

DIFC records best ever performance for the first half of a year

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Results fuel Dubai's economic vision and demonstrate global leadership in financial services and innovation

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– His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, First Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the UAE, and President of DIFC

Government of Dubai Media Office – 28 July 2025: Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), the leading global financial centre in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA), today announced its best-ever performance for the first half of a year, reinforcing its pivotal role in driving the future of finance and contributing to the Dubai Economic Agenda D33.

In the first six months of 2025, DIFC saw a record number of new firms establishing operations in the Centre, bringing the total number of active registered companies to 7,700, up from 6,153 in H1 2024 - a 25% year-on-year increase. 1,081 new active registered companies joined DIFC between January and June 2025, a 32% increase on the same period in 2024. The number of professionals working in DIFC rose to 47,901, marking a significant 9% increase from 43,787 a year earlier.

His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, First Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the UAE, and President of DIFC said: "The unprecedented results that DIFC continues to achieve across all fronts are a direct reflection of the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai - a vision focused on positioning Dubai at the forefront of the world's most advanced financial centres. Dubai has entered a new and greater phase of growth, and these results highlight the

competitiveness, attractiveness, and global confidence it enjoys. We firmly believe the future holds even more opportunities, and we will continue to strengthen DIFC's capabilities and its ecosystems that foster innovation, agility, and business growth."

A global leader in financial services

Driven by DIFC's strategic initiatives and unmatched scale in the region across all sectors, Dubai has been categorised as one of only eight cities globally to possess 'broad and deep' capabilities across all parts of the finance industry in the Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI), standing alongside cities like London, New York, and Paris.

Dubai is currently the sole centre in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia to be listed among the top GFCI ranked financial cities globally in several sectors: FinTech (5th), professional services (6th), investment management (8th), infrastructure (9th) and business environment (10th).

DIFC continues to advance its position as the region's largest regulated financial services ecosystem. A total of 980 entities are now regulated by the DFSA, the independent regulator for business undertaken from or within DIFC, up 17% year-on-year from 2024. Total Financial services authorisations grew 28% year-on-year, reaching 78 in H1 2025 compared to 61 in H1 2024.

DIFC's banking and capital markets cluster is unrivalled in the region, and growth aligns with the demand for broad and deep financial services capabilities to support the region's economic development aspirations. A total of 289 companies operate in this sector, up from 247 a year ago, a substantial 17% growth rate.

Dubai is home to the highest concentration of private wealth in any Middle Eastern city, according to Henley & Partners. This has supported growth in DIFC's wealth and asset management cluster, which is the biggest in the region. The number of firms in the sector increased to 440, up from 370 in H1 2024, growing 19% year-on-year. The Centre is now home to more than 85 hedge funds, soaring 72% over the last 12 months and includes 69 billion-dollar funds. Over 10,000 funds are being managed or marketed from DIFC.

DIFC's approach to supporting family businesses, including providing access to alternative investments through its wealth and asset management clients, and structures to support growth, continues to ensure the Centre is their preferred location. The number of entities associated with family businesses operating in DIFC has risen to 1,035, up from 600 a year ago, marking a 73% increase. The number of foundations in DIFC have accelerated to 842, up from 548 in H1 2024, a 54% year-on-year increase.

The insurance and reinsurance sector also experienced robust growth, with 135 related firms now operating in the ecosystem, increasing 8% from 125 in H1 2024. During the first half of 2025, it was announced that Gross written premiums reached USD 3.5bn for 2024, compared to USD 2.6bn a year earlier – a significant 35% increase.

New entrants to DIFC’s expanding client base during H1 2025 include ABK Capital, Avaloq, Baron Capital, Bluecrest Capital, Bridge Investment Group, Cambridge Associates, China International Capital Corporation, dLocal, Manulife, National Bank of Kuwait, Pearl Diver Capital, PIMCO, RV Capital, Silver Point Capital, Tourmaline, TransAmerica Life Bermuda, Welwing Capital Management and many others.

H.E. Essa Kazim, Governor of DIFC said: “DIFC remains the driving force behind Dubai’s economic growth, as a key enabler of the financial services sector’s expansion and diversification. Our consistent performance across all key sectors and rising global standing are evidence of our commitment to supporting innovation, attracting global capital, and reinforcing Dubai’s status as one of the world’s most competitive and diversified economies.”

Arif Amiri, Chief Executive Officer of DIFC Authority commented: “In the first half of 2025, DIFC has exceeded expectations across every metric. Our strong performance demonstrates the power of our ecosystem, the scale of our platform, and the depth of expertise we bring to the industry. We remain committed to transforming the future of finance from Dubai and advancing our position as the region’s number one global financial centre.”

A global leader in AI, FinTech and innovation

DIFC’s innovation ecosystem continued to attract a growing number of technology-led firms. The number of FinTech and Innovation companies reached 1,388, up from 1,081 in H1 2024 a surge of 28%, securing Dubai’s position as one of the world’s top five hubs for FinTech in the latest Global Financial Centres Index.

During H1 2025, this contributed to an overall 28% growth in total active non-financial entities, increasing to 6,335, up from 4,935 a year earlier.

The Centre’s flagship events, the Dubai AI Festival and Dubai FinTech Summit, collectively attracted over 20,000 participants from 120+ countries. During these events and in support of DIFC’s innovation agenda, the Dubai AI Academy was launched, and Dubai Future Finance Week was announced. Being held in May 2026, the week will bring together six major events, including the FinTech Summit, Future Sustainability Forum, and the Dubai Future District Fund AGM.

Having launched Ignyte at the end of 2024, a growth platform targeting 100,000 founders, start-ups, and investors subscribers have already redeemed benefits exceeding AED 182mn. This reflects Ignyte's real economic benefit and demonstrates how the platform is an enabler for growth.

A global hub for talent

Supporting the objectives of Dubai's Education Strategy 2033 and the Dubai Economic Agenda D33, the DIFC Academy has become a preferred choice for world-class universities. Amongst DIFC's partners, renowned universities including American University of Cairo, ESCP Business School, ESSEC Business School, Georgetown University, London Business School, Pantheon Assas University and SKEMA Business School offer 12 masters degree programmes.

Through 32 active partners, 46,103 learners have completed programmes at the DIFC Academy since inception, including 4,947 during H1 2025 – the highest ever number in a six month period.

To drive long-term impact, DIFC has launched the '1 Million Learners' initiative with the support of 30 founding partners, under the Sustainable Finance Catalyst, which aims to equip one million individuals with sustainability knowledge by 2030. The initiative builds on the demand for sustainability related training at the DIFC Academy which has delivered 6,075 hours of related learning in H1 2025, taking the total programming to 22,241 hours from 42 courses.

A global leader in legislation, regulation and governance

DIFC's legal and regulatory frameworks continued to evolve to keep pace with global developments. DIFC's legal framework features bespoke, best-in-class legislation, developed from leading international sources and standards to most effectively meet the needs of an international financial centre. This is complemented by a robust system of DIFC common law, with its substantial body of developed jurisprudence. This combination delivers an optimal balance of legal certainty, commercial flexibility, and judicial sophistication - positioning DIFC as the jurisdiction of choice for businesses across the region and globally.

During the first half of 2025, the Centre proposed to enact new Variable Capital Company Regulations. The proposed regulations seek to significantly enhance investment structuring and asset management options for proprietary investment in DIFC. Additionally, legal updates were proposed through the DIFC Laws Amendment Law, including refinements to the Law of Security, Insolvency Law and Employment Law, ensuring alignment with international standards.

In a milestone achievement underscoring Dubai's growing influence in global governance, DIFC was selected to host the upcoming Global Privacy Assembly 2026, the premier global forum for data protection and privacy authorities.

A global leader in real estate and urban development

DIFC's real estate portfolio continues to support Dubai's urban development ambitions. Inventory that was provided to the market for the recently launched DIFC Heights, sold out in three days, underscoring strong demand for premium living in the financial district.

Over 1.6mn sq. ft. of commercial space is currently under development and construction being accelerated to meet demand. The new space will be ready for occupancy starting from Q1 next year. DIFC also launched a new data platform enabling third-party access to real estate information, aligning with the Dubai Real Estate Strategy 2033.