



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Jafza





Dubai, U.A.E.

Key Facts

Established in 1985 with
19 companies.

Home to nearly **11,000**
companies in 2025.

Supports the employment of
nearly **160,000 people.**

Covers over **539+ million sq ft**
with multimodal connectivity
across sea, air and land.

Attracted **\$30 in FDI to Dubai** in
the last two decades.

Contributes **36% to Dubai's GDP**
along with Jebel Ali Port (2023).

60% of free zone trade in Dubai
was generated by Jafza (2023).

Value of US goods traded
through Jafza has **increased by**
nearly 57% since 2020.

Home to Middle East's **largest**
solar rooftop project and fully
powered by renewables.

Introduction

Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza) is one of the world's leading freezones and a key driver of national strategies like Dubai Economic Agenda D33, Operation 300bn, and Make it in the Emirates. Since starting with just 19 companies in 1985, it now supports over 11,000 businesses from 157 countries, including 300 U.S.-owned firms and more than 100 Fortune 500 companies. In 2024, Jafza facilitated \$190 billion in non-oil trade, a 15% rise from 2023.

Located between Jebel Ali Port and Al Maktoum International Airport, it's a vital logistics hub connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa. Jafza has grown into a trade catalyst and a smart business community offering unmatched access and growth opportunities. It was named Global Free Zone of the Year at fDi's 2024 awards. As Jafza marks its 40th anniversary, it continues to be a trusted gateway for U.S. businesses expanding into the region and beyond.

Jafza's success has also become a template for DP World's global expansion. The concept is now in place across 11 economic zones in Europe, India, Africa and the Americas, with three more in development. These zones continue to drive investment, industrial growth and job creation.

Notable U.S. – U.A.E. Partnerships

The U.S. is one of Jafza's top five trading partners by value. Today, more than 300 American companies operate out of the free zone, employing over 12,000 people across sectors like automotive, machinery, electronics and healthcare.

Many major US manufacturers have chosen Jafza as their regional logistics base. Among them is Fortune 500 company Eaton, which is setting up a 500,000 sq ft advanced manufacturing and R&D campus. The facility will produce electrical and electronic components for industries such as data centers, buildings, and solar energy, while also housing a center for sustainable manufacturing, power management, AI and machine learning.

Jafza is also home to a wide range of U.S. multinationals that feature on the Fortune Global 500 list. These include major players like Dow, HP, ExxonMobil, Schlumberger, Caterpillar, Ford, General Motors, RTX, GE Aerospace, 3M, Honeywell, Cummins, and Procter & Gamble among others. Most are engaged in trading activities, leveraging Jafza's infrastructure, multimodal connectivity, and proximity to Jebel Ali Port to serve customers across the Middle East, Africa, and beyond.

Abdulla Bin Damithan

CEO & Managing Director, DP World GCC

Abdulla Bin Damithan manages DP World's portfolio in the GCC region including Ports and Terminals, Economic Zones, Marine Services, Logistics and Trade Solutions.

Appointed in July 2023 to oversee the region, Abdulla previously held the position of CEO & Managing Director of DP World U.A.E..

Abdulla leads the company's business strategies in key GCC markets, including the United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman and Syria among others. His focus is on delivering end-to-end solutions for cargo owners, building world-class trade infrastructure across ports, terminals and free zones, and driving greater supply chain efficiency, transparency, resilience and sustainability.

In the U.A.E., Abdulla leads DP World's Jebel Ali Port, ranked among the largest container ports in the world, and Jafza, the company's flagship free zone and an essential part of the company's integrated regional business model. This port connects over 180 shipping lines to more than 3.5 billion consumers while Jafza is home to more than 11,000 businesses.

Additionally, Abdulla oversees South Container Terminal at Jeddah Islamic Port in Saudi Arabia. Abdulla guides DP World's investment in improving terminal infrastructure, focusing on operational performance and port trade volume.

Abdulla joined DP World in 2001 and has been an integral part of the company's transformation from a port operator to a global smart trade enabler.

During his two-decade tenure, Abdulla has held various senior leadership roles including Chief Commercial Officer of DP World U.A.E., where he managed revenue generation and oversaw service delivery across key business segments from Ports & Terminals to Trade Enablement.

A recognized leader in the maritime and logistics space within the Middle East, Abdulla serves on the boards of multiple DP World ports and terminals.

Abdulla Al Hashmi

COO & Managing Director, DP World GCC

Abdulla Al Hashmi leads DP World's Parks & Zones pillar in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. In this role, he oversees key assets including Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza), Dubai Auto Zone (DAZ), National Industries Park (NIP), Dubai Maritime City, the re-development of Mina Rashid and Jafza Enterprises.

Joining DP World's commercial department in 2010, Abdulla has held numerous leadership roles, playing a key part in positioning the business as a global smart trade enabler.

With more than 16 years of experience in finance and commerce, Abdulla has spearheaded the execution of large-scale mergers, acquisitions and greenfield deals. As a senior member of the Corporate Finance and Business Development team, he also informed investment strategies to support the group's transformation from a port operator to a global trade enabler.

Abdulla previously held the position of Vice President of Business Intelligence, where he was responsible for implementing a data-driven approach to addressing supply chain disruptions, supporting DP World's business growth and enhancing the trade competitiveness of Jebel Ali and Dubai.

A seasoned industry professional, Abdulla serves as Director on several DP World boards and other entities.

Contact

Contact us

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