



What makes Dubai a global smart city leader in 2025: A look into programs, policies, and more

Dubai's rise to fourth (4th) place in the 2025 IMD Smart City Index is a strong reflection of its consistent and strategic drive to become a smart, liveable city with world-class opportunities for work, study, and innovation. This progress is supported by a future-focused government that begins cultivating digital intelligence in pupils as young as four (4) years old. To put this into context, UAE public schools are set to introduce mandatory AI classes starting at age four.

This long-term commitment to talent development feeds directly into initiatives like Dubai AI Week, where programs such as the AI Academy offer platforms for meaningful collaboration and knowledge sharing across industries. The event also highlighted advancements in digital healthcare, driven by AI training programs for leaders.

This document explores how long-term strategies and key developments contribute to an enabling environment for entrepreneurs looking to do business in Dubai. As part of a series that seeks to unearth why Dubai ranks as one of the top four smartest cities globally, it outlines the structural benefits that make it a leading choice for innovation, investment, and business across Asia.

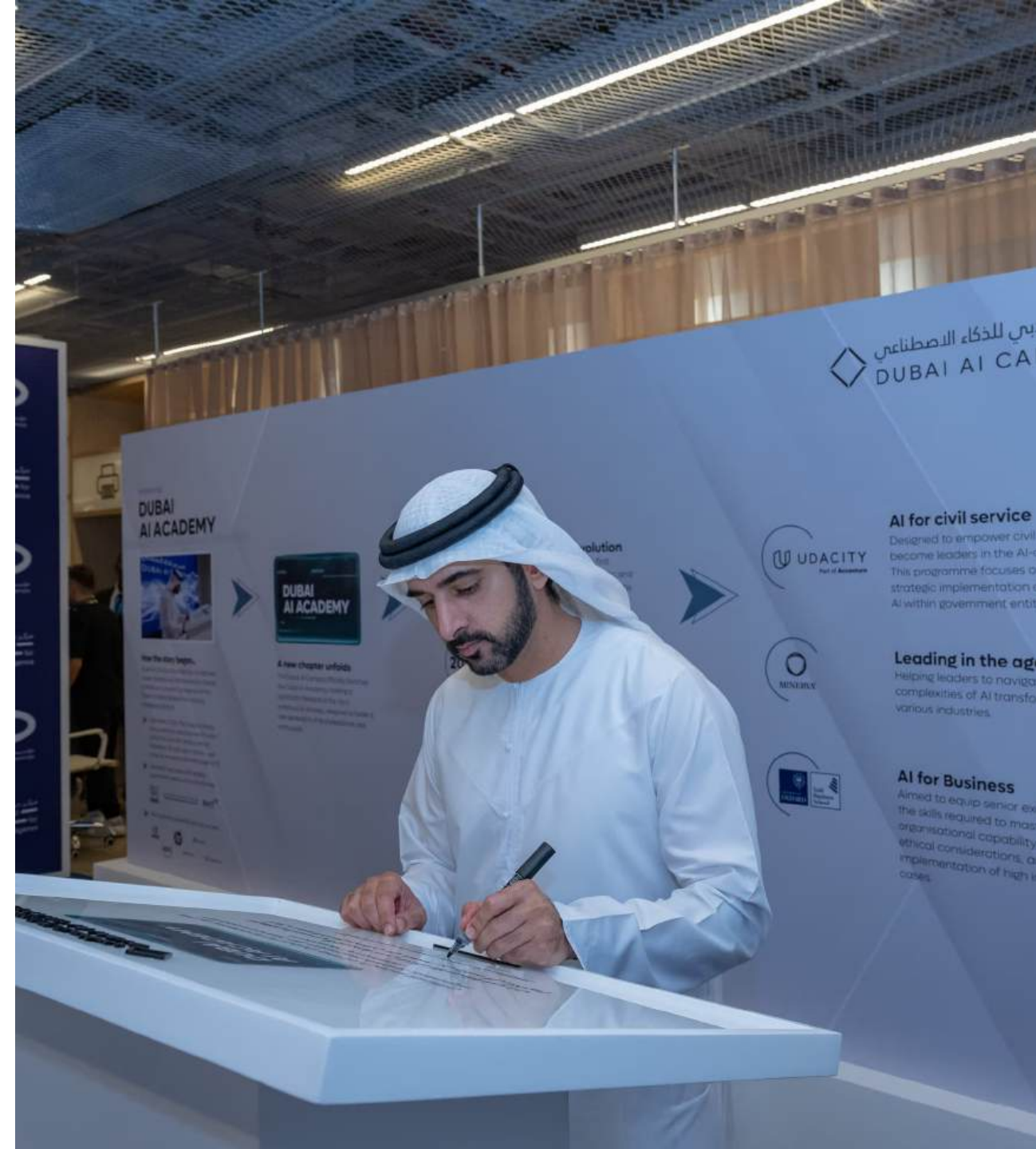


What is the Dubai AI Academy?

During Dubai AI Week, held from April 21 to 25, 2025, a series of developments and solutions were introduced by H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Dubai Future Foundation. One notable initiative is the AI Academy, which aims to train 10,000 professionals in world-class AI capabilities, including public sector leaders and private industry specialists.

In partnership with Oxford Saïd Business School, Udacity, and Minerva, it offers programs in:

- AI ethics and strategy
- Civil service transformation
- AI leadership in enterprise



The Academy is also part of the Dubai AI Campus, the largest hub for AI companies in the region, at the DIFC Innovation Hub. Through this setup, learners are immersed in real-world experience alongside AI start-ups, solution providers, and regulators. It helps them apply their knowledge quickly in practical situations. With such efforts, Dubai is creating talent pipelines and actively moulding a knowledge economy that powers smart governance and industry competitiveness.

It is important to note that these strategic initiatives align with the Dubai Universal Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence, which aims to double the contribution of AI to the UAE's GDP by 2030 and establish Dubai as a global AI capital. For investors and international firms evaluating how to start a business in Dubai, this future-ready environment presents access to talent as well as the frameworks and policies needed for AI integration at scale.



AI-Led innovation in Dubai's Healthcare Sector?

The AI integration strategy of the emirate delves deeply into healthcare, one of its most strategically vital sectors. The Dubai Health Authority (DHA) is spearheading numerous initiatives to further advance AI solutions.

1. Executive AI training program

In partnership with ESCP Business School, DHA launched a six-week AI-focused diploma program for 30 senior executives. Delivered during Dubai AI Week, the opportunity equips healthcare leaders with practical, data-driven tools for smarter clinical and administrative decision-making.

2. One Million AI Prompts' initiative

More than 25% of the DHA's workforce has been trained in generative AI and prompt engineering. These skills are essential for automation, diagnostics, and patient engagement in smart hospitals.



3. Specialised training for analysts

A job-specific training program for 200 healthcare analysts is currently underway via LinkedIn Learning. It supports skill development at scale with measurable outcomes.

4. WHX Tech event

This flagship healthtech event complements the above strategies and stresses AI applications in diagnostics, preventive care, and operational efficiency. It brings together innovators, regulators, and private sector stakeholders.

These collective initiatives truly exemplify the government's stance on improving public health services, which in turn creates a more favourable environment for healthcare innovation. These strategies benefit firms and investors eager to set up a business in Dubai's healthcare or digital services sectors.



An environment-friendly and innovative city

- 20-minute cities - urban areas where residents can access essential services and amenities within a 20-minute walk or bike ride
- Exclusive beach zones - recreational areas designed for recreation that enhance tourism and hospitality
- 300% public service expansion - enhanced access to healthcare, education, and community services.
- Smart living tools - over 80% of residents report high satisfaction with e-services like medical booking, job search, e-ID, and education. These are powered by citywide smart apps and free public Wi-Fi
- Sustainability tech - tools for tracking pollution, digital marketplaces for reuse, and more green spaces, all supported by smart infrastructure



Zero Bureaucracy and Digital Government initiative: A quick look

Among the prime contributors towards Dubai's success in gaining recognition as a smart city can be attributed to the larger UAE government's pledge to implement Zero Bureaucracy and the Digital Government Strategy. These national efforts aim to eliminate redundant administrative procedures and digitise public services. For SMEs, which often struggle with complex compliance and limited resources, these transformations remove bottlenecks and enable faster market entry.

The Zero Bureaucracy initiative simplifies processes by combining several government procedures into easy, digital workflows. A good example of this overhaul is the Employment Package (Work Bundle), which brings together work permits, visas, medical tests, and biometrics into one platform. This upgrade reduces the steps involved from 12 to just one or two; thus, especially helpful for SMEs needing rapid market entry without the delays of legacy systems.



The Digital Government Strategy 2025 builds on the Zero Bureaucracy initiative. It creates a plan to improve government services using modern digital tools. This strategy supports existing efforts like Dubai's Blockchain Strategy and Paperless projects, which highlight the importance of automation, unified systems, and real-time data sharing in today's governance.

It's worth noting that strategically associating with distinguished experts can help global companies navigate complicated rules more easily and quickly.





Become a Royalty Partner

Working with a local partner like the Seed Group opens doors to key stakeholders in both the public and private sectors, enabling accelerated business development through strategic alliances. With the Royal Family Office fostering relationships at the highest level, our partners gain access to otherwise inaccessible decision-makers.

A screenshot of a web form titled "Become a Royalty Partner" with the SEED GROUP logo at the top. The form is set against a background of desert dunes. It contains several input fields: "Company Name" and "Type of Business (B2B/B2C/B2G)" are at the top; "Company Website" and "Company Location" are in the middle; "Company Industry" (a dropdown menu) and "Product/Service" are below that; and "Company Phone No." and "Year of Establishment" are at the bottom. A small note "If not applicable, please type N/A" is located between the website and industry fields.

Become a Royalty Partner

Company Name * Type of Business (B2B/B2C/B2G) *

Company Website * Company Location *

If not applicable, please type N/A

Company Industry * Product/Service *

Please Select

Company Phone No. Year of Establishment

[Apply now](#)

Dubai's outstanding achievements in 2024 undoubtedly amplify its voice in the global investment and innovation expanse. These milestones, along with its pro-business policies and strategic vision, enhance the ease of starting a business in the emirate. Entrepreneurs and investors worldwide arguably benefit from Dubai's forward-thinking approach, making it a top place for company success.

More information and resources



Visit our accompanying blog post.



Visit our entire library of online resources.

We would welcome your feedback on this guide, please email marketing@seedgroup.com.



Find us on social media

Click on the icons below





© 2025 Seed Group. A Company of the Private Office of Sheikh Saeed bin Ahmed Al Maktoum. All Rights Reserved.
Seed Group is the trademark of Seed Group LLC. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.