UAE Company Formation — Documents Checklist for Mainland and Free Zone

Licensing takes two to ten working days in most free zones once the documents are in. The Indian side — LRS or ODI reporting — runs in parallel and is where most delays sit.

Each shareholder, director and manager (individuals)

☐ Passport with at least six months' validity — colour scan of the photo page
☐ Passport-size photograph on a white background
☐ Proof of residential address — utility bill or bank statement not older than three months
☐ Existing UAE visa or entry stamp, and Emirates ID if any
☐ CV or professional profile (asked for by DIFC, ADGM and some free zones for regulated or professional activities)
☐ Signed KYC and ultimate beneficial owner (UBO) declaration

Corporate shareholder (an Indian company or LLP)

☐ Certificate of incorporation, MOA and AOA / LLP agreement, notarised, apostilled and attested by the UAE embassy in India and the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs
☐ Board resolution approving the UAE subsidiary, its capital, and appointing the authorised signatory and managers — attested the same way
☐ Certificate of incumbency or a register of directors and shareholders
☐ Audited financial statements for the last year (some free zones and all banks)

About the business

☐ Three trade-name options (no religious, political or well-known brand words; a name matching the Indian company is usually accepted)
☐ Business activities from the free zone's list — the activity decides the licence type and the visa quota
☐ Short business plan: what is sold, to whom, expected turnover and headcount (required for DMCC, DIFC, ADGM and banks)
☐ Office choice — flexi-desk, serviced office or physical unit; the number of visas depends on it
☐ Share capital (free zones typically AED 10,000–50,000; some need it paid into a UAE account within a set period)

Indian compliance (before money leaves India)

☐ Individual shareholder: remittance under LRS within USD 250,000 a year, with Form A2 and the bank's ODI reporting (Form FC) for a controlling stake
☐ Company shareholder: board resolution, Form FC through the AD bank, valuation certificate where required, and the Unique Identification Number before the first remittance
☐ After setup: share certificate to the AD bank within six months, annual performance report by 31 December, and Schedule FA in the Indian return

Bank account opening

☐ All of the above plus: proof of business — Indian company's bank statements, contracts or invoices with existing customers, website
☐ Source of funds explanation and the shareholder's personal bank statements for six months
☐ Expected transaction profile — countries, currencies, monthly volumes

Before you send

- Attestation of Indian corporate documents takes two to four weeks; start it before choosing the free zone.
- Corporate tax registration with the FTA is due within three months of incorporation — a AED 10,000 penalty applies for late registration.
- A UAE company run from India can be taxed in India under the place-of-effective-management rule; keep board meetings and decisions in the UAE.

version: FY 2026-27.