Checklist: Setting Up a Company in Dubai

Twelve steps from idea to first bank account. Tick off what you have done and use the list on the last page to prepare your documents.

1 **Define your activity and market**
What the business will do and where your clients are: inside the UAE or abroad. The company format depends on this.

2 **Choose the format**
Free zone, mainland or holding company. Compare them against your activity.

3 **Compare 2-3 options on a full cost estimate**
Request the costs for the year, not only the registration price: licence, office, visas, renewal.

4 **Check approvals**
Regulated activities require additional approvals. Confirm them before submitting documents.

5 **Gather the founders' documents**
Passport with remaining validity, photo, proof of address, contact details. Check that the name is spelled identically in all documents.

6 **Prepare the corporate founder's documents**
If the founder is a legal entity: corporate documents, attestation and translation as the zone requires. Confirm the attestation procedure in advance.

7 **Choose a name and licence type**
The name must be approved. The licence type must match the actual activity.

8 **Settle the office and visas**
Flexi-desk, coworking or lease. The number of visas depends on the office and the zone's terms.

9 **Apply and obtain the licence**
Application, payment of fees, receipt of the licence and incorporation documents.

10 **Arrange visas and Emirates ID**
If a residence visa is needed: medical test, biometrics, ID card.

11 **Prepare for the bank account**
Description of the business and clients, sources of funds, company documents. The decision to open an account is made by the bank.

12 **Set up a renewal calendar**
Licence, office, visas, accounting and updating documents for the bank.

What to prepare in advance

- Passports of founders and directors, photos
- Proof of residential address
- Business description: services or goods, clients, countries
- Documents of the corporate founder, if any
- Information on the source of funds for the bank

This material is for information only and is not legal, tax or financial advice. Zone and bank requirements change; confirm them before filing. Bank account opening is subject to the bank's decision.