

The background of the cover is a photograph of an industrial facility, possibly an oil refinery or chemical plant, silhouetted against a bright sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong orange and yellow glow. In the foreground, there are stacks of large, cylindrical metal pipes or tanks, partially obscured by shadows.

# Doing Business in the **Arab World**

A Guide for Irish Companies



**Doing Business**  
**in the Arab World**

A Guide for Irish Companies

**Doing Business in the Arab World:  
A Guide for Irish Companies**

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## Preface

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This guide is intended as an introduction to the Arab world and the Arab markets for Irish companies who are interested in doing business there. The guide covers the markets in North Africa, the Middle East and the Arabian peninsula. It is not intended as an exhaustive guide, but aims to put the individual markets in context and to provide access to additional information sources, while addressing some of the cultural and business issues in dealing with Arab customers.

With increasing global competition in our traditional export markets, Irish companies need to look further afield for business opportunities. There are over 330 million people in the countries dealt with in this guide, representing an enormous and expanding market for Irish goods and services. And with increasing harmonisation of business practice across the world, it's becoming easier to do business in places we might not have thought about in the past.

The Arab markets are growing in importance for Irish companies. Despite regional instability, wars and acts of terrorism, the underlying growth rate is strong, driven by oil revenues, population growth and increases in GDP. Countries such as the United Arab Emirates have emerged as regional hubs in the past few years, with a full range of business services available to companies setting up there.

The Arab world is held together by the twin pillars of Islam and the Arabic language. Within a seemingly homogenous whole, there are however huge variations in history, culture, business practice and political stability. The Arab world includes some of the world's wealthiest countries such as Bahrain and Qatar, but there are also countries such as Yemen that are only beginning to emerge from poverty and underdevelopment. The small oil-rich states of the Gulf rely hugely on expatriate workers and imported expertise, and are very open to international trade. There are also countries that have suffered greatly from war and civil strife. Lebanon, for example, once the commercial heart of the eastern Mediterranean, has largely rebuilt its commercial and civic infrastructure over the past fifteen years.

The countries of North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Sudan) are at different stages of economic reform, and historically these have the closest ties with Europe, particularly with France. After years as an international outcast, Libya is once again open for international business and has applied for membership of the World Trade Organisation. Egypt is the most populous Arab country and, with close to 20 million inhabitants, Cairo is the largest metropolitan centre in the Arab world. Egypt is also one of the world's fastest growing markets, with opportunities for Irish companies in a range of areas. The discovery of oil and its commercial exploitation since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has radically transformed countries in the Middle East and the Arabian peninsula, bringing untold riches but also making the region a focus of global politics. This is compounded by the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict into which the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt have all been drawn at various stages.

Irish companies wishing to do business in the Arab world are more likely to be attracted to countries that are politically stable and prosperous and have advanced or developing modern economies. These countries are more likely to require the kinds of goods and services that Irish companies offer; and Irish companies will find business practices there that are not that dissimilar to other overseas markets. The Arab world offers a wide range of business opportunities to Irish companies, particularly in Internationally Traded Services, such as software or third level education, and in Manufacturing sectors that include design engineering and intellectual property content. Enterprise Ireland has offices in Riyadh and Dubai, and a Southern Europe, Middle East and Africa (SEMEA) team based in Dublin. We

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suggest that you talk to us when looking at new markets in the Arab World, as we can offer client companies access to a wide range of additional market information, introductions to potential buyers and can carry out customised market research to assist companies to win new business.

**Note on sources**

The following statistical sources are used in this document:

Statistics	Source
Import and export figures	World Bank country data, 2002
Population figures	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division
Internet penetration	Global Reach: <a href="http://www.global-reach.biz">www.global-reach.biz</a>
Literacy	UNESCO
Currency exchange rates	Bloomberg: <a href="http://www.bloomberg.com">www.bloomberg.com</a>
PPP gross national income per capita	World Bank, <i>2004 World Development Indicators</i> (figures expressed in international dollars for 2002); Benchmark: Ireland \$29,570

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## About the Arab World

### What is the Arab World?

The Arab World includes most of North Africa, the Middle East and the Arabian peninsula. It includes many diverse countries and cultures, with different levels of economic development, social attitudes and business practices. For the purposes of this document, we take the Arab world to include countries that are part of the Arab League. Excluded, however, are certain countries that do not currently, for whatever reason, offer significant opportunities for business to Irish companies.

### Population

The main concentrations of population in the Arab world are along the southern and eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, the Nile Valley, the Gulf, and the Tigris/Euphrates valley. The following table summarises the population of the countries dealt with in this guide.

North Africa		Middle East		Arabian Peninsula	
Libya	5.5 million	Egypt	66.4 million	Bahrain	0.73 million
Morocco	30.5 million	Iraq	24.1 million	Oman	2.9 million
Tunisia	9.8 million	Jordan	5.5 million	Qatar	0.61 million
Sudan	33 million	Lebanon	3.6 million	Saudi Arabia	24.2 million
Algeria	31.8 million	Syria	17.8 million	United Arab Emirates	4 million
		Palestine	4.2 million	Yemen	20 million
				Kuwait	2.5 million

### History and Religion

The history of the Arab world is essentially the history of Islam. Between the death of the prophet Muhammad and about 800AD, Arab conquests stretched from Spain to Afghanistan, and from the southern Caucasus to the Arabian peninsula.

Most of these areas remain Arabic and Islamic to this day.

### Five Pillars of Islam

1	Avowal of Faith	Each Muslim must make the avowal of faith in the form: 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet'.
2	Prayer	Ritual prayers five times a day.
3	Alms giving	Giving alms to the poor according to one's means.
4	Fasting	Fasting during the month of Ramadan.
5	Pilgrimage	Making the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during one's lifetime.

### Language

Arabic belongs to the Semitic family of languages, with a literary tradition dating back to the seventh century. Like Hebrew, which is also a Semitic language, it is written from right to left. Arabic is spoken in more than 20 countries across North Africa, in the Middle East and in the Arabian peninsula. Over 190 million people speak Arabic as a first language, and another 35 million speak it as a second language.

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The most recognised form of Arabic is Modern Standard Arabic. In its standardised written form, this is fairly consistent from country to country and is widely used for business communications. It is also used for official documents and in education. Spoken forms of the language, however, can vary widely from country to country and region to region, and there are many different local dialects. Of the major dialects, Egyptian Arabic is probably the most widely understood.

Arabic is the language of Islam, and the spread of the language throughout the Arab world followed the spread of Islam.

Most European languages contain words of Arabic origin, often entering via Spanish and Italian. These include the modern English words algebra, alcohol, mosque, lemon, tariff, elixir and cotton.

#### **Conversion between Christian and Islamic Dates**

Arab countries use an Islamic calendar, dating from the year of Muhammad's flight (hegira) from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD. There are a number of websites that convert between Christian and Islamic calendars; see [www.ori.unizh.ch/hegira.html](http://www.ori.unizh.ch/hegira.html) from the website of the University of Zurich's Institute of Oriental Studies.

#### **Health and Safety**

The countries in the Arab world differ widely in the sophistication of their healthcare and medical facilities. Before travelling, you are recommended to:

- Take out full health insurance before travelling.
- Visit your doctor and get the required vaccinations.
- Take the appropriate medicines with you as some countries may not have them.

Visit the Department of Foreign Affairs website for breaking news and for general advice:

[www.foreignaffairs.gov.ie](http://www.foreignaffairs.gov.ie)

#### **Meeting and Greeting**

There are considerable variations in the westernisation of the Arab world. For example, there is a great difference between doing business in the relatively liberal Tunisia and the very conservative Saudi Arabia. In general, however, it is better to err on the side of caution and conservatism in your business and social dealings. Here are some pointers on how to behave socially:

- Do not drink alcohol or eat pork in front of Muslims, particularly during Ramadan. Being drunk in public can carry strict penalties in certain countries.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke in public during Ramadan.
- Do not expose soles of feet when seated; keep both feet on the ground as the soles of your shoes are considered unclean and thus offensive to Arabs.
- Arabs are generally generous and welcoming, and great emphasis is placed on offering food and drink – accept food and hospitality graciously.
- Always use your right hand to accept food and drink.
- Shake hands on meeting and on leaving. Handshakes may last longer than those in Western cultures – this is a sign of friendship.
- Titles are important – for example, address a doctor as Doctor ...
- Avoid conversation involving religion and politics.
- Never ask after an Arab man's wife or daughter: ask after the family. Similarly, in an Arab

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household, never comment on the wife's cooking – compliment the host on his household.

- Avoid admiring possessions as the host may feel obliged to offer you a gift.

**Clothing**

For formal business meetings, men should wear a jacket and tie. Women are advised to wear modest clothing: dresses and skirts should be below the knee and blouses should cover the elbows. In Saudi Arabia women are advised to wear full length dresses. In more Westernised countries like Lebanon and Tunisia, women can be a bit more relaxed in what they wear.

**Visas**

Different Arab countries have different visa requirements for Irish passport holders. Information on visas is included in each of the country profiles. In every case you should check with the country's embassy to Ireland in advance of travel. The Joint Arab Irish Chamber of Commerce can also help you with information on visas.

**Joint Arab Irish Chamber of Commerce**

63 Lower Mount Street  
Dublin 2  
Ireland  
Tel: 01-6624451/6621577  
Fax: 01-6624729  
E-Mail: jaicc@indigo.ie

**Business Meetings**

Organisations and companies in the Arab world are often more hierarchical and structured much more rigidly than in Ireland. Getting to the right person who has the authority to make decisions is critical. This means that you need to establish who has the authority to make decisions – the deal will only be secure when that person signs the order.

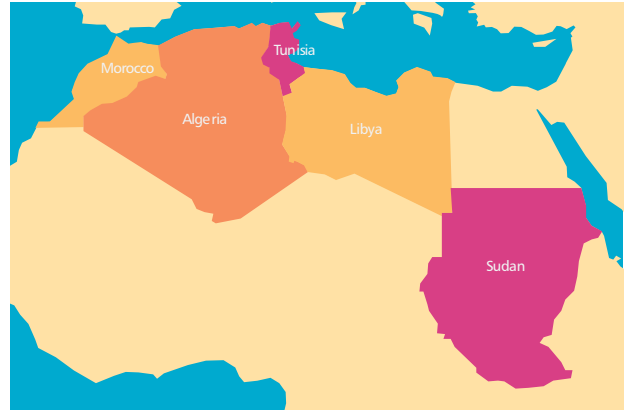
Business decisions can sometimes take much longer than you might be used to, and patience is essential. In most countries, no serious business decisions will be taken in the summer or during Ramadan.

The Arab world has a long trading history, and Arab business people are used to bargaining and then bargaining again. Once agreed to, they will stick to the terms of the agreement.

While it is possible to achieve one or two successes on a first short visit, this is quite unusual. Arab business people can be guarded in their dealings with new contacts, and it takes time to gain their confidence. Personal relationships will form the platform for any business activity.

## The Arab World, Country by Country

### North Africa



By contrast with its southern European neighbours across the Mediterranean, North Africa (the Maghreb) has long been characterised by economic underdevelopment, underachieving industry and trade imbalances. High budgetary deficits, volatility in commodities markets (for example in oil and phosphates), and in some cases political instability have in the past made the region less attractive as a place in which to do business.

For many different reasons, however, perceptions about North Africa as a difficult market are now being challenged, and Irish business people are beginning to see the opportunities and advantages of working in this region, including:

- Substantial natural resources
- Proximity to Europe
- Very large domestic markets
- Increasingly educated workforces
- Strong government measures towards market-oriented practices

#### North Africa and the EU

The Barcelona Declaration of 1995 set out the parameters for increased cooperation between the European Union and countries of North Africa and the Middle East that border the Mediterranean. The year 2010 has been set as the target date for the establishment of a Mediterranean free-trade area. Tunisia (1995), Morocco (1996) and Algeria (2001) have entered into Association Agreements with the European Union, and Libya has observer status at some Barcelona process meetings. Trade between the EU and North Africa is very strong and growing – for example, trade between Morocco and the EU almost doubled between 1993 and 2002.

#### Ongoing Economic Reforms

Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria have all begun the process of expanding the private sector and opening up their economies to foreign investors. Considerable progress has been made also in the areas of exchange rate policies, the streamlining of administration and the liberalisation of financial structures.

#### Language and Culture

For historical and cultural reasons, there are very strong business links between France and North Africa, and France is often the gateway for businesses who wish to expand or sell into those markets. There is a large population of North Africans in France (think of Zinedine Zidane), and strong business and cultural affinities. French is widely used as the language of business in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, and many companies in these countries have Arabic/French bilingual websites.



## Algeria

### At a Glance

Population	31.8 million
Principal cities	Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Annaba
International Access	Daily flights to Algiers from Paris, Milan, Brussels
Languages	Arabic, French
Major industries	Oil, natural gas, iron ore
PPP gross national income per capita	\$5,530

### Geography

Algeria is the second largest country in Africa and the 11<sup>th</sup> largest in the world. Over 90 per cent of the population, however, live in the fertile northern region. The south of the country is a vast area of largely uninhabited desert.

Algeria is one of the wealthiest countries in Africa, thanks to its rich natural resources – particularly oil, natural gas, iron and phosphates.

### Economic overview

During the twenty or so years after gaining its independence from France in 1962, Algeria made great progress across the range of social and economic indicators, including large investments in health and education. Much of this progress, however, was undermined by the economic depression of the mid-1980s and particularly by the brutal civil war of the early and mid-1990s in which upwards of 80,000 people were killed. In the past six or seven years, Algeria has recovered and is arriving at the level of political stability that is necessary for foreign companies who want to do business there. It remains, however, a very difficult country to travel or do business in.

In April 2002, Algeria and the European Union reached an Association Agreement committing both parties to liberalisation of trade and to the development of new structures for cooperation. The agreement gives Algeria the platform to move towards greater economic openness with improved access to the wider European market. The EU is the destination for 63.7 per cent of Algeria's exports, while 58 per cent of Algeria's imports originate in the EU.

Education	68.9% literacy 10 universities with over 160,000 students 59% enrolment in second-level education
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**Logistics**

Ports	Algiers, Annaba, Bejaia, Skikda and Oran
Airports	International airports at Algiers, Oran, Constantine Annaba
Roads and Railways	The road and rail infrastructure is confined to the populated northern third of the country
Telecomms	Limited data infrastructure; 500,000 Internet users

**Visiting Algeria**

Visa	Visa required for entry. Contact the Algerian embassy in London before leaving
Hotels	Adequate business hotels in the main cities
Changing money	Algerian Dinar = €0.0117

**Algeria's Main Trading Partners (1999)**

Customers	Suppliers
Italy 21.2%	France 29.5%
USA 15.0%	Italy 9.8%
France 12.9%	USA 7.2%
Spain 10.3%	Spain 6.8%
Brazil 5.9%	Germany 6.2%
Netherlands 5.5%	Canada 4.1%

**Imports and Exports**

Imports estimated at \$9.3bn, consisting mostly of capital goods, food and beverages, and consumer goods.

Exports estimated at \$13.7bn, dominated by petroleum, natural gas and petroleum products (97%).

**Setting up in Algeria**

Ongoing amendments to Algeria's regulatory framework are aimed at attracting inward investment, partnership and technical assistance. In particular, Algeria needs to diversify its economic base to reduce its dependence on oil for foreign earnings.

Companies who wish to establish a presence in Algeria should contact the **Agence national de developpement de l'investissement (ANDI)** – the government's investment development agency. ANDI is a one-stop shop for potential investors in Algeria. The ANDI website is in French, and it gives a good overview of the range of services available to investing companies, including:

- how to set up a company in Algeria
- the tax incentives available
- privatisation options

**Websites**

<a href="http://www.algeria.com">www.algeria.com</a>	An American-based portal site on Algeria.
<a href="http://www.andi.dz">www.andi.dz</a>	Website of the government's investment development agency (ANDI)
<a href="http://www.sonatrach-dz.com">www.sonatrach-dz.com</a>	Website of Sonatrach, Algeria's energy giant and the largest company in Africa – \$20bn turnover in 2000.
<a href="http://www.ons.dz">www.ons.dz</a>	Algeria's National Office of Statistics

**Morocco****At a Glance**

Population	30.5 million
Principal cities	Rabat, Casablanca, Marakech, Tangier, Fez
International Access	Daily flights to Casablanca from London; to Marakech from Paris
Languages	Arabic, Berber dialects, French
Major industries	Agriculture, phosphates, textiles, tourism
PPP gross national income per capita	\$3,730

**Geography**

Morocco is a mountainous country with the Atlas and Rif mountain chains separating the coastal plains from the Sahara. Most of the population live in the coastal plains to the north and west of the mountains, and all significant economic activity is concentrated there. This region of Morocco has a warm climate and fertile soils.

The Moroccan people are a rich blend of Arab, Berber, European and African cultures – reflecting the country's diverse history. Politically, Morocco is a constitutional monarchy in which the king is the dominant political figure.

**Economic Overview**

Morocco is politically and socially stable and has opted for an open liberal economy with encouragement of free enterprise and inward investment. Ongoing reforms in the administrative sector, privatisation of state companies, and tax-based incentives are all making Morocco a more attractive place to do business.

Education	Budget allocation of 26% to education 9-year basic education cycle 13 universities 50.7% literacy
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**Selling into Morocco**

Casablanca is the importation and distribution hub of Morocco with agents specialising in particular industries and sectors. Morocco is not a market which can be successfully entered by long-distance correspondence. Establishing a personal relationship with agents and potential customers is fundamental to doing business in Morocco, as it is seen as a sign of serious intent. In addition, visits to Morocco may uncover opportunities that may not have been previously envisaged.

Companies are advised against using direct mail to recruit an agent or distributor.

**Trade Shows and Exhibitions**

Information on forthcoming trade shows and exhibitions can be obtained from the Office of Fairs and Exhibitions: [www.ofec.co.ma](http://www.ofec.co.ma). This website is available in both French and English.

**Logistics**

Ports	Morocco has 24 ports accounting for 98% of the country's external trade. Annual traffic is approximately 9,000 vessels carrying 40 million tonnes of merchandise.
Airports	Morocco has 19 national and international airports.
Roads	By 2004, Morocco will have over 1,000 km of motorways, covering the major north-south and east-west routes.
Railways	Just under 2,000 km of railways, carrying passengers and freight. Over 27 million tonnes (of which two-thirds is phosphates) and 10 million passengers carried annually.
Telecomms	Constant growth since reforms of 1996. Almost 7 million mobile subscriptions. Over 500,000 Internet users.

**Imports and Exports**

Imports estimated at \$13.1 billion, consisting mostly of capital goods, manufactured goods, chemicals, food products and raw materials. Main import sources are France, Spain, Italy, Germany, the United States, and the United Arab Emirates.

Exports estimated at \$10.9 billion, dominated by crude oil, refined oil products, petrochemicals and plastic goods. Main export markets are France, Spain, India, Japan and Italy.

**Visiting Morocco**

Visa	Not required by Irish passport holders for stay of up to three months
Hotels	International class hotels in all the main cities
Changing money	Moroccan Dirham = €0.0912

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### Setting up in Morocco

Since 1995, Morocco has operated an Investment Charter that establishes the framework for encouraging investment. Under the charter, administration has been streamlined, and potential investors can follow an established and simplified procedure. It allows investors to:

- Repatriate 100 per cent of profits on investments
- Own 100 per cent of Moroccan-based companies – local partnering is not required
- Own property (excluding agricultural holdings)
- Enjoy a five-year exemption from corporation tax

Morocco also offers preferential treatment for export-oriented companies, and for companies with high projected employment targets.

There are special free-trade areas (for example, in Tangier and Casablanca) which benefit from extended tax exemptions.

Set up in 1996, the Department of Investments (Direction des investissements) is the government agency for promoting inward investment in Morocco. Its roles include:

- Promoting Morocco as an investment location
- Helping businesses with the practical details of setting up in Morocco
- Advising businesses on specific sectoral, regional and strategic issues

### Websites

[www.mincom.gov.ma](http://www.mincom.gov.ma)

Website of the Moroccan Ministry of Communications, this site includes a wide range of information on Moroccan society and business life:

- Sectoral overviews
- Government structures
- City guides
- Links to over 1,000 Moroccan websites, covering all areas of business and social life in Morocco

[www.morocco.com](http://www.morocco.com)

An American-based portal site on Morocco

[www.marweb.com](http://www.marweb.com)

Maghreb directory and search engine

[www.reach4morocco.com](http://www.reach4morocco.com)

Online business website for Morocco

[www.statistic-hcp.ma](http://www.statistic-hcp.ma)

Morocco's Statistics Office

### Opportunities

Morocco has all the business requirements of an expanding modern economy.

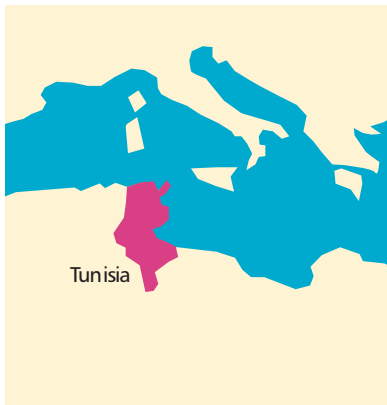
- A fast-developing telecommunications and information technology infrastructure.
- Increased emphasis on health and social care leading to growth in the pharmaceutical sector.
- Development of mass-market tourism.

#### Opportunity Case Study: Tourism

Morocco is ideally located to benefit from the world boom in tourism: close to the huge European market, with beautiful and diverse natural scenery, wide cultural interest and fine cuisine. Since the mid 1990s, tourist numbers have been increasing by an average of 8.4%, and foreign currency revenues have been rising by 13.7 per cent per annum.

With the support of the World Bank, the government of Morocco has undertaken a massive programme for sustainable development of coastal tourism, affecting a number of coastal resorts. The purpose of this development is to create 'the appropriate institutional conditions for attracting and promoting private investment in coastal sites development, and ensuring the socio-cultural and environmental sustainability of these investments'. The programme is under the direction of the Ministry of Tourism.

Investments in the tourism sector benefit under the general terms of the Investment Charter.



## Tunisia

### At a Glance

Population	9.8 million
Principal cities	Tunis, Sfax, Bizerte, Gabes
International Access	Daily flights to Tunis from Paris
Languages	Arabic, French
Major industries	Tourism, phosphates, agriculture, manufacturing
PPP gross national income per capita	\$6,300
Telecommunications	505,500 Internet users (5.1%)

### Geography

The smallest country in North Africa, Tunisia is bounded on the west by Algeria, and on the east by the sea; it also has a border on the south with Libya.

Most of the population live in the north of the country, which is relatively fertile. Moving southwards, Tunisia becomes progressively more arid, and the southern third of the country is barren except for some oases.

By comparison with its larger neighbours, Tunisia's oil deposits are very small. Petroleum and natural gas do, however, remain at the top of Tunisia's export earners. In recent years, tourism has become increasingly important to the Tunisian economy.

### **Economic Overview**

Tunisia's strong economic performance since the mid 1990s has been underpinned by political stability and government commitment to public sector reform and measures aimed at developing an open market economy.

Unlike its neighbours, Tunisia cannot rely on oil revenues, and for that reason it has a more diverse economic base. Tourism, services, manufacturing (particularly textiles, food processing and electrical equipment) have all expanded considerably in the past decade. Agriculture accounts for approximately 15 per cent of GDP.

Tunisia was the first country to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union under the terms of the Barcelona Process – this is leading to progressive removal of tariff barriers between the EU and Tunisia: currently 80 per cent of Tunisian exports go to the EU, and 71 per cent of Tunisia's imports originate in the EU.

<b>Education</b>	Over 70% of students complete second level education 73.2% literacy
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### **Selling into Tunisia**

Local representatives are essential in introducing products into Tunisia. Both commission agents and distributors may represent foreign businesses in Tunisia. A commission agent provides the investor with access to potential markets as well as helping to locate the business. A distributor purchases goods from a foreign supplier and then acts independently of that supplier to sell those goods. Any profits or losses incurred by the distributors are solely their responsibility.

### **Logistics**

<b>Ports</b>	Tunisia has eight commercial ports all of which are equipped to handle ro-ro ferries and container vessels. Annual traffic is approximately 6,000 vessels carrying 25 million tonnes of merchandise.
<b>Airports</b>	Tunisia has seven international airports, with over 280 flights a week to Europe (70 of which are to France).
<b>Roads</b>	Over 104,000 km of paved roads; 640 km dual carriageway; programme to build a further 200 km dual carriageway in progress.
<b>Railways</b>	Over 4,800 km of railways, of which over 300km are electrified.
<b>Telecomms</b>	Modernising infrastructure including ISDN, broadband, fibre optic link to Italy, GSM networks, X25; 505,000 Internet users.

**Tunisia's Main Trading Partners (2002)**

Customers	Suppliers
France 31.3%	France 25.6%
Italy 21.6%	Italy 19.5%
Germany 11.5%	Germany 8.9%

**Tunisia's major imports and exports**

Exports	%	Imports	%
Food	7.1	Food	8.4
Energy	9.4	Raw materials and intermediary products	26.8
Phosphates and derivatives	7.5	Capital goods	21.9
Textiles and leather goods	48.6	Consumer goods	33.7
Other	27.5	Energy	9.1

**Visiting Tunisia**

Visa	Not required by Irish passport holders for stay of up to three months.
Hotels	Tunisia has a strong tourism sector and is well provided for with international class hotels. For hotel reservations, contact the Tunisian National Tourism Office at <a href="http://www.tourismtunisia.com">www.tourismtunisia.com</a> .
Changing money	Tunisian Dinar = €0.65

**Setting up in Tunisia**

The Tunisian Government provides substantial support for foreign companies interested in investing or setting up in Tunisia. A unified investment code, established in 1994, provides for general incentives to investment, including:

- Tax exemptions on income earned and reinvested in Tunisia
- Suspension of VAT on capital goods
- Reduction of custom duties on imported equipment

The code also provides for specific incentives for particular sectors/types of investment, including:

- Enterprises directed exclusively at export markets
- Ventures locating in development regions
- Ventures with strong R&D and technology promotion elements
- New investors and small and medium-sized enterprises

Tunisia's Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA) was set up in 1995 under the auspices of the Ministry of Development and International Cooperation. Its role is to provide foreign investors with all the support they need to invest or set up in Tunisia.

Tunisia's Agency for Promotion of Industry, (Agence de Promotion de l'Industrie) operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Industry and Energy. It offers investors a one-stop-shop to streamline the legal and administrative procedures for setting up in Tunisia.

**Websites**

- www.tunisianindustry.nat.tn** The portal site of the Agency for Promotion of Industry – this gives access to very comprehensive information on doing business in Tunisia, including:
  - Detailed explanation of the steps you need to follow to set up a company.
  - Sector by sector listing of business and investment opportunities
- www.tunisiaonline.com** Official English language website of the Tunisian government.
- www.marweb.com** Maghreb directory and search engine
- www.reach4tunisia.com** Online business website for Tunisia
- www.utica.org.tn** Union tunisienne de l'industrie, du commerce et de l'artisanat (Tunisian organisation for industry, commerce and crafts)
- www.tunisianbusiness.net** Tunisian business portal (in French) covering:
  - Up to date information on investment opportunities
  - Promotion of Tunisian companies
  - Connecting Tunisian and foreign companies
  - Highlighting key issues affecting the business world in Tunisia
- www.cepex.nat.tn** Centre de promotion des exports / Centre for the Promotion of Exports.  
Includes a list of forthcoming trade shows and exhibitions.
- www.ins.nat.tn** Tunisia's National Statistics Institute (Institut National de la Statistique)



**Libya**

**At a Glance**

Population	5.5 million
Principal cities	Tripoli, Benghazi
International Access	Regular flights to Tripoli from London, Amsterdam and Milan
Languages	Arabic, Italian, English
Major industries	Petroleum, food processing, textiles, handicrafts, cement
PPP gross national income per capita	Estimates ranging between \$6,270 and \$7,600

**Geography**

One of Africa’s largest countries, Libya consists largely of barren desert and its population is concentrated in two locations along the Mediterranean coast: Jefra (centred on Tripoli) and Jebel (centred on Benghazi).

**Economic Overview**

Oil revenue dominates the Libyan economy, accounting for over two-thirds of national income and over 95 per cent of export earnings. Libya has the highest GNP per capita in Africa.

Since the conclusion of the Lockerbie case, EU and UN sanctions against Libya have been lifted and Libya’s relations with the West have improved substantially. In parallel, Libya has begun a series of economic reforms with a view to further integration with the world economy. Another step in this direction is the recently announced intention to apply for membership of the World Trade Organisation.

<b>Education</b>	Over 70% of students complete second level education. 81.7% literacy
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**Selling into Libya**

Libya restricts the import of a range of goods, including pork products, mineral water, poultry, and all products originating in Israel. You may not bring commercial samples into Libya – these must be sent to a Libyan agent in advance. Note also that all goods must be labelled in Arabic, and that all printed advertising material is dutiable.

Imported goods must be accompanied by a commercial invoice and a detailed certificate of origin.

The Central Bank of Libya issues currency and administers exchange controls. Foreign banks are not permitted in Libya.

**Libya’s Main Trading Partners (2002)**

Customers	Suppliers
The oil sector accounts for almost all exports from Libya. Main export partners are Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Turkey and Greece.	Imports consist of machinery, transport equipment, food and manufactured goods. Main import partners are Italy, Germany, UK, France, Spain, Turkey and Tunisia.

**Logistics**

<b>Ports</b>	Tripoli, Benghazi, Tobruk and Misratah
<b>Airports</b>	International airports at Tripoli and Benghazi
<b>Roads and Railways</b>	The main transport routes follow the Mediterranean coast. Libya has begun construction of 2,000 km west-east railway line.
<b>Telecomms</b>	Limited data infrastructure Low Internet penetration (20,000 Internet users).

**Visiting Libya**

Visa	Visitors to Libya need a visa. In addition, business visitors must first be invited by a Libyan contact. Contact the Libyan embassy in London before travelling.
Hotels	Modern business hotels in main cities
Changing money	Libyan Dinar = €0.6882

**Setting up in Libya**

Libya offers a variety of incentives for foreign investors; and applications for investment are handled by the Libyan Foreign Investment Board.

Since 1997 the Libyan government has encouraged foreign capital investment, particularly in critical areas such as technology transfer, and recent political changes make it more attractive for foreign companies to consider investment.

In particular, foreign investment is required for some of the major infrastructure projects that Libya is engaging in, including hospitals, water treatment, and railways to Tunisia and Egypt.

**Websites**

<a href="http://www.libyaonline.com">www.libyaonline.com</a>	A Canada-based portal site.
<a href="http://www.nasrlibya.net/english.html">www.nasrlibya.net/english.html</a>	Site of the National Board for Scientific Research (NBSR)
<a href="http://www.chambre-de-commerce-franco-libyenne.org">www.chambre-de-commerce-franco-libyenne.org</a>	Franco-Libyan Chamber of Commerce: useful links
<a href="http://www.pwcglobal.com">www.pwcglobal.com</a>	PriceWaterhouseCooper's global website – follow the country link to Libya to access <i>Doing Business and Investing in Libya</i> , a guide prepared by Mohamed Ghattour and Co.
<a href="http://www.libyaninvestment.com">www.libyaninvestment.com</a>	Portal website containing business-related news and information; also good links to other Libyan websites
<a href="http://en.ljbc.net">en.ljbc.net</a>	Libyan Broadcasting Corporation English-language website
<a href="http://www.investinlibya.com">www.investinlibya.com</a>	Website of the Libyan Foreign Investment Board



## Sudan

### At a Glance

Population	38.2 million
Principal cities	Khartoum, Port Sudan, Omdurman, El Obeid
International Access	Several flights a week to Khartoum from London, Frankfurt and Amsterdam
Languages	Arabic. English used in business
Major industries	Agri-processing
PPP gross national income per capita	\$1,852

### Geography

Sudan is the largest country in Africa. It covers an extensive land area, Sudan has a desert climate in the north and a tropical climate in the south. The Blue and White Nile rivers flow south to north through the eastern part of the country. Sudan has an 800km coastline on the Red Sea.

The population is roughly 40 per cent Arab, 50 per cent African, with the balance being made up by smaller ethnic minorities. The Arab population lives predominantly in the northern part of the country. About 70 per cent of the population is Muslim.

Sudan gained independence from Britain/Egypt in 1956, and has experienced almost constant inter-ethnic strife and civil war since then. In the Darfur region of western Sudan, ongoing conflict between the black African people of the region and the government-supported armed militia (Janjaweed) has led to a humanitarian crisis on a huge scale.

### Economic Overview

Sudan has rich reserves of oil, natural gas and minerals, such as gold, zinc, copper, which are under-exploited. Sudan's economy remains largely based on agriculture, which employs an estimated 80 per cent of the workforce. The main exports are cotton and gum arabic. Wheat, grain sorghum, peanuts, sesame seeds and ground nuts are also grown for domestic consumption and export.

Industrial activities include some agricultural processing and light industry around Khartoum.

Sudan remains subject to certain economic sanctions by the United States of America.

Education	59.9% literacy
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**Sudan's Main Trading Partners (2002)**

Customers	Suppliers
China 53.3%	China 20.1%, Saudi Arabia 7.5%,
Japan 13.4%	India 5.6%, UK 5.4%,
South Africa 4.9%	Germany 5.4%, Indonesia 4.7%
Saudi Arabia 4.7%	Australia 4%

**Logistics**

Ports	Port Sudan, Juba, Khartoum
Airports	Khartoum
Roads and Railways	Extensive railway but in bad repair and is currently operating to an estimated fifth of its capacity. Majority of roads are unsurfaced and become muddy during heavy rainfall but there is a paved highway between Khartoum and Port Sudan.
Telecomms	Government-controlled. Very low Internet penetration with approximately 56,000 Internet users.

**Visiting Sudan**

Visa	An entry visa is required – valid for one month. Non-diplomatic passport holders need to register with Aliens Department in Khartoum. Evidence of a previous visit to Israel (for example an Israeli stamp on your passport) will lead to refusal of entry.
Hotels	Some business-class hotels in Khartoum region and in Port Sudan.
Changing money	The official currency is the Sudanese Dinar. However, prices may be quoted in Sudanese Pounds. Sudanese Dinar = 10 Sudanese pounds Sudanese dinar (SDD) = €0.0032

**Setting up in Sudan**

Sudan has an Investment Authority under the Ministry of Investment with a brief to encourage inward foreign investment into the country.

**Websites**

<a href="http://www.sudaninvest.org">www.sudaninvest.org</a>	Website of the Sudanese Ministry of Investment
<a href="http://www.arabcomconsult.com/sudan2002/main.htm">www.arabcomconsult.com/sudan2002/main.htm</a>	Report on Sudan by Arab Communication Consult.
<a href="http://www.sudanca.com">www.sudanca.com</a>	Website of the Sudanese embassy to Canada, containing many business links.

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## The Middle East



Historically the Eastern Mediterranean and the Mesopotamian valley have been the homes to many of the world's richest civilisations, including the ancient Sumerians and Babylonians of what is now modern Iraq and the Pharaohs and Hellenistic Greeks of the Nile Delta.

Down to our own times, the Middle East has been the most sensitive political region in the world, where Christianity meets Islam and Judaism; where East meets West; where modern capitalism meets more paternalistic models of development.

Over the past 50 years, each decade has brought new strife to the Middle East: from the Suez crisis of 1956, to the Six-Day War of 1967, the Lebanese civil war in the 1970s and 1980s, the US-led wars on Iraq in 1990 and 2003–4.

In spite of its recent history of war and civil strife, the Middle East has continued to expand economically. Egypt, for example, has become a relatively stable emerging market, Lebanon has put the civil wars behind it and is reasserting its historical trading strengths; and Iraq has approximately 11 per cent of world oil reserves.



## Egypt

### At a Glance

Population	66.4 million
Principal cities	Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez
International Access	Daily flights to Cairo from London, Milan, Paris and Frankfurt
Languages	Arabic, English, French
Major industries	Oil and gas, metals, tourism, agriculture (especially cotton) and Suez Canal revenues
PPP gross national income per capita	\$3,810

### Geography

Egypt, situated in the north east of Africa, has borders with Libya, Israel, Sudan and the Mediterranean Sea. Geographically, Egypt is the centre of the Arab world, connecting Africa to the Middle East. Cairo, Egypt's capital, is the largest city in Africa, the Arab world and the Middle East. With 96 per cent of the country covered by desert, Egypt's population is concentrated along the Nile Valley and Delta.

Egypt's natural resources include petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, lead, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos and zinc.

### Economic Overview

Egypt's cultural heritage has resulted in its popularity as a popular tourist destination, encouraging Egypt's economic growth in tertiary services. In 2002, tertiary services accounted for 50.2 per cent of the GDP. Agriculture accounted for 16.8 per cent of GDP, while industry and manufacturing accounted for 33 per cent.

Egypt, the second largest economy in the Arab world, controls the Suez Canal, which generates substantial revenue for the services sector. Subsequent to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the USA in 2001, Egypt's services sector suffered a fall off in revenue due to a decline in tourism and Suez Canal tolls.

Egypt is heavily import-dependent. In 2002, Egypt's trade deficit stood at over \$8 billion. Oil accounts for approximately 50 per cent of Egypt's export earnings. Egypt's main imports include wheat, flour, meat, machinery and automotive vehicles, iron, steel, food products, paper products and chemicals.

Education	55.6% literacy Over 200,000 third-level graduates annually
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### Selling into Egypt

Foreign companies wishing to make a tender or purchase offers to government or public sector agencies, excluding the Ministry of Defence, are obliged to appoint a commercial agent. Investors wishing to invest in the private sector do not need to appoint a commercial agent. However, it is advantageous to have a local representative who can deal with any problems that may arise – for

example bureaucratic procedures, communication issues, local business practices and marketing. A commercial agent must be registered with the Ministry of Supply and Trade's Commercial Registry Department. Commercial agents are not required to authorise the importation of the foreign investor's principal product.

Importers who wish to import goods for the purpose of trade must register with the Register of Importers. Import licences are no longer required for importation of goods into Egypt. However, goods for resale can only be imported through an Egyptian national or company. In addition, importers must satisfy conditions relating to minimum capital and past commercial experience.

**Trade Associations in Egypt**

American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt	<a href="http://www.amcham.org.eg">www.amcham.org.eg</a>
Egyptian Computer Society	<a href="http://www.ifip.or.at/members/egypt.htm">www.ifip.or.at/members/egypt.htm</a>
Egyptian Exporters Association (EEA)	<a href="http://www.expolink.org">www.expolink.org</a>
Egyptian Publishers Association	<a href="http://www.shorouk.com">www.shorouk.com</a>
Internet Society of Egypt	<a href="http://www.ise.org.eg">www.ise.org.eg</a>

**Egypt's Main Trading Partners (2002)**

Customers	Suppliers
USA 18.3%	USA 16.9%
Italy 13.7%	Germany 7.9%
UK 8.4%	Italy 6.7%,
The EU is Egypt's largest trading partner.	France 6.5%
	China 5%,
	UK 4.1%

**Logistics**

Ports	Alexandria (main port) and Port Said are located on the Mediterranean Sea. Suez is at the north end of the Gulf of Suez.
Waterways	Suez Canal
Airports	International airports at Alexandria, Cairo and Luxor.
Roads and Railways	Railways are the main mode of transport in Egypt. There is an extensive rail network in the Nile Delta. Cairo is connected to Aswan by lines running southwards down the Nile and is also lined to Salloum in the west by a line running along the coast.
Telecomms	There are fibre optic cables connecting all cities and towns. The Egyptian government is focusing on the development of the telecom infrastructure. Internet penetration: 600,000 Internet users.

**Visiting Egypt**

Visa	In addition to a passport which must be valid for at least three months after the planned stay, visitors to Egypt need a visa. Contact the Egyptian embassy in Dublin before travelling. Visas are available for purchase on arrival at Cairo International Airport.
Hotels	Egypt has a strong tourism sector with modern business hotels in the main cities.
Changing money	Egyptian Pound (LE) = €0.1329

**Trade Shows and Exhibitions**

A list of upcoming trade shows and exhibitions can be found on the website of The General Organisation for International Exhibitions and Fairs: [www.goief.gov.eg](http://www.goief.gov.eg)

**Setting up in Egypt**

Egypt offers a variety of incentives for foreign investors. Applications for investment are handled by the Government agency, the General Authority for Investment (GAFI).

In an effort to develop specific regions, the Egyptian government is offering financial incentives to foreign investors willing to establish themselves outside of the main towns and cities.

**Reasons to invest in Egypt include:**

- skilled workforce
- geographical location
- free trade zones
- abundance of natural resources
- advanced infrastructure
- lower labour costs

**Websites**

[www.egypt.gov.eg](http://www.egypt.gov.eg)

[www.gafi.gov.eg](http://www.gafi.gov.eg)

[www.amcham.org.eg/dbe/trade.asp](http://www.amcham.org.eg/dbe/trade.asp)

[www.egyptinvest.com](http://www.egyptinvest.com)

[www.economy.gov.eg](http://www.economy.gov.eg)

[www.capmas.gov.eg](http://www.capmas.gov.eg)

Portal website of the Egyptian government

The General Authority for Investment and Free Zones – a one-stop shop for investors in Egypt

The American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt

Website of Egypt Invest, a forum that aims to increase investment and export trade flows between Egypt and international markets

Website of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Trade and Industry

Website of Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics



## Lebanon

### At a Glance

Population	3.6 million
Principal cities	Beirut, Tripoli, Zahle, Sidon
International Access	Daily flights to Beirut from London and Paris
Languages	Arabic, French, English and Armenian
Major industries	Agriculture, banking, construction, tourism
PPP gross national income per capita	\$4,600

### Geography

Lebanon, one of the smallest countries in the Middle East, is located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

Bordered by Syria to the north and east, and Israel to the south, Lebanon forms part of the Fertile Crescent; a semi-circular area of well-irrigated land connecting Egypt to Iraq. Lebanon is a mountainous country with a narrow coastal plain. Natural resources include limestone, iron ore and salt. The country's main agricultural region is the fertile 15-kilometre-wide Bekaa valley. Agricultural produce includes citrus fruits, sugar beet, potatoes, grapes and tobacco.

### Economic Overview

Lebanon's once thriving economy has been devastated by a 16-year civil war which ended in 1990. Once known as the banking capital of the Middle East, Lebanon has funded reconstruction by borrowing heavily, mainly from domestic banks. Such borrowing funded multi-billion dollar reconstruction programmes including "Horizon 2000", which have helped boost the Lebanese economy. The Lebanese economy is based mainly on the services sector, which accounts for over 67 per cent of the GDP. Industry and manufacturing account for 21 per cent. Agriculture accounts for almost 10 per cent of GDP but faces competition from produce smuggled in from Syria. Agriculture exports are mainly to Arab countries.

Education	87.4% literacy There are 6 universities in Beirut and more than 100 technical and vocational colleges nationwide.
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### Lebanon's Main Trading Partners (2002)

Customers	Suppliers
France 12%	Italy 11%
USA 10%	France 9%
Saudi Arabia 9%	Germany 8%
United Arab Emirates 9%	USA 7%
Switzerland 6%	Switzerland 7%

**Logistics**

Ports	Beirut, Tripoli, and Jounieh and Sidon
Airports	Beirut International Airport. There is no domestic air service within Lebanon.
Roads and Railways	Substantial road-building projects currently in progress. The rail system has not been in use since the Civil War.
Telecomms	New telecoms infrastructure; 400,000 Internet users

**Visiting Lebanon**

Visa	A visa is required for entry to Lebanon. A single entry business and visitor visa is valid for a stay of up to three months. Multiple entry visas are also available. A letter of invitation is also required. Travellers with an Israeli stamp in their passport are prohibited from entering Lebanon. Contact the Lebanese embassy in London before travelling.
Hotels	Beirut has a variety of international grade hotels; however, accommodation is quite limited outside the capital.
Changing money	Lebanese pound (LL) = €0.0005

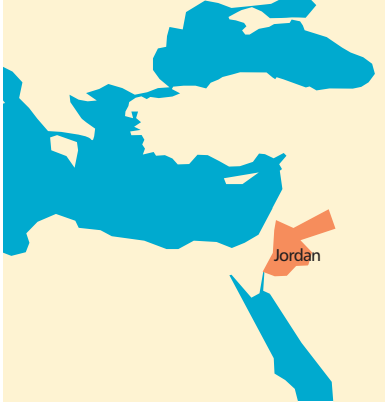
**Setting up in Lebanon**

The Investment Development Agency of Lebanon (IDAL) was established in 1994 under the auspices of the Lebanese government to promote Lebanon as a viable investment environment. The IDAL offers investment advice and information services to the potential investor.

The Lebanese government recognises the importance of investment, in particular the role that it plays in the reconstruction of Lebanon. In an attempt to attract foreign investors, the Lebanese government has offered generous investment incentives such as exemptions from income tax and tax on distribution of dividends. Investment incentives are awarded according to the investment zone chosen by the investor. Three investment zones have been distinguished by the Lebanese government: moderately developed regions, intermediate regions and underprivileged regions.

**Websites**

<a href="http://www.idal.com.lb">www.idal.com.lb</a>	Investment Development Agency of Lebanon (IDAL)
<a href="http://www.ifp.com.lb">www.ifp.com.lb</a>	The International Fairs and Promotions website Includes listings of forthcoming trade shows and exhibitions.
<a href="http://www.finance.gov.lb">www.finance.gov.lb</a>	Website of the Lebanese Ministry of Finance
<a href="http://www.economy.gov.lb">www.economy.gov.lb</a>	Website of the Lebanese Ministry of Economy and Trade
<a href="http://www.customs.gov.lb">www.customs.gov.lb</a>	Lebanese Customs website. Includes trade statistics.
<a href="http://www.linbusiness.com">www.linbusiness.com</a>	The Lebanon Business Network – features an online marketplace and business matching database; identifies opportunities and creates links between Lebanese and international businesses



## Jordan

### At a Glance

Population	5.5 million
Principal cities	Amman, Irbid, Zerka
International Access	Daily flights to Amman from Paris
Languages	Arabic, English
Major industries	Minerals, tourism, agriculture
PPP gross national income per capita	\$4,180

### Geography

Jordan has borders with Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Israel and the West Bank. It is almost landlocked, except for a short coastline at Aqaba, at the northern end of the Red Sea.

Jordan can be divided into three main geographical regions: the Jordan Rift Valley, the Eastern Uplands and the Desert. Jordan's population is concentrated in the northern and central sections of the Uplands. The River Jordan flows through the fertile Rift Valley, forming Jordan's western boundary and separating Jordan from the disputed territory of the West Bank.

A large percentage of Jordan's population is of Palestinian descent. Palestinian refugees fled to Jordan during the Arab-Israeli wars. Jordan was the only Middle Eastern country to grant them citizenship. The West Bank was part of Jordan up to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, when it was annexed by Israel.

### Economic Overview

Jordan's economic development efforts have been hindered by a lack of natural resources and by political disputes in its neighbouring countries.

The majority of Jordan's income is generated by the services sector, accounting for 74.6 per cent of Jordan's GDP. Industry and manufacturing account for 23.4 per cent; Jordan's major industries include oil refining, cement production and hydroelectric power. Industries such as food processing, textiles and pharmaceuticals are increasing in importance. With a relative scarcity of agricultural land, agriculture accounts for only 2 per cent of GDP.

Education	90.9% literacy Jordan has 22 universities.
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**Jordan's Main Trading Partners (2002)**

Customers	Suppliers
Iraq 20.1%	Iraq 13.4%
USA 14.5%	Germany 8.8%
India 8.1%	USA 8%, China 6%
Saudi Arabia 5.4%	France 4.2%, UK 4.1%
Israel 4.4%	Italy 4.1%

**Logistics**

Ports	Jordan's only port is Aqaba, 400 km south of Amman.
Airports	Amman International Airport, Aqaba and Queen Alia International.
Roads and Railways	Jordan's expanding road network is being constantly upgraded, with all major destinations accessible by modern roads. It is possible to reach all major tourist destinations by a modern, hard-surfaced road. Rail connects the city of Ma'an to Saudi Arabia and carries industrial traffic between the phosphate mines and the port of Aqaba.
Telecomms	Jordan has a modern communications infrastructure. 234,000 Internet users.

**Visiting Jordan**

Visa	All visitors to Jordan require a visa. Irish passport holders can obtain a tourist visa on arrival. For enquiries, contact the Jordanian embassy in London before travelling.
Hotels	Modern hotels in Amman
Changing money	Jordanian Dinar (JOD) = €1.1665

**Setting up in Jordan**

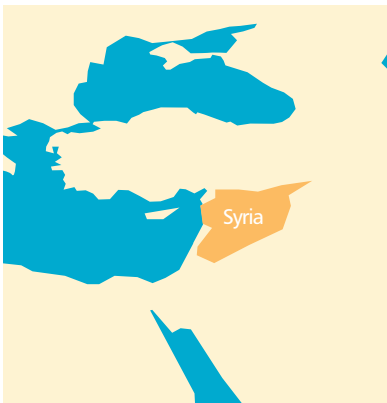
With the introduction of the Investment Promotion Law in 1995, the Jordanian government has opened its economy and created a favourable investment climate for both foreign and domestic investors. The Jordan Investment Board was established to promote Jordan as a viable investment location, in addition to advising and assisting potential investors.

Incentives include income tax and customs tax exemptions, and the unrestricted transfer of capital and profits.

Jordan's accession to the World Trade Organisation in 2000, along with the signing of an Association Agreement with the European Union a year later, has boosted Jordan's profile in the international investment arena.

**Websites**

<a href="http://www.jordaninvestment.com">www.jordaninvestment.com</a>	Website of the Jordan Investment Board, responsible for marketing Jordan internationally and for assisting investors in Jordan
<a href="http://www.mit.gov.jo">www.mit.gov.jo</a>	Website of the Jordanian Ministry for Industry and Trade
<a href="http://www.aci.org.jo">www.aci.org.jo</a>	Website of the Amman Chamber of Industry
<a href="http://www.ammanchamber.org">www.ammanchamber.org</a>	Website of the Amman chamber of commerce
<a href="http://www.imc.com.jo">www.imc.com.jo</a>	Institute of Management Consultants of Jordan
<a href="http://www.intaj.net">www.intaj.net</a>	Jordan Information Technology Association
<a href="http://www.jordanexporters.org">www.jordanexporters.org</a>	Website of the Jordan Exporters Association
<a href="http://www.free-zones.gov.jo">www.free-zones.gov.jo</a>	Website of the Free Zone Corporation – set up to attract business to the free zones
<a href="http://www.jedco.gov.jo">www.jedco.gov.jo</a>	Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centre Corporation – since 1972, Jordan's official trade development and promotion organisation
<a href="http://www.dos.gov.jo">www.dos.gov.jo</a>	Jordanian Government's Department of Statistics



**Syria**

**At a Glance**

Population	17.8 million
Principal cities	Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Hama
International Access	Several flights a week to Damascus from Amsterdam, Paris, London; weekly flights to Aleppo from London, Paris, Amsterdam, Rome
Languages	Arabic, Kurdish, Armenian and Circassian
Major industries	Oil, agriculture, textiles, phosphates
PPP gross national income per capita	\$3,470

**Geography**

Syria borders Jordan, Lebanon, Israel and the Mediterranean to the west and south, Turkey to the north and Iraq to the east. It consists mostly of an arid plateau to the east cut through by the upper Euphrates river, and a narrower mountainous region reaching down to the Mediterranean. All the major cities are in the western region. The Golan Heights forms the boundary between Syria and Israel – it was annexed by Israel in 1967, but is still claimed by Syria.

About 90 per cent of the population is Arabic with small Kurdish and Armenian minorities.

**Economic Overview**

Syria is a socialist country with the Government controlling most of the country's economy. Most of the country's major enterprises are nationalised, although there have been moves to liberalise in recent years.

Syria depends heavily on oil revenues which account for roughly 60 per cent of export earnings. Other important sectors include textiles, agriculture and food processing. Remittances from emigrants are also important to the Syrian economy.

Education	82.9% literacy
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**Selling into Syria**

A local representative or agent is an essential part of any business venture in Syria. Ensure that the agent is registered; using a non-registered agent when dealing in the public sector is illegal. The agency's registration number is also necessary to apply for an import licence.

It is essential to draw up a bilingual copy (Arabic and English) of a contract with the agency outlining conditions such as:

- Rate of commission and how it is calculated
- The territory covered by the agreement

Minor expenses are usually included in commission payments; however under Syrian law expenses are payable by the foreign firm. Ensure that all contracts are watertight, as disputes can take years to settle. Syrian businesses tend to examine contracts very carefully.

**Syria's Main Trading Partners (2002)**

Customers	Suppliers
Germany 19.1%	Italy 8.3%
Italy 17.5%	Germany 7.4%
Turkey 7.8%	China 5.7%
France 7.5%	South Korea 4.8%
Lebanon 5.2%	France 4.6%
	USA 4.4%
	Turkey 4.1%

**Logistics**

Ports	Baniyas, Jablah, Latakia and Tartus
Airports	Damascus International airport
Roads and Railways	Syria has a modern road network of which 95% is paved. Damascus and Aleppo are connected by railway. A secondary line also runs along the coast from Aleppo to the port of Latakia.
Telecomms	60,000 Internet users

**Visiting Syria**

Visa	A visa is required for visitors. Visas are valid for 15 days and must be used within one month of date of issue. Visitors who wish to stay longer than 15 days may apply to the immigration authorities for an extension. Visitors who successfully acquire an extension require an exit visa. Contact the Syrian embassy in London.
Hotels	Damascus has only two international hotels. There are also state-run hotels which are considered upmarket. However, there is a lack of mid-range hotels.
Changing money	1.00 Syrian Pound (SYP) = €0.0189

**Setting up in Syria**

Despite changes to its investment laws, Syria has been unable to attract substantial foreign investment. Currently, Syria is losing out to other Middle-Eastern countries who are offering more substantial investment incentives. Syria's current leader, President Bashar, is working towards the implementation of policies which will increase economic exports and modernise Syria's banking and monetary regulations, thus improving the investment climate.

**Websites**

<a href="http://www.syrecon.org">www.syrecon.org</a>	Website of the Syrian Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade
<a href="http://www.animaweb.org/pays_syrie_en.htm">www.animaweb.org/pays_syrie_en.htm</a>	Website of the Euro-Mediterranean Network of Investment Promotion Agencies
<a href="http://www.dci-syria.org">www.dci-syria.org</a>	Website of the Damascus Chamber of Industry
<a href="http://www.fedcommsyr.org">www.fedcommsyr.org</a>	Federation of Syrian Chambers of Commerce
<a href="http://www.syriaonline.com/Categories/exhibitions.htm">www.syriaonline.com/Categories/exhibitions.htm</a>	Information on forthcoming trade shows and exhibitions



## Palestine

### At a Glance

Population	4.2 million
Principal cities	Jerusalem, Ramallah, Gaza City, Nablus, Hebron, Jericho
Languages	Arabic
International access	Daily flights from London to Tel Aviv in Israel
PPP gross national income per capita	US\$940 (2002)

### Geography

The current Palestinian state consists of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, territories annexed by Israel from Egypt and Jordan following the 1967 war. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine is a focus of global attention, and the Palestinian cause is a rallying one for people all over the Arab world.

Political structures are emerging under the Palestinian National Authority, but Palestine is still a long way from having the autonomy that most countries take for granted in their dealings with the rest of the world – for example, there is no Palestinian currency. The West Bank includes a large number of Israeli settlements, deemed illegal by UN Security Council Resolution 146.

The West Bank is mostly rugged and hilly. The southern part is desert or semi-desert, while the north is more fertile. Gaza is separated from the rest of Palestine; it consists of a narrow coastal strip along the Mediterranean, with a short border with Egypt to the south.

### Economic Overview

The political conflict has made any economic development in Palestine very difficult if not impossible. The economy is characterised by agriculture and small-scale industry and is heavily dependent on Israeli channels for imports and exports. Israel and Jordan together account for over 95% of Palestine's exports.

### Visiting Palestine

Visa	Entry into Palestine is controlled by Israel.
Hotels	See <a href="http://www.palestinehotels.com">www.palestinehotels.com</a> for details of hotels in Palestine.
Changing money	1.00 Israeli Shekel (ILS) = €0.1838

### Websites

<a href="http://www.pna.gov.ps">www.pna.gov.ps</a>	Website of the Palestinian National Authority
<a href="http://www.palestinehotels.com">www.palestinehotels.com</a>	Sponsored by the Arab Hotel Association
<a href="http://www.apso.ie/palestine.asp">www.apso.ie/palestine.asp</a>	Information on Palestine from Development Cooperation Ireland.

[www.pma-palestine.org](http://www.pma-palestine.org)

Website of the Palestinian Monetary Authority whose objectives include the establishment of a strong and secure banking and monetary system.

[www.visit-palestine.com/main.htm](http://www.visit-palestine.com/main.htm)

Tourism website



## Iraq

### At a Glance

Population	24 million
Principal cities	Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk and Basrah
Languages	Arabic, Kurdish, Assyrian and Armenian
Major industries	Oil and gas
PPP gross national income per capita	\$2,500 (2000 estimate)

### Geography

Situated at the northern tip of the Arabian Gulf, Iraq has borders with Kuwait, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, Turkey, Jordan and Syria.

The mountainous area in the north-east is known as Al-Jazira. Terrain in the south-east is swampy and marshy. The desert region which constitutes approximately 35 per cent of the country lies to the west of the Euphrates.

Ports	The ports of Umm Qasr, Khawr az Zubayr and Al Basrah are all on the Gulf, but have limited capacity.
Airports	Before war: 150 airports

### Pre-war Iraq

Iraq is a country rich in petroleum and natural gas. It is estimated that Iraq has approximately 11 per cent of the world's petroleum reserves. The oil fields are located in two main regions: in the south-east near Ar Rumaylah, and in the north-central part of the country, near Mosul and Kirkuk.

In addition to plentiful supplies of phosphates, sulphur, salt and gypsum, Iraq has small deposits of iron, gold, lead, copper and silver.

Before the Ba'athist regime came to power, Iraq was predominantly an agricultural country. However, a lack of state investment and an increase in food imports (under the Oil for Food programme) reduced Iraq's agricultural production. Much of the farmland is situated on the alluvial plains between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

Iraq also had a small, predominantly freshwater, fishing industry.

Despite having the potential to be one of the world's richest countries due to its vast petroleum deposits, Iraq was economically crippled by previous wars and later by economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations. High unemployment and Saddam Hussein's regime forced much of the highly educated and skilled population to emigrate.

**Post-war Iraq**

The 2003 US-led war on Iraq has changed both the political and economic Iraqi landscape. The country's infrastructure and public services are in very poor condition and unemployment is high with a large number of the population relying on humanitarian aid for food.

It is hoped that foreign investment will aid in the reconstruction of the war-torn country, as well as fostering economic growth and creating employment. The new Iraqi interim government took office on 28 June 2004.

Ireland is not among the countries to which prime contracting is open; however, opportunities exist for companies to work as subcontractors.

<b>Telecomms</b>	The 2003 war severely damaged Iraq's telecommunications infrastructure and the system is currently very limited. There is a public mobile network and extensive use of satellite phones.
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**Websites**

<a href="http://www.rebuilding-iraq.net">www.rebuilding-iraq.net</a>	Website of the US-led Iraqi Project and Contracting Office
<a href="http://www.iraqibusinesscenter.org">www.iraqibusinesscenter.org</a>	Website of the Iraqi Business Center (currently run by the US army)
<a href="http://www.iraqproject.com">www.iraqproject.com</a>	Website of an American Organisation that specialises in consulting, project management and investment promotion in Iraq
<a href="http://www.rebuild-iraq-expo.com">www.rebuild-iraq-expo.com</a>	Website of the International Trade Exhibition for the Rebuilding of Iraq.
<a href="http://www.iraq-today.com">www.iraq-today.com</a>	An independent, online newspaper

## The Arabian Peninsula



The recent history of the Arabian peninsula starts with 1932 – the year Standard Oil Company of California first discovered oil in commercial quantities in Bahrain. Further discoveries were made in Saudi Arabia in 1938, in Qatar and Kuwait in 1940, in Abu Dhabi in 1960, in Oman in 1964 and in Yemen in 1983. Oil has brought with it huge wealth and economic development, and has made of the region a world nexus of commercial and political interest.

By most estimates, the Arabian peninsula alone accounts for roughly 47 per cent of the world's known oil reserves and roughly 19 per cent of known natural gas reserves. This is in a region with a total population of only 54 million – that's only slightly more than the combined population of Spain and Portugal, and slightly less than that of France.

To cope with the employment demands of the oil economy, most countries in the Arabian peninsula have attracted huge numbers of immigrant workers, mostly from other Islamic countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia and Iran. In Qatar, for example, over 90 per cent of the population is expatriate; in the United Arab Emirates, this figure is 75 per cent, while in Saudi Arabia, it is 30 per cent.

The countries of the Arabian peninsula have a variety of political and legal structures. In general, Islamic rule is stricter than in North Africa or in the Middle East.

### **Why Do Business in the Arabian Peninsula?**

With the great wealth generated by oil and natural gas, the Arabian peninsula attracts investment and business from all over the world.

- Enormous natural resources generate the wealth to pay for imported goods and services.
- The economies of most countries are highly developed by Western standards.
- In many cases, however, there remains a shortage of expertise and a shortage of human resources.
- A large education market, in particular for English language and technical skills.



## Saudi Arabia

### At a Glance

Population	24.2 million
Principal cities	Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Al Khobar, Dhahran
International Access	Daily flights to Riyadh and Jeddah from London
Languages	Arabic, English
Major industries	Oil, gas
PPP gross national income per capita	\$12,660

### Geography

Saudi Arabia occupies over four-fifths of the Arabian peninsula. It is bounded on the west by the Red Sea, by the Gulf to the east, by Oman, Yemen and the UAE to the south and by Iraq and Jordan to the north. Most of the country is desert.

Saudi Arabia is an Arab Islamic state whose constitution is the Koran and the Sunna of Muhammad. Islamic Law is applied, hence their strictness in relation to subjects such as alcohol and the role of women. As the custodian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, Saudi Arabia has a special place in the Islamic world. Every year millions of pilgrims make the haj to Mecca. Only Muslims may enter the holy cities.

### Economic Overview

In the past fifty years, the Saudi economy has been totally transformed by oil – the country has the largest reserves of oil in the world. Oil revenues and the huge international investments that have followed have enabled Saudi Arabia to build a modern communications and industrial infrastructure. The Saudi economy is very heavily dependent on immigrant labour, and roughly 30 per cent of residents are non-Saudi, mostly from Egypt, Pakistan, India and the Philippines.

Education	Education accounts for over 22% of total government expenditure (1997, UNESCO). One of the reasons for this commitment to education is that the government wants to roll back the very high dependence on imported expertise. 77.9% literacy
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**Logistics**

Ports	The main sea ports have modern containerised and ro-ro services: Gulf: Dammam and Jubail Red Sea: Jeddah, Jizan and Yanbu
Airports	International airports at Riyadh, Jeddah and Dhahran. Over 20 regional airports.
Roads	Most of the main roads are good quality but, given the distances between major centres, air travel is preferred.
Railways	Only one line: Riyadh to Dammam
Telecomms	Over 2.5 million mobile phones Over 1.6 million Internet users ADSL available in main centres

**Imports and Exports**

Imports are estimated at \$30.9 billion, consisting mostly of capital goods, manufactured goods, chemicals, food products and raw materials. Main import sources are USA, Japan, UK, Germany, Switzerland and Italy.

Exports are estimated at \$67.3 billion, dominated by crude oil, refined oil products, petrochemicals and plastic goods. Main export markets are USA, Japan, South Korea, France, Italy and Singapore.

**Visiting Saudi Arabia**

Visa	All visitors to Saudi Arabia need visas. To get a business or visitor visa, you must first receive an invitation from a sponsoring company or individual. Contact the Saudi Arabian embassy in London before travelling.
Hotels	Good choice of business-class hotels, including the major international chains in the main cities.
Changing money	1.00 Saudi Riyal (SAR) = €0.2205

**Setting up in Saudi Arabia**

The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) is a one-stop shop for inward investment in Saudi Arabia. It was set up in 2000 following the passing of a new Foreign Investment Law. SAGIA has three primary roles:

- To facilitate prospective investors
- To promote inward investment
- To propose state policy with regard to investment

**Websites**

<a href="http://www.the-saudi.net">www.the-saudi.net</a>	A site offering trade and business information on Saudi Arabia and the wider Middle East.
<a href="http://www.saudia-online.com">www.saudia-online.com</a>	Portal website for Saudi Arabia.
<a href="http://www.sagia.gov.sa">www.sagia.gov.sa</a>	Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA)
<a href="http://www.saso.org.sa">www.saso.org.sa</a>	Saudi Arabian Standards Organisation
<a href="http://www.receppo.com">www.receppo.com</a>	Website of the Riyadh Exhibitions Company Ltd
<a href="http://www.saudia-online.com/bus_events/bus_events.htm">www.saudia-online.com/bus_events/bus_events.htm</a>	Website listing business events in Saudi Arabia
<a href="http://www.saudinf.com">www.saudinf.com</a>	Website of the Saudi Arabia Ministry of Information

**Bahrain****At a Glance**

Population	724,000
	Manama
International Access	Daily flights from London
Languages	Arabic, English
Major industries	Oil, gas, financial services, training
PPP gross national income per capita	\$17,100

**Geography**

Bahrain consists of a group of islands in the Gulf just off the coast of Saudi Arabia. Bahrain island is the largest island and is connected to Saudi Arabia by the 25 km King Fahd bridge.

The Kingdom of Bahrain gained its independence from Great Britain in 1971 and is politically very stable.

**Economic Overview**

Bahrain is a prosperous country with one of the world's highest GNPs, but with its long history of trade and shipping, it is less dependent on oil revenues than other Gulf states and has a more diversified economy. Financial services, manufacturing, and training and related services are among the areas into which Bahrain has diversified.

Bahrain has a liberal economic environment and was the undisputed financial services centre for the Gulf region. The UAE, however, is now making great strides to rival it in this area. All the major Arab banks and most international banks have offices in Bahrain. It has a very highly developed telecommunications infrastructure, along with good road and air connections.

Roughly a third of the population are expatriate – considerably lower than in the other smaller Gulf states.

Education	Well developed system of free education. 88.5% literacy
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### Logistics

Ports	The main sea ports are Doha and Musayid
Airports	Major international airport at Manama
Roads	Connected to Saudi Arabia by the King Fahd Causeway
Telecomms	Advanced infrastructure with very high Internet penetration

### Imports and Exports

Imports are estimated at \$4.83 billion, mainly capital goods, machinery, food and chemicals. Main import sources are USA, UK, Saudi Arabia and Australia.

Exports are estimated at \$5.78 billion, over 80 per cent of which is accounted for by oil and oil products. Main export markets are Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan.

### Visiting Bahrain

Visa	Visitors to Bahrain require a visa. Apply to the Bahrain embassy in London before travelling.
Hotels	Wide range of business and tourist class hotels, including all the main international hotel groups.
Changing money	1.00 Bahraini dinar (BHD) = €2.1938

### Investing in Bahrain

The Bahrain Economic Development Board is responsible for all areas of inward investment into Bahrain.

### Websites

<a href="http://www.industry.gov.bh/moi_english/">www.industry.gov.bh/moi_english/</a>	The Kingdom of Bahrain Ministry of Industry website
<a href="http://www.bahrainedb.com">www.bahrainedb.com</a>	Website of the Bahrain Economic Development Board
<a href="http://www.albahrain.net">www.albahrain.net</a>	Portal website for Bahrain
<a href="http://www.bdb-bh.com">www.bdb-bh.com</a>	The Bahrain Development Bank



## Oman

### At a Glance

Population	2.9 million
Principal cities	Muscat, Salalah
International Access	Regular flights from Zurich to Muscat
Languages	Arabic
Major industries	Oil, gas, agriculture, fishing
PPP gross national income per capita	\$13,000

### Geography

The Sultanate of Oman is located at the south-eastern corner of the Arabian peninsula, a strategically important position overlooking the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Oman and the Straits of Hormuz.

Oman has a rich trading history, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had an extensive seaborne empire along the coast of Africa and in southern Pakistan.

### Economic Overview

Oil and natural gas are the mainstay of the Oman economy and account for over 75 per cent of exports. Approximately 40 per cent of the workforce is in agriculture, although this accounts for only 3 per cent of GDP.

Oman is politically and economically stable, and its government encourages market-oriented policies and private sector development.

Education	Oman has made huge strides in education over the past thirty years – as recently as the 1970s there were only 9 schools in the whole country – and has now achieved 74.4% literacy, and 97.9% literacy among 15-24 year olds.
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### Selling into Oman/Setting up in Oman

Before a foreign company or person is able to conduct business in Oman, they must be able to refer to a specific Omani law that permits them to carry out the type of commercial activity they are considering – for example, the Commercial Agencies Law which allows a foreign company to market and sell goods through a commercial agent or distributor.

**Logistics**

Ports	Muscat area: Matrah and Mina' al Fahl Salalah area: Mina' Raysut
Airports	International airport at Muscat
Roads	Reasonably well developed network, particularly along the Gulf of Oman coast into Dubai.
Telecomms	Low Internet penetration: about 100,000 users.

**Imports and Exports**

Imports estimated at \$5.9 billion, mainly machinery, capital goods and consumer goods. Major import sources are UAE (mostly for re-export), Japan, UK, Italy, USA and Germany.

Exports estimated at \$11.1 billion, mainly oil and oil products; major markets are Japan, Thailand, China, South Korea and UAE.

**Visiting Oman**

Visa	Irish passport holders may acquire a visa on arrival at Muscat, at a cost of £12.
Hotels	Choice of business and tourist class hotels in the major centres, including the major international chains.
Changing money	1.00 Omani Rial (OMR) = €2.1484

**Websites**

<a href="http://www.omanet.om">www.omanet.om</a>	Ministry of Information's website
<a href="http://www.omantel.net.om">www.omantel.net.om</a>	Website of Oman Telecommunications Company
<a href="http://www.peie.com">www.peie.com</a>	Public Establishment for Industrial Estates
<a href="http://www.ociped.com">www.ociped.com</a>	Omani Centre for Investment Promotion and Export Development
<a href="http://www.nbo.co.om">www.nbo.co.om</a>	The National Bank of Oman
<a href="http://www.arabbank.com">www.arabbank.com</a>	Arab Bank
<a href="http://www.ecgaoman.com">www.ecgaoman.com</a>	Export Credit Guarantee Agency
<a href="http://www.omanexpo.com">www.omanexpo.com</a>	Forthcoming exhibitions and trade fairs in Oman
<a href="http://www.moneoman.gov.om">www.moneoman.gov.om</a>	Ministry of National Economy, Information and Documentation Centre



## Qatar

### At a Glance

Population	610,000
Principal cities	Doha, Al Rayyan, Al Wakrah, Alkhor
International Access	Daily flights from London and Paris to Doha
Languages	Arabic
Major industries	Oil, gas
PPP gross national income per capita	\$21,500

### Geography

Qatar is a small desert peninsula about 100 miles long jutting into the Gulf. Before the discovery of oil, in 1939, Qatar was a poor region with very little economic activity. In the past thirty years, however, its export earnings from oil and gas have made it one of the richest countries (per capita) in the world. Qatar was a British protectorate from 1916 until 1971 when it gained its independence.

Over 90 per cent of the population of Qatar is expatriate, mainly from Pakistan and Iran.

### Economic Overview

Qatar has modest oil reserves, but very large gas reserves (estimated at 4 per cent of the world total). Recently, there has been successful diversification into iron and steel production.

Education	84.2% literacy
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### Doing Business in Qatar

Local agents are a legal requirement when selling or promoting products in Qatar. Commercial agents must be registered with The Commercial Affairs Department under the auspices of the Ministry of Economy and Commerce.

### Logistics

Ports	The main sea ports are Doha and Musayid.
Airports	International airport at Doha.
Roads	Most economic activity centres on Doha. Good road infrastructure.
Telecomms	50,000 Internet users.

### Imports and Exports

Imports are estimated at \$4.83 billion, mainly capital goods, machinery, food and chemicals. Main import sources are Italy, UK, France, Japan, Germany and USA.

Exports are estimated at \$11.03 billion, over 80 per cent of which is accounted for by oil and oil products. Main export markets are Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, USA and UAE.

### Visiting Qatar

Visa	Irish passport holders may acquire a visa on arrival at Doha, at a cost of £15.
Hotels	Wide range of business class hotels in Doha, including all the main international hotel groups.
Changing money	1.00 Qatari Riyal (QAR) = €0.2272

### Investing in Qatar

Qatar offers a favourable investment environment. Investment incentives include:

- Cheap energy costs due to Qatar's abundant supplies of natural gas and oil
- Liberal immigration and employment rules
- Benefits of free trade between Qatar and other GCC countries
- Free repatriation of profits and capital
- Duty-free imports of equipment and machinery needed for projects

Although foreign investment is limited to 49 per cent, the enactment of a new Foreign Investment Law in 2000 raised foreign investment in some businesses, for example agriculture and small industries, to 100%. Professional firms must have a Qatari sponsor who would be responsible for local debts. Qatar does not have any free trade zones at present. Foreign investors are not allowed to invest in the fields of banking, insurance, commercial representation and real estate.

### Websites

<a href="http://www.planetqatar.com">www.planetqatar.com</a>	Online marketplace for Qatar – includes business listings, classified ads, property and accommodation, and business opportunities
<a href="http://www.petroserv-limited.com/companies/qa.html">www.petroserv-limited.com/companies/qa.html</a>	Qatari companies with a web presence
<a href="http://www.e.gov.qa">www.e.gov.qa</a>	e-Government website
<a href="http://english.mofa.gov.qa">english.mofa.gov.qa</a>	Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<a href="http://www.qatar-info.com">www.qatar-info.com</a>	Website with various general information links on Qatar
<a href="http://www.wtcdoha.com">www.wtcdoha.com</a>	Website of the World Trade Centre in Doha, including information on forthcoming trade shows.



## United Arab Emirates

### At a Glance

Population	4 million
Principal cities	Abu Dhabi, Dubai
International Access	Daily flights from London and Paris to Dubai; from London to Abu Dhabi
Languages	Arabic, English
Major industries	Oil, gas, agriculture, fishing
PPP gross national income per capita	\$24,030

### Geography

The United Arab Emirates is a confederation of seven independent states on the Gulf coast, the most important being Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

### Economic Overview

Up until the early 1960s, the economy of the Emirates was based largely on pearl fishing, coastal trade and basic agriculture. Since oil production began, however, the economy has been totally transformed. The UAE is now estimated to have over 9 per cent of the world's oil reserves, and almost 4 per cent of the world's natural gas reserves, concentrated mostly in Abu Dhabi. The Emirate of Dubai, by contrast, has limited oil reserves, but has become the leading business, financial and exhibition centre in the Gulf.

The United Arab Emirates has the highest GDP per capita in the world.

Over 75 per cent of the population is expatriate and non-Arab, but largely Muslim from Pakistan, Iran, India and South-East Asia.

Education	<p>The United Arab Emirates has an extensive state-funded education system, absorbing over 15 per cent of the federal budget. It also has a large number of private schools (mostly for expatriates).</p> <p>Over 80 per cent of second-level students take up a place in higher education.</p> <p>77.3% literacy.</p>
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### Selling into the United Arab Emirates

If a foreign investor does not intend to establish a personal presence in the United Arab Emirates, he/she may conduct business through either a commercial agent or a distributor. A commercial agent represents foreign companies in the UAE by seeking out commercial opportunities and establishing relationships with customers. A commercial agent may also carry stock on behalf of the foreign

company. A distributor sells and distributes stock on behalf of the foreign company. Both distributors and commercial agents are regulated by the Trade Agencies Law.

### Trade Shows and Exhibitions

Trade shows and exhibitions have become an important aspect of the business and trade environment in the United Arab Emirates. The UAE boasts some of the best exhibition facilities in the world including:

- Dubai World Trade Centre
- Abu Dhabi International Exhibitions Centre
- Sharjah Expo and the Fujairah Exhibition Centre.

More information on future events can be obtained from the following websites:

<a href="http://www.dwtc.com">www.dwtc.com</a>	Dubai World Trade Centre
<a href="http://www.expo-centre.co.ae">www.expo-centre.co.ae</a>	Expo Centre Sharjah
<a href="http://www.adcci-uae.com">www.adcci-uae.com</a>	Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry

### Logistics

Ports	There are 9 modern commercial seaports in the UAE, and these account for almost half of all shipping in the Gulf.
Airports	International airports at Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah.
Roads	The main cities of the UAE are along the coast, and these are connected by a modern road network.
Telecomms	Very advanced telecommunications infrastructure. High Internet penetration: over 1.2 million users.

### Imports and Exports

Imports estimated at \$37.3 billion: consumer goods, capital goods. Main import partners are Japan, UK, USA, Italy, Germany and South Korea.

Exports estimated at \$45.9 billion, dominated by oil and gas. Over 60 per cent of oil and gas exports go to Japan. Other prominent export markets are India, Singapore and South Korea.

### Visiting the United Arab Emirates

Visa	Irish passport holders do not currently need a visa to visit the United Arab Emirates. Before travelling check with the UAE embassy in London.
Hotels	Excellent choice of business-class hotels, including the major international chains in the main cities.
Changing money	1.00 UAE Dirham (AED) = €0.2252

### Setting up in the United Arab Emirates

Companies wishing to establish themselves in any of the fourteen free zones may do so by obtaining any of the following:

- a Special Licence; or
- a Free Zone Enterprise Licence / Free Zone Establishment Licence.

Companies who wish to carry out manufacturing operations in the UAE need to obtain a National Industrial Licence. Advantages of setting up in free zones include non-payment of corporate tax for 15 years, the ability to establish a company with 100 per cent foreign ownership and assistance in the recruitment of staff.

### Websites

<a href="http://www.uae.gov.ae/mofi">www.uae.gov.ae/mofi</a>	Official website of the Ministry of Finance and Industry
<a href="http://www.nbad.com">www.nbad.com</a>	The National Bank of Abu Dhabi
<a href="http://www.cbuae.gov.ae">www.cbuae.gov.ae</a>	The Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates
<a href="http://www.uae.gov.ae">www.uae.gov.ae</a>	Website of the government of the United Arab Emirates
<a href="http://www.uaeinteract.com">www.uaeinteract.com</a>	Official website of the Ministry of Information and Culture



## Yemen

### At a Glance

Population	20 million
Principal cities	Sana'a, Aden
International Access	At least one flight a week from Sana'a to London, Paris, Frankfurt and Rome
Languages	Arabic
Major industries	Oil, gas
PPP gross national income per capita	\$800

### Geography

Occupying the south-western corner of the Arabian peninsula, the Republic of Yemen was formed when North and South Yemen united in 1990. Yemen continued to be politically unstable well into the 1990s.

The signing of the Jeddah Treaty with Saudi Arabia in 2000 ended a 70-year old dispute between the two countries relating to their national borders.

### Economic Overview

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arabian peninsula and its economic base remains largely agricultural. Oil was discovered in the mid 1980s, and although the reserves are modest, they have begun to make a significant contribution towards the country's economic development.

In 2002, agriculture accounted for 15.2 per cent of GDP, industry 46.3 per cent and tertiary 38.5 per cent.

Agreements with the IMF and World Bank have led to economic reforms including the privatisation of some state-run industries.

Education	65% literacy among 15-24 year olds. Note that among women, literacy is below 50%.
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### Logistics

Ports	The main sea ports are: Gulf of Aden: Aden, Mukalla Red Sea: Hudaidah, Mokha
Airports	International airports at Aden and Sana'a.
Roads	Yemen is currently building a road network with foreign aid.
Telecomms	Very low Internet penetration – 6,000 users.

### Imports and Exports

Imports estimated at \$2.82 billion consist mainly of consumer goods, machinery, chemicals, iron and steel. Yemen is heavily dependent on financial aid from abroad.

Exports estimated at \$3.05 billion, dominated by crude oil, coffee, cotton, hides and skins, and fish.

### Visiting Yemen

Visa	Visitors to Yemen require a visa. Apply to the Yemeni embassy in London before travelling.
Hotels	Tourist hotels in Aden, Sana'a and other cities.
Changing money	1.00 Yemeni Rial (YER) = €0.0045

### Investing in Yemen

The General Investment Authority of Yemen (GIAY) is the facilitating body for inward investment into Yemen. See the GIAY website at [www.giay.org](http://www.giay.org).

### Websites

<a href="http://www.yemen.gov.ye">www.yemen.gov.ye</a>	Yemen government website
<a href="http://www.y.net.ye">www.y.net.ye</a>	Website from Yemen's leading Internet Service Provider.
<a href="http://www.yemenairways.net">www.yemenairways.net</a>	Yemen Airways website.
<a href="http://www.centralbank.gov.ye">www.centralbank.gov.ye</a>	Website of the Central Bank of Yemen
<a href="http://www.yemeninfo.gov.ye/english/home.htm">www.yemeninfo.gov.ye/english/home.htm</a>	Website of the Ministry of Information.



## Kuwait

### At a Glance

Population	2.5 million
Principal cities	Kuwait City
International Access	Daily flights from London
Languages	Arabic, English
Major industries	Oil, gas, financial services, training
PPP gross national income per capita	\$17,780

### Geography

Kuwait is a low-lying desert region at the north-western end of the Gulf, bordering Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Most of the population live in or around Kuwait city. Two-thirds of the population of Kuwait are expatriates, mainly from other Arab countries and southern Asia. The majority of Kuwaitis are Sunni Muslims; 25 per cent are Shia Muslims.

### Economic Overview

Since the 1950s large-scale oil production has transformed Kuwait into a major trading centre. Kuwait has 9 per cent of the world's known oil reserves – in the Gulf only Iraq and Saudi Arabia have more. Kuwait has always used a portion of its oil revenues to invest overseas, and investment revenue has offered economic stability in the face of volatility in oil prices and, most notably, during the Iraqi invasion and occupation of 1990-91.

Education	82.9% literacy
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### Setting up in Kuwait

Current regulations stipulate that foreign investors need a Kuwaiti partner who has to have a minimum 51 per cent holding in the business. However, in an effort to attract foreign investment, Kuwait's Parliament recently passed a law which will allow foreign investors to own up to 100 per cent of business entities in certain approved sectors.

### Selling into Kuwait

According to Kuwaiti government policy, a local agent or sponsor is required by companies who wish to do business in Kuwait. All agency agreements must be registered with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

**Logistics**

Ports	The main ports are Shuaiba, Shuwaikh and Doha, all of which are equipped with modern ro-ro and containerised facilities.
Airports	International airport at Kuwait City
Roads	Advanced motorway network
Telecomms	Advanced infrastructure; Internet: 200,000 users

**Imports and Exports**

Imports estimated at \$8.2 billion, mainly machinery, capital goods, consumer goods. Major import sources are the United Arab Emirates (mostly for re-export), Japan, UK, Italy, USA, and Germany. Exports estimated at \$16 billion, mainly oil and oil products; major markets are Japan, Thailand, China, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates.

**Visiting Kuwait**

Visa	Entry visa required. A sponsor may be needed. Many large hotels act as sponsors. Visas are typically for one month and are difficult to extend while in Kuwait. Visas are not available at point of entry. Contact the Kuwaiti embassy in London before travelling.
Hotels	Many 4 and 5 star international group hotels in Kuwait.
Changing money	1 Kuwaiti Dinar (KWD) = €0.36

**Websites**

<a href="http://www.kcci.org.kw/html/english/home.html">www.kcci.org.kw/html/english/home.html</a>	Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<a href="http://www.kse.org.kw">www.kse.org.kw</a>	Kuwait Society for Engineers
<a href="http://www.arabianproducts.com/kuwait/kiu/kiu.htm">www.arabianproducts.com/kuwait/kiu/kiu.htm</a>	The Kuwaiti Industries Union
<a href="http://www.pai.gov.kw">www.pai.gov.kw</a>	Public Authority for Industry
<a href="http://www.kuwait-info.com">www.kuwait-info.com</a>	Site of the Kuwait information office in India
<a href="http://www.kia.gov.kw">www.kia.gov.kw</a>	Kuwait Investment Authority
<a href="http://www.mosal.gov.kw">www.mosal.gov.kw</a>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour – English section is currently under construction
<a href="http://www.kuwaitfreezone.com">www.kuwaitfreezone.com</a>	Kuwait Free Trade Zone
<a href="http://www.kif.net">www.kif.net</a>	The Kuwait International Fair company – information on forthcoming trade shows and exhibitions
<a href="http://www.mop.gov.kw">www.mop.gov.kw</a>	Kuwait's Ministry of Planning

## Sectoral Opportunities

The Arab World offers Irish companies opportunities across a range of sectors and many Irish companies already operate successfully in the region. Enterprise Ireland has offices on the ground in Riyadh and Dubai with staff who are experienced and who understand the opportunities and the obstacles to doing business in the Arab World. In addition, Enterprise Ireland's Dublin-based SEMEA team have particular knowledge of markets in the Middle East and North Africa.

The following is a brief summary of the areas where Enterprise Ireland sees opportunities for Irish companies. Where Enterprise Ireland client companies express interest in pursuing these opportunities, Enterprise Ireland will conduct seminars and propose buyer events / trade missions to tackle these opportunities. From time to time, Enterprise Ireland produces special sector-specific documents with an overview of the industry and an outline of the opportunities for Irish companies. Where available, these have been listed below.

### Banking and Telecoms Software

Governments in the Arab World are investing heavily in their IT infrastructures, and Irish products have a strong competitive edge in this field. While all countries in the region are upgrading their IT infrastructure, Bahrain, Dubai and Egypt are particular targets for Enterprise Ireland's banking software clients.

Countries of particular interest: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt

Reports available

Profiles of banks in the GCC Markets  
 Profiles of Telecoms operators in the GCC Markets  
 Profiles of System Integrators/ partners in the GCC Markets  
 Information Technology in Egypt  
 Telecommunications in Egypt  
 Telecoms research prepared on Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia

### Process Control and Automation for Utility Sectors

The investments being made by governments across the whole region in utility infrastructure and automation offer excellent opportunities for Irish companies. Water and electricity projects are key drivers of economic activity in the United Arab Emirates and in Saudi Arabia.

Countries of particular interest: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt

Reports available

Solid Waste Management in Egypt

### Oil and Gas Sectors and Construction Engineering Services

Some Irish companies already have experience of these sectors throughout the Gulf region. Currently there is a lot investment around oil and gas and in construction services for the power industry. In addition, there is a demand for professional services arising from the construction boom in civil, commercial and residential sectors in markets such as the United Arab Emirates.

Reports available

The Egyptian Petroleum Industry

**e-Learning and e-Government**

As the Arab World develops greater computer literacy and ease with technology, the market for e-learning is expanding rapidly. Irish companies are particularly strong in this area, and there are opportunities for online learning courseware in banking, telecoms, software technology, networking and communications. Other areas of potential include the International Computer Driving Licence, media training and niche business application e-learning areas such as aviation English and telecoms applications. Ireland has particular expertise and experience in e-government, which can be translated into trade opportunities as the region's governments go on-line.

Countries of particular interest: United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt and Jordan

Reports available

Profiles of Government organisations/buyers of goods and services for GCC countries in the Oil and Gas Industry

**Third-level Education**

Irish third-level education institutions have attracted students from the Gulf region for many years. While traditionally students have enrolled in medicine, other courses are now becoming popular. In the academic year 2002-2003, there were more than 600 Gulf and Middle-Eastern students in Ireland. Enterprise Ireland sees significant additional potential for this sector particularly in markets such as Saudi Arabia.

Reports available

Opportunities in Saudi Arabia for Irish providers of Third level Education Services

Countries of particular interest: United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia

**Healthcare**

With a rapidly growing population of over 330 million and increasing per capita income, the market for healthcare consumables in the Arab world is growing rapidly rate. Countries such as Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates are targeting the medical tourism market and are building new hospitals and clinics at a rapid rate. With very little penetration of the market by Irish companies, Enterprise Ireland view this as a priority market for Irish companies with finished products.

In Egypt, the emphasis has shifted from building new hospitals to upgrading existing facilities. The large number of patients with kidney failure has increased demand for electrolysis units in general hospitals and rural areas, while specialised biotechnology laboratory equipment for use in bone marrow and kidney transplants is another priority. Laboratories also require cell imaging, electrometry and electrophoresis equipment, and amino acid analysers and sequencers. Egypt imports almost all of its medical equipment requirements. Imports of all types of medical equipment are expected to grow in the future.

Countries of particular interest: United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Egypt

Reports available

Profiles of the Healthcare market in the GCC markets

**Food Processing and Packaging**

There are opportunities in post-harvest technology and associated process and packaging equipment – these include horizontal packaging, bottling, canning and display box machinery, atmospheric pressure packaging, handling of fruit and vegetables and perishable products. The most promising opportunities for Irish companies in this sector lie in the areas of processing equipment and refining mills for edible oils, animal and chicken feed, fresh and preserved fruits and vegetables, natural juices and fruit concentrates, baby milk and flour milling.

Countries of particular interest: Egypt, Morocco, United Arab Emirates

Reports available

The Dairy Sector in Egypt

## Diplomatic Missions

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### Diplomatic Missions Accredited to Ireland

Not all foreign embassies listed below have an embassy in Dublin. Some who have responsibilities for Ireland may be located elsewhere.

#### Algeria

Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
54 Holland Park, London W11 3RS  
Tel: 0044 207 221 7800  
Fax: 0044 207 221 0448

#### Bahrain

Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain  
30 Belgrave Square  
London SW1X 8QB  
Tel: 0044 207 901 9170  
Fax: 0044 207 201 9183

#### Egypt

Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
12 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4  
Tel: 01 6606566  
Fax: 01 6683745  
Email: embegypt@indigo.ie

#### Jordan

Embassy of the Hasemite Kingdom of Jordan  
6 Upper Phillimore Gardens  
Kensington, London W8 7HB  
Tel: 0044 207 937 3685  
Fax: 0044 207 937 8795

#### Honorary Consul

Mr Joe Geoghegan  
4 Cambridge Terrace, Leeson Park  
Dublin 6  
Tel: 01 6603409  
Fax: 01 6603049

#### Kuwait

Embassy of the State of Kuwait  
2 Albert Gate  
Hyde Park House  
Knightsbridge, London SW1 X7JU  
Tel: 0044 207 590 3400  
Fax: 0044 207 823 1712

#### Lebanon

Embassy of Lebanon  
21 Palace Garden Mews  
London W8 4QM  
Tel: 0044 207 229 7265  
Fax: 0044 207 243 1699

#### Libya

Embassy of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya  
The Libyan's Peoples Bureau  
61-62 Ennismore Gardens  
London SW7 1NH  
Tel: 0044 207 589 6120  
Fax: 0044 207 584 7668

#### Morocco

Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco  
53 Raglan Road, Dublin 4  
Tel: 01 6609449  
Fax: 01 6609468

#### Oman

Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman  
167 Queen's Gate  
London SW3 1HY  
Tel: 0044 207 225 0001  
Fax: 0044 207 589 2505

#### Honorary Consul

Ms Dettia O'Reilly  
Altona House  
232 Harold's Cross Road  
Dublin 6  
Tel: 01 4912411  
Fax: 01 4519767

#### Palestine

Delegation General of Palestine  
42 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2  
Tel: 01 6618031  
Fax: 01 6618030

**Qatar**

Embassy of the State of Qatar  
1 South Audley Street  
London W1Y 5DQ  
Tel: 0044 207 493 2200  
Fax: 0044 207 493 2661

**Saudi Arabia**

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
30 Charles Street  
London W1X 7DM  
Tel: 0044 207 917 3000  
Fax: 0044 207 917 3330

**Sudan**

Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan  
3 Cleveland Row  
St. James's, London SW1A 1DD  
Tel: 0044 207 839 8080  
Fax: 0044 207 839 7560

**Syria**

Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic  
8 Belgrave Square  
London SW1X 8PH  
Tel: 0044 207 245 901  
Fax: 0044 207 235 4612

**Tunisia**

Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia  
29 Prince's Gate  
London SW7 1QG  
Tel: 0044 207 584 8117  
Fax: 0044 207 225 2884

**Honorary Consul**

Mr Louis Maguire  
15 Rathgar Road  
Dublin 6  
Tel: 01 4976735  
Fax: 01 4976060.

**United Arab Emirates**

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates  
30 Princes Gate  
London SW7 1PT  
Tel: 0044 207 581 1281  
Fax: 0044 207 581 9616

## Irish Embassies and Diplomatic Missions to Arab Countries

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### Algeria

Diplomatic Representation for Algeria is handled by the Embassy in Switzerland.

Kirchenfeldstrasse 68  
CH-3005 Berne  
Tel: 0041 31 3521442  
Fax: 0041 31 352 1455

### Bahrain

Diplomatic Representation for Bahrain is handled by the Embassy in Saudi Arabia.

### Egypt

3 Abu El Fida St (7th Floor)  
Zamalek, Cairo  
P.O. Box 2681, Zamalek, Cairo  
Tel: 00202 7358264  
Fax: 00202 7362863

### Iraq

Diplomatic Representation for Iraq is handled by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin.

### Jordan

Diplomatic Representation for Jordan is handled by the Embassy in Egypt.

### Kuwait

Diplomatic Representation for Kuwait is handled by the Embassy in Saudi Arabia.

### Lebanon

Diplomatic Representation for Lebanon is handled by the Embassy in Egypt.

### Honorary Consul

Khaled Daouk  
Rue de Chilie  
Kollelat Building - Verdun  
P.O. Box 11-746, Beirut  
Tel: 009611 863040  
Fax: 009611 860076

### Libya

Diplomatic Representation for Libya is handled by the Embassy in Italy.

Piazza di Campitelli 3  
00186 Rome  
Tel: 0039 06 697 9121  
Fax: 0039 06 679 2354

### Morocco

Diplomatic Representation for Morocco is handled by the Embassy in Portugal.

Rua da Imprensa  
a Estrela 1-4  
1200684 Lisbon  
Tel: 00351 21 392 9440  
Fax: 00351 21 397 7363

### Honorary Consul

Abdelhak Bennani  
Building Copragri  
Bd. Moulay Ismail Km 6  
3 Route de Rabat  
Aïn Sebaâ  
Casablanca  
Tel: 00 212 22 66 03 06  
Fax: 00 212 22 66 03 21

### Oman

Diplomatic Representation for Oman is handled by the Embassy in Saudi Arabia.

### Palestine

Representative Office of Ireland to the  
Palestinian Authority  
Al-Watania Towers, 2nd Floor  
Al-Bireh, Ramallah, Palestine  
Tel: 00970 2 240 6811  
Fax: 00970 2 240 6816

### Qatar

Diplomatic Representation for Qatar is handled by the Embassy in Saudi Arabia.

**Saudi Arabia**

PO Box 94349  
Riyadh 11693  
Tel: 00966 1 488 2300  
Fax: 00966 1 488 0927

**Sudan**

Diplomatic Representation for Sudan is handled by the Embassy in Egypt.

**Syria**

Diplomatic Representation for Syria is handled by the Embassy in Egypt.

**Honorary Consul**

Naji-Pierre Chaoui  
P.O. Box 46  
Damascus  
Tel: 00963 11 334 2144  
Fax: 00963 11 222 1320

**Tunisia**

Diplomatic Representation for Tunisia is handled by the Embassy in Spain.

Ireland House  
Paseo de la Castellana 46-4  
28046 Madrid  
Tel: 0034 91 436 4093  
Fax: 0034 91 4351677

**Honorary Consul**

Morcef Mzabi  
Dalmas SARL  
1 Rue Laroussi Haddad  
Zi Sidi Rezig 2033  
Tel: 00216 71 432 888  
Fax: 00216 71 432 823

**United Arab Emirates**

Diplomatic Representation for United Arab Emirates is handled by the Embassy in Saudi Arabia.

**Yemen**

Diplomatic Representation for Yemen is handled by the Embassy to the United Nations in New York.

Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations  
1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza  
885 Second Avenue, 19th Floor  
New York N.Y. 10017  
Tel: 001 212 421 6934  
Fax: 001 212 752 4726  
Email: [Irlun@Undp.org](mailto:Irlun@Undp.org)

## Enterprise Ireland Offices in the Arab World

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### **Dubai Office**

Crowne Plaza Commercial Tower  
Skeikh Zayed Road  
PO Box 62425, Dubai  
UAE

Tel: 00971 4331 4493

Fax: 00971 4331 2294

### **Riyadh Office**

C/O Embassy of Ireland  
Diplomatic Area  
PO Box 94349  
Riyadh 11693  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Tel: 009661 488 1383

Fax: 009661 488 1094

### **Dublin SEMEA Office**

SEMEA, Enterprise Ireland  
Merrion Hall  
Strand Road  
Sandymount  
Dublin 4

Tel: 01 2066405

Fax: 01 2066397

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