

# STARTING A BUSINESS IS EASIER THAN YOU THINK

● Launching a company in the UAE? Don't forget these important things, say experts

BY CHIRANTI SENGUPTA  
Editor

## Find out about the changes in business ownership laws

 The UAE has introduced several new legislations to attract foreign investment and fuel entrepreneurship and the most notable is 100 per cent ownership by foreign nationals of companies licensed and registered in the UAE. The government has created a "Positive List" of business activities where foreign investors can own up to 100 per cent of the shares in an onshore company. The "Positive List" focuses on three key areas — manufacturing, services and agriculture — where the government wants to see more businesses committing investments.

"100 per cent ownership is subject to additional conditions," says Syam Panayickal Prabhu, Founder and Managing Director, Aurion. "These include minimum capital, implementation of latest technology and contribution to research and development, as well as satisfying the requirement of the licencing authority at the emirate level."

## Decide on the jurisdictions

 In the UAE, an investor can set up a company in mainland, free zones or offshore jurisdictions. "For a company planning to do business exclusively in the UAE or GCC with an office or a factory facility, it is always advisable to set up in mainland. If the company is intending to do import, re-export and B2B with mainland companies, it's a good idea to get a free zone licence, where 100 per cent expatriate shareholding is possible for all activities," explains Prabhu. "If the intention is to set up a company for international business, offshore International Business Company (IBC) is the best option. Offshore IBCs are considered to be a resident outside of the UAE and they can neither have offices in the UAE nor conduct business within the country."

## Applicability of VAT

 "It's critical to know about the Value Added Tax (VAT) law that stipulates all products and services are subject to 5 per cent VAT if the annual turnover of a company exceeds Dh375,000 and the company's modus operandi comes under the purview of VAT law, unless it is under the exempted category or the zero-rated category," says Prabhu.

## Understand the laws and regulations of company formation

 Prabhu from Aurion lists a number of laws and regulations that an entrepreneur needs to be aware of before setting up a company in the UAE.

- Federal law No. 2 of 2015 on commercial companies and the amended law No. 26 of 2020 apply to any entity involved in commercial, financial, industrial, agricultural, real estate or other kinds of economic activities in the mainland.
- Find out about the UAE labour law which explains the rights, duties, contracts and remedies of employees and employers.
- Learn about the common customs law of GCC as well as custom policies of the emirate in which the company is established.
- You also need to find out about free zone regulations – each free zone has its own rules and regulations developed within the general framework of business and commercial laws of land.
- Economic Substance Regulations (ESR) require the companies in the UAE carrying out "relevant activities" listed in regulation to maintain adequate "economic substance" in the UAE.
- Law of bankruptcy provides a legal framework to address distressed companies in the UAE, while helping them avoid bankruptcy and liquidation through various mechanisms like financial restructuring.

## Why you need to hire a business set-up consultant

 Entrepreneurship presents many challenges but, with the right support, it is easier and faster to start a business than handling the entire process on your own.

A business set-up consultant will help you in various aspects of establishing a company in the UAE. "They will first help you filter all the options available and select the most viable one based on your specific requirements," says Oliver Brinsley, Senior Business Setup Consultant & Sales Manager, Trade License Zone. "They also take care of the processing on your behalf. Business set-up is a process that requires accuracy as errors may cause lengthy delays and can be costly to rectify."

## How to select a business set-up consultant

 There is a myriad of business set-up consultants in the market offering the same services and products. "The key differences will be on the level of service, market knowledge, and industry experience," says Levi Joshua, Business Set Up Manager, Ezone. "They should be able to fully understand your operations and vision so that you are better equipped not just with the correct licence to start your business but also to plan the scalability of your growth."



**Syam Panayickal Prabhu**  
Aurion



**Levi Joshua**  
Ezone



**Oliver Brinsley**  
Trade License Zone





# AURION

Business Consultants

“We design  
the ideal  
*company package*  
for your business  
in UAE”

**Syam P Prabhu** B.A(Law), LL.B, LL.M  
Founder & Managing Director



Company Incorporation /  
Renewal / Liquidation



PRO Services in  
Freezones and Mainland



Trademark Registration



ISO Standards Consulting



Tax Residency Certificate  
Assistance



Knowledge Management

Associate Member



#### Dubai:

Office # 213 & 214,  
6 EA Building DAFZA,  
Dubai Airport Freezone  
Phone: +971 425 04150

#### Sharjah:

Office # 2 & 3, Z Bldg, (Formerly  
HSBC Bank office), Sharjah  
Airport International Freezone  
Phone: +971 655 79726

## “RAK ICC entities are established in a matter of 2-3 days”

**DR. SAMEER AL ANSARI**, CEO, RAK International Corporate Centre (RAK ICC)

**Please brief us on RAK ICC, highlighting how you could help a company set up an international business presence in the emirate?**

RAK ICC specialises in the establishment of International Business Companies and Foundations. RAK ICC entities are established in a matter of 2-3 days through our registered agents that provide corporate services and the registered office address for the company. RAK ICC companies are used by individuals and corporates to hold international assets and for wealth planning.

**What are the key advantages of setting up an international business company at RAK ICC? How does an International Business Company (IBC) differ from a Free Zone Company (FZCO)?**

RAK ICC IBC companies benefit from all of the advantages of the UAE, while conducting their



international trade or holding their global assets in a world class company registry, which is based on a common law and operates in full compliance with international standards. Also, with no direct UAE premises or employee costs, these entities are more cost-effective. For companies that require

offices, visas, etc., the FZCO structure is more appropriate.

**Is migration to RAK ICC from other jurisdictions possible? What are the main benefits of redomiciliations?**

Companies can easily redomicile into RAK ICC from other jurisdictions, both from within the UAE or internationally. The main benefits of redomiciling to RAK ICC include the maintenance of the existing legal status of the company, the continuation of its current banking arrangements and access to Common Law Courts. We have had hundreds of migrations from many jurisdictions such as BVI, Seychelles, Mauritius, Labuan, Marshall Islands, etc.

## “SMEs are a vital component of Abu Dhabi’s business landscape”

**KHALID AL MARZOOQI**, Director Commercial, KIZAD

**What steps have you taken to boost the SME sector?**

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of any economy, and are a vital component of Abu Dhabi’s business landscape. As engines for growth and employment, SMEs are one of the main pillars of Khalifa Industrial Zone



Abu Dhabi’s (KIZAD), business strategy.

As one of the leading enablers of industry, it is our responsibility to provide businesses with the opportunities to be competitive in their respective markets. The SME relief packages we announced recently

are aligned with the UAE’s efforts to protect SMEs in the country from the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.”

## “We find a paradigm shift in the thought process of investors”

**SYAM PANAYICKAL PRABHU**, Founder and Managing Director, Aurion

**How do you help entrepreneurs tap new sectors that offer growth opportunities?**



As business consultants, our role is to guide entrepreneurs to achieve their dreams. We support them in setting up the right legal structure so that they are on a solid platform to do the business. We always advise entrepreneurs to start a business in which they have the knowledge and confidence.

**Aurion has been operating in the UAE for more than a decade. How do you assess the evolution in the UAE’s entrepreneurial landscape over the past decade?**

We find a paradigm shift in the thought process of investors. The freedom to do business and safety are the key drivers of growth in the SME sector. The paperless e-governance added to the transparency and precision in administrative matters. Over the past decade, the UAE has evolved as the most sought-after destination for investors to set up their establishment so that they can cater to clients in MENA, and South Asia.

**Are there any exclusive Covid-related packages that the firm created to boost confidence among entrepreneurs?**

Any business, which fails to respond to the Covid-19 disaster by adjusting its terms, conditions, and pricing will soon become obsolete. Keeping this in mind, we have slashed the professional service fee by half to help investors establish their entities in the UAE.

## “EMAC adds fast-track and emergency arbitration to its rules”

**MAJID BIN BASHIR**, Chairman and Secretary General, Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre (EMAC)

**EMAC is the only specialist maritime, offshore energy, logistics arbitration centre in the Middle East. What are the key advantages of choosing EMAC for dispute resolution?**

Until 2016, the Middle East was void of a place to settle specialist maritime, offshore

energy and logistics-related disputes. Keeping in mind that no one enters a mutually beneficial agreement with the prospect of a dispute, when an unfortunate disagreement or conflict arises, parties want the comfort of knowing that their dispute will be technically understood by an impartial body and that the resolution or award will be enforceable in multiple countries.

Today, the UAE not only recognises the value of arbitration as a whole, through its updated federal arbitration law, but the country is home to both common law and civil law courts, making it one of the world’s leading jurisdictions to offer the co-existing systems successfully.

With the UAE signed up to the New York Convention, parties have further certainty that their award will be enforceable through the member states. In addition, EMAC has attracted world-renowned industry specialist arbitrators, mediators and experts to its panel, offering a one-stop place to find a reputable arbitrator, mediator or expert.

EMAC is one of the few centres in maritime that adds fast-track arbitration and emergency arbitration to its rules. The centre has adopted an approach that enables parties to conclude disputes in a cost and time effective manner while they can continue to focus on business as usual.

Today, EMAC’s offices and facilities are central to the region, making it accessible and this provides ease of access, further supporting cost reduction in dispute resolution.

**What are some of the success stories of EMAC since its launch?**

EMAC through a series of events, has built a brand that enables business. Today, the EMAC Breakfast series is one of the most popular gatherings in the industry where stakeholders meet to discuss issues, developments and regulations around the industry.

EMAC’s case support has increased whereby parties have recognised the efficiency and the service that the centre offers.

Through consistent stakeholder engagement, the referral to EMAC as the preferred option for dispute resolution has been confirmed in many industry relevant contracts.

One of the most important offerings at an arbitration centre is panel listings and as mentioned, EMAC has an impressive panel that offers parties a go-to when choosing a reliable arbitrator.



# SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURS

● A ready reckoner on the UAE's trusted business consultants who can help you start your dream venture

## AURION

### Key services

Aurion offers a wide range of specialised services in the field of company incorporation, PRO services, legal documentation, residence visa processing, bank account opening assistance, ISO standards consulting, accounting support, VAT assistance, chamber of commerce registration, tax residence certificate, import/export code, trademark registration, knowledge management, and more.

### Special packages

Aurion has announced a combo offer for investors, who will be able to obtain a business licence and quality management certificate from approved certification bodies.

Also, Aurion has launched a special discount promotion for businessmen PRO services, offering 50 per cent off with a dedicated PRO agent throughout the assignment.

### Number of clients handled

Over the past 12 years, it has supported more than 4,500 companies from 80 countries.

### Contact details

Aurionuae.com; 04 250 4150



This includes trade licence (government charges), corporate service agent fee, e-office, preparation of legal documents, corporate PRO services, court fee, company stamp, dedicated telephone number, conference room facility, call answering services, business address of premium location and dedicated account manager.

### Number of clients handled

Over 10,000

### Contact details

800244; Cigdubai.ae

## CREATIVE ZONE

### Key services

Company incorporation services in Dubai mainland, UAE free zones, Abu Dhabi mainland, and Saudi Arabia; tax and accounting; banking; co-working space and concierge and PRO.

### Special packages

Creative Zone offers free zone trade licence for Dh5,750 and Dubai mainland licence for Dh23,000.

### Number of clients handled

44, 000

### Contact details

04 567 7333, setup@creative-zone.ae



## MAKE MY FIRM

### Key Services

**Business set-up services:** Business set-up free consultation; assistance in opening bank account, residence and dependent visa, external approvals as per licence category; assistance in fit out approval, local partner or service agent for mainland licences, for sharing office facility, and assistance for product and trade mark registrations.

Make My Firm also offers external approval assistance from several government departments.

### Currently handling

350 customers

### Contact details

Makemyfirm.ae; 052 6739777, 04 5847025



## TRADE LICENSE ZONE

### Key services

Trade License Zone is a one-stop-shop for business set-up in the UAE, assisting with every step of the process. It offers guidance and support with free zone, mainland and offshore licence and visa applications.

Trade License Zone offers a full suite of office solutions, including co-working space, dedicated fully-furnished offices, meeting room facilities, reception management and several other start-up-related services.

### Special packages

With solid partnerships with numerous jurisdictions throughout the UAE, it can offer the latest streamlined and cost-effective business set-up packages. Trade License Zone has also tailored a package called eBorderless.com for e-commerce as it is the most popular business activity in the market today.

### Number of clients handled

It has handled thousands of clients since its inception.

### Contact details

04 429 5888; Tlz.ae



## BUSINESS LINK

### Key services

Business set-up consultancy services in GCC; professional, commercial and industrial business set-up in the UAE for mainland, free zone and offshore, business licenses, branch office set-up for a foreign company, subsidiary company set-up, PRO services, local and corporate sponsorship.

### Special packages

It has a limited time offer for Dubai mainland company set-up, starting from Dh22,000. This includes local sponsor and PRO services. It also offers 50 per cent off on e-commerce licence.

You can now start your company for Dh6,800.

### Number of clients handled

Business Link has handled more than 15,000 clients and 24,000 projects.

### Contact details

Businesslinkuae.com; Businesslink.ae; 04 321 5228



## EZONE

The team at Ezone has helped thousands of entrepreneurs start their business in the UAE and supported many more through their personalised, value-added services that enabled them to scale up their businesses successfully.

### Special packages

Ezone has waived processing fees for DED and Dubai free zone incorporation as well as for DED and Dubai free zone licence renewal and amendment from April to June.

### Number of clients handled

While Ezone is a new entity, Mariben Christine Eustaquio, its Managing Director has handled over 3,000 clients.

### Contact details

050 149 5611; http://www.ezone



## VIRTUZONE

### Key services

Company formation in mainland, free zone and offshore jurisdictions; one-stop-shop for all business set-up, trade licence and visa requirements.

**Business support services:** Accounting, tax advice, payroll, VAT registration, mail management, PRO, bank account opening, receptionist services, IT support, branding, copyright registration and more.

Virtuzone partners with Aramex, Arabian Radio Network (ARN), Carasti, Dubai Startup Hub, Eitsalat, KPMG, LaunchDXB, Petra Insurance Brokers, Shopify, Tajawal, VFS Global, WeWork, Zbooni and more.

### Special packages

Start any business with just Dh1,995.

Set up your own business now for just Dh19,995 per year. All-inclusive. Free visa included, for life.

### Number of clients handled

Over 40,000 entrepreneurs from 180 countries since its establishment in 2009.

### Contact details

Vz.ae; 04 457 8200



## CAPITAL INTERNATIONAL GROUP (CIG)

### Key services

Company formation in the UAE, business centre, financial services, succession planning, visa and immigration services

### Special packages

**Gold package:** You can start your business for Dh21,999 with 100 per cent ownership in Dubai mainland. This includes trade licence (government charges), corporate service agent fee, e-office, preparation of legal documents, corporate PRO services, court fee, immigration card, one investor visa, company stamp, dedicated telephone number, conference room facility, call answering services, business address of premium location and dedicated account manager.

**Silver package:** You can start your business for Dh17,499 with 100 per cent ownership in Dubai mainland.



## FLYINGCOLOUR

### Key services

Business set-up and structuring in the UAE for mainland, free zones, offshore; business set-up in the UK, the US and Canada; corporate services and PRO services, bank account assistance, accounting and bookkeeping, tax consultancy, real estate brokerage, global migration and citizenship services and skilled immigration services.

### Special packages

Flyingcolour has always believed in offering excellent services at reasonable rates. Its company formation packages start from Dh5,000. Its VAT and tax services start from Dh500.

### Number of clients handled

Over a period of 17 years, the company has handled over 10,000 clients globally.

### Contact details

Flyingcolour.net, 04 454 2366



## AURION BUSINESS CONSULTANTS

# Striving to excel

**W**hen experience and expertise blend together, the implementation gains perfection. Aurion, the top business set-up consultant in the UAE is the perfect example for it. With more than a decade-long track record and up-to-date market knowledge in company incorporation, Team Aurion stays ahead in its field of activities.

Aurion being the pioneer in company incorporation has played a vital role in setting up more than 4,500 companies in the UAE from across 80 countries. Guided by Syam Panayickal Prabhu, a postgraduate in law, Aurion delivers what it promises with transparency and perfection.

The team of expert business consultants constantly interacts with global investors to analyse their precise business requirements and suggests the right company formation package, business activity, and free zone in the UAE for setting up their base.

## Why choose Aurion as your business consultant in the UAE

Aurion has a well-structured support system to serve international clients with a multilingual team of expert legal and professional business consultants, and a multilingual website for global investors to easily reach out to the team.

Aurion IT Team has indigenously developed office management system software tool for securing client data and streamlining the workflow.

Its motto of Trust, Excellence, and Delivery (TED) makes Aurion the most trustworthy business advisory in the region.

## Awards galore — persistence pays

The numerous awards received by Aurion speak for the quality of service rendered. In 2021, it received three free zones awards for outstanding performance and



● Syam Panayickal Prabhu, Founder and Managing Director, Aurion

also the “Top Business Consultant of Middle East” Award from Silicon India, the best-selling IT Magazine in India.

## Aurion Zone — All businessmen services under one roof

Being the registered agent of 11 major free zones in the UAE, Aurion plays an important role in developing the business of various

free zones.

Aurion has also integrated all the company incorporation and allied businessmen services into a comprehensive 360-degree business set-up solution under the Aurion Zone, catering to high-net-worth global investors for all their business requirements.

Visit [Aurionuae.com](http://Aurionuae.com) or call on 04 250 4150 for more information.

## TRADE LICENSE ZONE

# A one-stop-shop for business set-up in the UAE

**T**rade License Zone is the UAE's fastest-growing business set-up specialist, with an unwavering focus on transparency and service excellence. This is a one-stop-shop for business set-up in the UAE, assisting with every step of the process. Trade License Zone offers guidance and support with free zones, mainland and offshore licence and visa applications.

Based in Dubai, Trade License Zone operates from two branches — one in Jumeirah Lake Towers (HQ) and another in Dubai Media City. In addition to business set-up services, Trade License Zone offers a full suite of office solutions, including co-working space, dedicated fully-furnished offices, meeting room facilities, reception man-

agement and several other start-up-related services.

Its focus is on providing a personal service, offering trusted guidance and affordable set-up solutions. During the company set-up process, a great deal of support is typically required, as there are many options available, and it is paramount that the right decisions are made.

With numerous partnerships with free zones throughout the UAE and an expert team that speaks 11 languages, it is well placed to offer streamlined and cost-effective packages to a local and global customer base.

While its primary function and focus is business setup, Trade License Zone understands that this is only the beginning of the journey for any new en-



trepreneur. Once we have successfully helped with the initial company set-up, we then see it as our duty to create an environment of support for new business owners and entrepreneurs. To this end, our TLZ Start-

up Partners division, made up of carefully selected and trusted suppliers, offers a range of business services for new companies.

The company has recently launched TLZ Travel to provide clients with

UAE short stay visit and tourist visas, and a range of other tourism services and now it looks forward to the imminent launch of TLZ Advisory — a bespoke and specialist advisory division.