

Procurement and Tendering Processes in the UAE

A Guide for Indian Companies



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Executive Summary

This paper provides a comprehensive overview of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) public procurement framework and offers practical guidance Indian companies seeking to access procurement opportunities across federal- and emirate-level platforms. Its primary purpose is to demystify the procurement process, highlight key legal and regulatory structures, and outline actionable steps for successful market entry and supplier registration.

At the federal level, procurement is governed by Federal Decree-Law No. 11 of 2023, which establishes the legal and procedural foundation for public contracting by ministries, agencies, and central authorities. The Digital Procurement Platform (DPP), administered by the Ministry of Finance, digitises the full procurement cycle, enabling streamlined access to tenders for over 30 federal entities.

At the emirate level, each jurisdiction maintains its own procurement systems and portals.

Notable examples, include:

- Abu Dhabi Government Procurement Gate (ADGPG)
- Dubai eSupply Portal
- Ajman Tawreed
- Sharjah eProcurement Platform
- Ras Al Khaimah Finance Supplier Register
- Municipal portals for Umm Al Quwain and Fujairah

The paper also analyses sector-specific procurement authorities, including:

- Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure (MoEI) (construction and infrastructure)
- Tawazun Council and EDGE Group (defence)
- Emirates Health Services (EHS), Dubai Health Authority (DHA), and Department of Health – Abu Dhabi (DoH) (healthcare)
- Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) via the Commercial Directory and SAP Ariba (oil and gas)

Each procurement pathway involves distinct eligibility criteria, including trade licences, certifications, and prequalification requirements. The paper details these requirements across different supplier types: domestic, free zone, foreign, SME, and freelance.

For Indian companies, the paper outlines a five-step entry strategy, ranging from identifying suitable portals and structuring legal presence to completing pre-qualification and actively monitoring tenders. For UAE-based Indian firms, it recommends maximising access to preferred vendor schemes, fee exemptions, and SME incentives while ensuring regulatory compliance.

By mapping out the UAE's procurement architecture and registration processes, this paper serves as a strategic entry guide for businesses aiming to access public sector opportunities. It enables Indian companies to navigate procurement systems with confidence, build compliance-ready supplier profiles, and position themselves for success in the UAE's dynamic economy.

Overview of the UAE Procurement Framework

Federal-Level Procurement

At the UAE federal-level, procurement is centralised through platforms managed by the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

Federal Decree-Law No. 11 of 2023 on Federal Government Procurement sets the general framework for the procurement of products and services by UAE government entities.

The law also aims to enhance integrity, trust, transparency, and competitiveness in all procurement procedures, while providing public value and public interest that aligns with global quality standards and sustainable development.

The law applies to all procurement and contracting activities and procedures of federal entities, including ministries, authorities, central agencies, as well as subsidiaries under them.

In line with this approach, the Digital Procurement Platform (DPP) is MoF's comprehensive system that digitises the procurement process across UAE federal entities, allowing for online announcement, bidding, and invoicing processes. DPP brings together federal entities and registered suppliers on a single platform, where all the stages of the procurement process, including announcement, bidding and following up on tenders, placing purchase orders, and generating invoices, can be completed online. DPP currently has over 30 federal government entities active on the platform.

Emirate-Level Procurement

Each emirate has its own procurement entities and portals:

- **Abu Dhabi:** The Department of Government Enablement Abu Dhabi has launched the Abu Dhabi Government Procurement Gate, a digital marketplace for suppliers.
- **Ajman:** The Tawreed Portal is Ajman's platform for supplier registration and procurement activities.
- **Dubai:** The eSupply Portal is the official procurement portal for Dubai Government tenders.
- **Fujairah:** The Fujairah Government website allows suppliers to engage in procurement activities.
- **Ras Al Khaimah:** The RAK Government Portal offers access to various e-services, including procurement-related activities.
- **Sharjah:** The Sharjah Finance Department eProcurement Portal provides web-based tools for procurement professionals and suppliers.
- **Umm Al Quwain:** The Umm Al Quwain Municipality website allows suppliers to participate in procurement in the emirate through open bidding.

Accreditation and Registration Requirements

Federal-Level Procurement

Registration guidelines for suppliers

- To register with the UAE Ministry of Finance, suppliers must meet requirements based on their specific category and submit the required documents accordingly.
- After a supplier's registration is accepted, a supplier can access and participate in tenders by joining the Federal Supplier Register. Only those suppliers who are registered on the Federal Supplier Register, can view winning bids as they are automated within the eProcurement system.
- Suppliers need to renew their registration annually, which they can do online.

The following types of entities are eligible for registration on the Federal Supplier Register:



Domestic

Companies located and providing goods and/or services in the UAE. (ie. not located in a UAE free zone or abroad)



Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

SMEs who are members of The National Programme for SMEs under the UAE Ministry of Economy.



Family (SANAA)

Emirati families and people of determination who can provide high quality and sustainable art and craft goods to federal entities.



Freelancer

Individuals residing in the UAE or offshore who own a Freelancer Licence and can provide services to federal entities



Foreign Supplier

Companies located outside the UAE, and without a local branch in the UAE.



Free Zone Supplier

Companies registered in any free zone entity within the UAE.

The type of documentation required for registration differs from entity to entity.

- **Domestic supplier:** Trade Licence, VAT Registration Certificate, and passport copy of company owner identified in the trade licence.
- **Free Zone:** Trade Licence, VAT Registration Certificate, and passport copy of company owner identified in the Trade Licence.
- **Foreign Supplier:** Trade Licence, Tax Registration Certificate, and passport copy of company owner.
- **Families:** Productive families (Sanaa) membership card.
- **SMEs:** Trade Licence and evidence of company ownership.
- **Freelancer:** Freelancer Licence and owner passport copy.

Emirate-level Registration

Public procurement processes vary across emirates, with distinct registration and eligibility requirements.

Abu Dhabi

The Abu Dhabi Government operates under Law No. 2 of 2019 on Regulating Partnerships between the Public and Private Sectors, which provides a legal framework for the development and delivery of public-private partnership (PPP) projects. These regulations offer greater clarity to private sector entities on how to engage with the government during the procurement and development phases of major infrastructure projects.

The Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) serves as the lead authority for facilitating and regulating infrastructure projects delivered through PPP models. ADIO is responsible for implementing the PPP law and associated regulations and acts as a key enabler across the PPP lifecycle. It has published the Partnership Projects Guidebook, which offers a practical and comprehensive overview of the procedures for developing, procuring, and managing partnership projects. The Guidebook aims to support both public and private sector stakeholders in delivering projects in a transparent, timely, and efficient manner.

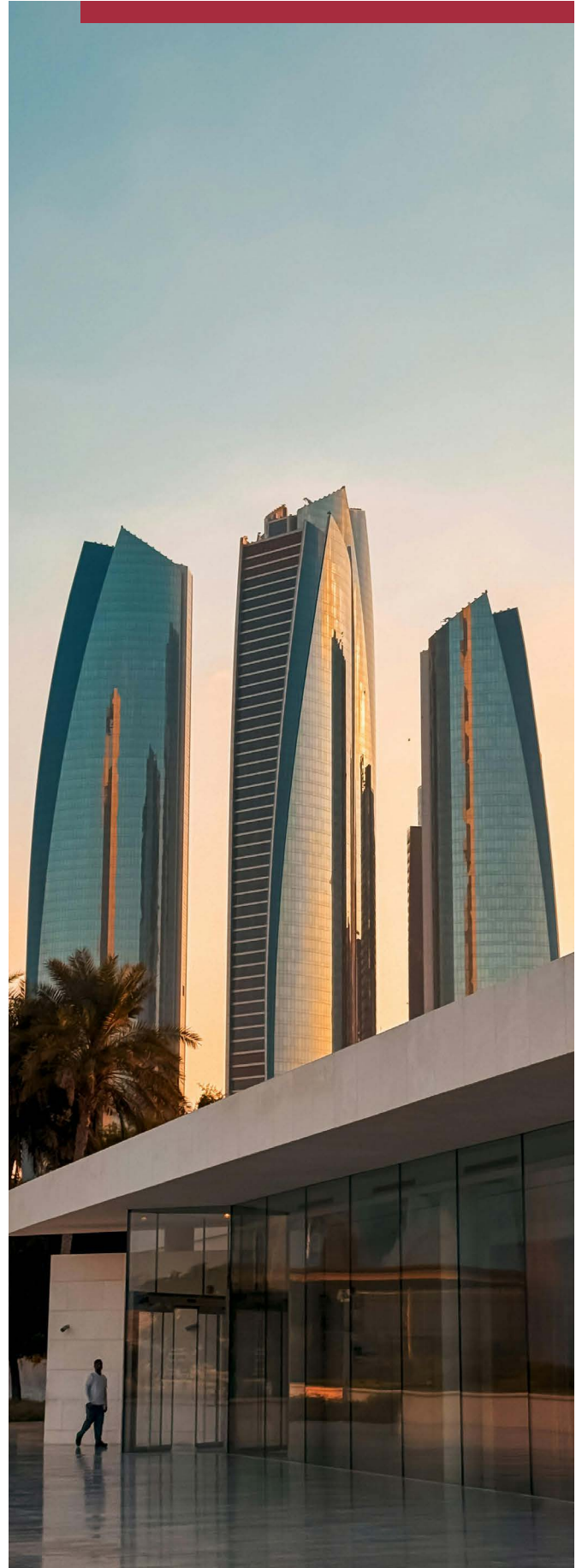
Suppliers wishing to conduct business with the Abu Dhabi Government must register on the Abu Dhabi Government Procurement Gate. Registration is a one-time, centralised process that provides suppliers visibility to all government entities operating through the platform.

Suppliers holding both Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (ADDED) licences and non-ADDED licences may participate in procurement activities. However, only suppliers with a valid ADDED licence are permitted to self-submit registration documents via the portal.

While the Procurement Gate covers the majority of Abu Dhabi Government entities, including many municipal bodies, some entities operate their own procurement platforms. These include:

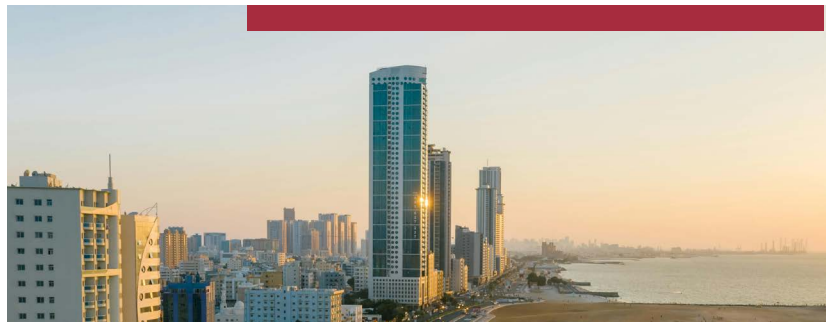
- Department of Municipalities and Transport (DMT)
- Tadweer (Waste Management Centre)
- Abu Dhabi Airports, which uses a dedicated portal requiring general and project-specific pre-qualification.

It is also important to note that some legacy procurement systems, such as Musanada, have been integrated into the centralised Procurement Gate.



Ajman

For Ajman, a supplier must first submit an application to Department of Finance – Ajman through their website. Once the application is reviewed and approved, a supplier can register on Ajman’s centralised supplier portal.



Dubai

In Dubai, Law No. 12 of 2020 on Contracts and Warehouse Management in Dubai Government establishes a comprehensive legal framework for regulating the procurement processes of government entities. The law aims to:

- Create a unified procurement process that ensures financial efficiency.
- Foster integrity, transparency, and equal opportunities among suppliers.
- Provide a legal foundation for the automation of procurement and warehouse operations.
- Standardise regulations governing contracts and warehouse management across entities.
- Ensure sound governance in procurement, asset disposal, and inventory management.
- Safeguard government assets.

The Dubai Department of Finance is mandated to issue governance guidelines and develop policies and decisions related to unified procurement, asset, and inventory management processes.

Supplier Registration

While the Dubai Municipality issues tenders via its official website, suppliers must register on the centralised eSupply Portal to be eligible to submit tenders and bids to most government entities.

Some specialised government departments operate their own registration platforms. For instance:

Roads and Transport Authority (RTA)

The RTA facilitates supplier registration through a dedicated portal. It also outlines specific eligibility requirements:

For UAE-based or locally authorised companies:

- A valid trade licence that is at least three years old.
- Minimum of three years’ experience in the relevant scope of work, supported by contracts or completion certificates.

For foreign companies not authorised in the UAE:

- A trade licence from the home country that is at least three years old.
- At least three years of relevant experience, evidenced by contracts or project completion certificates.
- Prequalification is conditional on establishing a UAE branch and obtaining the necessary approvals from local licencing authorities prior to contracting.
- A formal undertaking letter must be provided by the parent company.

Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA)

Suppliers seeking to engage with DEWA must register on its vendor portal to receive a vendor ID and password. Registration requires submission of the following documents:

- A valid copy of the Trade Licence.
- A valid Dubai Chamber of Commerce membership certificate.
- A valid membership certificate from the Mohammed bin Rashid Establishment for Young Business Leadership (if applicable).
- A copy of the local owner's passport.

Fujairah

For Fujairah, government procurement is managed by the Finance Department of Fujairah, through their website. The Port of Fujairah also has a Suppliers Hub for registered suppliers to engage in procurement activities.

On a municipal level, procurement in Fujairah is managed by the Fujairah Municipality through their website. The process involves open tendering through registration on the Smart Fujairah application.



Ras Al Khaimah

For suppliers seeking to do business with the Ras Al Khaimah Government, initial registration must be completed via the Supplier Register of the RAK Finance Department.

Registration in the RAK procurement system is free of charge, but with certain criteria, including submission of a valid Trade and Chamber of Commerce Licences.

At the municipal level, procurement opportunities in Ras Al Khaimah are made publicly available via the respective RAK municipal website.



Umm Al Quwain

In Umm Al Quwain, the process of government procurement is carried out through open tendering. In order to participate in the process, suppliers must obtain registration through the Umm Al Quwain Municipality website.

The documentation required for the registration process, includes a valid Trade Licence, VAT Certificate, Bank Confirmation Letter, as well as Passports or Visas and Emirates ID for all registered owners.



Sharjah

For Sharjah, the eProcurement Portal facilitates procurement professionals and suppliers to conduct sourcing activities. It provides a simple, secure, and efficient means for managing sourcing activities, reducing the time and effort required for both buyers and suppliers.

At the municipal level, procurement is managed by the Contracts and Procurement Department of the Sharjah Municipal Authority.



Sector- Specific Procurement

Construction

The Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure (MoEI) oversees procurement for federal infrastructure projects. Suppliers must register via the MoEI Supplier Registration Portal to participate in tenders.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Supplier Eligibility Criteria

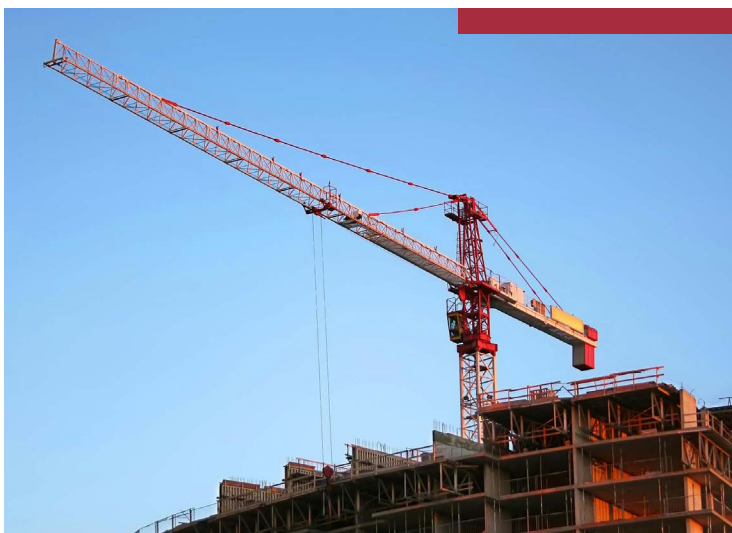
To be eligible for registration and participation in MoEI tenders, suppliers must meet the following requirements:

- Possess a valid licence from a UAE municipality or recognised economic authority.
- Have no conflict of interest (i.e. no personal interest or relationship with MoEI employees).
- Demonstrate experience in the construction field.
- Ensure the activity for registration is included in the commercial licence.
- Submit clear copies of all required documents.
- Maintain active status - registration will be cancelled if the certificate is not renewed for three consecutive years.
- Await approval of the request before the registration certificate is issued.
- Subcontractors in: Electrical works must submit licences issued by Etihad Water and Electricity (formerly the Federal Electricity and Water Authority) or any other specialised authority.
- Firefighting works must submit licences issued by Civil Defence.
- Suppliers must provide agency contracts, attested by the Ministry of Economy or a UAE embassy in the country of origin.
- Ensure all submitted documents and information are complete and accurate to avoid delays.
- All information provided will be treated as confidential, solely for registration purposes.

Required Documentation for Registration

Suppliers must provide:

- A valid commercial licence.
- Foundation contract, if applicable.
- Copies of contracts and certificates of completion mentioned in the application.
- Construction licences and contracts for prior projects.
- A bank statement for the past two years.
- A labour statement issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MOHRE).
- Relevant authorisations and catalogues, including attested agency contracts.



Emirate-Level Procurement

In addition to MoEI's federal procurement, various emirates manage construction procurement through their respective authorities:

Abu Dhabi Department of Municipalities and Transport (DMT):

- Oversees municipal and infrastructure projects in Abu Dhabi. Suppliers must register via the Abu Dhabi Government Procurement Gate (ADGPG).

Dubai Municipality:

- Manages tenders related to construction and infrastructure works in Dubai. Opportunities are published on the Dubai Municipality Tenders & Biddings Portal.



Defence

Defence procurement in the United Arab Emirates is centrally coordinated through a number of federal-level agencies and specialised procurement bodies. The key government entities involved include:

- **Ministry of Defence:** The principal authority responsible for national defence policy and the overarching procurement strategy.
- **General Command of the Armed Forces (GCAF):** Oversees the planning, acquisition, and management of defence capabilities for the UAE Armed Forces.
- **Armed Forces Procurement Office (AFPO):** Conducts technical evaluations and assessments in relation to defence procurement projects.



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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Focus Agencies of Interest: Two specialised entities are particularly relevant in the context of defence procurement, namely the Tawazun Council and the EDGE Group.

Tawazun Council

The Tawazun Council plays a pivotal role in managing procurement and contracting processes for the UAE Armed Forces and the Abu Dhabi Police. It also ensures compliance with and implementation of the Tawazun Economic Programme, which promotes domestic industrial participation in the defence and security sectors.¹



Key responsibilities of the Tawazun Council include:

1. Approving and awarding procurement projects and contracts.
2. Monitoring and supervising contract execution.
3. Managing all contracting-related executive procedures.
4. Preparing, managing, and allocating procurement budgets, and representing the Council in financial discussions with relevant stakeholders.
5. Registering suppliers and reviewing supplier applications.
6. Revising and updating legislation and procurement policies to reflect evolving industry standards and best practices.
7. Conducting quality assurance initiatives aimed at continuous improvement and addressing stakeholder concerns, operational challenges, and complaints.

Supplier registration and procurement management for the Tawazun Council are handled via the Tawazun Supplier Portal.

EDGE Group

Launched in November 2019, the EDGE Group is the UAE's leading advanced technology and defence conglomerate, and one of the most prominent globally. EDGE focuses on the integration of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies across defence and civilian domains, driving innovation through the convergence of research and development, digital transformation, and commercial technologies with tailored military applications.



EDGE brings together over 25 subsidiaries, consolidated into five strategic clusters:

- Platforms and Systems
- Missiles and Weapons
- Space and Cyber Technologies
- Trading and Mission Support
- Homeland Security

EDGE E-Vendor Portal

The EDGE Corporate E-Vendor Portal manages the end-to-end supplier lifecycle and is the central interface for all procurement-related interactions between EDGE and its vendors. Key functions of the platform include:

- Supplier registration and onboarding

1. For companies working in the defence space, the Tawazun Council has established specialised industrial zone, the Tawazun Industrial Park (TIP). TIP supports the UAE's strategic objectives in defence, security, aerospace, and advanced manufacturing. The zone has been purpose-built to accommodate sensitive and high-tech industries, the park offers secure infrastructure, advanced facilities, and regulatory support tailored to companies operating in these sectors. While TIP provides many benefits typically associated with free zones, such as streamlined licencing and dedicated investor services, it is not a traditional free zone and operates under the regulatory framework of Tawazun Council, with specific protocols for sensitive industries.

- Purchase order collaboration and tracking
- Integrated reporting capabilities for both EDGE buyers and suppliers

The E-Vendor Portal ensures that suppliers remain informed about EDGE's procurement activities, including purchase orders, invoice statuses, and receivables, thereby improving planning accuracy and reducing reliance on voice and email communications.

Key Benefits for Suppliers:

- A streamlined onboarding process with integrated workflows
- A faster, digital-first method to submit, validate, and approve vendor information
- Enhanced transparency on long-term and short-term procurement demands
- A collaborative interface for visibility on purchasing documentation
- Self-service tools for updating company information

Compliance and Accreditation

Both the Tawazun Council and the EDGE Group maintain strict accreditation protocols, which include:

- Mandatory security clearances
- Compliance with technical and operational standards
- Ongoing performance evaluation and quality assurance

These requirements are designed to ensure that suppliers uphold the integrity, reliability, and security necessary for operating in high-stakes defence and homeland security environments.



Healthcare

Procurement in the UAE's healthcare sector is managed by various federal - and emirate -level entities:

Emirates Health Services (EHS)

The EHS manages all procurement activities related to medicines, medical supplies, and general materials.

Suppliers must register via the Ministry of Finance's Digital Procurement Platform to participate in tenders, with detailed guidelines and requirements are available on the EHS Purchases System.

EHS | مؤسسة الإمارات للخدمات الصحية
Emirates Health Services

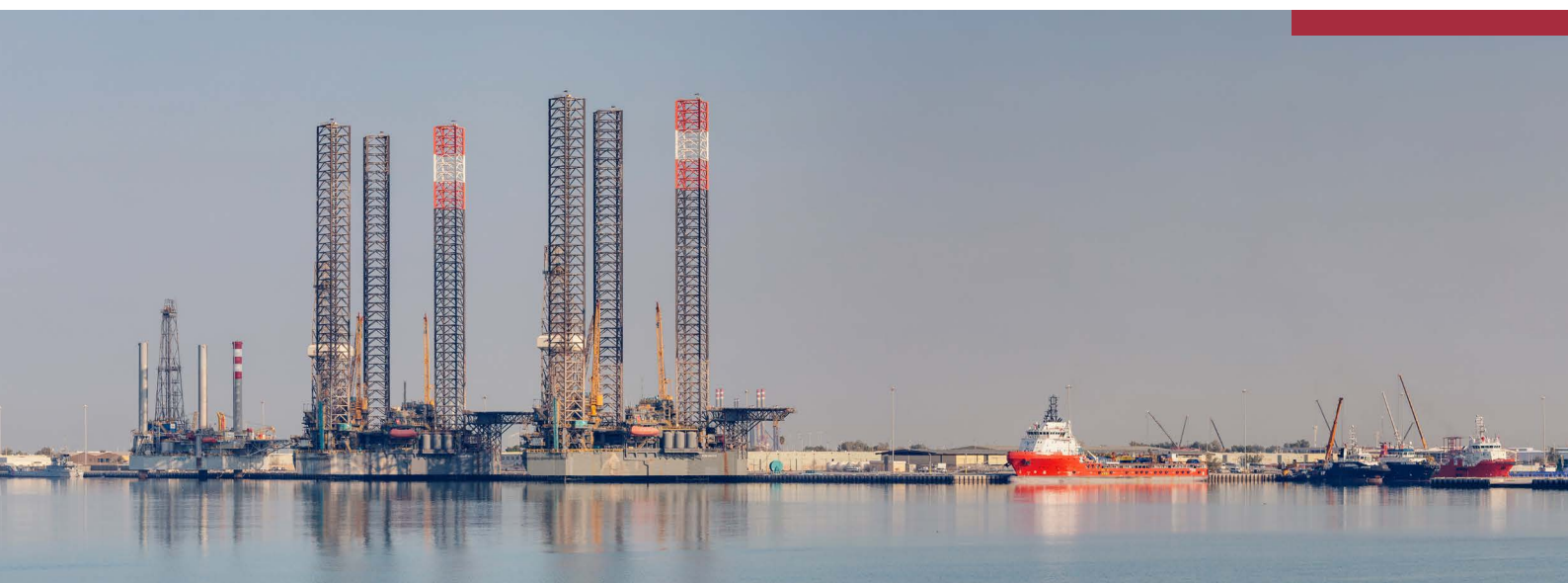
To participate in EHS-managed tenders and procurement processes, suppliers must meet the following eligibility conditions:

- If the supplier is a legal person, it must be a company registered in the UAE, and subject to the provisions of Federal Law No. (2) of 2015 on Commercial Companies, as amended, or any replacement legislation.
- Free zone companies are excluded from participating in tenders unless they have a registered branch outside the free zone. In such cases, they must register and participate through the onshore branch. Medicine suppliers are exempt from this restriction.
- Suppliers must be authorised to conduct commercial activities in the UAE.
- Suppliers must not be banned from tendering by any federal authority.
- Suppliers must not be a partner of any EHS employee.

Healthcare Procurement at the Emirate Level

While EHS manages procurement at the federal level, Emirate-specific health authorities also conduct procurement independently:

- **Department of Health – Abu Dhabi (DoH):** Manages public healthcare procurement in Abu Dhabi. Suppliers must register via the Abu Dhabi Government Procurement Gate (ADGPG).
- **Dubai Health Authority (DHA):** Oversees public health sector procurement in Dubai. Tenders are published on the Dubai eSupply Portal, where suppliers can register and participate.



Oil and Gas

Procurement in the UAE's oil and gas sector is primarily overseen by the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), which acts as the central authority for upstream, midstream, and downstream procurement across Abu Dhabi's energy ecosystem.



Other emirates manage their own oil and gas operations independently, including:

Dubai through Dubai Petroleum under the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, Sharjah via the Sharjah National Oil Corporation (SNOC), and Ras Al Khaimah through RAK Gas, each overseeing their respective procurement processes separately from ADNOC.

To participate in ADNOC sourcing events, including tenders, requests for proposals (RFPs), and other procurement opportunities, all suppliers must first register and prequalify through the ADNOC Commercial Directory and the SAP Ariba system.

The ADNOC Commercial Directory provides suppliers with an integrated, real-time platform that enables:

- Online registration for all ADNOC Group company suppliers.
- The ability to track prequalification status in real time.
- Online updates to company profiles.

Recommendations for Indian Companies Entering the UAE Procurement Market



STEP 01: Identify Relevant Procurement Portals

Map out procurement platforms at the federal, emirate, and municipal levels (e.g. MoEI, ADGPG, Dubai eSupply, RAK Finance Portal). Pay close attention to sector-specific platforms such as:

- » Tawazun Supplier Portal (defence and security),
- » DEWA and DoH (utilities and health),
- » ADNOC Commercial Directory / Ariba (oil and gas).
- Study each portal's eligibility criteria, licencing requirements, and accreditation processes.

STEP 02: Define Market Entry and Legal Structure

Choose a structure that satisfies registration and eligibility requirements:

- Agency Agreement (with a local sponsor or agent),
- Joint Venture (JV) with a UAE partner, Branch Office, or Free Zone Establishment (not always eligible unless also registered onshore).
- Consider sector-specific restrictions (e.g. Emirati ownership thresholds in defence) when defining your entry model.

STEP 03: Prepare Required Documentation and Complete Pre-Qualification

Gather all necessary documentation:

- UAE Trade Licence (if applicable),
- Chamber of Commerce certificate,
- Sector-specific permits and accreditations (e.g. from Civil Defence, MOHRE, EtihadWE, etc.),
- Company profile, project experience, and financial statements.
- Complete all pre-qualification and supplier registration steps for each relevant platform.

STEP 04: Maintain Compliance and Valid Documentation

- Ensure all registration data is continuously updated based on the business structure and emirate-specific regulations.
- Renew trade licences, maintain valid certifications, and monitor changes to eligibility rules or documentation requirements.

STEP 05: Monitor Tenders and Bid Strategically

- Subscribe to tender notifications and bulletins on each portal.
- Track submission timelines, bid formats, and evaluation criteria carefully.
- Seek guidance from local legal or business consultants to ensure alignment with procurement laws and procedures.

Conclusion

Understanding and navigating the UAE's multi-layered procurement ecosystem is essential for both new Indian entrants and existing UAE-based Indian companies seeking public sector opportunities. By proactively managing registration, compliance, and accreditation across federal -, emirate -, and sectoral -levels , companies can enhance their competitiveness and unlock opportunities across infrastructure, defence, energy, healthcare, and municipal projects.

Database of Active Procurement Platforms and Portals

Federal Portals

- [Digital Procurement Platform \(DPP\)](#)

Emirate-Specific Portals

Abu Dhabi

- [Abu Dhabi Government Procurement Gate](#)
- [Department of Municipalities and Transport \(DMT\)](#)
- [Tadweer \(Waste Management\)](#)
- [Abu Dhabi Airports e-sourcing portal](#)

Ajman

- [Tawreed Portal](#)

Dubai

- [eSupply Portal](#)
- [Dubai Municipality](#)
- [Road & Transport Authority](#)
- [Dubai Electricity and Water Authority](#)

Fujairah

- [Fujairah Government Website](#)
- [Fujairah Port Suppliers Hub](#)
- [Fujairah Municipality](#)

Ras Al Khaimah (RAK)

- [RAK Government Portal](#)
- [RAK Municipality](#)

Sharjah

- [Sharjah Finance Department eProcurement Portal](#)

Defence Sector Portals

- [Tawazun Council: Supplier Registration Portal](#)
- [EDGE Group: E-Vendor Portal](#)

Oil and Gas Sector

- [ADNOC Group: ADNOC Procurement Services Portal](#)

Healthcare Sector

- [Emirates Health Services \(EHS\): EHS Purchases System](#)
- [Department of Health Abu Dhabi \(DoH\): Abu Dhabi Government Procurement Gate \(ADGPG\)](#)
- [Dubai Health Authority \(DHA\): eSupply Portal](#)

Construction Sector

- [Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure \(MoEI\): MoEI](#)
- [Abu Dhabi Department of Municipalities and Transport \(DMT\): ADGPG](#)
- [Dubai Municipality: Dubai Municipality Tenders & Biddings](#)

