



استثمر في الشارقة
invest in Sharjah

GUIDING YOUR SUCCESS

INVESTOR HANDBOOK





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e-handbook here



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UAE The Easiest Place to do Business

A global outlook, a **cosmopolitan** workforce and a **leadership** invested in the future.

The United Arab Emirates

is synonymous with innovation, from its use of next generation technology, space exploration, renewable energy and tourism.

Located in the Arabian Gulf, the country boasts the GCC's most diversified economy with a vibrant hospitality sector, as well as retail, manufacturing, real estate and travel complementing its oil and gas sector.

80% 
World's population
live within a six hour flight

Expatriates from all over the world make up close to 89% of the UAE's population. The UAE is ranked 18th globally by the World Economic Forum's Enabling Trade Index, and top in the Middle East region by the World Bank for Ease of Doing Business, and the UN's Human Development Index.

 **#1**
Regionally for Ease of Doing Business

The Government is keen to diversify the economy further and to promote the private sector. It has set the stage for its ambitious plans at Expo 2020 Dubai, which will take place from 1 October 2021 for six months. The UAE is also interested in agritech and aquaculture as part of an effort to reduce its reliance on imported food. While the government recently introduced VAT at 5%, there is no personal income tax or corporate tax, making the country hugely attractive for both individuals and businesses.

Policies that drive business success

The UAE is extremely proactive in creating a business-friendly environment and attracting foreign direct investment. In July 2020, the UAE announced a new Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology to develop the industrial sector by promoting the adoption of advanced technology. The government fosters innovation through a variety of policy initiatives, including dedicated strategies for the **Fourth Industrial Revolution, Artificial Intelligence; Advanced Innovation; the UAE Centennial Vision 2071, Operation 300 billion and "Make it in the Emirates" and the National Advanced Sciences Agenda 2031.**



**100% Foreign
Ownership**



**New Bankruptcy
Law**



**Higher IPO
Limits**



**Flexible Residence
Visa Options**

Recent reforms allow for 100% foreign ownership of businesses, offer long-term and freelance residency and citizenship to entrepreneurs, business leaders and specialized talents. The UAE has also updated the laws around IPOs, remote working, and bankruptcy. Together, these policies create an environment where innovation is part of the fabric of society; where collaboration between public and private partners shapes a new reality; and where the future comes to life before us.

The UAE means business

9th

Most competitive nation
in the world (**IMD, 2020**)

5th

Most globally connected
country in the world
(**DHL, 2020**)

1st

in the Arab World
Human Capital Index
(**World Bank, 2021**)

1st

in the MENA Ease of Doing
Business Report
(**World Bank, 2020**)

9th

Globally for embracing
new technology
(**Soft Power Index, 2021**)

1st

in the MENA Index
of Economic Freedom
(**Heritage Foundation, 2021**)

Diversity at its core

The UAE has invested a lot of energy and resources into women's empowerment. As a result, the UAE ranks 1st in MENA for women's economic empowerment in the World Bank's Women, Business, and the Law report (2021). The country also ranks 1st for gender equality in the Arab world (2020 WEF Global Gender Gap Index).

Around 70% of all Emirati university graduates are female; 56% of UAE graduates in STEM are women; 34% of the Hope Mars Mission team members are Emirati women and 80% of the mission's scientists are women.

Sharjah - The Heart and Mind of the GCC

Sharjah is the Middle East's best kept secret:

an emirate where universities, entrepreneurs and government bodies collaborate to create a vibrant home for SMEs and global businesses alike. The emirate comprises Sharjah City, the Central Region including Mleiha, Al Badayer, Al Dhaid, and the East Coast including Khorfakkan, Kalba, Dibba Al Hisn.

Sharjah is widely recognized as the industrial hub, education hotspot and cultural capital of the UAE, and is now becoming increasingly well-known for its pioneering sustainability initiatives and as a world-class R&D, innovation and startup hub. With exceptional support provided by the government, lower costs than neighbouring emirates, and a culture of innovation, the city is an ideal choice for multinationals seeking a base in the Middle East.

The emirate is also a thriving tourist destination, attracting millions of visitors every year. Sharjah was chosen as the **UNESCO World Book Capital** in 2019 and is home to several UNESCO Heritage sites.

It was the **Capital of Arab Tourism** 2015 and the **Capital of Islamic Culture** 2014 thanks to 16 museums across Sharjah that cover widely varied fields, including Islamic art and culture, archaeology, heritage, science, marine life, as well as the history of Sharjah and the region. For the inquisitive and the curious, Sharjah has much to offer the sophisticated traveller.



With a steadily rising GDP,

a highly-diversified economy and a growing population of highly educated, ambitious and outward-looking young people, Sharjah is well placed for long term investment returns and access to global markets and skilled talent.



Centrally located

between Europe and East Asia, and with convenient access to major international airports and sea ports on both the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean, Sharjah sits at the centre of the largest metropolitan area of the UAE, nestled between the global financial hub of Dubai and the rapidly-growing northern emirates.

Sharjah

Today

1.7 Million
population (2020)

3rd Largest
emirate after Abu Dhabi
and Dubai

128 km
of coastline

\$30.66 BN
GDP (2020)

Border all
6 Emirates and Oman

1 International
Airport

3 seaports
on Arabian Gulf
and Indian Ocean

6th Safest
city in the world (2021)

SIR BU NUAIR ISLAND

SHARJAH CITY

SHARJAH
(2590 km)

DUBAI

ABU DHABI

RAS
AL KHAIMAH

DIBBA AL HISN
CITY

UMM
AL QUWAIN

FUJAIRAH

KHORFAKKAN
CITY

RAS
AL KHAIMAH

FUJAIRAH
KALBA
CITY

Why Sharjah?

Sharjah has the right mix of ingredients to drive your business forward. It is the gateway to the Middle East, offering businesses a low-cost working environment, access to unparalleled talent and support at the highest level.



A vibrant and highly-qualified workforce

As a popular destination for expats, Sharjah boasts a young, diverse, talented, and multicultural population. Key to attracting such talent has been Sharjah's continued investment in education. Sharjah invests \$1.5 billion a year into education and research, a higher per capita spend than most countries in the region. Sharjah University City is home to around 47,000 students, who upon graduation will become part of the emirate's well-educated workforce across an incredible variety of disciplines.



Sharjah at a Glance



A vibrant and highly-qualified workforce



A home for innovation



A business-friendly environment



A well-connected export hub



A gateway to the UAE and GCC



A thriving space for entrepreneurs and SMEs



A business-friendly environment

Sharjah's government has taken steps to ensure the city is one of the GCC's most lucrative places to do business. It is easy and quick to set up a business, with an abundance of industry-specific free zones and support from Sharjah Investors Services Centre (SAEED).



A gateway to the UAE and GCC

Sharjah is strategically located between Dubai and the burgeoning northern emirates, and is the only emirate which borders all six of the other UAE emirates. Sharjah offers easy access by air, sea, land to hubs in the UAE, GCC and beyond, which is one of the reasons why manufacturing accounts for 17% of the emirate's GDP. The population of the GCC stands at 54 million while its combined GDP is \$3.4 trillion. Rich in natural resources, these countries have a higher than average proportion of high net worth individuals and are among the most lucrative and profitable markets in the world.



A home for innovation

Sharjah is a future-ready city thanks to its world-class innovation cluster. This area houses University City and Sharjah Research Technology and Innovation Park, which together combine industry, government, universities and research facilities.

Pilot projects for tech-based organisations like Nokia, IBM, and Dell are underway in the emirate. Initiatives like Digital Sharjah and e-transformation and a focus on sustainability are core tenets of Sharjah's culture of innovation.



A well-connected export hub

Sharjah International Airport connects the city to the GCC, Europe, Africa, and Asia, this international airport is home to the region's leading low-cost airline - Air Arabia. The emirate also benefits from its proximity to Dubai International Airport, a gateway to the world, located just 28km away. Etihad Rail aims to connect the GCC overland, creating the opportunity to export to huge markets like Saudi Arabia without using air freight.

Sharjah is home to three seaports, and is the only emirate with seaports on both the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean. This provides the shortest access between Asia and the GCC through the port of Khorfakkan.



A thriving space for entrepreneurs and SMEs

Sharjah is home to more than 60,000 SMEs and start-ups across its six free zones and 33 industrial zones. It is a hub for innovation, with organisations like the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Centre (Sheraa) providing support including incubators and accelerator programmes as well as the annual Sharjah Entrepreneurship Festival, an event that brings together the world's most promising innovators.





Sharjah FDI Office (Invest in Sharjah)

Sharjah FDI Office (Invest in Sharjah) is Sharjah's investment promotion agency and a strategic partner for global investors looking to grow their business in the emirate.

As Sharjah investment promotion agency, we are committed to guiding foreign investors to the tremendous opportunity and potential Sharjah offers. Our vision is to inspire businesses by building on the strong foundations of Sharjah's sustainable growth and economic diversification.

We offer Investors:



Expert market knowledge and intelligence



Access to investment opportunities across a range of sectors and industries



Bespoke advice and step-by-step guidance



Aftercare services



We are a passionate and ambitious team dedicated to opening doors and guiding your success. We are here and ready to support you to achieve your plans and ambitions in Sharjah and realise your investments in the emirate.

Sharjah

Mainland vs Free Zone

Sharjah Mainland

Sharjah Department of Economic Development (SEDD) is the department in charge of licensing and registration of corporate entities in mainland Sharjah.

The SEDD's licensing and registration procedure is streamlined to offer ease of registration based on specific business activities. The UAE Commercial Companies Law (CCL) is the federal law that regulates all entities set up in the UAE mainland and has recently been amended to allow 100% foreign ownership. A company registered on the mainland can conduct business across the whole UAE including with federal and local government bodies.



Sharjah Free Zones

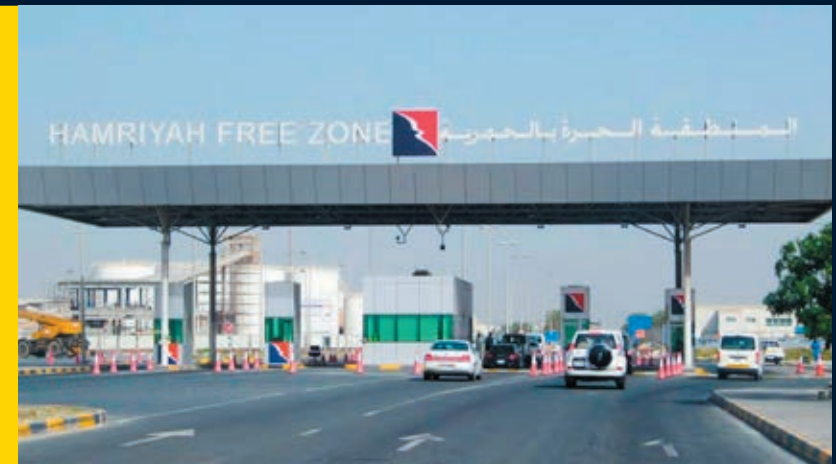
Sharjah is home to six free zones that are strategically located in, or near major transport centres to facilitate the logistics needs of investors. The emirate prides itself on minimising bureaucracy. Free Zones are business-friendly with 0% corporate tax and 0% personal income tax. There are no import, export, re-export fees, or customs duties.



Hamriyah Free Zone

Registering and setting up a business is exceptionally quick, taking less than an hour at the **Hamriyah Free Zone Authority (HFZA)**.

As the UAE's second largest industrial free zone, HFZA is home to more than 6,500 businesses from 163 countries. Due to its central coastal location, it offers air, sea and land access to both domestic and regional markets.



Sharjah Airport Free Zone

The Sharjah Airport Free Zone (SAIF) offers pre-built warehouses for small and medium-sized businesses, while also offering substantial space for larger multinationals to build their own if they wish to do so.

The free zone has on-site customs for rapid clearance of goods; more than 8000 companies from 160 countries; and has exceptional market access as it is connected to Sharjah International Airport.



Sharjah Research Technology and Innovation Park

Established in 2016, the **Sharjah Research Technology and Innovation Park (SRTIP)** is a world-class innovation ecosystem that promotes research and development and supports collaboration between industry, government and academia. SRTIP was launched to complement University City and has been very successful in attracting leading innovation-focused SMEs, multinationals, and startups in piloting, commercialising, and adopting R&D.



Sharjah Healthcare City

Sharjah Healthcare City (SHCC) is a dedicated healthcare and wellness city home to dozens of hospitals and clinics. Sharjah Healthcare City welcomes Research and Development centres, laboratories, hospitals and rehabilitation centres.

Located close to Sharjah International Airport, the free zone offers investors plots of land for construction of hospitals, clinics and offices while other healthcare buildings are available for long-term leases.



Sharjah Publishing City

Sharjah Publishing City (SPC) is the world's first free zone dedicated exclusively to serving the global Publishing and Printing industry. SPC provides all the necessary infrastructure and services, along with a business-friendly environment. Businesses can write, design, publish, print, store, and distribute - locally and worldwide - all from one single, purpose-built, state of the art facility.



Sharjah Media City

Sharjah Media City (SHAMS) was launched in February 2017 to act as a catalyst for creative and media businesses to grow and thrive. The zone is a world-class media hub with innovative and purpose-built facilities and services.



Investment Opportunities

“ WE CREATE VALUE FOR MUTUAL SUCCESS & A BETTER TOMORROW

Invest in Sharjah is committed to the future of Sharjah and has been entrusted to work with investors to identify bespoke investment opportunities across a range of sectors that further diversify the economy for a more sustainable society and welcoming business environment.





Advanced Manufacturing

WORLD-LEADING TALENT, SOPHISTICATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND A DESIRE TO LEAD

The manufacturing sector is the second highest contributor to Sharjah's GDP and accounts for one third of the UAE's manufacturing output. Sharjah is widely recognized as the industrial hub of the nation, particularly owing to its six free zones and 33 industrial zones which are strategically located near major air and



16.3%
OF GDP BASED ON
INDUSTRY MANUFACTURING



150,000
EMPLOYEES IN THE
EMIRATE'S INDUSTRIAL CITY

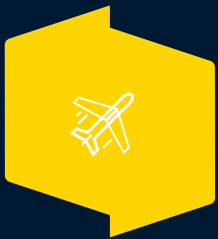


62%
OF INDUSTRIAL HUBS DEDICATED
TO FREIGHT FORWARDING



33
INDUSTRIAL
ZONES

sea ports. The emirate has long been a leader in light manufacturing and has recently emerged as a hotbed for advanced manufacturing utilizing next-generation technologies such as robotics, AI, and 3D printing for the production of products including drones, mega yachts, and construction equipment.



Culture & Tourism

CAPTURING THE HEARTS OF ADVENTURERS, ECO-WARRIORS AND INTREPID TRAVELLERS

Sharjah's cultural offerings, thriving art scene and UNESCO Heritage sites have long-attracted visitors from around the world. Recent major investments in infrastructure and large-scale tourism destinations around the emirate's open deserts, mountains, beaches and natural reserves have seen Sharjah- dubbed



75%
INTERNATIONAL
TOURISTS



1.3M
HOTEL VISITORS
(2019)

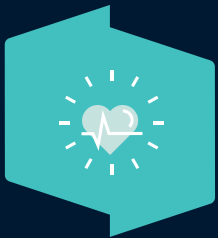


70%
GUESTS STAY AT
4-5-STAR HOTELS



13.6 M
PASSENGER AT SHARJAH
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (2019)

the UAE's culture capital- transform into a popular hot spot for adventure and eco-tourism, particularly in the rapidly-growing eastern and central regions, generating tremendous opportunities for hospitality, leisure, entertainment, food and beverage, retail, and other travel-related offering.



Health & Wellbeing

ROBUST RESEARCH CENTERS, WORLD-CLASS FACILITIES AND GLOBAL ACCESS

With its world-class infrastructure and robust network of university hospitals, R&D centres and private clinics, Sharjah is uniquely placed to become a leading healthcare capital in the Middle East. Major government initiatives such as Sharjah Healthcare City are creating new opportunities for growth while



16

PUBLIC & PRIVATE
HOSPITALS (2021)



1000+

ADDITIONAL
BEDS NEEDED



\$1,268

U.A.E HEALTH EXPENDITURE
PER CAPITA ON AVG



INSURANCE

AND PRIVATE
HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

ensuring extremely low barriers to entry for healthcare providers. A rapidly-growing and predominantly young demographic have fuelled demand for the development of medical and wellness products and services across the healthcare value chain.



Human Capital & Innovation

A DIVERSE, EDUCATED AND TALENTED WORKFORCE

A regional hub for higher education, Sharjah- home to one of the world's largest university cities- has long-been recognized as the education hotspot of the UAE and a major centre for research and development. With a strong government commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship, the emirate has developed



2000+
PhD HOLDERS



47K
STUDENTS IN
UNIVERSITY CITY

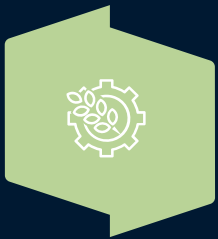


22
HIGHER LEARNING
INSTITUTIONS IN THE
UNIVERSITY CITY (2019)



232+
SCHOOLS (2019)

a world-class innovation ecosystem leveraging University City's rich pool of talent, research and technology-focused free zones, incubators, accelerators, makerspaces, and additive manufacturing facilities which is now home to a thriving startup scene and pilot projects with technology giants from around the world.



Agri-food Technology

BUILDING AN OASIS IN THE DESERT

The UAE'S food security strategy aims to position the UAE as a world-leading hub for innovation-driven food security and amongst the most food-secure countries in the world. With a deep culture in research and innovation, dedicated Food Park to bring food to market, and world-class Research Technology and



\$626M

UAE AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCT MARKET (2019)



\$1.1B

EXPECTED SIZE OF THE UAE
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT
MARKET BY 2024



9.8%

CAGR OF REVENUE FROM
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN UAE (2019)



\$24.7B

UAE FOOD TRADE
VALUE (2020)

Innovation Park, Sharjah is home to many agritech companies, startups, and pilot projects. Sharjah is in an advantageous geographic position with coasts on both sides of the country. It is the industrial hub of the UAE, and has lower operating costs than some neighbouring emirates.



Mobility & Logistics

REACH THE WORLD THROUGH THE BEST CONNECTED EMIRATE

Nestled between the rapidly-growing northern emirates and the global financial hubs of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and strategically located at the heart of global trade with three seaports, an international airport, and six free zones, Sharjah serves as the UAE's industrial hub and gateway to the world's fastest growing



25M

PASSENGER CAPACITY AT SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BY 2025



20K

TOTAL METRES OF BERTH



62%

OF INDUSTRIAL HUBS DEDICATED TO FREIGHT FORWARDING



RAPIDLY

EXPANDING EXPORT AND RE-EXPORT MARKET

markets across Asia, Africa and Europe. As the only emirate with ports on both the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean, Sharjah offers the shortest maritime journey between the GCC and Asia and unparalleled access to the rest of the UAE and beyond.



GreenTech

COMMITTED TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Sharjah is on track to reach a zero waste-to-landfill target by 2020 with strong government support for green initiatives and ground-breaking projects like Sharjah Sustainable City- the first net zero energy community in Sharjah- and state-of-the-art waste-to-energy projects, sustainability and waste



5%
ANNUAL INCREASE IN
DEMAND FOR POWER



9.5
HOURS OF DAILY
SUNLIGHT FOR SOLAR ENERGY



2.3 M
TONES OF WASTE COLLECTED BY BEE'AH
FROM 1 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS EACH YEAR



MEA
ENERGY INNOVATION HUB

management are at the heart of the emirate's development. Innovation-led policies have produced an ecosystem that is especially welcoming of sustainability and clean-tech start-ups with tremendous opportunities for research and development, commercialization, and public-private partnerships.



We lead your business
to success

—



www.investinsharjah.ae



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