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Free trade zones in the UAE

| by Ahmad Imandoost

The United Arab Emirates – UAE – is renowned for its Free Trade Zones (FTZs), making it a global hub that attracts entrepreneurs, investors, and corporations worldwide. Advantages of setting up in such zones include tax benefits, 100 per cent foreign ownership, streamlined set-up procedures, modern infrastructure, business-friendly regulations, and strategic access to global markets. Below is a brief overview of the UAE's top five free zones

1. Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZA)

One of the most well-known free zones in the world and the oldest and largest free zone in the UAE. Located in Dubai, it is home to over 7,500 companies from more than 100 countries. Adjacent to Jebel Ali Port, JAFZA has access to water transport in addition to the air and land transport in an unparalleled international centre such as Dubai – an ideal location for businesses in the logistics sector.

2. Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC)

The world's most interconnected free zone and the largest in the UAE, established by the Government of Dubai to position the city as a global hub for commodities trade and enterprise. Located at Jumeirah Lake Towers, DMCC is home to over 23,000 companies and accounting for a large percentage of all FDI inflows to Dubai. It offers excellent sea, air, and road connections, and company registration can be completed entirely online and without the need to visit in person.



3. Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZ)

Home to over 2,500 registered businesses

with more than 20,000 professionals from various and different sectors. Adjacent and with

direct access to Dubai International Airport, businesses set up in this free zone, can take advantage of a connectivity that is rare and unique among free zones in the world. Furthermore, DAFZ is one of the most prestigious and advanced free zones in Dubai which adds the elements of luxury and modernity.

4. Sharjah Airport International Free Zone (SAIF Zone)

One of the UAE's most established and strategically located free trade zones, situated adjacent to Sharjah International Airport. Renowned for its excellent connectivity and cost-effective business solutions, SAIF Zone offers a dynamic platform for companies engaged in trade, manufacturing, logistics, and light industry. With its modern infrastructure, flexible licensing options, and investor-friendly policies, it has become a preferred hub for thousands of businesses seeking to expand their operations in the Middle East and beyond.

5. Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (KIZAD)

Spanning over 420 square kilometers, KIZAD is among the largest industrial and logistics ecosystems in the world and a subsidiary of Abu Dhabi Ports. Established in Abu Dhabi, it is the largest industrial and free trade zone in the MENA region and offers the most competitive business setup solutions and world-class infrastructure facilities in the UAE.

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