



واحة دبي للسيليكون Dubai Silicon Oasis

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO DUBAL AL AL EL COSSISTE IVI

2025 EDITION

Contents

| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | - 3 |
|--|------------|
| AI GLOBAL LEADERSHIP | - 4 |
| UAE Landscape | |
| Dubai as a prime hub for business & innovation | <u>n</u> |
| Al Ecosystem in Dubai | |
| SURVEY RESULTS: AI ECOSYSTEM IN DUBAI | - 8 |
| Growth Opportunities Adaptation | |
| Government Policies Trends | |
| Market Demand CEO Confidence Inde | <u>:X</u> |
| <u>Investments</u> | |
| 6 PRACTICAL STEPS | - 18 |
| Step 1: Establish a Strong Foundation | |
| Step 2: Secure Corporate Partnerships | |
| Step 3: Navigate Financial Regulations | |
| Step 4: Secure Regional Funding for Growth | |
| Step 5: Understand the Local Market | |
| Step 6: Participate in Al Talent Development | |
| CHECKLIST | 30 |
| RESOURCES | - 31 |
| CONTACT US | 32 |
| | |



DUAMENTES.COM

Executive Summary



Dubai is a global hub for **innovation** and **entrepreneurship**, offering businesses an ideal environment to thrive. This guide serves as a strategic **roadmap** for companies and entrepreneurs looking to **establish** and **expand** in the region, providing essential insights into Dubai's business landscape, regulatory framework, and investment opportunities.

With its world-class **infrastructure**, access to international talent, and business-friendly policies, Dubai fosters an ecosystem that accelerates **growth**, **innovation**, and **market expansion**. The city's favorable regulations, dynamic investment landscape, and seamless market access make it a **prime destination** for both local and international businesses aiming to scale in the digital economy.

At the heart of the government's forward-thinking agenda is the **Dubai Economic Agenda (D33)**, designed to double the size of Dubai's economy over the next decade and solidify its position among the top three global cities. This initiative reinforces **Dubai's commitment** to long-term economic growth, technological advancement, and global competitiveness.

Dubai's vision for Al and digital transformation is driven by **Dubai Universal Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence**, accelerating Al adoption across industries, while **Dubai Urban Master Plan 2040** ensures sustainable infrastructure, smarter city planning, and a high quality of life.

For businesses looking to take **advantage** of these **opportunities**, the next step is to dive into this **Practical Guide** and gain a clear understanding of the requirements, ecosystem and soft-landing options, and funding landscape. Crafting a solid business plan with the insights provided in this guide is key.

Choosing the **right ecosystem** — each offering unique benefits and industry focus — is crucial for long-term success. Once the groundwork is in place, entrepreneurs can initiate business registration, secure funding, and tap into one of the world's most dynamic markets.



Dr Juma Al Matrooshi — Director General of Dubai Silicon Oasis

Central to our mission at Dubai Silicon Oasis is fostering knowledge and innovation across industries with the highest economic impact. A dedicated cluster of AI businesses is established to ensure collaboration and access to resources, including talent, infrastructure and research, to facilitate innovation in emerging tech.



Kristina Marinović — Chief Operating Officer, Duamentes

We support businesses growth in 35 countries and recognize the importance of government-backed initiatives. Dubai is a great example, where state support works efficiently. To raise awareness of those opportunities we developed this guide in partnership with DSO.



United Arab Emirates — Global Economy for AI businesses

Political Stability

The UAE is recognized for its political stability, maintaining a consistent and secure governance structure. This stability is a cornerstone of its appeal to investors and expatriates.

Diplomatic Presence

The UAE has established a robust diplomatic network, with over 100 active missions abroad and approximately 200 foreign diplomatic missions within the country. This extensive diplomatic engagement underscores its commitment to international relations.

Social Stability

In the World Happiness Report 2024, the UAE was ranked 22nd globally and second in the region, reflecting its social stability and the well-being of its residents

OVER \$140B \$62B 2021

PROJECTED TO GROW UAE **DIGITAL ECONOMY**

Safety

The UAE is considered a safe place to live and invest in, contributing to its attractiveness for expatriates and businesses.

Ease of Doing Business

The UAE has been ranked number one globally for the third consecutive year by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report for the year 2023-2024, surpassing many advanced economies.



Al is expected to contribute close to the UAE GDP by 2030

DUAMENTES COM DSO AF

Dubai — Global Hub for Business & Innovation



Daniel Callaghan — Senior Vice President, DSO

Dubai offers a unique environment for testing AI solutions, with strong regulatory support and real-world sandboxes. Businesses can experiment with their innovations in a controlled yet scalable way, which is something that very few markets offer. This ability to innovate is a key reason why Dubai is ahead of many global competitors.

1 Dubai's Economic Boom

BY 4.17% in 2025 GDP forecasted to expand

This growth is fueled by strategic initiatives under the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33), which aims to double the city's economy by 2033, including initiatives like supporting high-growth startups and SMEs by identifying 400 promising companies and providing them with global expansion support.

2 Expanding Market Advantage

OVER **5.8M** residents by 2040

Dubai's rapid expansion is fueled by strong economic growth, business incentives, and advanced infrastructure. Its strategic location, investment-friendly environment, and world-class innovation hubs make it a magnet for global talent and entrepreneurs seeking both opportunity and high-quality living

3 The Best Talent

#1 in the UAE and 22nd globally in the 2023 GTCI

Dubai stands out for its openness and access to growth opportunities, attracting global talent through initiatives like the Golden Visa and Remote Work Program. These efforts continue to bring in highly skilled professionals, entrepreneurs, and innovators, reinforcing the emirate's position as a hub for business and innovation. In 2024, Dubai Silicon Oasis launched Al Business Institute to support companies in their Al journeys by offering Al adoption maturity assessments, certifications, and training.

4 Rising Investment Hub Booming

1ST worldwide for attracting greenfield FDI projects

Dubai's investment landscape is a key driver of growth. The city boasts a thriving venture capital ecosystem alongside a range of government-backed funds, providing startups and businesses with the financial support needed to scale globally and drive innovation.

5 Business Gateway Unlocking

86% of UAE scaleups are based in Dubai

Dubai's business-friendly environment attracts foreign investment with zero personal income tax, a 9% corporate tax on profits over \$100K, a Unified Business Licensing System, and government-backed incentives like tax exemptions and VAT refunds.

6 Advancing Quality of Life

OVER 200 projects as part of the Dubai Quality of Life Strategy 2033

The plan aims to enhance recreation, entertainment, and cultural preservation, including 200 new parks, expanded cycling tracks, and 1,000+ annual events, reinforcing Dubai's position as a top city for quality of life with a strong focus on sustainability, accessibility, and well-being.

7 Innovation Without Limits

Dubai fosters a supportive environment for innovation, reinforcing its status as a global tech hub. In partnership with Builder.ai, Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO) launched a 'Living Lab' to advance Al and quantum computing through research, workshops, and seminars, strengthening DSO's Al and Quantum Cluster.



Derek Watson — CEO, Fusion-42

Dubai is an incredibly optimistic place for innovation. The answer here is always 'yes' — there's a strong willingness to experiment, a supportive regulatory framework, and significant financial backing to build world-class infrastructure.

Dubai Al Ecosystem on the Rise

Dubai is taking bold steps to accelerate Al adoption with the launch of the Dubai Universal Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence, a strategic initiative aimed at integrating Al across industries and positioning Dubai as a leader in Al-driven innovation. This blueprint outlines key policies, compliance frameworks, and infrastructure investments to support the rapid expansion of Al technologies in the region.

Ensuring regulatory compliance is a cornerstone of this effort. Businesses operating in the AI space must adhere to UAE data protection laws, which set clear guidelines for the responsible use of AI-driven data processing.

Series of new regulations in 2024



Dubai Al Seal: Certifies trusted Al companies, ensuring credibility, reliability, and eligibility for government projects.



Dubai Universal Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence: Designed to accelerate the adoption of Al applications across various sectors



Al Ethics Guidelines: Ensures transparent, fair, and responsible Al deployment across public and private sectors.



National Al Certification Program: Aims to certify Al systems and ensure compliance with UAE regulatory standards before market deployment.



Enhanced Data Protection: Updates to existing privacy and security laws to address the evolving challenges posed by AI technologies.



Daniel Callaghan — Senior Vice President, DSO

Dubai is far ahead when it comes to AI regulation and support. The fact that Dubai has a dedicated Ministry of AI sends a strong signal to the market that AI is a top priority. The government has successfully integrated investors, regulators, and technology leaders into a cohesive AI strategy, reducing uncertainty and providing businesses with the clarity they need to innovate.



Khawla Hammad Founder and CEO, Takalam

Dubai's innovation ecosystem, supported by entities like the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) and various innovation labs, plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between the rising demand for mental health services and the limited number of providers.

Survey Results: Al Ecosystem in Dubai 2025

Growth Opportunities



What is driving the growth opportunities for Dubai Al ecosystem?

51%

say demand for industryspecific AI solutions is the top factor driving growth opportunities in Dubai's AI ecosystem

TOP 5 GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES





Usman Wattoo — Senior Vice President Sales, Kore.ai

Al acts as a radar for businesses, helping them identify where they can benefit—whether it's saving time, money, or resources. In Dubai, companies are actively looking for opportunities to automate processes, improve citizen services, and integrate Al into operations. Al is no longer optional; it's a requirement, and the focus is now on how to extract real business value from it.



Ahmed Al Mashhadi — CEO, vminds.ai

Dubai has developed a strong ecosystem for AI startups, offering solid infrastructure, access to funding, and proactive government support. These factors make it a key hub for businesses looking to scale

Government Policies Becoming More Supportive



agree that government regulations on Al in Dubai have become more relevant and supportive in 2024

This shift reflects the city's commitment to fostering Al growth through effective structured policies, investments, and many regulatory advancements.

To accelerate Al adoption, Dubai launched the Universal Blueprint for AI, with the first phase including the appointment of 22 Chief Al Officers (CAIOs) across key government departments and the introduction of a major Al and Web3 startup incubator. These steps establish a foundation for Al-driven transformation across industries.

The Dubai Robotics and Automation Program is another landmark initiative, aiming to increase the sector's contribution to Dubai's GDP to 9% and deploy 200,000 robots by 2032. This program positions Dubai as a leader in robotics, enhancing automation in industries ranging from healthcare to logistics.

Supporting Al infrastructure, Dubai now leads the UAE's data center market, boasting 18 major data centers and over 230 cloud service providers, including AWS, Microsoft, and SAP. These facilities provide the necessary computational power to scale Al applications.

Looking ahead, Al adoption in government departments will continue to expand. The Universal Blueprint for Al will introduce more AI officers, new regulatory frameworks for AI ethics and transparency, and an advanced compliance system.

To ensure ethical Al deployment, Dubai is launching a national Al certification program, reinforcing data protection laws and AI ethics guidelines. These measures position Dubai at the forefront of responsible Al governance, balancing rapid innovation with accountability.



Daniel Callaghan — Senior Vice President, DSO

Dubai's strategic vision and structured AI policies make it a global leader in AI innovation, providing businesses, startups, and researchers with the support needed to test, scale, and implement AI solutions efficiently



Ahmed Al Mashhadi — CEO, vminds.ai

Dubai is making impressive strides in AI adoption, rapidly integrating AI solutions across various sectors—remarkably even the court system is leveraging AI. The speed of implementation is phenomenal, driven by ambitious government initiatives and a clear commitment to innovation



DSO AF DUAMENTES COM

Growing Market Demand for Al-powered Projects



agree that market demand for Al-integrated projects and products in Dubai is growing

Within Dubai Silicon Oasis alone there are hundreds of companies in the AI ecosystem and cluster. These companies focus on AI development, innovation, and go-to market consultancy.



Usman Wattoo — Senior Vice President Sales, Kore.ai

Fintech is leading AI adoption, while healthcare and hospitality are focusing on enhancing customer and patient experiences. Al presents incredible opportunities across vertical industries, from retail to telecom. However, Al is not just a function — it's an integrated force that connects and transforms entire organizations.



Richard Kennedy — Director, Al for Business Institute

There's been a lot of talk in recent years about what can be done, but now we're finally seeing people start to implement their initiatives. Sustainability is a major factor moving forward, especially with the energy demands of data centers in regions like the Middle East that does not have natural cooling abilities.

AI-SPECIALIZED COMPANIES ARE **CURRENTLY OPERATING IN DUBAI**

OF THESE COMPANIES HAVE CHOSEN DUBAI AS THEIR GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS

DUAMENTES.COM DSO AF

VCs in Dubai Seek **AI-Driven Innovation**



80% state that VCs in Dubai are actively seeking Al-powered solutions



Richard Kennedy — Director, Al for Business Institute

Over 70% of CEOs in the Middle East are looking to invest in Al now, a massive jump from last year which was circa 40%. In the next six months, I believe we'll start to see some truly groundbreaking use cases emerge, as companies move beyond the early stages of their initiatives and move beyond the pilot phase.



Derek Watson — Founder, Fusion 42

The investment landscape is evolving rapidly, with venture capital and government initiatives driving AI growth. Unlike other regions where AI adoption is cautious, here, investors see AI as a major growth area, and funding is flowing into Al-powered startups, robotics, and automation. If you want to build in Al, this is one of the best places to do it.



DUAMENTES.COM DSO AF

Leading Industries in Adopting Al

Which industry in Dubai is leading the adoption of Al technologies?

39% believe that smart cities and infrastructure are leading the adoption of AI technologies

- **SMART CITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **RETAIL AND E-COMMERCE**
- 3 REAL ESTATE
- 4 PUBLIC SECTOR
- 5 PHYSICAL AI (ROBOTICS, ETC)



TOP 5
INDUSTRIES

Dooyeon Kim — Regional President & Director, Nota Al

At Nota Al Middle East, we focus on Al-driven traffic solutions, helping cities reduce congestion through intelligent traffic management. Our system detects incidents in real time, reports them automatically, and integrates with relevant organizations to speed up response times and improve urban mobility



Kareem Ayyad — Founder & CEO, Teammates.ai

Al adoption is accelerating across industries, but the impact differs by sector. Customer service is moving toward full automation, while industries like legal will see AI augmenting professionals rather than replacing them. Healthcare, insurance, and real estate are all integrating AI, each with its own adoption path. Al agents will soon reshape the entire software landscape, driving efficiency at an unprecedented pace.



Ahmed Al Mashhadi — CEO, vminds.ai

Al adoption in Dubai is expanding across industries rapidly — smart cities, agriculture, retail, FMCG, oil and gas, and more. With such a vision, unstoppable momentum, committed patient investments, developed empowering ecosystem and a strong policy framework, the UAE is positioning itself as a major stakeholder in AI innovation and advancements.

DSO AF DUAMENTES COM

AI Emerging Trends



Daniel Callaghan — Senior Vice President, DSO

Dubai is far ahead in Al adoption and regulation. The government ensures all stakeholders — startups, corporations, and investors — work cohesively to drive Al integration. Having a Minister for Al signals to the market that Al is taken seriously at the highest levels. Dubai also provides a unique testing ground for Al innovation, combining a global market environment with regulatory clarity.



Kristina Marinović — Chief Operation Officer, Duamentes

In a capital-intensive industry like AI, the ecosystem is key, where support goes beyond just funding to include resources like government-backed programs, infrastructure, and innovation hubs. Dubai is a prime example of a thriving ecosystem in action.

63%

state the key trend is the integration of AI technologies to optimize business processes, improving decision-making, resource management, and operational efficiency across departments



Richard Kennedy — Director, Al for Business Institute

Another exciting development in conversational AI is the move beyond the era of Chatbot 2.0, in the next six months, we're likely to see Chatbot 3.0 — where it will be almost impossible to tell whether you're talking to a human or a robot.



Derek Watson — Founder, Fusion 42

Looking ahead, AI will continue to reshape industries, not just as a tool but as an integrated part of business strategy. The biggest shift will come when AI moves beyond software and into robotics — when humanoids enter the workforce, that's the tipping point of true AI acceptance.

EMERGING AI TRENDS IN DUBAI 2025

1

Government-backed Al adoption

The UAE continues to lead in AI regulatory innovation, launching AI ethics guidelines and AI certification programs in 2024

3

Al talent shortage & upskilling efforts

Al education in Dubai is booming, with an increase in Al-related initiatives

2

Al-powered automation in retail & logistics

Companies like DTEK.ai are revolutionizing retail with computer vision-based checkout solutions

4

Growing corporate-startup Al collaborations

Companies like Google, Mastercard and DAMAC Group have launched Aldriven partnerships in Dubai



CEO Confidence Index

70%

of companies are confident in the growth prospects within Dubai AI ecosystem over the next 12 months





Khawla Hammad — Founder and CEO, Takalam

Dubai is far ahead of other markets when it comes to CEO confidence. Business leaders here recognize the potential and are driving innovation forward with conviction.



Usman Wattoo — Senior Vice President Sales, Kore.ai

Fintech is leading AI adoption, while healthcare and hospitality are focusing on enhancing customer and patient experiences. AI presents incredible opportunities across vertical industries, from retail to telecom. However, AI is not just a function—it's an integrated force that connects and transforms entire organizations.



Ranime El Skaff — co-founder, Prop-Al

Dubai offers stability, strong business infrastructure, and a government that actively supports Al-driven businesses, making it an attractive destination for top Al professionals and companies alike



Step 1: Establish a Strong Foundation with Government Programs & Free Zones

Dubai offers a business-friendly environment with innovation hubs and accelerators designed to support Al startups

Set up in one of the Incubators or Dubai Accelerators for funding, mentorship, and regulatory support Explore free zones that offer tax benefits and streamlined business setup processes

Dubai's Free Zones: Industry-Specific Business Hubs

Dubai offers a variety of free zones, each specializing in a specific industry. DMCC focuses on commodities, DIFC on the financial sector, and **Dubai Silicon Oasis** is the largest economic zone for emerging technology, recognized for innovation by the **Financial Times fDi report.**

DSO provides flexi-desk coworking spaces, fixed desks, private offices, and land plots, ideal for deep-tech and scientific research businesses. Companies can obtain up to two visas per flexidesk, access incubators, investment support, venture capitalists, and corporate partner labs, and apply for scientific office approvals. The setup process takes just **1.5 weeks**, with physical presence required, making it an efficient gateway for tech-driven businesses to thrive.



Ranime El Skaff Co-founder, Prop-Al

DSO has been highly supportive, providing direct connections, funding opportunities, and access to the right decision-makers. They helped us navigate the AI ecosystem and identify areas where our technology could bring value.



Daniel Callaghan
Senior Vice President, DSO

Setting up in Dubai is becoming increasingly streamlined, but businesses still need access to high-quality, up-to-date information. At DSO, we actively support them by providing the resources, guidance, and ecosystem they need to navigate regulations, secure funding, and accelerate AI adoption.

DIAMENTES COM DSO AF

Al & Technology-Focused Incubators and Accelerators in Dubai





















techstars_



Additional Programs and Initiatives

1 Al-powered pedestrian crossing systems

DSO, in collaboration with Derq, introduced **14** Al-enabled smart pedestrian crossings. These systems use behavior prediction models to detect pedestrians and cyclists, activating warning signs, in-road lights, and traffic signal controllers to enhance safety.

3 Partnership with Builder.ai for Al & Quantum Innovations

DSO partnered with **Builder.ai** to create a Living Lab for AI and quantum computing applications, supporting innovation in smart city solutions.

5 Smart Police Station with Al-Powered Services

DSO features a Smart Police Station, allowing residents and visitors to access Al-driven police services without human intervention. Services include incident reporting, certificate applications, and community assistance.

7 Drone Delivery Trials

DSO hosted a three-week Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone delivery trial in collaboration with Jeebly LLC and Skye Air Mobility. This project is part of the Dubai Program to Enable Drone Transportation, aiming to enhance commercial transport efficiency.

2 Al-Enabled Building Management System

DSO upgraded its Integrated Building Management System (IBMS) with AI, connecting nearly **60,000** control points across 40 buildings. The AI optimizes energy consumption and operational efficiency, achieving a 36% reduction in annual energy costs.

4 Deployment of NVIDIA Supercluster for AI Computing

DSO, in collaboration with AI Hosting Hub, deployed an NVIDIA GPU supercluster, providing advanced AI computing power for startups and enterprises.

6 Drone Delivery Trials

DSO hosted a three-week Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone delivery trial in collaboration with Jeebly LLC and Skye Air Mobility. This project is part of the Dubai Program to Enable Drone Transportation, aiming to enhance commercial transport efficiency.

8 Al-Powered Urban Planning

Dubai's first Al-powered platform for urban planning was launched at DSO, supporting the city's vision to become a global leader in smart urban development.

Step 2: Secure Corporate Partnerships to Scale Faster



Corporate partnerships are essential as they bridge gaps in expertise, funding, and market access. Partners offer capital, specialized knowledge, and international connections

> **DANIEL CALLAGHAN** Senior Vice President, DSO

DAMAC Group, headquartered in Dubai, has committed \$50 million to AI startup Anthropic and is expanding into Al-driven data centers and digital infrastructure.

Mastercard has launched a global AI and cyber technology center in Dubai, strengthening its role in digital transformation.

Amazon, runs an Al-focused accelerator, equipping Dubai-based businesses with advanced digital tools and market access to scale globally.

Meta introduced the Llama Design Drive, an Al accelerator powered by Startupbootcamp, allowing startups to develop Al-driven solutions.



DUAMENTES COM DSO AF L'Oréal Middle East launched L'Oréal TechQuest, a regional startup challenge aimed at advancing beauty technology innovations in the UAE and Saudi Arabia

DSO developed an AI cluster, which includes companies like Kore AI, Dialogue Sphere, Hoplow, and Razor. These firms collaborate with academic and business partners to drive AI adoption, while RIT supplies AI-ready talent to DSO member companies



Dooyeon Kim — Regional President & Director, Nota Al

Dubai's business environment is highly network-driven. Even if a company has superior technology, success depends on the strength of its local connections. Knowing the right people is often more critical than having the best product



Ranime El Skaff — Co-founder, Prop-Al

Corporate partnerships play a huge role in AI adoption. Large enterprises often struggle to innovate internally due to their size and bureaucratic processes. Instead of trying to build everything from scratch, they are partnering with AI startups and smaller companies that bring fresh solutions. Some corporates are also investing in AI through corporate venture capital (CVC) funds and startup accelerators, helping drive innovation in sectors like fintech, proptech, and sustainability.



Step 3: Navigate Financial Regulations, Banking, and Legal Compliance

Financial Regulations & Banking

UAE Law vs. Common Law

- UAE Law: Governs most free zones, following civil law principles with specific regulations for each zone.
- Common Law: Operates under an independent legal framework based on English Common Law.

Dubai Silicon Oasis

Acts as a regulatory testbed and advocacy hub for emerging technologies, providing a controlled environment where regulations do not yet exist. This is done in collaboration with partners such as Dubai Civil Aviation.

Intellectual Property (IP) Protection

- Al startups can register patents, trademarks, and copyrights through the UAE Ministry of Economy
- DSO provides businesses with dedicated assistance in intellectual property (IP) registration, including patents, trademarks, and copyrights.

Employment Regulations & Visa Sponsorship

- Dubai Silicon Oasis offer simplified visa sponsorship for Al professionals.
- Dtec facilitates the process of obtaining work permits and visas for foreign nationals aiming to establish or join startups within its premises.





Daniel Callaghan Senior Vice President, DSO

Dubai is far ahead in AI adoption and regulation. The government ensures all stakeholders — startups, corporations, and investors — work cohesively to drive AI integration. Having a Minister for AI signals to the market that AI is taken seriously at the highest levels. Dubai also provides a unique testing ground for AI innovation, combining a global market environment with regulatory clarity.



Dooyeon Kim Regional President & Director, Nota Al

Dubai offers a unique business environment with no income tax, lower corporate taxes, and a cost-effective workforce. Safety and high-quality infrastructure make it an attractive place for businesses and talent alike.



Khawla Hammad — Founder and CEO, Takalam

Dubai is a true hub for international business. Al and online businesses scale efficiently here, supported by world-class infrastructure and government-backed services.



Step 4: Secure Regional Funding for Growth

Dubai's investment ecosystem provides access to over 1,300 investors, including venture capital funds, angel investors, and sovereign wealth funds, positioning the city as a prime destination for AI and deeptech startups seeking funding. Government-backed funds, corporate investments, and free-zone initiatives further enhance opportunities for scaling AI-driven businesses.

Key Investment Funds Supporting AI & Tech Startups

ORASEYA CAPITAL — THE MOST ACTIVE INVESTOR IN THE UAE FOR 2024, SPECIALIZES IN INVESTING IN EARLY-STAGE STARTUPS ACROSS HIGH-POTENTIAL SECTORS, SUCH AS AI, PROPTECH, FINTECH, AND CLEANTECH

BECO Capital

A leading VC firm investing in early-stage Al startups, particularly in deep tech, enterprise software and automation

Dubai Future District Fund (DFDF)

A government-backed investment initiative with a \$1 billion target AUM by 2024, funding AI, Fintech, Healthtech and sustainability startups

COTU Ventures

Focuses on pre-seed and seed-stage Al companies in the Middle East, offering capital and market expansion support

Global Ventures

Specializes in Al-driven fintech, healthcare and sustainability, backing scalable Al applications

Shorooq Partners

A regional VC investing in Al-first startups across fintech, gaming, and enterprise SaaS

Middle East Venture Partners (MEVP)

One of MENA's largest VC firms, actively investing in Al-powered digital platforms and B2B tech solutions



Daniel Callaghan Senior Vice President, DSO

Investors understand that companies leveraging AI will be the ones delivering big exits in the future. DSO operates Oraseya Capital fund focusing on SaaS and AI-integrated software solutions. This fund actively supports AI-driven startups through DSO Sandbox Accelerator, with shifted focus towards AI applications, reflecting the market's direction.

Step 5: Understand the Local Market & Customer Needs

To succeed in Dubai's Al-driven business landscape, a deep understanding of market trends, consumer behavior, and regulatory frameworks is a key



Kristina Marinović — Chief Operation Officer, Duamentes

Given Dubai's diverse, tech-savvy population and the government's AI initiatives, businesses must rely on data-driven insights and localized strategies to establish a strong presence.



Trendwatching & Reports

Monitor Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy, DSO and Al adoption trends



Local Analytics & Insights

Leverage real-time consumer research



Regulatory Awareness

Stay informed about Dubai's Al governance, data protection laws and compliance frameworks



Cultural Adaptation

Align Al solutions with local business etiquette, consumer expectations and industry-specific challenges



Nadya Nord — Founder and CEO, FutureTech Con

Success here isn't just about moving fast — it depends on how well you align with the local culture and approach

Step 6: Participate in Al Talent Development

Dubai has launched several strategic initiatives to attract, retain, and upskill Al professionals. With a growing demand for Al expertise and a reported talent shortage across industries, these programs aim to strengthen Dubai Al workforce

Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO)

DSO offers direct access to a talent pool of 60,000 professionals, fostering innovation and business growth. As home to the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in Dubai, DSO creates a dynamic ecosystem where academia meets industry, enabling companies to tap into top-tier talent, research collaborations, and cutting-edge technological advancements.

Golden Visa for Al Professionals

Dubai grants a 10-year Golden Visa to Al entrepreneurs, investors, and top-tier talent. Eligible individuals must be linked to a pioneering Al project, a classified SME, or have completed a project sale exceeding \$1.9 million.

Blue Visa for AI & Sustainability Talent

A newly introduced 10-year Blue Visa supports Al professionals working on Climatetech solutions, reinforcing Dubai's commitment to Al-driven sustainability policies.





Usman Wattoo — Vice President Sales, Kore.ai

For AI to create real impact, we need the right talent across all levels. Companies and government entities require top-level leaders who understand AI's strategic benefits and project managers who can effectively implement AI solutions. The easier AI becomes to use, the more essential it is to have skilled professionals who can drive its adoption and maximize its value.

Education, Training and Research initiatives to accelerate talent development:

- Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI)

 The world's first Al-dedicated university, training specialists in machine learning, robotics, and Al ethics to meet regional innovation needs
- DSO Al for Business Institute
 Provides Al upskilling programs, talent certification, and Al adoption benchmarking to help companies integrate Al efficiently
- Government-Backed R&D Funding

 Dubai is expanding university-industry collaborations, allocating funding for Alpowered R&D projects to support cutting-edge innovations



Daniel Callaghan — Senior Vice President, DSO

DSO partners with Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), which provides AI Citizen Certificate for undergraduates to prepare them for AI-integrated careers. This aligns with our mission to continuously supply top-tier AI talent to the market.



STED 1. CHOOSE A HIDISDICTION

Al-Powered Company Journey in Dubai Check list

| SILF | I. CHOOSE A JUNISDICTION | |
|--|--|--|
| | Decide between Mainland, Free Zone, or Offshore based on business model | |
| Ш | If Free Zone, select the best option | |
| STEP 2: IDENTIFY NATURE OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY | | |
| | Define AI sector focus (Fintech AI, Smart City AI, Healthcare AI, etc.) | |
| | Ensure alignment with Dubai's Al licensing regulations | |
| STEP 3: CHOOSE A LEGAL STRUCTURE | | |
| | Select Sole Proprietorship, LLC, or Branch Office | |
| | Register under a Free Zone Authority or Dubai Economy (DED) | |
| STEP 4: IDENTIFY A FREE ZONE (IF NOT MAINLAND) | | |
| | Consider Leading Innovation Hubs | |
| | Evaluate benefits like tax incentives, funding access, and AI testing facilities | |
| STEP 5: APPLY FOR A TRADE LICENSE | | |
| | Obtain Tech License (Dtec) or Innovation License (DSO) | |
| | Ensure compliance with Al-related governance laws | |
| STEP 6: REFER TO 'DID YOU KNOW' SECTION FOR SPECIFIC APPROVALS | | |
| | Secure Al-related certifications | |
| | Register intellectual property & patents | |
| | Obtain any required AI R&D permits (if working with AI-driven sensitive data) | |
| STEP 7: APPLY FOR VISA & TALENT SUPPORT | | |
| | Apply for Golden Visa (Al Talent), Blue Visa (Al & Sustainability Experts) | |
| | Hire AI specialists from AI for Business Institute, RIT, and other universities | |
| | Enroll in AI upskilling programs & corporate AI training | |

Sources

- Duamentes Survey, 100+ respondents, January 2025
- **Duamentes Quantitative research, January 2025**
- Dubai Silicon Oasis 🦠
- 4 How will Al affect businesses in 2024? %
- Dubai-Report 🦠
- Digital Dubai 🗞
- Dubai Startup Guide %
- **Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report 2024**
- UAE MOE: Establish Companies in the UAE
- 10 UAE MOE: Entities Supporting Projects of Emirati Entrepreneurs
- **UAE MOE: The National Agenda for Entrepreneurship and SMEs**
- 12 U.AE %
- 13 AI.GOV.AE %
- 14 DUBAIAICAMPUS.COM %
- 15 UAERESEARCHMAP.AE %
- 16 Dubai Center for Artificial Intelligence (DCAI) 🦠

DUAMENTES COM DSO AF

Contacts

Duamentes Growth Alliance

www.duamentes.com % welcome@duamentes.com

Dubai Silicon Oasis

www.dso.ae % hello@dso.ae

