CSF BUSINESS

Corporate Services & Company Formations in Dubai, UAE

DUBAI COMPANY REGISTRATION GUIDE

Your step-by-step playbook to establish, license and operate a company in the UAE - Mainland, Free Zone or Offshore.

2026 EDITION

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01 Why Dubai?

The UAE has become one of the world's most business-friendly jurisdictions. For entrepreneurs and investors, Dubai offers a rare combination of low taxes, world-class infrastructure and fast, digitised government services.

- 0% personal income tax - keep what you earn, with no salary or dividend tax for individuals
- Corporate tax at 9% on taxable profits above AED 375,000, and 0% on qualifying income for eligible Free Zone companies
- 100% foreign ownership - Free Zone companies, and most Mainland activities since 2021
- VAT of only 5% (with many zero-rated categories such as international transport and exports)
- Strategic location - 8-hour flight radius covering two-thirds of the world's population
- Full capital and profit repatriation - no restrictions on moving money out
- Golden Visa and investor-friendly residency options for owners, families and employees
- Modern banking, free-trade agreements and a business culture that speaks Mandarin, English, Arabic and Urdu

Dubai's D33 economic agenda targets doubling the economy by 2033, making this an exceptional window for new companies to establish a regional base.

02 Choosing Your Company Structure

The right structure depends on your target market, banking needs and residency plans. The three most common options are:

Aspect	Mainland (LLC)	Free Zone (FZ-LLC)	Offshore
100% foreign ownership for most activities	100% foreign ownership	100% foreign ownership	
Trade anywhere: local UAE market + international	International trade; local UAE market via distributor or branch	Holding, IP and international trading only	
Local regulator (DED / DEDC) license	Free Zone Authority license (DMCC, IFZA, Meydan, etc.)	RAK ICC / JAFZA Offshore license	
Office or warehouse required in most cases	Flexible desk / office options	No physical office needed	
Full UAE banking access	Banking available (some FZ reputational checks)	Banking possible but more scrutiny	
Investor visa + staff visas	Investor visa + staff visas	No residency visa by default	

Mainland is ideal when you want to serve the local UAE market directly. Free Zones suit trading, tech and consultancy companies with international clients. Offshore works best for holding structures, IP ownership and asset protection.

03 Registration Step by Step

From first consultation to operating company, the typical journey looks like this - CSF Business manages the entire process end to end.

01	**Free consultation & business plan**	We assess your activity, target market and budget, and recommend the optimal structure and jurisdiction.
02	**Structure & jurisdiction selection**	Choose Mainland, Free Zone or Offshore; shortlist the authority that best matches your business model.
03	**Name reservation & initial approval**	Reserve your trade name and obtain initial approval from the relevant authority (24-48 hours for most Free Zones).
04	**Legal documents & Memorandum of Association**	Draft and notarise the MOA / LSA. Our team prepares, translates and submits all documents for you.
05	**License issuance**	Pay government fees and receive your trade license - the official green light to operate.
06	**Visas & Emirates ID**	Apply for investor / employee visas, medical and Emirates ID; biometric and typing centre appointments arranged.
07	**Bank account & go-live**	We prepare your application package for UAE banks (or international options) so account opening goes smoothly.

Total time: most Free Zone licenses issue in 3-7 working days; Mainland typically 2-4 weeks including all government approvals.

04 Indicative Costs & Timeline

Setup costs depend on jurisdiction, activity and office requirements. The figures below are typical market ranges for guidance only - request a tailored quote from CSF Business.

Package	Indicative Cost (AED)	Typical Time
Free Zone company (desk / flexi desk)	AED 9,000 - 18,000	3 - 7 working days
Free Zone company (office package)	AED 18,000 - 35,000	5 - 10 working days
Mainland company (trade / service)	AED 15,000 - 35,000	2 - 4 weeks
Mainland company (industrial / office)	AED 35,000 - 80,000+	3 - 6 weeks
Offshore company (RAK ICC / JAFZA)	AED 12,000 - 25,000	3 - 5 working days
Investor / employee visa (per person)	AED 4,000 - 8,000	1 - 3 weeks

What's included in a typical CSF Business package: government license fees, company registration, MOA notarisation, initial approvals and our professional service fees. Visa, Emirates ID and bank account opening are quoted separately.

Tip: many Free Zones bundle visas and office with the license. Compare total cost over 3 years, not just the first-year price - renewals matter.

05 Visas, Emirates ID & Banking

Visa & residence

- Investor visa: available to company owners and partners; 2 or 3-year residence visas with family sponsorship
- Golden Visa: 10-year residence for investors, entrepreneurs, skilled professionals and outstanding students
- Employee visas: hire staff under your new company with standard 2-year work visas
- Emirates ID & medical: mandatory for all residents - we schedule and accompany you through the process

Bank account opening

UAE banks assess each application carefully. Typical requirements:

- Valid trade license and business documents (MOA, office lease)
- Residence visa and Emirates ID of the signatories
- Business plan and expected transaction volumes
- Source-of-funds evidence for initial deposit

Banks we commonly work with: Mashreq, ADCB, Emirates NBD, RAKBANK, Wio, Mbank and select digital banks. We help you prepare a complete, bank-ready package to maximise approval rates.

06 Tax Essentials at a Glance

Item	Rate	Notes
Personal income tax	0%	No tax on salaries, dividends or capital gains for individuals
Corporate tax - general	9%	On taxable profits above AED 375,000 (below that: 0%)
Corporate tax - qualifying Free Zone income	0%	For eligible Free Zone entities meeting substance conditions
Value Added Tax (VAT)	5%	Standard rate; many exports and international services are zero-rated
Withholding tax	0%	No withholding tax on dividends, interest or royalties paid abroad
Zakat / excise / customs	Varies	Customs duty typically 5%; excise applies to specific goods only

Companies earning above AED 375,000 taxable profit should register for corporate tax and file quarterly / annual returns. VAT registration is mandatory above AED 375,000 annual turnover (voluntary from AED 187,500).

This guide is a summary, not tax advice. Always confirm your exact position with a licensed advisor - CSF Business coordinates with vetted tax consultants in Dubai.

07 Why Establish With CSF Business

- Full-service setup: company formation, visas, PRO & government services, banking and tax support in one place
- Bilingual consultants (English / Chinese / Arabic / Urdu) with deep local knowledge
- Transparent fixed-fee quotes - no hidden government or service charges
- Post-licensing care: renewals, amendments, compliance and annual filings
- Real office in Al Qusais Business District, Dubai - visit us anytime
- Fast turnaround: most Free Zone licenses issued within one week

Ready to start? Send us your activity and budget - we will respond within 24 hours with a tailored proposal and a fixed quote.

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