



**Client Handbook**  
**Incorporation/Registration of a DIFC Entity**  
**Recognised Partnership (RP)**



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## I. Introduction

This user guide outlines the requirements and processes for incorporating a Recognised Partnership (RP) at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC).

## II. Recognised Partnership (RP)

To set up an entity as a Recognised Partnership in the DIFC, RP must have been formed in a jurisdiction other than the DIFC and is registered with the Registrar to carry on business in the Centre. RP has to fulfil the following:

- Appoint at least one person to accept service of documents or notice on behalf of the Recognised Partnership and;
- Have a principal place of business in the DIFC

For more details about this legal structure, please refer to DIFC laws and regulations available on: <http://www.difc.ae/legal-database>

## III. In Principle Approval

Prior to applying for the registration of an RP and depending on the type of the proposed business activity, an in-principle approval should be obtained either from the DIFC Authority (DIFCA) or the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA).

*DFSA's in-principle approval* will be applicable for RPs whose proposed business scope falls under financial activities. *DIFCA's in-principle approval* is required for RPs whose proposed business scope falls under non-financial activities. For the list of non-financial activities, please visit: <http://www.difc.ae/non-financial-activities>. You may also contact the DIFC Business Development on [setup@difc.ae](mailto:setup@difc.ae) for further details.

Upon receiving the in-principle approval, the company may proceed with securing a registered address (an operating location) within the Dubai International Financial Centre either through leasing, sharing office space or purchasing a commercial/retail unit. Sharing office space is

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allowed only for affiliates and is subject to approval by the Business Development Department of DIFC Authority.

#### IV. Operating Location

In order to complete the registration application with DIFC, please ensure that the entity's operating location is registered before submitting the application on the DIFC Client Portal:

- If you are operating from a leased/ subleased unit, please ensure your lease agreement is registered with the DIFC Registrar of Real Property. For more details, email [rorp@difc.ae](mailto:rorp@difc.ae). If your lease is signed with DIFC Investments LLC, lease registration will not be required as it will be completed automatically by DIFC Investments LLC.
- If you are sharing a space with an affiliate, please obtain a No Objection Letter (NOC) from DIFCA. For more information, please contact your Business Development Relationship Manager from DIFCA.
- If you are operating from a purchased unit, the unit must be owned by the entity itself or by the sole shareholder. Please contact our Registrar of Real Properties team on [rorp@difc.ae](mailto:rorp@difc.ae) to apply for "Self-Occupy".

#### V. Name Reservation (optional)

If you would like to reserve a name, before proceeding with the application for Registration of the RP, you can submit an Application for Name Reservation in hard copy along with the fees as per the table below to the DIFC Registry Services. Nonetheless, name reservation is an optional service that is provided by the DIFC Registrar of Companies. A proposed name can be reserved for a period of 90 calendar days.

| Entity Type | Name Reservation Fees |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Non Retail  | \$800                 |
| Retail      | \$340                 |

To access the Application for Name Reservation, please visit: <http://www.difc.ae/downloads>

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## VI. DIFC Client Portal

Once you obtain the in-principle approval and a registered operating location in the DIFC, you can start filling the Application for Incorporation/Registration on the DIFC Client Portal.

The DIFC Client Portal is a system developed by DIFC to extend and facilitate the services of the DIFC Registrar of Companies. If you wish to set up an entity in DIFC, you must use the DIFC Client Portal to submit your application. The sections below will guide you on the process and requirements to submit the Application for Incorporation/Registration on the portal:

### *a) First Time Access to DIFC client portal*

Upon receiving the in-principle approval from DIFCA or DFSA depending on the scope of the proposed business activities of the RP, the entity will be granted access to the DIFC Client Portal.

Below please find the steps in more detail:

- DIFC Registry Services will send you an email requesting further details to create the entity account which include:
  - i. Entity Name
  - ii. Business Activity(s)
  - iii. Trading Name
  - iv. Entity type
  - v. Portal User First Name
  - vi. Portal User Last Name
  - vii. Portal User Email
  - viii. Portal User Phone No
- The account will be created once the details are received. The appointed person will receive an email with a link to fill a user access form.
- The appointed person must complete the details and attach a valid passport copy. On submission, the system will send the appointed person an email with the portal username and a link to set the password.
- The appointed person must use the portal username each time to login to the portal.

### *b) Submission on the DIFC client portal*

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- Log in to the DIFC Client Portal: <https://portal.difc.ae/> using your user name and password.

**LOGIN TO PORTAL**

User Name  
Enter User Name here...

Password  
Enter Password here...

Login

[Forgot your password?](#)  
[Problem logging in?](#)  
[Request to access portal](#)

**WELCOME TO DIFC PORTAL**

This portal is dedicated to the companies operating in DIFC. It offers a wide variety of online services such as setting up a company in the Centre, registration and licensing, amendment of company profile and employee services such as visas. Throughout this portal, the company once registered, can also request for certificates, attestations and letters, access the company profile, and pay online for these services.

Introduction to DIFC client portal | Gaining access to the portal | Setting up a new business in DIFC

- Once logged in, navigate to Company Services by clicking on the 'Company Services' icon. For RP registration, you will need to click on 'Application for Incorporation/Registration' under Company Registration.

**COMPANY OVERVIEW**

Name: UAT Test 1

Portal Balance: 172,225.00 AED  
As of 14:0:10

PSA Deposit: 0.00 AED

PSA Available: 0.00 AED

Employment Quota: 0

**Number of Employees**

Current: 0

Pipeline: 0

**TOP UP BALANCE**

Choose Payment Option

Bank Payment  
 Pay By Cash  
 Pay By Cheque  
 Pay By Card

**COMPANY SERVICES**

This page allows companies to apply for various company related services including requests for certificates, company amendments, registration, licensing and renewals. Just click on the request, complete it, pay online (where applicable) and submit. Some requests will require original documents to be submitted, they will be identified in each request.

**Company Registration**  
Application for Incorporation / Registration

**Administrative Services**  
Certificate of Status (Under formation)

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- Click 'Application for Incorporation/Registration'. In the first section, you are required to select your entity's legal structure and fill information related to your entity's name. Please ensure the correct legal structure is selected as this will identify the structure of the application, the fees and the sections to be filled.

| HOME  | COMPANY SERVICES | EMPLOYEE SERVICES | SERVICE REQUESTS | SAVED REQUESTS | PENDING ACTIONS | COMPANY INFO | CASES | FAQS |
|---|------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|-------|------|
| <b>Entity Registration Details</b>  |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| <b>Entity Registration Details</b>  |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| Application for Registration<br>This request is for the set up of a company in DIFC covering the registration and licensing. Just click on each of the sections shown on the left hand panel, complete it, save press on Next. On 'Review and Finalize', make sure that you are okay with all the details of the completed sections and click on 'Finalize & Proceed'. In this step, you can also cancel the request, and create a new one. On 'Upload Required Documents', you will be asked to add supporting documents for the request, some of which will be generate 'Generated Documents' of the said section. Upload all the required documents, and click on Next. Navigate to 'Submit Request' to finalize the submission. |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| In this request, you are asked to submit some of the documents in original copies - they are identified in Upload Required Documents'. Should you have any clarifications, please email portal@difc.ae  |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| <div style="text-align: right;"> <input type="button" value="Save"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/> <input type="button" value="Next"/> </div>   |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| <b>Customer Correspondence Details</b> <span style="float: right;">= Required Information</span>  |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| Client <input type="text" value="UAT Customer 74"/>   |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| Email <input type="text" value="alya.alzarouni@difc.ae"/>   |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| Mobile <input type="text"/>   |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| <b>Entity Type Details</b>  |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| Company Type <input type="text" value="Financial - related"/>   |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| Legal Entity Type <input type="text" value="--None--"/>   |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| Registration Type <input type="text" value="--None--"/>   |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |
| For advise on Legal Entity Type, please contact roc.helpdesk@difc.ae. In case the company is opening a branch, select the applicable Recognized legal structure. Please indicate whether you are creating a start-up or registering the transfer of an entity to the DIFC.  |                  |                   |                  |                |                 |              |       |      |

- Once your legal structure is selected as "RP", the system will load the sections to be filled. You need to complete all the mandatory fields in the first section to be able to proceed to the other section. In this section you must also indicate if you wish to apply for a new establishment card for the company. Please note that establishment card is an optional service and is required only if the entity wishes to sponsor employees. Once completed, click 'Next'.
- The following sections need to be filled on the system to submit the application. Post submission, DIFC Registry Services will process your application within five working days. In case of further information required or documents to be uploaded, the portal user will be notified by email and the same will be accessible under the 'Pending Actions' tab.

| Section Name                                      | Description   |
|---|---|
| Proposed Registered Address / Operating Locations | In this section, you can add your operating location(s). In case you were operating from more than one unit, you may select one or more to be your registered address. Leased/subleased properties can be viewed only if the lease agreement is registered with the DIFC Registrar of |

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|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | Real Property. If your lease agreement is signed with DIFC investments LLC, the lease agreement will be registered automatically by the landlord.  |
| Details of Foreign General Partnership                                | In this section, you are required to provide the details of the Foreign General Partnership registering as a branch in the DIFC.   |
| Authorized Signatory Details  | In this section, you need to add the authorized signatories for the proposed entity. The authorized signatories will be listed in the license issued by the DIFC.<br>A minimum of one Authorized Signatory is required. All the details must be entered as per the passport.   |
| Details of General Partners of the Foreign General Partnership        | In this section, you need to add details of the general partners as appointed in the Foreign General Partnership. A minimum of one general partner must be added. All the details must be entered as per the passport (if the general partner is an individual) or the certificate (if the partner is a body corporate). |
| Beneficial / Ultimate Owner Details                                   | In this section, you need to provide details of the ultimate beneficial owners for body corporate partners. This section is required only if the proposed entity has a body corporate <b>as a partner.</b>   |
| Details of person appointed to accept service of documents or notices | In this section, you need to provide details of the person who will be appointed by the entity to accept service of documents and notices from the DIFC.   |
| Data Protection   | In this section, you need to specify whether the entity will be processing personal data or not. In case of processing personal data, you need to specify the manner of processing personal data.<br>This section also requires the details of the Data Controller appointed by the proposed entity.                     |
| DFSA Approval   | This section will be enabled for financial entities only. In this section, you can enter the date of receiving the DFSA draft license.   |
| Declaration   | In this section, you will specify the name and capacity of the person authorized to set the proposed entity.   |

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|  |  |
|--|--|
| Government Services Authorized Signatory Details | <p>In this section, you need to add the authorized signatories who will be responsible to sign documents related to Government Services such as salary certificate, internal transfer application etc.. It is independent from the Authorised Signatory details indicated in the earlier section.</p> <p>A maximum of 4 signatory can be added. All the details must be entered as per the passport.</p> <p>Please note that this section will be required only if the entity is applying for an establishment card.</p> |
| Review & Finalize                                | <p>In this section, you will be asked to review the full application before moving to the 'upload documents' section. Please ensure all the details are accurate and valid as changes cannot be made once the request is finalized.</p>  |
| Upload Required Documents                        | <p>In this section, you will be required to upload all the documents as per the requirements section of this user guide.</p> <p>The system will generate three declarations that must be printed, signed by the authorized individuals and then uploaded as part of this section.</p>  |
| Submit Request                                   | <p>Once the required documents are uploaded, you can submit the application for registration. Upon submission, the system will direct you to the payment page to confirm deduction of the fees from your company balance.</p> <p>Please ensure you have enough balance prior to submitting your request.</p>   |

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c) *Required documents*

The following documents will be required to set up an RP in the DIFC. Please note that all the documents must be scanned and uploaded on the portal. However, a list of following documents needs to be submitted in the original format as indicated in the table below:

| <b>Requirements to Register a Recognised General Partnership</b>  | <b>To upload</b> | <b>Original Required</b> |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>If any documents are not in the English Language, they must be accompanied by a legal translation certified to the satisfaction of the Registrar.</i>  |                  |                          |
| A copy of the current certificate of Incorporation or Registration of the foreign general partnership or similar document certified by the relevant authority in the jurisdiction in which it is incorporated or registered.  | Yes              | Yes                      |
| Approval of the Partners of the foreign general partnership:<br>a) Authorizing the registration of the Partnership in the DIFC.<br>b) Appointing the person authorized to sign documents on behalf of the body corporate in relation to the registration of the new Partnership<br>c) Appointing the person authorized to sign documents in all matters following registration of the new Company | Yes              | Yes                      |
| Approval from DIFCA (required for entities undertaking non-financial services).   | Yes              | No                       |
| Personnel Sponsorship Agreement. This document is generated upon finalizing the request on DIFC Client Portal and must be signed by the company's authorised signatory. Please note that this document will be required only if the entity is applying for an establishment card.   | Yes              | No                       |
| Passport copies / Copy of the Certificates of Incorporation of the individuals / body corporates listed on the Application for Registration as Authorized Signatories, Partners and the Government Services Authorized Signatories if applicable.   | Yes              | No                       |

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|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| DFSA In principle Approval and Draft License ( required for Financial entities only)   | Yes | No |
| NOC for sharing registered space issued by DIFC Authority. This is required only if the entity is sharing space with another entity.   | Yes | No |
| NOC from the Legal Affairs Department approving that the entity is registered in DIFC. This is required for entities undertaking legal services only.  | Yes | No |
| Government Services Authorized Signatory. This document is generated upon finalizing the request and must be signed by each of the individual appointed as Government Service Authorized Signatory.<br><br>Please note that this document will be required only if the entity is applying for an establishment card. | Yes | No |
| Relationship Declaration. This document is generated upon finalizing the request on DIFC Client Portal and must be signed by each individual appointed by the entity as a General Partner, Authorized Signatory, Person appointed to Receive Documents.  | Yes | No |
| Declaration RP. This document is generated upon finalizing the request on DIFC Client Portal and must be signed by the person authorized by the foreign general partnership.   | Yes | No |
| DP Declaration. This document is generated upon finalizing the request on DIFC Client Portal and must be signed by the appointed data controller.  | Yes | No |

d) *Top Up your balance on the portal*

In order to submit the Application for Incorporation/Registration on the portal, the company must have sufficient portal balance. Below please find the steps to top up your portal balance:

- Log in to the DIFC Client Portal: <https://portal.difc.ae/> using your user name and password.
- To top up your balance, please enter the amount and select the payment method on the left hand panel of the screen. For wire transfers, ensure your business partner number is included in the narration provided by the bank. This will help us identify the source of the funds and top up your balance faster.

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For more information, please refer to the user video guides available on the front page of the DIFC Client Portal or email us on [portal@difc.ae](mailto:portal@difc.ae).

e) *Fees*

The table below lists the fees to incorporate a Recognised Partnership as per DIFC laws and regulations.

*Registrar of Companies Fees:*

| <b>Service</b>  | <b>Non-Retail</b>                       | <b>Retail</b> |
|---|---|---------------|
| Application for Registration of a Recognised Partnership              | US\$ 4,000                              | US\$ 1,700    |
| Commercial License fee (payable upon registration and annual renewal) | US\$ 12,000                             | US\$ 5,100    |
| New Establishment Card Fees (if applicable)                           | US\$ 618 (Normal)<br>US\$ 656 (Express) |               |
| Add Authorized Signatory  | US\$ 27                                 |               |
| Personnel Sponsorship Agreement Deposit                               | US\$ 680                                |               |

*Commissioner of Data Protection Fees:*

The fees below will be decided based on the options selected on the Data Protection section at the time of filling the Incorporation/Registration Application.

| <b>Services</b>   | <b>Financial</b> | <b>Non-Financial</b> | <b>Retail</b> |
|---|------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Entity does not intend to process personal data   | Nil              | Nil                  | Nil           |
| Prior to or immediately upon personal data processing   | \$1,000          | \$500                | \$200         |
| Permit to transfer personal data outside DIFC under Article 12(1)(a) of the Data Protection Law | \$250            | \$150                | \$50          |
| Permit to process sensitive personal data under Article 10(2) of the Data Protection Law        | \$250            | \$150                | \$50          |

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