



What are the ranking trends?

- The **United Arab Emirates** (UAE), in 26th place in the *Doing Business* global rankings, is the highest ranked economy in the Middle East and North Africa region, followed by **Bahrain** (at 63) and **Oman** (66).
- Amid political instability, **Libya** (188), **Syria** (173), and **Yemen** (179) are lowest ranked economies in the region.
- Other large economies in the region and their rankings are **Egypt** (122), **Iran** (120), **Morocco** (68), **Saudi Arabia** (94), and **Tunisia** (77).
- The region's economies perform well on the *Doing Business* indicators of Dealing with Construction Permits (with an average rank of 84) and Getting Electricity (91). For example, completing all the formalities to build a warehouse takes 130 days on average in the region, compared with the global average of 156 days.
- The region underperforms in the area of Getting Credit (135), Protecting Minority Investors (121) and Starting a Business (117). For example, Starting a Business in the region costs 26 percent of income per capita on average, compared with 3 percent on average in OECD high-income economies.

What are the reform trends?

- A total of 35 reforms, making it easier to do business, were implemented in 15 of the region's 20 economies in the past year. This is significantly more than the region's annual average of 19 reforms over the past five years.
- The **UAE** and **Bahrain** are among the global top 10 improvers.
- The largest number of reforms were implemented in the *Doing Business* areas of Starting a Business (with 9 reforms) and Trading Across Borders (6).
- **Morocco** and the **UAE** continued to lead the region in terms of number of reforms implemented, with five each in the past year, while **Algeria**, **Bahrain**, **Egypt**, and **Jordan** were also amongst the notable reformers. Examples of reforms include:
 - **Morocco** strengthened minority investor protections by clarifying ownership and control structures and by requiring greater corporate transparency.
 - The **UAE** made Dealing with Construction Permits easier by implementing risk-based inspections and merging the final inspection into the process of obtaining a completion certificate.

New inclusions in *Doing Business 2017*

- This year's report covers 190 economies, with the inclusion of Somalia.
- For the first time, *Doing Business 2017* includes a gender dimension in three indicators: Starting a Business, Registering Property and Enforcing Contracts. The report finds that 70 percent of economies in the region have regulations that are different for women and men entrepreneurs. For instance, in **Saudi Arabia**, three extra procedures are stipulated for married women to start and operate a business.
- The Paying Taxes indicator has been expanded to cover post-filing processes, such as tax audits and VAT refund. The economies of the Middle East and North Africa generally perform well in these new areas. A notable exception is **Lebanon**, where compliance time for VAT refund is considerably high.
- The report includes an annex with a pilot indicator set on public procurement regulations. The 'selling to the government' procurement process is studied in 78 economies and is not included in the overall rankings. The indicator set analyzes five main areas: accessibility and transparency, bid security, payment delays, incentives for small and medium-size enterprises and complaint mechanisms.

Rankings Data for the Middle East and North Africa

Economy	Rank (1–190)		Distance to frontier score (0–100)		# of Reforms	
	DB2016	DB2017	DB2016	DB2017	DB2016	DB2017
Algeria	163	156	45.88	47.76	2	4
Bahrain	66	63	66.38	68.44	0	3
Djibouti	168	171	44.42	44.50	0	0
Egypt, Arab Rep.	126	122	55.18	56.64	1	2
Iran, Islamic Rep.	117	120	57.08	57.26	0	1
Iraq	166	165	44.99	45.61	0	2
Jordan	119	118	57.02	57.30	0	2
Kuwait	98	102	60.12	59.55	1	1
Lebanon	122	126	56.08	55.90	0	0
Libya	188	188	33.33	33.19	0	0
Malta	83	76	62.52	65.01	1	2
Morocco	68	68	65.82	67.50	4	5
Oman	69	66	65.65	67.73	2	2
Qatar	74	83	64.68	63.66	1	2
Saudi Arabia	96	94	60.33	61.11	1	2
Syrian Arab Republic	172	173	42.85	41.43	0	1
Tunisia	75	77	63.91	64.89	2	1
United Arab Emirates	34	26	74.83	76.89	4	5
West Bank and Gaza	138	140	51.81	53.21	2	0
Yemen, Rep.	179	179	39.92	39.57	0	0

Source: *Doing Business* database.

Note: The rankings are based on the average of each economy's distance to frontier scores for the 10 topics included in this year's aggregate ranking. This measure shows how close each economy is to global best practices in business regulation. A higher score indicates a more efficient business environment and stronger legal institutions.