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

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
- 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

“Women are well represented amongst the capital investment community that does exist.”

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 it 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