

ADGM & DIFC Structures for Financial Businesses

Regulated Gateways for Global Financial Expansion from the UAE

Introduction: The UAE as a Financial Powerhouse

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has rapidly evolved into a premier global hub for financial services, private wealth management, fintech, and structured investment vehicles. Within the UAE, two jurisdictions stand out for financial business structuring: Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC).

Both ADGM and DIFC are independent regulatory jurisdictions with their own common law-based legal systems, regulatory frameworks, and business courts. They are internationally recognized and tailored specifically for financial services, private funds, family offices, and fintech startups seeking secure, compliant, and globally respected platforms.

Why Choose ADGM or DIFC?

Both ADGM and DIFC offer several competitive advantages:

- Independent Legal System based on English common law
- 100% Foreign Ownership with no restrictions on capital repatriation
- Zero Corporate Tax (until UAE-wide corporate tax applies; certain exemptions continue to apply)
- Robust Regulatory Environment under FSRA (ADGM) and DFSA (DIFC)
- Strategic Location connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe
- Access to Global Banking and Investment Ecosystems

1. Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM)

Ideal for Private Funds, SPVs, and Tech-Driven Financial Structures

- Regulator: Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA)
- Legal System: Direct application of English common law (unique in the region)
- Corporate Vehicles:
 - Private Company Limited by Shares (Ltd)
 - Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs)
 - Foundations (commonly used for asset protection and wealth structuring)
 - Venture Capital Fund Structures
- Key Use Cases:
 - Holding structures for international assets
 - Private equity and VC funds
 - Fintech regulatory sandbox
 - Succession and family office planning via Foundations

ADGM is especially popular for SPVs used in conjunction with global holding structures or trust jurisdictions like Cayman or Nevis. ADGM also offers fast-track licensing and a tech-forward approach to regulation, ideal for digital asset businesses, crowdfunding platforms, and robo-advisors.

2. Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC)

The Middle East's Premier Hub for Banking, Finance, and Fintech

- Regulator: Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA)
- Legal System: DIFC Law based on English common law principles
- Corporate Vehicles:
 - DIFC Ltd Company
 - Prescribed Companies (similar to SPVs)
 - Foundations (commonly used by family offices)
 - Limited Partnerships (for investment and fund management)
- Key Use Cases:
 - Investment firms and brokerage licenses
 - Wealth management and advisory
 - Hedge funds and REIT structures
 - Family offices and private trust companies

DIFC is ideal for regulated financial institutions, wealth advisory firms, and fund managers looking to service both regional and global clients. The DIFC Court and Arbitration Centre further offer commercial dispute resolution under common law jurisdiction.



When to Choose ADGM vs DIFC

- Choose ADGM if your primary focus is international structuring, holding companies, fintech, or SPVs supporting trust or offshore entities.
- Choose DIFC for client-facing financial services, private banking, wealth advisory, or investment management with exposure to the UAE and GCC clientele.

HPT Group: Structuring Solutions with Precision

At HPT, we specialize in designing and launching compliant, tax-efficient, and strategically positioned financial structures in both ADGM and DIFC.

Our services include:

- Entity formation (SPVs, Ltd, Foundations)
- Regulatory licensing (FSRA, DFSA)
- Economic Substance compliance
- Nominee officers and local support
- Banking introduction in UAE and globally
- Fund and trust structuring using ADGM/DIFC foundations

Whether you're building a cross-border fund, a fintech platform, or a global holding structure, ADGM and DIFC are elite gateways. HPT ensures your structure is compliant, operational, and optimized for growth.