the responsibility we hold.

Let us celebrate the spirit of entrepreneurship, innovation, and collaboration that defines our community. With family businesses at the core, we will pave the way for a sustainable and prosperous future.

Arif Amiri
Chief Executive Officer
DIFC Authority



Our **Proposition**



No family business is alike, which is why DIFC offers a robust suite of sophisticated structures and solutions, giving you a wide range of options that are tailored to your individual needs, no matter where your family interests and assets reside.

Flexibility is key. Our diverse structures, from holding companies, prescribed structures, family offices and foundations can be used to structure, protect, and grow your wealth in a secure and tax-efficient manner, navigating the most complex of scenarios.

With our best-in-class laws and regulations based on common law and independent courts, we offer a robust legal and regulatory framework grounded in the ultimate adherence to the Rule of Law. Tailormade legislation for families, such as the Trust Law and the Foundations Law, the Family Arrangements Regulations, Prescribed Company Regulations and the DIFC Court's Will Service, allow for family arrangements and structures laws that allow for succession, legacy and tax planning in a manner that has no equal globally. We understand for families that, ultimately, it's all about trust, and at DIFC we have worked hard to earn that trust over the last 22 years.

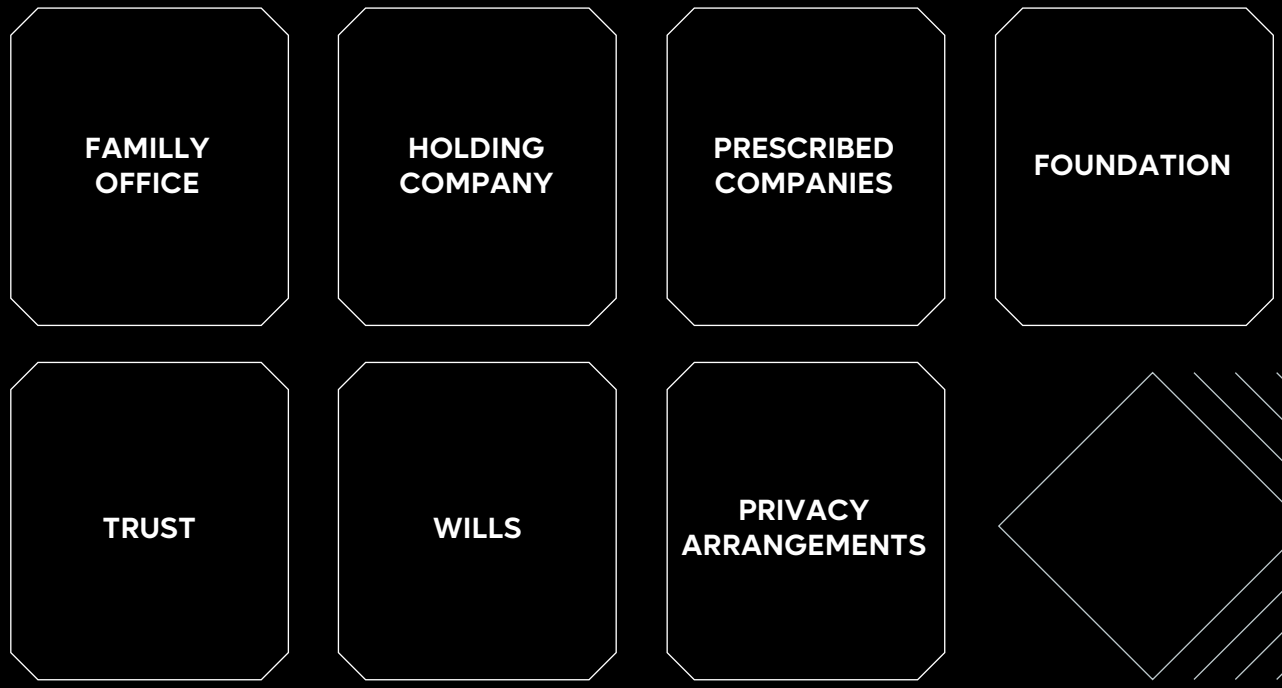
Our holistic approach allows you to focus on your family's legacy while we safeguard its foundation.

We understand that for family entities confidentiality and privacy are paramount, which is why we provide them the option to remove their entity from the Public Register and place it on the Private Register.

Throughout this journey, our dedicated Family Wealth Centre, and our thriving ecosystem of experts and service providers is here to support you every step of the way, curating the optimal solution for your unique family.

Our mission is to enable multi-generation wealth by delivering pragmatic, robust, and flexible solutions, so you can focus on what matters most: building a thriving family legacy and securing prosperity for generations to come.

DIFC
Structures and Solutions



Future of wealth starts here



Family Office

For families seeking to protect and grow their wealth across generations, the DIFC's Family Office regime offer a unique and flexible solution, albeit for a single family office or a multi-family office.solutions. This professional, governance-focused platform goes beyond simple wealth administration, management and advisory components, providing a best-in-class platform for managing all aspects of your family's affairs and legacy.

Families with significant wealth and complex ownership and control structures that are seeking long-term stability may benefit from a family office platform in DIFC. Whether your assets are local, regional, or global, our family office structure provides a secure and efficient means of doing business that assists in managing diverse holdings while navigating multi-generational needs with personalised guidance.

In circumstances where a DIFC family office provides services to more than one family, must show that proper separation and confidentiality measures are in place in relation to the affairs of each of the families being served. Multi-family offices that provide financial services (by way of business) to more than one family need to be regulated by the DFSA as a financial services provider.

For requirements and process, please refer to the DIFC Family Arrangements Regulations.

Holding Company

A Holding Company is a dedicated legal entity that owns and controls other companies, streamlining your family business structure and governance. Benefits include being able to manage multiple businesses and investments under one roof, while simplifying decision-making, clarifying ownership structure, and diversifying investments with greater flexibility. Additionally, it can centralise administrative functions or hold personal investments alongside business interests.

Holding companies are also suited to families with multiple businesses or investments that are seeking simplified management, clear ownership structures, and flexible investment options should consider consolidating these into a holding company structure.

For further information, please refer to the DIFC Handbook.

Prescribed Companies

A Prescribed Company (PC) is a special purpose vehicle regime offered by DIFC. They are considered as private companies under the DIFC Companies Law, irrespective of their number of shareholders (usually the limit for private companies is 50 shareholders). They are generally used as passive holding entities for specific purposes i.e. facilitating corporate structuring, financings or asset holding structures.



Setting up a PC in the DIFC offers a fast-track application process, reduced incorporation and licensing fees and more flexible requirements under the DIFC Companies Law or Operating Law requirements.

PCs are an attractive tool for families with complex structures across geographies for a variety of reasons. These include:

Strategic structuring: To help organisations undertake strategic structuring by encompassing decision-making and accountability within a specific prescribed company structure.

Ring-fencing assets: PCs can own assets to reduce the complexity of asset ownership in large companies. Holding assets in a PC is done in an isolated vehicle and avoids lengthy contract, licence, and permit processes.

Risk mitigation: Mitigate risks by holding assets or liabilities in a separate legal entity to isolate from other business risks, such as insolvency, or when used for fundraising, particularly where a parent may be exposed to volatile markets.

Financing and securitisation: Asset securitisation utilising a PC structure could be one way for a company to raise capital for the purchase of assets.

Intellectual property protection: Isolate and protect intellectual property ("IP") to assist with fund raising and commercialisation.

PC's have no local director, manager, or representative requirements in the DIFC or the UAE, and there is no need to have a corporate services provider or registered agent appointed, if you already have a presence in the DIFC, in which case that address can serve as your registered address in the DIFC.

For further information, please refer to the DIFC website.

Foundation

A foundation is a corporate person under the law but it has no shareholders. Instead a foundation is governed by its council which it has to do so in accordance with requirements of the foundation's charter and its by-laws. It offers families a robust platform for both succession planning and strategic asset management. At the same time, a Foundation has the capacity, rights and privileges of a natural person. The validity of an act done by a DIFC foundation shall not be called into question on the ground of lack of capacity by reason of anything in its charter or its by-laws.



This structure can safeguard assets for intended beneficiaries, potentially minimise tax burdens, and even contribute to broader public interest goals (excluding pure charitable endeavours). endeavours). Foundations can also safeguard both beneficiaries' rights and foundation assets from unforeseen circumstances like bankruptcy. Ultimately, establishing a foundation provides a level of certainty that the founder's wishes will be followed regarding asset distribution, ensuring continuity potentially for generations to come.

The DIFC offers what has been widely recognised as the most flexible and sophisticated foundations regime globally. Some of the unique advantages include:

- permitting a broad scope of objectives and activities, inclusive of charitable purposes;
- strong ringfencing provisions, ensuring the application of DIFC law and the jurisdiction of the DIFC Courts across the board (e.g. excluding foreign heirship rights and limiting the application of foreign law to DIFC Foundations where it contradicts DIFC law);
- flexibility in terms of constitution and operation, inclusive of permitting corporate membership of the foundation council;
- a clear description of council members' and others' duties and responsibilities;
- reservation to the founder of the power to amend, revoke or terminate;
- the potential for tax friendly treatment of benefits vesting for beneficiaries;
- limitation of transferability of rights to beneficiaries;
- statutory entrenchment of private dispute resolution mechanisms and the powers of an arbitration tribunal in that context;
- statutory entrenchment of asset ownership restrictions (e.g. to recognise nationality requirements for ownership of property or restricted stock) to the extent that property and company registrars can place faith in DIFC certification that any further distributions/ transfers beyond such restriction will be null and void;
- the broad set of MoUs DIFC has in place with local authorities recognising DIFC foundations regime for local ownership registration requirements

These competitive advantages make DIFC Foundations a globally attractive option for families seeking secure, flexible, and internationally recognised structures for their legacy planning and asset management.

For further information, please refer to the DIFC Foundations Law No.3 of 2018



Trust

The DIFC Trust Law allows for the establishment of trust arrangements subject to DIFC law. A trust, in its most basic sense, is a legal relationship between a settlor and a trustee, whereby assets are placed by the settlor under the control of the trustee for the benefit of a beneficiary, or beneficiaries, or for a specified purpose. A trust is governed by a trust instrument (such as a trust deed), which outlines the terms of the trust including its duration, beneficiaries, as well as the powers of the trustees.

Trusts can enable you to protect and manage family assets, while structuring their distribution according to your wishes. Trust arrangements are a possible tool for succession planning that can facilitate a seamless transfer of wealth to the next generation, primarily on the basis that it separates legal ownership from beneficial ownership in assets.

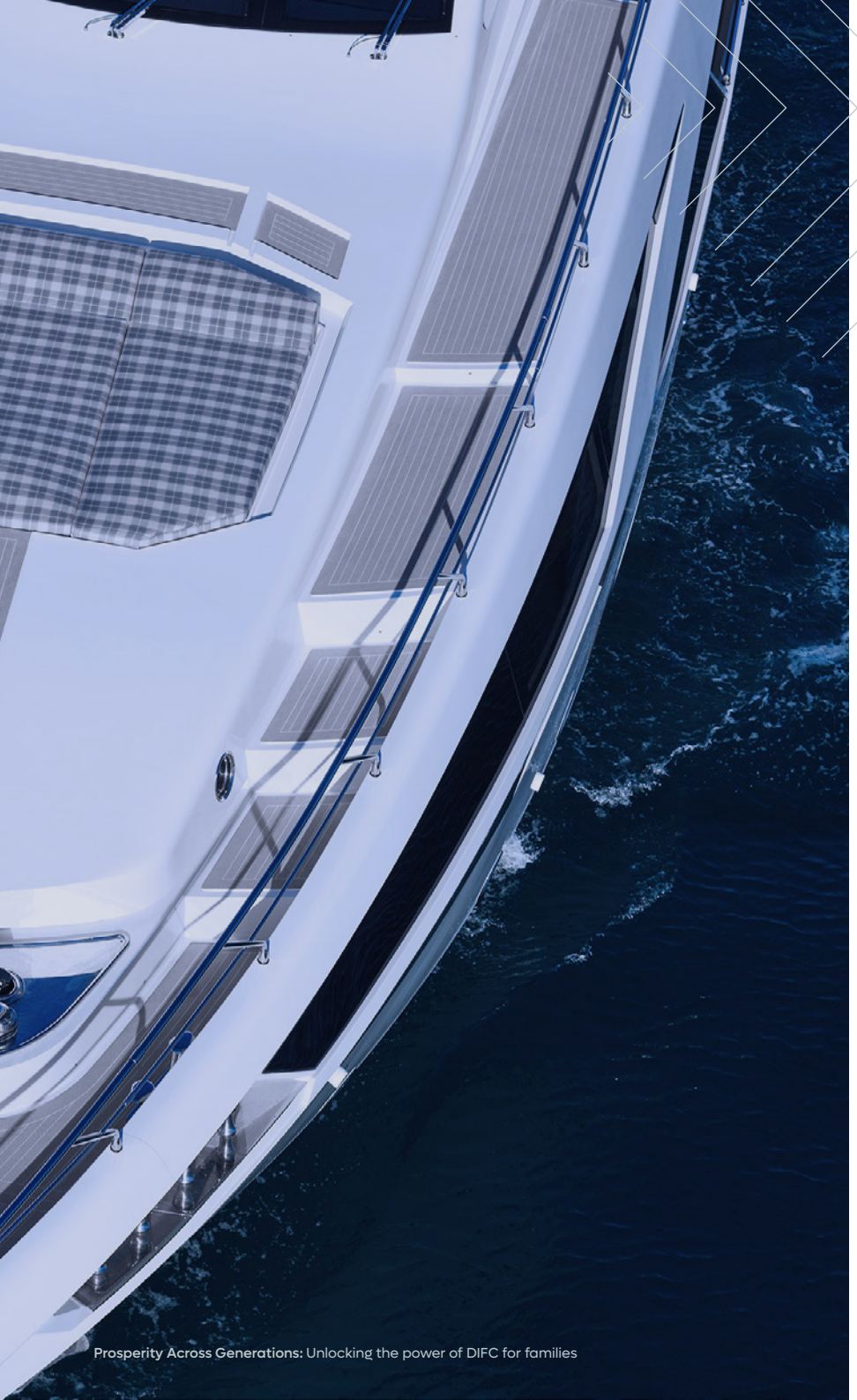
Trusts in the DIFC are not registrable, so the DIFC holds no details in respect of the settlors, trustees, beneficiaries or protectors of trusts, unless a request is submitted to the DIFC Registrar of Companies to certify any of the aforementioned for purposes of local registration or assets. Similarly, a trustee of a DIFC trust does not require to be present in the DIFC or to be registered or regulated to do so, unless trustee services are provided to more than one trust (by way of business) in which case such trustee will require regulation by the DFSA as a trust services provider.

Families can explore DIFC-based opportunities for different types of trusts to meet their needs:

- ***Charitable trusts:*** These trusts are created for charitable purposes, such as relief of poverty, the advancement of education, the promotion of health, art, or environmental protection.
- ***Non-charitable or purpose trusts:*** Purpose trusts can be validly established for the benefit of several persons or purposes (charitable and/or non-charitable) or a mix of both, subject only to legality and public policy considerations. This means they can be used in a commercial, philanthropic, or family estate planning context or even in a mix of all three. The settlor may appoint a 'protector' of a purpose trust who exercises various supervisory or protective powers about the trustee's administration of the trust.
- ***Investment trusts regulated by the DFSA:*** The DFSA regulates trusts established for collective investment purposes under the Investment Trust Lawthat are.

The DIFC Trust Law applies to express trusts, whether charitable or non-charitable. It also governs the duties and powers of trustees, relations among trustees, and the rights and interests of beneficiaries. It also places a duty on trustees to keep and disclose ultimate beneficial ownership interests in respect of the key stakeholders in trusts.

For further information, please refer to the DIFC Family Trust Law No. 4 of 2018



Wills

DIFC Courts provide a Wills Service, a collaborative effort between the Dubai government and the DIFC Courts. This service is designed to provide non-Muslims, owning assets in the UAE, with the opportunity to determine the distribution of their assets as well as designate guardians for their children, to align these decisions to the specifications outlined in their Will.

The DIFC Courts' Wills Service registers five (5) different types:

- ***Full Will (Assets and Guardianship):*** Covers the distribution of movable and immovable property in the UAE as well as the appointment of interim and permanent guardians for minor children residing in the Emirates of Dubai or Ras Al Khaimah (if applicable). A Full Will also allows the option of including assets outside of the UAE, however, it is strongly recommended that one seeks appropriate legal advice to ensure the enforcement of the Will can be carried out in the intended area outside of the UAE.
- ***Guardianship Will:*** Covers the appointment of guardians for minor children residing in the Emirates of Dubai or Ras Al Khaimah.
- ***Property Will:*** Covers up to five real estate properties within the UAE.
- ***Business Owners Will:*** Covers up to five shareholdings within the UAE.
- ***Financial Assets Will:*** Covers up to ten (10) bank and/or brokerage accounts registered at a branch that is situated in the UAE.

If you require legal advice or assistance in drafting a will, please refer to a lawyer from the register of DIFC Courts Wills Draftsmen. It is important to note that the Wills Service will not accept wills from lawyers who are not registered as a Wills Draftsman.

For further information, please refer to the DIFC Courts Wills Service.

Privacy Arrangements

The privacy and data protection regime of DIFC is developed with the protection of privacy of family details, interests and holdings at its core. A family office or family entity may apply and request to a confidential private register, which keeps the details of the shareholders and, interest holders confidential, that shall not be disclosed to the Public Register of DIFC. Similarly, the DIFC Privacy Vault ensures the highest level of protection of any personal details of family members in the DIFC.

To qualify for the DIFC Private Register, the applicant entity must be a family office or family entity and make the payment of the prescribed fees.

For further information, please refer to the DIFC Family Arrangements Regulations.



Family Arrangement Regulations



DIFC offers a robust framework for families to build, protect, and pass on their wealth for generations. Aligning with the UAE's vision to empower family businesses, DIFC replaced the Single Family Office (SFO) regulations with the Family Arrangements Regulations in January 2023. This move supports the long-term success of family businesses and ensures the continued legacy and wealth of families.

Benefits and key features under the Family Arrangements Regulations include:

- ***Flexibility for Family Offices*** allowing family offices – that serve a single family – to provide a detailed set description of services including financial services to that family without being regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA), also with no requirement to register with DFSA as a Designated Non-Financial Businesses or Profession (DNFBP).

- ***Establishment of a Private Register*** which allows entities controlled by a family or a family office to apply to have their shareholders, interest holders, directors and officers to be kept on a private register, as opposed to the DIFC company register which is publicly accessible. This further enhances the DIFC's privacy offering catering specifically to the need for families for these matters to be kept confidential and to be dealt with the utmost of discretion.

- ***Conflict management solutions*** through special provisions (also found in the DIFC Trust Law and Foundations Law) that allows for mandating on a statutory basis private alternative dispute resolution for all parties with a relevant interest, irrespective of whether they were contractually made a party to such arrangements, to be bound thereby. This ensures that family disputes can be dealt with in private and for parties to refrain from airing their grievances in public forums. Very strict ringfencing mechanisms in the DIFC Trust Law and Foundations Law further ensure that these requirements cannot be circumvented or negated by going to another court outside the DIFC.

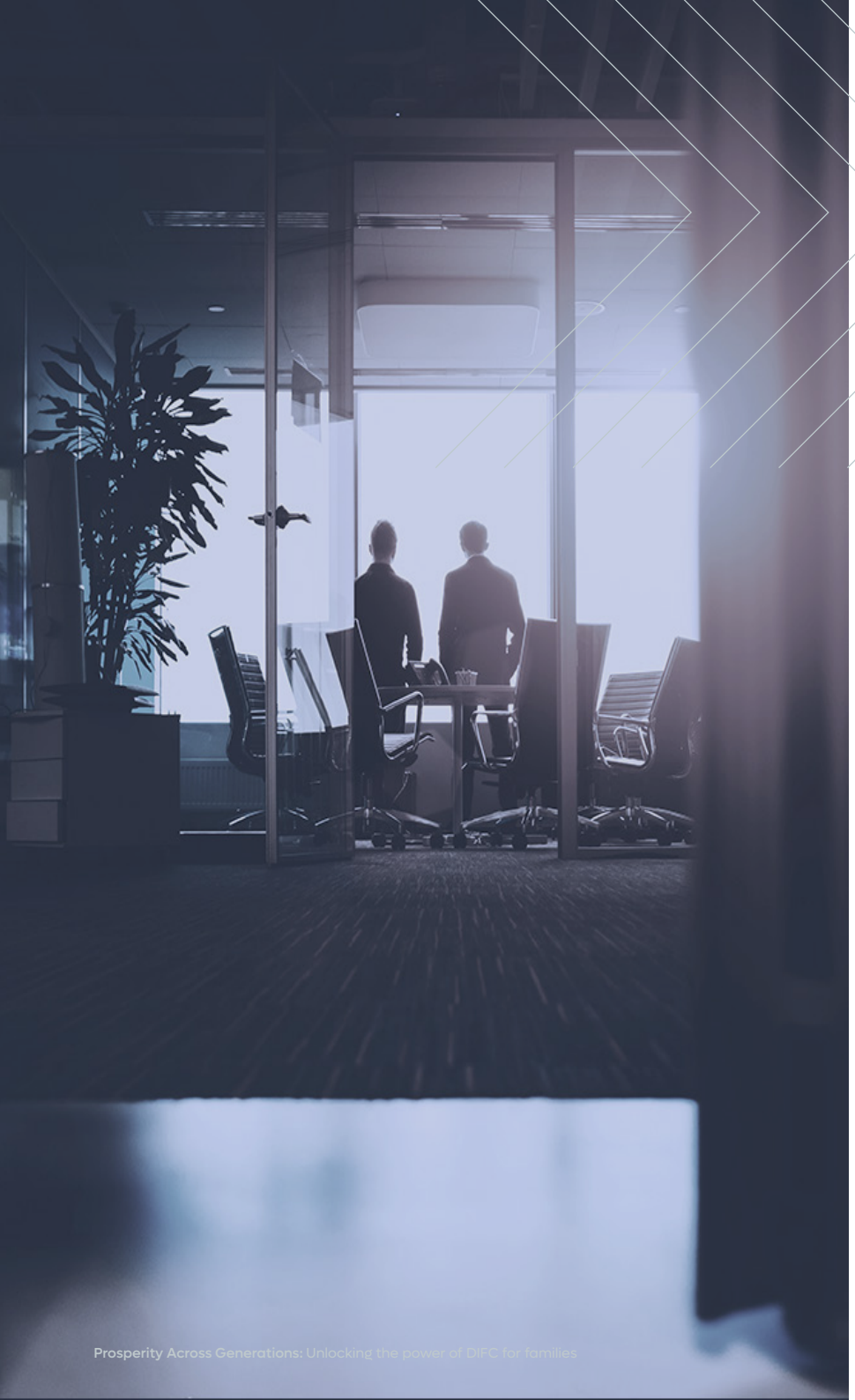
In addition, the Family Arrangements Regulations are in alignment with the UAE Family Business Law in the following ways:

- ***The UAE Family Business Law expressly recognises the validity of the DIFC*** family structures and their enforceability, also if the need arises to execute orders pursuant thereto in mainland UAE.

- ***Disapplication of Shari'a succession principles***, in circumstances where the disposal of family assets by a founder took place into a family succession structure during his/her lifetime (recognised as lifetime gifting or hiba), the provisions of Article 361 of the UAE Personal Status Law that deals with the succession principles of Shariah is expressly disapplied.

- ***Establishment of a Family Business Register*** as part of the delegated authority under the UAE Family Business Law, provided to the DIFC Registrar of Companies is permitted to run a Family Business Register for DIFC entities and family businesses qualifying under the federal law for them to gain access to benefits that can be provided pursuant to the UAE Family Business Law, local Emirate laws or DIFC laws as a consequence of family businesses satisfying certain requirements (e.g. succession planning and social responsibility arrangements in place).


DIFC
Family Wealth
Centre



DIFC Family Wealth Centre (DFWC) is a subsidiary of the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) launched in March 2023 with the endorsement of His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the UAE and President of DIFC, and was inaugurated by His Excellency Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, Cabinet Member and UAE Minister of Economy as well as His Excellency Essa Kazim, Governor of DIFC.

The central mission of DFWC is to help family-led institutions and UHNWIs preserve their legacies and wealth for generations to come. The DFWC achieves this by empowering our clients with a suite of programs and tailored services, guiding them on their journey to achieve multigenerational success. These include access to a global community of exceptional individuals and their families, networking events, education and thought-leadership, and certification.

Global membership community

We offer an exclusive club to a growing community of members who are based all over the world. Our members are typically large, established, family-led institutions including family offices, family foundations and family enterprises. We also welcome UHNWIs and their families, who are entrepreneur founders and C-level leadership.

As a global hub, we do not require members to be established in DIFC, nor be residents of the UAE.

Networking events

DFWC provides its ecosystem with ample opportunity for VIP access to exclusive forums for peer exchange and high-level networking. Our by-invitation only roundtables, hosted alongside the DIFC flagship events, are designed to enrich our community and raise awareness on the topics of wealth management, family governance, succession planning, and ESG.

By collaborating with the Innovation Hub, DFWC empowers principals and next-generation owners to stay at the forefront of technological advancements through engagement with the DIFC's broader start-up community, including founders, investors, and pitch demos. This valuable network allows for potential partnerships with the Innovation Hub and participation in large-scale initiatives.



Education and thought-leadership

We provide world-class educational and research initiatives to accompany family businesses in their journey to successfully preserve their legacies and wealth across generations. We provide programmes as well as short courses in coordination with DIFC Academy in partnership with top-tier global educational institutions and practitioners, as well as with the Hawkamah Institute.

The courses cover broad topics of interest to family principals, their next generation, as well as C-suites such as family governance, succession, estate planning, inheritance regimes and trending topics around ESG, innovation, strategy and technology.

"We are proud to be the first member of DIFC Family Wealth Centre. Our move to join the Centre was highly strategic to ensure future growth and solid succession planning. The Centre's swift on-boarding process, robust regulations, and advanced ring-fencing structure offer a compelling environment for us to operate and a welcome step towards ensuring our legacy thrives in a protected, growth-focused ecosystem."

Dr. Ahmed Saif Belhasa
Chairman of Belhasa International & Group



Why DIFC?

Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) is the leading financial hub for the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) which comprises 72 countries with an approximate population of 3bn and an estimated GDP of USD 8trn.

The Centre's vision is to drive the future of finance through cutting-edge technology, innovation, and partnerships. Today, it is the global future of finance and innovation hub offering one of the region's most comprehensive FinTech and venture capital environments, including cost-effective licensing solutions, fit-for-purpose regulation, innovative accelerator programmes, and funding for growth-stage start-ups.

Comprising a variety of world-renowned retail and dining venues, a dynamic art and culture scene, residential apartments, hotels and public spaces, DIFC continues to be one of Dubai's most sought-after business and lifestyle destinations.

Established as a financial free zone in 2004, DIFC has evolved into the deepest financial centre between London and Singapore, attracting a vibrant community with a global reach and strong standards.

Key highlights of our regulatory advantage:

- → ***common law with binding legal precedent taken from key common law jurisdictions;***
- → ***providing legal certainty on principles, rights, remedies, and parties' obligations;***
- → ***a flexible intellectual property ownership landscape, including the DIFC Intellectial Property Law;***
- → ***progressive debtor-in-hand Insolvency Law capable of dealing with complex business relationships and restructurings;***
- → ***comprehensive, easy-to-read Companies Law, Operating Law, Trust Law, Foundations Law and related Regulations that allow for a flexible range of company structures and operating requirements;***
- → ***globally competitive and attractive tax regime;***
- → ***no exchange control or capital repatriation restrictions; and***
- → ***100% foreign ownership.***

10,000+
REGISTERED FIRMS

50,200+
PROFESSIONALS FROM 150+ NATIONALITIES

1,130+
DFSA-REGULATED FINANCIAL SERVICES FIRMS

USD 440+bn
ASSETS MANAGED FROM DIFC

1,900+
AI, FINTECH AND INNOVATION FIRMS

1,400+
ENTITIES AFFILIATED WITH FAMILY BUSINESSES

DIFC is enabled by trusted institutions that provide world-class legal and regulatory frameworks:

- → ***DIFC Authority (DIFCA):*** Provides seamless jurisdiction-as-a-service offering best-in-class public administration, based on international best practice.
- → ***Dubai Financial Services*** Authority (DFSA): Provides world-class regulations for all financial services activities carried out in and from the DIFC.
- → ***DIFC Courts:*** Administers an independent common law judiciary adjudicating civil and commercial legal disputes with commercial court judges from eminent jurisdictions across the globe.

DIFC

DFSA Dubai Financial Services Authority

محاكم DIFC COURTS

Future of wealth starts here



Start your DIFC Journey

Are you ready to unlock the potential of DIFC? Our teams are here to guide you through each step, making the process smooth and straightforward.

DIFC Authority
+9714 362 2222
(Monday to Friday 08:00am - 04:00pm GST)
www.difc.com

DIFC Family Wealth Centre
+971 4 362 2223
(Monday to Friday 08:00am - 04:00pm GST)
familywealth@difc.ae
www.difc.com/ecosystem/difc-family-wealth-centre

DIFC Courts
+971 4 427 3333
(Monday to Friday 08:00am - 04:00pm GST)
+971 4 427 3331 (for emergencies)
registry@difcourts.ae
www.difccourts.ae

DIFC Courts Will Service
+971 4 404 8888
(Monday to Friday 08:00am - 04:00pm GST)
willservice@difccourts.ae



References

Dubai International Financial Centre
www.difc.com

DIFC Family Wealth Centre
www.difc.com/ecosystem/difc-family-wealth-centree

DIFC Courts
www.difccourts.ae

DIFC Courts Wills Service
www.difccourts.ae/ws

DIFC Legal Database

www.difc.com/business/laws-and-regulations/legal-database

DIFC Laws

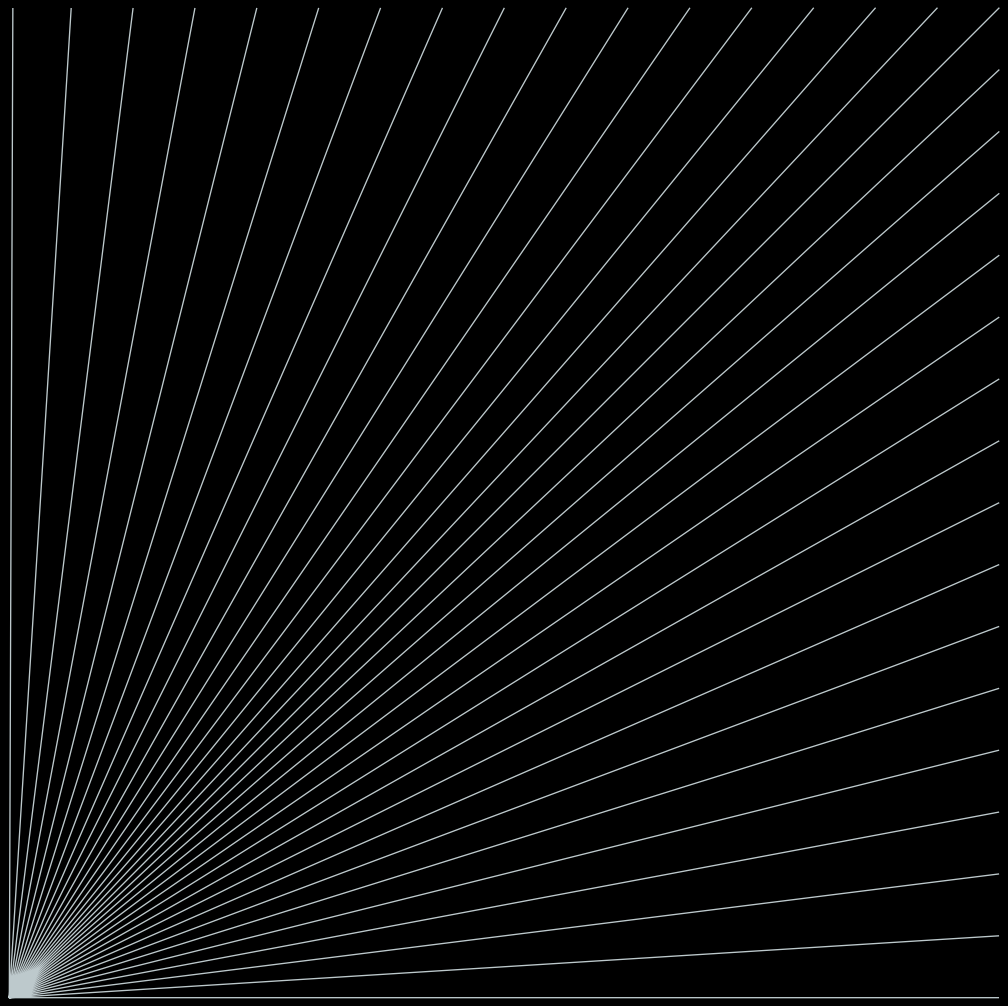
DIFC Family Arrangements Regulations (Updated August 2023)

DIFC Family Trust Law No. 4 of 2018

DIFC Foundations Law No.3 of 2018

UAE Law

UAE Federal Decree Law No.37 of 2022 Concerning Family Companies



Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our gratitude to the individuals and organisations who have contributed to sharing their experiences with DIFC and perspectives on family wealth management:

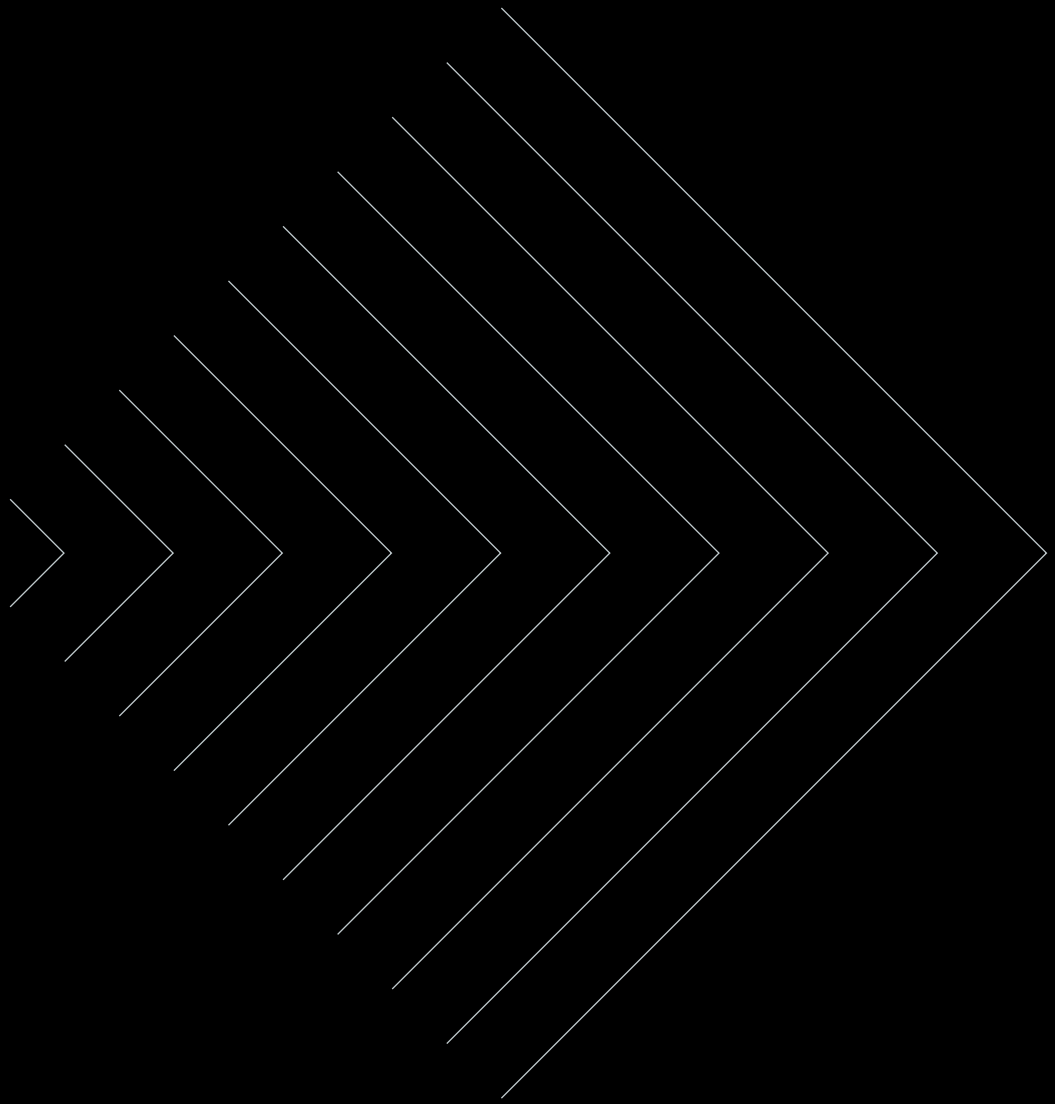
Family Business

Dr. Ahmed Saif Belhasa, Chairman of Belhasa, International and Group

Perspectives

- Al Tamimi & Company Limited
- Hourani & Partners
- M-HQ Corporate Services Ltd
- Trident Fund Services (DIFC) Limited

DIFC



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