

مدينة إكسبو دبي  
EXPO CITY DUBAI



# How to set up your business in Expo City Dubai

## Expo City Dubai

Expo City Dubai is the pioneering legacy of Expo 2020 Dubai, and has been at the core of our planning since the very beginning. An innovation-driven, people-centric city of the future that is committed to protecting the environment, it forms a key part of the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan. As a blueprint for sustainable living, Expo City Dubai expects all entities operating within the city to align with its goals and targets to create a climate-friendly, smart community that exists in harmony with nature.

Expo City is packed with an array of educational, cultural and entertainment offerings, as well as offices, residences, leisure facilities, dining options, event venues, wellness and exercise grounds, and more.

### The future of business

Expo City Dubai enables the future of business by bringing together a purpose-driven community of Fortune 500 companies, entrepreneurs, SMEs, start-ups, government, academia, and research institutions to collaborate in a vibrant setting. It provides efficient and flexible shell and core spaces within a dynamic Free Zone

environment, driving business growth by enabling entities to work smarter, faster and more sustainably. Available spaces encompass smaller working areas, larger offices across entire floors and buildings, and multi-building campuses.

- › More than 135,000sqm of Grade A office space
- › Designed with efficient and flexible floor plates
- › Spaces available from 92sqm to large bespoke requirements
- › LEED Platinum- and Gold-certified buildings
- › Unique views of Expo landmarks

### Business setup in Expo City Dubai

Clients wishing to operate from and within Expo City Dubai (hereinafter known as ECD) must hold a valid Licence issued by the City. The ECD Licence is the foundational document necessary to operate within the ECD Free Zone.

The ECD Licence allows companies to enjoy a number of exclusive benefits operating in Expo City Dubai, these include:



Figure 1 Benefits of operating in Expo City Dubai

ECD offers clients a tailored and agile approach to setting up business within the City, ensuring an enjoyable and seamless client experience. Once registered, clients will be provided with fully integrated access to all Government and ECD Free Zone services both virtually through the Expo City Dubai Portal and physically through the Client Relations Centre located within the Expo City Sustainability District.

## How to get started

Clients wishing to obtain an ECD Licence must identify the type of legal entity applicable for their specific business.

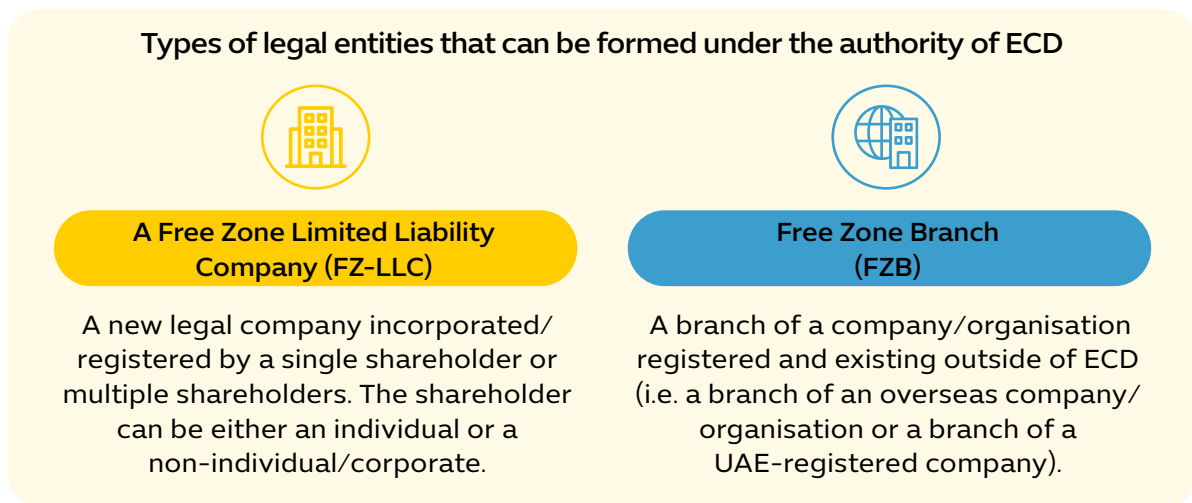


Figure 2 Types of legal entities that can be formed under the authority of ECD

Clients must also identify the licence type that is best suited to their planned business activities. The ECD team is available to provide the guidance required to help clients identify the most suitable licence type.

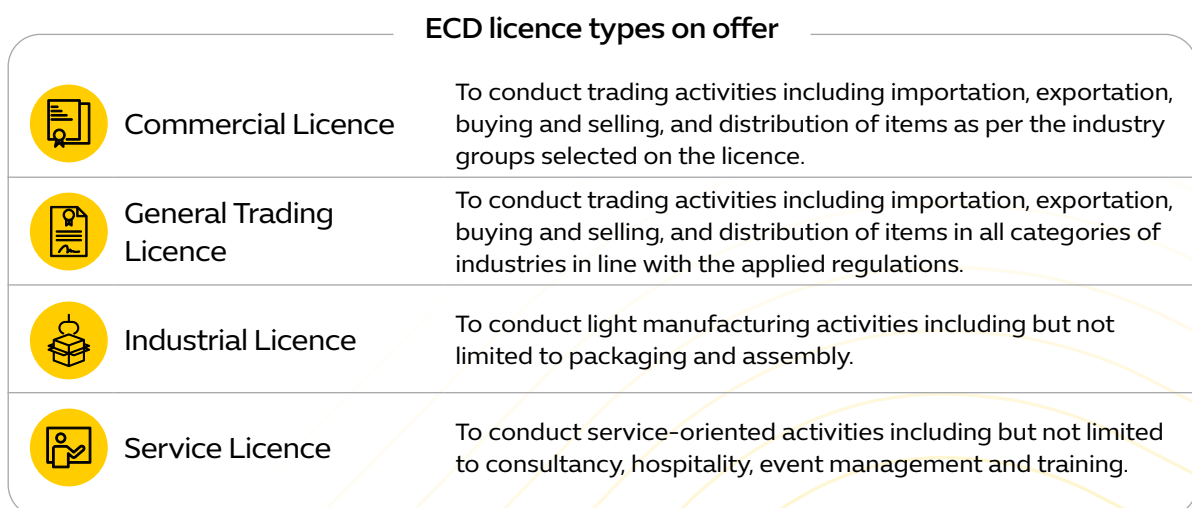


Figure 3 ECD licence types on offer

To obtain an ECD Licence, the client must submit the mandated legal documents and complete the steps below. ECD will assign each client an Account Manager to support and manage their licensing journey.

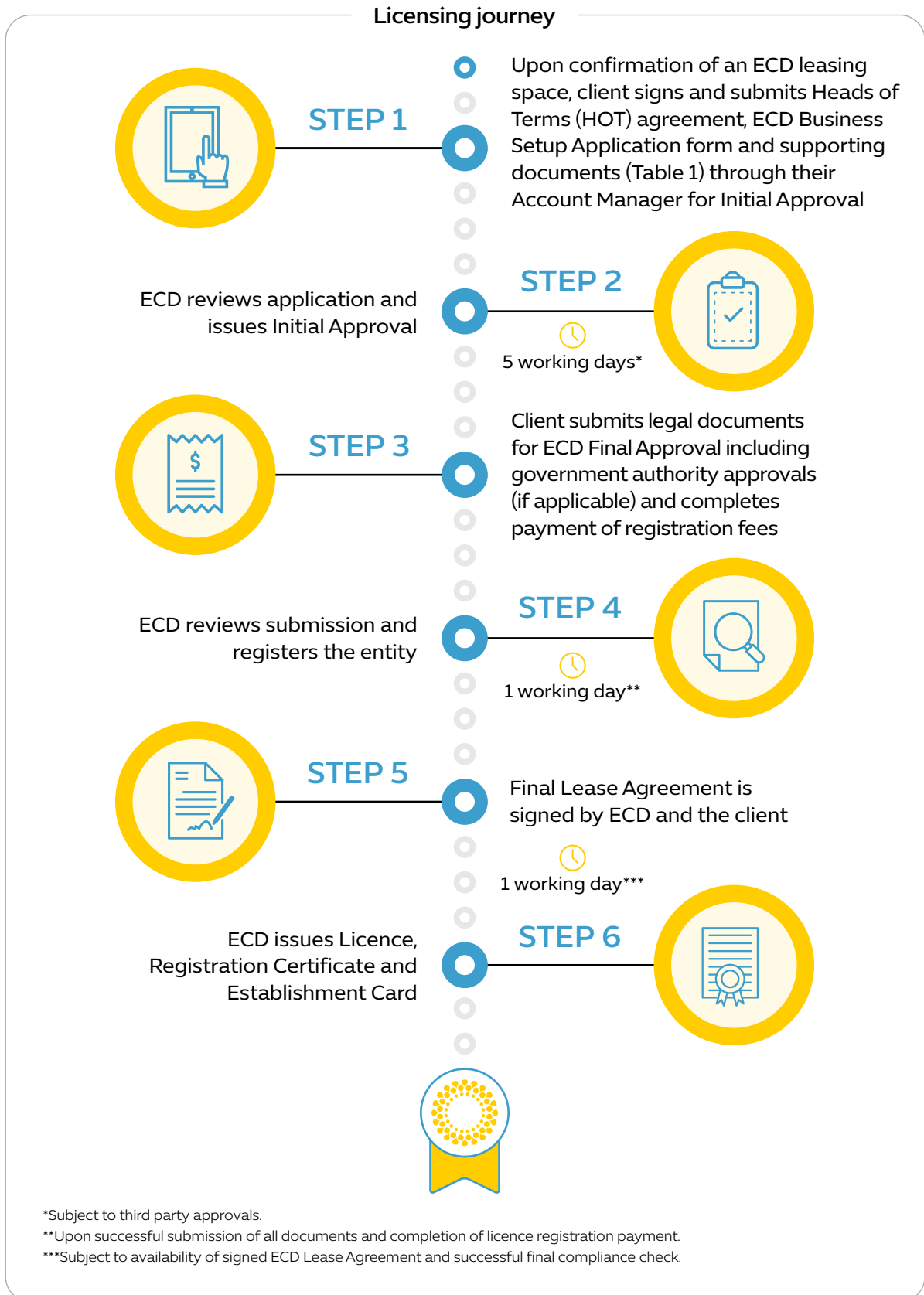


Figure 4 Licensing journey

## STEP 1 – New application submission for Initial Approval

Upon identification and confirmation of an ECD leasing space, the client will sign a HOT agreement (optional) with their designated Account Manager. The client must then submit a Business Setup Application form and supporting documentation (listed below) through their Account Manager and complete a non-refundable AED 500 application fee.

If the Business Setup Application submission is completed by a legal entity, agency or representative on behalf of the shareholder(s) then an attested copy of the Power of Attorney stipulating the authority to complete submissions on behalf of the shareholder(s) must be provided at the time of application.

Documents required for ECD Initial Approval	FZ-LLC Individual Shareholders	FZ-LLC Non-Individual Shareholders	FZB
Business Setup Application form	✓	✓	✓
Signed copy of the ECD HOT agreement (optional)	✓	✓	✓
Passport copies of all licensed parties (e.g. shareholders, directors, company managers, secretary)	✓	✓	✓
United Arab Emirates visa copies of all licensed parties (if applicable)	✓	✓	✓
Emirates ID copies of all licensed parties (if applicable)	✓	✓	✓
Additional documents for entities undertaking restricted business activities (if applicable)*	✓	✓	✓
A copy of the Parent Company Licence			✓

\*Please refer to the Expo City Dubai: Restricted business activities - food and beverage, shisha and alcohol leaflet for details.

Table 1 Documents required for ECD Initial Approval

## STEP 2 – Initial review and approval

Once all documents are received, ECD will review to ensure all requirements are met and necessary approvals obtained. The Initial Approval will include confirmation of the availability of the trade name as well as validation of the business activities planned.

Upon completion of Initial Approval, the client will be notified along with any letters addressed to the relevant authorities to obtain approval for any restricted business activities. Additionally, any relevant document templates required for Final Approval will also be provided to the client. Initial Approval is valid for 30 (thirty) days and submission of legal documents must be completed within this period.

### STEP 3 – Legal document submission for entity registration

Once Initial Approval is obtained, the client can submit their final documents directly and be invoiced immediately. However, it is recommended that a draft of the legal documents and relevant external authority approvals for restricted business activities be shared with the ECD Account Manager for validation ahead of the official signing.

This is to avoid any additional costs as a result of resubmission or re-attestation of legal documents that are not accepted by ECD. Once draft legal documents have

been validated by ECD, an invoice will be issued to the client to complete payment of registration fees for the Entity Registration, Licence, Establishment Card and Lease Security Deposit. Payment of the invoice must be completed within 7 (seven) days from the date of issuance. The ECD Account Manager will then schedule an appointment with the client to proceed with the signing of the original legal documents.

The signing of legal documents must be completed by a legal representative of the entity either in person or virtually, adhering to ECD templates.

Documents required for ECD Final Approval	FZ-LLC Individual Shareholders	FZ-LLC Non-Individual Shareholders	FZB
Articles of Association (adhering to the ECD templates provided)	✓	✓	
Shareholder Resolution/Declaration to set up a new company (adhering to the ECD templates provided)	✓	✓	
Specimen signature of shareholders of all licensed parties (adhering to the ECD templates provided)	✓	✓	
Approvals from government authorities for any restricted business activities (if applicable)	✓	✓	✓
ECD Ultimate Beneficial Owner Declaration		✓	
A copy of the Parent Company Licence with a minimum validity period of 6 (six) months		✓	✓
Good Legal Standing, issued no later than 3 (three) months from date of application		✓	✓
Incorporation Certificates		✓	✓
Shareholder Resolution/Declaration to set up a new branch in ECD and appointment of the Company Manager (must clearly stipulate the Delegation of Authority of the appointed Company Manager)			✓
Specimen signature of the Company Manager (adhering to the ECD templates provided)			✓
Parent Company approvals from government authorities for any restricted business activities (if applicable)			✓
Articles of Association of the parent company			✓

Table 2 Documents required for ECD Final Approval

If the Entity's shareholder(s) is/are to be represented by a legal entity or agency to complete the physical signing, then an original Power of Attorney stipulating the authority to sign on behalf of the shareholder(s) must be presented at the time of signing.

For virtual signing through video call, photo Identification in the form of an original Passport or Emirates ID or National ID must be presented by the Entity's shareholder(s) or legal representative at the time of signing.

#### **STEP 4 – Final review and approval**

When signed legal documents and payment for the registration fees have been received, ECD will carry out the Final Review and complete registration of the Entity.

#### **STEP 5 – Signing of final Expo City Dubai Lease Agreement**

Once the Entity is registered, ECD will generate a final Lease Agreement which must be signed by both ECD and the client or an authorised representative. The registration of the Entity and signing of the Lease Agreement will take place either physically or virtually as requested by the client.

#### **STEP 6 – Issue of Licence, Registration Certificate and Establishment Card**

Once the final Lease Agreement has been signed, a final compliance check of all documentation will then be carried out by ECD. The ECD Licence, Registration Certificate and Establishment Card will then be issued and provided to the client by the ECD Account Manager as part of the welcome pack.

#### **Congratulations**

You are now licensed within Expo City Dubai.

For any further queries or clarifications please contact your ECD Account Manager.

ECD licensing requirements are subject to change and the client may be required to provide additional documentation to complete the licensing process. Please refer to the latest requirements as set out in the 'How to set up your business in Expo City Dubai' guidelines.