

# UAE among most digitally competitive nations

Nation ranked 17th after excelling in the fields of business agility and regulatory frameworks

DUBAI

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The UAE is the only country in the Arab world again ranked in the top 20 on the Digital Competitiveness Index, according to a report released by the IMD World Digital Competitiveness Centre.

The country is ranked 18th globally, up one spot from last year, due to its continued developments and increased adoption of digital strategies in various projects and initiatives being implemented.

The other Arab countries are Saudi Arabia at 42, down from 36 in 2017, Qatar, which remains in 28th spot, and Jordan which moved up from 56 to 45.

The research group at IMD Business School in Switzerland has been publishing the competitiveness rankings every year since 1989.

This is the second edition of the World Digital Competitiveness Ranking (WDCR).

It studied 63 economies and quantified the rapid technological transformations the countries are undergoing, providing a tool for decision-makers in the public and private sectors to interpret and address these changes.

## Rankings of Arab Countries

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
UAE	26	22	25	18	17
Qatar	28	32	28	28	28
Saudi Arabia	-	-	-	36	42
Jordan	46	49	48	56	45

Source: IMD

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Jose Caballero | Economist

According to the report, the UAE tops globally when it comes to Business Agility, a subfactor of the 'Future Readiness' indicator.

The country is ranked third globally on Regulatory Framework, a subfactor of the 'Technology' indicator. The UAE also ranks fourth globally in terms of Talent, a subfactor for the 'Knowledge' indicator.

Jose Caballero, senior economist at IMD World Digital Competitiveness Centre, told *Gulf News* that the UAE has improved in certain aspects, especially in technology and future readiness, but there are some things the country has to consider to improve its ranking in the future.

"In Business Agility and Reg-

ulatory Framework, the UAE ranks high. These two sub-factors are crucial for improving digital competitiveness," he said.

He said that the country is ranked 53rd in Training and Education. When it comes to public expenditure on education, the country is ranked 61st while concerning the Pupil-Teacher Ratio, it is ranked 41st.

### Low R&D expenditures

The country's expenditure on R&D is relatively low.

"In the long term, having a technological framework and readiness for digital changes may not be sustainable if you do not have the foundation of digitalisation — knowledge and train-

ing. The UAE needs to strengthen these aspects to improve its digital competitiveness," he said.

Ammar Al Malek, executive director of Dubai Internet City, told *Gulf News* that the findings of this latest report on digital competitiveness are really encouraging.

"They prove that our efforts to invest in talent and create supportive ecosystems for technology businesses are paying off, and enabling us to become ready for a future dominated by agile and disruptive businesses," he said.

With a focus on nurturing new business ideas and supporting companies of all sizes to thrive and grow, Al Malek added that Dubai Internet City is one of the key drivers of this process, and "we look forward to continuously improving our ecosystem to remain one of the main catalysts of technology generated growth in the region."

The US leads the 2018 rankings, followed by Singapore, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland. Rising from the third spot last year, the US overtook Singapore and Sweden to grab the top spot.

In 2017, the top 10 consisted of Singapore, Sweden, the US, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Canada and Norway.

Bris said that the US had capitalised on its improvements in knowledge and in technology.

This year, the majority of countries in the study experienced an improvement in their level of digital competitiveness.