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1. UAE Economy Overview



UAE Economy Overview

The UAE, a nation of significant economic prowess, is the third-largest economy in the Middle East. With a projected GDP of USD 509 billion in 2023, it trails only behind economic powerhouses Saudi Arabia and Israel. This ranking underscores the UAE's economic might and potential for further growth. Additionally, the nation boasts a per capita income of USD 53,707 in 2022, a testament to its wealth and prosperity.

Furthermore, the country's recent economic success is attributed to strategic positioning, robust financial reserves, a substantial sovereign wealth fund, investor confidence, economic diversification initiatives, thriving free zones, and significant foreign investment.

Moreover, the UAE has made remarkable strides in reducing its dependence on oil through deliberate economic diversification efforts. In H1 2023, the non-oil sectors contributed 72.4% of the total GDP, completely reversing the share from 1971.

The region is touted to grow faster than the rest of the Middle East region for the rest of the decade.

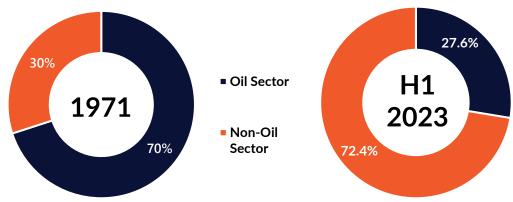
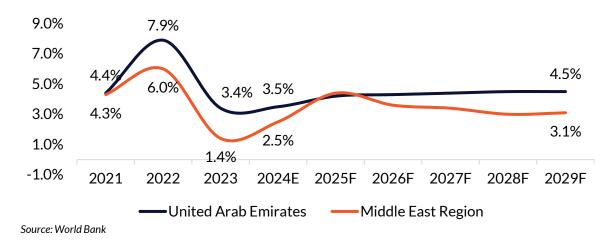


Figure 1. Diversification of GDP By UAE, 1971 & H1 2023

Source: Ministry of Finance & Stratrich Analysis

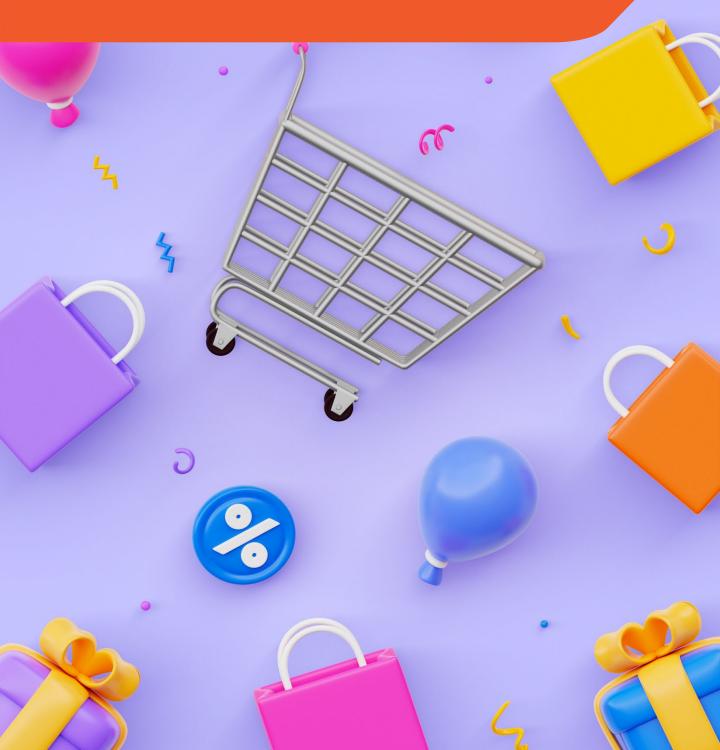




2. UAE E-Commerce Outlook

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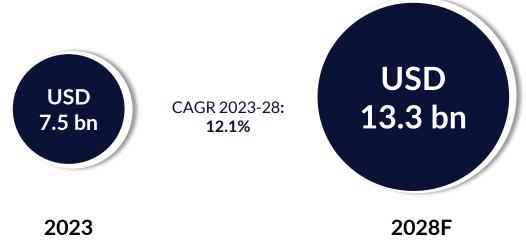
UAE E- Commerce Outlook

The UAE ranks as the second largest e-commerce market in the GCC, only behind Saudi Arabia. In 2023, the UAE's e-commerce market reached a **total size of USD 7.5 billion**. This market is projected to exceed **USD 13.3 billion by 2028**.

The rapid growth of e-commerce in the UAE is driven by a tech-savvy Gen Z and millennial population, bolstered by strong government support and significant investments in digital infrastructure. In 2023, the top e-commerce verticals by value were consumer electronics, apparel and footwear.

Additionally, free zones such as Dubai CommerCity and EZDUbai (Dubai South) are expected to fuel the growth of e-commerce in the country. These zones offer facilities and services specifically designed to assist businesses engaged in digital commerce.





Source: Dubai Chamber of Commerce

The UAE's e-commerce industry has experienced impressive growth and is poised for further expansion. This robust outlook is driven by widespread high-speed internet connectivity and favorable policies focused on developing digital payments and logistics infrastructure.

2.1 UAE E- Commerce Market Size

"In recent years, the UAE's e-commerce industry has experienced significant growth, driven by increasing smartphone and internet penetration. The impact of COVID-19 and the resulting market conditions have further accelerated this trend. These factors have served as catalysts for the UAE's e-commerce market, which was already gaining momentum."

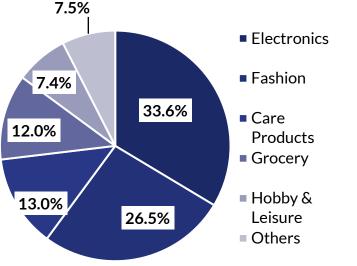
14.9 CAGR 2019-23: 28.5% CAGR 2024-29: 12.1% 13.3 11.9 10.6 9.5 8.4 7.5 6.6 5.4 4.0 2.7 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024E 2025F 2027F 2029F 2026F 2028F

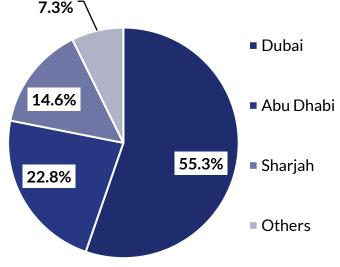
Figure 4. UAE E-Commerce Sales (USD Billion), 2019 - 2029F

Figure 5. UAE E-Commerce Market Product Segmentation (USD Billion), 2023



Source: Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Stratrich Analysis





Source: Stratrich Analysis

2.2 Driving Factors for E-commerce Market

Drivers
High Internet Penetration
Immense Purchasing Potential
Increasing Local and Migrant Population

In 2022, the total population of the **UAE reached 10.08 million**, with 9.98 million individuals utilizing the Internet. This staggering statistic indicates that 99% of the UAE's population is **connected online**, underscoring the nation's robust digital presence. This high internet penetration rate is a compelling driver for the continuous growth of eCommerce within the region.

Additionally, the **UAE boasts 9.80 million smartphone users, of which 9.32 million** access the internet via mobile devices. This prevalence of smartphone usage highlights another significant trend propelling the expansion of mobile commerce. Notably, **mobile commerce already constitutes 44%** of the total eCommerce sales revenue, indicating its substantial contribution to the flourishing eCommerce landscape in the UAE.

In the UAE, consumers favor mobile-based shopping, valuing convenience and cost-effectiveness. Credit and debit cards are the predominant payment methods for online purchases, **with 93.2%** of Euromonitor International's 2023 survey respondents indicating strong confidence in traditional banking methods.

2.3 Investments, Government Policy & *Regulations*

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has emerged as a significant player in the Middle East ecommerce market, attracting substantial investment and attention from both local and international businesses.

The Indian gifting platform IGP plans to enter the UAE market with an investment of USD 10 million. The company has already established a warehouse that spans over 20,000 square feet.

Amazon continues its investment in the UAE by opening a new fulfilment centre in 2023 with a storage capacity of 2.1 million cubic feet, thereby increasing Amazon's total storage capacity in the UAE by 70%.

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In 2022, Noon.com, the Middle East's leading digital e-commerce platform, announced plans to build the UAE's largest fulfilment centre in Abu Dhabi. This 252,000m² mega facility results from a partnership between Noon and the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO).

In 2024, HSBC has announced the launch of its new e-commerce digital payment platform, Omni Collect, in the UAE, in partnership with the leading Saudi-based fintech company Geidea.

Top Companies in UAE *E-commerce*





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BASHARACARE

2.3 Investments, Government Policy & *Regulations*

The government of UAE has established a comprehensive framework to support and regulate the growing e-commerce sector.

Policies & Regulations:

Federal Decree-Law No. 14 of 2023 on Trading by Modern Technological Means (The E-Commerce Law): This recent law governs online transactions, putting them on par with traditional methods. It applies to selling goods, services, and data through digital platforms.

Federal Law No. 15 of 2020 on Consumer Protection (The Consumer Protection Law): This law safeguards consumer rights in online purchases, guaranteeing fair pricing, accurate product information, secure payment methods, and clear return/exchange policies.

Federal Decree-Law No. 46 of 2021 on Electronic Transactions and Trust Services: The legislation enables secure online transactions by validating electronic signatures and documents.

Online business licences in the UAE's mainland: To establish an online business in the UAE mainland, apply through the Department of Economic Development (DED) in the respective emirate. Additionally, obtain approval from the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority, which regulates eCommerce. Find the service to apply for a non-objection certificate to practice eTrade.

Strategy:

Dubai eCommerce strategy

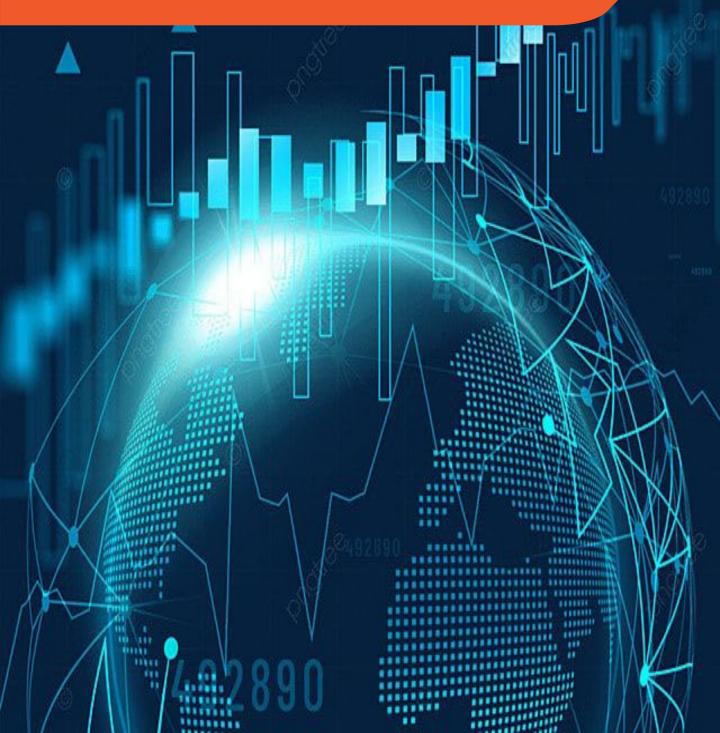
The strategy aims to strengthen Dubai's status as a global logistics hub, accelerate its online commerce growth, attract more foreign direct investments in the e-commerce sector, and reduce the paperwork required for customs clearance and the fees imposed on goods passing through the free zones.



3. Market Trends & Evolution

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Market Trends & Evolution

Past

Growth Phase (2010-2022):

- 1. The introduction of secure online payment methods and improved logistics boosted consumer confidence.
- 2. Major players like Souq.com (acquired by Amazon in 2017) emerged as leading ecommerce platforms.
- 3. Government initiatives such as Smart Dubai to promote digital transformation further encouraged e-commerce growth.

Present

Market Size and Dynamics:

- 1. The UAE e-commerce market is one of the fastest growing in the Middle East.
- 2. High internet and smartphone penetration rates facilitate online shopping, with many transactions made via mobile devices.

Key Players:

- 1. Amazon (formerly Souq.com), Noon, and Namshi are some of the dominant players.
- 2. Global brands and luxury retailers such as Karl Lagerfeld and Bally have also established a strong online presence in the UAE.

Consumer Behavior:

- 1. Consumers in the UAE prefer international brands and high-quality products.
- 2. There is a notable shift towards omnichannel shopping, where customers seamlessly switch between online and offline channels.

Logistics:

- 1. Expansion of e-commerce fulfillment centers to support the increasing online shopping demand.
- 2. Cold Storage: Growth in demand for temperature-controlled storage solutions driven by the pharmaceutical, food, and beverage industries.

Technological Adoption:

- 1. Advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), and chatbots enhance the online shopping experience.
- 2. Credit cards remain a popular payment method, but there is a growing acceptance of digital payments, including mobile wallets and contactless payments. For instance, in Euromonitor International's 2023 survey, 93.2% of respondents indicated that credit and debit cards are the most widely used payment methods for online purchases.

Trends & Evolution

Future

Market Expansion:

- 1. The UAE e-commerce market is projected to continue expanding, driven by rising consumer demand and increasing internet penetration.
- 2. Cross-border e-commerce is expected to grow, with UAE consumers frequently shopping from international websites.

Innovation and Digital Transformation:

- 1. Emerging technologies like AI, AR, virtual reality (VR), and blockchain will further transform the e-commerce landscape.
- 2. Enhanced personalisation, improved logistics, and faster delivery services will become key competitive differentiators.

Government Support:

- 1. Continued government initiatives and policies aimed at fostering a digital economy will support the growth of e-commerce.
- 2. Smart city projects and investments in digital infrastructure will enhance connectivity and create a conducive environment for e-commerce.

Sustainability and Ethical Shopping:

- 1. Increasing awareness of sustainability issues will drive demand for eco-friendly products and ethical shopping practices.
- 2. Retailers will focus on sustainable packaging, reducing carbon footprints, and promoting responsible consumption.

Rise of Social Commerce:

- 1. Social media platforms will play an increasingly important role in e-commerce, with brands leveraging social commerce to reach and engage consumers.
- 2. Influencer marketing and live shopping events on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok will drive sales.

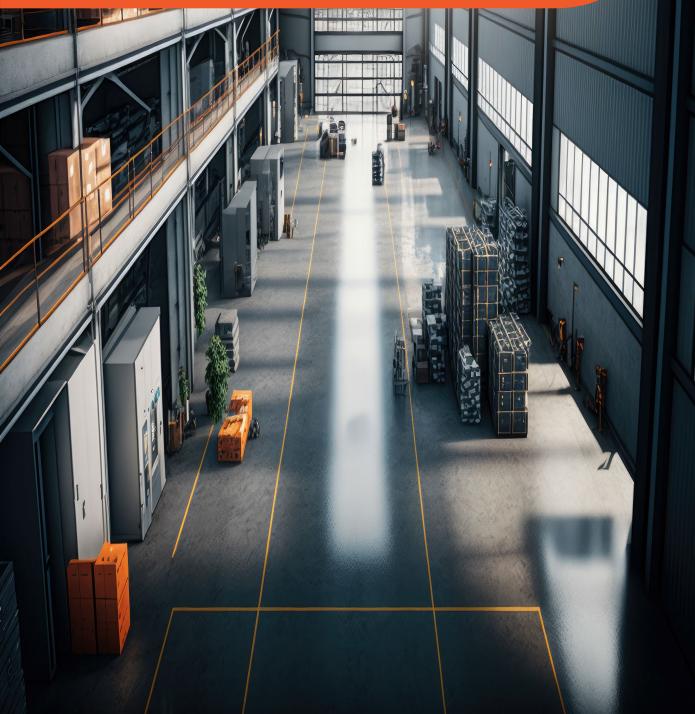
Logistics:

- 1. The adoption of automation technologies such as Automated Storage and Retrieval Systems (AS/RS) to improve efficiency and accuracy.
- 2. Growth of micro-fulfillment centers to meet the rising demand for same-day and next-day deliveries in urban areas.

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4. UAE Warehouse & Logistics Sector

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UAE Warehouse & Logistics *Sector*

The warehouse and logistics sector is crucial for the operational success of e-commerce. It ensures efficient inventory management, enabling product availability and optimized storage solutions for various goods.

As of 2024, the logistics sector accounts for **approximately 14% of the UAE's gross domestic product**. The country is committed to strengthening its logistics infrastructure, with significant investments such as the **USD 3.5 billion Al Mafraq-Al Ghuwaifat road upgrade**. This project aims to enhance 246 kilometers of roads in the western UAE which would improve connectivity and efficiency.

USD 27 billion

estimated value of UAE freight and logistics market by 2029.

USD 7 billion

projected value of goods and services foreign trade value over the next decade under D33.

*D33: Dubai's Economic Agenda

In the **first nine months of 2023, Dubai saw 9.9 million square feet** of new warehouse demand. The logistics sector led this demand, making up **44% of the new requirements**, followed by the manufacturing, industry, and technology sectors.

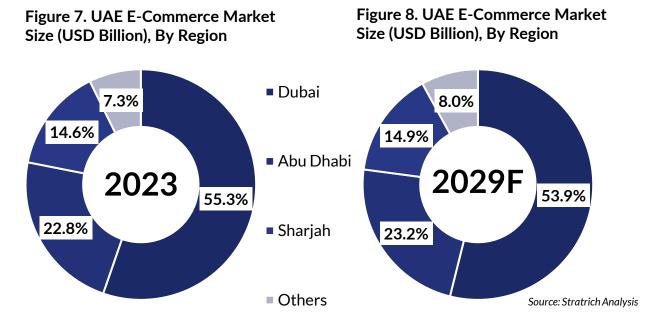
Additionally, the UAE is expected to see a substantial increase in warehouse demand in the coming years due to rising investments in the ecommerce sector. With ecommerce companies expanding their operations in the UAE, there is a growing need for additional warehouse space to accommodate their logistics and fulfillment needs.

5. Regional & Segment Analysis

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Regional Analysis

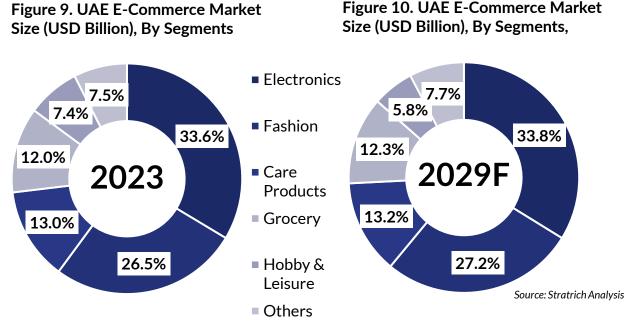


According to Stratrich Consulting, in 2023, Dubai dominated the e-commerce landscape with **55.3% of total** revenue, followed by **Abu Dhabi at 22.8%** and **Sharjah at 14.6%**. Other locations collectively accounted for 7.3%.

Looking ahead to 2029, **Dubai maintained a significant share at 53.9%**, with **Abu Dhabi and Sharjah seeing slight increases to 23.2% and 14.9%**, respectively. The collective share of other locations also grew to 8.0%.

These trends underscore a dynamic evolution in regional e-commerce dynamics, with Abu Dhabi and Sharjah gaining ground alongside Dubai, reflecting broader economic and demographic shifts within the UAE.

Segment wise Analysis



According to the analysis of the UAE e-commerce market size by Stratrich Consulting, the distribution of revenue across various segments in 2023 and 2029 shows consistent trends with slight shifts in some areas.

In 2023, **electronics led the market with 33.6% of the total revenue**, followed by **fashion at 26.5%**, **care products at 13.0%**, **grocery at 12.0%**, hobby and leisure at 7.4%, and other segments collectively at 7.5%.

By 2029, the market saw a slight increase in the **share of electronics to 33.8%**, **fashion to 27.2%**, **care products to 13.2%**, **and grocery to 12.3%**. However, the **share of hobby and leisure decreased to 5.8%**, while the collective share of other segments rose slightly to 7.7%.

These trends highlight the growing importance of electronics, fashion and care products in the ecommerce sector, alongside the sustained dominance of electronics, reflecting evolving consumer preferences and market dynamics within the UAE.

E-commerce Platform Comparaison by Product Segment

Segment	Amazon	Noon	Namshi	OUNASS	Mumzworld	Carrefour
Electronics	✓	\checkmark	\checkmark	×	×	\checkmark
Fashion	✓	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	×
Grocery	✓	\checkmark	×	×	×	\checkmark
Hobby & Leisure	\checkmark	\checkmark	×	×	\checkmark	×
Care Products	✓	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
Others	✓	\checkmark	\checkmark	×	\checkmark	\checkmark

Others Include: Furniture, Homecare, Etc.

 \checkmark : Available, \times : Not Available

"Amazon.ae has established itself as the leading e-commerce company in the UAE, thanks to its extensive range of product categories, from electronics to groceries, and its comprehensive distribution network across the UAE and the Middle East. Other major market players include Noon, Namshi, OUNASS, Carrefour, and more."



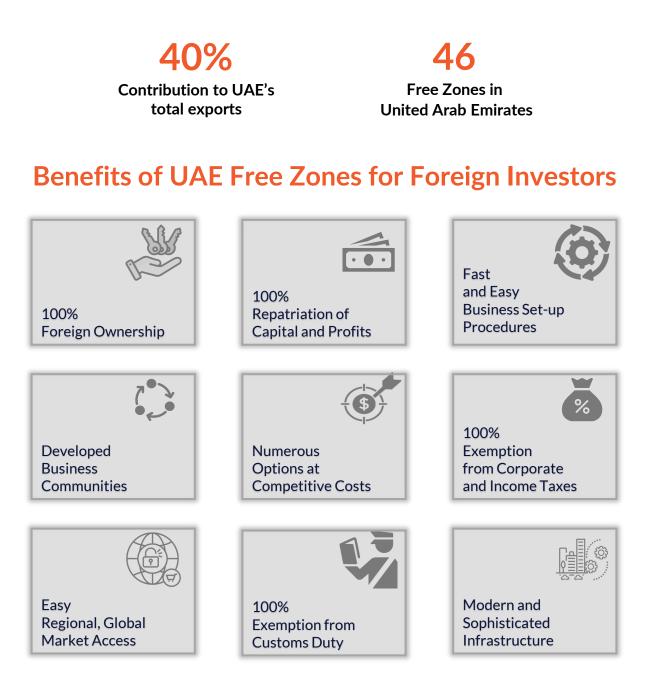
6. Free Zones: Accelerators of E-Commerce Growth



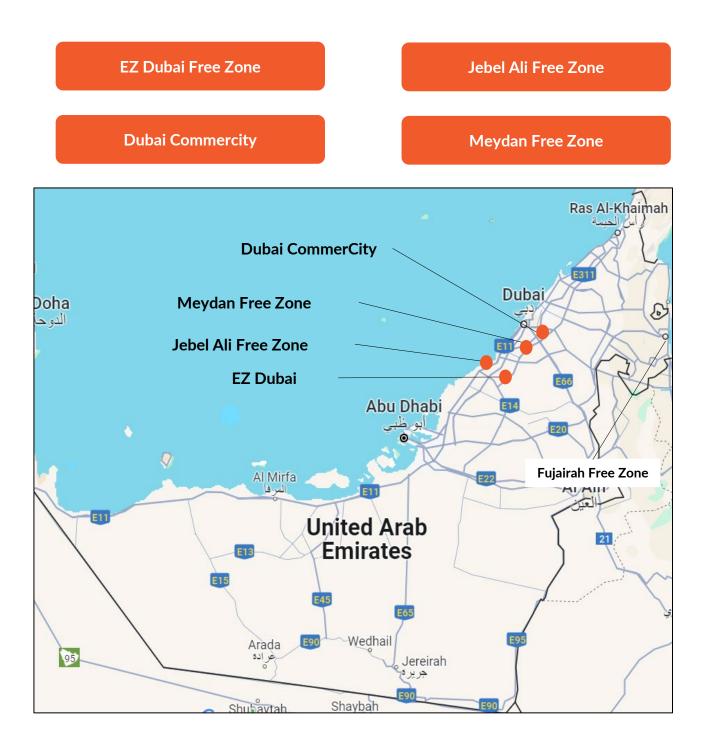


What is a Free **Zone**?

Free zones in the UAE are special economic areas that provide customs duty benefits and tax concessions to investors, operating under their own unique set of rules and regulations. They are specifically designed to attract foreign investment by offering 100% ownership to all nationalities and streamlined startup processes, labour and immigration procedures, and various legal services. Furthermore, establishing the Jebel Ali Free Zone in 1985 marked the inception of this transformative approach.



E-Commerce Free Zones in UAE





EZ Dubai

EZDubai, strategically located in the heart of Dubai South's Logistics District, is the region's dedicated e-commerce zone. It is designed to support both multinational corporations and SMEs by offering advanced logistics and business solutions. Aligned with Dubai's e-Commerce Strategy, EZDubai facilitates growth and caters to both B2B and B2C needs on a global scale.



Advantages of **EZ Dubai**

- **1** Supply Centers- Plots available from 10,000 to 100,000 sqm. Facilities available from 10,000 to 60,000 sqm.
 - E-Fulfilment Center- Facilities available from 10,000 to 100,000 sqm.
- 3 Last Mile Center- Facilities available from 5,000 sqm.
 - Return and Repair Centers- Facilities range from 250 to 5,000 sqm
 - Business Blocks- Fitted-out offices are available from 28 to 300 sqm, while Shell & Core offices range from 300 to 12,000 sqm.



Dubai CommerCity Free Zone

Dubai CommerCity, situated in Umm Ramool near Dubai International Airport, stands as a dedicated free zone aimed at catalyzing the growth of e-commerce within the United Arab Emirates. This specialized zone offers cutting-edge infrastructure tailored specifically for online retailers, global brands, and emerging e-commerce startups. It provides a comprehensive array of services, including customizable office spaces, advanced warehousing facilities, and efficient logistics solutions. By focusing on sectors such as fashion, electronics, and beauty products,



Advantages of Dubai CommerCity

- Business Centers- The Business Cluster consists of 12 office buildings covering a total of 240,000 square meters of developed area. These buildings showcase modern and innovative architecture amidst well-designed landscapes.
- 2 Logistics Clusters- The Logistics Cluster offers a range of specialized fulfillment solutions tailored for e-commerce enterprises.
 - Social Cluster- The Social Cluster hosts a diverse array of amenities including food halls, cafes, restaurants, art galleries, and open spaces.
 - Return and Repair Centers- Facilities range from 250 to 5,000 sqm

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Business Blocks- Fitted-out offices are available from 28 to 300 sqm, while Shell & Core offices range from 300 to 12,000 sqm.



Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZA)

Jafza reaffirms its status as a premier global hub for trade and logistics, housing over 1,180 companies and significantly contributing to the retail, trading, and e-commerce sectors. Its resilient infrastructure makes Jafza an ideal location for retail and e-commerce businesses to establish and operate within the free zone. Consequently, the growth of the e-commerce sector, along with related industries in Jafza, has propelled business expansion, continuing to thrive despite current and future challenges.



Advantages of Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZA)

Jafza boasts 1.85 million square meters of combined facilities, including 42,800 square meters of warehouse space and over 1.8 million square meters of dedicated land space.

Jafza accounts for 25% of the UAE's retail, trading, and e-commerce trade volume.

Meydan Free Zone (MFZ)

Meydan Free Zone is one of the world's largest and most advanced digital free zones. Strategically located just 15 minutes from Dubai International Airport and based at the luxurious Meydan Hotel, the free zone's award-winning 360-degree platform empowers entrepreneurs to efficiently establish and expand their businesses using sophisticated strategies and technologies. As the only 24/7 digital free zone, it offers a fully digitized environment where all trade licenses and payments are managed through its acclaimed customer portal.

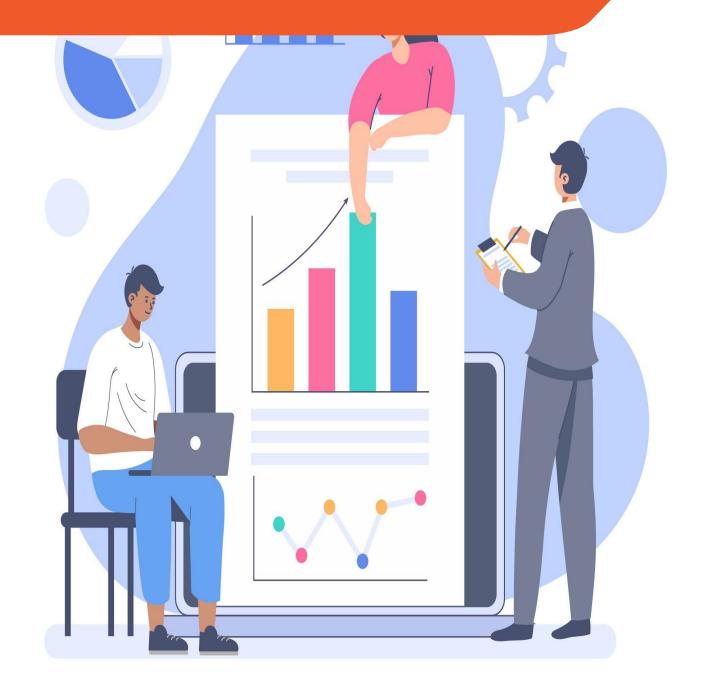


Advantages of Meydan Free Zone (MFZ)

1 Meydan Free Zone provides comprehensive business start-up services

Modern infrastructure with flexi-desk options, dedicated offices, and meeting rooms.

7. Key Strategic Recommendation



Key Strategic Recommendation

Focus on Electronics Segment:

The United Arab Emirates has emerged as a global leader in consumer electronics consumption. According to Euromonitor, the UAE boasts the second-highest per capita consumption of electronics worldwide, surpassed only by Hong Kong.

Moreover, public sector investment in the UAE drives demand for ICT products and services across various sectors, including healthcare, space, aviation, aerospace, defense, transportation, retail, financial services, and hospitality. This increased demand extends to IT hardware such as laptops, desktops, HDDs, SSDs, keyboards, and more.

Key Product Categories:

1. Smartphones and Accessories: The demand for the latest smartphones is consistently high. Offering a wide range of brands, models, and accessories such as cases, chargers, and screen protectors can attract a large customer base.

2. Laptops and Computers: With the rise of remote working and e-learning, the demand for laptops, desktops, and related peripherals such as monitors, CPU and keyboards, has surged. Providing options for different budgets and needs can cater to both students and professionals.

3. Home Entertainment: Televisions, sound systems, and streaming devices are popular among consumers looking to enhance their home entertainment experience. Offering the latest technology in home audio and video systems can draw tech enthusiasts.

4. Smart Home Devices: The growing trend towards smart homes creates a demand for products like smart speakers, security cameras, smart lighting, and home automation systems. Educating consumers about the benefits of these devices can drive sales.

Why in to invest in UAE E-commerce?

Lucrative Opportunities:

•High Disposable Income: The UAE boasts a young population with high disposable income, creating a strong customer base for online shopping.

•High E-commerce Penetration: The e-commerce penetration in UAE is expected to reach 10.1% by 2028 from just 2.8% in 2018.

•Strategic Location: The UAE's strategic location between Asia, Africa, and Europe makes it an excellent hub for regional e-commerce operations.

•Growing M-commerce and Social Commerce: Mobile commerce (m-commerce) and social commerce are witnessing significant growth, offering new avenues for e-commerce businesses.



Business-Friendly Environment:

•Streamlined Business Setup: Free zones like Dubai CommerCity offer simplified business setup processes and provide a range of support services.

•100% Foreign Ownership: Businesses can enjoy 100% foreign ownership, eliminating the need for a local partner.

•**Tax Advantages:** The UAE offers competitive tax rates and exemptions, making it an attractive location for e-commerce businesses.

•Developed Infrastructure: The UAE boasts excellent infrastructure, including modern logistics facilities and advanced communication networks.

Where to invest in UAE?

Investing in the UAE's e-commerce sector would be promising owing to the country's digitalsavvy population, high internet penetration, and growing online shopping trends. Here are some key areas and regions to consider for investment:

Dubai: Dubai is the leading city in the UAE for e-commerce due to its status as a major business hub and tourism destination. It offers a large consumer base, excellent logistics infrastructure, and a supportive business environment.

Abu Dhabi: The capital city also presents significant opportunities, especially with its focus on economic diversification and digital transformation initiatives. Government support and investment incentives can be advantageous.

Top Free Zones:

- 1. Meydan Free Zone
- 2. Jebel Ali Free Zone
- 3. EZ Dubai Free Zone
- 4. Dubai CommerCity Zone

1st

in Getting Electricity

16th

Rank in Ease of Doing Business Rank

3rd Rank in Dealing with Construction Permits

in Starting a business



About Stratrich

400+ Clients 300+ Employees

7 Offices

Stratrich Consulting removes the complexities of entering the UAE markets. We are your one-stop shop, guiding you through every stage of your journey, from pre-incorporation planning to post-incorporation support. Our team of experts in both regions ensures a smooth transition and helps you navigate the unique regulatory landscapes.

Strategic Approach, Agile Execution

We combine a comprehensive strategy with agile execution to equip you with the tools you need to succeed.

Our services are designed to help you:

Overcome challenges: We understand the hurdles foreign businesses face in the UAE. We have the experience and knowledge to help you navigate them efficiently.

Capture growth opportunities: We identify and capitalise on market opportunities, ensuring your business thrives in these dynamic economies. Achieve sustainable growth: Our focus goes beyond just market entry. We provide ongoing support to ensure your long-term success.

Tailored Solutions for Your Business

We understand that every business is unique. Our solutions are customized to fit your specific needs and goals, whether you're a startup seeking to enter the Indian market or an established company looking to expand your reach in UAE.

Your Trusted Partner

Stratrich Consulting is your reliable advisor throughout your market entry and growth journey in India and UAE.

"Let us help you navigate the complexities and unlock your full potential in these exciting markets. "

How Stratrich Can Help You

Whether you are growing in one market or many, transforming your business, looking to operate more effectively, managing risk and compliance, or realizing stakeholder value, Stratrich Consulting has the right experts to meet your needs.

Advisory & Regulatory

Our adaptable advisory services seamlessly integrate with your team, guiding you through challenges, uncovering opportunities, and charting a course for sustainable growth.

- Business Consulting
- Business Risk Services
- Regulatory Advisory Services
- M & A and Transactions Advisory
- Market Research and Intelligence

- Market Entry Strategy & Entry Routes
- Supply Chain Services
- Business Planning and Techno-economic Viability Report/Detailed Project Report
- Location Analysis & Selection and Incentive Benchmarking/Optimization

Business Setup & Incorporation

Let our experts handle your Business Setup and incorporation. Our cost-effective services free you and your stakeholders to focus on what matters most—running your business.

- Incorporation and PRO
- Companies (Public or Private)
- Limited liability Partnerships (LLPs)
- Liaison Offices
- Wholly Owned Subsidiary
- Joint Ventures

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Our team leverages deep industry expertise, both local and global, alongside powerful tax tools to simplify compliance and identify optimal tax strategies for your business.

- Corporate Tax
- Expatriate Services
- International Tax Services

- Transfer Pricing
- GST/VAT Services

Corporate Services

Our comprehensive suite of corporate services streamlines essential tasks, unlocks talent potential, and provides the expertise you need to navigate challenges.

- Accounting & Bookkeeping Support
- Payroll Compliance & Management
- Legal & Regulatory Services

- Audit Support Services
- Human Capital Consulting



Our Experts



Rajat Chawla

Chief Business Officer

Leads Business Development, Assurance, Market Entry & Technology



Richa Juneja

Director

Leads International Taxation, Transfer Pricing & Taxlitigation



Vipin Sachdeva

Deputy Director Lead Operations, Incorporation, Compliance Accounting & FPNA



Priyam Pandit

Business Development Manager

Leads Business Advisory and Pre-Incorporation Support Services



Chandan Singh

Business Development Manager

Leads Business Setup and Incorporation Services





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