China vs Dubai

More ownership. More scale. Room to grow.

A practical guide to ownership, tax, visas and business growth.

COMPARE	CHINA | THE OPPORTUNITY	DUBAI
Foreign ownership	**100% foreign-owned** in many sectors; activity restrictions apply.	**100% foreign ownership** in most mainland activities and free zones; strategic exceptions apply.
Corporate income tax	**5% effective CIT** for qualifying small companies with annual taxable profit up to RMB3m.* Standard rate: 25%.	Ordinary UAE regime: **0% to AED375,000** taxable profit; **9% above**. Qualifying free-zone income can be 0%.
VAT / sales tax	**1% on eligible transactions** for small-scale taxpayers, generally with sales up to RMB5m.*	**5% UAE VAT**; zero-rating and exemptions apply.
Dividend tax	**20% for foreign individuals** from 1 Sep 2026. Corporate shareholders have different rules.	**0% UAE dividend withholding**; recipients may owe tax in another country.
Repatriating profits	**Permitted after tax and distribution compliance.** Banks review corporate, financial and tax records.	**Full profit/capital repatriation generally allowed.** Tax compliance and bank checks still apply.
Family visa rights	**S1:** eligible spouse, parents, children under 18 and parents-in-law; residence application required.	Eligible spouse and children; sons generally under 25, unmarried daughters. Income, housing and other rules apply.
Hiring & capital	**No general nationwide 4:1 hiring rule.** Local work-permit and capital requirements apply.	Licence, premises and visa allocation depend on jurisdiction. Capital and Emiratisation rules vary.
Work & residence	Eligible founders can apply through a **genuine operating company**; applicant and job criteria apply.	**Investor/partner residence routes** available for qualifying businesses; licensing and immigration approval required.
Market size	**Around 1.4 billion people.** A large domestic customer base; demand varies by product.	**Around 4.6 million residents** (Dubai, end-2025), plus regional trade reach. China figure is nationwide.
Supply chain & talent	**Broad industrial supply chains** and a large workforce for sourcing and scaling.	Strong trade, logistics and regional services hub; China offers a much larger industrial ecosystem.
Banking & setup	**Multilingual local support** for documents, appointments and bank coordination. Bank approval required.	Choose mainland or free zone; licence renewal, bank KYC and substance requirements apply.

* China: 5% CIT needs total profit <= RMB3m, <= 300 staff, assets <= RMB50m and eligible activity. Small-scale VAT conditions apply; input VAT generally not deductible. Both concessions end 31 Dec 2027. Standard China VAT rates differ. Dividend figures concern foreign individuals/nonresidents, not total personal tax; treaties may reduce rates. Family rights depend on route; work rights vary. Population figures are rounded 2025/26 estimates. Reviewed 29 Oct 2026. UAE large-group minimum tax and special regimes can differ.

LET'S TALK CHINA.

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