

Dubai Overall Score 32.1/100 | Overall Rank: 43/100

Basic Facts

- 2.5 million population in Greater Dubai
- \$72.8 billion Gross Metro Product (2016)
- Top industries by employment are: trade & transport, hospitality services, construction
- Dubai has changed dramatically over the last three decades, diversifying from oil, to become a major business center
- Dubai has a stated goal of being “the happiest city on earth” and has developed its [Smart Dubai 2021](#) strategy to achieve this through digital innovation
- Dubai enjoys a strategic location and serves as the biggest re-exporting center in the Middle East. Trade, transport, tourism, and industry have helped the economy expand
- A No. 17 rank in Technology Policy recognized Dubai’s efforts in data collection on gender technology use and their efforts to provide open and flexible technology platforms
- Dubai announced their first ICT strategy in 1999. This was followed by the launch of Dubai Internet City, Dubai e-government, Dubai Smart Government and, in 2014, the Smart Dubai initiative. This has propelled it to [one of the highest levels of ICT adoption](#) in the region, both by the public and government

Notable Strengths

- Dubai’s long term growth rates, near 5 percent per year, are in the top ten among our cities, and business and startup costs are low
- Women are well represented amongst the capital investment community that exists. Dubai ranks in the top half for women-founded VC firms.
- [Womena](#) is one such example that is “enhance[ing] the MENA entrepreneurship ecosystem by empowering and educating women to be angel investors”
- Crowdfunding is another way that women can raise capital. The platform [Eureeca](#) is an equity crowdfunding platform located in Dubai that allows investors, who range from casual and angel investors to institutional firms, to buy shares in growth-oriented businesses
- Dubai’s high point is its rank of No. 29 in the Culture pillar. It is driven by a No. 3 place, behind only Singapore and Seoul, in Attitudes and Expectations, thanks to city level events for women in business and safety

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Areas for Improvement

- Dubai would be aided by efforts to get more women representation on company boards and the boards of business associations
- While Dubai does an excellent job of educating its citizens, ranking No. 5 for the percent of the population with a tertiary degree, it is slightly disproportionate with 47 percent of women with at least a tertiary degree (ranking it No. 15) and it ranks No. 28 for the percentage of women enrolled in top universities
- Women are also not achieving their MBAs in proportion to men (ranking 48 out of 50 on this metric)
- Potential women entrepreneurs would also benefit from having more business and finance training available (ranking No. 30)
- The city can also work on formalizing non-discrimination in hiring policies and equal pay policies