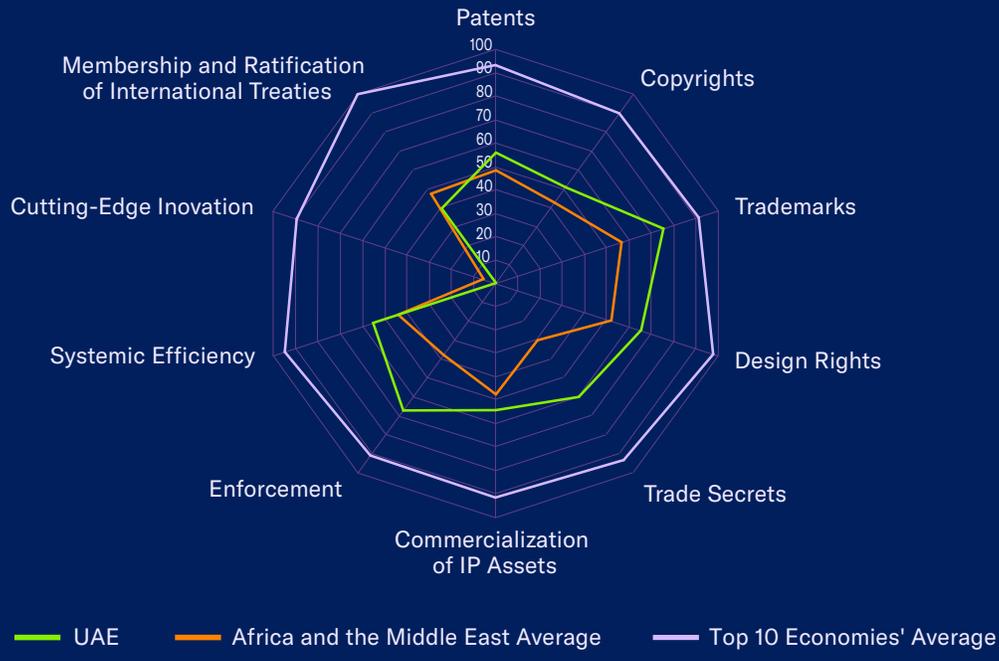




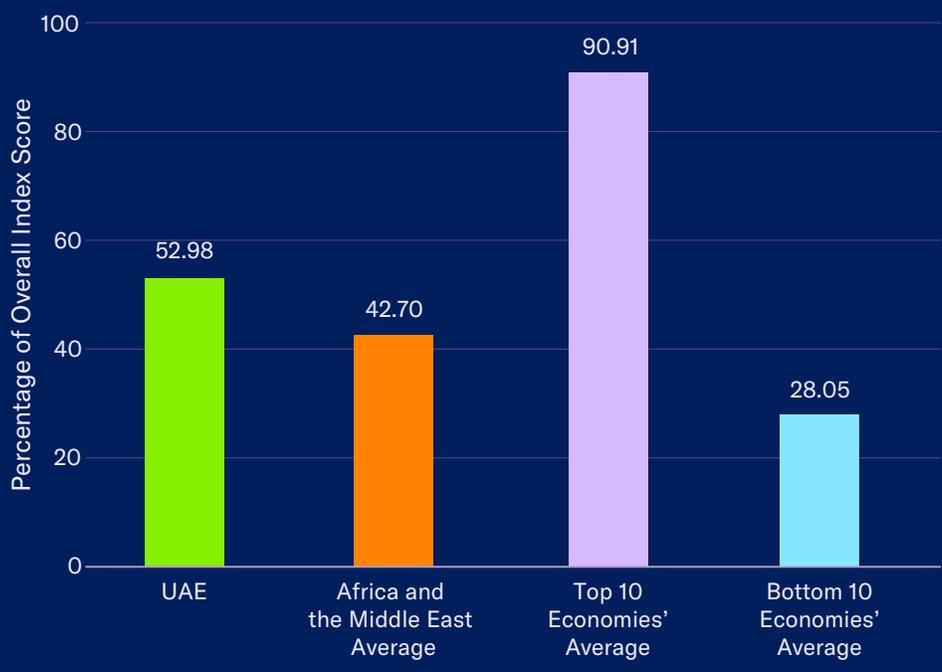
United Arab Emirates

Rank
27/55

Category Scores



Overall Score in Comparison



Key Areas of Strength

- 2024 e-commerce law, Federal Decree-Law No. 14, and new system of administrative injunctive-style relief significantly strengthened IP environment
- Term of protection for design rights extended in 2021
- Acceded to Madrid Protocol in 2021
- 2021 Trademark Law improves environment for well-known marks and raises potential damages
- 2021 Trademark Law provides stronger border measures against counterfeit goods
- Defined RDP term introduced in 2020
- Foreign Direct Investment Law offers possibility of 100% foreign ownership granting foreign investors a potential exemption from the requirement of having an Emirati partner holding a minimum of 51% of a company's shares
- Enhanced anti-counterfeiting efforts, including criminal penalties
- Awareness raising and capacity building efforts on importance and value of IP rights

Key Areas of Weakness

- No special IP incentives for orphan medicinal product development
- Limited participation in international treaties

Indicator	Score	Indicator	Score
Category 1: Patents Rights and Limitations		5.00	
1. Term of protection	1.00	29. Direct Government intervention in setting licensing terms	0.50
2. Patentability requirements	0.50	30. IP as an economic asset	0.50
3. Patentability of CII	0.50	31. Tax incentives for the creation of IP assets	1.00
4. Plant variety protection	1.00	Category 7: Enforcement	
5. Pharmaceutical-related enforcement	0.75	4.70	
6. Legislative criteria and active use of compulsory licensing	1.00	32. Physical counterfeiting rates	0.52
7. Pharmaceutical patent term restoration	0.00	33. Software piracy rates	0.68
8. Membership of a Patent Prosecution Highway	0.00	34. Civil and procedural remedies	0.75
9. Patent Opposition	0.25	35. Pre-established damages	0.50
Category 2: Copyrights and Limitations		3.53	
10. Term of protection	0.53	36. Criminal standards	0.75
11. Exclusive rights	0.75	37. Effective border measures	0.75
12. Expeditious legal remedies disabling access to infringing content online	1.00	38. Transparency and public reporting by Customs	0.75
13. Cooperative action against online piracy	0.00	Category 8: Systemic Efficiency	
14. Limitations and exceptions	0.50	2.75	
15. TPM and DRM	0.50	39. Coordination of IP rights enforcement	0.25
16. Government use of licensed software	0.25	40. Consultation with stakeholders during IP policy formation	0.50
Category 3: Trademarks Rights and Limitations		3.00	
17. Term of protection	1.00	41. Educational campaigns and awareness raising	1.00
18. Protection of well-known marks	0.75	42. Targeted incentives for the creation and use of IP assets for SMEs	0.75
19. Exclusive rights, trademarks	0.75	43. IP-intensive industries, national economic impact analysis	0.25
20. Frameworks against online sale of counterfeit goods	0.50	Category 9: Cutting-Edge Innovation	
Category 4: Design Rights and Limitations		0.00	
21. Industrial Design Term of Protection	0.80	44. IP incentives for orphan medicinal product development	0.00
22. Exclusive rights, industrial design rights	0.50	45. IP incentives for orphan medicinal product development, term of protection	0.00
Category 5: Trade Secrets and the Protection of Confidential Information		1.80	
23. Protection of trade secrets (Civil Remedies)	0.50	46. Restrictions on the effective use of existing IP incentives for orphan medicinal product development	0.00
24. Protection of trade secrets (Criminal Sanctions)	0.50	Category 10: Membership and Ratification of International Treaties	
25. Regulatory data protection term	0.80	2.75	
Category 6: Commercialization of IP Assets		3.25	
26. Barriers to market access	0.25	47. WIPO Internet Treaties	1.00
27. Barriers to technology transfer	0.50	48. Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks and Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks	0.50
28. Registration and disclosure requirements of licensing deals	0.50	49. Patent Law Treaty and Patent Cooperation Treaty	0.50
		50. Membership of the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, act of 1991	0.00
		51. Membership of the Convention on Cybercrime, 2001	0.00
		52. The Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs	0.00
		53. Post-TRIPS FTA	0.75

Total Score: 28.08

Spotlight on the National IP Environment

Past Editions versus Current Score

The UAE's overall score has increased from 25.58 out of 53 indicators in the 13th edition to 28.08. This reflects score increases on indicators 5, 38, 42, and 53.

Patent Rights and Limitations

In 2025, there were several positive developments in patent policy. To begin with, the Ministry of Economy and the USPTO agreed to an accelerated patent-grant program in July. Under this program, applicants who have obtained a U.S. patent and file a corresponding application in the UAE will benefit from accelerated review. The Ministry also introduced the “Patent Hive” program, which aims to cut processing and examination times from an average of 42 months to six months. This program will also offer reduced application fees and a new range of technical assistance programs to be developed in partnership with WIPO. The Ministry launched a new initiative on environmentally sustainable technologies: the “Green Intellectual Property” track.

These are all positive efforts to improve the patenting environment in the UAE. This is especially true for the accelerated patent grant program. Increased cooperation between IP offices is one of the most tangible ways to improve and harmonize the administration and functioning of the international IP system, benefiting inventors and rights holders. One established avenue for patenting is through an economy's relevant IP or patent office joining international efforts to streamline and improve patent prosecution by securing membership in the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH).

The UAE is not currently a member of the Global Patent Prosecution Highway, nor does it have bilateral PPH agreements with other IP offices. Building on the new accelerated patent grant program and additional PPH initiatives would further improve the patenting environment and lead to a higher score on indicator 8. Membership in a Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH).

5. Pharmaceutical-related patent

enforcement and resolution mechanism:

In a positive development, in 2025, the government introduced a potential new pre-marketing patent enforcement and resolution mechanism for biopharmaceuticals in the UAE. As noted in the Index, up until 2017, Ministry of Health Decree 404 provided an early patent adjudication mechanism for pharmaceuticals. Under the system, the Ministry of Health would deny marketing approval for a product that infringes on a patent existing either in the UAE or in the economy from which the product has been imported. Officials were to either reject an application or place it on hold until the patent expires. However, in 2017, the UAE government approved the marketing of two generic versions of a pharmaceutical product that was still under patent in the country of origin.

In late 2024, a new law was promulgated — Federal Decree-Law No. 38 of 2024 — regulating all aspects of medical products. The new law affects almost all facets of the biopharmaceutical market authorization process, including important aspects of biopharmaceutical IP protection. With respect to IP rights, both Articles 6 and 18 provide broad protection.

Article 6(e), which outlines the market approval procedures and process for innovative and follow-on products, states that applicants have the right to market their products in “accordance with the established rules for intellectual property and trademarks” and that follow-on applicants should “ensure compliance with the applicable laws and regulations concerning the protection of intellectual property and trademarks and provide evidence of the use of information and data for innovative products.”

Similarly, Article 18 of the Law states that “documents and data related to an innovative Medical Product and a Medical Product with at least one new active ingredient, whether developed in the State or imported, are subject to a protection period. The Executive Regulations of this Decree-Law shall specify the period, mechanism, and system related to regulatory protection.” Having a functioning linkage regime that gives rights holders a meaningful ability to prevent the launch of follow-on products during the granted term of exclusivity would strengthen the biopharmaceutical IP environment in the UAE.

At the time of the research, no Executive Regulations or additional information had been made publicly available that provided details on the rights and responsibilities of innovators and follow-on applicants. Nevertheless, the introduction of Federal Decree-Law No. 38 provides the basis for a potential pre-approval enforcement mechanism and an explicit form of statutory protection. On this basis, the score on this indicator increased by 0.75. The Index will continue to monitor these developments in 2026.

Enforcement

38. Transparency and public reporting by Customs authorities of trade-related IP infringement: Historically, the UAE’s Federal Customs Authority has not published regular and systematic statistics and data on trade-related IP infringement.

While this indicator primarily focuses on what happens at the national/central government level, the UAE’s federal structure includes a great deal of delegation and devolved authority to the level of each emirate, including border enforcement. As a result, this year’s Index examined customs activity at the sub-national level of each of the UAE’s seven emirates. Both Dubai and Abu Dhabi — two of the largest emirates and home to the UAE’s largest and most active seaports publish regular, systematic statistics on border enforcement related to IP infringement. For example, in 2025, Dubai Customs released data on the total seizures of trade-related IP-infringing goods for 2024, the estimated value of these seizures, and the types of goods seized. Similarly, in its Annual Report, Abu Dhabi Customs provided an estimate of the total value in AED of counterfeit goods seized in 2024. As a result of this positive activity, the score on this indicator increased by 0.75.

Systemic Efficiency

42. Targeted incentives for the creation and use of IP assets for SMEs:

As noted last year, historically, the UAE has offered only limited incentives for the creation and use of IP assets by SMEs. Registration fees for SMEs have not been discounted, and there has been no expedited review process. The technical assistance programs that have been in place have not been emirate-wide; they have been available only in Dubai. In 2024, this began to change when the Ministry of Economy launched two new SME-specific, emirates-wide IP support programs targeting patent registration and financial support: the “Intangible Finance Committee” and the “Patent Incubator.” Both programs aim to increase and improve the development and registration of IP assets by SMEs by providing access to financing, technical assistance, and registration support.

In 2025, these positive efforts continued with the Ministry, first launching a new technical assistance program — in partnership with Dubai Science Park — and second, reducing trademark registration fees by 50% for qualifying SMEs. The latter policy is part of a broader effort under Cabinet Resolution 102 (2025) to incentivize greater trademark registrations. Of note is the introduction of a new ‘One-Day’ expedited registration service. As a result of these positive efforts, the score on this indicator increased by 0.25.

Membership and Ratification of International Treaties

53. At least one post-TRIPS FTA with substantive IP provisions and chapters in line with international best practices:

Over the last five years, the UAE has concluded a growing number of stand-alone Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPAs) with several other Index economies on a bilateral basis, including India, Israel, Indonesia, and Türkiye. In 2025, another such agreement came into effect, the UAE-Australia CEPA. All these CEPAs include a dedicated IP chapter. This is a positive feature of the agreements, which reflects a recognition of the importance of IP-intensive industries and the centrality of IP rights to future trade and economic development in all economies.

As has been noted in the Index, this is not always the case. Many 21st-century post-TRIPS FTAs do not include a dedicated IP chapter or otherwise skirt meaningful provisions on IP rights. The UAE’s CEPAs include several substantive IP provisions identified in the Index. For example, the UAE-Kenya CEPA (Section G, Article 13.33) contains a clearly defined RDP term of five years for submitted clinical test data as part of sanitary registration for a new medicinal product.

Similarly, Article 14.25 of the 2025 Australia-UAE CEPA ensures that recordal of a trademark license is not required to establish the validity of such a license or the legitimate use of the mark in question. These are both important post-TRIPS IP standards covered as discrete indicators in the Index.

Historically, this indicator has been scored based on whether an economy is a signatory to, and has ratified or acceded to, a modern post-TRIPS FTA that includes substantive IP provisions in line with international best practices, as identified in the Index. Therefore, this indicator does not consider the allocation of partial scores in situations where a post-TRIPS FTA contains only a limited number of substantive IP provisions, in line with international best practices identified in the Index. To take better account of the increasing number of post-TRIPS FTAs that include some substantive IP provisions identified in the Index, from this edition of the Index onward, it will be possible to achieve a partial score ranging from 0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, and 1. Like all other indicators in this category, score allocation will still be evenly divided between the signature and ratification or accession to an international treaty. As a result of the change in the scoring methodology, the score for this indicator increased by 0.75.