المركز الاتحادي للتنافسية والإحصاء
FEDERAL COMPETITIVENESS AND STATISTICS CENTRE

United Arab Emirates

THE GDP NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

When The Economy Grew Faster than the Instruments Measuring It

2026

Ministry of Cabinet Affairs | وزارة شؤون مجلس الوزراء

A once-in-a-generation rebuild of the national accounts on new audited data, unified methods and modern international standards.

PART I · THE IMPERATIVE — THE CASE FOR ACTION

The economy grew faster than the instruments measuring it.

$517bn

AED 1.9 Trillion
UAE GDP 2025
(Constant Prices)

6.2%

National Growth, Above Global Averages

A larger, more complex and increasingly digital economy — fast-growing free zones, financial services, logistics and new-economy sectors — has outpaced the surveys and processes built to observe it.

When the instruments lag the economy they measure, the official number drifts from reality. A structurally transformed economy needs a structurally modern measurement to match it — comprehensive in coverage, unified in method, and comparable across borders.

PART I · THE BASIS — FOUR FOUNDATIONS

Why the UAE is undertaking the review — the reasons it rests on.

KEY DRIVER

A New Audited Data Foundation

Federal Corporate Tax (Decree-Law No. 47 of 2022) created a near-universal, audited record of the business population — including the free zones — the single most powerful new source for measuring the modern economy.

1

Newer, Broader Data Sources

An updated business register, administrative records, field surveys and entirely new sources that reflect the true size and diversity of activity across all seven emirates.

2

Emerging Economic Activities

A fast-growing digital economy, free zones, financial services and logistics that demand updated, comprehensive coverage to be represented in the national accounts.

3

Modern International Standards

Alignment with the System of National Accounts and a refreshed 2024 base year — the conditions for accuracy, comparability and international acceptance.

THE NEW DATA FOUNDATION

Corporate tax gave the UAE a new audited view of its own economy — for the first time.

For most of its history the UAE was a light-tax economy — with no single, mandatory, audited record of the full business population, especially across its free zones. Federal Corporate Tax changed that overnight.

Under Federal Decree-Law No. 47 of 2022 — a 9% rate from June 2023, and a 15% Domestic Minimum Top-up Tax on large multinationals from January 2025 — virtually every business must register with the Federal Tax Authority, and larger entities file audited statements.

An updated business register
Near-universal, legally mandated coverage of active entities.

Audited value-added by entity
Verified financials mapped to sector and activity.

Free-zone visibility
The previously under-observed economy, brought into scope.

Higher-frequency signal
Structured, recurring filings that shorten production cycles.

> The timing is not a coincidence: this foundation matured precisely when the National Statistics Data Platform (NSDP) was built to consume administrative data — and when the GDP review needed it.

PART II · THE ANATOMY OF THE REVIEW

Six pillars, one unified series.

PILLAR 01

Unified Base Year · 2024

One national base year and a periodic rebasing cycle across all seven emirates, per international best practice.

PILLAR 02

Expanded Activity Base

Wider coverage including the digital economy and previously non-observed activities, for a truly comprehensive GDP.

PILLAR 03

Unified Methods

Harmonized methodological notes and one publication calendar.

PILLAR 04

Unified Financial-Sector Method

A single national methodology for banking output (FISIM) and insurance activity.

PILLAR 05

Unified Government Method

Harmonized public administration value-added, with functional classification and clean activity separation.

PILLAR 06

Free-Zone Integration

Comprehensive, unified coverage of free-zone and semi-government entities within GDP and its data flows.

Expected outcome by March 2027: a re-established 2010–2026 series on one methodology and comprehensive coverage, fully consistent with the System of National Accounts.

PART III · STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Comprehensive revision is what credible systems do. The outlier is one that doesn't.

RECOMMENDED

A standing expectation

The System of National Accounts and the IMF recommend periodic rebasing — roughly every five years — so the base year stays representative of the economy.

ROUTINE

Standard among leading economies

Benchmark and comprehensive revisions are routine across the world›s most advanced statistical offices.

RESPONSIBLE

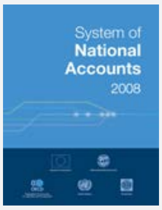
The UAE, realigning

The UAE is bringing its national accounts back onto the cycle that best practice expects — a deliberate step into line with its peers.

The risk is not in revising the number. The risk is a number left unrevised while the economy moves on.

PART III · QUALITY ASSURANCE

Comparability and quality, designed in — not inserted.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

System of National Accounts

The internationally agreed framework for GDP — the standard against which the new series is built and read.

United Nations

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

UN Fundamental Principles

Professional independence, sound methods and transparency — the principles that make official statistics trusted.

modernstats

PRODUCTION MODEL

GSBPM

The Generic Statistical Business Process Model — the common process language of national statistical offices.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

UN NQAF

The National Quality Assurance Framework — quality managed and evidenced across the full production lifecycle.

Each methodological choice in the review — base year, coverage, financial-sector and government methods — is made to be consistent with these standards , so the resulting series is comparable with peer economies and legible to every institution that consumes it.

PART III · GOVERNANCE & INDEPENDENCE

A Rigorous, Impartial Process — by Design.

01
Professional independence

Methods and results are determined on statistical grounds, insulated from any single outcome.

02
Documented, published methodology

Concepts, classifications and bridge tables set out in the open for external scrutiny.

03
Quality gates across the lifecycle

Checkpoints aligned to the UN NQAF at every stage of production.

04
Independent technical assistance

IMF technical assistance in reconstructing and reconciling the series will be requested.

05
Audit-grade source data

Anchored in audited corporate-tax filings and official administrative registers.

06
Full traceability

Every figure reproducible from source — defensible on the record, not on assertion.

Because the results are reproducible from audited records rather than analytical judgment, they are defensible to any reviewer.

PART IV · THE COMMITMENT — THE NATIONAL ROADMA

A sequenced path to one number, announced to the world.

30 MAR 2027

The National Reveal

New series & 2024 base year released; shared with IMF and UN Statistics.

Q1 2027

Series Rebuilt

2010–2026 recomputed and reconciled with IMF technical assistance.

DEC 2026

Data & Base Year

Matrices from all seven emirates consolidated; 2024 base year set.

JULY 2026

National Announcement

Plan for a review at the national level to be announced

MAY 2026

Abu Dhabi Announces

Announces its revision and re-basing, reinforcing consistency.

MARCH 2026

Dubai Announces

Announces a comprehensive revision and re-based GDP series.

PART IV · THE COMMITMENT

The commitments behind the number.

01

Publish the full methodology

Concepts, classifications, sources and bridge tables released openly, so any reviewer can follow the reconstruction.

02

Maintain a regular rebasing cycle and a revision policy

A predictable schedule aligned to international practice — not repeated, ad-hoc revisions.

03

Engage the IMF and UN throughout

Technical assistance and consultation carried through to the release.

04

Maintain one consistent series forward

A single, coherent 2010–2026 series carried forward — a new steady state, not a moment.

@FCSCUAE @FCSAUAE

For more information, please contact FCSC at:
info@fcsc.gov.ae