

OPINION

SHHHHHT! AMONGST A WEALTH MANAGEMENT TECTONIC SHIFT, THE UAE HAS EMERGED AS THE SINGLE FAMILY OFFICES SUPER HUB

The smart, sophisticated money loves nothing more but to eschew the spotlight, to operate discreetly. “*Money talks, Wealth whispers*”, as the saying goes. It seems, though, that the secret is out: every family office that matters has its eyes on – if not already a second leg in – the Middle East.

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All of Reuters, the FT and Bloomberg recently reported on prominent family offices actively exploring permanent establishments – if not a full relocation – to the UAE.

The triggers? A convergence of factors, of course, but concerns over regulation signals are the one most often referred to.

Switzerland proposed increased disclosure regulations and a potential 50% tax on large inheritances and gifts is leading Swiss families to leave the country with their family offices in tow¹.

Stricter regulations (again!) and increased reporting obligations are the main reason for Switzerland's Asian pendant, Singapore, reporting a similar outflow. The latter is particularly material as following the introduction of tax-incentives, the pool of Single Family offices (“SFOs”) registered in the City-state grew 3 times to 1,400 at the end of 2024².

The smart money is increasingly more mobile and voting with its feet. Ultra-high-net-worth individuals [UHNWIs] have relocated globally at historically unprecedented rates in 2025, driven by global economic and political shifts. Close to 10,000 have set their sights onto the UAE, the UHNWIs net inflow leader for the past three years [by contrast, Singapore projects a UHNWIs net inflow of just 1,600 in 2025, down over 50% from 3,500 in 2024, per CNBC].

1. There are between 250 and 300 SFOs in Switzerland, per Reuters [[reuters.com/business/single-family-offices-switzerland-worth-670-bln-study-shows04-06-2024-/](https://www.reuters.com/business/single-family-offices-switzerland-worth-670-bln-study-shows04-06-2024-/)]
2. [mas.gov.sg/news/speeches/2024/building-a-stronger-tomorrow---family-offices-in-our-flourishing-wealth-management-landscape](https://www.mas.gov.sg/news/speeches/2024/building-a-stronger-tomorrow---family-offices-in-our-flourishing-wealth-management-landscape)

Of course, a pragmatic and open stance immigration policy alone does not lead a jurisdiction to become a *bona fide* wealth management hub.

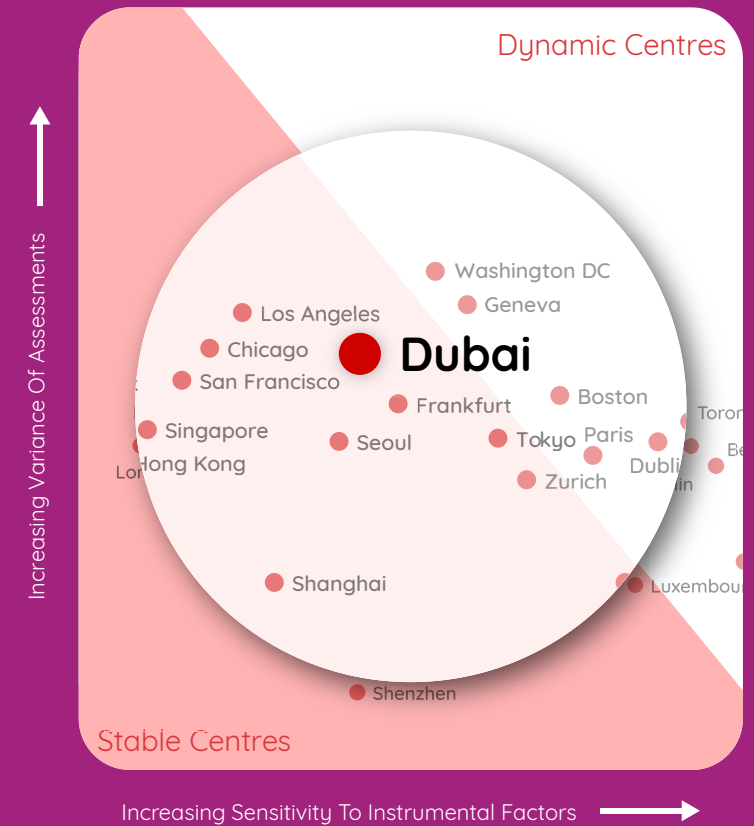
Wealth preservation is a long team game. For the smart money to commit to a country's wealth management infrastructure, more is required: credibility, stability, privacy. This is where the UAE, with its proactive commitment to private wealth and offering tailored towards these contemporary needs, has emerged as more than a mere alternative, but as the new wealth management power hub.

The Gulf State has been making strides as a Financial centre for the past decade. Dubai and Abu Dhabi have cemented their positions amongst the 13 'Global' Financial centres, with Dubai now checking in at 11th worldwide - the only 'Global leader' on the rise and n1 likely to 'Become More Significant' for the 2nd consecutive year, per the recent Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI), a benchmark measuring the performance and reputation of financial hubs worldwide³.

But in a context of high inflation and economic uncertainty, what strikes is how the UAE is perceived – as highly stable.

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Global Financial Centres | Stability rating



3. longfinance.net/media/documents/GFCI_38_Report_2025.09.25_v1.0.pdf

Dubai is now deemed more stable than traditional, old-money, centers like Frankfurt, Zurich, Geneva or Tokyo. How times have changed.

It therefore stands to reason that UHNWIs relocating to the country would consider making the most out of its infrastructure, and in particular, its proprietary investment regulatory framework.

Built with local and regional needs in mind, but benchmarking to appeal to the global super-sophisticated players, the UAE's Proprietary investment regulatory framework offers arguably the most comprehensive and versatile tool chest of wealth structuring/business continuity solutions in the world. The most sophisticated of these can be found within the common law financial free zones of the Abu Dhabi Global Markets ("ADGM") and the Dubai International Financial Centre ("DIFC").

The UAE has also introduced wide-ranging fiscal exemptions for qualifying financial activities amongst clear, simple and predictable tax policies, as well as operational privacy. SFOs can opt not to have their data in the public domain.

This confluence of factors has led to a significant acceleration in Proprietary investments undertaken in and out of the country, boosting an already fast growing SFOs ecosystem. The cherry on the Sunday? Superior deal flow. A recent UBS survey reports that alternative assets [particularly private equity and private debt] outweigh traditional assets among large SFOs, and many new initiatives are driven via the Gulf instead of traditional financial centres.

There is tectonic shift in the wealth management world. Will the UAE emerge as the Single-Family Offices super hub?

Shhhht! Do not say it too loud: it seems it just has.

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Interested in the UAE's rise as a global wealth hub and M/HQ's expertise in assisting SFOs/MFOs? Watch our webcast mini-series "[SFO x MFOs in the UAE](#)"



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We have extensive experience advising on a broad range of wealth structuring and legacy planning issues. We particularly assist in establishing and servicing **Single- and Multi- Family offices, Family- and Group- Holdings, Foundations** and other asset consolidation/protection and intergenerational wealth management structures.

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