



# Unlock the UAE

**Develop your business and  
#GoBeyond**

2025



# Expanding your business in the UAE

Navigating new international markets offers exciting opportunities. With careful consideration and resolution, it can pave the way for success and growth. Our Unlock the UAE guide service is designed to provide expert advice and insights, supporting your expansion journey in the UAE.

Whether finding the best location or facilitating setting up a branch or subsidiary, we are committed to providing pragmatic and timely advice, enabling you to focus on achieving your business objectives.

Venturing into global markets is a crucial step. However, by having a dedicated international business adviser who understands your business and customises services to your specific needs, you will gain confidence in effectively managing risks and maximising the potential a new market offers your business.



# We can help you with the following services



## Audit

- Statutory audit
- Limited review
- Agreed upon procedure
- FRAS services



## Advisory

- Business consulting
- Business risk services
- Regulatory advisory services
- M&A and transactions advisory
- Regulatory and financial crime compliance
- Technology advisory and cybersecurity
- ESG services



## Tax

- Corporate tax
- VAT
- Transfer pricing
- International tax and tax due diligence
- Economic substance requirements
- Customs and international trade
- Excise tax



## Business process solutions

- Incorporation and PRO
- HR and payroll services
- Outsourcing advisory services

# Why choose UAE?

## Market opportunity

- The UAE is the world's most economically stable country, <sup>1</sup> with a GDP per capita comparable to top Western European nations.
- Additionally, it has the most competitive economy in the Arab world <sup>2</sup>
- The UAE is one of the most fastest growing ecommerce markets in the world <sup>3</sup> - global ecommerce players have expanded to Dubai given its robust focus on an investment as a digital innovation hub

## Business friendly environment

- The UAE is ranked 1st in the Middle East and North Africa Region in the 2020 World Bank "Ease of Doing Business" Rankings and 16th in the world
- The UAE ranked 7th globally in the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking 2024 <sup>4</sup>
- The UAE is ranked in the top in the Arab States Region on the World Economic Forum's Networked Readiness Index 2023
- The UAE has a complete VAT system, with most supplies of goods and services taxed at 5%

## Access to finance

- Over 40 freezones operate in the UAE each offering 100% foreign ownership, and favourable terms for setup, taxes and leasing
- SME friendly environment and government policies
- Home to one-third of the region's investors and a significant number of venture capitalists
- Dubai ranked 16th globally in the Global Financial Centre Index 36 and is the top regional financial centre, followed by Abu Dhabi



The United Arab Emirates is the number one destination for foreign direct investment in the Middle East.

# Why choose UAE? (continued)

## Innovation hub

- The UAE ranked 1st in the MENA region and 31st worldwide in the Global Innovation Index 2022 <sup>1</sup>
- According to the UAE National Innovation Strategy, total investments in innovation are estimated at AED 14 billion annually, with half allocated to Research and Development <sup>2</sup>
- The UAE is the leading regional fintech hub and start-up hub

## Magnet for talent

- The UAE ranks in the top 22 worldwide in the INSEAD Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2023 <sup>3</sup>
- A large pool of expatriate labour skills – modern growth in the workforce, from 7.7 million workers in 2019 to approximately 8.5 million in 2025 <sup>4</sup>
- Strong investment in education as the economy transitions to a knowledge-based one <sup>5</sup>

## Quality of life

- Home to over 200 nationalities, the UAE is a peaceful, diverse, welcoming, and tolerant country <sup>6</sup>
- One of the world's safest countries – the UAE ranks 2nd globally in the 2025 Safety Index by Numbeo
- The UAE ranked first in the region and 18th globally in the World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024 <sup>7</sup>
- Dubai and Abu Dhabi both rank as cities with the highest quality of Living across the Middle East region <sup>8</sup>



With state-of-the-art infrastructure, easy access to smart government services, highly transparent financial services, a tax-efficient business environment, and a vibrant open economy, the UAE is the ideal location to grow your business.

# Grant Thornton – A truly global network

Grant Thornton is a global leader in assurance, tax, and advisory services, empowering businesses to succeed locally and internationally.

Wherever you operate, our experts bring innovative ideas and strategic insights to drive your growth. With 22 International Business Centres (IBCs) led by top professionals worldwide, we seamlessly connect you to Grant Thornton's extensive resources, ensuring consistent and coordinated support for your business needs.



**UAE**

**5**

Offices

**\$78.39m**  
Revenue (USD)

**692**

Employees



**Global**

**690+**

Offices

**\$8bn**  
Revenue (USD)

**150**

Markets

**76,000**  
Employees

# Contact

For more information about how we can help you unlock the UAE, please contact:



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