StartupBlink

Innovators Business Environment Index 2026



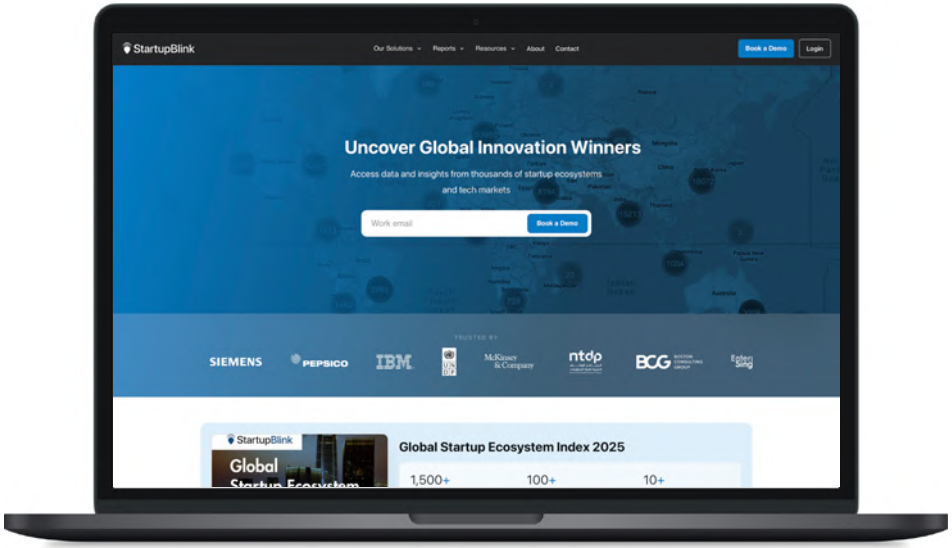
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About StartupBlink

StartupBlink is a global startup ecosystem research platform, providing data and insights about the innovation economy to advise and support decision-makers in growing their innovation efforts.



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How Do We Support Decision-Makers?

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We help local economies grow by mapping, analysis, benchmarking and policy advising.

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120+
Countries' Business Environments

1,500+
Startup Ecosystems

250,000+
Startups, Coworking Spaces, and Accelerators

370+
Corporations' Startup Activity

100+
Tech Market Verticals

StartupBlink Publications

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Flagship Indexes



Global Startup Ecosystem Index

A ranking of 1,400+ cities' and 110+ countries' startup ecosystem success.



Corporate Startup Activity Index

A first-of-its-kind report analyzing the startup-related activities of more than 370 corporations worldwide.

Industry Reports





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Foreword



Eli David Rokah

CEO of StartupBlink

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Governments have been trying to utilize grants, accelerators and micro-interventions to trigger innovation for years. However, our work with various economies reveals a consistent pattern; these targeted incentives are not the main drivers of long-term economic progress. A strong, stable and genuinely pro-business environment is what really makes the difference.

Much of the recent global attention has focused on those nations that have improved their fundamental conditions. Singapore has been a prime example for a very long time of how business-friendly laws, efficient governance, and transparent rules can take a city-state to a new level and make it a global hub. Paraguay and El Salvador are becoming attractive markets to new investors simply because they are streamlining their business conditions rather than initiating heavy capital projects. Saudi Arabia is changing the face of the economy by modernizing the business environment at home. And if we look back, in the United States', presence of flexible bankruptcy laws, the ease of setting up a company and sensible regulatory frameworks are major factors in the culture-building of entrepreneurship that lasted over time.

While the business environment is undoubtedly at the core of everything, only a few global indices consider it from the perspective of innovators, founders, and builders. Current benchmarks rely on broad economic categories that often miss the real, practical conditions innovators need to succeed and scale.

This led us to create the Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI), a transparent, practical and innovation-relevant benchmark that shows how countries support the development and growth of companies that want to scale and compete globally.

IBEI zeroes in on the basics: the rules, conditions, and policies that directly affect the innovators' freedom to start, operate and grow. This is different from our Global Startup Ecosystem Index (GSEI), which tracks the output and performance of the ecosystem. IBEI, on the other hand, assesses the foundational environment that results in such output.

For policymakers, IBEI is a global KPI that shows how conducive your business environment is for innovators. Our advice to you is simple: to help your economy grow, make it easy for anyone to do business and keep government interference low.

For innovators, the place you choose to build your business will shape your chances of success. Choose wisely, and we hope this index helps make that decision easier.

Introduction

The StartupBlink Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI) is a global benchmark dedicated to evaluating how easily innovators can start and operate a business across the world.

This Index introduces a comprehensive framework designed to capture the readiness of national environments for entrepreneurship, the systems, institutions, and infrastructure that enable innovators to begin and scale their journey efficiently and with confidence.

125 countries and +30 Parameters

Covering more than 125 countries, the report applies a consistent methodology based on over 30 measurable parameters to assess how accessible, predictable, and reliable national business environments are for innovators. Scores on a 0–100 scale reflect levels of friction and the strength of institutional support for starting and operating a business.

Beyond serving as a benchmarking tool, the framework also shows how policy choices shape a country's ability to innovate. As countries compete for talent and investment, the indicators make it clear which business environments are reducing barriers to entrepreneurship and which are not. The scoring system also supports practical, evidence-based reforms by helping policymakers spot priority areas and learn from countries that have successfully strengthened their business conditions.

What Does IBEI Measure?

The IBEI measures the friction and infrastructure that define the business journey:

> ***Can I start easily? Can I operate profitably? Can I trust the system?***

This is achieved through three Pillars that together form the structure of the Index:

- **Ease of Operating a Business:**
  A measure of how simple, fast, and operationally frictionless it is to start, run, and maintain a business in a country.
- **Business Incentives:**
  An evaluation of how financially attractive a country is for entrepreneurs and investors.
- **Market Perception:**
  A measure of how a country is viewed globally in terms of governance quality, credibility, transparency, stability, human capital, and international mobility.

To support deeper analysis, all parameters are also grouped into five Functional Categories.
This is a different perspective than the pillars to analyze the business environments:

Regulation & Governance

Assesses the legal, regulatory, and procedural environment using parameters such as Open Regulation, Starting a Business, Government, Resolving Insolvency, Labor Law Rigidity, and Control of Corruption.

Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure

Evaluates financial systems through parameters like Funding Availability, Financial Tools Openness, Market Size, Lending & Credit Access, Cross-Border Banking, and Credit Rating.

Taxation

Measures the tax environment using Corporate Tax Rate, Capital Gains Tax, Dividend Tax, and Top Personal Income Tax.

Digital Infrastructure

An evaluation of the digital infrastructure through parameters such as Internet Freedom and Internet Speed.

Global Mobility & Openness

Evaluates cross-border accessibility and international accessibility through English Proficiency, Cost of Living, Trade Openness, and Passport Power.

The IBEI dataset is built on StartupBlink's proprietary intelligence, enriched by a vast network of internationally recognized sources, including inputs from IMF, World Bank, and UN—to generate a new, comprehensive standard of insight. A detailed explanation of parameters used and scoring logic appears later in this report under the Methodology section.

Reward and Penalty Mechanism

After countries are scored, the IBEI applies calibrated Rewards and Penalties to better reflect conditions affecting only a small number of countries. Rewards add modest bonus points where enabling conditions reduce friction for innovators, while Penalties account for additional barriers such as long registration times or restrictive currency rules. These adjustments affect only total scores, not Pillars or Functional Categories. As a result, a country's Pillar and Functional Category scores won't necessarily add up to its total score.

Why is IBEI needed?

Countries increasingly compete for entrepreneurs, investment, and global talent, yet many continue to face bureaucratic friction, weak institutions, and unpredictable regulation that prevent innovators from getting started. In this context, a reliable business environment is no longer a policy advantage but a strategic necessity. The IBEI addresses this need by providing a transparent, comparable assessment of the foundational conditions that enable entrepreneurship.

What Makes IBEI Unique?

Unlike legacy business-environment benchmarks or innovation-focused indices, the IBEI is the first and only framework specifically designed around the innovator's journey. It isolates the starting conditions, the friction, trust, and financial feasibility that are often overlooked in traditional economic evaluations. By combining institutional reliability, process efficiency, and financial accessibility, the IBEI provides a uniquely actionable lens for innovators.

Conceptual Framework

The IBEI is built on a simple idea: lower friction enables faster company formation, credible institutions support scale, and aligned incentives sustain growth. These factors are captured through three pillars reflecting the experience of starting and operating a business, informed by StartupBlink's global research and policy work.

While the Global Startup Ecosystem Index (GSEI) measures innovation outcomes, the IBEI assesses the foundational conditions that make those outcomes possible. Together, they provide a complementary view of global innovation, from starting conditions to results.

Intended Use

- **Governments and public institutions** use the IBEI as a diagnostic instrument to identify structural bottlenecks and design evidence-based reforms.
- **Investors and development organizations** use the Index to assess institutional stability and risk in emerging markets.
- **Founders and ecosystem builders** compare the relative accessibility of environments in which to establish new ventures.

The IBEI is not prescriptive; rather, it highlights structural conditions and enables governments to benchmark themselves against global peers.

For deeper insight, join the StartupBlink Research Membership. Members access the full IBEI and GSEI results and may request tailored baseline reports on questions such as where to start a business, how countries compare regionally, and other topics within the innovation economy.

This report comprises the following sections:

- **Key Insights:** An overview of macro trends shaping the business environment for innovators.
- **Global and Regional Rankings:** Comparative rankings covering 125 countries across five world regions.
- **Country Profiles:** Analysis for each country, combining quantitative metrics with qualitative insights.
- **City Spotlights:** Profiles of selected cities showcasing how national strengths translate into local success.
- **Recognitions:** Honoring the Country, City, Regional Government, and Region of the Year for their momentum and dedication, regardless of Index results.
- **Methodology:** An overview of data sources, parameters, and the framework underlying the Index.
- **Annexes:** Outlining the technical methods and validation checks used to build the IBEI, as well as rankings by pillars.

How to Read the IBEI

- **What it measures:** The degree of friction innovators face when starting and operating businesses.
- **What it does not:** The IBEI does not evaluate startup performance or innovation outcomes; these are covered by the Global Startup Ecosystem Index (GSEI).

The views presented in this report belong to StartupBlink and do not necessarily represent the views of our partners. This report is opinionated by design, based on our consulting experience and hundreds of conversations with economic developers. Some of those opinions will be proven wrong over time.

Our work is constantly improved by feedback from you, our readers. If you have any feedback, feel free to contact us via this form.



Ziv Baida, PhD

Editor-in-Chief and Index Development Lead, StartupBlink

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StartupBlink Global Partners







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StartupBlink works together with partners who actively work to improve the business environment in their locations.
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- Kingston Economic Development [Canada]
- M Accelerator (by M Venture Studio) [United States]
- Accelerate Texas Partnership [United States]

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- Foundation 787 [Bosnia and Herzegovina]
- Vitosha Venture Partners [Bulgaria]
- Endeavor [Bulgaria]
- Research & Innovation Foundation [Cyprus]
- JIC [Czechia]
- Czech Startup Association [The Czech Republic]
- Startup Aarhus [Denmark]
- Helsinki Partners [Finland]
- Maria 01 [Finland]
- Business Tampere [Finland]
- Berlin Partner for Business and Technology [Germany]
- SpinLab [Germany]
- InnovUp [Italy]
- Tactica [Kosovo]
- Innovation Center Kosovo [Kosovo]
- Investment and Development Agency of Latvia [Latvia]
- Startup Lithuania [Lithuania]
- Superhero Capital [Lithuania]
- Startup Moldova [Moldova]
- Upstream Festival [Netherlands]
- Startup Macedonia [North Macedonia]
- Startup Club Skopje [North Macedonia]
- Wroclaw Agglomeration Development Agency [Poland]
- Startup Portugal [Portugal]
- Algarve Evolution [Portugal]
- Impact Hub Bucharest [Romania]
- Cowork Timisoara [Romania]
- ROStartup Ecosystem Association [Romania]
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Banja Luka Region [Bosnia and Herzegovina]
- Agency for Business Competitiveness (ACCIO) [Spain]
- SSE Business Lab [Sweden]
- Techosystem [Ukraine]

Asia Pacific

- Swisscontact Cambodia [Cambodia]
- APS Asset Management [China]
- Tokyo Metropolitan Government [Japan]
- Astana Hub [Kazakhstan]
- Digital Penang [Malaysia]
- National Information Technology Park of Mongolia [Mongolia]
- Enterprise Singapore [Singapore]
- IT Park Uzbekistan [Uzbekistan]
- Vietnam National Innovation Center (NIC) [Vietnam]
- Danang Business Incubator (DNES) [Vietnam]
- Hai Phong Innovation and Application of Science and Technology Center [Vietnam]

Middle East & Africa

- H2i – Hub To Innovation [Angola]
- Israel Innovation Authority [Israel]
- GrowthAfrica [Kenya]
- Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture [Namibia]

LATAM & Caribbean

- CorLab – Córdoba's Laboratory of Public Innovation and Govtech [Argentina]
- Supera Parque [Brazil]
- Brazilian National Confederation of Industry [Brazil]
- Ruta N [Colombia]
- Cámara de Comercio de Cali [Colombia]
- Startup Chihuahua [Mexico]
- Ministerio de la Producción del Perú [Perú]
- Oficina Económica y Comercial de España en San Juan de Puerto Rico [Puerto Rico]
- Fundación da Vinci [Uruguay]

KEY INSIGHTS

In this section we present the most notable insights of the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.



Who's Winning (At a Glance)

- The United States (1st), Singapore (2nd), and United Kingdom (3rd) are the top three business environments globally.
- The United Kingdom (3rd), Switzerland (4th), and Netherlands (7th) are the three highest-ranked countries in Europe.
- Saudi Arabia (9th) ranks 1st worldwide for friction-reducing policy levers.
- The Gulf region is leading globally in taxation conditions, with the United Arab Emirates (5th), Bahrain (44th), and Qatar (59th) as the top three performers globally.
- Nordic nations lead Digital Infrastructure globally, with Iceland (27th), Norway (21st), and Denmark (20th) forming the global top three.
- Smaller economies such as Estonia (10th), Luxembourg (13th), and New Zealand (11th) all rank within the global top 15, showing that small markets can still offer highly competitive conditions for innovators.
- Portugal (31st), Croatia (38th), and Slovenia (41st) are the top three countries globally for Global Mobility and Openness, indicating high levels of international accessibility and cross-border movement ease.
- Brazil (42nd), Uruguay (45th), and Puerto Rico (46th), Colombia (47th) and Peru (55th) are the five highest-ranked countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.
- South Africa (61st), Kenya (68th), and Cape Verde (70) rank as the three highest-placed countries in Africa.

Top 20 Countries

Individual leadership highlights among the Top 20:

- The United States (1st) combines a large market size with a conducive business environment.
- Singapore (2nd) scores highest on the eight parameters, more than any other country in the Index.
- United Arab Emirates (5th) and Saudi Arabia (9th) rank 2nd and 6th globally in Taxation, standing out within the Top 20 where most countries perform weakly in this area.
- Japan (8th) ranks 1st globally for Lending Rate and Getting Credit, indicating favorable credit conditions.
- New Zealand (11th) ranks 1st worldwide for Starting a Business, reflecting comparatively low entry barriers.
- Sweden (12th) ranks highest among Top 20 countries in Global Mobility & Openness.
- Cyprus (15th) is the top ranked Western European country for taxation conditions.
- Finland (19th) ranks 1st worldwide for Resolving Insolvency, indicating strong institutional handling of business failure.
- Denmark (20th) ranks 3rd globally in Digital Infrastructure, higher than any other country in the Top 20.

Trends and patterns among the Top 20:

- Seventeen of the Top 20 countries show strong results in Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure. Globally, the top three performers in this category are the United States (1st), Singapore (2nd), and the United Kingdom (3rd).
- Sixteen of the Top 20 countries show strong results in Regulation & Governance, making this a common characteristic among leading business environments.
- Strong Internet Freedom and Internet Speed are a shared characteristic among Top 20 countries, with fourteen of the countries performing strongly in Digital Infrastructure.
- Global Mobility & Openness is a common but not universal strength among the Top 20, with thirteen of the countries performing strongly in this category.
- Access to funding varies even within the Top 20, as twelve of the countries show strong results in the Funding per Capita Parameter.
- Taxation is seldom a key strength in the Top 20, with seventeen countries demonstrating limited performance in this area.
- Overall, Top 20 countries reach their position through different mixes of strengths, rather than a single dominant area of performance.

Countries ranked 21–50

Individual leadership highlights among the countries ranked 21–50:

- Germany (23rd) and France (28th) both rank in the global Top 10 for Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure, with Germany ranking 4th and France 7th worldwide.
- Israel (24th) ranks 2nd worldwide for Funding per Capita, the highest position among countries ranked 21–50.
- Iceland (27th) ranks 1st globally in Digital Infrastructure, followed by Norway (21st) in 2nd place, making both countries global leaders in this category.
- Romania (25th), France (28th), Spain (39th) and Italy (43rd) jointly rank 2nd globally for Financial Tools Openness.
- Two countries stand out for their global Top 10 positions in Regulation & Governance: Taiwan (29th) ranks 7th worldwide, followed by Norway (21st) ranking 10th globally.
- Portugal (31st), Croatia (38th), and Slovenia (41st) form the global top three in Global Mobility & Openness, making international accessibility the strongest shared advantage among these countries.
- Bahrain (44th) ranks 1st globally in Taxation, making it the strongest tax performer worldwide.
- Malaysia (48th) ranks 2nd globally for the Labor Law, standing out in a parameter where most countries among 21–50 perform weakly.

Trends and patterns among the countries ranked 21–50:

- Starting a Business is the most common area of strength among countries ranked 21–50, with twenty-nine countries showing strong results.
- Cross Border Banking follows closely, as twenty-six countries record solid results on this parameter.
- Global Mobility & Openness remains a shared advantage in this group, with sixteen countries showing strong performance in this area.
- Resolving Insolvency also stands out among countries ranked 21–50, with sixteen countries recording strong outcomes.
- Labor Law rarely appears as a strength among countries ranked 21–50, with only Malaysia, Georgia, and Puerto Rico showing strong results.
- Taxation is the least common strength in this range, with Bahrain as the only country showing strong results.

Individual leadership highlights among the countries ranked 51–80:

- Chile (57th) and Costa Rica (73rd) are the only countries in the 51–80 range to place within the global top 30 for Digital Infrastructure, ranking 11th and 22nd, respectively.
- Mexico (58th) records the highest score among countries ranked 51–80 on Financial Tools Openness.
- Qatar (59th), Kuwait (71st), Kosovo (65th), and Bosnia & Herzegovina (72nd) all place in the global Top 10 for Taxation, with Qatar ranked 3rd, Kuwait 4th, and Kosovo and Bosnia & Herzegovina sharing 7th place.
- Kazakhstan (69th) holds 11th place globally in Taxation.
- For Starting a Business, Armenia (66th), Azerbaijan (74th), and Uzbekistan (78th) perform best among countries ranked between 51st and 80th.
- Albania (60th) leads the group in Trade Openness, reflecting relatively strong cross-border trade integration.
- Cape Verde (70th) records the best score in the 51–80 range for Private-Sector Corruption Pressure, reflecting comparatively favorable business integrity conditions.
- El Salvador (79th) records the highest score among countries ranked 51–80 for Labor Law, reflecting comparatively flexible employment regulation.

Trends and patterns among the countries ranked 51–80:

- Twenty-nine of the thirty countries have good-to-strong scores in Regulation & Governance, indicating broadly stable institutional conditions.
- Twenty-seven countries have strong scores in Starting a Business, making it one of the most consistent strengths among countries ranked 51–80.
- Twenty-three countries show strong results in Cost of Living, indicating affordability as a widespread advantage in this range.
- Only eleven countries show good results in Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure, pointing to limited financial depth across much of the group.
- Only four countries have strong results in Taxation within the 51–80 range, making it a selective area of strength rather than a broad characteristic of this group.
- Only two countries show strong results in Labor Law, making it a relatively weak area among countries ranked 51–80.

Countries ranked 81–100

Individual leadership highlights among the countries ranked 81–100:

- Taxation stands out for two countries in the 81–100 range, with Oman (88th) ranked joint 4th globally (tied with Kuwait at 71st) and Kyrgyzstan (84th) ranked 7th globally.
- Paraguay (82nd) and Bolivia (93rd) also score relatively well in Taxation, ranking 16th and 19th globally.
- Oman (88th) and China (85th) show strength across the widest range of parameters among countries ranked 81–100.
- Rwanda (91st) is the only country in the 81–100 range to place within the global top 30 for Regulation & Governance, ranking 22nd worldwide.
- China (85th) is the only country among countries ranked 81–100 to record a good result in Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure, ranking 28th globally.
- Namibia (83rd) records the strongest result among countries ranked 81–100 for Internet Freedom, ranking 36th globally.

Trends and patterns among the countries ranked 81–100:

- Cost of Living is the most widespread parameter-level strength, with nineteen countries showing strong results, making affordability a shared characteristic across this range.
- Regulation & Governance shows the broadest strength in the 81–100 range, with fifteen of the twenty countries achieving good-to-strong results, indicating generally solid institutional conditions among countries ranked 81–100.
- Starting a Business stands out as a common strength among countries ranked 81–100, with fourteen countries recording strong results.
- Taxation also stands out within this group, with eleven countries reaching good-to-strong results, reflecting relatively favorable tax conditions.
- Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure is the weakest area in this among countries ranked 81–100, with only one country, China (85th), achieving a good score, highlighting limited financial depth across most of the group.
- No countries among 81–100 register strong results in Passport Power.

Countries ranked 101–125

Individual leadership highlights among the countries ranked 101 – 125:

- Taxation stands out in the among countries ranked 101–125: several countries rank far higher on Taxation than overall—Tajikistan (108th overall; 20th on Taxation), Iraq (117th; 23rd), Myanmar (118th, 27), Iran (125th; 28th), Cambodia (111th; 39th), and Lebanon (114th; 41st).

- Sri Lanka (104th) delivers the strongest result in Regulation & Governance among countries ranked 101–125, ranking 52nd globally; Senegal (101st) and Ghana (102nd) also perform well, ranking 65th and 66th worldwide, respectively.

- Russia (105th) posts the strongest results on both Funding per Capita and Market Size among countries ranked 101–125, standing out for capital availability and economic scale.

- Zimbabwe (119th) and Belarus (115th) are notable positive exceptions on Global Mobility & Openness, ranking 53rd and 57th globally—well ahead of most countries ranked 101–125.

- Belarus records the highest result in the cohort for Starting a Business, placing it ahead of peers on entry and setup conditions.

Trends and patterns among the countries ranked 101 – 125:

- Cost of Living is the most widespread parameter-level strength, with twenty-two of the twenty-five countries showing strong results.

- Labor Law is a recurring strength among countries ranked 101–125, with fifteen countries showing good-to-strong results, reflecting flexibility in employment conditions.

- Starting a Business also stands out among countries ranked 101–125, with fourteen countries recording strong results, indicating relatively accessible entry conditions.

- Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure and Digital Infrastructure are shared weaknesses in this among countries ranked 101–125, as most countries achieve only weak-to-moderate scores.

Innovators Business Environment Index: Top Countries

Rank	Country	Total Score
1	United States	100.000
2	Singapore	99.145
3	United Kingdom	93.900
4	Switzerland	86.901
5	United Arab Emirates	86.222
6	Canada	86.144
7	The Netherlands	85.715
8	Japan	83.644
9	Saudi Arabia	82.880
10	Estonia	78.997

For extended datasets or customized analysis of business environments across 125 countries, explore our Research Membership.

Innovators Business Environment Index: Country Rankings

Rank	Country	Total Score
11	New Zealand	77.740
12	Sweden	77.012
13	Luxembourg	76.136
14	Ireland	75.448
15	Cyprus	74.630
16	Belgium	74.409
17	Australia	73.812
18	Bulgaria	73.631
19	Finland	73.393
20	Denmark	72.945
21	Norway	72.388
22	Lithuania	71.981
23	Germany	71.922
24	Israel	70.523
25	Romania	70.448
26	Austria	69.618
27	Iceland	69.293
28	France	69.257
29	Taiwan	69.007
30	Czechia	68.788
31	Portugal	68.471
32	South Korea	67.895
33	Greece	67.621
34	Hungary	66.888
35	Latvia	66.681
36	Slovakia	66.291
37	Georgia	65.591
38	Croatia	64.741
39	Spain	64.519
40	Poland	62.997
41	Slovenia	62.687
42	Brazil	61.776
43	Italy	61.699
44	Bahrain	61.246
45	Uruguay	61.232
46	Puerto Rico	60.606
47	Colombia	59.337
48	Malaysia	58.756
49	Malta	58.427
50	Serbia	57.682
51	North Macedonia	57.526
52	Vietnam	57.133
53	Indonesia	56.234
54	India	55.035
55	Peru	54.911
56	Thailand	53.847
57	Chile	52.536
58	Mexico	52.519
59	Qatar	52.287
60	Albania	52.176
61	South Africa	52.168
62	Philippines	50.569
63	Panama	50.565
64	Moldova	50.447
65	Kosovo	49.341
66	Armenia	48.997
67	Ukraine	48.704
68	Kenya	47.709
69	Kazakhstan	47.485
70	Cape Verde	46.992
71	Kuwait	46.548
72	Bosnia and Herzegovina	46.533
73	Costa Rica	46.496
74	Azerbaijan	46.186
75	Argentina	45.625
76	Jamaica	45.496
77	Jordan	44.828
78	Uzbekistan	44.260
79	El Salvador	44.190
80	Morocco	43.258
81	Cote d'Ivoire	42.917
82	Paraguay	42.689
83	Namibia	41.886
84	Kyrgyzstan	41.847
85	China	41.672
86	Ecuador	40.716
87	Tunisia	40.493
88	Oman	40.063
89	Guatemala	39.954
90	Türkiye	39.905
91	Rwanda	39.876
92	Mongolia	39.169
93	Bolivia	39.058
94	Egypt	38.306
95	Nigeria	38.176
96	Dominican Republic	36.222
97	Zambia	35.768
98	Tanzania	33.407
99	Uganda	32.776
100	Pakistan	32.668

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Innovators Business Environment Index: Country Rankings

Rank	Country	Total Score
101	Senegal	32.519
102	Ghana	32.376
103	Nepal	32.034
104	Sri Lanka	31.719
105	Russia	30.251
106	Bangladesh	28.168
107	Liberia	27.681
108	Tajikistan	27.280
109	Algeria	26.528
110	Guinea	25.404
111	Cambodia	25.040
112	Nicaragua	24.846
113	Mauritania	24.786
114	Lebanon	24.657
115	Belarus	22.426
116	Angola	22.053
117	Iraq	21.430
118	Myanmar	16.728
119	Zimbabwe	15.672
120	Ethiopia	14.248
121	Cameroon	11.765
122	Congo	6.103
123	Somalia	3.142
124	Venezuela	0.577
125	Iran	0.100



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REGIONAL RANKINGS

This chapter highlights the top 10 countries across StartupBlink's five main regions: North America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Regional Rankings

- North America

Europe

Asia Pacific

Middle East and Africa

Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional Rank	Country	Global Rank	Total Score
1	United States	1	100.000
2	Canada	6	86.140

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Regional Rankings

North America

▶ Europe

Asia Pacific

Middle East and Africa

Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional Rank	Country	Global Rank	Total Score
1	United Kingdom	3	93.900
2	Switzerland	4	86.900
3	The Netherlands	7	85.710
4	Estonia	10	78.997
5	Sweden	12	77.012
6	Luxembourg	13	76.136
7	Ireland	14	75.448
8	Cyprus	15	74.630
9	Belgium	16	74.409
10	Bulgaria	18	73.630

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Regional Rankings

North America

Europe

▶ Asia Pacific

Middle East and Africa

Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional Rank	Country	Global Rank	Total Score
1	Singapore	2	99.145
2	Japan	8	83.644
3	New Zealand	11	77.740
4	Australia	17	73.812
5	Taiwan	29	69.007
6	South Korea	32	67.895
7	Malaysia	48	58.756
8	Vietnam	52	57.133
9	Indonesia	53	56.234
10	India	54	55.035

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Regional Rankings

North America

Europe

Asia Pacific

▸ Middle East and Africa

Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional Rank	Country	Global Rank	Total Score
1	United Arab Emirates	5	86.222
2	Saudi Arabia	9	82.880
3	Israel	24	70.523
4	Bahrain	44	61.246
5	Qatar	59	52.287
6	South Africa	61	52.168
7	Kenya	68	47.709
8	Cape Verde	70	46.992
9	Kuwait	71	46.548
10	Jordan	77	44.828

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Regional Rankings

North America

Europe

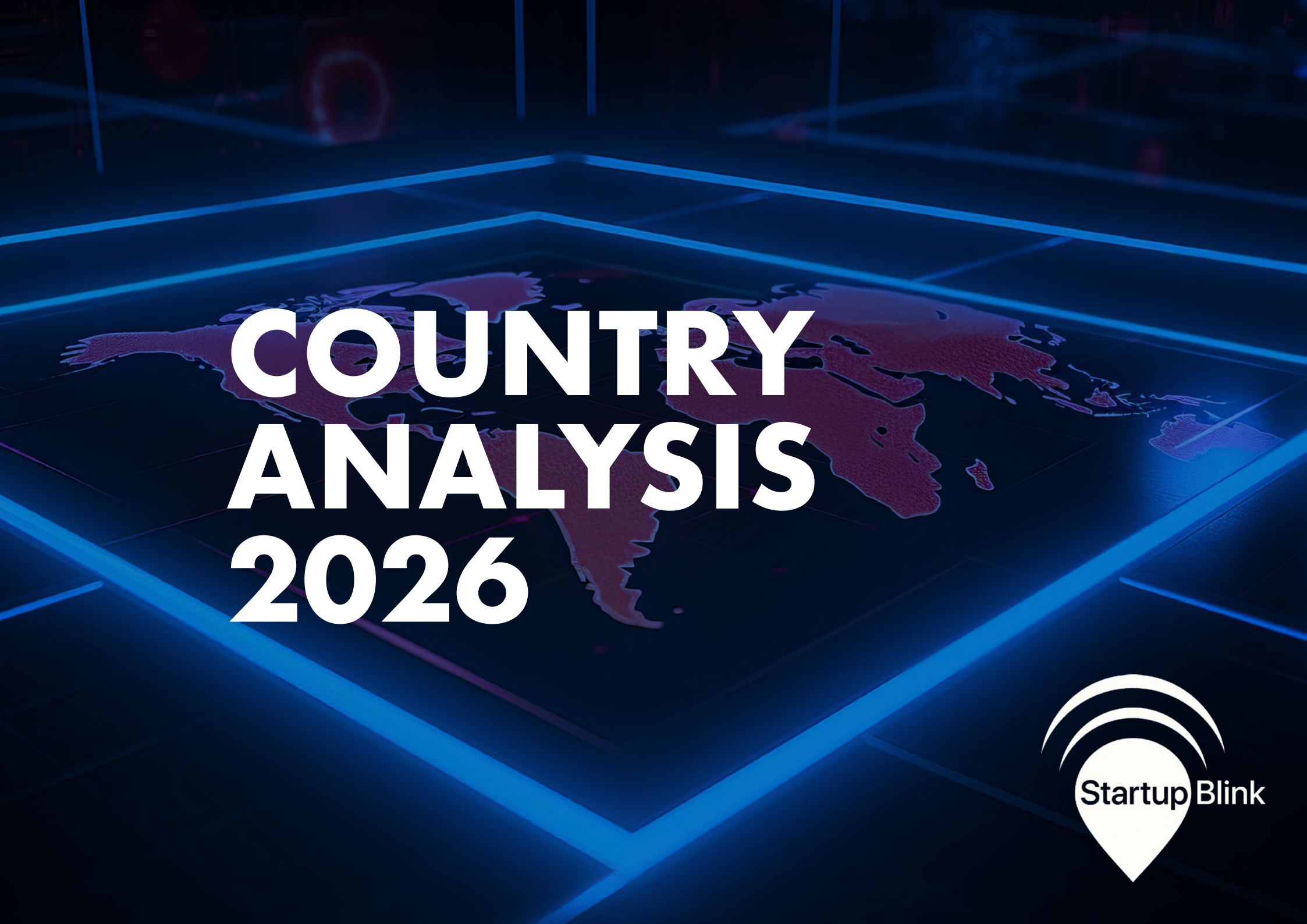
Asia Pacific

Middle East and Africa

▶ Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional Rank	Country	Global Rank	Total Score
1	Brazil	42	61.776
2	Uruguay	45	61.232
3	Puerto Rico	46	60.606
4	Colombia	47	59.337
5	Peru	55	54.910
6	Chile	57	52.536
7	Mexico	58	52.519
8	Panama	63	50.565
9	Costa Rica	73	46.496
10	Argentina	75	45.625

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COUNTRY
ANALYSIS
2026
Startup Blink



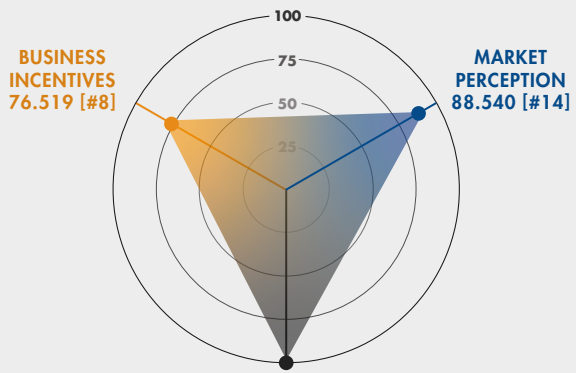
1. United States

GLOBAL RANK
#1

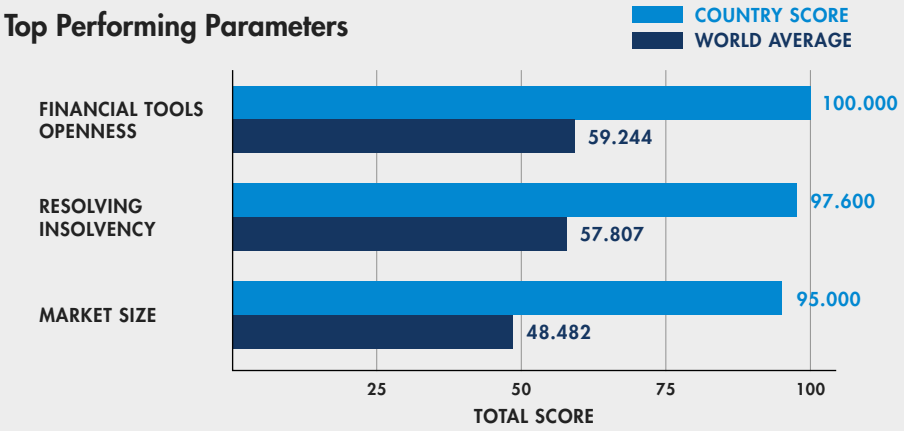
NORTH AMERICA RANK
#1

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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The United States leads the Innovators Business Environment Index in 2026.

- The United States ranks 1st on the IBEI, securing the highest overall position in the Index.
- This performance aligns with the latest StartupBlink Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, where the US also ranks 1st, showing alignment between strong business-environment conditions and ecosystem performance.
- The country ranks 1st in the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, showing that innovators can start, operate, and scale with clarity and predictable processes.
- It ranks 1st in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting strong access to capital and advanced financial infrastructure.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within the United States' overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, the United States places within the top 25 countries on over 60% of the Index's measures, including Funding per Capita, Starting a Business, and Openness of Financial Tools.
- Together, these results reflect a business environment characterized by institutional depth and consistent operating conditions across the Index.

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Country Overview

The United States has historically been the world's hub of capitalism and continues to be one of the most business-friendly places globally. A culture that values entrepreneurship and accepts failure motivates individuals to launch businesses. Regulations like adaptable bankruptcy laws and widespread availability of stock options position the nation as an ideal place for entrepreneurs. These benefits entail compromises: the social safety net is less robust than in numerous developed nations. Nonetheless, this system has facilitated ongoing innovation and development.

The nation's advantages reach into its capital markets. The United States is home to the largest venture-capital ecosystem globally. NASDAQ and the NYSE offer significant exit routes that appeal to investors and entrepreneurs. Robust intellectual property safeguards, reliable judicial systems, and regulatory structures that permit managed experimentation enhance stability. Examples include fintech and autonomous car sandboxes and accelerated assessments for biotech.

Internal rivalry between US states also creates opportunities to differentiate business climates at the state level. Delaware has historically been the preferred state for incorporation, although in recent years several high-profile companies have moved away from the state. Texas and Colorado, meanwhile, continue to attract large numbers of entrepreneurs due to their bold, pro-business initiatives.

Furthermore, innovation hubs like Silicon Valley, Boston and Cambridge, Austin-Round Rock Area, and the Research Triangle integrate talent, funding, and research. Federal laboratories, such as NASA and the Department of Energy, enhance this environment by promoting fundamental science and technology. Initiatives like SelectUSA assist foreign companies in understanding regulations and linking with local partners in a varied market.

In general, the United States continues to have a business environment conducive of innovation. It keeps drawing talent and serves as a global hub of innovation.

"California uniquely demonstrates exceptional openness to emerging technologies—from AI to cleantech—providing crucial early validation for global ventures. Combined with sophisticated infrastructure for scaling across 50 states, founders here access both innovation-friendly early adopters and the world's largest unified market for growth."



Alessandro Marianantoni
CEO, M Accelerator
(by M Venture Studio)

Our Local Partners

M ACCELERATOR los angeles

Accelerate Texas PARTNERSHIP

ROUND ROCK TEXAS



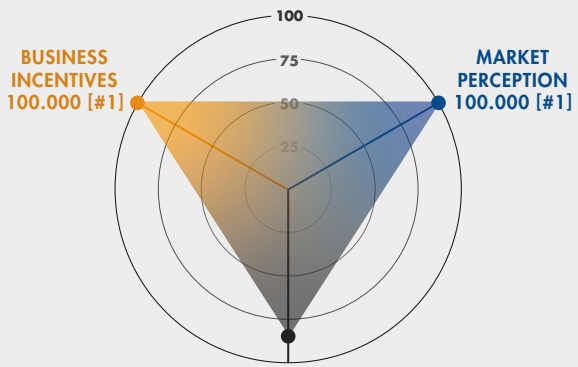
2. Singapore

GLOBAL RANK
#2

ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#1

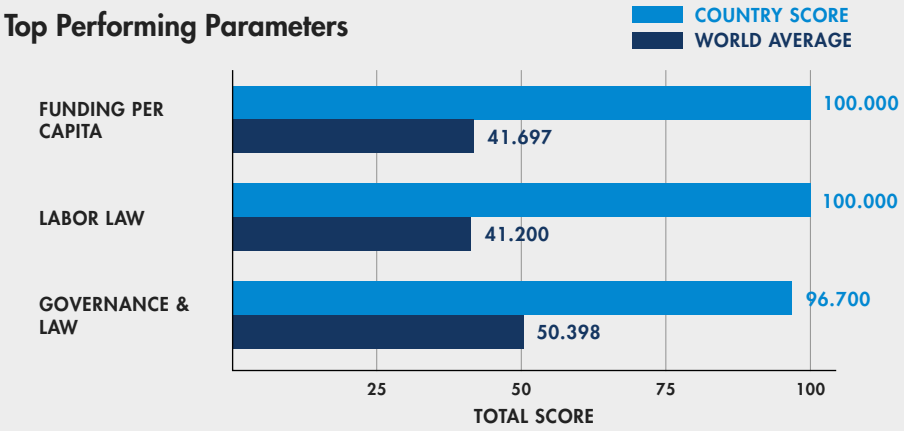
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
84.875 [#15]

Top Performing Parameters



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Singapore leads the world in Market Perception of its business environment.

- Singapore ranks 2nd globally in the IBEI, placing it among the highest-ranked business environments assessed worldwide.
- Singapore ranks 1st overall in Asia Pacific, positioning it at the top of the regional business-environment landscape.
- Singapore's IBEI ranking aligns with its position in the StartupBlink Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, where it ranks 4th worldwide following a sustained upward trend.
- Singapore ranks 1st worldwide under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting the strongest assessments of governance, stability, and international accessibility conditions.
- Singapore ranks 1st globally in the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting the highest assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions in the Index.
- Singapore ranks 1st worldwide in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, based on evaluations of legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- Singapore ranks within the top 25% of the Index for approximately 90% of all Parameters, indicating broad-based performance across the assessment framework.
- Parameters where Singapore is assessed within the top 25% globally include Governance & Law, Funding per Capita, and Starting a Business.
- Taken together, Singapore's results reflect a business environment characterized by institutional consistency, international accessibility, and stable performance across IBEI dimensions.

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Country Overview

In just a few decades, Singapore has transformed from a developing country into one of the globe's most affluent and stable business environments. Targeted economic strategy, strategic planning, and the use of English as the official language sped up its integration into international markets.

Stability has turned into its most significant competitive advantage. Investors and entrepreneurs encounter minimal surprises. Transparent governance, responsible fiscal oversight, and consistent regulatory updates foster a setting in which rules remain stable. This stability promotes sustained investment and establishes Singapore as a key access point to Asia.

Although improvement is needed in the dominance of the Singapore Stock Exchange, Singapore's financial system remains one of the most robust in the region. The country benefits from a strong and well-regulated banking sector, substantial venture capital and private equity funding, and capital markets that are closely linked to major international financial hubs. In addition, a territorial tax system that supports global operations enhances Singapore's overall attractiveness. As a result, companies can access funding, operate across the region, and scale internationally with relative ease.

Robust public institutions support the business environment. Enterprise Singapore assists companies in developing skills, growing internationally, and embracing innovative technologies. JTC enhances the wider ecosystem by creating industrial infrastructure and innovation hubs that foster growth and teamwork. Initiatives like EntrePass, Tech.Pass, and the Global Investor Programme provide evident routes for entrepreneurs and experts to create lasting foundations.

These benefits establish Singapore as a safe and conducive business environment for innovators. It continues to be an extensively linked market for businesses seeking to develop, expand, and compete internationally.

Our Local Partner

Enterprise Singapore



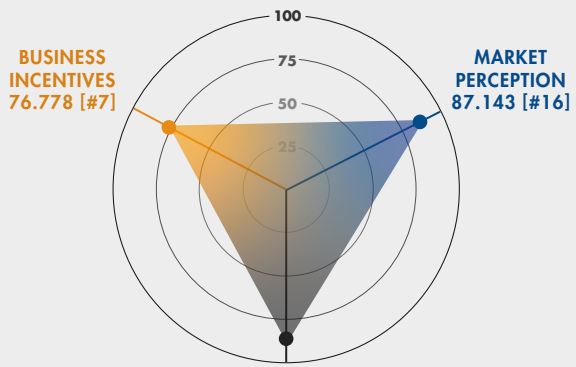
3. United Kingdom

GLOBAL RANK
#3

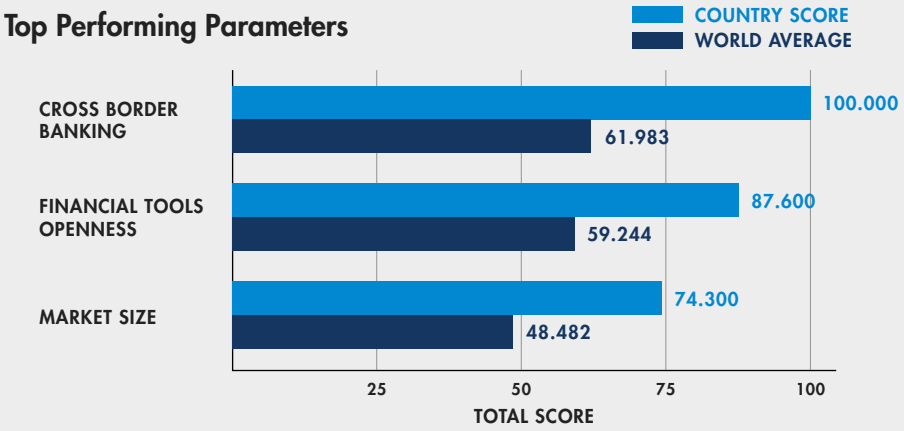
EUROPE RANK
#1

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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The UK leads Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index in 2026.

- The United Kingdom ranks 3rd globally in the IBEI, placing it among the higher-ranked business environments assessed by the Index.
- The UK also ranks 1st in Europe, representing the highest regional position among European countries.
- The UK ranks 3rd worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside the United States and the Netherlands, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.
- The UK ranks 2nd globally and 1st in EMEA in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting strong evaluations of credit systems, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within the UK's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, the United Kingdom ranks among the top 25 countries for approximately 67% of all Parameters, including Cross-Border Banking, Financial Tools Openness, and Trade Openness.
- Overall, the United Kingdom's Index results showcase consistently assessed financial-system capacity and frictionless operating conditions.

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Country Overview

Historically, the United Kingdom has been among the world's strongest places to do business. Reliable institutions, a robust legal system, and high-value sectors such as research, finance, and advanced technology built that reputation. Although Brexit introduced pessimism, its impact has been milder than many expected. In some areas it has even brought an opportunity for more independent and agile policymaking.

The UK is currently undergoing a challenging phase. Recent policy decisions, such as the abolition of non-dom status and increasing taxes, have resulted in various degrees of exodus of its most talented people. Attempts to counterbalance these rises with grants that pick the winning startups have introduced more complexity instead of simplicity. These changes occur while the nation seeks to strengthen its competitiveness.

In spite of these challenges, the UK maintains significant advantages. Its official language is English and it utilizes a vast and internationally linked talent pool. It continues to be one of the leading financial hubs globally, with the London Stock Exchange widely regarded as one of the world's most important markets. Also, the corporate tax structure still provides advantages for research, commercialization, and the development of intellectual property. The revised residency tax regulations also offer benefits for internationally mobile entrepreneurs during their initial years in the nation.

The business environment is further supported by robust institutions. Innovate UK and UK Research and Innovation support the transition of scientific breakthroughs into business opportunities. The FCA Regulatory Sandbox and the Open Banking system establish worldwide standards for regulatory advancement. Additionally, the UK is dedicated to drawing international talent through immigration pathways for skilled workers, such as the Scale-up Visa.

With a clearer direction, the UK can utilize these advantages to create an even more competitive business environment. It has the assets to remain an open, connected, and innovation-driven country for global business.



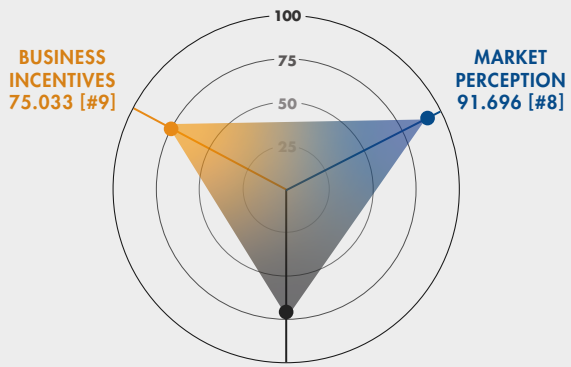
4. Switzerland

GLOBAL RANK
#4

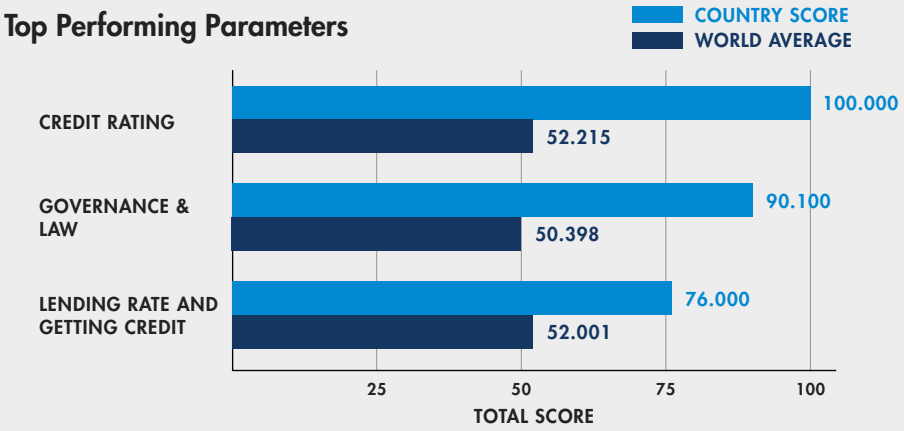
EUROPE RANK
#2

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Switzerland ranks 2nd in Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Switzerland ranks 4th globally in the IBEI, placing it among the higher-ranked business environments assessed by the Index.
- Switzerland secures 2nd place in Europe, reflecting its regional standing within the Index results.
- Switzerland ranks 3rd worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside Canada and Japan, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Switzerland's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Switzerland ranks within the top 25 countries for approximately 52% of all Parameters, including Lending Rate & Getting Credit, Governance & Law, Capital Gains Tax Rate, and Trade Openness.
- Overall, Switzerland delivers a business environment characterized by the effective use of friction-reducing policy levers, a low presence of structural frictions, and strong governance, financial, and trade-related parameters.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Switzerland provides a reliable and consistent business environment. Political stability, consistent economic approach, and a longstanding history of technical proficiency are key aspects of its economy. A culture of engineering and robust scientific organizations has enabled the nation to emerge as a world leader in areas like Foodtech, Healthtech, and Fintech.

Switzerland's main strength lies in its stability. The nation faces nearly zero political or policy surprises. Such consistency draws in companies and investors operating internationally who appreciate transparency. A decentralized system strengthens this setting. Cantons possess considerable power regarding taxation and regulation. This establishes an environment where local variations encourage internal rivalry and enable customized business conditions. Multiple cantons provide residency options for internationally mobile individuals, demonstrating Switzerland's globally open economic approach.

The innovation network links universities, industry associates, and global partners. Switzerland Global Enterprise aids exporters and encourages investment. Various organizations within the national innovation network promote technology transfer, foster scientific collaborations, and support the growth of high-value industries.

The country also retains economic connections with the European Union. Bilateral agreements facilitate seamless cross-border trade while enabling the nation to maintain regulatory autonomy. This equilibrium promotes both transparency and independence.

High living expenses can pose difficulties for early-stage innovators. Nonetheless, Switzerland continues to be a center of innovation, thanks to its dependable, technologically sophisticated, internationally connected business environment.



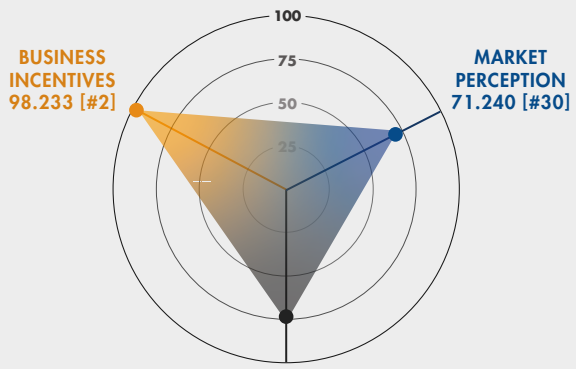
5. United Arab Emirates

GLOBAL RANK
#5

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#1

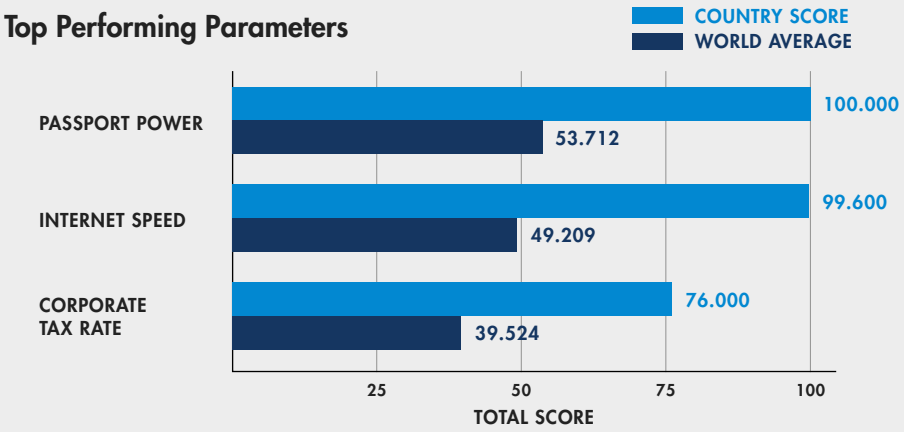
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
73.090 [#42]

Top Performing Parameters



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The United Arab Emirates leads all GCC countries in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- The United Arab Emirates ranks 5th globally and 1st in the Middle East in the IBEI, representing the highest regional placement in the Index.
- The UAE's position in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating strong underlying business-environment assessments relative to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- The UAE ranks 2nd worldwide under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting positive assessment of fiscal and financial conditions.
- The UAE ranks 2nd globally in the Taxation Functional Category, placing it among the highest-ranked countries in tax-related assessments.
- The UAE can further improve on the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- At the Parameter level, the UAE ranks within the top 25% of the Index for more than half of Parameters, including Dividend Tax Rate, Capital Gains Tax Rate, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate.
- Overall, the UAE shows consistently high results across fiscal and incentive-related Parameters, aligning with its position among the top five business environments globally.

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Country Overview

The United Arab Emirates is one of MENA's most diversified and business-friendly environments. Its reliable regulatory system, strong transparency, and the emphasis on global mobility have helped it grow into an appealing business environment.

Its strengths rest on strong institutions, efficient public services, and policies that lower barriers for local and international firms. Many bootstrapped founders choose the country for its incentives and its ease of starting and running a business.

The UAE's globally competitive tax framework remains central to the country's appeal for innovators. Long-term residency options such as the Golden Visa give investors, founders, and skilled professionals a sense of stability and the ability to build lasting roots.

Free Zones are another feature of the UAE business environment. Dubai Internet City, Abu Dhabi Global Market, and the Sharjah Research Technology and Innovation Park offer simplified rules, full foreign ownership, and smooth access to regional and global markets.

The support for innovation expands through institutions. Hub71, Dubai Chambers, the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Center, and the Emirates Development Bank provide funding, partnerships, and support for international growth. Although the UAE's business environment remains more regional than global, its rapid development and forward-looking economic strategy continue to strengthen its global reputation.

Overall, the UAE is a fast-growing and strategically minded business environment. It offers stability, clear advantages, and room to scale for entrepreneurs with global ambitions.





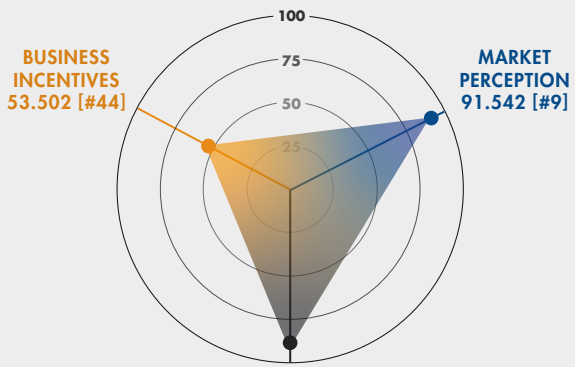
6. Canada

GLOBAL RANK
#6

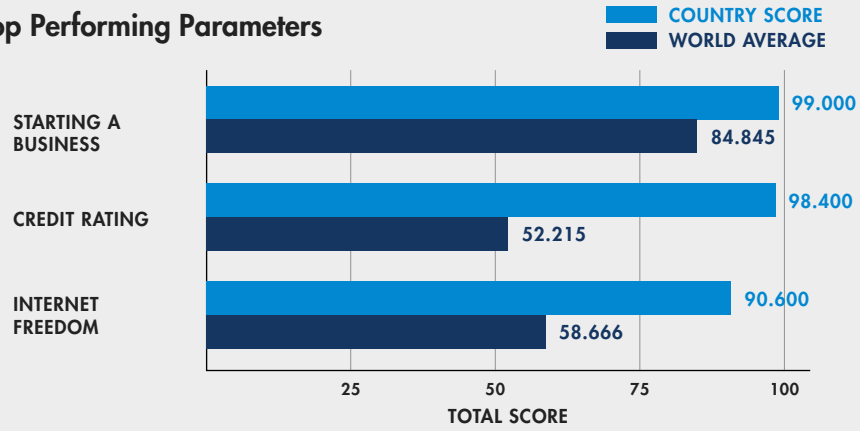
NORTH AMERICA RANK
#2

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Calgary has long been recognized as the economic engine of Canada and is a global magnet for innovators and entrepreneurs who want to build something great. Our strength comes from our economic foundations in the natural resource sector, world class post-secondary education institutions, and a culture of hard work and risk taking. Calgary's innovation ecosystem is leading the way creating economic opportunities for all Canadians."



Jen Lussier
CEO, Platform Calgary

Canada ranks 4th worldwide for Regulations & Governance.

- Canada ranks 6th globally in the IBEI 2026, placing it among the higher-ranked business environments assessed by the Index.
- Canada ranks 3rd worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside Switzerland and Japan, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.
- Canada ranks 4th globally under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.

- Canada ranks 4th globally in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, reflecting evaluated legal, regulatory, and procedural conditions.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Canada's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit and Cross-Border Banking are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Canada's overall placement.
- Overall, Canada's results show a business environment with strong institutions, advanced digital infrastructure, high levels of mobility and international accessibility, and an enabling environment for running a business.

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Country Overview

Canada offers a stable and institutionally strong business environment. Trusted legal frameworks, deep capital markets, and a long-standing commitment to openness support this foundation. Its policies are solid, yet they are less aggressively pro-business than those of the United States. Proximity to a much larger competitor also places pressure on Canada to keep improving its business conditions.

Innovation in Canada is spread across provinces rather than concentrated in a single hub. In Ontario, activity extends from Toronto's financial and technology core to cities punching above their weight such as Kingston, where Queen's University anchors a strong ecosystem in research, talent development, and commercialization. The federal structure gives provinces broad autonomy over regulation and economic priorities. This creates internal competition and allows distinct regional strengths to emerge.

Canada's immigration system remains one of its strongest assets. It offers multiple entry paths for globally mobile professionals and entrepreneurs. Its research and technology ecosystem benefits from strong universities, active research councils, and clear intellectual property rules. These elements support commercialization and help diversify the economy. Traditional resource industries now sit alongside expanding digital and scientific sectors.

Overall, Canada combines regulatory clarity, institutional depth, and a wide innovation base. It may not be among the world's most aggressively pro-business environments. Yet it remains a reliable and well-functioning setting for innovation-driven growth.

Our Local Partners

PLATFORM calgary

KINGSTON — Economic Development —

CITY SPOTLIGHT:

Kingston



An Interview with

Donna Gillespie

CEO of Kingston Economic Development Corporation

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How would you describe the overarching vision your city is working toward?

Kingston is working toward becoming a globally recognized innovation hub in our priority sectors namely life science and health innovations as well as sustainable manufacturing. A city in which businesses, government, and academic partners collaborate to create high-quality jobs and inclusive prosperity. We strive to leverage our world-class talent, technological infrastructure, intellectual property and research centers, and culture of innovation to build a forward-looking, sustainable economy that enriches quality of life for Kingstonians and the rest of the world. This vision is reflected in Kingston's recent recognition as a fully Certified Intelligent Community (ICF) and as Canada's #1 small city for startups.

What investments has your city made to expand digital infrastructure or support innovation hubs?

Kingston has made significant investments to expand digital infrastructure and support innovation. The city's Utilities operates an extensive fiber-optic broadband network that ensures high-speed connectivity across the region – a unique advantage underpinning Kingston's smart city initiative. Beyond this, Queen's University, a leading research-intensive institution and Bell Canada, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to build and operate a next-generation, world-class Artificial Intelligence (AI) supercomputing facility in Kingston. We have also bolstered our innovation ecosystem by establishing new incubator and accelerator spaces as we continue our efforts to commercialise intellectual property that is being created from this ecosystem. For example, Kingston helped launch a life sciences incubator with state-of-the-art lab facilities and has partnered with Providence Care Hospital, Queen's Innovation Center, and Launch Labs the regions innovation center. These investments ensure entrepreneurs and companies have cutting-edge infrastructure and collaborative spaces to innovate and grow.

Does your city offer any financial incentives or grants for new or high-growth businesses?

Yes – Kingston offers a range of financial incentives and grants to support new and high-growth businesses. Through Kingston Economic Development, entrepreneurs can access programs like Helix Life Sciences accelerator program, which provides matching grants up to $100,000 on approved projects, Starter Company Plus up to 5,000 CAD and Summer Company, which provide seed funding, mentorship and training for new

startups and young entrepreneurs for up to 3,000 CAD. In addition, the City provides broader business incentives: for example, we waive development charges for qualifying industrial expansions and offer tax rebate programs (like a Brownfield Redevelopment CIP) to encourage investment. These incentives create a supportive environment for businesses to launch, expand, and thrive in Kingston.

What long-term priorities or goals guide your city's economic development strategy?

Kingston's economic development strategy is supported by more than research centers which are established and working from the Kingston ecosystem, and it is therefore guided by long-term priorities centered on innovation, talent, and sustainable growth. We focus on developing key sectors – such as sustainable manufacturing, health & life sciences innovation, and creative industries – where Kingston has competitive strengths and future potential. A strong emphasis is placed on workforce development and talent attraction: we leverage our world-class universities and colleges to cultivate skilled talent, and we welcome newcomers to strengthen our workforce. The strategy also prioritizes infrastructure and inclusivity – from investing in digital connectivity (broadband and 5G readiness) and innovation hubs, to embedding sustainability and climate resilience in our planning. Overall, our long-term goal is to build a resilient, forward-thinking economy that generates high-quality employment, supports entrepreneurs, and maintains Kingston's exceptional quality of life for the future.





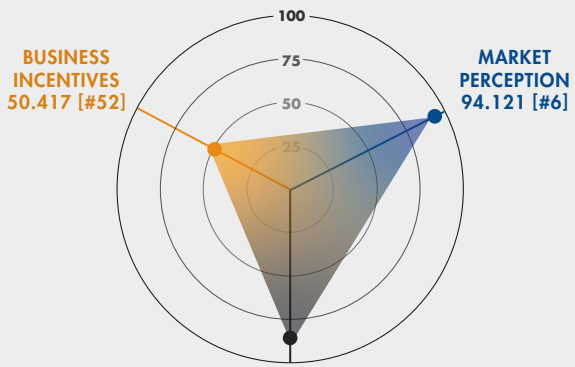
7. The Netherlands

GLOBAL RANK
#7

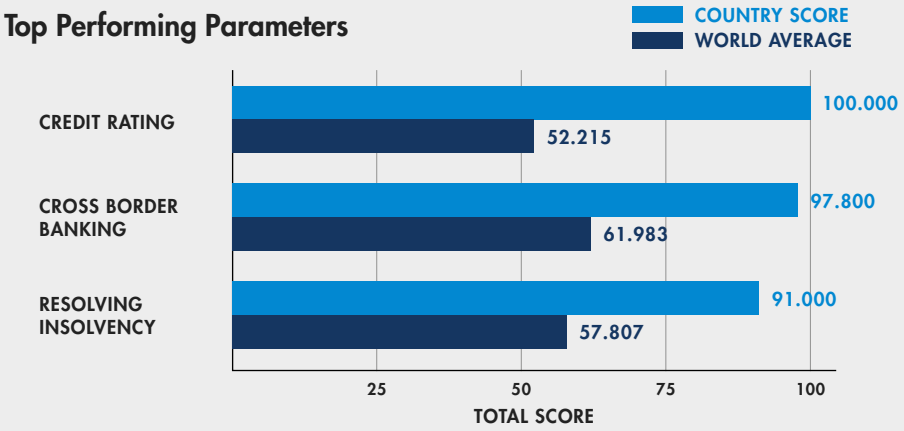
EUROPE RANK
#3

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"In the Netherlands, founders benefit from an international mindset, a culture of practical problem solving and strong collaboration across the ecosystem. Its compact geography makes it easy for founders, investors, and corporates to connect, while a growing focus on deeptech and impact creates room for experimentation. It's an environment where innovators can move quickly, find talent, and test ideas with real partners."



Lisette Braakenburg van Backum
Co-Founder/CEO, Upstream Festival

The Netherlands is the highest-ranked EU member state in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- The Netherlands ranks 7th globally in the IBEI 2026 and 1st among EU member states, placing it among the higher-ranked business environments assessed by the Index.
- The Netherlands' IBEI position stands ahead of its 10th-place ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to the actual startup ecosystem output.

- The Netherlands ranks 3rd worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside the United States and the UK, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within the Netherlands' overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, the Netherlands ranks within the top 25% of the Index for approximately 60% of all Parameters, including Cross-Border Banking, Credit Rating, and Starting a Business.
- Overall, the Netherlands delivers a business environment characterized by effective friction-reducing policy levers and strong performance across mobility and financial-access related Parameters within the EU.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

The Netherlands offers a stable and internationally connected business environment. Strong institutions, an open trading tradition, and a strategic location in Europe form its core advantages. World-class transport and logistics networks build on these strengths, which also position the country as a major gateway for international trade.

The economy is deeply integrated into European value chains. Membership in the EU single market gives firms direct access to suppliers and customers across the region. This integration strengthens the Netherlands role as both a logistics hub and a production base for industries that operate across Europe.

A distinct political and economic culture reinforces this geographic positioning. The Netherlands relies on the consensus-driven Polder Model. Government, employers, and labor groups negotiate to resolve disputes. This approach limits abrupt policy changes and supports long-term planning. The framework encourages technology-driven activity. It also permits controlled experimentation in areas such as digital finance. Moreover, digital public-administration tools reduce friction in company formation and make regulatory coordination more efficient.

Public institutions further strengthen the business environment. The Netherlands Enterprise Agency and the Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency, both within the Invest in Holland network, promote investment and help firms expand abroad. A deep talent pool and companies such as ASML and Booking.com show how an EU member state can maintain a competitive setting for global innovation and business growth.

Overall, the Netherlands combines openness and regulatory stability with strong innovative capacity and deep integration into global markets.

Our Local Partner

UPSTREAM
CONNECTING CHANGE MAKERS



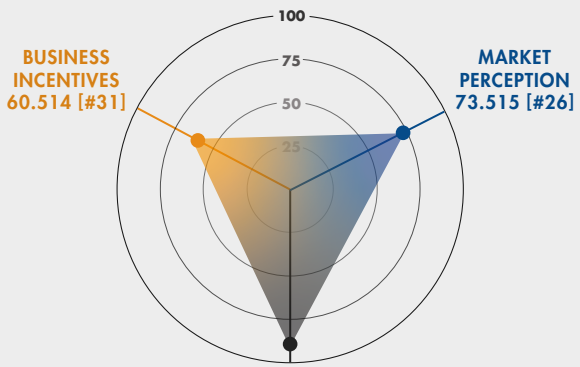
8. Japan

GLOBAL RANK
#8

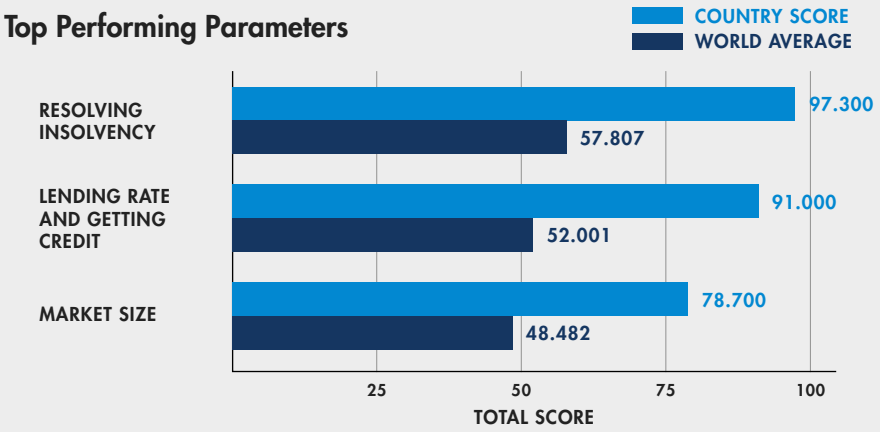
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#2

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Tokyo offers a vibrant startup ecosystem built on Japan's unique strengths in technology, culture, and values. Under its "Global Innovation Strategy 2.0 STARTUP & SCALEUP," the Tokyo Metropolitan Government provides platforms connecting Tokyo, Japan, and the world through two key initiatives: SusHi Tech Tokyo, a global innovation conference, and Tokyo Innovation Base (TIB), a hub connecting startups and stakeholders. These efforts accelerate the creation of globally impactful innovation from Tokyo to the world."



Yoshimura Keiichi
Director General
of Startup Strategy
Promotion Headquarters,
Tokyo Metropolitan Government

Japan ranks 2nd worldwide for Ease of Operating a Business.

- Japan ranks 8th globally and 2nd in Asia Pacific in the IBEI 2026, placing it among the higher-ranked business environments in the region.
- Japan's IBEI position stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating a stronger assessment of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to the actual startup ecosystem output.
- Japan ranks 4th worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside Canada and Switzerland, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.

- Japan ranks 2nd globally under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to business operations.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Japan's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit, Cross-Border Banking, and Financial Tools Openness are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Japan shows a business environment characterized by strong financial-infrastructure evaluations and region-leading operational and digital foundations.

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Country Overview

Japan maintains an advanced and research-driven business environment. World-class manufacturing, deep-technology capability, and a stable rules-based system anchor its economic strength. Strong intellectual-property protection, predictable regulation, and reliable contract enforcement support long-term investment in engineering, robotics, materials science, and other high-value industrial sectors. Japan's central position in global supply chains reinforces its international connectivity.

The country also offers residency pathways aimed at globally active entrepreneurs and skilled professionals. The Startup Visa and the Highly Skilled Professional Visa reflect Japan's effort to attract talent and deepen international exchange.

Policy continues to focus on technology development and industrial modernization. Universities, research agencies, and major corporate laboratories contribute to a large pool of scientific and engineering talent. This foundation supports progress in advanced manufacturing, green technology, and deep tech. Yet challenges remain. Regulatory simplification moves slowly, and incentive modernization lags behind hubs like Singapore. To sustain its record of innovation, Japan should preserve the conditions needed for continued growth and competitiveness.

Economic activity spans several regional hubs. Tokyo leads in business, finance, and digital services. Osaka retains significant industrial capability. Fukuoka has become an important base for international startups. This distribution reflects Japan's mix of long-standing industrial strength and emerging innovation-driven growth.

Japan's global engagement is supported by institutions such as the Japan External Trade Organization. JETRO promotes investment and helps connect domestic firms to global markets. Combined with Japan's major financial center and one of the world's leading stock exchanges, these factors create a business environment defined by regulatory clarity, technological depth, and a durable commitment to industrial excellence.

Our Local Partner

SusHi Tech TOKYO

CITY SPOTLIGHT: Tokyo



An Interview with

Yoshimura Keiichi

Director General, Startup Strategy Promotion Headquarters, Tokyo Metropolitan Government

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How would you describe the overarching vision your city is working toward?

Tokyo aspires to be the world's best city—a place where "growth" and "maturity" coexist, and every individual shines with a sense of wellbeing.

Tokyo will create a sustainable society through cutting-edge high technology —a challenge shared by the entire world. Under the concept of SusHi Tech, Tokyo drives global transformation and growth. We host the annual global conference **"SusHi Tech Tokyo,"** bringing together major corporations, municipalities, and diverse international players. This platform envisions and shapes the future of cities, driving innovation worldwide.

What would you identify as the key economic assets or competitive advantages of your region today?

Tokyo's competitive advantages come from its advanced urban infrastructure, the concentration of universities and research institutions, and a strong financial foundation that drives innovation. The city also benefits as a major hub where companies and diverse global talent gather, fostering a highly international business environment. In addition, Tokyo's rich cultural and tourism assets, along with the legacy of international events, further enhance its global appeal. These multifaceted strengths create a solid ecosystem that supports startup growth and bold challenges.

What specific measures has your city implemented to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start a business?

Under the concept of "Toward a Tokyo where challengers are born, grow, and reach their potential," the Tokyo Metropolitan Government provides hands-on support for young innovators at **Tokyo Innovation Base (TIB)**.TIB STUDIO assists with business plan validation and funding, while TIB FAB offers an experimental space with tools like 3D printers and laser cutters, plus expert technical and business support. Tokyo also operates TOKYO STARTUP STATION for business consultations and the Tokyo One-Stop Business Establishment Center, where entrepreneurs can complete all required administrative procedures in one place.

What long-term priorities or goals guide your city's economic development strategy?

Tokyo's startup strategy introduced the ambitious *"10×10×10 Innovation Vision,"* aiming

to increase tenfold the number of unicorns, startups, and public–private collaborations within five years. Under the *Global Innovation Strategy 2.0*, the city accelerates efforts to support startup scale-ups and foster global innovation grounded in Japan's strengths. By engaging all players—large companies, SMEs, universities, and research institutions—Tokyo advances a long-term strategy to create technologies and values with worldwide impact.

Does your city offer any financial incentives or grant programs for new or high-growth businesses?

The new initiative "SusHi Tech Global" provides focused support and bold funding for large-scale overseas projects to drive startup growth worldwide. Guided by the philosophy of "creating together," we unite public and private strengths to build a new growth-stage ecosystem in Japan. A public–private fund invests in growth-stage startups with deep tech from universities and those with potential to address societal challenges. ¥15 billion has been invested over two years, with an additional ¥5 billion planned for this fiscal year. Furthermore, we are establishing the public–private fund platform "SusHi Tech Global Funds" to deliver bold financing to strategic growth sectors.

What investments has your city made to strengthen digital infrastructure or support innovation hubs?

Tokyo Innovation Base (TIB), established as a major node for local and global interaction among diverse players, has rapidly grown, attracting over 310,000 visitors in just two years. Tokyo is now scaling this model citywide, transforming the entire metropolitan area into an innovation field by connecting regional assets. Through the Deep Tech Innovation Hub Promotion Program, the city collaborates with private partners to create new specialized hubs, strengthening support for deep-tech startups and reinforcing the broader innovation ecosystem.





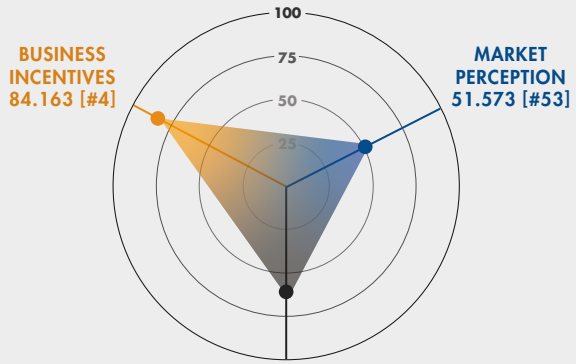
9. Saudi Arabia

GLOBAL RANK
#9

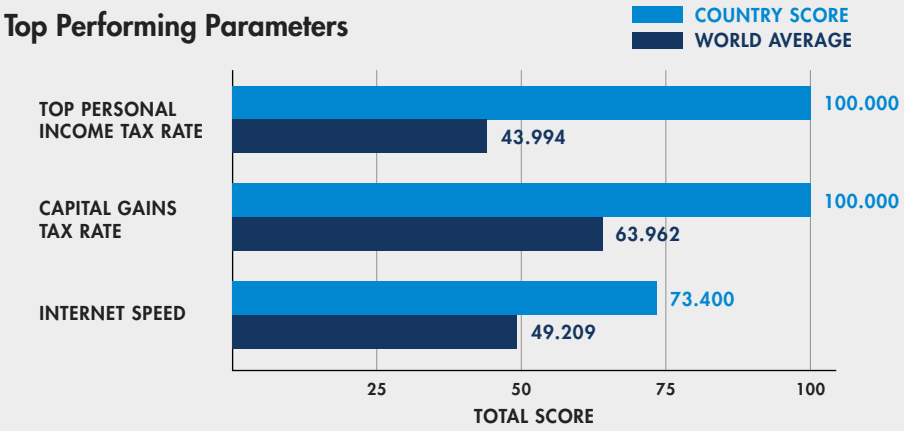
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#2

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Saudi Arabia is our Country of the Year. For more information, turn to page 297.

Saudi Arabia ranks 1st worldwide for friction-reducing policy levers.

- Saudi Arabia ranks 9th globally in the IBEI 2026, placing it among the strongest business environments assessed by the Index.
- The Kingdom ranks 1st worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.
- Saudi Arabia ranks 4th worldwide under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting highly favorable assessments of fiscal and financial conditions.
- The country ranks 2nd overall in the Middle East and 2nd in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), reinforcing its regional positioning within the Index.
- The country ranks 2nd in the GCC in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions across credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.

- At the Parameter level, Capital Gains Tax Rate, Dividend Tax Rate, and Financial Tools Openness are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Saudi Arabia demonstrates a business environment defined by leading incentive structures, effective use of friction-reducing policy levers and strong access to financial infrastructure.

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Country Overview

Saudi Arabia is remaking its economy at remarkable speed under Vision 2030. The country is moving beyond hydrocarbons and building a broader economic base. New institutions, clearer regulation, and major investments in transport, energy, and digital infrastructure are changing how firms operate.

One of the most visible shifts is the rise of Special Economic Zones. These zones offer simpler operating rules and attract firms that think internationally. The Kingdom's structured fiscal system continues to anchor public finances. Large projects such as NEOM push this ambition further. They signal a desire to lead the next wave of industrial, technological, and urban development worldwide. Each reform adds predictability and strengthens the sense that the Kingdom is planning for the long term.

Technology development sits at the heart of this transformation. The National Technology Development Program, in particular, has emerged as a key organization in building the Kingdom's innovation capacity. It expands digital capability, nurtures high-growth firms, and helps them reach the scale needed to compete globally.

The Kingdom is also investing in its talent policy. New residency pathways and greater labor mobility open the door to founders and skilled professionals who want to build in the Kingdom. Moreover, digital systems now handle business formation and licensing with far less friction. Last, but not least, a move toward full foreign ownership has made the market more accessible to global firms seeking a stable base in the region.

All of this points in one direction. Saudi Arabia is building an operating environment shaped by long-term vision and strong institutional coordination. International connectivity is rising. Investment is deepening. The country is positioning itself as a regional force and a fast-emerging hub for innovators.



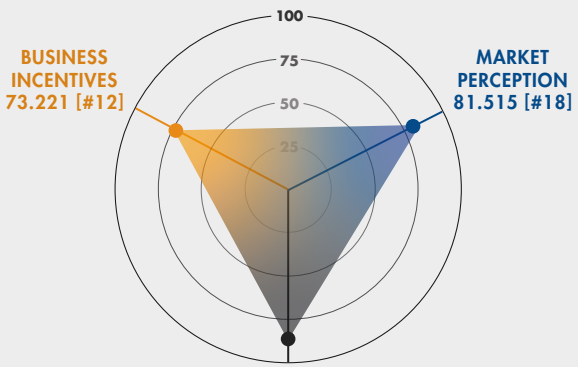
10. Estonia

GLOBAL RANK
#10

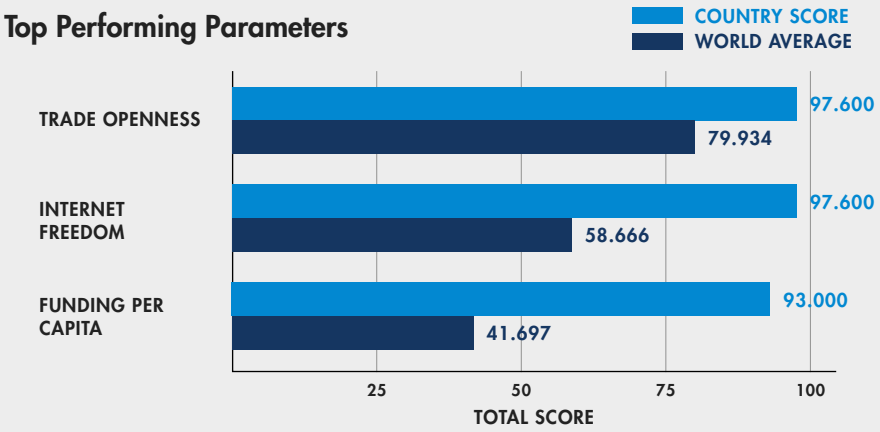
EUROPE RANK
#4

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Estonia leads Central & Eastern Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Estonia ranks 10th globally, 2nd in the EU, and 1st in Central & Eastern Europe in the IBEI 2026, representing the highest business-environment assessment among its regional peers.
- Estonia's placement in the IBEI 2026 ranks higher than its position in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively strong underlying business-environment assessments relative to actual startup ecosystem output.
- Estonia ranks 1st in Central & Eastern Europe (CEE) under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting the highest regional assessments of conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Estonia ranks 1st in CEE under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The country ranks 5th worldwide in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions related to Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Estonia's overall Index profile.
- Estonia leads the Baltic states, ranking 12 places ahead of Lithuania, reinforcing its relative positioning within the regional comparison.

- At the Parameter level, Estonia ranks within the top 25% of the Index for nearly half of all Parameters, including Trade Openness, Funding per Capita, and Internet Freedom.
- Overall, Estonia demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong operational conditions, high institutional trust, and advanced digital capability.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Estonia has become one of the world's most digitally advanced business environments. It built this reputation by pioneering online public administration and creating a state infrastructure that allows entrepreneurs to operate from anywhere. The e-Residency program is the best known example. It gives users a secure digital identity and the ability to manage EU-based companies entirely online. The program remains one of Estonia's most distinctive innovations and a major driver of its global visibility.

This digital model rests on a strong national architecture. The X-Road data-exchange layer, managed by the Information System Authority, allows public and private systems to communicate securely. Company formation takes minutes. Administrative friction is minimal. Few countries have been able to match this level of efficiency. The e-Governance Academy supports the system through international capacity building and continuous modernization.

Estonia's tax structure offers another competitive advantage. The country applies a zero percent tax on retained and reinvested profits. This encourages reinvestment and appeals to early-stage and fast-growing firms that need to conserve capital. Global mobility is also part of the model. The Startup Visa allows non-EU founders and employees of innovative companies to relocate. A national committee evaluates applications to ensure alignment with the country's startup priorities.

The innovation ecosystem is organized through coordinated public institutions. Startup Estonia leads efforts to strengthen the national startup environment. It operates within the Estonian Business and Innovation Agency, created through the merger of Enterprise Estonia and KredEx. Invest in Estonia adds investment promotion, soft-landing services, and support for international firms entering the market.

Despite its small size, limited domestic market, and harsh climate, Estonia attracts a notable number of foreign entrepreneurs. Its blend of secure digital identity, rapid administrative processes, reinvestment-friendly taxation, and well-structured innovation programs allows the country to punch far above its weight. As a result, Estonia has become one of the most forward-leaning business environments in the European Union.



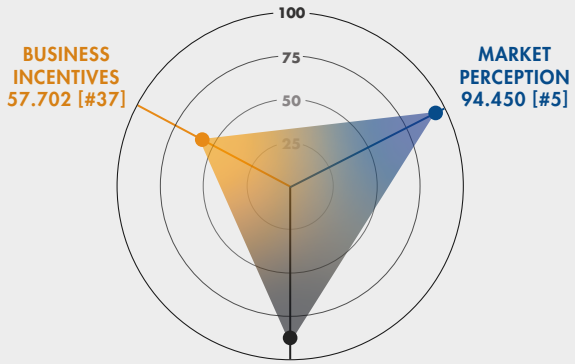
11. New Zealand

GLOBAL RANK
#11

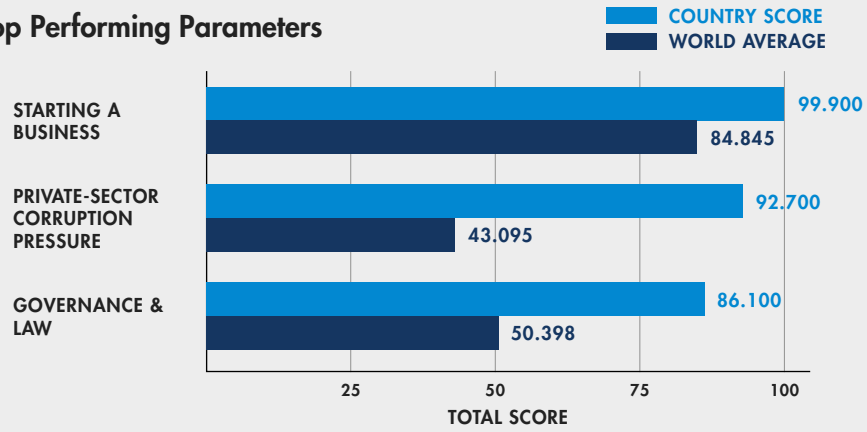
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#3

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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New Zealand leads the Asia Pacific in Digital Infrastructure.

- New Zealand ranks 11th globally and 3rd in Asia Pacific in the IBEI 2026, indicating a comparatively strong position among business environments in the region.
- New Zealand's 11th-place IBEI ranking stands above its position in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively strong business-environment assessments relative to actual startup ecosystem output.
- New Zealand ranks 2nd in Asia Pacific under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- New Zealand ranks 2nd in Asia Pacific under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- New Zealand ranks 1st in Asia Pacific in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions related to Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- The country also ranks 1st in Asia Pacific in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions related to cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within New Zealand's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business, Credit Rating, Funding per Capita, and Cross-Border Banking are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.

- New Zealand ranks ahead of Australia in the IBEI 2026, with higher evaluations in the Ease of Operating a Business, Market Perception, and Business Incentives Pillars.
- Overall, New Zealand shows a business environment characterized by strong digital-infrastructure evaluations, high international accessibility, and solid institutional performance across several IBEI dimensions.

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Country Overview

New Zealand maintains a transparent and internationally open business environment. Clear regulation, a simple tax structure, and stable public institutions support this foundation. Digital administration is efficient. Company formation is easy. These features make the country accessible to globally active founders, even though its geographic distance from major economic centers remains a structural challenge.

Residency pathways for entrepreneurs and investors underline New Zealand's commitment to attracting global talent and capital. These routes fit well with an economy defined by regulatory predictability and the free movement of capital. Processes for establishing and operating a business remain straightforward, which reduces uncertainty for both local and international firms.

Innovation benefits from national frameworks that encourage research, commercialization, and early-stage enterprise development. Targeted mechanisms help move scientific advances into applied markets. This approach supports a steady pipeline of technology-oriented companies across a range of sectors.

Trade, investment, and innovation agencies work together to support firms at home and abroad. Their coordination reflects the country's orientation toward openness and research-driven growth. New Zealand's small size could allow it to take even bolder steps in shaping its business environment. Yet even now, it consistently punches above its weight. It offers transparent conditions, reliable institutions, and practical support for firms that aim to innovate and expand globally.



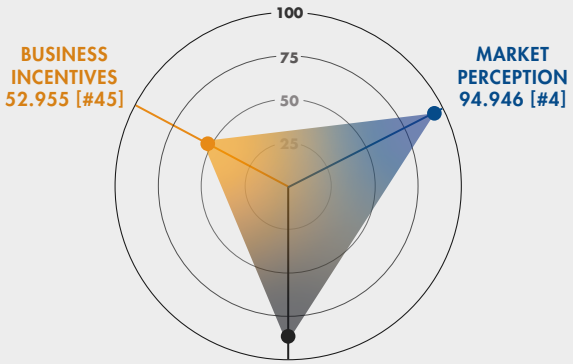
12. Sweden

GLOBAL RANK
#12

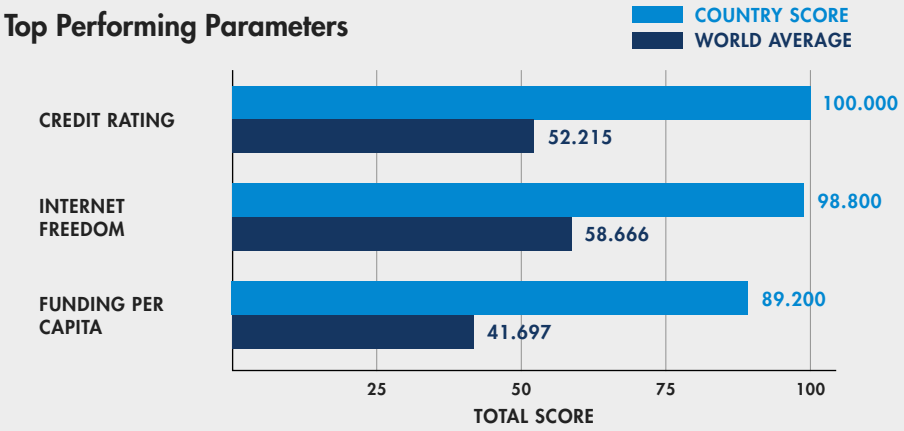
EUROPE RANK
#5

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Everyone's talking about Sweden's momentum—and rightly so. It's a rare environment where creativity compounds. From historical reforms like Gripenstedt's trade liberalization to modern frameworks like subsidized PCs, Studieledighetslagen, and Dark Fiber infrastructure, Sweden has quietly become an 'Incubator-as-a-Country'. It's a 'series of fortunate events' that enable creatives to be creative. Add a culture of mutual support and a one-degree network of doers, and you get conditions where momentum doesn't just start—it lasts."



Elsa Giolito
Senior Program Manager,
SSE Business Lab

Sweden ranks 4th globally in Digital Infrastructure.

- Sweden ranks 12th globally and 3rd in the EU in the IBEI 2026, indicating a strong business-environment assessment within the region.
- Sweden ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI 2026, indicating that its startup ecosystem performs especially well relative to its already solid business-environment fundamentals.
- Sweden ranks 2nd in the EU under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.

- Sweden ranks 4th worldwide and 2nd in the EU in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions related to Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- Sweden ranks 5th globally and 3rd in the EU in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting evaluated conditions across credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.
- The country ranks 6th globally in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, reflecting assessed levels of cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Sweden's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Cross-Border Banking, Credit Rating, and Funding per Capita are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Sweden shows a business environment characterized by strong digital-infrastructure evaluations, international connectivity, and strong assessments across capital-related Parameters.

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Country Overview

Sweden has one of Europe's most innovation-driven business environments. Strong public institutions, sophisticated digital governance, and a deep-rooted tradition of scientific and technical superiority support this system. Stable politics, minimal corruption, and a clear legal system further decrease operational risk. These benefits have allowed Sweden to establish globally successful firms like Spotify and IKEA.

The innovation ecosystem is supported by national and regional entities that work together efficiently. Vinnova and Business Sweden promote research collaborations and international business involvement. They also enhance links between the private sector and the public sector. A fully digitized public administration system strengthens this effort. It facilitates effective regulatory collaboration and enhances the overall simplicity of conducting business.

Opportunities exist to enhance the business environment further. Despite that, Sweden still outperforms its regional peers in Nordics. Collectively, these elements create an ecosystem characterized by robust institutions, advanced technology, and strong connections to international markets.

Our Local Partner

STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

SSE BUSINESS LAB



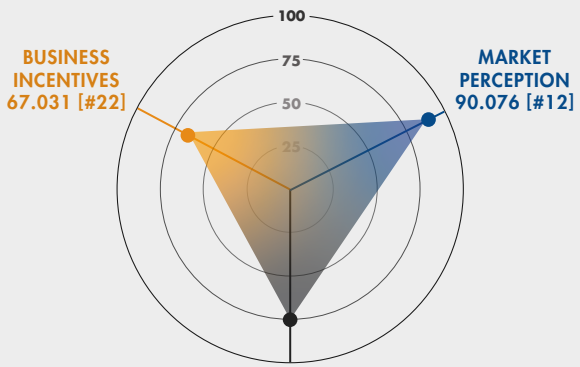
13. Luxembourg

GLOBAL RANK
#13

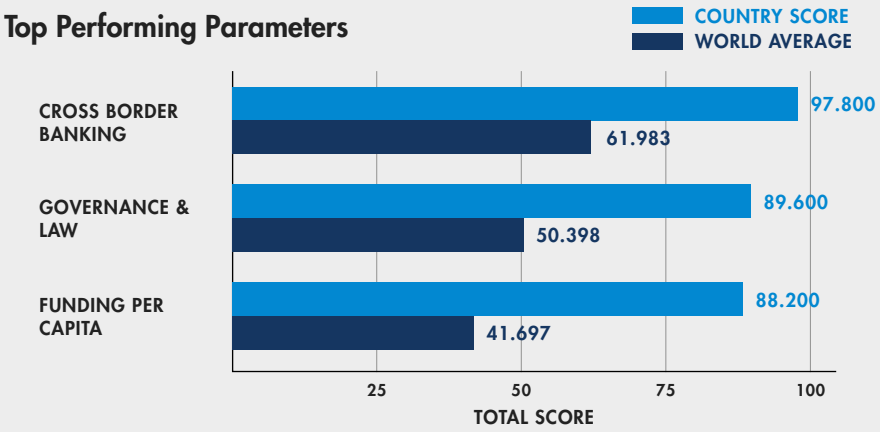
EUROPE RANK
#6

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Luxembourg ranks 2nd in Western Europe for Taxation Conditions.

- Luxembourg ranks 13th worldwide and 4th among EU member states in the IBEI 2026.
- Luxembourg's higher placement in the IBEI 2026 compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 highlights the strength of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to actual startup ecosystem output.
- Luxembourg ranks 2nd in Western Europe in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions related to its tax framework.
- The country ranks 9th globally in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting positive assessments of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- At the Parameter level, Trade Openness, Cross-Border Banking, Credit Rating, and Funding per Capita are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Luxembourg's overall standing.
- Luxembourg's well-developed cross-border financial infrastructure and open trade environment reinforce its position as one of Europe's most internationally connected business environments.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Luxembourg has established a secure and globally connected business environment. It combines regulatory certainty with the demands of international companies. Its strategic position in Europe, diverse language-speaking workforce, and extensive history of transnational commerce make it an appealing hub for businesses looking for regional entry and a trustworthy platform in the EU. Despite its size, Luxembourg has grown into one of Europe's most promising business environments, trusted by companies that value transparency and institutional stability.

Recent policy changes indicate a heightened emphasis on entrepreneurship and the ability to scale up. The From Seed to Scale strategy presents a long-term initiative to increase support for emerging and developing companies. It seeks to enhance access to funding, expertise, and skilled individuals. Recent reforms enhance competitive benefits for employee stock options and establish an impatriate system to assist skilled professionals and founders in accessing the labor market.

Investment from private sources in early-stage companies is expected to increase as well. The suggested Start-Up Tax Credit would provide income-tax assistance to personal investors who support groundbreaking domestic companies. The initiative seeks to accelerate startup development and enhance local investment ability by expanding the availability of early-stage funding.

Luxembourg excels in funding research and digital expertise. The high-performance computing framework and continuous digitalization of administration enhance the speed and predictability of operational processes for firms entering or growing in the country.

Collectively, these factors establish a business landscape characterized by global interconnectivity, consistent institutional frameworks, and availability of specialized knowledge. These enable Luxembourg to excel beyond its size as a center for entrepreneurship and high-value economic ventures.

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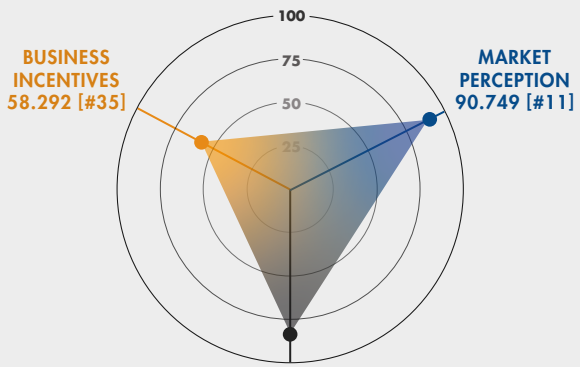
14. Ireland

GLOBAL RANK
#14

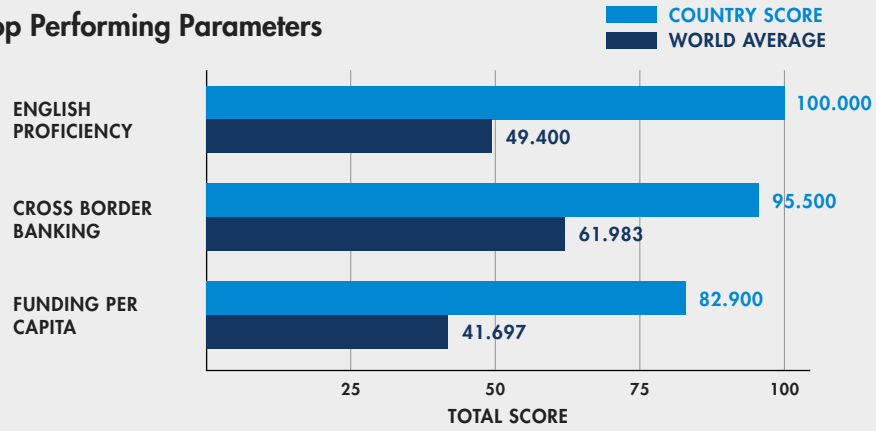
EUROPE RANK
#7

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Ireland ranks 3rd in Northern Europe for Global Mobility & Openness.

- Ireland ranks 14th globally and 5th within the European Union in the IBEI 2026.
- Ireland ranks 4th in Northern Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial conditions relative to regional peers.
- Ireland ranks 3rd in Northern Europe in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions related to cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Ireland's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Cross-Border Banking, Credit Rating, and Funding per Capita are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Ireland's overall result.
- Overall, Ireland demonstrates a business environment characterized by well-developed incentive conditions, positively assessed international openness, and institutional reliability across the Index.

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Country Overview

Ireland maintains a stable and innovation-oriented business environment. Strong institutions, an internationally focused fiscal framework, and a long record of attracting globally integrated firms shape this foundation. Its common-law legal system offers clarity for companies that operate across multiple jurisdictions. As an English-speaking EU member, Ireland also gives firms direct access to the European market. This remains one of its most durable competitive strengths.

The country has a history of pioneering bold business incentives. Its tax structures attracted many of the world's largest technology and life-science companies. Recent years have brought fewer transformative policy moves. Even so, Ireland continues to provide a regulatory setting well suited for intellectual-property development, research activity, and high-value commercialization. Long-term investment in education and research has produced a steady pipeline of skilled talent. This reinforces Ireland's focus on knowledge-intensive industries.

Residency pathways for innovative founders support Ireland's broader effort to attract globally mobile professionals. National initiatives encourage research, digital capability, and the growth of innovation-driven firms. These programs help sustain Ireland's reputation as a trusted base for international business.

Economic development institutions play a central role. Enterprise Ireland helps domestic companies expand and tap into international markets. IDA Ireland leads foreign direct investment strategy and supports the growth of high-value activity. These organizations balance regulatory stability with openness to global markets.

Ireland retains the characteristics that made it a standout destination for multinational firms. It offers stability, international connectivity, and a strong orientation toward innovation-led growth. It also has room to design more targeted incentives for smaller and emerging companies.

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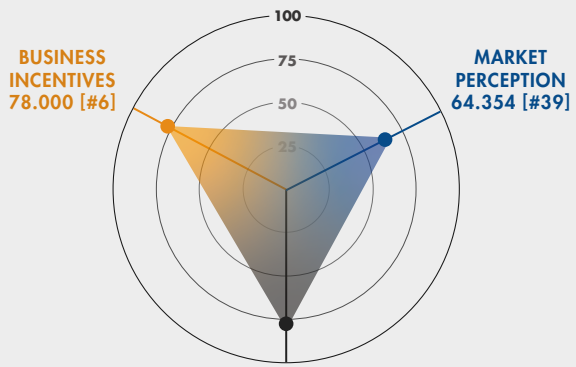
15. Cyprus

GLOBAL RANK
#15

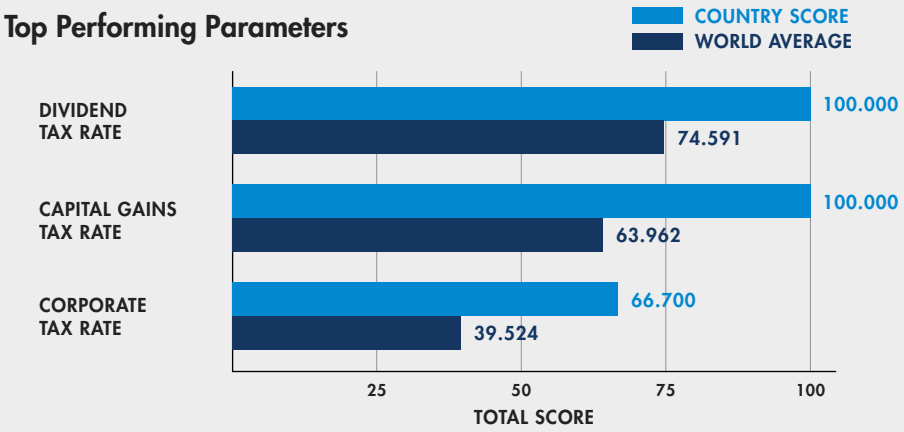
EUROPE RANK
#8

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Cyprus leads the EU in Taxation.

- Cyprus ranks 15th globally in the IBEI 2026 and 1st in Southern Europe, positioning it as the highest-rated business environment in its sub-region.
- Cyprus' higher ranking in the IBEI 2026 compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 highlights the strength of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- Cyprus ranks 2nd in the EU under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting positively assessed fiscal and financial conditions.
- Cyprus ranks 10th worldwide and 1st in the EU in the Taxation Functional Category, indicating a tax structure evaluated favorably relative to other European markets.
- At the Parameter level, Cyprus records multiple results within the top 25% of the Index, including Corporate Tax Rate, Capital Gains Tax Rate, and Dividend Tax Rate.
- Overall, Cyprus's results showcase a business environment characterized by positively assessed taxation conditions and business-incentive frameworks.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Cyprus has established a business environment characterized by legal transparency, global accessibility, and strategies that assist entrepreneurs working internationally. Its Mediterranean setting and historical importance as a trade hub create an attractive base for founders engaged in international activities. They acquire consistent administrative and financial regulations within the European Union. In recent years, Cyprus has experienced a significant economic transformation. This change has transformed its image and established it as one of the more appealing business hubs in the area.

The corporate tax structure is one of the most competitive within the EU. It provides businesses with distinct long-term clarity and aligns well with enterprises that cater to local and international markets. Extra steps ease adherence for smaller businesses. They assist in establishing an organized and controllable setting for everyday business activities.

Personal taxes enhance Cyprus's attractiveness. The non-domiciled system allows eligible residents to avoid specific taxes on dividends and interest. It has emerged as a key resource for appealing to globally mobile innovators and investors with international income sources. The Startup Visa Program enhances this strategy. It provides non-EU and non-EEA entrepreneurs a clear route to create technology-focused businesses and aids Cyprus's goal to enhance its knowledge-based industries.

Institutional backing strengthens this path. The Foundation for Research and Innovation (RIF) manages initiatives that encourage scientific and commercial endeavors. Invest Cyprus acts as the primary contact for international investors and offers support during establishment and growth.

Collectively, these factors form a commercial atmosphere characterized by stability, global accessibility, and significant financial benefits. This partnership has facilitated Cyprus's evolution from a formerly challenging business environment into one of the region's most remarkable success stories.

Our Local Partner

RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOUNDATION



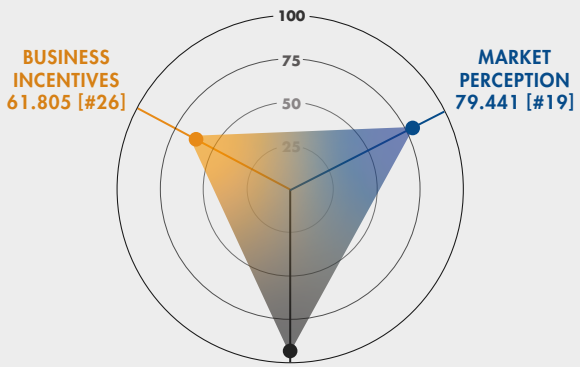
16. Belgium

GLOBAL RANK
#16

EUROPE RANK
#9

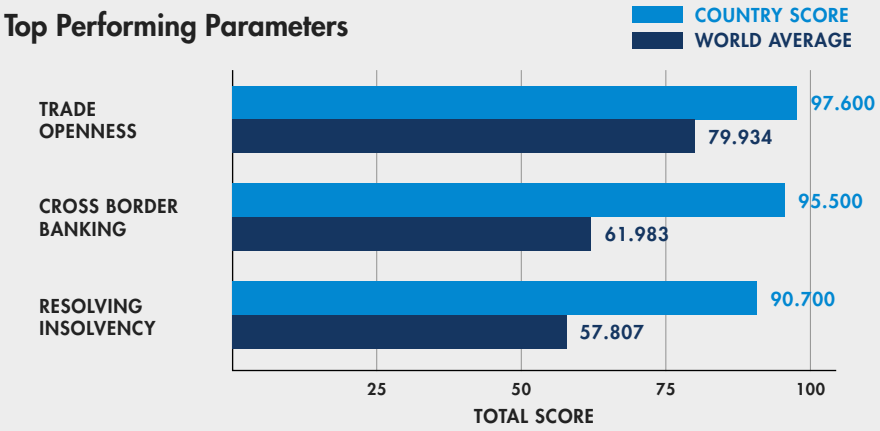
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
82.925 [#20]

Top Performing Parameters



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Belgium ranks 5th in Western Europe for Business Incentives.

- Belgium ranks 16th globally and 7th in the European Union in the IBEI 2026, placing it within the upper tier of business-environment performers in the region.
- Belgium ranks 5th in Western Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial conditions within this Pillar.
- Belgium ranks 6th in Western Europe in the Taxation Functional Category, holding a higher assessment than the Netherlands, which ranks 14th in the same category.
- Belgium places 8th in the EU in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, reflecting assessed legal, regulatory, and procedural conditions.
- At the Parameter level, Trade Openness, Resolving Insolvency, and Starting a Business are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Belgium's overall standing.
- Overall, Belgium shows a business environment characterized by positively assessed financial-infrastructure conditions and strong regional performance across incentives, taxation, and governance.

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Country Overview

Belgium's business environment is built on economic steadiness, clear institutions, and robust global connections. Its pivotal position in Europe, along with being the location for essential EU institutions, allows it to quickly facilitate involvement in EU initiatives. Businesses achieve closeness to decision-makers, stable regulatory environments, and entry to one of the largest integrated markets globally.

This role presents both benefits and challenges. Belgium's strong link to EU initiatives provides companies with greater access to finance, subsidies, and cooperative structures. However, it also shifts segments of the ecosystem toward program-driven actions instead of market-driven rivalry. That dynamic could alleviate some of the pressures prompting private companies to take significant risks.

This role brings both benefits and challenges. Belgium's close link to EU initiatives gives firms easier access to funding, subsidies, and collaborative programs. Yet it also steers parts of the ecosystem toward program-driven activity rather than market competition. That shift can reduce the pressure that pushes private companies to take bold risks.

In summary, Belgium offers regulatory consistency, robust logistical and institutional links, along with favorable access to EU decision-making. These factors foster a business climate conducive to innovation, strategic planning, and international collaboration, even though some aspects of the ecosystem are still more connected to institutional initiatives than to genuine market forces.





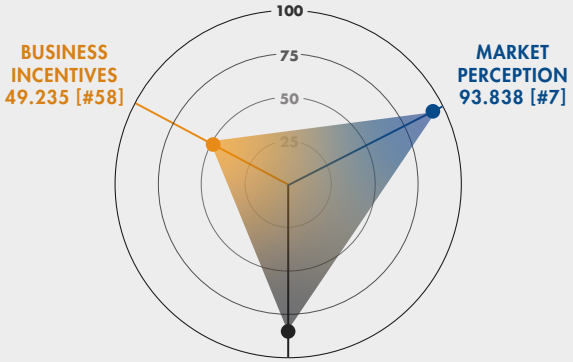
17. Australia

GLOBAL RANK
#17

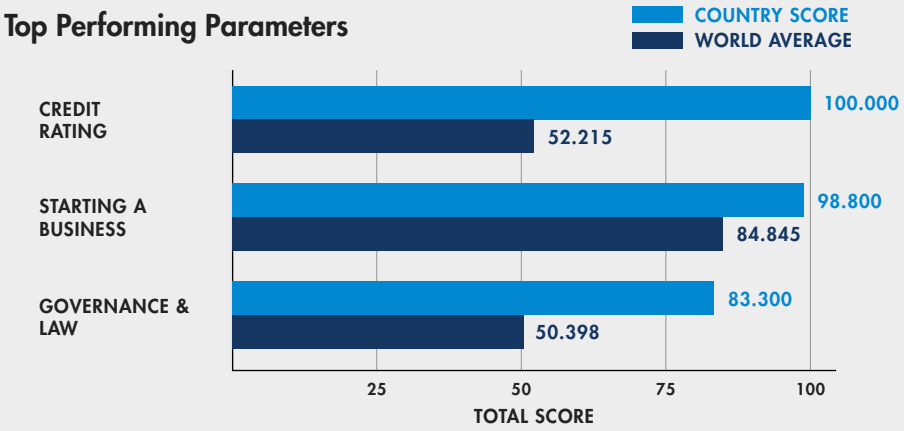
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#4

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"There is a lot of founder energy in Sydney, and an increasing depth of experience and maturity in the ecosystem--alumni of larger local players like Canva and Atlassian seed new startups at good pace. Relatively large pools of venture capital are available, although there are some gaps at the earliest stages. Challenges include high cost of living and a degree of cultural complacency that may stop Sydney and Australia from reaching the highest echelons of startup ecosystems."



Yaniv Bernstein
Founder & CTO,
Violet

Australia ranks 3rd in Asia Pacific for Market Perception.

- Australia ranks 17th globally and 4th in Asia Pacific in the IBEI 2026.
- Australia ranks 3rd in Asia Pacific under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Australia ranks 3rd in Asia Pacific under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.

- The country also ranks 3rd in Asia Pacific in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, reflecting strong assessments of cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area where Australia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- Australia ranks 3rd in Asia Pacific in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions across credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.
- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business, Governance & Law, and Credit Rating are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Australia's overall position.
- Overall, Australia demonstrates a business environment supported by well-established financial infrastructure and positively evaluated conditions across multiple dimensions of the Index.

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Country Overview

Australia maintains an innovation-oriented business environment supported by strong research institutions, advanced digital infrastructure, and a long-standing emphasis on scientific and technical capability. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) anchors much of the country's applied research output and contributes to long-term industrial development across multiple sectors.

The country offers residency pathways for internationally active entrepreneurs and skilled professionals. Frameworks such as the National Innovation Visa reflect Australia's orientation toward global talent mobility and its interest in attracting individuals engaged in technology-focused enterprise.

National policy continues to prioritize industrial modernization, scientific collaboration, and diversification across knowledge-intensive sectors. Public institutions involved in investment attraction, economic development, and research coordination reinforce these priorities and help position Australia within regional and global markets. Its role as a gateway to the Asia–Pacific region, combined with an English-speaking environment and transparent regulatory framework, strengthens its accessibility for international firms.

Despite these advantages and its status as an extremely successful economy, Australia still has substantial potential for adopting bolder, more ambitious pro-business initiatives that reflect the scale of its economic strength. Much of its progress stems from institutional stability and research capacity, yet the environment could further benefit from policies that more directly stimulate entrepreneurship and high-growth business formation.

Overall, Australia's business environment is defined by economic stability, research depth, and strong international connectivity, while still offering significant room for more assertive pro-business reforms.



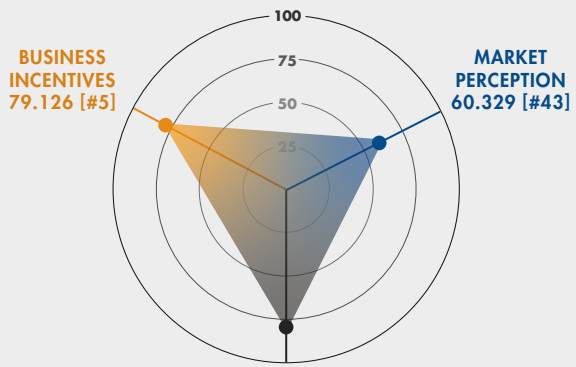
18. Bulgaria

GLOBAL RANK
#18

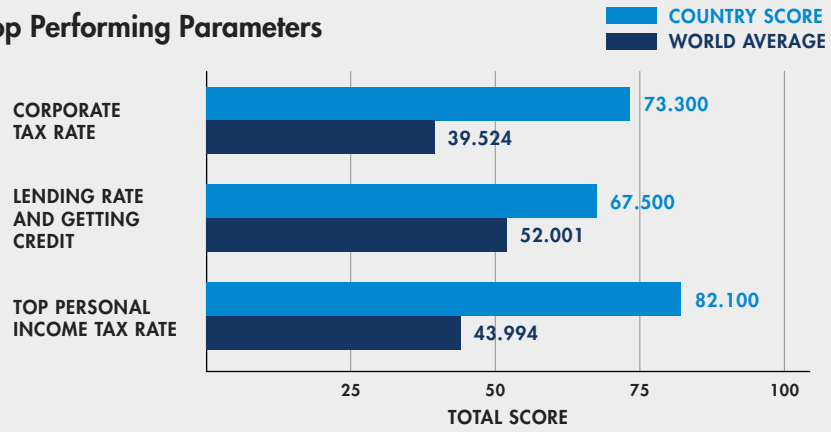
EUROPE RANK
#10

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Bulgaria offers the EU's lowest flat tax at 10%, world-class technical talent, and €500 million in locally managed VC capital. Startup investment has quadrupled to €264 million, and INSAIT anchors Eastern Europe's first dedicated AI research institute. The key shift? Our talent is now building homegrown companies, not just servicing foreign ones. With eurozone accession in 2026, Schengen integration, and a new Variable Capital Company structure for startups, the friction is gone. Bulgaria's fundamentals are now top-tier."



Max Gurvits
Managing partner,
Vitosha Venture Partners

Bulgaria leads the EU in Business Incentives.

- Bulgaria ranks 1st in the Balkans and 2nd in Central & Eastern Europe in the IBEI 2026, receiving the highest-rated business environment assessment among its neighboring regional economies.
- Bulgaria's business environment is evaluated more strongly in the IBEI 2026 than its startup-ecosystem outcomes in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025.
- Bulgaria ranks 5th in the world and 1st in the EU for the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting a positive assessment of fiscal and financial conditions.

- Bulgaria ranks 2nd in the EU for the Taxation Functional Category, highlighting positively evaluated tax structures relative to other EU member states.
- Bulgaria has scope to further improve on the Regulation & Governance Functional Category.
- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit, Corporate Tax Rate, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Bulgaria's overall result.
- Overall, Bulgaria demonstrates a business environment characterized by positively assessed taxation conditions, credit accessibility, and incentive frameworks, supporting a strong regional position within the IBEI.

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Country Overview

Bulgaria is known for being pro-business relative to its economic size. It offers founders a predictable regulatory setting and fewer administrative barriers than many of its regional peers.

A key feature of Bulgaria's recent strategy is its openness to foreign innovators. The Startup Visa, issued by the Ministry of Innovation and Growth, gives non-EU founders a structured path to establish and operate innovative companies. The program signals Bulgaria's intention to attract global talent and increase its presence within the European market.

Several institutions support this direction. The Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency helps firms grow and expand internationally. BESCO works with policymakers to streamline regulation and improve public–private dialogue. The Bulgaria Innovation Hub complements these efforts by connecting local companies with partners and opportunities abroad.

Bulgaria has also developed longer-term plans to deepen support for innovation. New programs aim to strengthen research capability and align national policy with European standards in digital transformation.

In short, Bulgaria offers a business environment defined by regulatory clarity, openness to international founders, and institutions that actively encourage entrepreneurship. These conditions help explain why the country continues to punch above its weight and attract a growing community of globally minded businesses.

Our Local Partners

"Over the past decade, Bulgaria has cultivated a vibrant startup and scale-up ecosystem. With a solid architecture comprising of ambitious founders with strong technical expertise, expanding access to venture capital, a network of dedicated support organisations and better alignemnt with public policies and institutions it is now equiped to produce success on a systematic basis. This is further supported by the stable macro economic framework, favourable tax regime and the upcoming accession into the Euro zone. Some Bulgarian born global success stories include Payhawk, EnduroSat, SiteGround, Dronamics and others."



Momchil Vassilev
Managing Director,
Bulgaria and SEE, Endeavor

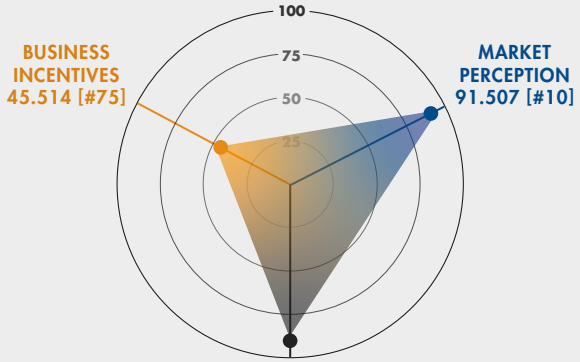
19. Finland

GLOBAL RANK
#19

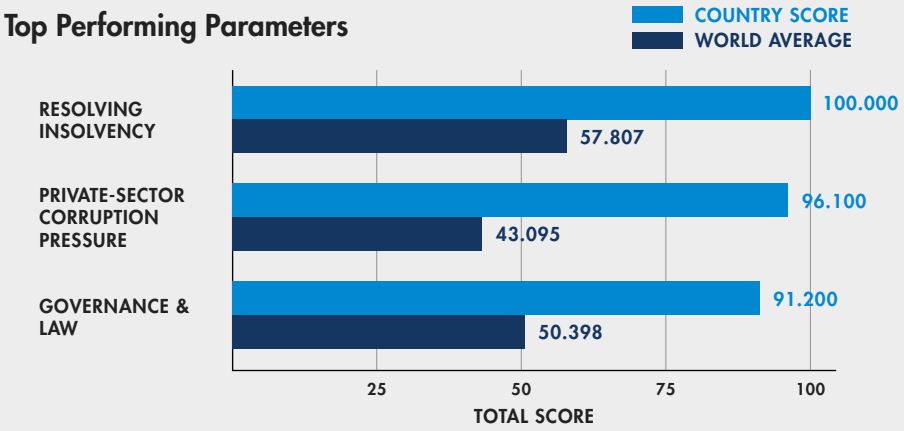
EUROPE RANK
#11

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Finland offers a dynamic and collaborative startup ecosystem where knowledge sharing and mentoring are integral to the culture. At its beating heart is Maria 01, driving innovation and connecting founders. The ecosystem combines world-class education, strong innovation capacity, and high patent activity. With the widespread use of English, excellent work-life balance, safety, and closeness to nature, Finland is not only a great place to build a company but also a great place to call home."



Sarita Runeberg
CEO, Maria 01

Finland leads the EU for Ease of Operating a Business.

- Finland ranks 19th globally and 9th in the European Union in the IBEI 2026.
- Finland ranks 1st in the EU and 3rd worldwide for the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting positively evaluated operational conditions for running and managing companies.
- Finland ranks 4th in the EU for the Market Perception Pillar, which captures assessments across governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility–related Parameters.

- Finland ranks 6th worldwide and 4th in the EU in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting positive assessments across Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters
- Finland also ranks 3rd globally and 1st in Europe in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, indicating positive assessments of its legal and regulatory environment.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area where Finland has additional scope to advance its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Trade Openness, Internet Speed, Financial Tools Openness, and Private-Sector Corruption Pressure are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Finland's overall result.
- Overall, Finland's results demonstrate a business environment supported by well-developed digital capability and positively evaluated institutional conditions.

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Country Overview

Finland maintains an innovation-oriented business environment shaped by engineering excellence, advanced research capability, and a long-standing commitment to technology development. Its global reputation is strengthened by companies such as Nokia and Wolt. Events like Slush add to this visibility and show Finland's ability to produce high-quality firms and connect its ecosystem to international networks.

Highly digital public services and efficient regulatory systems create a predictable and accessible setting for internationally active companies. Finland also offers residency pathways for mobile talent. Mechanisms for highly skilled professionals and entrepreneurs reflect the country's interest in attracting individuals engaged in innovation-driven activity.

Business Finland plays a central role in technological and economic development. The agency promotes research collaboration, supports international firms, and deepens Finland's integration into global markets. Its work helps the country continue to punch above its weight.

Together, these elements create a business environment defined by digital efficiency, scientific depth, technological leadership, and strong institutional coordination. Finland remains globally connected and consistently capable of generating high-quality firms despite its modest size.

"Helsinki offers a predictable and transparent environment where sustainability and value-driven innovation shape how companies grow. Efficient digital public services, clean energy infrastructure, and strong collaboration between public and private sectors create a practical foundation for developing new technologies. For companies, this offers a stable platform to build responsible, globally scalable solutions."



Ilona Kuusi
Senior Manager, Business Intelligence and Insights, Helsinki Partners

"Tampere is building a future ready drone RDI ecosystem, from high tech indoor testing at Nokia Arena to emerging outdoor and BVLOS opportunities. This city offers startups practical access to smart city testbeds, pilot environments, and partners who move fast from idea to implementation. For founders looking to experiment, validate, and scale new drone solutions in real urban conditions, Tampere is the place to plug in and grow together"



Tero Kyckling
Sr. Business Advisor, Business Tampere Oy

Our Local Partners

BUSINESS TAMPERE

Helsinki Partners

Helsinki

maria 01





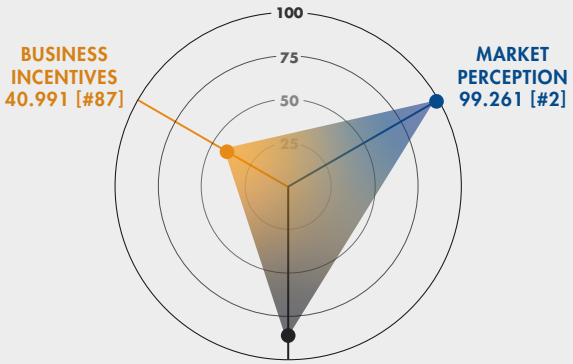
20. Denmark

GLOBAL RANK
#20

EUROPE RANK
#12

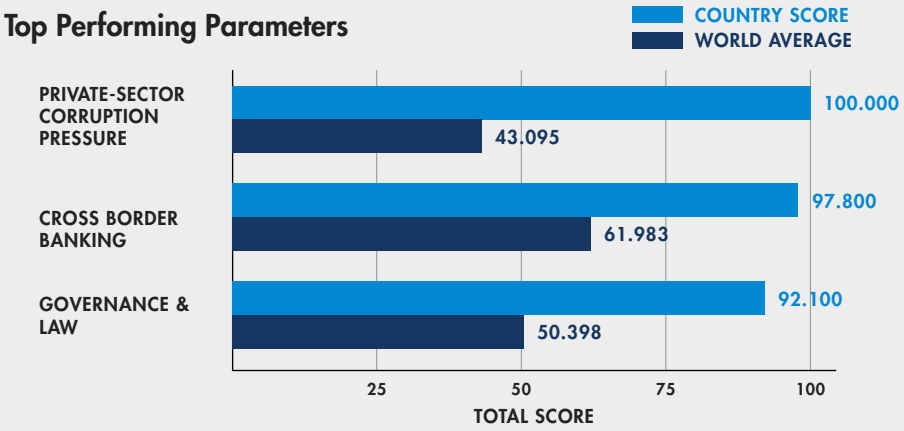
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
86.083 [#10]

Top Performing Parameters



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"Denmark's startup ecosystem works because we're small enough to know each other and connected enough to make things happen. Through Startup Aarhus, TechBBQ, SMIL and the many founder hubs, we focus on making it easy to come to Denmark and meet the right startups. Matchmaking, warm introductions and a constant finger on the pulse are core to how we work. With trust, a flat hierarchy and a well-connected community, we remove friction wherever we can."



Mette Hoberg Tonnesen
CEO, Startup Aarhus

Denmark leads Europe in Market Perception.

- Denmark ranks 20th globally and 10th in the European Union in the IBEI 2026.
- Denmark ranks 2nd worldwide and 1st in Europe for the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting positive assessments across governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Denmark ranks 4th in the EU for the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting positively evaluated conditions related to establishing and running companies.

- Denmark ranks 5th worldwide and 2nd in the EU in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, indicating positively assessed legal, regulatory, and procedural conditions.
- Denmark places 5th in the EU in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which assesses credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area with scope for further development within Denmark's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Governance & Law, Funding per Capita, and Lending Rate & Getting Credit are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Denmark's overall result.
- Overall, Denmark demonstrates a business environment supported by well-developed digital capability, positively evaluated institutional conditions, and consistent performance across multiple dimensions of the Index.

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Country Overview

Denmark maintains a steady business environment that values innovation. Clear regulations, robust public institutions, and sophisticated digital public services constitute the foundation of this ecosystem. Its flexicurity framework combines adaptable labor regulations with extensive social safety nets. The outcome is a job market that responds swiftly yet maintains enduring stability. International companies like Novo Nordisk and Maersk enhance Denmark's status by demonstrating that the nation can foster globally recognized firms based on scientific and technological prowess.

The Danish Business Authority manages the regulatory and administrative structure. It provides uniform policy enforcement and guarantees that digital services stay accessible and effective. These characteristics create a predictable and easily navigable environment for businesses. Denmark's sophisticated digital infrastructure enhances this impact by streamlining business registration, reporting, and compliance.

In recent years, the nation has shifted toward a more overtly pro-business position. This change is expected to enhance competitiveness and foster the development of innovation-focused companies.

Collectively, these components form a business ecosystem influenced by robust institutions, extensive scientific and industrial competencies, and exceptionally efficient digital systems. Denmark continues to be technologically sophisticated and globally linked. It is strategically placed to keep generating high-quality global enterprises and stay internationally connected.

Our Local Partner

Startup Aarhus



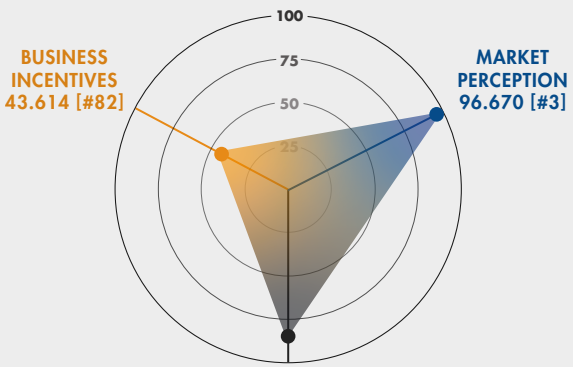
21. Norway

GLOBAL RANK
#21

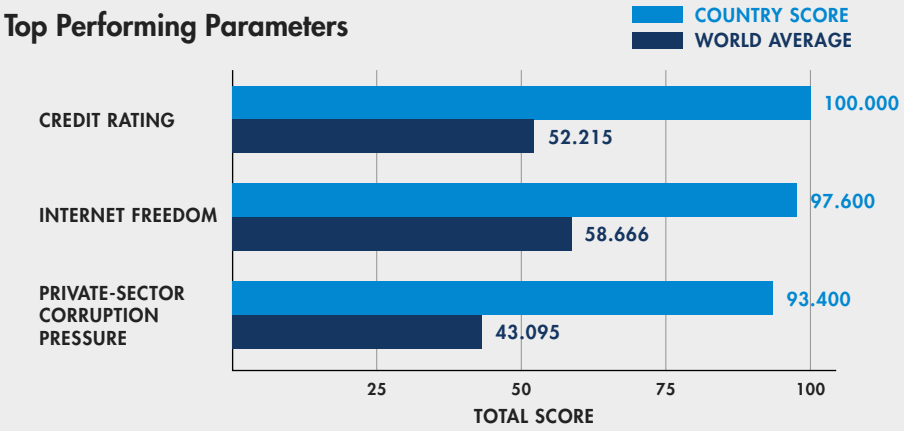
EUROPE RANK
#13

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Norway ranks 2nd in the world for Digital Infrastructure.

- Norway ranks 21st globally and 13th in Europe in the IBEI 2026.
- Norway ranks 3rd globally and 2nd in Europe for the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting positive assessments of governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Norway places 9th in Europe for the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, evaluating conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Norway ranks 2nd globally in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting positive assessments of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area with scope for further improvement within Norway's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Governance & Law, Funding per Capita, and Cross-Border Banking are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Norway's overall position.
- Overall, Norway presents a business environment supported by positively assessed institutional conditions, well-developed digital capability, and a positively evaluated financial-infrastructure base.

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Country Overview

Norway's business environment is characterized by strong public institutions, mature digital infrastructure, and a long-standing commitment to research-driven innovation. High-quality governance and predictable regulation create a stable setting for local and global firms. The country's focus on sustainability influences development across energy, technology, and advanced engineering. Yet Norway's substantial national resources and economic surplus also raise expectations. Many observers believe the business environment could place greater emphasis on entrepreneurship and private-sector growth than it currently does.

National research coordination channels scientific and applied knowledge into industry. SkatteFUNN provides a consistent incentive for research across sectors. It reinforces Norway's orientation toward technology-intensive development and supports firms investing in long-term capability. Innovation Norway adds to this framework. It promotes internationalisation, facilitates business development, and connects Norwegian companies with global markets.

Yet, the introduction of an exit tax has discouraged some founders. It has contributed to an outflow of entrepreneurial talent and revealed weaknesses in Norway's broader pro-business positioning.

Norway still has considerable untapped potential. More assertive pro-business policies could better match its economic advantages and help retain and attract entrepreneurial talent.





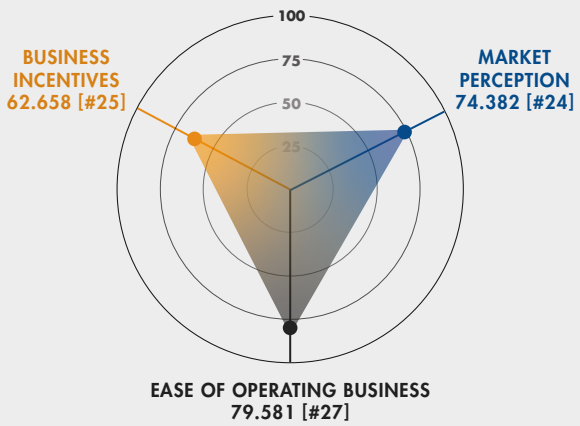
22. Lithuania

GLOBAL RANK
#22

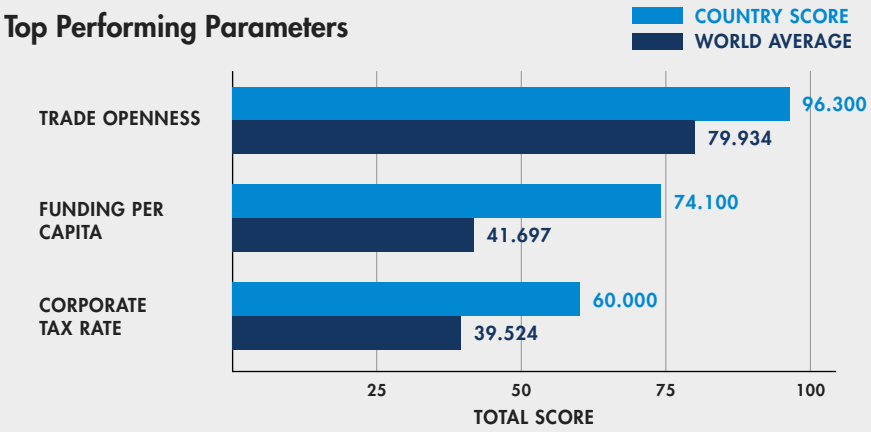
EUROPE RANK
#14

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Lithuania is small, fast, and agile—perfect for startups that need to move quickly in a changing world. Our country offers an ideal launchpad for founders looking to build and scale in fintech, life sciences, software development, and other future-ready sectors. Thanks to a sandbox-driven approach to innovation and a highly supportive government, startups can test, iterate, and reach the market faster. Collaboration is in our DNA, with founders, universities, corporates, and the public sector working in sync to accelerate breakthrough ideas. Lithuania is where globally impactful startups take shape and grow."



Karolina Urbonaitė
Head of Startup Lithuania,
Startup Lithuania

Lithuania ranks 2nd in Central & Eastern Europe for Digital Infrastructure.

- Lithuania ranks 22nd in the world and 3rd in Central & Eastern Europe (CEE) in the IBEI 2026, placing it among the region's higher-rated business environments.
- It ranks 2nd in CEE for the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting positive assessments of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- Lithuania also ranks 3rd in CEE for Regulation & Governance Functional Category, indicating a positively evaluated legal and regulatory framework.
- It ranks 3rd in CEE for the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, highlighting positive evaluations of credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.

- Lithuania ranks ahead of Estonia in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, placing 9th in CEE compared with Estonia's 11th position.
- Taxation emerges as a Functional Category in which Lithuania has room to advance its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Funding per Capita, Trade Openness, and Internet Freedom are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Lithuania's overall position.
- Overall, Lithuania demonstrates a business environment strengthened by well-developed digital capability, positively evaluated institutional conditions, and competitive regional performance across multiple IBEI dimensions.

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Country Overview

Lithuania offers a clear and orderly business environment shaped by digital governance, EU market access, and a policy tradition that supports modern, technology-oriented activity. The country has built a reputation for administrative simplicity and predictable regulation. These qualities give internationally mobile founders a practical base inside the European Union. Yet Lithuania is still viewed as less bold and less creatively experimental than its Estonian neighbour. Many expect it to push further and adopt more forward-leaning business initiatives.

Corporate taxation follows a straightforward structure that keeps operational planning manageable for both domestic and foreign companies. Early-stage compliance regimes and incentives in designated economic zones reduce procedural burdens. They also support reinvestment by firms that are beginning to scale.

A feature of Lithuania's global outlook is the Startup Visa. This programme offers non-EU innovators a clear path to temporary residence when founding scalable, technology-driven ventures. It has become one of the country's most recognisable tools for attracting global talent and signals Lithuania's ambition to remain competitive within the regional innovation ecosystem.

Institutional support moves this strategy forward. Startup Lithuania acts as a national platform that connects founders with information, programs, and visibility. The Lithuanian Innovation Agency advances research and business development through funding, advisory services, and international partnerships. Together, these institutions help structure an ecosystem where companies can grow with confidence.

Taken together, digital accessibility, EU integration, and coordinated institutional backing give Lithuania a predictable and supportive environment for launching and expanding European operations. Yet the country's strong talent base and small-country agility suggest room for more creative, high-impact initiatives. Such moves could elevate Lithuania further and narrow the gap with the region's most innovative peers.

"Lithuania has built an environment where founders can focus on progress instead of bureaucracy. Clear rules, accessible talent, and a culture that values trust make it easier to turn ideas into companies. What stands out most is how Lithuania links wellbeing with performance. When people feel supported by the ecosystem, they create better products, move faster, and stay resilient. That balance of stability and ambition is what keeps attracting founders to build here."



Gytenis Galkis
General Partner,
Superhero Capital

Our Local Partners

SUPERHERO CAPITAL

Innovation Agency LITHUANIA | Startup Lithuania



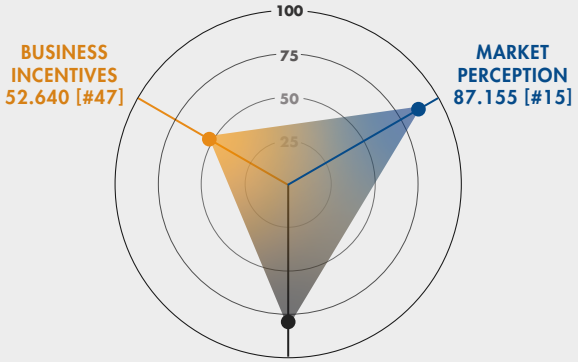
23. Germany

GLOBAL RANK
#23

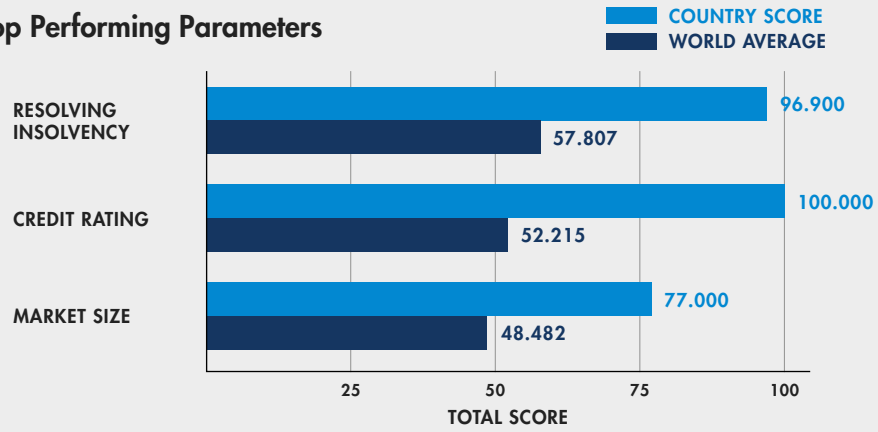
EUROPE RANK
#15

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Berlin takes pride in its unicorns and scale-ups: e-commerce companies like Zalando, HelloFresh, and GetYourGuide started out in Berlin and are now global players. Berlin is still Germany's biggest tech hub, accounting for 42% of the national ecosystem value. But things are changing – it's no longer a guaranteed success story and the focus is shifting towards deep tech and defense tech. The city also has a strong pipeline of future hotspots and startups in AI, climate tech, health, and fintech."



Stefan Franzke
CEO, Berlin Partner

Germany leads the EU in Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure.

- Germany ranks 23rd globally and 12th in the European Union in the IBEI 2026, positioning it in the upper half of business environments in the region.
- Germany ranks 4th worldwide and 1st in the EU in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting positive evaluations of credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.
- Germany ranks 7th in the EU in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, indicating positively assessed legal, regulatory, and procedural conditions.

- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area with scope for further improvement within Germany's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Credit Rating, Cross-Border Banking, and Funding per Capita are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Germany's overall standing.
- Overall, Germany demonstrates a business environment grounded in well-structured financial infrastructure and positively assessed operational conditions.

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Country Overview

Germany continues to be one of the most powerful industrial economies globally. Elevated productivity, robust public institutions, and a deep-rooted tradition of engineering uphold this stance. Applied innovation has shaped the country for decades. Yet, recent momentum is slower and there is a growing number of concerns about Germany's competitiveness. Even so, the underlying business environment remains strong. Germany still operates as one of the leading economies in the world.

The federal system enhances the depth of this setting. Regional specialization among the Länder results in a blend of industrial clusters. Certain areas emphasize high-tech manufacturing. Some excel in mobility, chemicals, or clean technologies. Well-established transportation and logistics systems connect these areas. They also connect the economy to global and European value chains. EU membership strengthens this integration by granting access to a broad and reliable regulatory framework.

National organizations aid in establishing policy and directing economic actions. The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action defines the strategy for industry and digitalization. Germany Trade and Invest encourages investment and facilitates global business involvement. Regional entities also have a part to play. They foster initial innovation and enhance industrial strengths throughout the nation.

Collectively, these factors create a business landscape characterized by stable institutions, exceptional research, and a deep-rooted dedication to innovation. Germany is striving to recapture the drive that previously characterized its economic path. Its structural advantages provide a robust basis for innovative endeavors.

"Germany combines robust corporate demand, a dynamic landscape of mid-sized companies, and one of Europe's most active venture investment environments. Its strong scientific and research base remains an underutilized asset with considerable potential for deep-tech commercialization. For innovators, this creates a fertile environment with access to customers, capital, and pathways to bring advanced technologies to market."



Eric Weber
CEO, SpinLab

Our Local Partners

BERLIN
BERLIN PARTNER
for Business
and Technology

SPINLAB
THE HHL ACCELERATOR

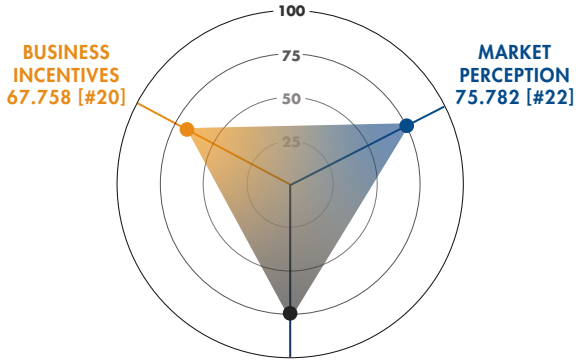
24. Israel

GLOBAL RANK
#24

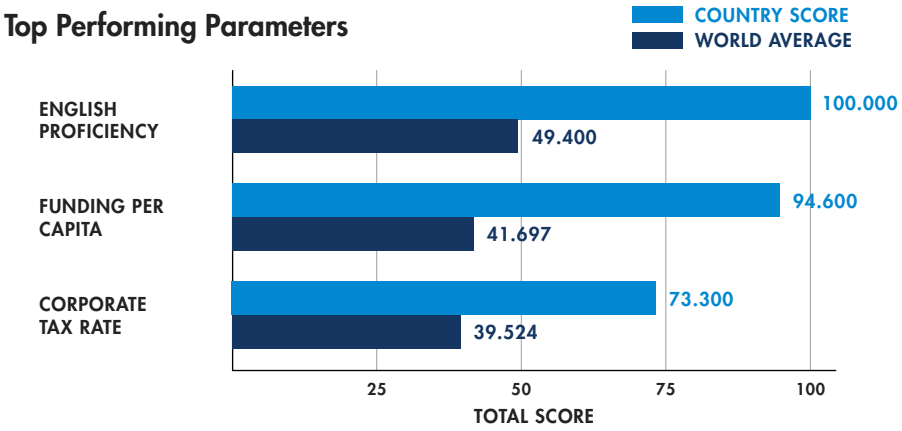
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#3

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Israel's business ecosystem has long been powered by innovation and exceptional talent, supported by a globally competitive tax environment. The new tax reform sharpens this advantage by adding certainty - clear taxation for IP transfers after acquisitions, certainty for multinational R&D centers, tax credits for R&D in Israel, and easier growth through M&A - further strengthening Israel as a predictable, attractive, and scalable destination for global investors and companies."



Dror Bin
CEO, Israel Innovation Authority

Israel leads the Middle East in Ease of Operating a Business.

- Israel ranks 24th worldwide and 3rd in the Middle East in the IBEI 2026, placing it among the region's higher-ranked business environments assessed by the Index.
- Israel's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 exceeds its position in the IBEI, highlighting strong startup-ecosystem outcomes alongside solid business-environment foundations.
- Israel ranks 1st in the Middle East under the Market Perception Pillar, indicating a positive assessment of governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.

- Israel ranks 1st in the Middle East under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting positively assessed operational conditions for establishing and running companies in the region.
- Israel places 1st in the Middle East in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting a positive assessment of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- Israel also ranks 1st in the Middle East in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, indicating positively assessed levels of cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area with scope for further development within Israel's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Israel records multiple results within the top 25% of the Index, including Funding per Capita, Governance & Law, and Resolving Insolvency.
- Overall, Israel's results reflect a business environment characterized by positively assessed digital infrastructure, international openness, and governance-related foundations.

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Country Overview

Israel's reputation as the "Startup Nation" stems from two decades of strong performance in technology and research-driven enterprise. Its business environment is deeply tied to advanced digital capability, highly skilled engineering talent, and regulation that supports cross-border activity and intellectual-property clarity. Geography adds another advantage. Israel's location enables commercial ties that reach into Europe, the Middle East, and global markets.

National institutions sit at the core of this innovation system. The Israel Innovation Authority guides technology policy and supports cooperation between research institutions and industry. Universities such as the Technion strengthen national research capacity and maintain long-standing partnerships with the private sector. Knowledge transfer from the military feeds directly into the economy and injects technical expertise and applied-engineering skills into commercial activity.

Multinational firms add a further layer of strength. Many operate major research centres in Israel. Their presence accelerates knowledge transfer, develops talent, and embeds Israel in global technology value chains. These activities reinforce the country's competitive edge in software, cybersecurity, and other research-intensive fields.

A broader institutional network complements this landscape. The Authority for Investments and Development of the Industry and Economy facilitates industrial projects and global engagement. Startup Nation Central helps connect Israel's technology community with international partners and strengthens its outward-facing innovation profile.

Yet Israel faces challenges that sit alongside these strengths. Bureaucratic processes remain complex. The country has not fully translated its innovation capabilities into a business environment that matches its technological excellence. These shortcomings have contributed to an outflow of skilled talent, underscoring the need for deeper reform and clearer communication of the advantages already in place.

Israel offers exceptional research depth, technological specialisation, and strong institutional foundations. It remains a global leader in innovation. Further progress will depend on aligning its broader business environment with the strength of its technological ecosystem.

Our Local Partner

רשות החדשנות
Israel Innovation Authority



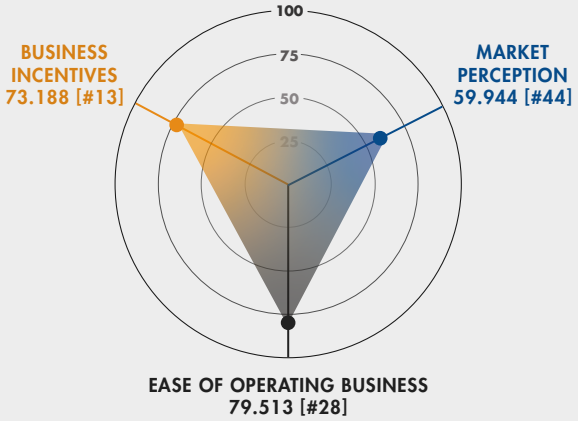
25. Romania

GLOBAL RANK
#25

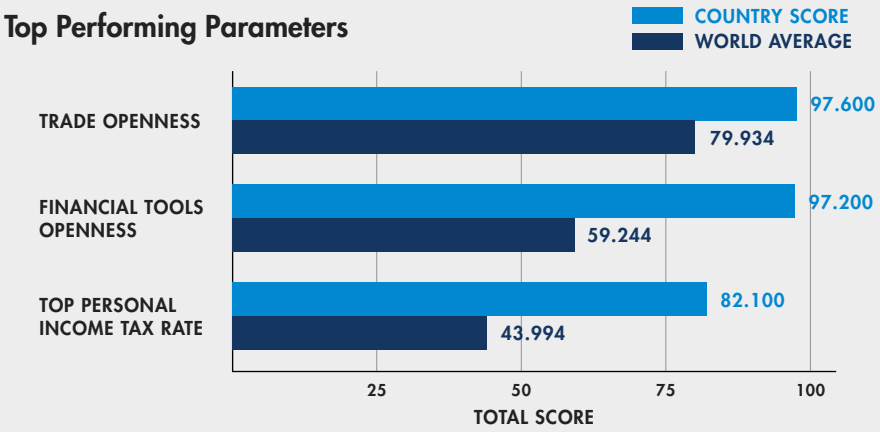
EUROPE RANK
#16

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Impact Hub Bucharest supports the development of entrepreneurship in Romania through dedicated programs, access to resources, mentorship and an active community. This integrated ecosystem helps founders validate ideas, overcome local challenges and scale relevant solutions. Impact Hub Bucharest acts as a catalyst for sustainable initiatives that strengthen Romania's economy."



Oana Craioveanu
CEO & Co-founder,
Impact Hub Bucharest

Romania ranks 2nd in the Balkans in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Romania ranks 25th worldwide in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Romania ranks 2nd in the Balkans and 4th in Central & Eastern Europe in the IBEI 2026, positioning it among the higher-ranked business environments within its regional peer group.
- Romania's IBEI ranking stands above its position in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, offering a positive indication of its underlying business-environment foundations than are reflected in current startup ecosystem output.

- Romania ranks 5th in the EU under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting positive assessments of fiscal and financial conditions relative to other member states.
- The country ranks 3rd in Central & Eastern Europe in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, indicating positively assessed levels of cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category represents an area with scope for further development within Romania's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Romania records multiple results within the top 25% of the Index, including Financial Tools Openness, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, and Trade Openness.
- Overall, Romania's results reflect a business environment characterized by positively assessed taxation conditions, international openness, and institutional capacity.

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Country Overview

Romania's business environment reflects a mix of steady market growth, competitive operating costs, and ongoing regulatory modernization. A strong base in software and engineering makes the country appealing to founders who need technical talent and predictable cost structures. Romania often punches above its weight relative to its economic size, and its reputation as a reliable technical hub continues to grow.

Corporate taxation is simple and easy to navigate. Most companies operate under a single rate. Micro-enterprises can opt for a simplified turnover-based regime that reduces administrative effort. Entrepreneurial residence is typically obtained through long-stay commercial routes. The proposed Golden Visa could add a multi-year, investment-based pathway if adopted.

Institutional support spans several organisations. InvestRomania guides foreign investors entering the market. The Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalization shapes national R&D policy. The Start-Up Nation programme provides grants that help new ventures gain early momentum.

Romania offers innovators a practical platform within a large and steadily evolving European market. The country still has room for more ambitious reforms, yet its current trajectory remains promising for founders and investors alike.

"We're in a historical setting where Romania has more than 200M euros to invest in tech startups, and more than that, the Western Region of Romania has a combined acceleration & investment mechanism to take you from John with an idea to a 4M round within the two VCs that will be operating within the region."



Andrei Cosmin Munteanu
CEO, Cowork Timisoara

Our Local Partners

co-work Timisoara

ROStartUp
Build the Ecosystem

IMPACT HUB Bucharest



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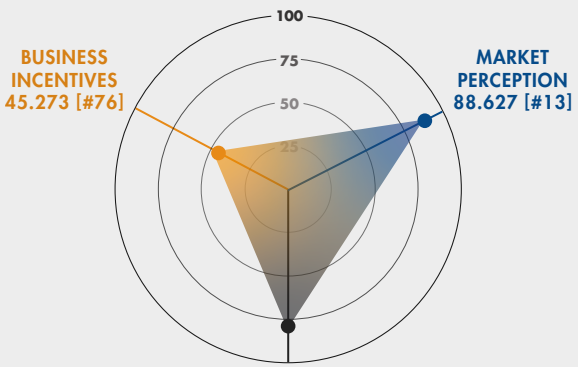
26. Austria

GLOBAL RANK
#26

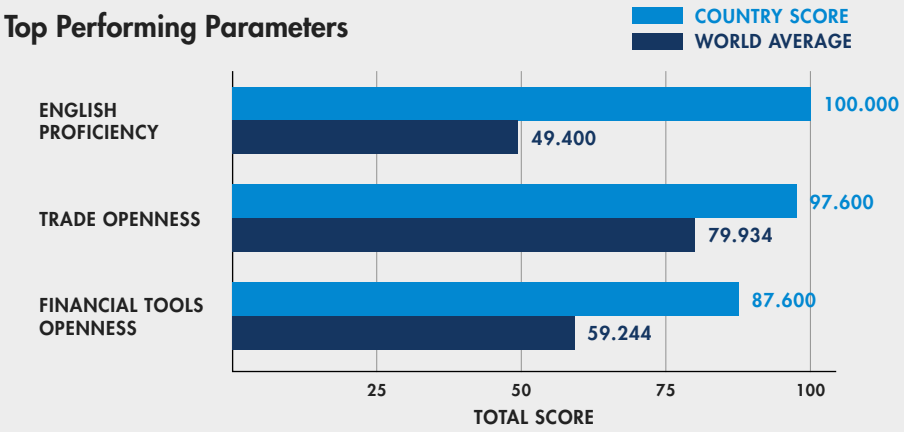
EUROPE RANK
#17

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Austria shows strong regional performance in Market Perception.

- Austria ranks 26th globally and 14th in the European Union in the IBEI 2026.
- Austria ranks 7th in the EU under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Austria also ranks 8th in the EU for the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which evaluates credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.
- Austria ranks 9th in the EU for the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting positive assessments of the Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- Austria places 10th in the world for the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which assesses cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Austria's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Austria is assessed within the top 25% of the Index for Financial Tools Openness, Cross-Border Banking, and Governance & Law.
- Overall, Austria's results reflect a business environment characterized by positively assessed financial-infrastructure conditions, openness, and strong market-perception performance within the European Union.

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Country Overview

Austria supports a stable and research-focused business climate influenced by robust public institutions, a talented workforce, and a well-defined regulatory framework. Its central location in Europe, along with Vienna's historical significance as a center for international organizations and cross-border trade, provides globally active businesses with a well-connected and reliable operational foundation.

The nation provides residency options for globally mobile entrepreneurs, such as the Red-White-Red Card designed for start-up creators. This indicates Austria's aim to draw talent engaged in innovative business development and incorporate foreign experts into the national economy.

Austria's innovation ecosystem is backed by national entities that manage scientific progress and encourage commercialization. Austria Wirtschaftsservice and the Austrian Research Promotion Agency assist in converting research into market-viable applications. The Vienna Business Agency and the Austrian Business Agency assist international companies evaluating Austria as a base for regional activities.

These traits are present within a larger context characterized by macroeconomic stability, dependable infrastructure, and strong ties to European markets. Collectively, they establish a business environment characterized by clear institutions, thorough science, and robust global connections. Austria provides a strong basis for businesses aiming for sustainable, innovation-driven expansion.





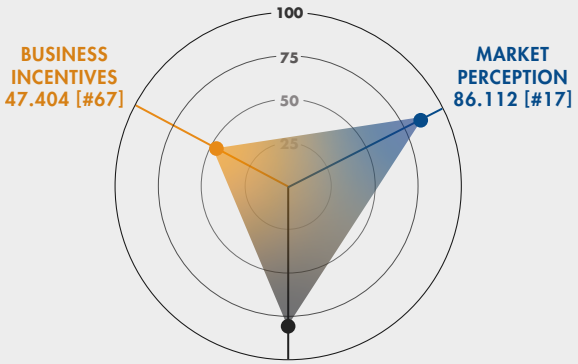
27. Iceland

GLOBAL RANK
#27

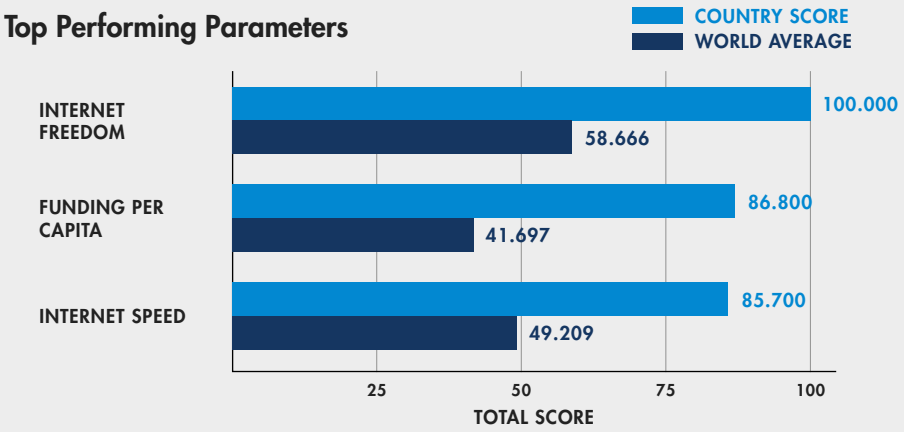
EUROPE RANK
#18

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Iceland ranks 1st globally in Digital Infrastructure.

- Iceland ranks 27th globally and 9th in Northern Europe in the IBEI 2026.
- Iceland ranks 2nd in the Nordics for the Business Incentives Pillar, showing positive assessments of fiscal and financial conditions.
- Iceland ranks 1st worldwide in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting positive assessments of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- It also ranks 1st in the Nordics for the Taxation Functional Category, indicating a positive assessment across Parameters such as Corporate Tax Rate, Capital Gains Tax Rate, Dividend Tax Rate, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate.
- At the Parameter level, Iceland records results within the global top 25% of the Index for Governance & Law, Internet Speed, and Funding per Capita.
- Overall, Iceland's results reflect a business environment characterized by positively evaluated digital capability, taxation conditions, and institutional foundations across core dimensions of the Index.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Iceland offers a business environment shaped by regulatory stability, transparent institutions, and a long-standing focus on research and digital public services. Its renewable-energy base provides predictable electricity costs and supports industries that rely on clean and reliable power. This gives Iceland a distinctive operating profile within the broader European region.

Company formation and taxation follow clear and simple rules. Businesses are taxed on profit rather than total income. This structure creates predictable compliance and supports long-term planning. It is especially useful for founders who value operational clarity in a small but orderly market.

Research activity benefits from the national R&D tax credit. The incentive allows firms to deduct a share of actual research spending, lowering early development costs and supporting Iceland's goal of expanding technology-driven enterprise. Advanced digital-government systems reduce administrative friction across registration, reporting, and daily interactions with public services.

Institutional support reinforces this environment. Invest in Iceland guides international companies and explains available incentives. The Icelandic Centre for Research coordinates national innovation programs and helps firms participate in broader research initiatives.

Iceland's stable governance, renewable-energy foundation, predictable taxation, and coordinated institutional support create a clear and well-structured setting for innovators assessing opportunities in a very small but highly organised market.





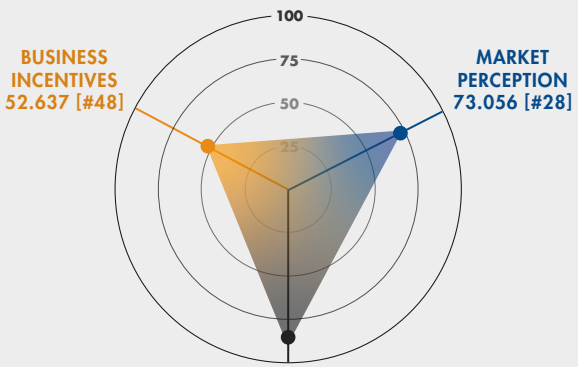
28. France

GLOBAL RANK
#28

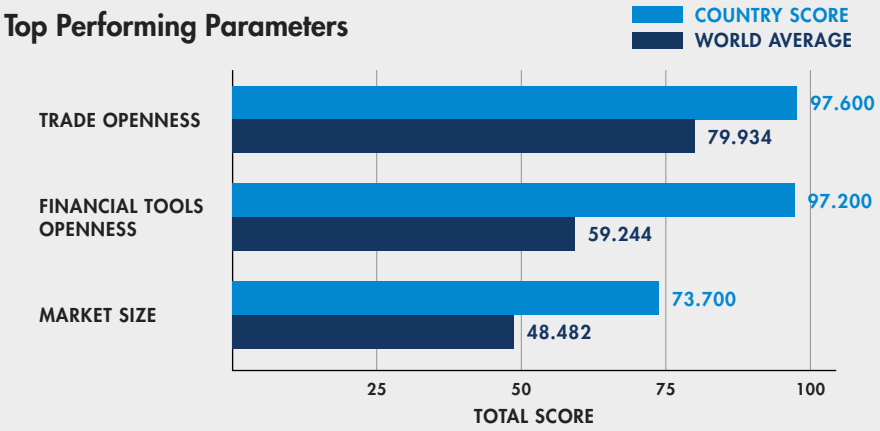
EUROPE RANK
#19

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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France ranks 3rd in the EU in Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure.

- France ranks 28th globally and 15th in the European Union in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- France's higher ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 highlights particularly strong startup ecosystem outcomes alongside its broader business-environment performance.
- France ranks 7th in the EU under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting positive evaluations of clarity and predictability in operating conditions.
- France ranks 3rd in the EU and 7th worldwide in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which evaluates credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category represents an area for further development within France's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Financial Tools Openness, Starting a Business, and Governance & Law are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to France's overall position.
- Overall, France's Index results reflect positively assessed operational conditions and solid financial-infrastructure capacity within the European business-environment landscape.

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Country Overview

France's business environment reflects a large and diversified economy supported by long-standing institutional stability and strong technological capability. Structural reforms in recent years have reduced barriers that once limited innovation growth. These changes have moved France into a stronger position than before the Macron era. National strategies such as France 2030 add long-term direction for industrial and technological development and signal policy continuity beyond short political cycles.

Residency pathways, including the Talent Passport, further supports this environment. They give entrepreneurs, researchers, and technical specialists a clear route to build long-term ties with the French economy. These mechanisms support France's broader goal of attracting internationally mobile talent and expanding innovation-driven activity.

Institutional support comes through a coordinated system of national bodies. La Mission French Tech promotes the growth of technology-focused firms and connects them to domestic and international innovation networks. Bpifrance provides financing, guarantees, and advisory support that help firms grow at every stage. Business France acts as the national interface for investment facilitation and international expansion. These institutions operate alongside a mature financial system with established banks, capital markets, and investment intermediaries. Together, they offer predictable financing conditions for companies of all sizes.

France may still lack some of the simplicity found in more business-friendly economies. Yet it has clearly improved and is now better positioned to unlock more of its economic potential.





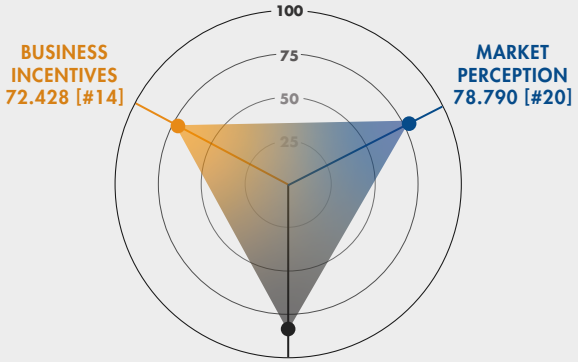
29. Taiwan

GLOBAL RANK
#29

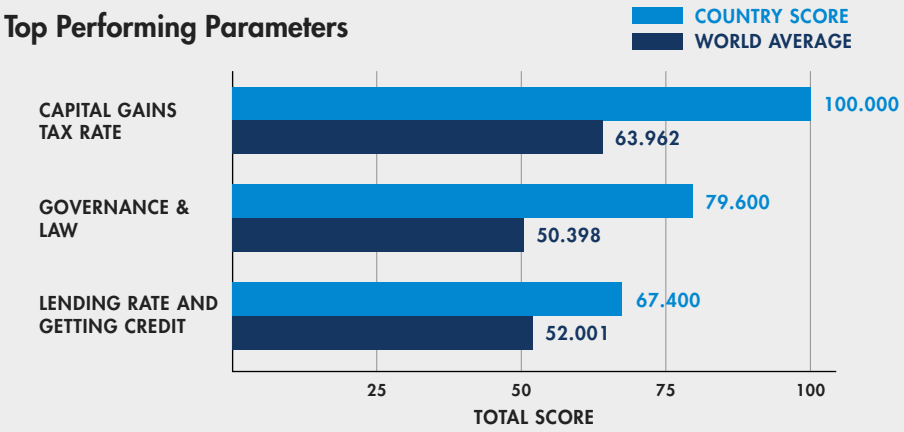
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#5

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Taiwan leads Asia in Digital Infrastructure.

- Taiwan ranks 29th globally in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Taiwan ranks 3rd in Asia and 2nd in East Asia overall in the IBEI 2026, placing it among the higher-ranked business environments.
- Taiwan ranks 1st in East Asia under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting positively assessed incentive-related conditions.
- Taiwan ranks 1st in Asia in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions related to Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- Taiwan ranks 1st in East Asia under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- It also ranks 1st in East Asia in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, reflecting assessed conditions related to cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- Taiwan ranks 1st in East Asia in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, indicating positively assessed legal, regulatory, and procedural conditions relative to regional peers.
- Taiwan holds 1st place in East Asia in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting positively assessed corporate and investor-relevant tax conditions.

- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit, Governance & Law, and Credit Rating are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Taiwan's overall position.
- Overall, Taiwan's Index results showcase positively assessed institutional foundations, incentive structures, and financial-system conditions.

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Country Overview

Taiwan's rise as a technology hub rests on a combination of advanced manufacturing, strong digital infrastructure, and deep expertise in semiconductors and electronics. These capabilities have shaped a business environment that feels both stable and highly innovative. Local champions such as TSMC illustrate how these capabilities translate into global leadership.

Taiwan has created several residency pathways that make it easier for entrepreneurs and skilled professionals to enter and remain in the country. The Entrepreneur Visa and the Employment Gold Card are the most prominent examples. They offer clear routes for internationally oriented individuals and signal Taiwan's intention to deepen its global links.

Policy efforts also push the economy toward higher-value activity. Research, industrial development, and technology commercialisation are long-standing national priorities. A strong intellectual-property regime protects innovative work, while a highly trained engineering workforce sustains the growth of knowledge-intensive industries. Together, these strengths anchor Taiwan's position within global technology supply chains.

A broad network of institutions adds structure to this business environment. Taiwan Tech Arena supports emerging technology fields and nurtures early-stage ventures. Economic planning and investment engagement fall under the National Development Council and InvesTaiwan, while international trade relations are guided by the Taiwan External Trade Development Council. Innovation hubs such as Taiwan Startup Terrace and Startup Island round out the system by offering co-working spaces, tailored programming, and access to local and international networks.

The result is a business environment that combines technological depth with institutional stability and strong international integration. For entrepreneurs seeking a platform for innovation-led growth, Taiwan offers a compelling and increasingly influential base within the global technology economy.

Our Local Partner

Startup Island TAIWAN



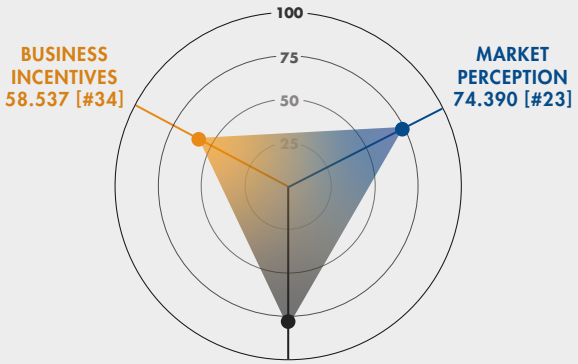
30. Czechia

GLOBAL RANK
#30

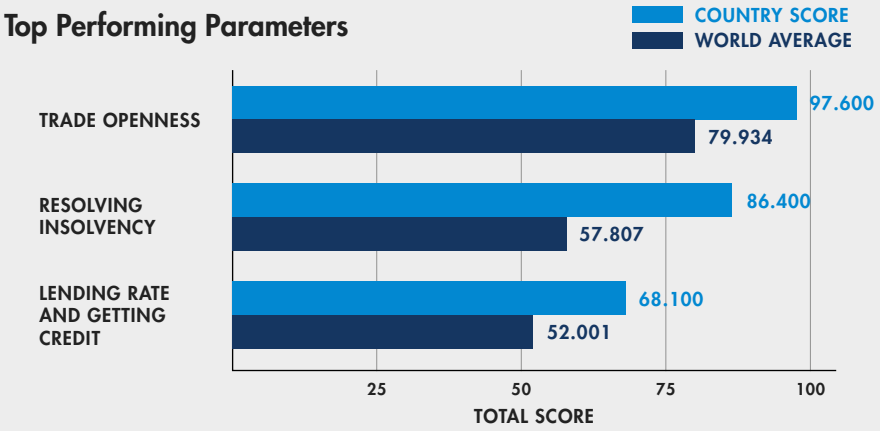
EUROPE RANK
#20

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Besides deep talent pool the Czech Republic is making it easier to build innovative companies by expanding support for founders and preparing measures such as a startup law and tax-advantaged ESOP rules. Our growing deep-tech, cybersecurity and other sectors show that high-value innovation can emerge locally and scale globally. Access to capital and smoother technology transfer remain challenges, yet awareness is increasing and new public-private initiatives have already started to address these gaps."



Petr Chladek
CEO, JIC

Czechia leads Central Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026

- Czechia ranks 30th globally and 1st in Central Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026, holding the region's top business-environment position.
- Czechia ranks 2nd in Central & Eastern Europe in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, indicating positively evaluated conditions related to credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.

- Czechia ranks 3rd in Central & Eastern Europe under the Market Perception Pillar, which evaluates governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an opportunity for further improvement within Czechia's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Credit Rating and Trade Openness are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Czechia's overall position.
- Overall, Czechia's Index results showcase positively assessed financial accessibility, institutional conditions, and regional positioning across core dimensions of the Index.

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Country Overview

Czechia is developing a business environment shaped by a long industrial tradition, a strong engineering base, and institutions that treat innovation as part of the country's broader economic strategy. Its central position in Europe reinforces this direction. Founders gain stable regulatory conditions and easy access to regional markets, which makes Czechia a practical base for long-term operations.

Entry routes for internationally active founders support this trajectory. The Startup Visa, administered with support from CzechInvest, gives non-EU innovators and essential personnel a clear pathway to establish local operations. A long-term business visa provides another option for individuals building commercial activity in the country. Both mechanisms aim to integrate foreign entrepreneurs into the national economy.

Several public institutions shape the business environment for innovation-focused firms. The Business and Innovation Agency supports small and medium-sized companies through programmes that promote development and modernization. The Technology Agency of the Czech Republic and the Czech Science Foundation coordinate national research agendas, fund scientific work, and strengthen collaboration between academia and industry. CzechInvest remains central to investment promotion and guides foreign founders through regulatory and operational questions.

These elements create a business environment that is steady, technically grounded, and increasingly attractive for innovators looking to build lasting operations within the European Union.

"Czechia combines a predictable legal framework, EU single-market access, and a strong pipeline of technical talent from its universities. Prague, Brno, and other hubs offer dense supplier networks and a growing community of investors and accelerators. The government has begun modernizing the toolkit—most notably, the amended ESOP framework—and is collaborating with ecosystem stakeholders on a Startup Act aimed at reducing friction in hiring, administration, and incentives for angel investors."



Tomas Pospisil
Analyst, Czech Startup Association

Our Local Partners

czech startup association

JIC



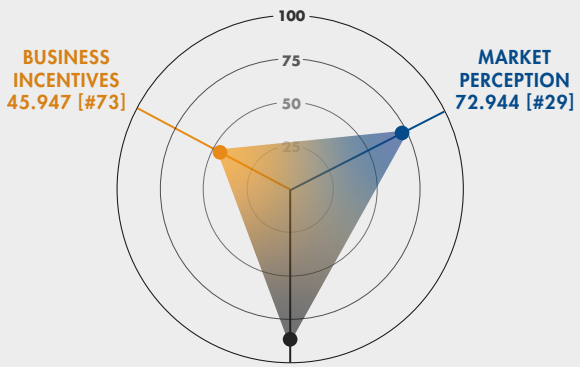
31. Portugal

GLOBAL RANK
#31

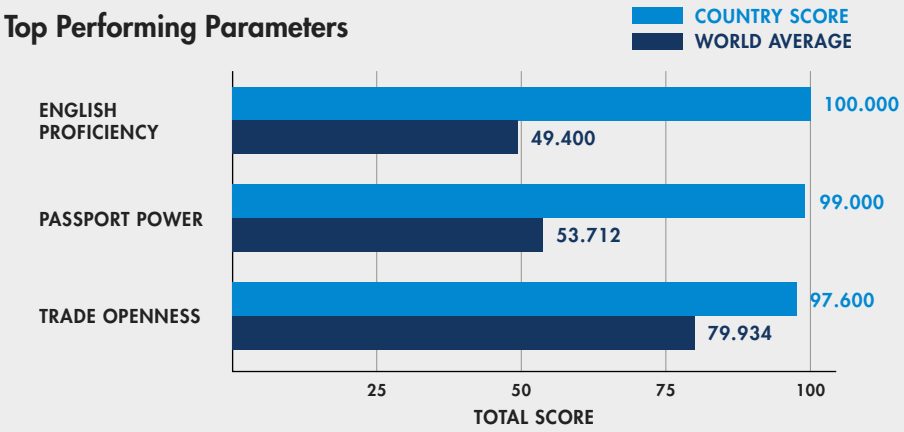
EUROPE RANK
#21

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Portugal's progress in the Innovators Business Environment Index reflects years of consistent work to make it easier for founders to build and scale here. This recognition validates that our reforms are working—but we're not declaring victory, we're accelerating. At Startup Portugal, our focus remains clear: improve regulatory efficiency, reduce friction, and ensure Portugal becomes a top destination for innovation-driven entrepreneurs in Europe."



Miguel Aguiar
Executive Director,
Startup Portugal

Portugal leads the world in Global Mobility & Openness.

- Portugal ranks 2nd in Southern Europe in the IBEI 2026, indicating a comparatively high performance within the region.
- Portugal ranks 1st in Southern Europe under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Portugal ranks 1st globally in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which evaluates cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The country ranks 1st in Southern Europe in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, based on evaluations of legal, regulatory, and procedural foundations.

- Portugal also ranks 1st in Southern Europe in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, according to assessments of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Portugal's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Cross-Border Banking, Funding per Capita, and Starting a Business are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Portugal's Index results indicate positively assessed operational conditions, institutional foundations, and international openness.

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Country Overview

Portugal has positioned itself as one of Europe's most accessible destinations for internationally oriented founders. Predictable regulation, favourable residency pathways, and coordinated national programs support innovation-focused business activity. A stable legal framework and a clear corporate tax system create an operating environment well aligned with international investment and long-term planning.

Fiscal policy plays a prominent role in this strategy. The Non-Habitual Residency regime offers advantageous tax treatment for individuals engaged in high–value-added work. It can also exempt certain foreign-sourced income for eligible newcomers. This regime has become one of Portugal's most recognisable tools for attracting mobile professionals and has contributed significantly to the country's global appeal. For companies, the national R&D tax credit encourages continued investment in technological development and supports early-stage experimentation.

Talent mobility further strengthens Portugal's ecosystem. The StartUP Visa gives non-EU founders a straightforward residency route when building innovative and scalable companies. The Tech Visa complements this by allowing accredited firms to recruit non-EU technology specialists more efficiently. Both pathways broaden access to global talent and ease growth for young firms.

National institutions reinforce these measures with coordinated support structures. Startup Portugal serves as the government's main platform for early-stage and enterprise-development programs. Portugal Ventures, the state-backed venture capital fund, increases investment capacity for technology-focused businesses and helps deepen the domestic venture landscape.

Portugal's global visibility has expanded alongside these efforts. Lisbon's annual hosting of Web Summit has amplified international connections and strengthened the country's reputation as an accessible, creative, and globally engaged destination for founders.

"The Algarve is emerging as one of Europe's most promising regions for founders, where a supportive business environment, international mindset, and fast-growing innovation community converge. The region's combination of quality of life, connectivity, and collaborative institutions creates fertile ground for entrepreneurs to build and scale impactful businesses."



António Guerreiro
Director,
Algarve Evolution

Our Local Partners

algarve evolution

STARTUP PORTUGAL



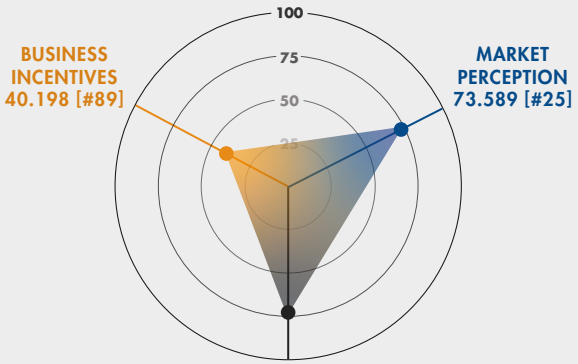
32. South Korea

GLOBAL RANK
#32

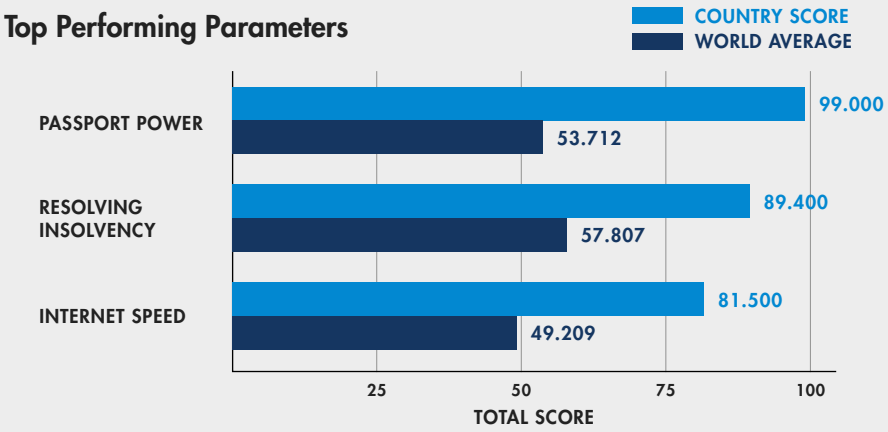
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#6

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Korea's startup ecosystem boasts outstanding IT infrastructure and a highly skilled workforce. The government supports technological innovation and entrepreneurship through various startup support programs. The country has huge potential as a testing ground. Korean entrepreneurs are increasingly moving onto the global stage, while global entrepreneurs are coming to Korea in search of opportunities."



Hwa-joon Choi
Adjunct Professor,
Ajou University

South Korea ranks 3rd in Asia in Market Perception.

- South Korea ranks 3rd in East Asia in the IBEI 2026, indicating a high position in business-environment performance within the region.
- South Korea also ranks 3rd in Asia under the Market Perception Pillar, according to assessments related to governance, stability, and international accessibility.
- In East Asia, South Korea ranks 3rd under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, based on evaluated conditions for establishing and running companies.
- The country ranks 3rd in Asia in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, indicating positively evaluated conditions related to credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.

- South Korea places 3rd in East Asia in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, according to assessments of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- At the Parameter level, Credit Rating, Governance & Law, and Funding per Capita are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, South Korea's Index results show positively assessed capital-related conditions, governance-related foundations, and digital-infrastructure dimensions.

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Country Overview

South Korea's economic profile is shaped by heavy industrial capability, deep digital adoption, and a long history of export-driven growth. These forces have produced one of Asia's most sophisticated technology and manufacturing bases. Strong infrastructure and a highly educated workforce reinforce this foundation and keep the country deeply integrated into global supply chains. Yet founders often view the broader business climate as rigid. Compared with more flexible regional hubs, South Korea's regulatory system can feel demanding for those who prefer faster decision cycles and lighter administrative rules.

Much of the country's innovation agenda is organised through national institutions. The Ministry of SMEs and Startups sets priorities for business development and supports efforts to modernise industry. The Korea Institute of Startup and Entrepreneurship Development works with early-stage teams, strengthens entrepreneurial capability, and channels resources toward technology-led ventures. Additional public organisations shape digital policy, manage research partnerships, and attract investment, creating a wide network around enterprise development.

These elements produce a business landscape with clear strengths in technology, industrial organisation, and long-term public investment. What the system lacks is regulatory flexibility. A move toward simpler procedures and more market-driven rules would make South Korea more competitive with regional leaders such as Singapore, where founders enjoy greater room to operate and adjust as they grow.

CITY SPOTLIGHT:

Daejeon



An Interview with

Mr. Daehee Park

CEO & President of the Daejeon Center for Creative Economy and Innovation

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What long-term vision is Daejeon currently pursuing in terms of innovation and economic development?

Daejeon is pursuing a long-term vision of an innovation-driven economy in which scientific research, AI, and AI Transformation (AX) serve as core engines linking R&D outcomes to entrepreneurship, commercialization, investment, and global markets. In particular, the city aims to transform nationally accumulated research capabilities centered around the Daedeok Innopolis into deep-tech startups and emerging industries, positioning Daejeon as a future-oriented industrial city with strong global technological competitiveness.

What key assets or strengths make Daejeon an attractive environment for founders and high-growth companies?

Daejeon has Korea's highest concentration of research, technology, and talent, anchored by Daejeon CCEI, 19 universities including KAIST, 27 government-funded research institutes, and numerous corporate R&D centers. Supported by high-quality coworking infrastructure such as Daejeon Startup Park and its 10 affiliated buildings, this ecosystem enables a virtuous cycle of public technology commercialization, deep-tech entrepreneurship, technology transfer, and investment, making Daejeon an attractive base for high-growth and globally scaling startups.

What measures has the city implemented to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start and operate a business?

To minimize administrative and operational burdens for entrepreneurs, Daejeon has established a one-stop startup support system. This integrated framework connects startup consulting, incubation space, commercialization funding, investment linkage, legal, intellectual property, and accounting support, as well as global expansion programs, enabling early-stage startups to focus on technology development and market entry.

What programs, initiatives, or infrastructure investments support innovation and technology development in Daejeon?

The Daejeon CCEI, an official startup supporting organization under the Korean government, systematically promotes R&D-driven innovation centered on Daejeon Startup Park. Its initiatives include the formation of a TLO council among government-funded research institutes, technology commercialization, and specialized programs

in AI, deep tech, space, defense, and biotechnology. In addition, through an open innovation framework involving research institutions, universities, corporations, and investment organizations, DCCEI provides a continuous growth pathway encompassing proof of concept (PoC), commercialization, and investment attraction.

Does Daejeon offer grants, incentives, or financial support for startups or new businesses?

Daejeon provides a wide range of financial incentives for startups and new ventures, including commercialization grants, TIPS-linked investment, the formation of public-private funds, and investment attraction support. These measures are designed to alleviate financing constraints for early-stage startups and to enable growth-stage companies to scale up in a stable and sustainable manner through a phased financial support system.

What are the city's strategic priorities for strengthening the local business environment in the coming years?

Looking ahead, Daejeon has identified the qualitative advancement of its deep-tech and AI-centered startup ecosystem, the expansion of global market access and international networks, and the activation of investment and open innovation as strategic priorities. In parallel, through data-driven policymaking and alignment with international indices, the city aims to position itself as Asia's leading technology startup hub and a globally competitive innovation city.





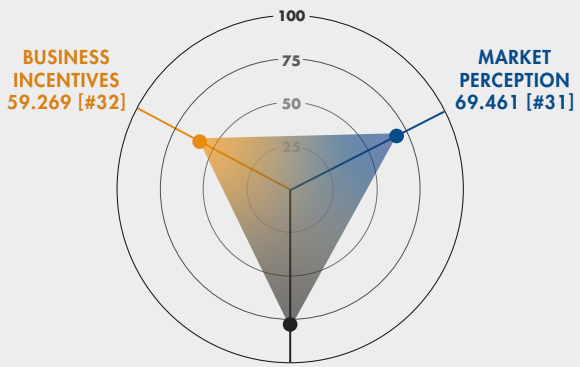
33. Greece

GLOBAL RANK
#33

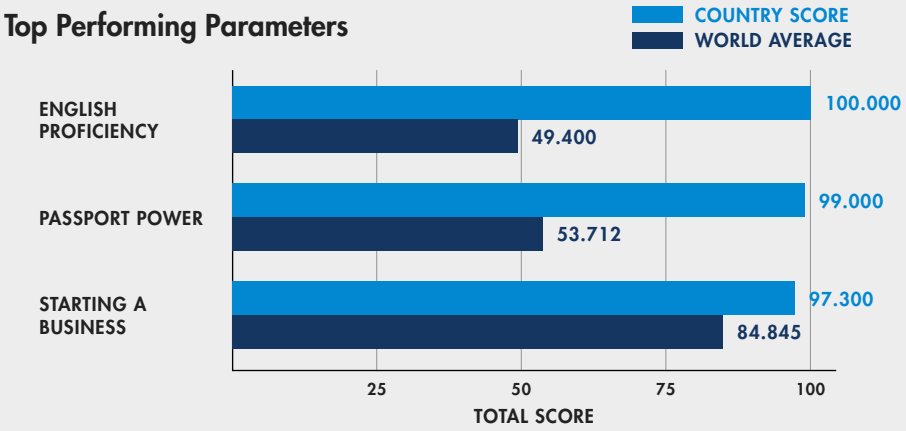
EUROPE RANK
#22

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Greece ranks 2nd in the Balkans in Market Perception.

- Greece ranks 3rd in the Balkans and Southern Europe in the IBEI 2026.
- Greece ranks 2nd in the Balkans under the Market Perception Pillar, based on assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Greece also ranks 4th in Europe in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Greece's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Cross-Border Banking, Trade Openness, and Starting a Business are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Greece's Index results showcase positively assessed conditions related to cross-border integration and regional perception.

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Country Overview

Greece has begun to reshape its economic profile by placing greater emphasis on attracting internationally oriented founders and investors. The shift is visible in a series of reforms that aim to align the country's business environment with global expectations. Talent mobility, capital formation, and the growth of innovation-driven companies now sit more clearly on the policy agenda. Structural challenges remain, but the overall trajectory marks meaningful progress compared with earlier years.

One of the most significant changes is the introduction of the non-domicile regime. Eligible individuals who relocate to Greece and meet defined investment conditions can opt for a flat annual tax on foreign-sourced income. For globally active entrepreneurs, this creates clarity and predictability. It has also become one of Greece's most prominent tools for attracting mobile talent and international investment.

The Golden Visa adds another layer to this strategy. It is a long-standing residency pathway linked to qualifying economic activity. For founders and investors who value seamless travel across the European Union, the programme remains a stable and practical entry point into the Greek economy.

Capital formation has also received renewed attention. Recent legislative changes introduced tax deductions for individuals investing in young Greek companies. These incentives create a more structured environment for angel investment and help draw participation from both domestic and international investors.

Institutions reinforce these developments. Enterprise Greece, the national investment-promotion authority, guides foreign companies through establishment and expansion. The Visa Innovation Program Europe offers another channel for internationally active teams by facilitating collaboration with corporate partners and industry networks.

Greece now provides clearer residency pathways, recognises the importance of cross-border capital, and offers growing support to innovators who want to participate in the country's evolving economic landscape.



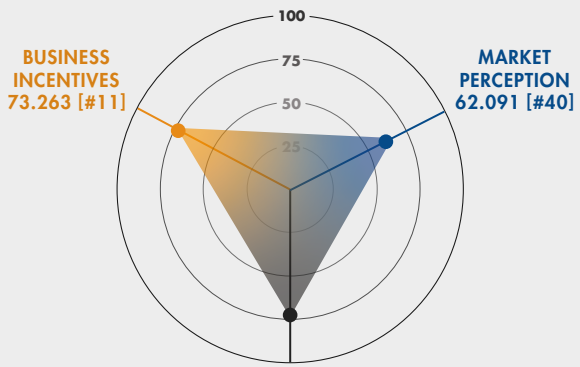
34. Hungary

GLOBAL RANK
#34

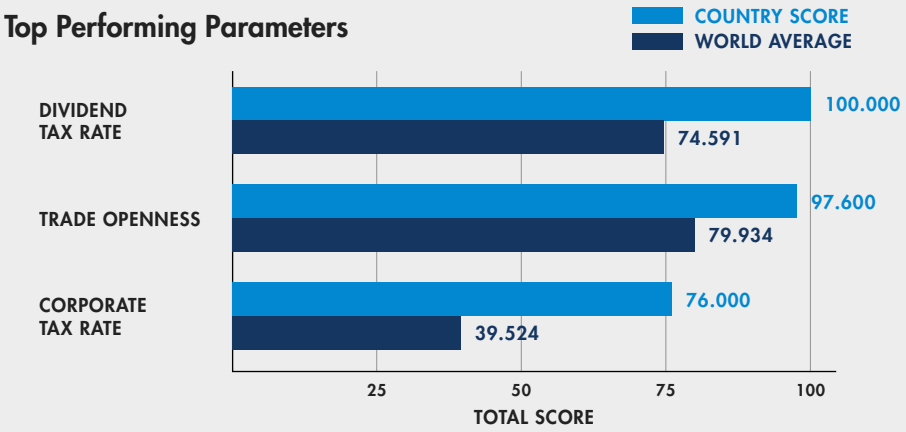
EUROPE RANK
#23

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Hungary's attractive business environment with 9% corporate tax rate and an exceptionally favorable ESOP regulation, combined with its technical and scientific talent pool makes it an excellent Deep Tech hub, located in the heart of Europe."



Laszlo Bodis
Deputy State Secretary for innovation & CEO,
Hungarian Innovation Agency

Hungary ranks 1st among the OECD Countries in Taxation.

- Hungary ranks 2nd in Central Europe in the IBEI 2026, indicating a comparatively high placement among business-environment performers in the region.
- Hungary ranks 11th worldwide and 5th in Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, according to assessments of conditions related to business-support measures within the region.
- Hungary ranks 1st among OECD countries and 5th in Europe in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting a positive assessment of tax-related Parameters.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category represents an area for further development within Hungary's overall Index profile.

- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate, Trade Openness, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Hungary's Index results reflect positively assessed taxation conditions, incentive-related frameworks, and institutional components.

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Country Overview

Hungary has been shaping a business environment that blends clear rules, competitive operating conditions, and a growing emphasis on attracting internationally active founders. The country's broader economic direction focuses on strengthening its innovation base while keeping administrative procedures accessible for individuals seeking to establish a commercial presence. This approach helps explain why Hungary is often viewed as offering more attractive incentives than several other countries in its region.

A central part of Hungary's offer to globally oriented entrepreneurs is the range of residence options linked to business activity and investment. The residence permit for individuals intending to start a business provides a defined route for newcomers establishing operations locally. Complementing this, the guest investor framework offers long-horizon residency to those who commit capital to the country, giving investors stability and a predictable base for long-term planning.

Hungary's innovation landscape is supported by a network of institutions that add structure and continuity to the operating environment. The Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency assists international companies through facilitation, aftercare services, and guidance on local opportunities. The National Research, Development and Innovation Office coordinates research strategy and funding instruments, while Hiventures, the state-backed investment platform, expands financing options for companies at various stages of development.

Together, these elements create a practical environment for founders evaluating Central European locations. Hungary's combination of accessible residency pathways, supportive institutions, and a policy orientation aimed at reinforcing innovation provides a predictable and competitive base for companies seeking to build operations with regional or international reach.



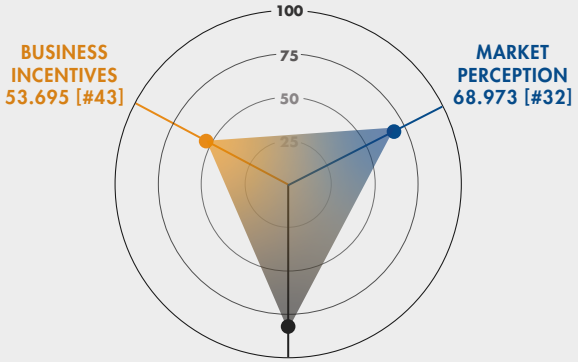
35. Latvia

GLOBAL RANK
#35

EUROPE RANK
#24

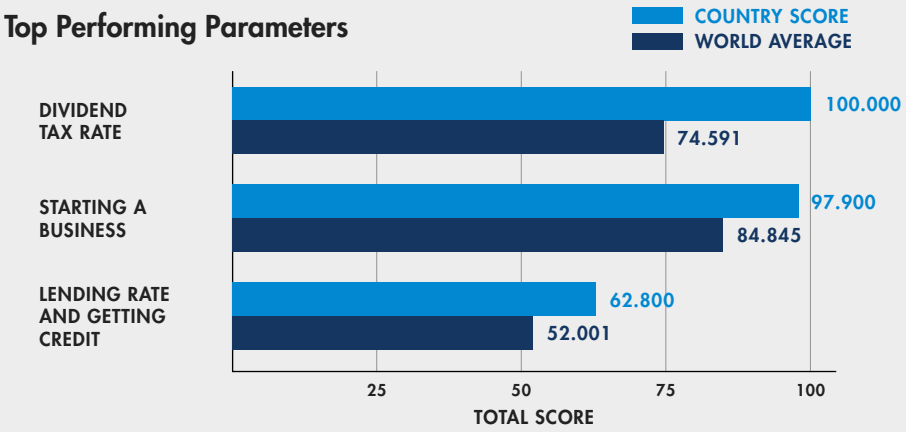
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
81.707 [#22]

Top Performing Parameters



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"Latvia offers a vibrant and future-ready environment for founders — combining seamless digital accessibility, with over 90% of state services available online, a highly skilled and multilingual workforce, and strong innovation support. Our agile regulatory framework and rapidly growing startup ecosystem empower entrepreneurs to scale faster and connect with European and global markets."



Ieva Jagere
Director General,
Investment and Development
Agency of Latvia

Latvia ranks 2nd in the Baltics in Ease of Operating a Business.

- Latvia ranks 3rd in the Baltics in the IBEI 2026, indicating a comparatively high placement within the subregion.
- Latvia's higher position in the IBEI compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 points to comparatively strong underlying business-environment conditions than its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Latvia ranks 2nd in the Baltics and Central & Eastern Europe under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Latvia places 3rd in Central & Eastern Europe and 10th in the EU in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, based on assessed results for Internet Freedom and Internet Speed Parameters.

- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Latvia's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business, Lending Rate and Getting Credit, and Internet Freedom are assessed within the top 25% of the Index for Latvia.
- Overall, Latvia shows comparatively strong results across indicators related to business operations, mobility, and digital infrastructure within the Index.

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Country Overview

Latvia has built a business environment shaped by clear rules, steady digitalisation, and policies designed to attract innovative companies. Long-term strategies such as the National Industrial Policy Guidelines and the Smart Specialisation Strategy aim to raise productivity, upgrade technological capacity, and deepen international engagement. These frameworks give the economy direction, although Latvia still lags behind its Baltic neighbours, especially Estonia, in overall business dynamism.

One of Latvia's most distinctive features is its corporate tax structure. Profits are taxed only when distributed. This reinvestment-friendly model supports young companies that prioritise product development and expansion rather than early profit extraction.

Talent mobility aligns with this broader effort. The Startup Visa allows non-EU founders to establish a company for up to three years and bring co-founders and family members. It offers a straightforward path for internationally mobile teams that want an EU base.

The Startup Law adds another layer of targeted support. It reduces employment-related costs through a fixed social contribution regime and provides co-financing for highly qualified specialists. These measures help early-stage companies scale with fewer financial constraints.

Institutional support anchors the system. Startup Latvia administers both the Startup Visa and the Startup Law. ALTUM offers guarantees, loans, and venture capital tools that expand financing options. The Investment and Development Agency of Latvia promotes investment and supports innovation-led business development.

Latvia is still working to build the momentum seen in its more advanced Baltic peers, yet the foundations for a stronger innovation ecosystem are firmly in place.

Our Local Partner

LIAA



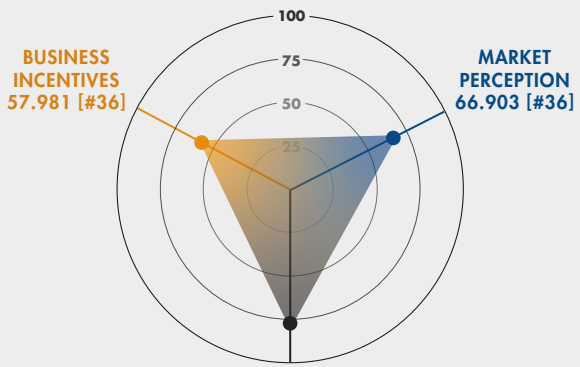
36. Slovakia

GLOBAL RANK
#36

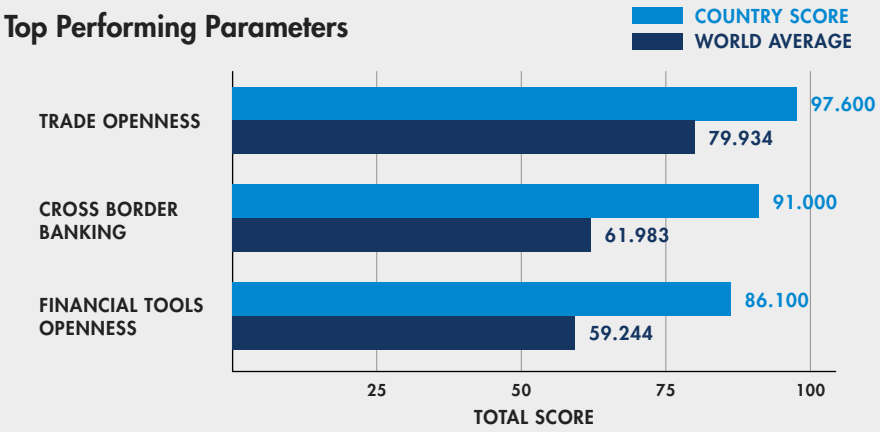
EUROPE RANK
#25

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Slovakia ranks 5th among the OECD Countries in Taxation.

- Slovakia ranks 3rd in Central Europe in the IBEI 2026, indicating a comparatively high placement in the region.
- Slovakia's higher placement in the IBEI compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 suggests that its underlying business-environment conditions are stronger than its measured startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Slovakia ranks 3rd in Central Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, based on assessments of fiscal and financial elements.
- Slovakia also ranks 3rd in Central Europe under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, according to evaluations of conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Slovakia ranks 5th among OECD countries and 8th in the European Union in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting assessed tax-related conditions.
- At the Parameter level, Cross-Border Banking, Credit Rating, and Trade Openness are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Slovakia's Index results show positively assessed tax-related, operational, and financial-infrastructure dimensions.

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Country Overview

Slovakia has been establishing a unique position in Central Europe by merging industrial strength with enhancing technological expertise. Its location within Europe's interconnected manufacturing and innovation networks provides companies with dependable access to regional supply chains. A reliable regulatory system enhances predictability, positioning the nation as a suitable hub for globally engaged firms.

Innovation is integral to Slovakia's economic identity. National frameworks consistently highlight the importance of research and development, motivating companies to invest in innovative technologies. These initiatives link technological activities with industrial requirements and promote a gradual transition to higher-value manufacturing, digitalization, and knowledge-driven jobs.

This change is most evident in Slovakia's developing urban tech centers. Bratislava and Košice currently feature dense clusters of talent, practical research, and engineering-focused endeavors. These cities are broadening the nation's presence in software development, advanced manufacturing, and technological innovation, aiding Slovakia in diversifying beyond its conventional industrial strengths.

SAPIE, the Slovak Alliance for Innovative Economy is a key organization for supporting innovative businesses. It aids the business environment by fostering collaboration, engaging in policy, and working to enhance coordination between government and industry.

Slovakia's industrial foundation, advantageous European positioning, and increasing innovation ability provide globally oriented companies a stable and developing environment for sustainable growth.





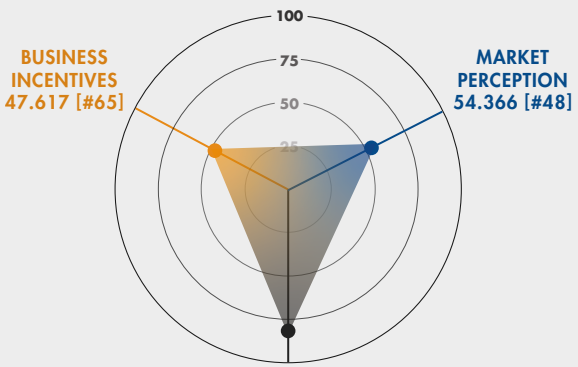
37. Georgia

GLOBAL RANK
#37

EUROPE RANK
#26

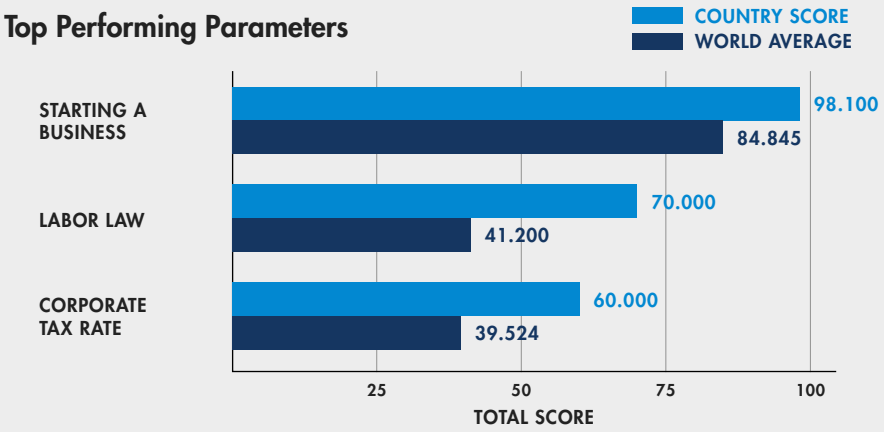
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
81.348 [#24]

Top Performing Parameters



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Georgia leads the Caucasus in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Georgia ranks 1st in the Caucasus overall in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Georgia's higher placement in the IBEI compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 indicates comparatively strong evaluations of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Georgia ranks 1st in the Caucasus under all two main IBEI Pillars: Ease of Operating a Business and Market Perception.
- Under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, Georgia ranks 4th in Central & Eastern Europe, reflecting a positive assessment of conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Georgia also ranks 2nd in Central & Eastern Europe in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, showcasing a positive evaluation of legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- Georgia ranks 7th in Central & Eastern Europe in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, based on performance in Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category represents an area for further development within Georgia's overall Index profile.

- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business, Corporate Tax Rate, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Georgia's Index results reflect positively assessed regulatory, operational, and cost-related dimensions.

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Country Overview

Georgia has emerged as a regional services and technology hub by combining low administrative friction with straightforward rules for company formation. Over the past decade, it has used its tax architecture and regulatory reforms to appeal to internationally oriented founders. These choices help explain why the country continues to punch above its weight in attracting foreign entrepreneurs and digital operators.

An element of Georgia's business environment appeal is its treatment of undistributed profits. Companies pay tax only when profits are distributed. This allows growing firms to reinvest without facing immediate fiscal pressure and creates a predictable base for long-term planning. Several targeted regimes build on this principle. The Virtual Zone framework supports software companies that develop and export digital products. The International Company regime offers a stable structure for technology and business-services firms operating in global markets. Together, these arrangements give digital enterprises clear rules and reduced friction during early expansion.

Georgia also provides simplified pathways for individual entrepreneurs. Streamlined reporting and minimal administrative obligations allow founders to test ideas at low cost before shifting into larger corporate structures.

Institutional support reinforces these advantages. The Georgia Innovation and Technology Agency promotes research and entrepreneurship through grants, technology parks, and partnerships with international organisations. Enterprise Georgia plays a complementary role by supporting business development, export activity, and investment facilitation. Their work helps firms navigate administrative processes as they scale and strengthens the country's orientation toward innovation and digital services.



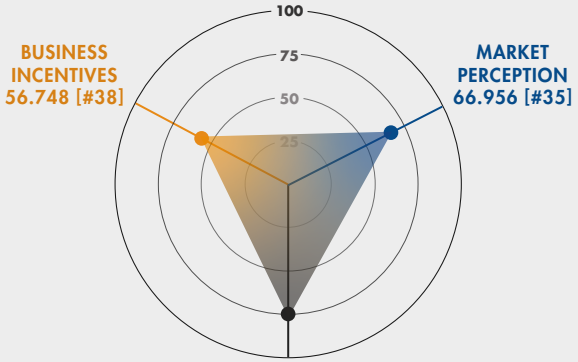
38. Croatia

GLOBAL RANK
#38

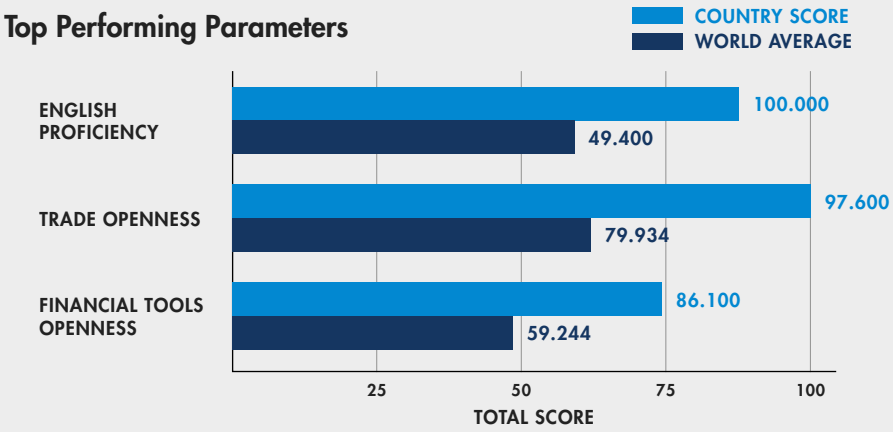
EUROPE RANK
#27

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Croatia ranks 2nd globally in Global Mobility & Openness.

- Croatia ranks 4th in Southern Europe and 4th in the Balkans in the regional overall rankings, indicating a comparatively high position across both regions.
- Croatia's higher placement in the IBEI compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 reflects comparatively strong evaluations of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Croatia ranks 3rd in the Balkans under the Market Perception Pillar, according to evaluations of governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Croatia ranks 2nd worldwide in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, based on assessments of cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- At the Parameter level, Trade Openness, Corporate Tax Rate, and English Proficiency are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Croatia's Index results show positively assessed stability, international connectedness, and conditions related to cross-border activity.

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Country Overview

Croatia has been reshaping its business environment in steady steps. Regulation has moved closer to European Union standards, and digital public services now handle much of the administrative load. Founders can register a company and complete routine compliance largely online. These improvements lower barriers for innovators assessing where to base their operations and create a system that values clarity and predictable rules. Yet meaningful obstacles remain. Talent continues to leave the country, and many business owners still face a tax burden that weighs more heavily than in competing European markets.

Foreign founders have a defined pathway into the system. Croatia links company creation to residency options for non-EU nationals. Entrepreneurs who establish and actively manage a business can obtain permission to stay. This model suits founders who prefer to build their companies on the ground rather than operate remotely.

The country also maintains Free Zones that support production and export activity. These zones reflect Croatia's long-standing industrial orientation. They attract firms that value simplified procedures and facilitated access to international markets.

Institutional support strengthens the landscape further. HAMAG-BICRO, the national agency for small and medium-sized enterprises, innovation, and investment, provides advisory services and financial instruments. Its work brings more structure to the operating environment and helps companies progress through different stages of development.

Together, Croatia's digital administration, predictable regulation, business-linked residency pathways, and industrial support mechanisms give innovators a practical foundation for entering the European market. Even so, the country will need more ambitious reforms in taxation and incentives if it wants to keep its talent and realise more of its long-term potential.



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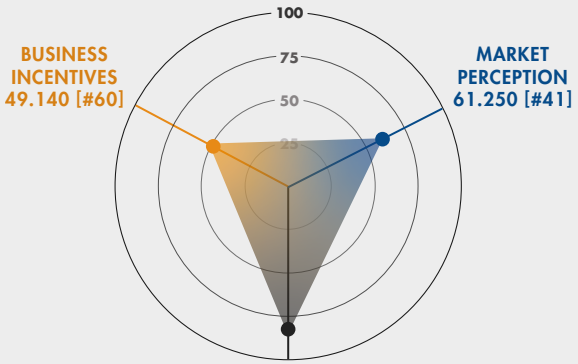
39. Spain

GLOBAL RANK
#39

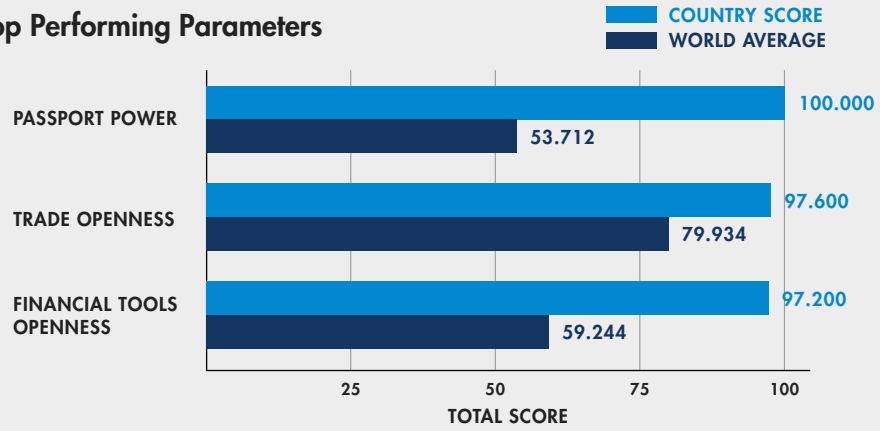
EUROPE RANK
#28

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Catalonia is our Regional Government of the Year.
For more information, turn to page 299.

Spain leads Southern Europe for Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure.

- Spain ranks 5th in Southern Europe in the IBEI 2026, indicating a comparatively high placement within the subregion.
- Spain ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively strong evaluations of its startup ecosystem alongside broader business-environment conditions.
- Spain ranks 2nd in Southern Europe and 10th in the EU under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, based on assessments of conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Spain places 1st in Southern Europe and 10th in the EU in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, according to evaluations of credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Spain's overall Index profile.

- At the Parameter level, Financial Tools Openness, Trade Openness, and Lending Rate & Getting Credit are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Spain's overall position.
- Overall, Spain's Index results show positively assessed financial-infrastructure conditions, external-market accessibility, and operational factors relative to other Southern European economies.

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Country Overview

Spain is shaping a modern, innovation-oriented business environment built on digital-government reforms, strong human capital, and a clearer focus on technology-based enterprise. Recent legislative updates show a national push to expand entrepreneurial activity and sharpen Spain's position within Europe's innovation landscape. Digitalisation has reduced some friction, yet administrative complexity still challenges founders and limits the country's full potential.

The country offers multiple residency routes for internationally mobile entrepreneurs and professionals. The Entrepreneur Visa allows founders to build cross-border ventures from a Spanish base. The Beckham Law adds tax benefits for eligible foreign workers who qualify as non-residents for a fixed period. The regime attracts mobile talent, although bureaucratic requirements can dilute some of its advantages. Digital public-administration tools support these pathways by simplifying company formation and improving regulatory coordination.

Regional agencies give Spain a distinctive economic structure. ACCIÓ in Catalonia, for example, supports internationalisation and regional industry development. Other regions maintain similar bodies, creating a pattern of decentralised economic specialisation. Large companies in telecommunications, finance, and energy complement this system through investment in emerging technologies and cooperation with younger firms.

Spain's academic and research institutions reinforce its capabilities. Universities and technology centres produce skilled workers in information technology, life sciences, and advanced industry. EU membership provides seamless access to the single market. Long-standing cultural and commercial ties to Latin America offer a second channel into international markets.

Spain offers a business environment defined by digital progress, regional strengths, and broad international links. Streamlined bureaucracy and sharper pro-business reforms would allow the country to convert these strengths into a more competitive and innovation-driven economy.

Our Local Partners

acció

SMARTCITY
EXPO WORLD CONGRESS

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT:

Catalonia



An Interview with

Miquel Sàmper

Minister of Business and Labour,
Government of Catalonia.

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How does your city position itself internationally to attract investors and entrepreneurs?

Catalonia is a major economic engine of Spain, generating 19% of national GDP and ranking as the third-largest European region for job creation through FDI. Barcelona is recognised for having the second-best FDI strategy in Europe and the best in the EU. The region hosts nearly 2,300 startups, including 374 deep-tech companies, and ranks among the top five startup ecosystems in the EU and the leading one in Southern Europe. Barcelona is also the world's third city for AI FDI projects. With over 9,600 foreign companies, 160 digital innovation hubs, and global events like Mobile World Congress and ISE, Barcelona positions itself as an open, innovative, and globally connected business hub.

What investments has your region made to expand digital infrastructure or support innovation hubs?

Catalonia has invested heavily in advanced scientific and digital infrastructure to support innovation. The region hosts leading research institutions such as the Barcelona Biomedical Research Park, ICIQ, and ICFO, and promotes technology transfer through the TECNIO network. Flagship infrastructures include the ALBA Synchrotron, soon to be upgraded to ALBA II, and MareNostrum 5, one of Europe's most powerful supercomputers. In digital connectivity, the Barcelona Cable Landing Station acts as a neutral Mediterranean interconnection hub, enhancing global connectivity for technology-driven businesses and innovation hubs.

What would you identify as the key economic assets or advantages of your region today?

Catalonia's strengths include a strong industrial base, a pro-business mindset, and high-quality talent from leading universities, research centres, and business schools. The economy is diversified, technologically advanced, and innovation-driven, with sustainability as a strategic priority. Its geostrategic location and world-class infrastructure position Barcelona as a gateway to Southern Europe and a major Mediterranean logistics hub. Strong digital talent attraction and an exceptional quality of life further reinforce the region's competitiveness.

What specific measures has your city implemented to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start a business?

Catalonia supports entrepreneurship through a strong public–private ecosystem focused on digital innovation and sustainability. A dense network of incubators, accelerators, and venture builders, over 80% privately operated, provides access to capital, mentors, and markets. Public grants support industrial projects and early-stage startups. Catalonia also leads the Start Easy project under Interreg Europe to improve startup-friendly policies. Through ACCIÓ–Catalonia Trade & Investment, entrepreneurs receive support in project management, financing, executive mobility, and location scouting, backed by a global network of 40 offices.



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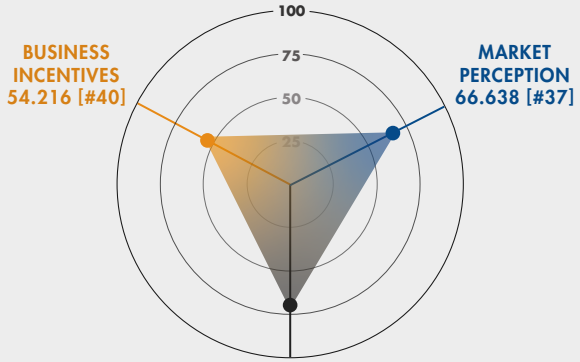
40. Poland

GLOBAL RANK
#40

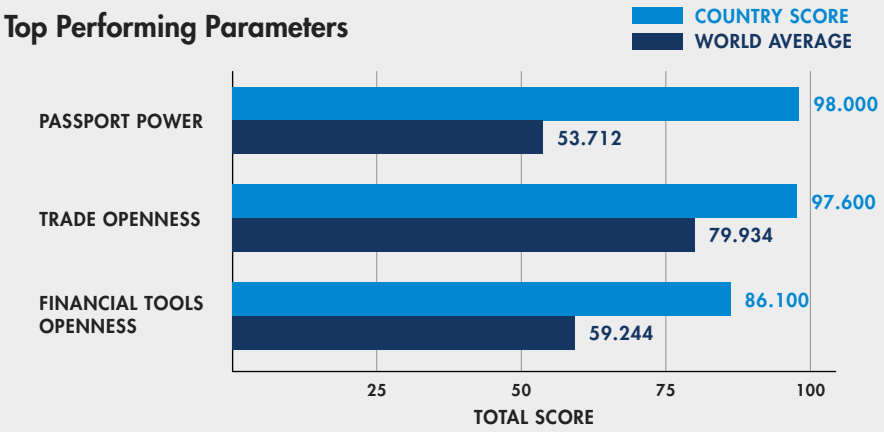
EUROPE RANK
#29

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Poland's economy is blooming, and Wrocław stands as a vivid example: an energetic startup hub with a well-linked ecosystem, strong infrastructure, a deep talent pool, and straightforward policies that make launching a business remarkably smooth. As Startup Wroclaw, we describe this growth and provide a soft-landing guide for founders in our latest report, 'Wrocław & Lower Silesian Startup Ecosystem'."



Paulina Muszyńska
Head of Startup Wroclaw, Wroclaw Agglomeration Development Agency

Poland ranks 3rd in Central Europe for Global Mobility & Openness

- Poland ranks 4th in Central Europe in the IBEI 2026, indicating a comparatively high placement within the region.
- Poland ranks 3rd in Central Europe in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, reflecting a positive assessment of its cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- Poland also ranks 3rd in Central Europe in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, according to evaluations of credit systems, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool availability.

- The Governance & Regulation Functional Category represents an area for further development within Poland's overall Index profile, based on evaluations of its legal, regulatory, and procedural environment.
- At the Parameter level, Trade Openness and Resolving Insolvency are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Poland's Index results reflect positively assessed conditions related to international openness, financial accessibility, and selected regulatory and procedural dimensions.

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Country Overview

Poland maintains a business environment shaped by steady economic development, strong institutions, and policies that support investment and internationally active founders. This foundation is reinforced by programmes that encourage the relocation of innovative companies and by a network of organisations that contribute to a well-structured business landscape. Although Poland has achieved significant economic momentum and has been highly successful in attracting talent from abroad, especially from neighbouring countries, there remains an expectation that the country could adopt even bolder initiatives to match the scale of its economic growth.

Individuals relocating to Poland may opt for a lump-sum tax regime on foreign-source income, available to eligible new residents who meet defined conditions. This structure offers predictability for founders and investors who retain income streams abroad and provides an added incentive for globally oriented professionals considering a long-term base in the country.

Poland has introduced several measures that support innovative and expanding companies. The Polish Investment Zone reform allows qualifying investment projects to access tax incentives regardless of location, creating a more flexible framework for regional development. Research and development relief permits companies to deduct an enhanced share of eligible development costs and accelerate the depreciation of selected technology assets, strengthening incentives for technical advancement.

A set of national programmes also assists foreign technology companies. The Poland Business Harbour initiative offers a streamlined route for IT professionals, founders, and companies establishing operations in Poland. The Poland Prize programme provides financial support, mentorship, and advisory services for foreign teams building ventures in the country.

Institutional support further shapes the environment. The Startup Poland Foundation acts as an advocacy and research platform for technology-oriented companies. The Polish Investment and Trade Agency promotes investment and facilitates international business expansion, while the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development oversees startup and acceleration programmes, including Poland Prize, and channels public resources into early business development.

Taken together, Poland's combination of investment incentives, talent-attraction routes, and coordinated institutional support creates a compelling foundation for innovative companies. Continued expansion of pro-business initiatives would enable Poland to fully leverage its fast-growing economy and strengthen its position within Europe's technology and entrepreneurship landscape.

Our Local Partner

Startup Wroclaw



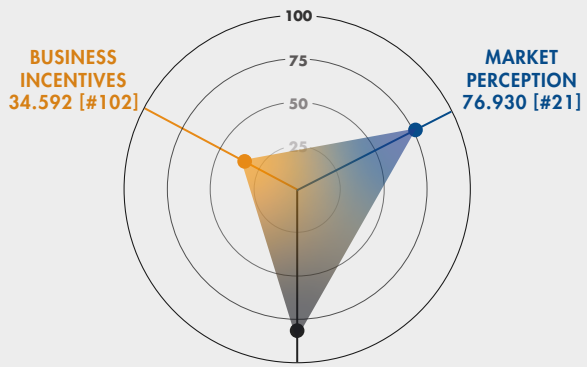
41. Slovenia

GLOBAL RANK
#41

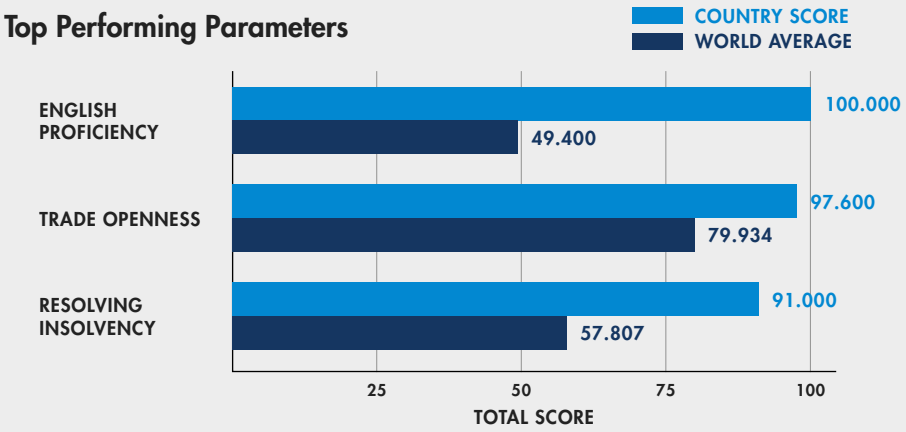
EUROPE RANK
#30

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Slovenia leads Central Europe in Market Perception.

- Slovenia ranks 6th in Southern Europe and 5th in the Balkans in the IBEI 2026, positioning it among the higher-performing business environments within these regional groupings.
- Slovenia's placement in the IBEI 2026 stands above its position in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions than are reflected in its startup-ecosystem outcomes
- Slovenia ranks 1st in Central Europe and the Balkans under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting the highest regional assessments of governance, stability, and international accessibility.
- The country also ranks 1st in Central Europe and the Balkans under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, showing strongly assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Slovenia ranks 1st in Central Europe and the Balkans in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, indicating strong evaluations of legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- Slovenia ranks 1st in Central Europe and 3rd in Europe in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, reflecting high regional assessments of cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The country also ranks 1st in Central Europe and the Balkans in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting positive assessments of Internet Freedom and Internet Speed Parameters.

- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area with scope for further improvement within Slovenia's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Trade Openness, Cross-Border Banking, and Internet Speed are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Slovenia's overall position.
- Overall, Slovenia demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong institutional conditions, high market trust, and competitive regional accessibility.

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Country Overview

Slovenia offers a rules-based business environment grounded in a long tradition of public-financing tools and a coordinated network of organisations that work with early-stage and growing companies. National policy prioritises research, development, and targeted investment support. It places far less emphasis on preferential personal tax regimes or founder-specific residency pathways. The institutional foundations of a strong innovation ecosystem are in place, yet the country's current level of ambition does not fully match the expectations of a small and historically forward-leaning economy.

Investment attraction relies on a defined set of policy instruments. Under the Investment Promotion Act, eligible projects may receive grants, loans, guarantees, interest subsidies, or discounted land in designated municipalities. These tools support employment creation, technological advancement, and more balanced regional development. Companies pursuing long-term product development or digital transformation can also benefit from research and development incentives.

A network of national organisations reinforces this structure. SPIRIT Slovenia serves as the central agency for investment and entrepreneurship promotion. It offers soft-landing support and guidance on available programmes. The Slovene Enterprise Fund provides grants, convertible loans, and co-investment instruments for early-stage firms. SID Bank, the national development institution, adds further capacity by financing small and medium-sized enterprises, research projects, and export-oriented growth.

Slovenia's mix of investment incentives and institutional coordination provides a clear and organised environment for innovation-driven enterprise. What remains to improve is the adoption of a more ambitious policy agenda that would allow Slovenia to reclaim the leadership role it once played in the region.



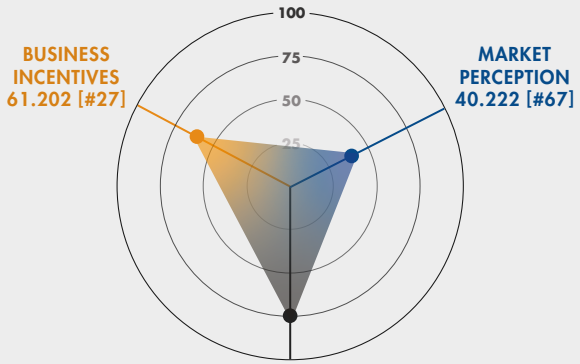
42. Brazil

GLOBAL RANK
#42

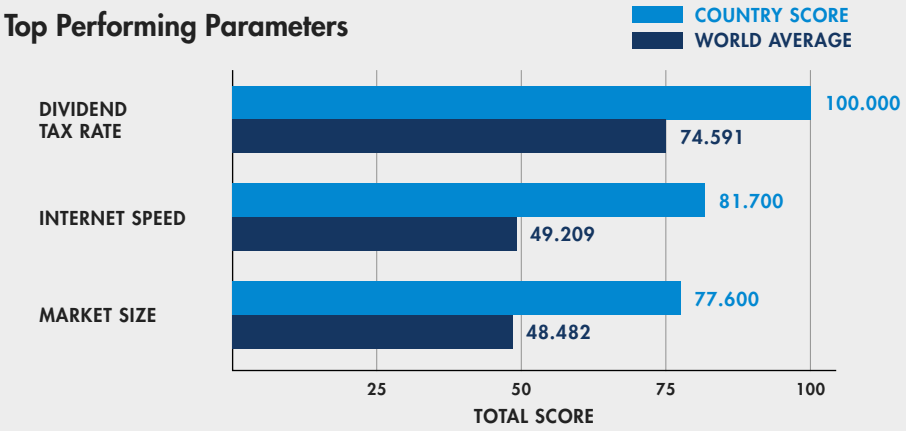
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#1

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"By connecting these key players, SUPERA Parque catalyzes growth in sectors like Health, Biotechnology, and Deep Tech, transforming complex research into real market solutions. Its strong open-innovation culture and strategic environment accelerate businesses, strengthen Brazil's innovation ecosystem, and create tangible value for society and the economy by generating talent, technology, and collaborations that expand competitiveness."



Eduardo Garbes Cicconi
Manager, Supera Parque

Brazil leads Latin America & Caribbean in Business Incentives.

- Brazil ranks 1st in South America in the IBEI 2026, placing it among the higher-performing business environments within the region.
- Brazil ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI 2026, indicating comparatively strong evaluations of its startup ecosystem alongside broader business-environment conditions.
- Brazil ranks 10th worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside India and Azerbaijan, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.

- Brazil ranks 1st in the Latin America & Caribbean region under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting the strongest regional assessments of fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category represents an area with scope for further development within Brazil's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Internet Speed, Corporate Tax Rate, and Dividend Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Brazil's overall positioning.
- Overall, Brazil demonstrates a business environment shaped by favorable incentive conditions, accessible financial infrastructure, and operational ease in South America.

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Country Overview

Brazil's business environment is the reflection of the scale and diversity of its economy. Manufacturing, agriculture, services, and a growing technology sector all contribute to a domestic market large enough to support long-term investment. This depth of demand remains one of Brazil's core advantages and continues to draw firms that rely on market size to reach scale.

Digital modernisation further enhances the business environment. Electronic-payment systems and digital public services have spread widely, making everyday transactions and administrative processes more accessible. These improvements point to a gradual strengthening of national digital infrastructure rather than abrupt reform.

Brazil also provides residency channels for internationally active investors and skilled professionals. These pathways signal a willingness to engage with global talent and support cross-border entrepreneurship. Combined with a large and varied workforce, they reinforce the country's appeal for companies that operate across multiple markets.

Institutional stability comes from long-standing organisations such as the National Confederation of Industry. The CNI influences industrial policy, supports production networks, and acts as a bridge between government and the private sector. Its presence helps anchor Brazil's economic direction even during periods of policy change.

Brazil's business environment benefits from scale, expanding digital systems, openness to talent, and established industrial institutions. Yet many founders still confront a complex regulatory and administrative landscape. Streamlining these processes would allow Brazil to make fuller use of its considerable potential as a destination for internationally oriented firms.

Brazil's pro-market financial regulation has become a catalyst for innovation. The launch of Pix brought 70 million people into the financial system in just four years, while the country's Open Finance framework — now the largest in the world, with over 110 million active data sharings — has created fertile ground for startups to build inclusive and scalable financial solutions.



Bruno Loiola
Co-Founder, Pluggy

Our Local Partners

Observatório Nacional da Indústria

pluggy

SUPERA
Parque de Inovação e Tecnologia de Ribeirão Preto

43. Italy

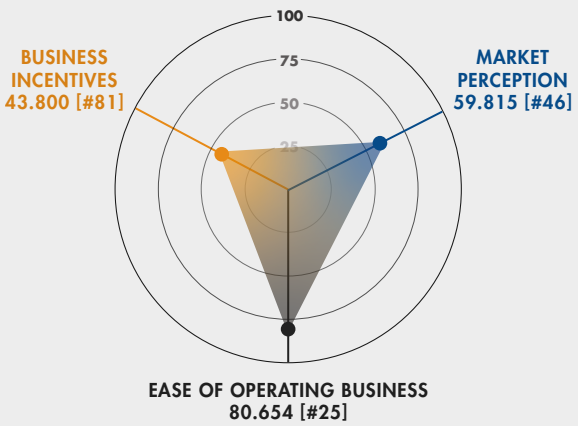


GLOBAL RANK
#43

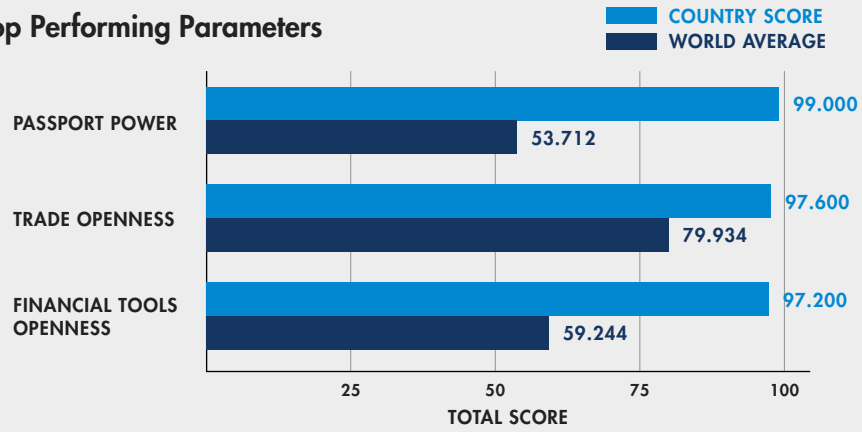
EUROPE RANK
#31

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"The Italian Scaleup Act has laid the foundations for a more modern and attractive environment for innovators in Italy, with measures such as the new framework enabling pension funds to support venture capital and bring fresh institutional capital to startups and scaleups. A forthcoming Unified Startup Code will further simplify and consolidate all rules governing the innovation ecosystem. In this broader push for simplification, the proposed 28th Regime at the European Level represents an important opportunity to ease cross-border operations and expand growth pathways for founders."



Giorgio Ciron
Director, InnovUp

Italy ranks 2nd in Southern Europe for Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure.

- Italy ranks 7th in Southern Europe in the IBEI 2026, positioning it within the upper tier of business environments in the region.
- Italy ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI 2026, reflecting comparatively strong evaluations of its startup ecosystem alongside broader business-environment conditions.
- Italy places 4th in Southern Europe under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating comparatively supportive conditions for establishing and operating companies.

- The country places 2nd in Southern Europe in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting a positive assessment of credit availability, investment channels, and financial-system openness.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area with scope for further development within Italy's overall Index profile.
- At the Parameter level, Financial Tools Openness, Trade Openness, and Cross-Border Banking are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, supporting Italy's overall standing.
- Overall, Italy shows a business environment shaped by accessible financial channels, solid trade integration, and stable operational foundations within Southern Europe.

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Country Overview

Italy's business environment rests on a long tradition of design excellence, engineering skill, and highly specialised manufacturing. These strengths shape how innovators build products. They blend technical depth with applied research across fields such as automotive, machinery, and advanced materials. Italy's industrial districts amplify this dynamic. Dense clusters of specialised firms share regional expertise, speed up knowledge transfer, and keep the country competitive in niche, high-quality manufacturing.

International mobility fits into this structure. Italy offers residency routes for globally active professionals, including pathways tailored to entrepreneurs building innovation-driven companies. These options reflect the country's interest in attracting talent and strengthening its links to international markets. Select tax measures, including a capped regime for eligible newcomers, give relocating entrepreneurs a degree of fiscal predictability.

Institutional support adds further shape to the landscape. The Ministry for Enterprises and Made in Italy guides national industrial and innovation policy. InnovUp, the association representing Italy's innovation community, promotes collaboration, supports startup development, and helps raise the international profile of Italian technology companies.

Italy combines its industrial heritage with an expanding focus on digital transformation, scientific research, and global engagement. Clearer policies and more efficient administration would unlock additional potential and help the country convert its deep strengths into faster, innovation-led growth.

Our Local Partner

InnovUp
ITALIAN INNOVATION & STARTUP ECOSYSTEM



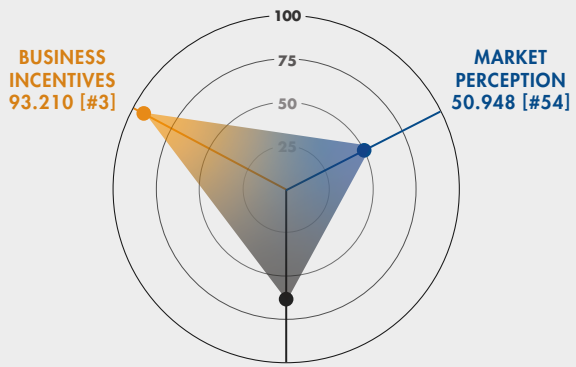
44. Bahrain

GLOBAL RANK
#44

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#4

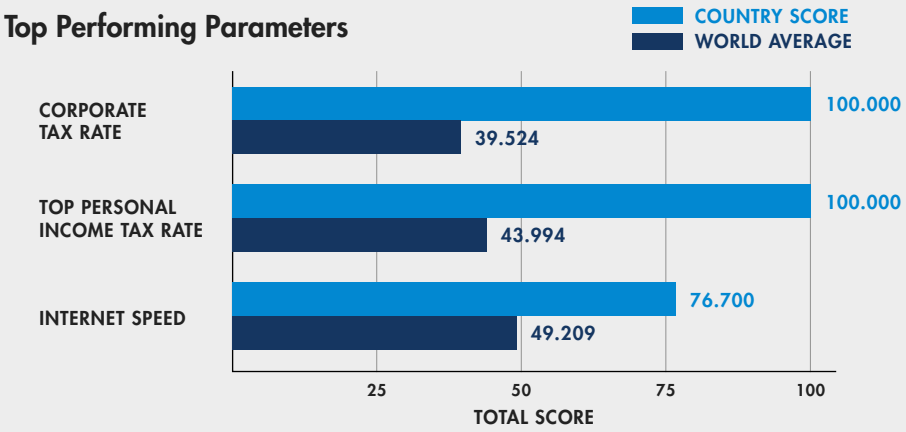
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
63.013 [#67]

Top Performing Parameters



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Bahrain ranks 1st globally in Taxation.

- Bahrain ranks 3rd among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the IBEI 2026, placing it in the upper tier of business-environment assessments within the Gulf.
- Bahrain's higher placement in the IBEI 2026 compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 reflects comparatively strong evaluations of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Bahrain ranks 3rd globally and 2nd in GCC under the Business Incentives Pillar, based on assessments of fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- The country ranks 1st in the GCC in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, based on assessments of cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- Bahrain ranks 1st worldwide in the Taxation Functional Category, based on assessed tax-related conditions.
- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, and Internet Speed are assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Bahrain demonstrates a business environment shaped by competitive fiscal conditions, strong cross-border accessibility, and advantageous incentive structures within the broader EMEA region.

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Country Overview

Bahrain's business environment is open, clear, and accessible to international firms. Its fiscal system is straightforward and its regulatory framework is easy to navigate. Full foreign ownership is allowed in many non-oil sectors, which removes a common barrier for foreign companies. The country's position in the Gulf gives firms convenient access to regional markets, and continued investment in transport, logistics, and digital infrastructure strengthens this advantage.

Policies that support talent mobility add another layer of practicality. Residency routes for investors and skilled professionals make relocation relatively simple. Companies that depend on international teams often find the labour market flexible enough to expand quickly.

Several national bodies shape the operating landscape. Tamkeen helps firms upgrade skills and expand their activities. The Bahrain Economic Development Board focuses on investment promotion and broader economic planning. The Central Bank of Bahrain maintains a regulatory system that supports the financial sector and reinforces the country's long-standing role in regional finance. Bahrain FinTech Bay brings technology-focused founders and established companies into closer contact and encourages experimentation in financial services.

The overall effect is a business setting that is predictable, outward-looking, and easy to navigate for internationally engaged firms. Clear rules, active institutions, and improving connectivity have made Bahrain an increasingly practical base for companies operating across the Gulf.





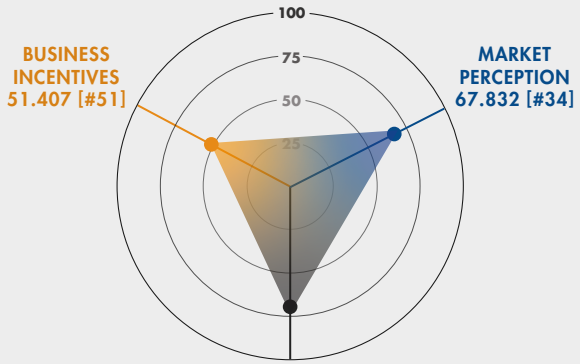
45. Uruguay

GLOBAL RANK
#45

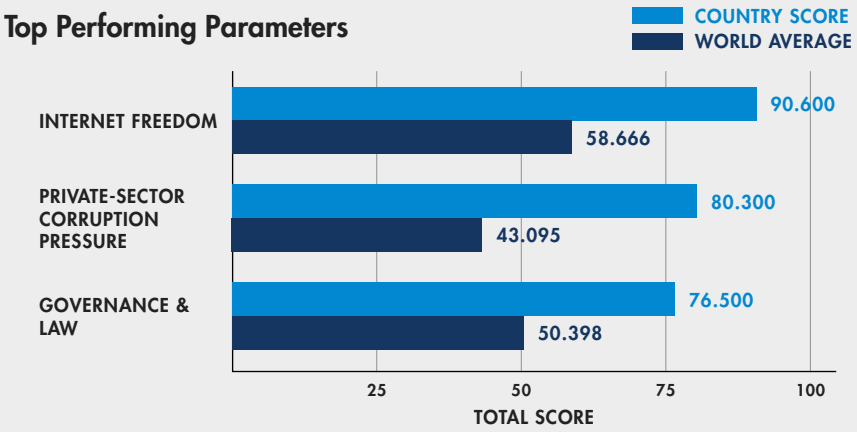
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#2

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Uruguay combines a stable business climate, modern digital infrastructure, and clear, innovation-oriented regulations. For founders looking to operate across Latin America, it offers a confident and trustworthy launchpad to grow with long-term visibility."



Sergio Delgado
Managing Director,
Fundación da Vinci

Uruguay ranks 1st in Latin America & Caribbean in Market Perception.

- Uruguay ranks 2nd in the Latin America & Caribbean region in the IBEI 2026, placing it among the higher-ranked business environments in the region.
- The country also ranks 1st in the Latin America & Caribbean under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Uruguay ranks 2nd in the Latin America & Caribbean region in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, based on assessed conditions related to Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- Uruguay ranks 2nd in South America in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, based on evaluations of legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.

- Within Uruguay's overall Index profile, the Taxation Functional Category shows scope for further development.
- At the Parameter level, Governance & Law and Internet Freedom are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Uruguay's overall assessment.
- Uruguay demonstrates a business environment defined by institutional strength, a trusted regional reputation, and a highly developed digital foundation in Latin America & the Caribbean.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Uruguay has built a business environment marked by institutional stability, clear tax rules, and a steady commitment to research and innovation. This level of predictability is unusual in the region and remains one of the main reasons Uruguay is often viewed as Latin America's most reliable place to operate a business.

A key feature of the country's economic model is its territorial tax system. Companies pay tax only on income earned within Uruguay, which allows internationally active firms to separate domestic activity from global operations with ease. This clarity supports long-term planning. The national investment-promotion framework adds further structure. Projects are assessed on factors such as employment, export potential, research and development, decentralisation, and clean technology. Firms that meet these standards may qualify for significant tax reductions over multiple years. The system rewards reinvestment and steers economic activity toward national priorities.

Institutional capacity reinforces these conditions. Uruguay XXI serves as the main agency for investment and export promotion, offering guidance, soft-landing services, and support in navigating incentive programmes. The National Agency for Research and Innovation provides grants and co-financing for research-driven work. The Development Agency widens access to entrepreneurship finance and delivers programmes for small and medium-sized enterprises.

These result in a business environment that is steady, transparent, and well organised. Uruguay offers founders and investors a mix of stability, territorial taxation, and coordinated institutional support that suits long-term development and internationally connected activity.

Our Local Partner

fundación da Vinci

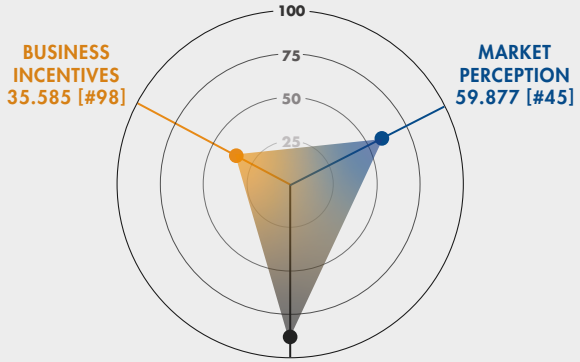
46. Puerto Rico

GLOBAL RANK
#46

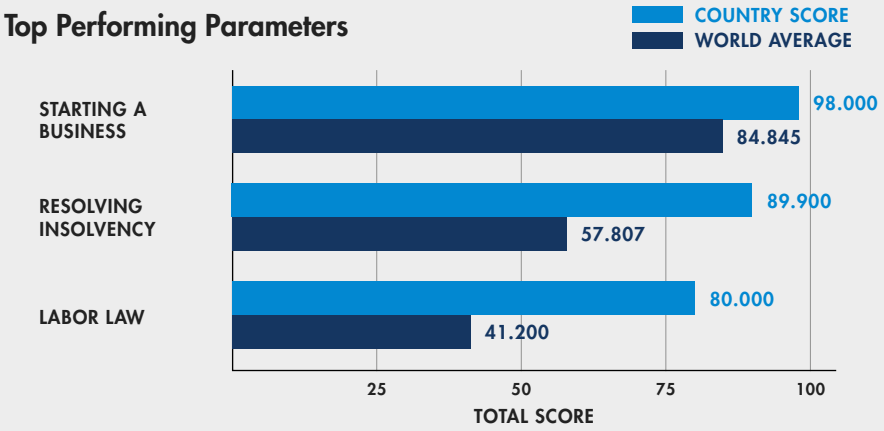
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#3

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"The entrepreneurial environment in Puerto is experimenting a phase of consolidation due to an attractive fiscal ecosystem and the arrival of new start-ups from the United States in the wake of the pandemic. The Tax Incentive Cod (Law 60) plays a central role by offering a 50% tax credit for research and development activities, encouraging innovation. In addition, public initiatives such as the accelerator Parallel18 have driven the setup and scaling of local and international start-ups, boosting the entrepreneurial ecosystem."



Francisco José Millán Rajoy
Chief Economic and Trade Counselor, Economic and Trade Office of Spain in San Juan, Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico leads Latin America & the Caribbean in Ease of Operating a Business.

- Puerto Rico ranks 1st in the Caribbean in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Puerto Rico ranks 5th worldwide and 1st in Latin America & the Caribbean under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- It also ranks 3rd in Latin America in the Market Perception Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.

- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business, Cross-Border Banking, and Internet Speed are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Puerto Rico's overall assessment.
- Overall, Puerto Rico presents a business environment defined by operational ease, financial accessibility, and solid digital capability, supporting its position as a leading hub in Latin America & the Caribbean.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Puerto Rico occupies a distinctive position in the global business landscape. It operates under the legal and regulatory architecture of the United States while applying its own long-standing incentives framework, which has become a defining feature of its economic identity. This combination gives internationally oriented founders access to US structures with a level of fiscal flexibility that is uncommon within the mainland.

The island's incentives code, known as Act 60, sets out the rules for companies engaged in export-oriented services and selected strategic activities. Eligible firms can operate under a preferential tax structure designed to encourage the development of high-value services, technology, and knowledge-based work. The same framework offers a residency pathway for individuals who relocate and meet programme conditions, providing favourable treatment for qualifying investment income earned after establishing residency. For founders whose commercial activity spans multiple jurisdictions, these provisions offer a clear and predictable operating model.

Migration procedures follow the US federal rules, as Puerto Rico does not administer its own entry categories for entrepreneurs. Founders establishing a presence on the island typically rely on standard US business and investor visa routes, making the territory an accessible option for those already familiar with the US compliance processes.

Our Local Partner





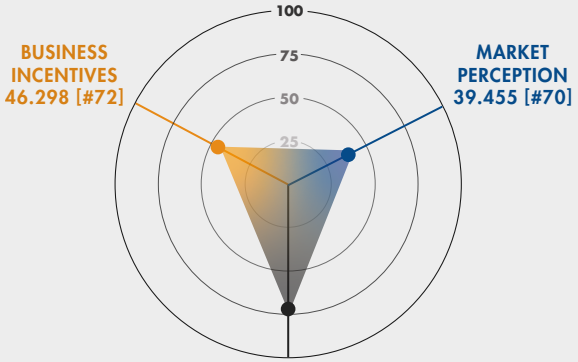
47. Colombia

GLOBAL RANK
#47

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#4

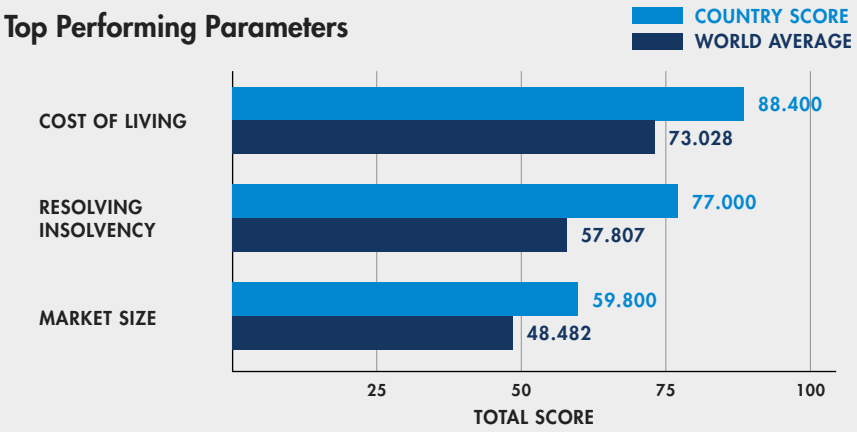
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
71.327 [#47]

Top Performing Parameters



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Medellín is our City of the Year.
For more information, turn to page 301.

Colombia ranks 3rd in South America in Ease of Operating a Business.

- Colombia ranks 3rd in South America, reflecting a competitive position within the region's business-environment landscape.
- Colombia ranks 5th worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside South Korea, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.
- Colombia ranks 3rd in South America under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating a positive assessment of conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- The country ranks 3rd in South America in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- Colombia ranks within the top 25% of the Index for Resolving Insolvency, Cost of Living and Market Size Parameters.

- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area where Colombia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- Overall, Colombia demonstrates a business environment characterized by accessible financial infrastructure, favorable operating conditions, and cost-related advantages within the South American region.

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Country Overview

Colombia has experienced one of the region's more significant economic transitions. Regulatory modernisation, targeted incentives, and stronger national and regional institutions have helped reshape the operating landscape. A large domestic market and rapid digital uptake give technology-oriented and internationally active firms a strong platform for growth.

Digital transformation has become a major focus of public policy. The Digital Government Policy and the National Digital Transformation Strategy have expanded online services, encouraged open-data systems, and improved national connectivity. SENA, the national training institution, supports this shift by developing technical and digital skills that widen the country's talent pool.

Regulatory updates have made it easier to start and run a business, with clearer procedures for company creation and broader access to support programmes. Research and innovation benefit from incentives overseen by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, which encourage companies to invest in technological development and build deeper long-term capabilities.

Colombia's Free Trade Zone framework continues to play an important role. These zones offer tax advantages and simpler administrative processes for export-focused activity, which helps sectors such as logistics, manufacturing, IT services, and business-process operations expand more efficiently.

A set of national institutions guides enterprise development. iNNpulsa Colombia shapes policy for business growth and innovation. ProColombia leads efforts to attract investment and help firms enter global markets. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism directs industrial strategy and supports programmes aimed at strengthening conditions for innovative businesses.

Regional organisations contribute further capacity. Ruta N in Medellín promotes technology adoption and connects research organisations with industry. Chambers of commerce in Bogotá and Cali provide practical support for companies and help shape local business conditions. Sector associations offer additional networks for firms in fast-growing industries.

Alongside public institutions, private-sector stakeholders also contribute to shaping the technology and business environment. One example is KPMG Colombia, which publishes the Colombia Tech Report annually to support accurate information flow within the country's innovation ecosystem.

Colombia's direction remains broadly favourable, even as recent years have brought fewer large-scale reform initiatives. Improved regulation, expanding digital capability, and a coordinated institutional ecosystem now give entrepreneurs and internationally oriented companies a more workable and forward-looking environment in which to operate.

Our Local Partners

ruta n MEDELLÍN CENTRO DE INNOVACIÓN Y NEGOCIOS

Cámara de Comercio de Cali



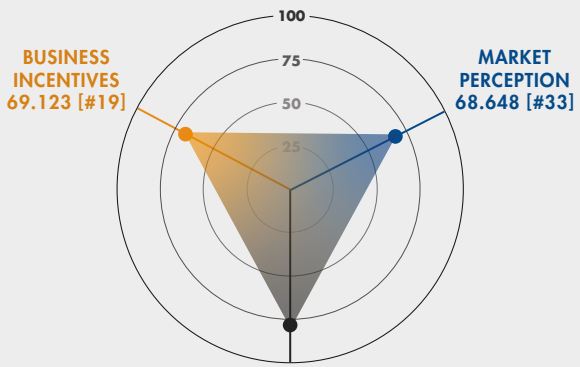
48. Malaysia

GLOBAL RANK
#48

ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#7

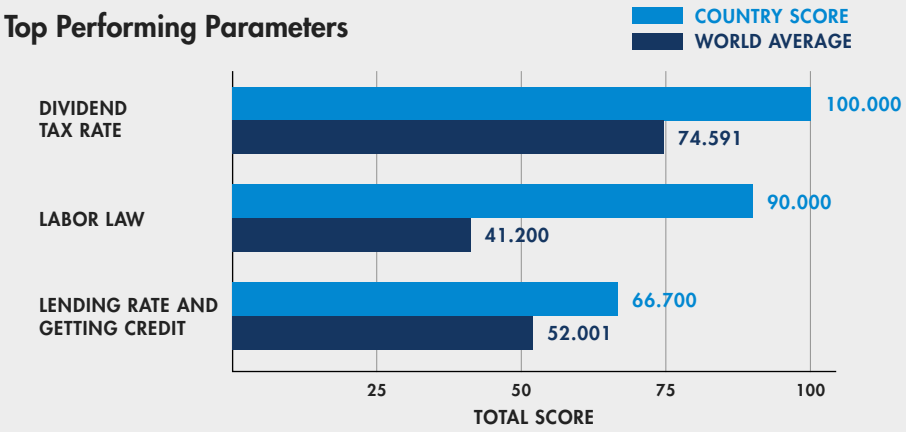
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
77.967 [#32]

Top Performing Parameters



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Malaysia ranks 2nd among the ASEAN countries in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Malaysia ranks 2nd among ASEAN countries in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026, placing it within the upper tier of business-environment assessments in the region.
- Malaysia's Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 ranking exceeds its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 2nd in ASEAN in the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating a positive assessment of conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Malaysia ranks 1st in Asia and 8th worldwide in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category,which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area where Malaysia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit, Internet Speed, and Dividend Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Malaysia's overall position.
- Overall, Malaysia demonstrates a business environment, supported by strong financial accessibility, solid regional perception, and improving digital-infrastructure conditions.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Malaysia has positioned itself as a base for companies that operate across Southeast Asia. Its role as a regional connector stems from predictable regulation, strong trade relationships, and an operating environment that is easy to navigate. These features draw founders who need stability while building businesses that cross borders.

Tax rules further contribute to this appeal as well. The corporate tax framework is straightforward, and smaller enterprises can opt into simplified regimes. Income earned abroad often receives favourable treatment. For founders who manage revenue streams in multiple jurisdictions, this flexibility makes planning more manageable.

Malaysia has also begun to cultivate a more technology-oriented economy. The Malaysia Tech Entrepreneur Programme provides a dedicated entry route for founders and investors working on innovative ventures. The Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation coordinates broader digital initiatives and works to expand the country's technology base.

Several institutions support this transition. Cradle Fund supplies early-stage finance and guidance for young companies. The Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre develops entrepreneurial skills through targeted programmes. In East Malaysia, the Sarawak Multimedia Authority promotes digital initiatives and widens participation in the technology sector.

The combination of clear tax rules, structured entry pathways for international talent, and a growing set of digital-economy institutions gives Malaysia a business environment that suits regionally connected and internationally mobile firms.

"Penang offers a dynamic and collaborative startup ecosystem that combines access to skilled talent, supportive government policies, and strong networks of investors and industry partners. Startups benefit from streamlined business processes, mentorship, and opportunities to connect with local and international markets. With programs supporting ideation, incorporation, and scaling, Penang provides innovators, especially Gen Z and millennial founders, with the resources, guidance, and environment they need to transform ideas into successful ventures and thrive in today's competitive global landscape"



Noor Hanis Binti Harun,
Manager, Ecosystem Development, Digital Penang

Our Local Partner

Digital Penang



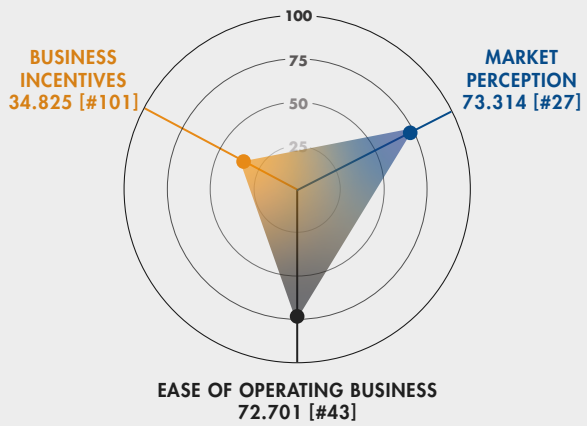
49. Malta

GLOBAL RANK
#49

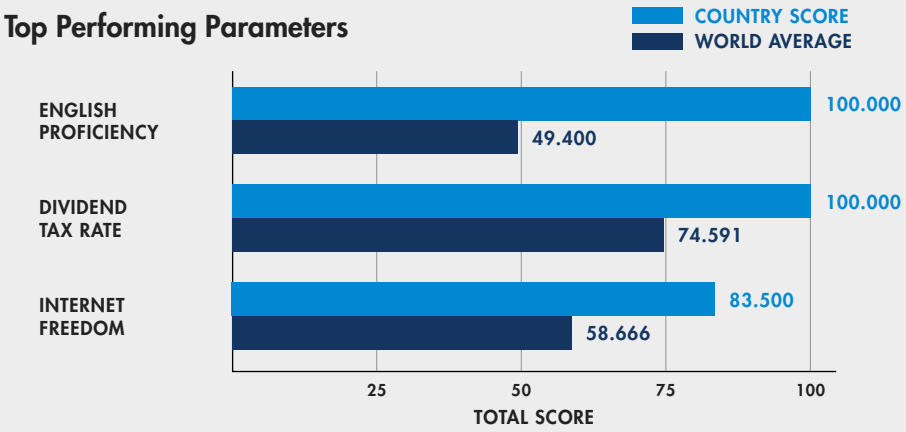
EUROPE RANK
#32

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Malta ranks 2nd in Southern Europe in Market Perception.

- Malta ranks 8th in Southern Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Malta's higher placement in the IBEI 2026 compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 reflects stronger evaluations of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Malta ranks 2nd in Southern Europe under the Market Perception Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Malta ranks 5th worldwide and in Europe in Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The country ranks 3rd in Southern Europe in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom parameters.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area where Malta can further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Funding per Capita, Internet Freedom, and Dividend Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Malta's overall assessment.
- Overall, Malta demonstrates a business environment characterized by well-assessed digital conditions and positive performance in Market Perception Pillar within Southern Europe.

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Country Overview

Over the past decade, Malta has worked to position itself as a base for entrepreneurs who operate across borders. The country leans on regulatory stability and a deliberate openness to international activity. Its status as a small but well-connected EU member gives founders an environment where rules are clear and administrative processes are easy to navigate.

Contributing to the international appeal of the business environment, The Malta Startup Residence Programme links residency to the creation of an innovative company and provides a defined path for non-EU founders, their teams, and their families. Administered by Residency Malta and Malta Enterprise, it offers an initial three-year permit with the possibility of extending for up to five more. Moreover, the FinTech Regulatory Sandbox, run by the Malta Financial Services Authority, gives companies a supervised space to test new financial technologies before entering the broader market.

A network of specialised organisations reinforces these efforts. Malta Enterprise leads investment promotion, funding schemes, and the StartinMalta framework. The Malta Digital Innovation Authority oversees digital assurance and certification. The Malta Council for Science and Technology supports research programmes, while Tech.MT promotes Malta's capabilities and links industry with new opportunities. Residency Malta ensures that residence procedures remain aligned with entrepreneurial activity.

Overall, Malta's business setting is straightforward and internationally accessible. Entrepreneurs seeking a compact but globally connected base within the European Union will find Malta a practical platform for building and expanding their ventures.



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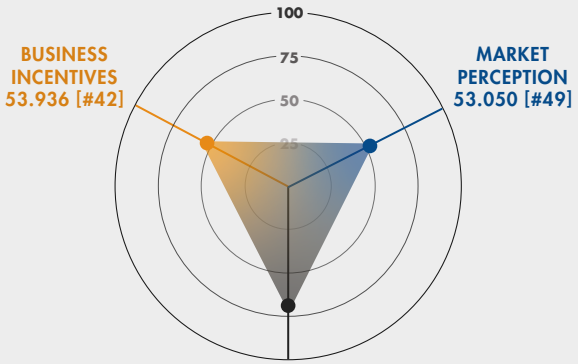
50. Serbia

GLOBAL RANK
#50

EUROPE RANK
#33

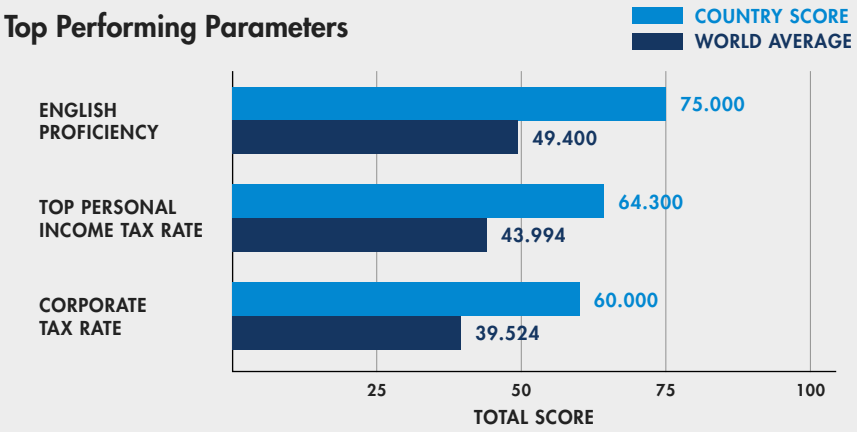
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
68.465 [#55]

Top Performing Parameters



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Serbia ranks 5th in the Balkans for Regulations & Governance.

- Serbia ranks 6th in the Balkans in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Serbia's higher position in the IBEI 2026 compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 reflects stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Serbia ranks 6th in Southern Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, which measures fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- The country places 5th in the Balkans in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Serbia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Serbia's overall assessment.
- Overall, Serbia demonstrates a business environment characterized by assessed institutional stability and developing fiscal conditions within the Balkan region.

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Country Overview

Serbia is redirecting its economic focus toward technology, research, and international mobility. This shift marks a move away from older industrial structures and toward a growth model built on innovation and higher-value work.

Residency rules form an early entry point into this transition. Foreign entrepreneurs who establish and run a company in Serbia can obtain residency tied to their business activity. Investors who provide substantial capital have their own dedicated pathways. These options lower the barriers facing internationally mobile founders and allow them to manage operations directly within the country.

Tax policy works in the same direction. Serbia has introduced personal tax arrangements that reduce the financial burden on early-stage founders and make relocation more attractive for skilled professionals. Incentives for research, intellectual property development, and technology projects add another layer of support. The overall effect is an environment that rewards long-term investment and supports experimentation.

A network of institutions provides structure to these reforms. The Science Fund backs both basic and applied research. The Innovation Fund helps early ideas move toward commercial use through grants and acceleration programmes. The Development Agency of Serbia assists investors as they navigate administrative procedures. The Digital Serbia Initiative promotes clearer regulation and improvements in digital infrastructure.

These changes give Serbia a business environment that is easier to navigate and increasingly oriented toward research and technology. For founders and investors seeking an entry point into a growing European market, Serbia offers clearer rules, expanding support systems, and a range of emerging opportunities.



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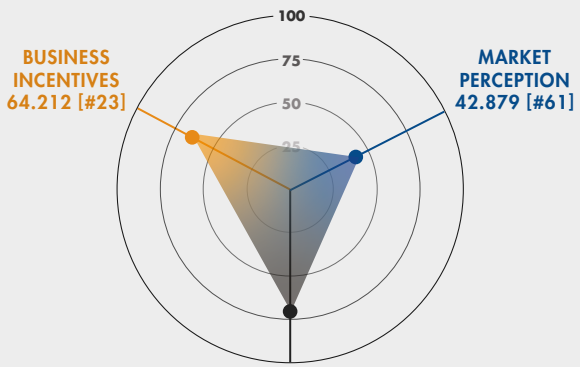
51. North Macedonia

GLOBAL RANK
#51

EUROPE RANK
#34

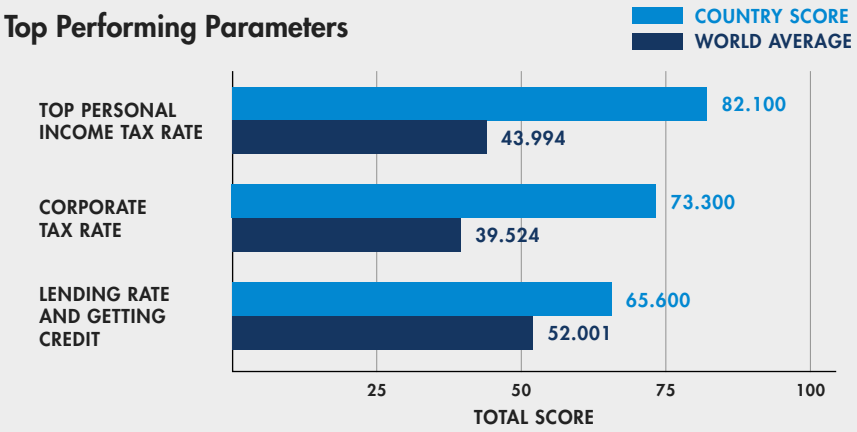
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
69.837 [#49]

Top Performing Parameters



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"North Macedonia is becoming a dynamic launchpad where founders, investors, and institutions actively build together. Our strong engineering talent and fast-growing AI R&D scene are driving a clear shift from service work toward creating global-ready products. By using the country as an agile testing ground and embracing a regional mindset, startups can validate faster, collaborate more easily, and scale across the Balkans and into global markets with confidence."



Igor Madzov
President of the board,
Startup Macedonia

North Macedonia ranks 2nd in Southern Europe in Business Incentives.

- North Macedonia ranks 7th in the Balkans in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- North Macedonia's higher position in the IBEI 2026 compared with the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 reflects stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- North Macedonia ranks 2nd in Southern Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, indicating positively assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions.

- The country places 4th in the Balkans in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- North Macedonia ranks 5th in Eastern Europe and 3rd in the Balkans in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where North Macedonia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate, Lending Rate & Getting Credit, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index
- Overall, North Macedonia demonstrates a business environment characterized by assessed incentive conditions, competitive tax-related parameters, and improving institutional stability within its regional context.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

North Macedonia has built a business environment that performs better than many would expect from a small economy. Recent advancements show the country holding its ground against regional peers and attracting a growing number of foreign founders. Low taxes have helped draw internationally mobile entrepreneurs who value small-market accessibility.

Tax policy is one of the country's clearest advantages. North Macedonia applies one of the lowest corporate tax rates in Europe to net profits calculated under standard accounting rules.

"North Macedonia is an emerging ecosystem shaped largely by its startup community. Alongside other active organizations, Startup Club Skopje has contributed through ongoing initiatives and the regional Startup Revolution AI Summit, connecting founders, investors, and ecosystem builders. Growing investor interest is driven by new talent and ideas, supported by the global success of companies such as HeyReach, NativeTeams, Upshift, and Cognisam. This momentum reflects a maturing environment increasingly relevant to innovators building for regional and international markets."



Sasho Jovanovski
President,
Startup Club Skopje

The approach is simple, predictable, and friendly to reinvestment, which matters for early-stage firms and companies that operate across borders.

Digital strategy is also becoming more organised. The Ministry of Digital Transformation is expanding digital public services, improving alignment with EU DESI standards, and consolidating ICT functions into a central e-government agency. These steps aim to reduce administrative friction and strengthen the systems that businesses rely on for day-to-day operations.

Yet, access to high-quality fintech tools and modern payment infrastructure is still limited. For founders who depend on smooth digital transactions, this shortfall creates practical constraints that are out of line with wider European norms and hold back part of the country's innovation potential.

Even so, North Macedonia is becoming more appealing with a number of national initiatives that have started to improve the overall operating environment. The country has made visible progress, yet it still has room to expand its digital capabilities, upgrade financial infrastructure, and build a more supportive innovation ecosystem.

Overall, North Macedonia offers low taxation, improving digital administration, and rising international attention. With targeted improvements to its technology and financial systems, it could strengthen its position further and offer an even more compelling base for modern, internationally oriented companies.

Our Local Partners

Startup Club Skopje

Startup Macedonia





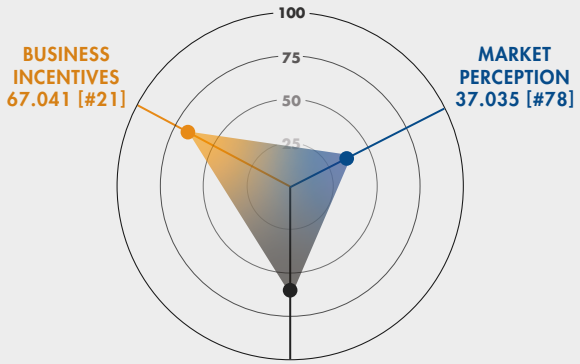
52. Vietnam

GLOBAL RANK
#52

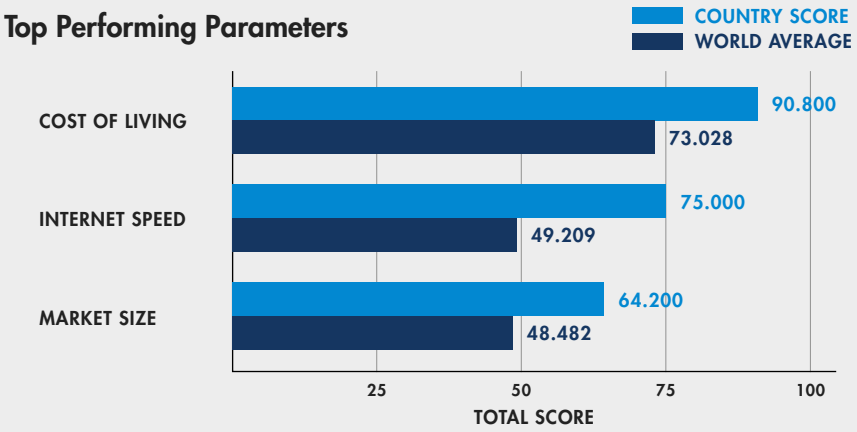
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#8

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Da Nang has made steady progress in simplifying business procedures and improving transparency, while actively promoting innovation in areas such as e-commerce and AI. With a growing tech workforce, supportive policies, and strong digital infrastructure, the city offers a practical and collaborative environment for innovators and entrepreneurs to develop and scale their solutions."



Mr. Pham Duc Linh
Permanent Vice Chairman, Danang Business Incubator - DNES

Vietnam ranks 2nd in ASEAN for Taxation in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Vietnam ranks 3rd in ASEAN and Southeast Asia in the IBEI 2026, placing it within the upper tier of business-environment assessments in the region.
- Vietnam ranks 7th worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside India and Azerbaijan, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.

- Vietnam ranks 2nd in ASEAN and Southeast Asia in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Vietnam has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living and Market Size rank within the top 25% of the Index, reflecting structural characteristics relevant to business operations.
- Capital Gains Tax Rate is also assessed within the top 25% of the Index at the Parameter level, contributing positively to Vietnam's overall assessment.
- Overall, Vietnam demonstrates a business environment characterized by assessed tax-related conditions, cost-structure advantages, and a strong regional positioning within ASEAN and Southeast Asia.

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Country Overview

Through rapid growth, steady structural reforms, and an ambitious push to expand industrial and technological capacity, Vietnam has become one of Southeast Asia's most compelling economic stories. These conditions attract internationally mobile professionals, many of whom choose to live in Vietnam. However, the country is yet to become a default location for global headquarters.

Policy direction now leans heavily toward research, digitalisation, and institutional strengthening. Early-stage tax relief gives new firms breathing room, and reinvestment incentives help companies scale. Certain regions add targeted benefits for higher-value industrial and technology activity. All of this signals Vietnam's intention to capture more of the value chain and foster a deeper base of innovation-led enterprise.

Founders seeking permanence can rely on residency options tied to investment commitments. The tiered structure offers a clear pathway for those willing to anchor economic activity in the country and brings some predictability to long-term planning.

Vietnam is also refining the rules that govern science, technology, and innovation. Recent legal updates clarify how research is managed, how technology can be transferred, and how intellectual property moves from labs into commercial use. These reforms build on earlier milestones, including the creation of the Vietnam National Innovation Center within the Ministry of Planning and Investment.

Support comes from a broad institutional network. The Ministry of Science and Technology sets national innovation priorities. The Vietnam National Startup Support Center coordinates programmes for early-stage companies. At the city level, Ho Chi Minh City Department of Science and Technology, Startup Haiphong and the Da Nang Innovation Startup Support Center show how local institutions provide additional layers of support for innovation activity. International initiatives such as the Swiss Entrepreneurship Program also contribute by strengthening startup ecosystems, improving access to expertise, and supporting innovation-driven enterprises.

Vietnam has yet to establish itself as a regional headquarters location, but further reforms would make it more competitive.

"With its strategic location, modern seaport–logistics infrastructure, and a dynamic business community, Hai Phong city is shaping a highly promising innovation ecosystem. Strong government support, a high-quality workforce, and the city's open and welcoming mindset create a reliable environment for founders to grow and scale their ventures."



Nguyen Thi Cam Huong
Director,
Hai Phong Innovaton and Application of Science and Technology Center

Our Local Partners

DNES DANANG INCUBATOR

NIC VIETNAM NATIONAL INNOVATION CENTER

startup HAIPHONG EMPOWERED BY ISC



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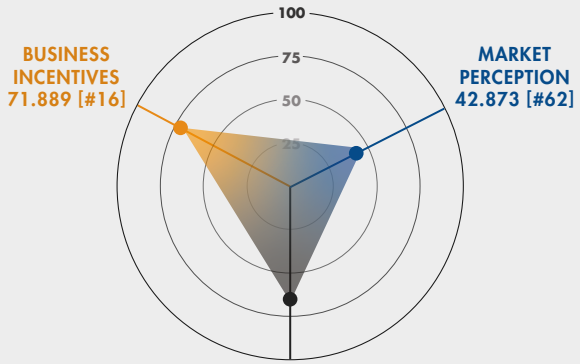
53. Indonesia

GLOBAL RANK
#53

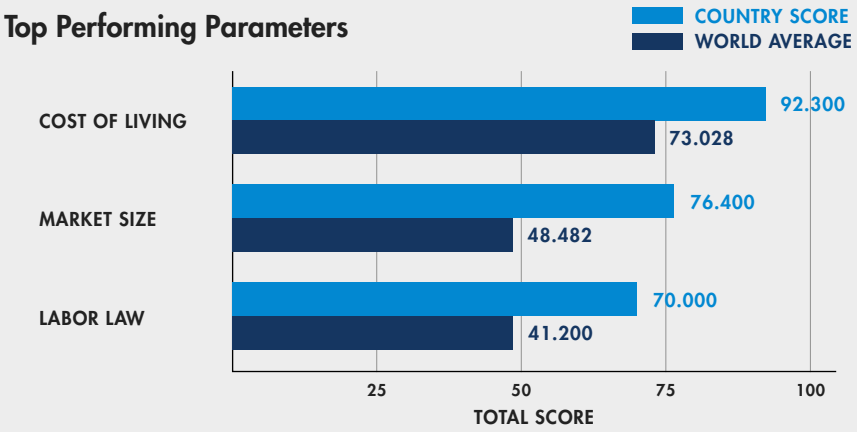
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#9

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Indonesia ranks 2nd among ASEAN Countries for Business Incentives.

- Indonesia ranks 4th in ASEAN in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Indonesia's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 exceeds its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- Indonesia ranks 2nd in ASEAN under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting positively assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- The country places 3rd in Southeast Asia in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Indonesia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living and Market Size are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Indonesia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Indonesia demonstrates a business environment defined by favourable cost conditions, regional competitiveness in incentives, and a sizable domestic market that supports broad economic activity.

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Country Overview

Indonesia's economy gives the country a distinctive starting point for business activity. Its domestic market is large, diverse, and capable of supporting firms across many stages of growth. Policymakers have been trying to shift this scale advantage toward higher-value activity. An example of this transformation is The Making Indonesia 4.0 strategy. The strategy outlines a move toward stronger manufacturing systems, broader use of technology, and improved competitiveness in key industries.

Regulatory changes have begun to make day-to-day operations easier. Procedures are more predictable than they were a decade ago, and firms now face fewer uncertainties when navigating administrative requirements. Special economic zones reinforce this direction. They concentrate industrial production, open more space for export-oriented activity, and provide clearer conditions for companies working in logistics or technology. These zones allow Indonesia to upgrade its business environment in a gradual but steady way.

Indonesia's place within ASEAN also contributes to its business environment appeal. The country sits in the centre of a regional network that encourages cross-border investment and binds firms into wider supply chains. For international founders, this combination of domestic scale and regional linkage is a rare advantage.

Indonesia's business setting is expanding in scope and improving in structure. The combination of market size, regional ties, and ongoing regulatory reform gives the country a clear advantage toward becoming a more attractive base for firms looking to grow across Southeast Asia.





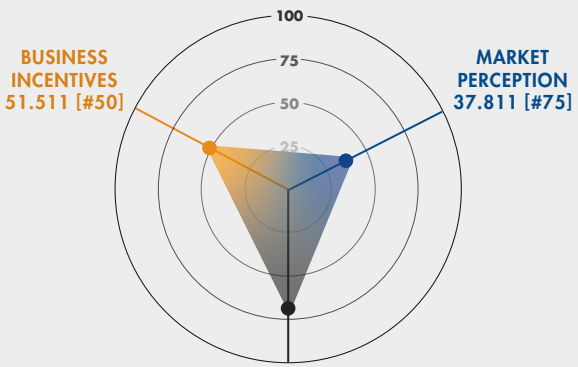
54. India

GLOBAL RANK
#54

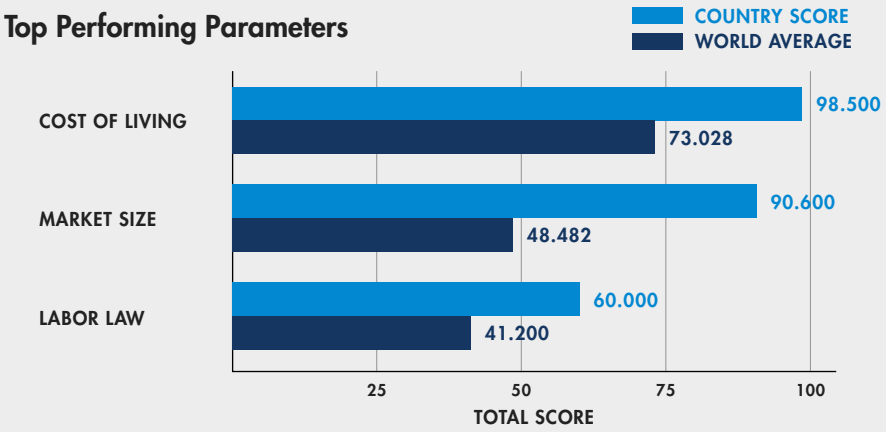
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#10

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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India leads South Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index.

- India ranks 1st in South Asia and across all three main Pillars: Ease of Operating a Business, Business Incentives, and Market Perception, reflecting the highest regional assessments across these dimensions.
- India's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 exceeds its placement in the IBEI 2026, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- India ranks 10th worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside Brazil and Azerbaijan, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.
- The country ranks 7th in Asia under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- India ranks 7th in Asia in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- The Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement, represents an area where India has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.

- At the Parameter level, Market Size and Cost of Living are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to India's overall positioning.
- Overall, India demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional pillar performance, solid access to capital within Asia, and inherent structural advantages related to market scale and cost conditions.

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Country Overview

India has a vast domestic market and a broad industrial base, giving the country economic weight that few others can match. Many observers now see India as a future global economic leader, a view strengthened by years of investment in infrastructure, digital systems, and industrial capacity. Over the past decade, the operating climate has changed noticeably. Rules are clearer, administrative processes are more coordinated, and both domestic and international firms face far fewer obstacles than before.

Digital public infrastructure has driven much of this shift. Tools associated with the India Stack have streamlined identification, payments, and interaction with government services. These systems now form part of the daily operating rhythm for millions of companies. Rapid urban growth, expanding physical connectivity, and a deepening technology sector reinforce this momentum. India's long-standing strength in IT and global business services is the product of decades of accumulated expertise rather than a recent surge.

A network of institutions adds further structure. Invest India helps investors navigate entry, expansion, and regulatory questions. Sectoral agencies advance research and support the adoption of new technologies. State-level bodies, such as the Kerala Startup Mission and the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission, have built credible local ecosystems and show how regional policy can complement national reform.

India continues to move in a positive direction. The country has made real progress and has begun aligning its economic model more closely with innovation and long-term capability building. With continued reform, India has the potential to turn its current momentum into durable global leadership. For founders and investors, it offers a large, increasingly coordinated, and steadily modernising environment in which to build.



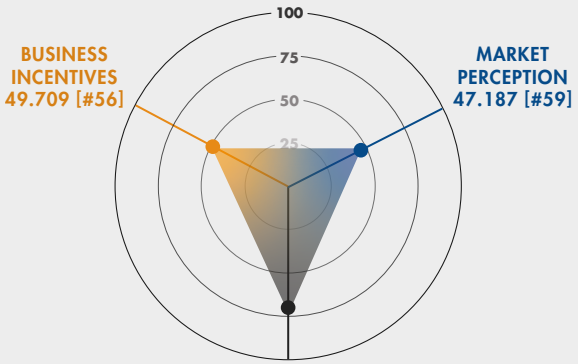
55. Peru

GLOBAL RANK
#55

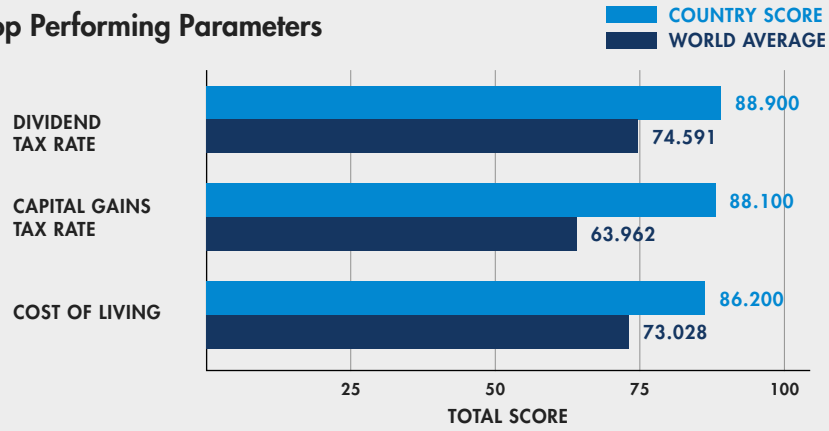
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#5

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Peru has advanced a policy-driven agenda to strengthen its innovation and business environment. Simplified and increasingly digital business registration has reduced entry barriers for firms, including micro and small enterprises. These measures are supported by reforms to credit-information systems that expand access to finance, as well as by trade facilitation and customs modernization policies that enhance cross-border integration. Together, these policies reflect Peru's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship, innovation-led growth, and a competitive, rules-based emerging economy."



Kenji Alex
Director of Innovation,
Ministerio de la
Producción del Perú

Peru ranks 4th in South America in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Peru ranks 4th in South America in the IBEI 2026, positioning it within the upper range of business-environment assessments in the region.
- Peru ranks 3rd in Latin America and Caribbean under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- The country ranks 3rd in South America under the Market Perception Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.

- At the Parameter level, Capital Gains Tax Rate is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Peru's overall standing.
- Overall, Peru demonstrates a business environment characterized by assessed progress in international accessibility and stable perception-related conditions within Latin America.

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Country Overview

Peru's business environment still reflects the weight of its traditional industries. Minerals, mining, and tourism remain central to economic activity. Entrepreneurship and technology-led ventures are emerging within this setting, supported by public programmes and a growing network of private accelerators. Incentives for small and medium-sized enterprises give new founders a practical starting point, even if the broader ecosystem is still maturing.

Tax rules play an important role in planning. Non-domiciled individuals pay tax only on Peru-sourced income, while residents are taxed on worldwide income under controlled foreign company provisions. For internationally active founders, this distinction shapes how revenue is structured and how long-term commitments are made.

Foreign entrepreneurs typically enter the market through the Independent Investor Visa. This route ties residency to an investment pledge and a business plan, offering predictable conditions for founders who prefer to manage operations on the ground rather than remotely.

Several organisations help build the country's entrepreneurial capacity. The Ministry of Production of Peru (PRODUCE) plays a central role in shaping national entrepreneurship and innovation policy and supporting SME and startup development. It acts as the system-level coordinator for entrepreneurship and innovation, aligning public programmes, regulatory instruments, and funding mechanisms that support firm creation, scaling, and formalisation.

Several organisations help build the country's entrepreneurial capacity. COFIDE, the Development Bank of Peru, provides financing tools and hosts the national venture-capital conference, adding structure to early-stage capital formation. The Swiss Entrepreneurship Program connects Peruvian startups with international expertise and mentorship. PromPerú and ProInversión encourage export development and investment flows.

Peru's innovation environment remains in the early stages, and visible large-scale initiatives are still limited. Even so, the combination of investment-linked residency, emerging institutional support, and a gradually expanding entrepreneurial network offers a workable foundation for founders assessing opportunities in a market that is evolving, if unevenly, toward more innovation-led activity.

Our Local Partner

PERÚ Ministerio de la Producción

CITY SPOTLIGHT:

Lima



An Interview with

Kenji Alex

Director of Innovation,
Peru Ministry of Industry & Production

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How would you describe Lima's current vision for innovation and economic development?

Lima's vision for innovation and economic development is increasingly framed around productivity growth, digital transformation, and economic diversification—aiming to make the city more competitive, resilient, and inclusive. As Peru's main economic and institutional hub, Lima concentrates a large share of the country's talent, corporate decision-making, finance, and public institutions, which enables the city to act as the primary platform where innovation policy, private investment, and entrepreneurial activity converge. This vision is reinforced by a growing emphasis on digital government, data-driven public services, and stronger linkages between startups, universities, and industry.

What would you identify as Lima's key economic assets or competitive advantages today?

Lima's main competitive advantages include: (i) scale—its large consumer and business market and concentration of high-value services (finance, corporate HQs, advanced services); (ii) connectivity—logistics and international linkages that facilitate scaling and regional market access; and (iii) ecosystem density—an expanding network of universities, incubators/accelerators, corporate innovation actors, and investors that support venture creation and growth. Lima also benefits from national programs and institutions headquartered in the city, which increases the availability of co-financing, entrepreneurial services, and innovation support instruments.

What specific measures has the city taken to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start and grow a business?

Lima benefits from a combination of locally available national services and city-level modernization efforts that reduce friction for entrepreneurs across the business lifecycle. Key measures include: (i) formalization and business setup assistance through one-stop guidance and advisory services delivered in the city (e.g., "Tu Empresa" services for formalization and management support); (ii) a robust support infrastructure (incubators, accelerators, innovation hubs) that provides mentoring, networks, and specialized services; (iii) public co-financing opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship offered through competitive instruments; and (iv) increasing digitization of public services that helps reduce time and transaction costs for procedures.

What long-term priorities guide Lima's strategy to strengthen its innovation ecosystem?

Lima's long-term priorities to strengthen its innovation ecosystem can be summarized as: (i) accelerating digitalization for firms and public services; (ii) improving the business environment

through simplification, predictability, and service quality; (iii) deepening innovation capabilities in MSMEs and enabling pathways from early-stage entrepreneurship to scale-up; (iv) strengthening public–private–academic collaboration to increase technology adoption and commercialization; (v) expanding access to finance and investor networks; and (vi) embedding inclusion and sustainability—supporting more diverse founders and solutions aligned with climate and social priorities.

Does Lima offer any financial incentives or support programs for startups or high-growth companies?

Yes—while many incentives are designed at the national level, Lima is the main access point where these instruments are concentrated and most frequently activated. Support typically includes: (i) seed capital and co-financing for startups and high-growth ventures through dedicated public innovation programs (e.g., StartUp Perú and broader ProInnóvate portfolios); (ii) market-building support through incubators/accelerators and investor readiness programs; (iii) the presence of an organized venture capital community and networks that improve deal flow and standards; and (iv) complementary fiscal incentives for R&D and innovation expenditures under Peru's tax incentive framework (extended through 31 December 2025, with defined eligibility conditions).

What investments or initiatives has the city recently made to enhance digital infrastructure or support innovation hubs?

Recent progress combines national digital infrastructure rollouts visible first in Lima with city-level digital modernization. On the infrastructure side, early 5G deployments and pilots have included initial coverage in selected areas of Lima, supporting higher-capacity connectivity for businesses and tech-driven services.

On the public-sector modernization side, Peru's digital government push—anchored in platforms such as GOB.PE and interoperability infrastructure (PIDE)—helps expand online services and enables more integrated digital procedures, which is particularly impactful in Lima where demand and usage are highest.

At the municipal level, Lima has also advanced open government/data and digital innovation efforts (e.g., open data initiatives and municipal digital innovation labs to modernize specific services), while the city hosts multiple innovation hubs and programs (universities and corporate hubs) that provide space, networks, and acceleration services for entrepreneurs.

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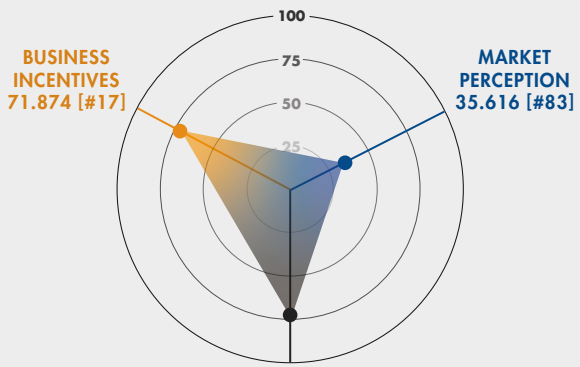
56. Thailand

GLOBAL RANK
#56

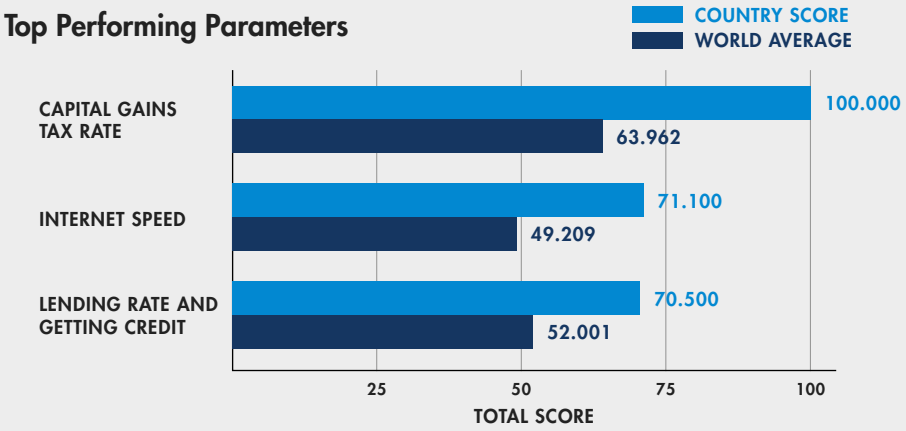
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#11

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Thailand ranks 3rd in ASEAN in the Ease of Operating a Business.

- Thailand ranks 5th in Southeast Asia and ASEAN in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Thailand ranks 3rd in ASEAN under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the broader regional level.
- The country ranks 3rd in Southeast Asia and ASEAN under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Thailand also ranks 3rd in ASEAN in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit, Internet Speed, and Capital Gains Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Thailand's overall positioning.
- Overall, Thailand demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional performance in operational ease and financial access.

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Country Overview

Thailand's economic direction has shifted noticeably in recent years. Instead of relying primarily on traditional manufacturing, the country is now positioning itself in domains such as digital services, biotechnology, and advanced automation. This transition is captured in the Thailand 4.0 agenda, which encourages companies to integrate new technologies and foster a tighter relationship between laboratories, applied science, and industry.

This strategic shift becomes most visible in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). Thailand concentrates its major upgrades here, transport links, regulatory facilitation, and specialised talent initiatives, rather than dispersing them across the country. Firms operating within the EEC can tap into tax incentives and operational benefits granted through the Board of Investment, provided they commit to higher-value production, export orientation, or technology-driven activity. The National Innovation Agency (NIA) strengthens this framework by supporting innovation-based enterprises through funding instruments, technical assistance, and ecosystem-building programmes.

Thailand's international appeal continues to be a major asset. The country attracts skilled professionals, investors, and remote workers drawn by its high quality of life and mature service economy. Special visa pathways for priority industries, along with accelerated processing options, facilitate knowledge exchange and cross-border collaboration. A growing opportunity lies in more deeply connecting this diverse global talent pool with Thailand's expanding innovation and startup ecosystem.

Overall, Thailand presents a compelling combination of industrial ambition, targeted incentives, improving digital governance, and strong global talent attraction. With continued emphasis on business-friendly implementation and deeper integration of international expertise, the country is well positioned to further strengthen its long-term competitiveness.

Our Local Partner

NIA
NATIONAL INNOVATION AGENCY

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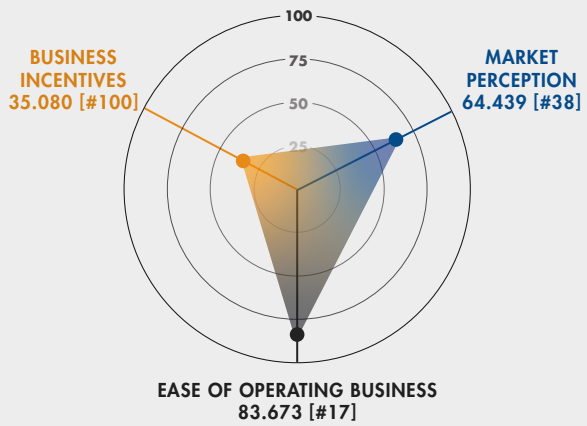
57. Chile

GLOBAL RANK
#57

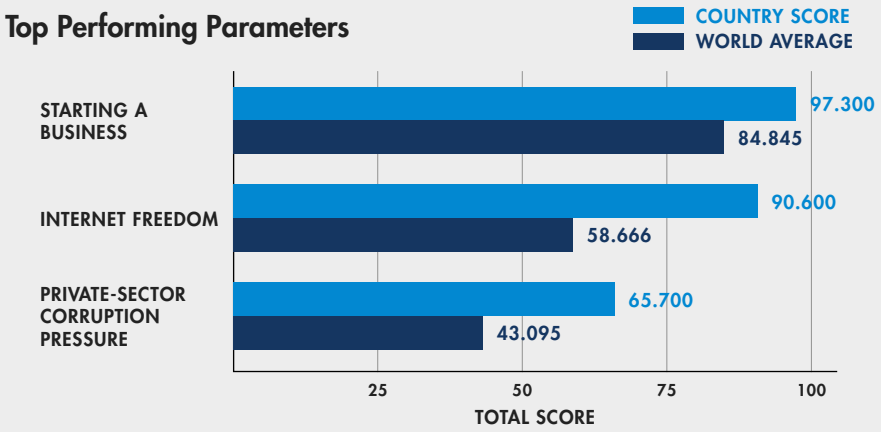
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#6

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Chile leads South America in Ease of Operating a Business.

- Chile ranks 5th in South America in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Chile's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 exceeds its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 1st in South America under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- The Business Incentives Pillar represents an area where Chile has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- Chile ranks 1st in South America in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- The country ranks 11th worldwide and 1st in Latin America in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting a positive evaluation of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- Chile ranks 2nd in Latin America & the Caribbean under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting a positive assessment of conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.

- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business, Internet Speed, and Private-Sector Corruption Pressure are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Chile's overall standing.
- Overall, Chile demonstrates a business environment characterized by well-assessed institutional conditions, solid digital infrastructure, and supportive operational foundations within Latin America.

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Country Overview

Chile emerged early as one of Latin America's most visible centres for innovation, a reputation shaped in large part by the global reach of Start-Up Chile. The programme introduced an entirely new model for attracting internationally mobile founders and, for many years, set Chile apart as a regional reference point. While the country still benefits from this legacy, the pace of new flagship initiatives has slowed down. The innovation landscape has not expanded with the same intensity that characterised its earlier period of leadership.

Foreign entrepreneurs relocating to Chile are supported by a transitional tax period in which only Chile-source income is taxed, a feature that offers practical flexibility during the first stages of establishing operations. This arrangement complements a broader tradition of openness toward globally active talent.

Much of Chile's innovation architecture is built around its major national institutions. CORFO plays a central role, overseeing Start-Up Chile and administering a range of financial instruments that fund business formation and technological development. ANID, the national research agency, connects scientific work with industry needs and supports the country's research base. Companies investing in innovation may also access an R&D tax credit that reduces the cost of eligible activities.

In parallel, Chile has long relied on its Free Trade Zones to attract export-oriented businesses. These zones streamline operations for logistics, services and manufacturing, reinforcing the country's function as a Pacific gateway for regional and international commerce. The administrative environment has become increasingly digital, making interactions with public services more straightforward for companies. Foreign firms additionally receive structured support from InvestChile, which provides guidance on regulations and opportunities across key sectors.

Although the country's business environment would benefit from a renewed wave of large-scale programmes, Chile still offers a combination of international connectivity, institutional maturity and operational clarity that remains attractive to founders building across Latin America and beyond.



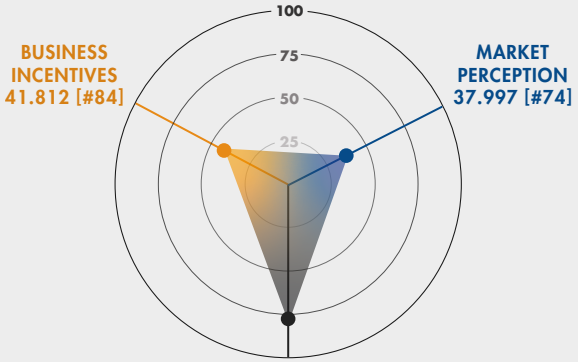
58. Mexico

GLOBAL RANK
#58

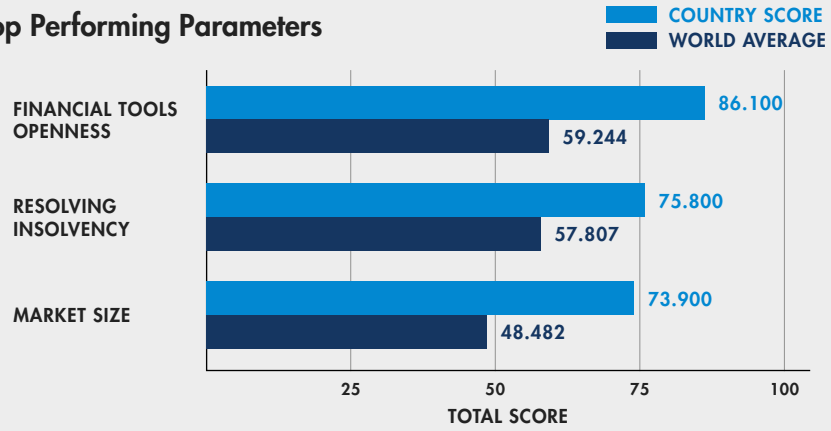
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#7

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Chihuahua has strengthened its business climate through intersectoral coordination, the promotion of strategic sectors, and the development of a highly specialized workforce, leveraging its proximity to the U.S. border. These actions reduce entry barriers and connect entrepreneurs with financing and export opportunities. Within this ecosystem, startups drive productivity and innovation, while public policies supporting micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises enable projects to scale, integrate into supply chains, and foster inclusive growth across sectors and regions."



Marco Antonio Bonilla Mendoza
Mayor of Municipality Goverment of Chihuahua, Startup Chihuahua

Mexico leads Central America in the Innovators Business Environment Index.

- Mexico ranks 1st in Central America in the IBEI 2026, reflecting the highest overall business-environment assessment within the subregion.
- Mexico ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI 2026, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- Mexico ranks 3rd in Latin America & the Caribbean under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.

- At the Parameter level, Market Size is an inherent structural Parameter assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Mexico's overall business-environment profile.
- Overall, Mexico demonstrates a business environment characterized by regional leadership in Central America, supportive operational conditions, and well-assessed digital infrastructure within the broader Latin American context.

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Country Overview

Mexico's business environment benefits largely from the weight of its domestic market, a long-standing industrial base, and its tight linkage to North American production networks. Close proximity to the United States and participation in the USMCA place the country at the heart of regional supply chains. A wide network of trade agreements extends this reach and keeps Mexico deeply connected to global commerce.

Regulatory updates over the past decade have made the operating environment somewhat more navigable. The Fintech Law, one of the region's first attempts to regulate digital finance in a comprehensive way, signals an effort to bring clarity to emerging technologies without relying on short-lived policy shifts. Digital tools within public administration add another layer of predictability, even though many founders still contend with heavy bureaucratic processes.

Mexico has also become a more common stop for internationally mobile professionals and early-stage entrepreneurs. Straightforward residency routes allow foreign talent to establish a foothold, contributing to the rise of globally minded founder communities in the country's major cities. Momentum is heading in the right direction, yet more business-friendly reforms would make Mexico a stronger option for companies looking to build or headquarter innovation-driven operations.

A network of institutions helps orient the country's economic strategy. The Secretariat of Economy steers industrial and innovation policy. CONACYT shapes research priorities and fosters cooperation between scientific institutions and industry. State-level development agencies add another layer by promoting investment and supporting regional economic initiatives across Mexico's diverse local economies.

Mexico's combination of scale, industrial depth, trade integration, improving regulatory clarity, and maturing institutions creates a landscape with substantial potential for innovators. Further progress on easing administrative burdens would allow the country to realise more of that potential and strengthen its position within the global economy.

Our Local Partner

STARTUP CHIHUAHUA



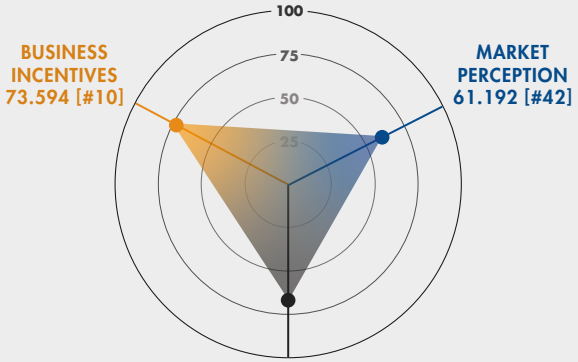
59. Qatar

GLOBAL RANK
#59

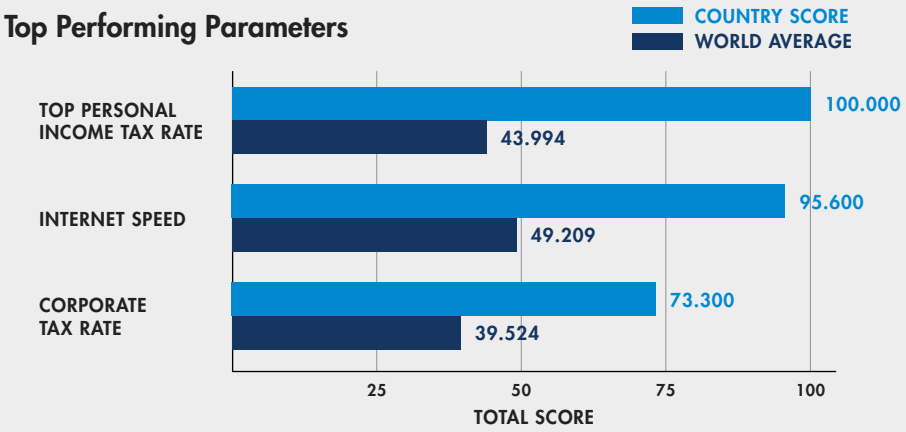
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#5

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Qatar ranks 2nd among the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries in Market Perception.

- Qatar ranks 4th among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the IBEI 2026.
- Qatar's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Qatar places 2nd in the GCC under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Qatar ranks 2nd in the GCC under the Market Perception Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The country ranks 2nd in the GCC in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- Qatar ranks 3rd in the Africa & Middle East region and globally in the Taxation Functional Category, based on assessed tax-related conditions.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Qatar has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.

- At the Parameter level, Internet Speed, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, and Corporate Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Qatar's overall assessment.
- Overall, Qatar demonstrates a business environment characterized by well-assessed taxation conditions, solid digital infrastructure, and a stable perception profile within the GCC.

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Country Overview

Qatar's business environment benefits from long-term planning and a deliberate shift away from reliance on hydrocarbons. Qatar National Vision 2030 is the country's anchor strategy and positions Qatar as a regional base for companies working in technology, services and applied research. The ambition is clear: attract internationally active firms and build a more diversified economic model.

Specialised economic platforms sit at the centre of this strategy. The Qatar Free Zones Authority manages Ras Bufontas near Hamad International Airport and Umm Alhoul next to Hamad Port. Both zones offer corporate tax exemptions, customs benefits, full foreign ownership and stable, long-duration operating terms for qualifying firms. The absence of personal income tax adds another incentive for founders and skilled professionals considering relocation.

Qatar has also developed targeted environments for research and high-value services. Qatar Science and Technology Park, embedded within Education City's academic ecosystem, provides facilities for testing, licensing and commercialisation. The Qatar Financial Centre offers a separate legal and regulatory system built for professional services, financial firms and high-growth industries, giving companies an additional entry point into the local economy.

Multiple institutions reinforce these efforts. Qatar Development Bank is the backbone of startup and SME financing and support, providing capital, export tools, and incubation through entities such as the Qatar Business Incubation Center. Invest Qatar serves as a front door for investors and helps firms understand available incentives. The Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council sets national R&D priorities and funds collaborative work between universities, government and the private sector.

Qatar's direction is unmistakable. The country has created clear regulatory frameworks, strong sector platforms and well-defined support channels for international firms. To compete more directly with the region's most business-friendly hubs, it would benefit from additional high-impact reforms. Even so, Qatar already offers a predictable, tax-efficient and institutionally supported base for companies seeking a foothold in the Gulf.



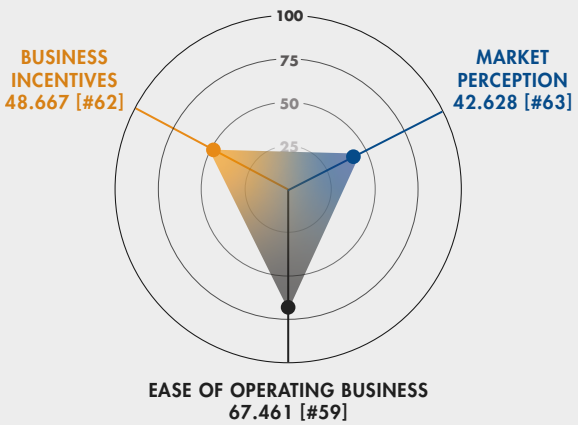
60. Albania

GLOBAL RANK
#60

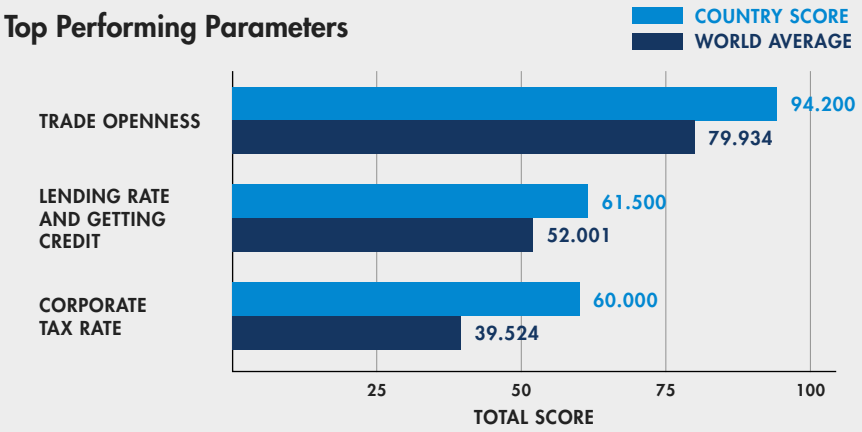
EUROPE RANK
#35

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Albania ranks 3rd in the Balkans for Regulation & Governance.

- Albania ranks 8th in the Balkans in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Albania's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- The country ranks 3rd in the Balkans in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- Albania places 4th in Southern Europe and 8th in Europe in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting comparatively positive evaluations of tax-related conditions.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Albania has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate, Trade Openness, and Lending Rate & Getting Credit are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Albania's overall performance.
- Overall, Albania demonstrates a business environment characterized by assessed tax-related conditions, improving regulatory evaluations, and developing financial-access conditions within the Balkan region.

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Country Overview

Albania has spent recent years reworking the foundations of its business environment. Openness to investment has expanded, regulations have been rewritten, and the country's position between regional and European markets has become a strategic asset rather than a geographic fact. As company registration moved online and procedural steps were cut back, starting a business shifted from an administrative hurdle to a routine task. These changes helped nurture a more confident entrepreneurial community, supported by a young workforce that is rapidly acquiring new skills.

Investment from abroad anchors much of the government's economic thinking. Technology, tourism, agriculture and energy sit at the centre of this agenda, reflecting sectors with scope for long-term gains.

Several organisations help translate these ambitions into practice. One example is the Albanian Investment Development Agency assists firms as they navigate permits and incentive mechanisms. The National Business Center folds registration and licensing into a single digital interface, reducing the delays common in older systems. Chambers of commerce, including the Tirana Chamber, give smaller companies access to networks, advocacy and day-to-day support.

These adjustments have pushed Albania toward a more coherent and predictable business environment. Institutions function with greater clarity, transparency has improved, and the path for founders and investors has become easier to follow. For those looking at Southeast Europe, Albania now offers a steadier footing and a clearer framework for building long-term operations.



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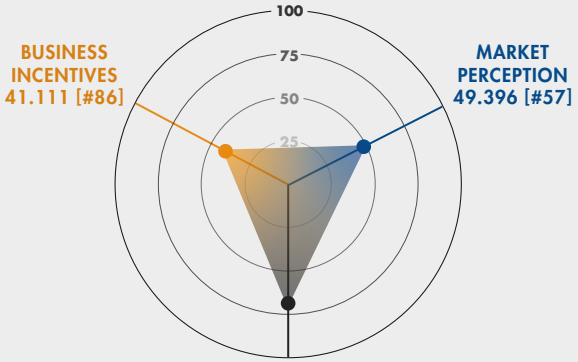
61. South Africa

GLOBAL RANK
#61

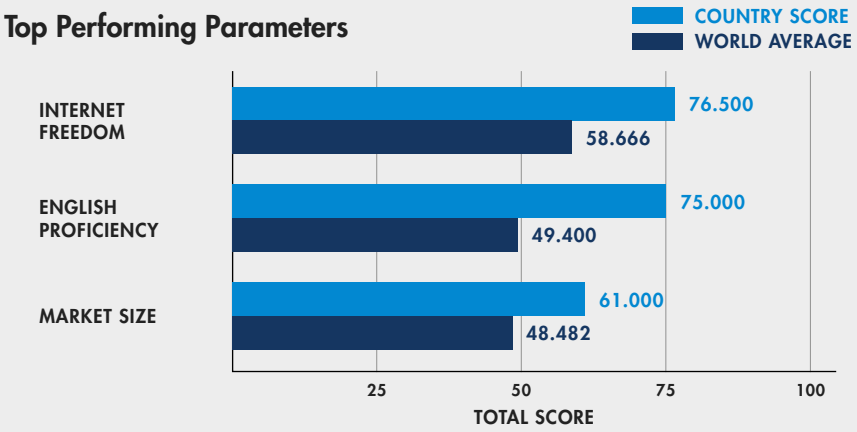
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#6

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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South Africa leads Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- South Africa ranks 1st in Africa in the IBEI 2026, reflecting the highest overall business-environment assessment within the region.
- South Africa ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI 2026, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 1st in Southern Africa under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- South Africa places 2nd in the Africa & Middle East region in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, indicating a positive assessment of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- South Africa also ranks 1st in Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Taxation Functional Category represents an area where South Africa has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Market Size is an inherent structural Parameter assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to South Africa's overall positioning.
- Overall, South Africa demonstrates a business environment characterized by well-assessed digital infrastructure, and leading mobility and openness conditions across the African continent.

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Country Overview

South Africa stands out in Africa for the breadth of its economy. Manufacturing, services, mining and a growing technology sector give the country a wide industrial base and help sustain its role as a regional centre for trade and investment. This depth is matched by a sophisticated financial system. Capital markets run deep, banks operate under strong oversight and investors have access to tools rarely found elsewhere on the continent. For international firms, this creates a level of stability that remains unusual in the region.

Yet, the infrastructure challenges affect businesses unevenly across the country. Some regions experience persistent constraints, while others have adapted with surprising resilience. Cape Town shows this contrast most clearly. It is attracting remote workers and internationally mobile professionals around the world. A strong services sector, an emerging technology scene and a high quality of life continue to draw new talent and investment.

South Africa also has special economic zones to encourage industrial clustering. These zones offer structured conditions for manufacturers, logistics companies and technology firms, and they complement a slow but steady shift toward more digital public and private services. Innovation institutions add further capacity. The Technology Innovation Agency backs research, validates new technologies and supports young ventures, while UVU Africa helps expand the technology talent pool and strengthen local ecosystems.

The country's long-term potential remains considerable. Improvements in infrastructure reliability, regulatory consistency and competitiveness would unlock more of that promise and make growth easier for expanding firms.





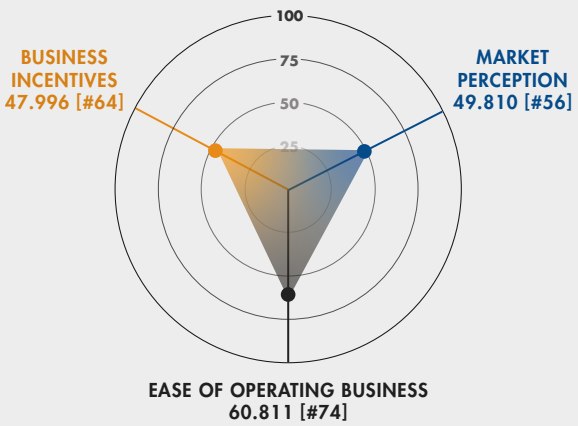
62. Philippines

GLOBAL RANK
#62

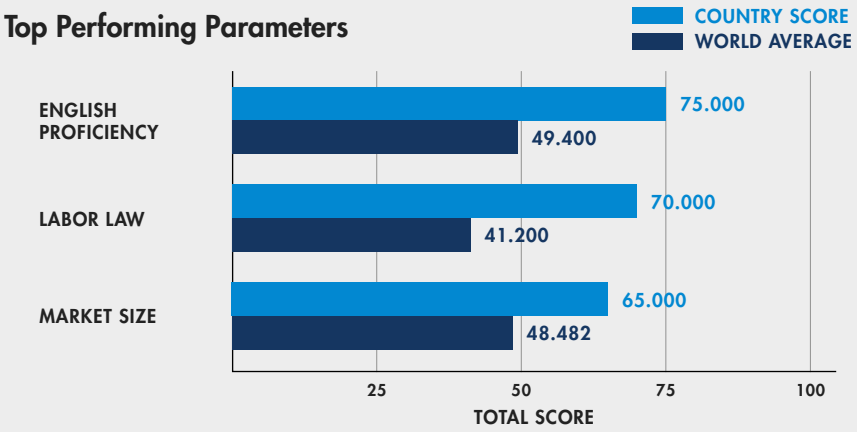
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#12

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Philippines ranks 3rd in ASEAN for Market Perception.

- The Philippines ranks 6th in ASEAN in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- The Philippines ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI 2026, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The Philippines ranks 3rd in Southeast Asia and ASEAN under the Market Perception Pillar, indicating assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility within the subregion.
- The country ranks 3rd in Southeast Asia in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Philippines places 3rd in Southeast Asia and ASEAN in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where the Philippines has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Market Size is an inherent structural Parameter assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to the Philippines' overall positioning.
- Overall, the Philippines demonstrates a business environment characterized by positive regional market perception, strong mobility-related assessments, and scale-related structural advantages within Southeast Asia.

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Country Overview

The Philippines has built its global reputation on the strength of its outsourcing industry. English proficiency, service-oriented talent, and competitive labour costs created a foundation that still supports much of the economy. Artificial intelligence is transforming international labour markets, so traditional outsourcing alone is unlikely to sustain long-term growth.

Recent changes point toward this shift. Government agencies now offer clearer paths for business registration, and more of the process can be completed online. Digitalisation is advancing within public institutions, allowing companies to interact with the state through more consistent channels. These steps make the operating landscape easier to navigate, even if the system remains uneven in practice.

Investment incentives remain a major point of attraction. Firms that register with investment-promotion bodies gain access to tax benefits, customs support, and other forms of assistance. Economic zones continue to draw export-oriented and technology-focused companies by offering conditions that differ from those found in the domestic market.

Policy for innovation is gradually gaining a clearer structure. The Innovative Startup Act assigns responsibilities to the main economic and science agencies and creates visa options for foreign founders. It also introduces support programmes for early-stage companies, ranging from grants for product development to mechanisms that help startups move from prototype to commercial activity. The National Development Company adds further financing tools to this emerging ecosystem.

The Philippines may not yet function as a natural headquarters location for global technology companies, but the direction of reform is evident. Continued work on reducing everyday barriers will determine how quickly the country can shift toward a more innovation-driven economy.



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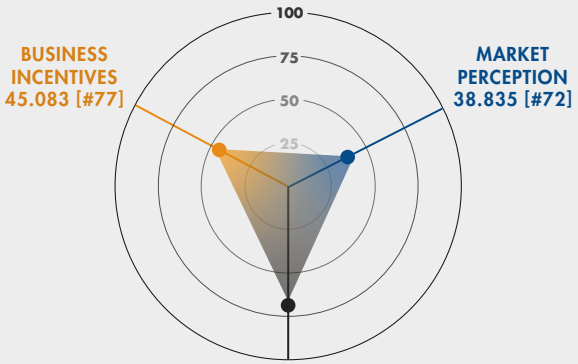
63. Panama

GLOBAL RANK
#63

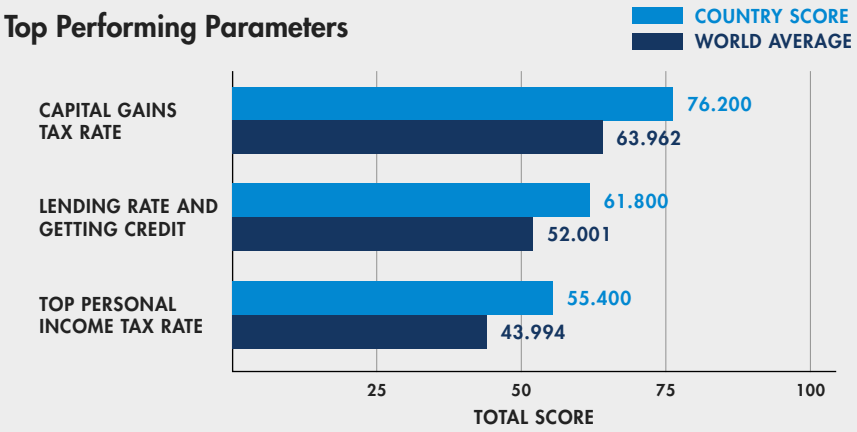
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#8

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Panama ranks 2nd in Central America for Business Incentives.

- Panama ranks 2nd in Central America in the IBEI 2026, reflecting a strong position within the subregional business-environment landscape.
- Panama's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Panama ranks 2nd in Central America under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting positively assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions within the subregion.
- The country ranks 2nd in Central America in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- Panama places 2nd in Central America in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where Panama has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit is assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Panama demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong incentive-related assessments, supportive credit-access conditions, and a stable regional standing within Central America.

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Country Overview

Panama's business environment reflects the country's long-standing orientation toward services, mobility, and international engagement. Its migration system is well known for its accessibility, which helps explain why many foreigners, including a considerable number of US nationals, choose to establish residency there. The country functions as a regional landing point for internationally active professionals and companies looking for a practical base in the Americas.

A core element of Panama's economic framework is its territorial tax system. Only locally sourced income is taxed, allowing firms with cross-border operations to separate foreign earnings from domestic activity. This feature remains one of the biggest draws for entrepreneurs and service businesses that work across multiple jurisdictions.

Several incentive regimes complement this tax structure. The government offers programmes that reduce long-term tax obligations for activities connected to logistics, exports, and specialised services. Companies that qualify receive predictable, multi-year advantages, and investment-promotion bodies help firms navigate the rules and understand what is required to participate.

Foreign founders also have clear pathways for establishing residency tied to their commercial activity or investment commitments. These options give entrepreneurs a structured way to remain in the country and manage their operations locally, fitting naturally within Panama's broader migration framework.

Institutional support comes from a mix of public agencies and private organisations focused on improving digital capacity, strengthening key sectors, and streamlining administrative processes. Their work contributes to a more organised environment for firms building regionally or globally connected operations.

For founders looking for a base with strong connectivity and straightforward fiscal rules, Panama offers a clear and pragmatic operating platform.



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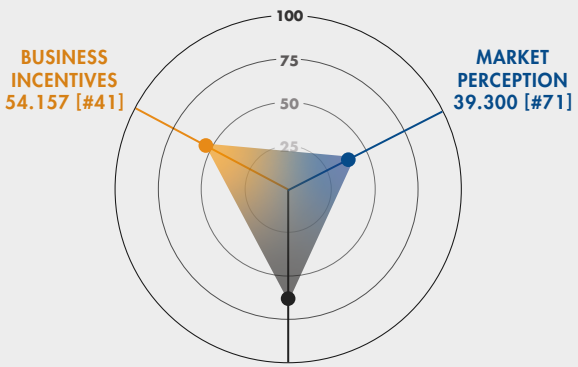
64. Moldova

GLOBAL RANK
#64

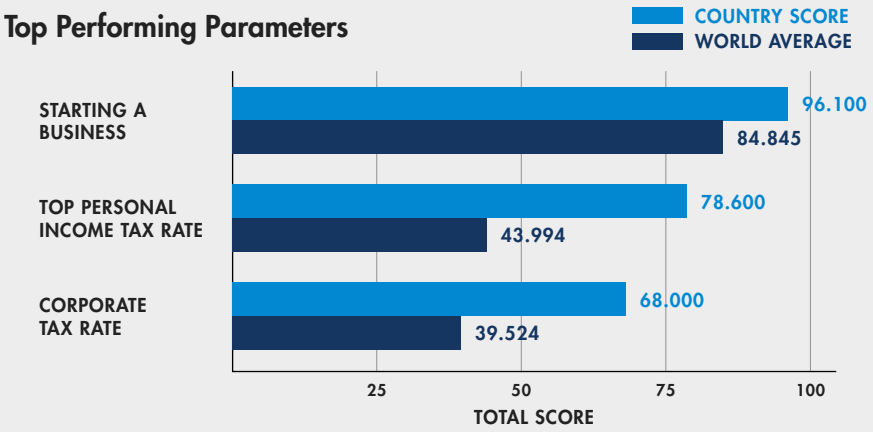
EUROPE RANK
#36

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"As Moldova moves forward with EU accession, the country's startup ecosystem is gaining real momentum. This year, we've seen tangible progress, including the launch of the Fund of Funds to attract venture capital, new grant programmes supporting startups and innovation, and the establishment of the Moldova HiTech Park to serves as a bridge between academia, startups, and corporations. Together with its partners, Startup Moldova continues to support founders and connect them with investors, mentors and policymakers to build a more competitive and innovation-driven economy."



Olga Melniciuc
CEO, Startup Moldova

Moldova ranks 3rd in Europe in Taxation.

- Moldova ranks 16th in Central & Eastern Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Moldova ranks 14th in Eastern Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- The country ranks 3rd in Europe and 13th worldwide in the Taxation Functional Category which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Moldova has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.

- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, and Starting a Business are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Moldova's overall positioning.
- Overall, Moldova demonstrates a business environment characterized by comparatively strong tax-related assessments and attractive incentives for businesses.

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Country Overview

Moldova has carved out a distinctive position in the region by building a business environment centred on digital operations and technology-led activity. Much of this identity comes from the Moldova Innovation Technology Park (MITP), a platform that allows tech companies and remote founders to manage their entire corporate footprint online. The model has become one of the country's most recognisable assets and a focal point for its growing technology sector.

While Moldova generally applies a standard corporate income tax, firms registered in MITP operate under a unified turnover-based tax. This single levy replaces corporate income tax, personal income tax, and social contributions for qualifying activities. The result is a cost structure that is both predictable and highly competitive for software developers, digital-service providers, and other technology businesses.

MITP's design also enables remote incorporation and fully electronic company management. For international founders, this means the ability to establish and run operations without being tied to physical presence or extensive local administration. The accompanying IT Visa Program provides a residency route for founders, specialists, and foreign employees, making it easier for globally mobile teams to anchor their work in Moldova.

Business environment initiatives extend beyond taxation and residency. Startup Moldova provides mentoring, community-building, and access to investors, helping expand participation in the country's innovation economy and supporting the growth of early-stage ventures.

Moldova's approach results in a business environment that emphasises digital operations, simplified rules, and targeted support for technology companies, an appealing mix for founders looking for a modern, low-friction base for remote or internationally oriented activity.

Our Local Partner



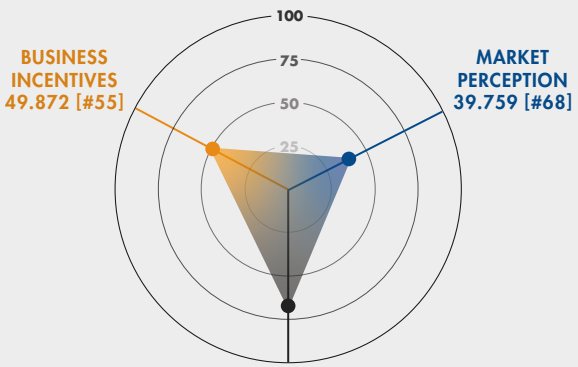
65. Kosovo

GLOBAL RANK
#65

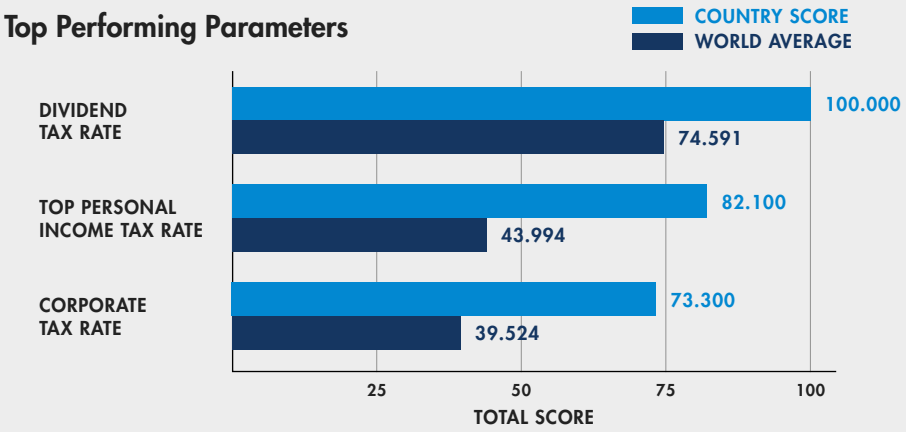
EUROPE RANK
#37

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Kosovo has been working to make it easier for founders to start and grow their businesses. With simpler registration processes, improved access to funding, programs connecting startups with mentors and industry partners, and investments in digital infrastructure, including expanded high-speed internet, along with an energetic community of innovators, Kosovo is becoming an increasingly accessible, supportive, and promising place for entrepreneurs."



Dorina Grezda
Acting Managing Director/ Incubator and Project Manager, Innovation Center Kosovo

Kosovo leads Europe in Taxation.

- Kosovo ranks 9th in the Balkans in the IBEI, reflecting its position within the regional business-environment landscape.
- Its position is higher in the IBEI than its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Kosovo ranks 2nd in the Balkans in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- The country ranks 1st in Europe in the Taxation Functional Category, and 7th globally, which measures tax-related conditions.

- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Kosovo has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, and Starting a Business are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Kosovo's overall positioning.
- Overall, Kosovo demonstrates a business environment characterized by well-assessed regulatory conditions and competitive tax-related parameters.

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Country Overview

Kosovo's business environment is evolving quickly. As digital public services expand, more founders are entering the market and testing ideas, supported by a young population that adopts new technologies with ease. The overall climate feels open to experimentation and early-stage activity.

The tax system mirrors this simplicity. Rates are relatively low, the rules are easy to follow, and companies face few surprises when planning local operations. Kosovo does not offer specialised tax regimes for mobile or foreign founders, yet the straightforward structure often proves more practical than complex incentive schemes.

International entrepreneurs follow the same company-formation and residence procedures as local founders. There is no dedicated startup or tech-visa route, but the existing framework is manageable, and foreign teams can set up operations without excessive administrative hurdles.

Support organisations have grown in number and capability. The Innovation Centre Kosovo (ICK) has become a focal point for incubation, training, and early-stage development, giving young firms a structured place to gain skills and guidance. Government grants complement this by co-financing substantial portions of eligible projects, narrowing the early-capital gap many founders face.

Digital government services continue to expand as well. The eKosova platform brings essential procedures into a single online system, making access to grants, subsidies, and administrative tools far more efficient than before.

For entrepreneurs seeking an accessible, low-cost base in a growing regional market, Kosovo presents a practical and steadily improving option.

"Kosovo has lowered barriers to entrepreneurship through fast company setup, a flat 10% corporate tax, and expanding digital public services. A young, highly adaptable workforce with strong English and technical skills is driving a growing startup and innovation ecosystem connected to global markets."



Rilind Elezaj
Co-founder,
Tactica

Our Local Partners

INNOVATION CENTRE KOSOVO

Tactica



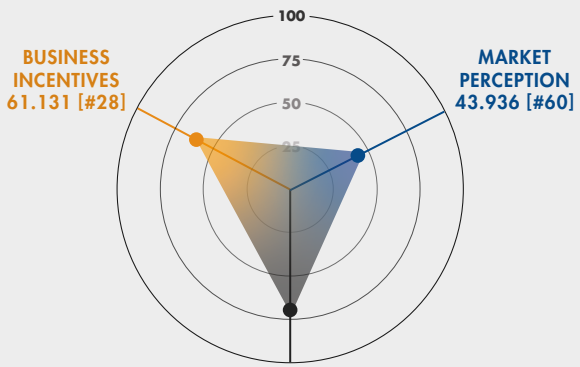
66. Armenia

GLOBAL RANK
#66

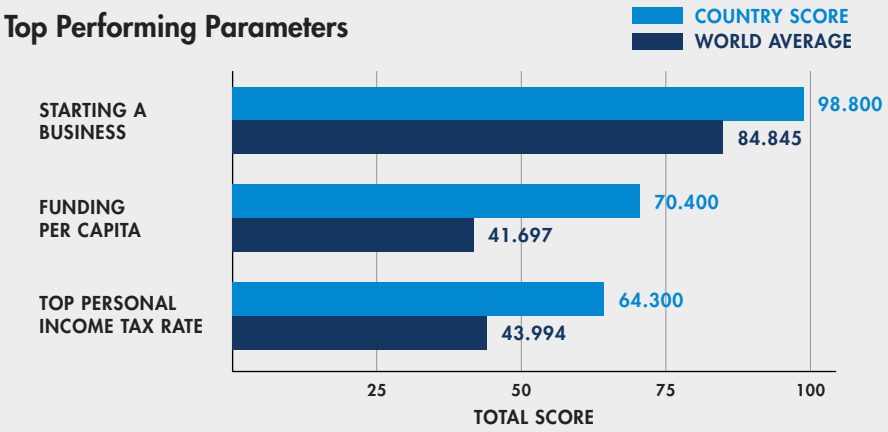
EUROPE RANK
#38

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Armenia ranks 2nd in the Caucasus in the Market Perception.

- Armenia ranks 2nd in the Caucasus in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Armenia ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- Armenia ranks 2nd in the Caucasus under the Market Perception Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The country ranks 1st in the Caucasus in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- The country also ranks 2nd in the Caucasus in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business, Funding per Capita, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Armenia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Armenia demonstrates a business environment characterized by solid regional performance in capital access and mobility, positive perception-related assessments.

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Country Overview

Armenia's business environment has become more open to international activity, upgraded many of its digital systems, and put effort into creating rules that feel stable rather than shifting. Historically, Armenia has long had a track record of entrepreneurial talent, visible both at home and across its diaspora.

Setting up a company is a simple process. The registration steps are light, and most founders can begin operating with little delay. Even residency follows this practical approach. Foreign entrepreneurs who start and run a company can obtain residency, avoiding a separate work-permit procedure. For founders who move between countries, this clarity makes it easier to work on the ground rather than manage everything at a distance.

Around this administrative backbone, a small but active ecosystem has started to grow. The National Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship offers guidance and connects founders to scientific resources. The Science and Technology Angels Network steps in even earlier, providing seed funding and mentorship to teams trying to turn research into commercial products.

Armenia blends straightforward procedures, workable residency options, and a slowly expanding set of innovation supports. For founders looking for a stable base in a market that is opening itself to technology and knowledge-driven activity, the country offers more promise than many might expect.



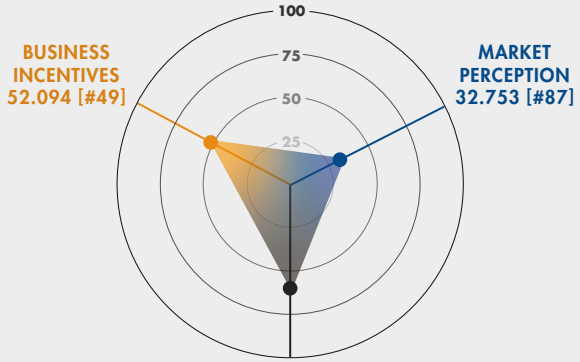
67. Ukraine

GLOBAL RANK
#67

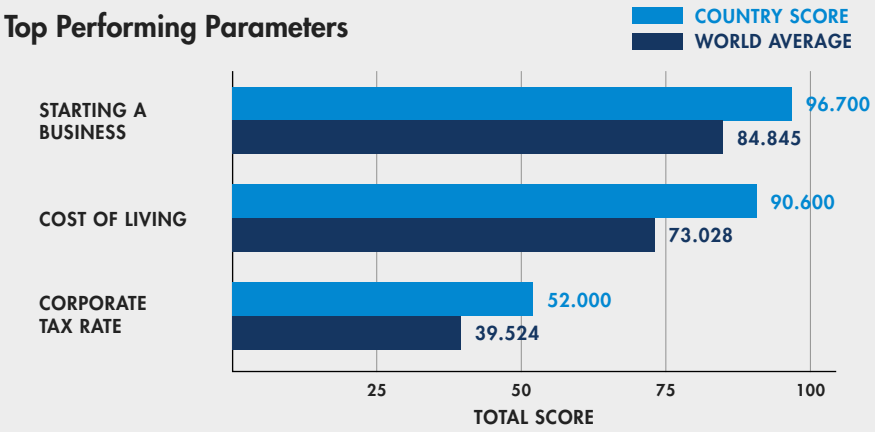
EUROPE RANK
#39

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"The government has streamlined processes using digital services like Diia - the world's fastest business registration, with less than an hour to start your own business, and introduced favorable tax and legal regimes, notably Diia.City for IT companies, which offers reduced taxes and flexible employment. Ukraine attracts innovators with a deep pool of tech talent (over 300,000 professionals), competitive operational costs, and a culture of resilience and agile problem-solving reinforced by real-world DefenseTech experience."



Marharyta Horokhova
Head of Partnerships & Development, Techosystem

- Ukraine ranks 19th in Central & Eastern Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Ukraine ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 18th in Central & Eastern Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- The country ranks 15th in Eastern Europe in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.

- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Ukraine has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business and Corporate Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Ukraine's overall positioning.
- Overall, Ukraine demonstrates a business environment characterized by a positive performance in cross-border accessibility and international movement, alongside comparatively assessed taxation conditions

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Country Overview

Ukraine has managed to hold onto a strong digital and innovation profile despite the pressures of war. Modernisation is spread across areas such as governance and business regulation, and digital systems which now sit at the centre of how the country interacts with companies. These developments show a determination to stay competitive over the long term, even in an exceptionally difficult period.

One of the most visible aspects of this effort is Diia.City. This framework offers a long-term legal and tax model built for technology firms, including a 9 percent tax on distributed capital and employment structures aligned with international standards. For founders and investors looking in from abroad, Diia.City is often the clearest signal of how Ukraine intends to position its tech sector once conditions stabilize.

Support for innovation comes from a mix of domestic institutions and international partners. IT Ukraine represents the technology sector and contributes to national policy discussions. The Ukrainian Startup Fund provides early-stage grants that help new teams build momentum. Larger actors such as the EBRD and IFC add financial depth through investment programmes.

Reconstruction and deeper European integration will require a new wave of reforms, but Ukraine's direction is clear. The country is betting on digital governance, transparent rules, and internationally compatible business frameworks as the foundation for a future economy anchored in technology and innovation.

Our Local Partner

techosystem



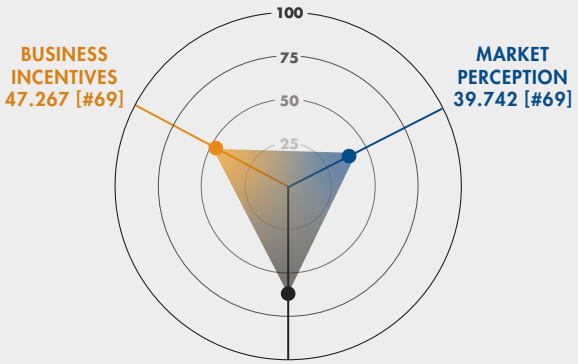
68. Kenya

GLOBAL RANK
#68

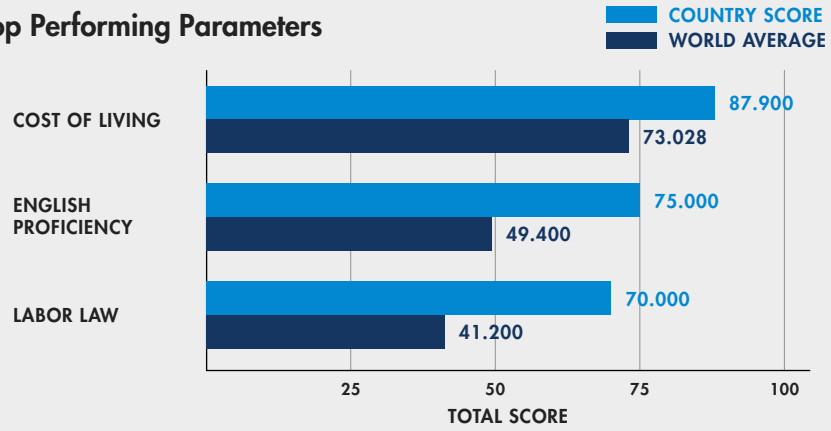
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#7

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Kenya offers one of Africa's most dynamic and tested business environments for founders. A strong digital backbone, deep entrepreneurial talent, and early adoption of innovation have positioned the country as a continental launchpad. While regulatory complexity and access to later-stage capital remain constraints, Kenya's ecosystem benefits from experienced founders, active support organisations, and increasing investor sophistication. Its real strength lies in building businesses that respond to concrete market needs, not abstract innovation."



Ian Lorenzen
Executive Director & Partner, GrowthAfrica

Kenya leads Eastern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Kenya ranks 1st in Eastern Africa in the IBEI, reflecting the highest overall business-environment assessment within the subregion.
- Kenya's position in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 is higher than its position in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- Kenya ranks 2nd in Sub-Saharan Africa under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.

- The country ranks 2nd in Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- Kenya ranks 1st in Eastern Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility within the subregion.
- Kenya places 2nd in Sub-Saharan Africa under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Kenya has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living is an structural Parameter assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Kenya's overall positioning.
- Overall, Kenya demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional pillar performance, positive market perception, and well-assessed mobility conditions within Eastern Africa, alongside scope for further development in digital infrastructure.

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Country Overview

Kenya is reshaping its economic profile around a more open and internationally connected business environment. Nairobi remains the country's commercial hub, but recent reforms point to a clearer ambition: to offer innovators a predictable base with regional reach and straightforward rules.

Financial-sector changes are central to this effort. The Nairobi International Financial Centre reduces early tax obligations for qualifying firms, while Special Economic Zones provide long-term incentives and simplified procedures for export-oriented activity. These mechanisms aim to attract higher-value investment and diversify the country's economic base.

Rules for foreign founders have also become more transparent. The Class G Investor Permit sets defined entry conditions, and additional residency options give long-term operators a stable footing in a region where legal certainty strongly influences location choices.

Institutional coordination supports this direction. The Kenya National Innovation Agency, the Nairobi International Financial Centre Authority, and the Special Economic Zones Authority each shape parts of the operating landscape, making it easier for firms to navigate the system.

Kenya is moving toward a more structured, internationally oriented environment that can better support innovation-driven growth.

Our Local Partner

growthafrica



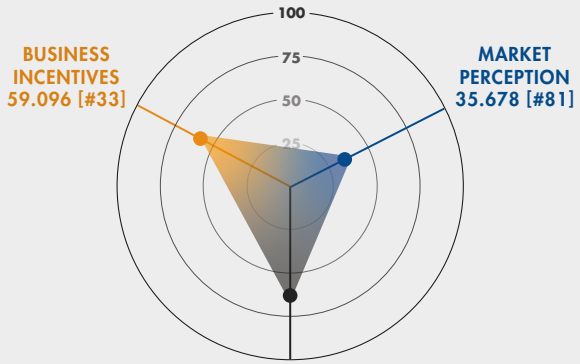
69. Kazakhstan

GLOBAL RANK
#69

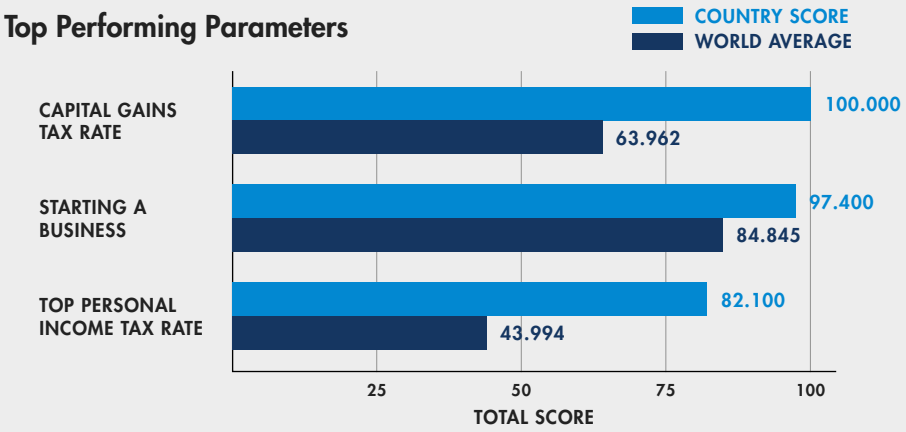
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#13

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Astana Hub is strengthening the business environment for the tech entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan by building the ecosystem that support tech projects at all stages of development. We provide tax incentives to over 1900 participants, including more than 450 companies with foreign investment. Total revenue of our residents reached $3.9B for over 5 years, with more than $700M in investments raised. Through our acceleration and incubation programs, we foster the growth of startups and facilitate collaboration with industry partners."



Magzhan Madiyev
CEO, Astana Hub

Kazakhstan leads Central Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Kazakhstan ranks 1st in Central Asia in the IBEI, reflecting the highest overall business-environment assessment within the subregion.
- It ranks higher in the IBEI than its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Kazakhstan ranks 1st in Central Asia under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.

- The country ranks 1st in Central Asia under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- Kazakhstan ranks 11th globally and 2nd in Asia Pacific in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting positive assessment of measures tax-related conditions.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Kazakhstan has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, Starting a Business, and Capital Gains Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Kazakhstan's overall positioning.
- Overall, Kazakhstan demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional performance in operational ease, competitive tax-related assessments, and supportive entry conditions.

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Country Overview

Kazakhstan's long-standing base in energy and heavy industry now sits alongside a broader push to improve digital capability and align regulation with international standards. This mix has created an operating environment that looks increasingly outward and follows a deliberate strategic path.

Innovation and financial zones drive much of this shift. Astana Hub offers a 0% tax regime for qualifying technology activity, giving software and digital-service firms an unusually light operating structure. The Astana International Financial Centre runs on common law and provides long-term tax advantages for financial and professional-services companies. Each zone gives firms a distinct set of rules and has helped define Kazakhstan's emerging position in the regional economy.

Residency pathways complement these structures. The AIFC Investment Tax Residency Programme gives founders and investors predictable conditions and access to the centre's legal infrastructure. This option aligns with Kazakhstan's broader effort to attract people who work across borders and seek stability in their operating base.

National institutions add further direction. QazInnovations supports technology companies with grants and advisory services. Baiterek and its development-finance institutions fund long-term projects that require patient capital. Astana Hub and the AIFC act as consolidated entry points where firms can navigate regulation, obtain business services, and plan expansion.

Kazakhstan is still refining its competitiveness, yet the direction is clear. The country has built an environment shaped by strategic intent, early investment in ecosystem development, and growing international orientation. For innovators looking at Central Asia, Kazakhstan now offers one of the region's most structured and forward-looking operating bases.

Our Local Partner

astana hub

CITY SPOTLIGHT:

Astana



An Interview with

Magzan Madiyev

CEO of Astana Hub

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How would you describe the overarching vision your city is working toward?

Astana aims to position itself as a leading innovation-driven capital in Eurasia, combining modern infrastructure with a strong focus on technological advancement. The city's long-term vision centers on creating a vibrant, diversified economy supported by digital transformation, sustainability, and global connectivity. Astana strives to become a hub where government, business, academia, and startups collaborate to generate high-impact solutions. With strategic investments in talent development, smart-city technologies, and international partnerships, the city is working to build an inclusive ecosystem that attracts global innovators and fosters high-value economic growth.

What would you identify as the key economic assets or competitive advantages of your region today?

Astana benefits from its strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, strong political stability, and rapidly developing infrastructure. The city hosts a growing technology and innovation sector, anchored by Astana Hub, Central Eurasia's largest international innovation cluster. Astana also offers a highly educated workforce, competitive operational costs, and a favorable business environment supported by national digitalization initiatives. Its international financial center and modern transport connectivity further strengthen its competitiveness, enabling companies to access regional markets and scale efficiently across Central Eurasia and beyond.

What specific measures has your city implemented to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start a business?

Astana has streamlined business registration processes, expanded access to e-government services, and reduced regulatory barriers for new enterprises. Through Astana Hub, resident startups benefit from 0% tax preferences, receive support with Digital Nomad Visa and Digital Nomad Residency for foreign specialists, as well as free access to mentorship programs, accelerators, and a wide range of digital tools. The city also actively promotes a "One-stop-Shop" model for specialists, simplifying interactions with government agencies. Additionally, coworking spaces, educational bootcamps, and grant programs are available to help early-stage teams' prototype, test, and launch their products more quickly and efficiently.

Moreover, in partnership with the city administration of Astana and Astana Innovations JSC, we are launching the Astana Innovations Accelerator. It is an international acceleration

program for startups and IT companies developing innovative technologies to address the pressing challenges of modern cities. The program is designed to support promising projects from Central Asia and integrate their solutions into urban infrastructure, making life in Astana more convenient, safe, and comfortable for its residents.

What long-term priorities or goals guide your city's economic development strategy?

Astana's long-term economic development strategy focuses on diversification beyond traditional industries by accelerating digital transformation, fostering innovation, and cultivating human capital. Our vision is to position Astana as a global hub of technology and creativity, driving sustainable growth through knowledge and innovation.

A key initiative in this direction is the establishment of the International Center for Artificial Intelligence – alem.ai, envisioned as a "factory of ideas and innovation." This center will build on the success of Astana Hub, now the largest international innovation cluster in Central Eurasia, with a growing global presence in Silicon Valley, Dubai, Shanghai, and London.

At the heart of this initiative lies Kazakhstan's national vision for digital transformation, as outlined by the President. We aim to create a unified platform where students, entrepreneurs, and researchers can experiment, collaborate, and pioneer breakthroughs in AI. The center aims to train 1,000 AI specialists annually, launch 100 startups, support 10 research projects, and engage 10,000 professionals by 2030 to strengthen Kazakhstan's position in the global AI industry.





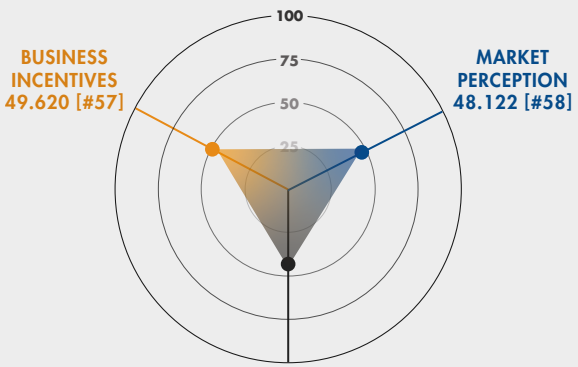
70. Cape Verde

GLOBAL RANK
#70

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#8

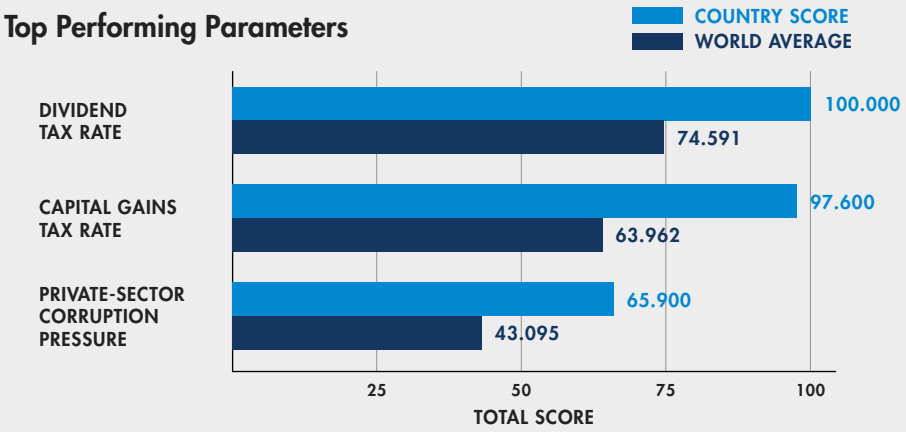
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
42.477 [#106]

Top Performing Parameters



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Cape Verde leads Africa in Business Incentives.

- Cape Verde ranks 1st in Western Africa in the IBEI, reflecting the highest overall business-environment assessment within the subregion.
- The country ranks 9th worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside South Korea, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.
- Cape Verde ranks 1st in Africa under the Business Incentives Pillar, indicating positively assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- The country ranks 1st in Western Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Cape Verde places 1st in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which indicates a positive assessment of tax-related conditions.
- At the Parameter level, Capital Gains Tax Rate, Dividend Tax Rate, and Private-Sector Corruption Pressure are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Cabo Verde's overall positioning.
- Overall, Cape Verde demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional performance in incentive-related and perception-based assessments, alongside well-evaluated digital conditions within Sub-Saharan Africa.

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Country Overview

Cape Verde's economic narrative is shaped around digital openness and the growth of a remote-work–friendly environment. Cape Verde's stable governance, reliable digital infrastructure, and a welcoming stance toward mobile professionals contributes to the global appeal of the country for founders who value geographic flexibility.

The business environment also includes a corporate tax system with meaningful incentives, particularly for companies that generate employment. While resident firms follow the standard corporate income tax framework, those that meet specific job-creation thresholds may qualify for substantially reduced rates. This approach introduces a competitive advantage for enterprises that invest in local employment and can materially lower the cost of operating for expanding firms.

Cape Verde's orientation toward innovation and digital enterprise is further supported by programs and institutions designed to strengthen the ecosystem. The digital nomad visa offers an accessible pathway for remote professionals, founders, and investors who work digitally, while Cabo Verde Digital provides guidance, incentives, and entry points into the national entrepreneurial landscape. Together, these elements shape a business environment defined by stable taxation, strong job-creation incentives, and openness to digital and location-independent work, making Cape Verde an appealing option for globally connected entrepreneurs.



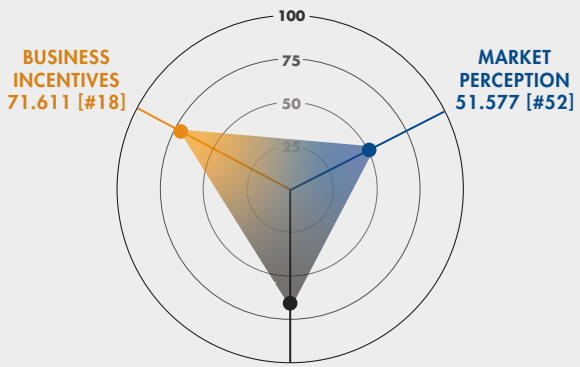
71. Kuwait

GLOBAL RANK
#71

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#9

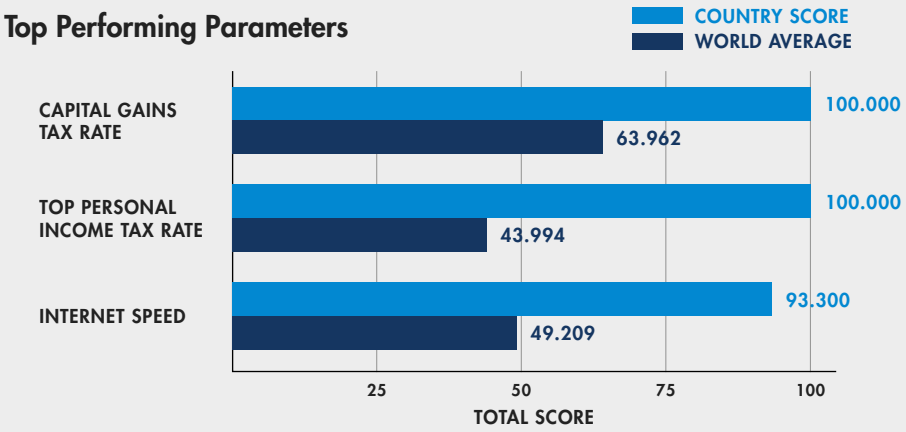
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
65.369 [#63]

Top Performing Parameters



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Kuwait ranks leads the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in Digital Infrastructure.

- Kuwait ranks 5th among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the IBEI 2026.
- Kuwait ranks higher in the IBEI than in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Kuwait ranks 4th globally and in GCC for the Taxation Functional Category, indicating a positive assessment of tax-related conditions.
- Kuwait ranks 1st in the GCC in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where Kuwait has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Internet Speed, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, and Credit Rating are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Kuwait's overall positioning.
- Overall, Kuwait demonstrates a business environment characterized by assessed financial-access conditions, solid digital infrastructure, and favorable tax-related parameters.

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Country Overview

Kuwait is a high-income economy with strong foundations, yet it still trails several regional peers in drawing in innovative foreign firms. Stability, clear regulation, and substantial public investment all work in its favour. Even so, a large share of the country's potential remains out of reach until more targeted business-environment reforms take hold.

Predictability has long defined Kuwait's business environment. Foreign-owned companies fall under a single corporate tax system, but investors can opt for a different route through the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA). Projects that meet its criteria can qualify for multi-year corporate tax exemptions and relief from customs duties on approved equipment. In return, firms commit to goals such as local hiring, skills transfer, or wider economic contribution. This creates a structured path for founders and investors who want to align their operations with national priorities.

Most foreign entrepreneurs enter the market through standard work- and residence-based channels tied to the companies they manage. KDIPA-licensed projects follow a more consolidated path, with procedures routed through a dedicated investment window that clarifies what is required for market entry.

New economic zones, planned in Al-Abdali, Al-Wafra, and Al-Na'ayem, add another layer to the strategy. These sites are designed to cluster industrial and commercial activity around shared infrastructure and tailored policies, complementing wider diversification efforts.

Kuwait now presents a business environment built on regulatory continuity, clear investment channels, and a widening network of support for entrepreneurs. With sharper reforms aimed at competitiveness and international appeal, the country could play a far stronger role in the region's emerging innovation economy.





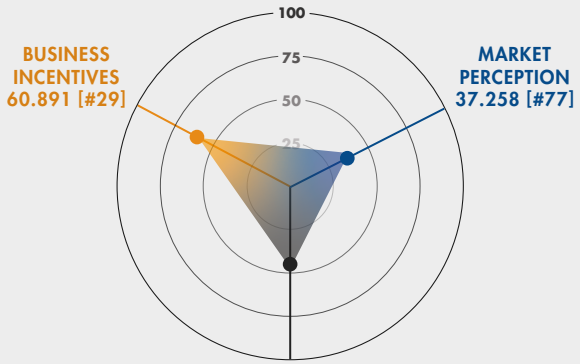
72. Bosnia and Herzegovina

GLOBAL RANK
#72

EUROPE RANK
#40

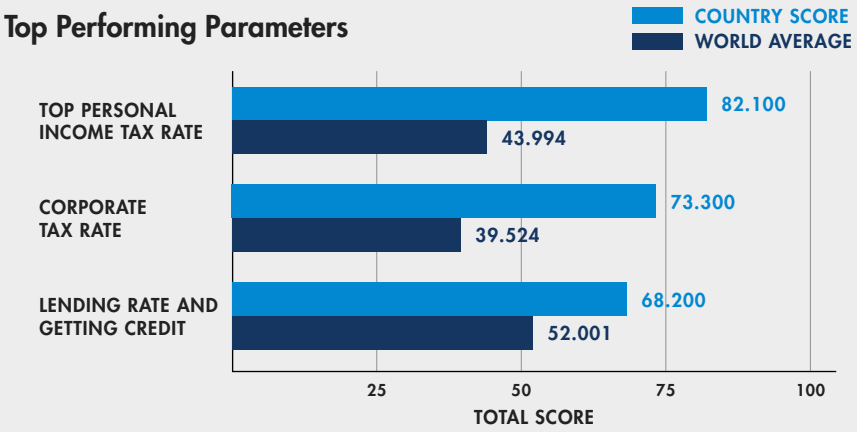
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
44.556 [#102]

Top Performing Parameters



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"Bosnia and Herzegovina has made it easier to do business by keeping taxes low, opening access to EU markets, and gradually improving support for start-ups and financing. Our strategic location, competitive costs, and skilled, adaptable workforce make the country attractive to innovators who value efficiency and resilience. While reforms continue, these fundamentals already create real opportunities for those ready to build and grow here."



Miron Lukač
Director,
Foundation 787

Bosnia and Herzegovina leads Europe in Taxation.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina ranks 10th in the Balkans in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- It ranks higher in the IBEI than in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina ranks 3rd in Southern Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the subregional level.

- The country ranks 7th globally, and 1st in Europe and the Balkans, in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where Bosnia and Herzegovina has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit, Corporate Tax Rate, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Bosnia and Herzegovina's overall positioning.
- Overall, Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong tax-related assessments and incentive conditions.

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Country Overview

Bosnia and Herzegovina's business environment has plenty of room for improvement, yet challenging political context slows decisions and complicates even basic reforms. The result is an economy that has ingredients for progress but has not yet turned them into sustained competitiveness. Entrepreneurship programmes and investment initiatives do exist, but they operate on the sides rather than as part of a unified strategy.

Founders who do choose to engage with the market often begin with a handful of institutions that help make sense of the business environment. The Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA) guides foreign firms through procedures and incentives, easing some of the uncertainty around market entry. International actors also play a meaningful role. The Swiss Entrepreneurship Program, for example, partners with local organizations to provide startups with improved programs, high-value services, strategic advice, and international connections.

The operating framework itself contains a few stable elements. Tax rules are straightforward, and free-zone arrangements offer certain industries a clearer regulatory setting. Early attempts to support technology-driven ventures are emerging as well. But these pieces remain more like foundations than a finished structure.

For Bosnia and Herzegovina to compete more effectively, deeper reform will be needed. Greater policy coherence, faster regulation, and more coordinated governance would allow the country to convert early signs of progress into a broader economic shift. Until then, its promise remains visible but not yet fully realised.

"Republika Srpska offers a favorable taxation system, quick company setup, and fast developing infrastructure. We are on the European Union border which gives easy access to european market as well as to the local resources and talent."



Milena Đuđić
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Banja Luka Region, Project Manager

Our Local Partner

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF BANJA LUKA REGION



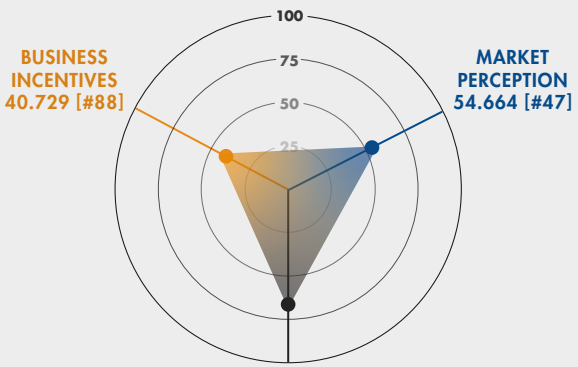
73. Costa Rica

GLOBAL RANK
#73

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#9

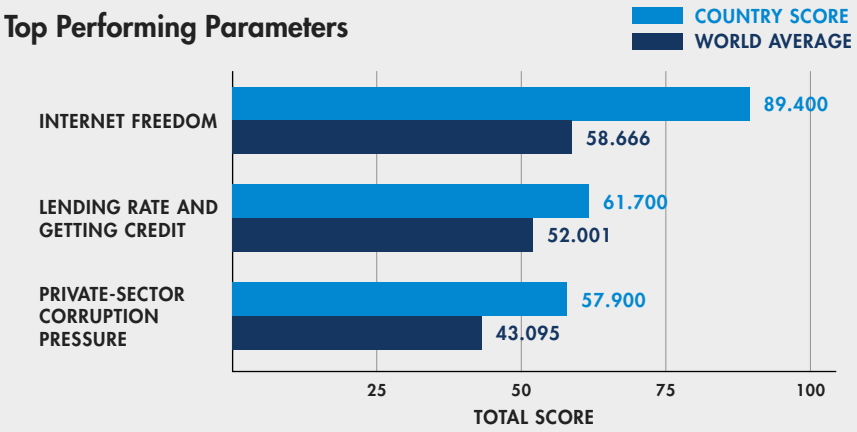
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
66.022 [#62]

Top Performing Parameters



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Costa Rica leads Central America in Digital Infrastructure.

- Costa Rica ranks 3rd in Central America in the IBEI, reflecting its position within the subregional business-environment landscape.
- The country places 4th in Latin America & the Caribbean under the Market Perception Pillar, indicating assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The Business Incentives Pillar, which assesses fiscal and financial incentive conditions, represents an area where Costa Rica has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- Costa Rica ranks 1st in Central America in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, indicating a positive assessment of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- Costa Rica ranks 2nd in Central America in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit and Internet Freedom are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Costa Rica's overall positioning.
- Overall, Costa Rica demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong digital infrastructure, positive perception-related assessments, and solid cross-border accessibility within Central America.

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Country Overview

Costa Rica's business environment is widely known for its decades of institutional consistency and a deliberate choice to pursue high-value exports rather than compete on low labour costs. Technology firms, advanced service providers, and life-science companies gravitated toward the country because they could rely on clear rules and a strong social and environmental framework. Those qualities have turned Costa Rica into a base for globally oriented businesses that want stability while serving international markets.

The Free Trade Zone regime offers a single structure that offers predictable, multi-year tax relief, lighter customs procedures, and a stable operating environment for companies that meet export requirements. Additionally, foreign entrepreneurs can benefit from the investor and rentista residence categories which let founders base themselves in the country while they build or scale a venture.

Several institutions keep this machinery moving. The Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency works with incoming firms and helps position the country within global supply and service networks. PROCOMER oversees the Free Trade Zone programme, leads export promotion, and runs initiatives that connect international companies with local suppliers and talent pools. Policy for emerging technologies comes from the Ministry of Science, Innovation, Technology and Telecommunications, while enterprise development and regulatory adjustments fall under the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce.

Costa Rica ultimately presents a business environment with a stable environment, a well-established export model, and the institutional support system functions with a level of coherence that benefits both long-standing investors and founders looking for a stable first base in the region.





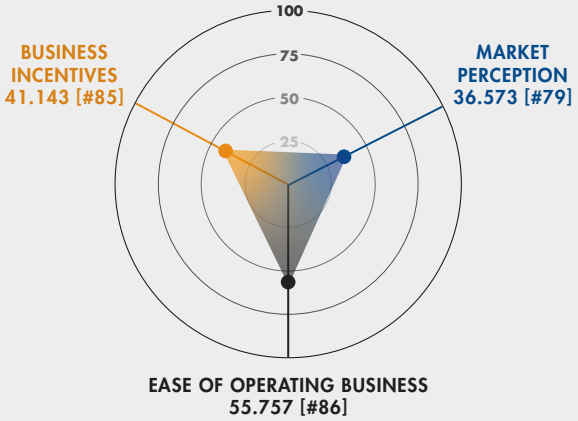
74. Azerbaijan

GLOBAL RANK
#74

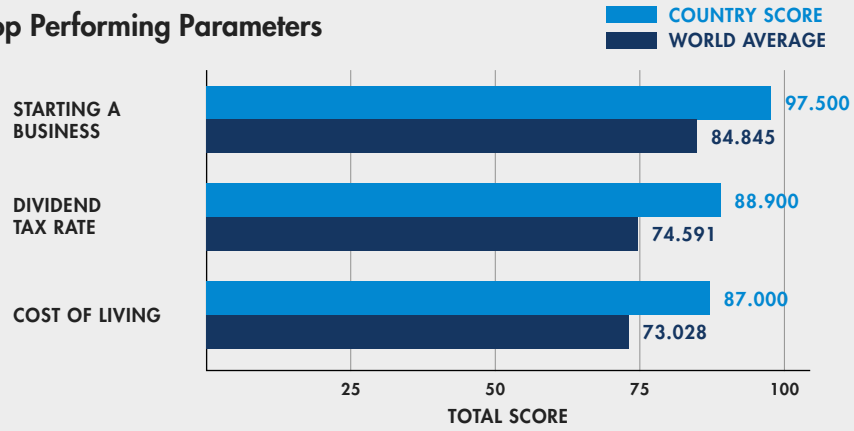
EUROPE RANK
#41

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Azerbaijan ranks 10th in Europe in Taxation.

- Azerbaijan ranks 3rd in the Caucasus in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Azerbaijan ranks 10th worldwide for the Rewards and Penalties mechanism of the Index, alongside Brazil and Azerbaijan, reflecting strong use of friction-reducing policy levers versus the existence of structural frictions in the business environment.
- The country ranks 2nd in the Caucasus and 10th in Europe in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related condition.
- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Azerbaijan's overall positioning.
- Overall, Azerbaijan demonstrates a business environment characterized by relatively frictionless operating conditions and comparatively well-assessed taxation performance within the Caucasus region.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Azerbaijan has entered a new phase of economic development. Digitalisation is advancing, diversification is gaining ground, and the country's profile abroad is expanding as these shifts take hold. The business climate now shows more efficiency, clearer rules, and a growing openness to innovation.

Digital governance drives much of this change. The Innovation and Digital Development Agency has pushed new tools into public administration, raised service quality, and strengthened the technological backbone that companies rely on. As these systems mature, firms experience a more streamlined relationship with the state.

Geography plays an important role in Azerbaijan's appeal as a business environment. Sitting on trade corridors that link Europe to Central Asia gives Azerbaijan natural reach into regional markets. Transport, logistics, and cross-border commerce benefit directly from this positioning. Smaller firms also find room to operate thanks to simplified frameworks designed to lower early barriers.

Energy still dominates the economic landscape. It anchors public finances and finances new sectors. Yet other parts of the economy are slowly gaining weight. Services, technology, and related activity show momentum, supported by an expanding pool of technically trained workers.

Administrative reforms continue to reshape daily business practice. ASAN Service has become the country's defining interface for government procedures, replacing older, fragmented systems. Broader e-government tools lighten routine compliance and make day-to-day operations more manageable for companies of all sizes.

Azerbaijan now combines a stronger digital base with strategic geography and a gradual turn toward a more diverse economy. How much of this potential becomes reality will depend on the pace and depth of the next stage of reform.





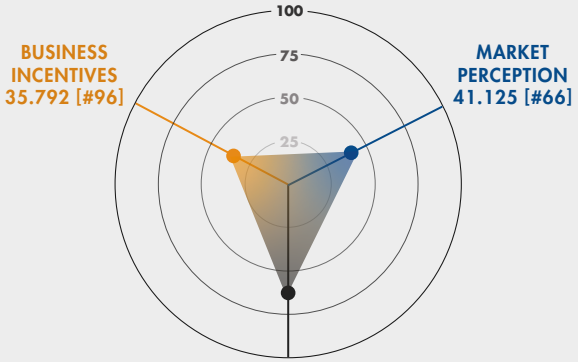
75. Argentina

GLOBAL RANK
#75

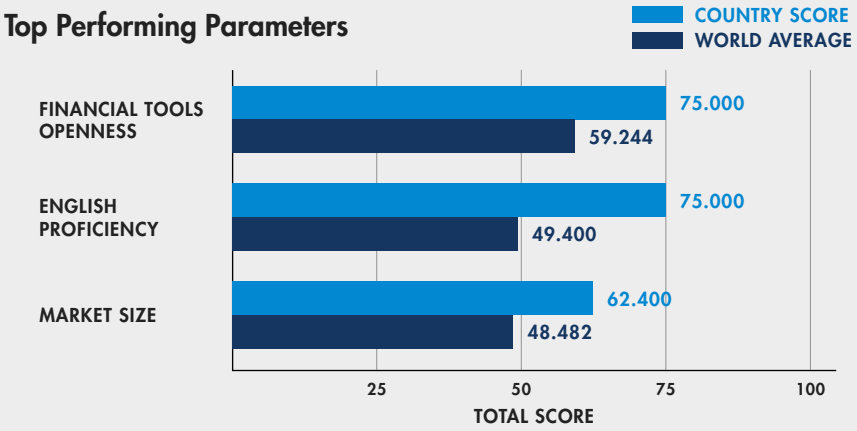
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#10

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Córdoba combines a strong network of universities and technological institutions with a rapidly expanding innovation ecosystem. A competitive cost of living attracts startups as well as regional and global talent. While industrial and knowledge economy clusters foster collaboration, the region's strategic location and conectivity facilitate business operations. The result is a dynamic, accesible environment, ideal for new ventures."



Hernán Perin
General Director of Govtech, CorLab - Córdoba's Laboratory of Public Innovation and Govtech

Argentina leads Latin America & the Caribbean in the Global Mobility & Openness.

- Argentina ranks 6th in South America in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Argentina ranks 6th in South America under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies within the region.
- Argentina ranks 1st in Latin America & the Caribbean in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.

- The country places 4th in South America in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category represents an area where Argentina has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Market Size is an inherent structural Parameter assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Argentina's overall positioning.
- Overall, Argentina demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong cross-border accessibility and scale-related structural advantages.

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Country Overview

Argentina's business landscape draws on several long-standing strengths: a large home market, deep technical expertise, and a digital-services sector that has expanded rapidly over the past decade. These factors give the country a broad base for innovation and help explain why many observers see room for Argentina to regain a stronger economic role in the region. Recent policy shifts have added a cautious sense of optimism as the government works to stabilise the rules of the game for investors and entrepreneurs.

Technology-driven firms now operate under a clearer framework than in the past. The Knowledge Economy Law is central to this change. It sets out consistent terms for companies involved in research, software, and other high-value activities. Rather than relying on a single incentive, the law creates a longer planning horizon for firms building advanced products and services.

A few cities carry much of this momentum. Buenos Aires remains the country's primary hub for digital services and entrepreneurial activity, while Córdoba and Mendoza have built strong communities in software, agriculture-tech, and applied research. Their concentration of talent and support organisations gives Argentina a set of regional innovation hotspots.

The country is now moving through one of its most significant economic adjustments in years. To convert this period into lasting gains, Argentina will need more focused reforms that reduce uncertainty and improve the operating climate. The underlying ingredients for progress are present, and the path forward depends on how effectively the country builds on them.

Our Local Partner

CorLab



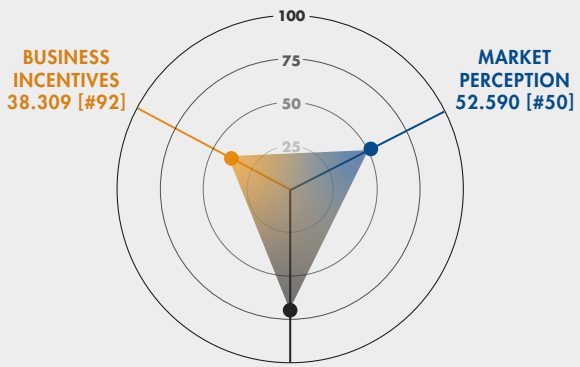
76. Jamaica

GLOBAL RANK
#76

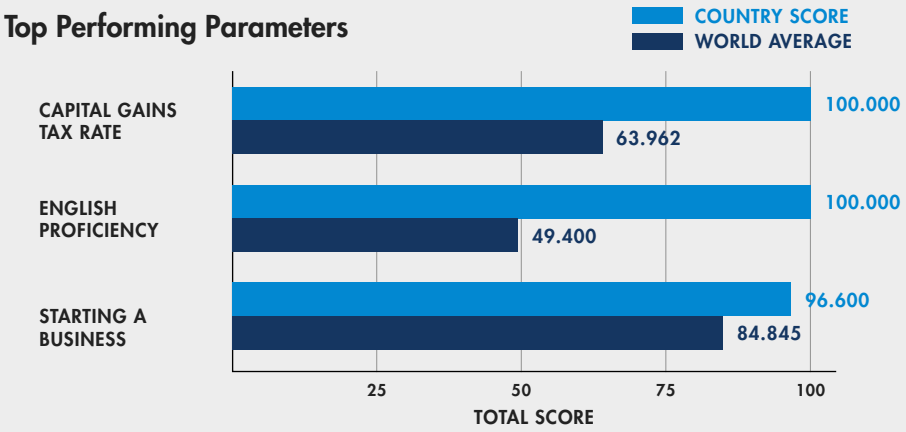
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#11

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Jamaica leads the Caribbean in Taxation.

- Jamaica ranks 2nd in the Caribbean in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- It ranks higher in the IBEI than in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Jamaica places 5th in Latin America & the Caribbean in the Market Perception Pillar, indicating comparatively favorable assessments related to trust, stability, and international accessibility.
- Jamaica ranks 1st in the Caribbean in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The country also ranks 1st in the Caribbean in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which evaluates cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Jamaica has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business, Capital Gains Tax Rate, and English Proficiency are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Jamaica's overall positioning.
- Overall, Jamaica demonstrates a business environment characterized by competitive tax conditions and strong cross-border accessibility.

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Country Overview

Jamaica's business environment is going through a phase of institutional modernization and an expanding set of tools that support entrepreneurship, investment, and sector development. Its position connecting North and South America, combined with English-speaking talent and one of the region's most active service and logistics hubs, gives the country a solid foundation within the Caribbean.

Special Economic Zones offer reduced tax rates, duty exemptions, and customs advantages for eligible firms, supporting activity across logistics, manufacturing, agribusiness, tourism, and renewable energy. Incentives such as the Productive Inputs Relief Regime and employment tax credits complement this structure, while JAMPRO provides guidance for both domestic and foreign investors. Company establishment has become more accessible through streamlined procedures, including the Registrar of Companies' consolidated "Super Form" for incorporation.

A broader institutional network backs the business environment. The Development Bank of Jamaica supports enterprise capability through its Strategic Services Department, which provides research, product-development support, analytics, and stakeholder engagement. Its Voucher for Technical Assistance programme helps firms access advisory services and BIGEE program strengthens entrepreneurship and SME growth.

Jamaica holds one of the stronger positions in the Caribbean, and ongoing regulatory and digital modernization would further enhance its competitiveness as a destination for founders and internationally engaged firms.





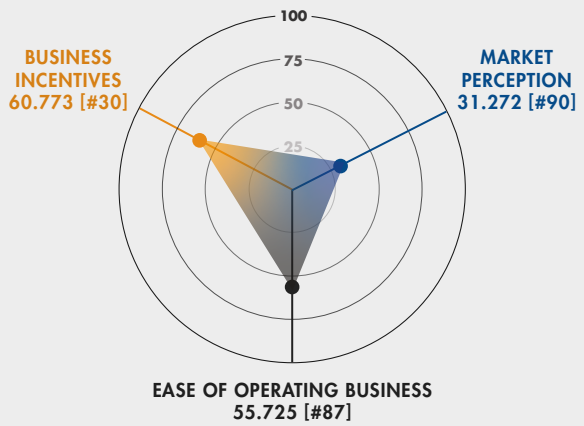
77. Jordan

GLOBAL RANK
#77

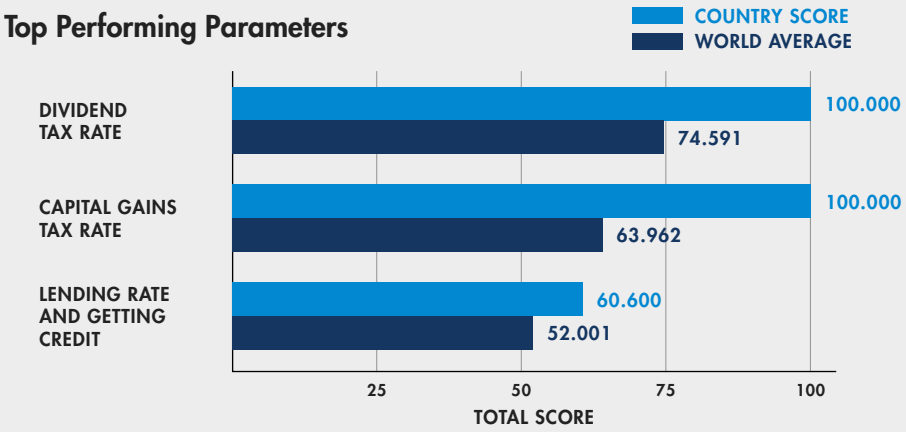
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#10

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Jordan ranks 5th in the Middle East in Digital Infrastructure.

- Jordan ranks 7th in the Middle East in the IBEI, reflecting its position within the regional business-environment landscape.
- Jordan's position in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 is higher than its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- Jordan places 7th in the Arab League under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- The Market Perception Pillar, which captures assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility, represents an area where Jordan has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- The country ranks 5th in the Middle East in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- At the Parameter level, Capital Gains Tax Rate and Dividend Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Jordan's overall positioning.
- Overall, Jordan demonstrates a business environment characterized by solid digital infrastructure performance and competitive tax-related parameters.

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Country Overview

Jordan has been steadily shaping a business environment that feels both stable and forward-looking. Strong public institutions and a highly capable workforce form the backbone of this system. Employers often point to the country's education levels, language skills, and adaptability as reasons why service and knowledge-based industries thrive here. This foundation has allowed Jordan to maintain consistent economic policy and offer investors a setting where the rules do not shift overnight.

Its geography adds another layer to the story. Positioned at the meeting point of the Levant, the Gulf, North Africa, and Europe, Jordan functions as a natural link between several major markets. Companies that want regional reach often choose it for that reason alone. Free trade agreements with the United States, the European Union, and Arab markets widen the country's commercial horizon and give exporters direct access to millions of consumers.

A different type of momentum is taking shape in the digital economy. Jordan's ICT sector is among the strongest in the Middle East and benefits from widespread internet use, reliable digital infrastructure, and a government that continues to expand e-services. These conditions have helped build a lively startup ecosystem that cuts across finance, education, logistics, and other fast-growing fields. At the same time, Jordan is pushing deeper into renewable energy and environmental sustainability, signalling a long-term view of resilience and competitiveness.

Jordan's continued focus on modernization and openness gives it a strong platform for the next phase of innovation-driven growth.





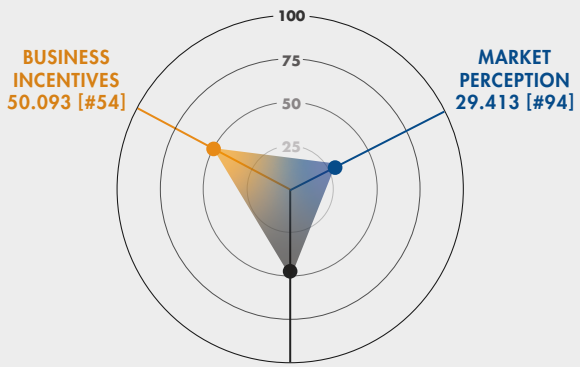
78. Uzbekistan

GLOBAL RANK
#78

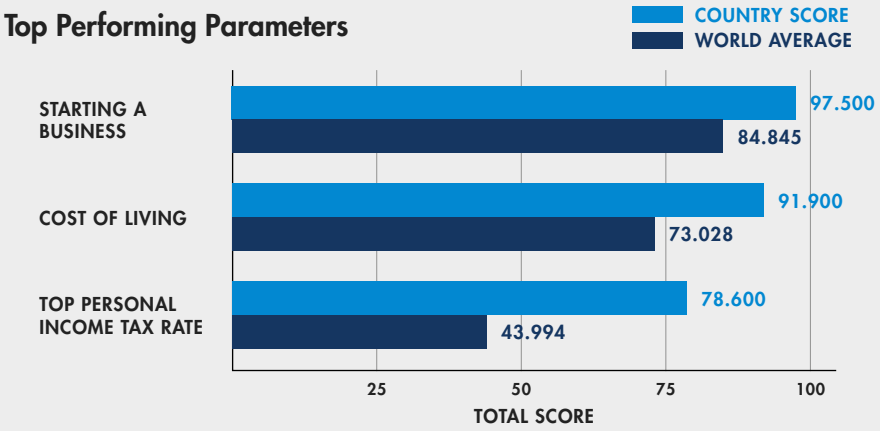
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#14

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Uzbekistan ranks 2nd in Central Asia in Regulation & Governance.

- Uzbekistan ranks 2nd in Central Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Uzbekistan's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions alongside a fast-growing startup ecosystem.
- The country ranks 3rd under the Business Incentives Pillar within the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) region, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- Uzbekistan ranks 2nd in Central Asia in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- The country places 5th in Asia in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate, Starting a Business, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Uzbekistan's overall positioning.
- Overall, Uzbekistan demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional incentive and governance assessments, competitive taxation performance within Asia.

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Country Overview

Uzbekistan is restructuring its economic and business environment, steadily dismantling long-standing barriers that once slowed companies down. The momentum is clear: the country has become one of the region's most determined reformers.

Tax policy is moving in a supportive direction with new measures to ease the shift into the VAT system, giving young companies time to stabilise and reinvest before taking on larger obligations. It is a practical step that signals a broader commitment to lower the barriers for starting a business.

IT Park Uzbekistan has become the country's main supporter of technology companies, offering tax exemption, acceleration, and advisory support to its residents. It also manages the IT Visa, which gives foreign founders, specialists, and investors a clear route to live and work in Uzbekistan. The Digital Startups Program widens access to funding and lowers operating costs for emerging firms. Co-investment options invite foreign venture funds into the market, while accelerators, incubators, and training programmes help founders build capability quickly. These tools are expanding the country's innovation pipeline and giving tech entrepreneurs more confidence as they grow.

Administrative modernisation is advancing alongside these efforts. Upcoming changes to business registration aim to remove redundant steps and bring more transparency into routine procedures. The broader goal is straightforward: make public services operate with the same clarity and pace that founders expect in a modern economy.

Uzbekistan's reform momentum is strong, and the country is positioning itself as one of Central Asia's most promising locations for innovation-driven firms.

Our Local Partner

IT PARK UZBEKISTAN

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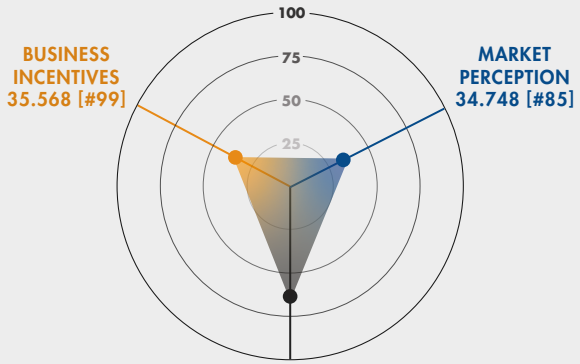
79. El Salvador

GLOBAL RANK
#79

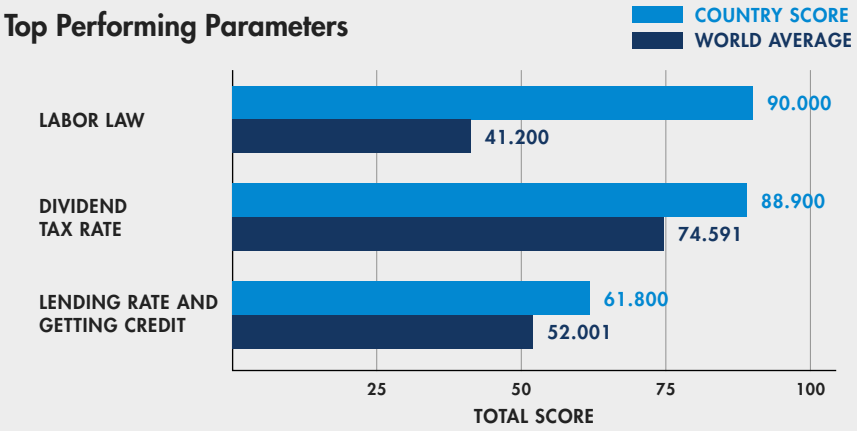
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#12

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"We are consolidating an ecosystem where entrepreneurs can innovate fearlessly, scale globally, and find in El Salvador a committed partner for their growth."



María Luisa Hayem Brevé
Minister of Economy
of El Salvador

El Salvador leads Central America in Global Mobility & Openness.

- El Salvador ranks 4th in Central America and 13th in Latin America & the Caribbean in the IBEI 2026.
- El Salvador ranks 1st in Central America in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The country places 4th in Central America in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where El Salvador has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.

- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit is assessed within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, El Salvador demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong cross-border accessibility and solid capital-access conditions within Central America, alongside scope for further development in regulatory and governance-related performance.

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Country Overview

El Salvador's business landscape is built on a mix of stability and gradual modernization. Dollarization gives the country a consistent monetary base, removing exchange-rate uncertainty for companies that operate across borders. With public security improving, the overall environment has become easier to navigate, and planning for the medium term has become more realistic for investors and entrepreneurs.

Digital-asset legislation is now part of the country's economic framework, reflecting an interest in bringing new financial technologies into a structured setting. The legal clarity around this area has drawn attention from groups that look for jurisdictions willing to accommodate emerging industries.

Free zones form an important part of the business landscape, offering tax incentives and streamlined procedures for export-focused firms. These areas give manufacturers and service providers direct pathways into regional and North American value chains. Institutional support from the Ministry of Economy, BANDESAL, and Invest in El Salvador adds more depth, helping firms understand available incentives, secure financing, and organize their growth plans in a clearer way.

The country's trajectory is positive, but the next stage will benefit from reforms aimed at high-growth companies and founders who build businesses that operate beyond national borders. Additional modernization of the business environment would help translate current momentum into a stronger, more competitive setting for innovation-driven activity.



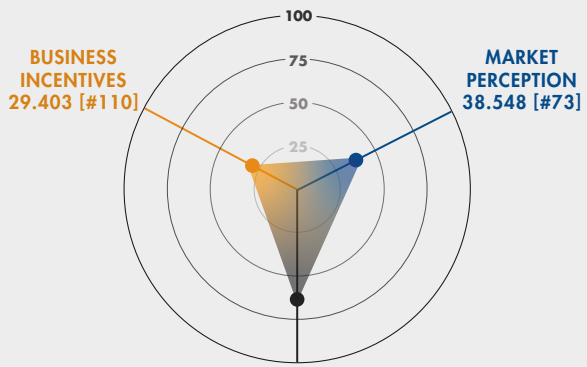
80. Morocco

GLOBAL RANK
#80

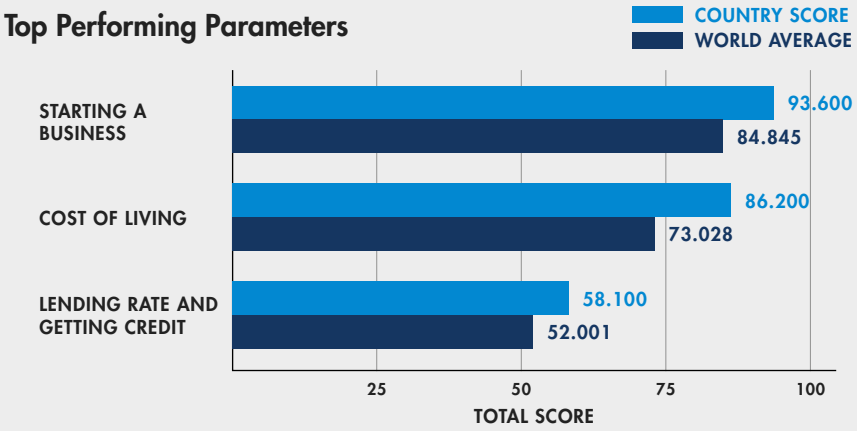
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#11

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Morocco leads Northern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Morocco ranks 1st in Northern Africa in the IBEI, reflecting the strongest overall business-environment assessment within its subregion.
- Morocco's position in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment relative to startup ecosystem outcomes.
- Morocco ranks 2nd in Africa under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- The Business Incentives Pillar, which evaluates fiscal and financial incentive conditions, represents an area where Morocco has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- The country ranks 1st in Northern Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- At the Parameter level, Lending and Getting Credit, Cost of Living, and Starting a Business Openness stand out as the strongest Parameters of the country where it scores between 50-75%.
- Overall, Morocco demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional accessibility, favorable tax-related parameters, and well-assessed operational conditions across Northern Africa.

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Country Overview

Morocco's economic direction has been shaped by decades of diversification, long-term industrial planning, and a strategy that positions the country as a bridge between European and African markets. Large-scale initiatives such as Generation Green 2020–2030 and Digital Morocco 2030 signal a continued orientation toward structural reform, improved productivity, and a more modern digital state. For innovators assessing regional bases, this combination of clear planning and geographic connectivity has become an important part of the country's identity.

A central pillar of Morocco's offer is the development of strategic platforms that support industrial activity and cross-border expansion. Casablanca Finance City plays a prominent role as a financial and corporate hub for firms looking toward African markets, while the Tanger Med port and industrial complex has grown into one of the region's leading logistics corridors. Additional industrial and technology zones across Casablanca, Kenitra, Nouaceur, and Oujda provide modern infrastructure and regulatory predictability that appeal to companies operating in export-oriented and manufacturing-led sectors.

Institutional support is provided through a broad network of national organisations. The Moroccan Agency for Investment and Export Development coordinates investment promotion and serves as a single point of contact for international companies. Maroc PME implements programmes that help small and medium-sized firms upgrade capabilities and expand commercially. The Agence de Développement du Digital leads national digital transformation efforts, while Technopark operates a network of innovation spaces that connect companies with services and sector partners.

Together, Morocco's long-term planning, strategic position between continents, and coordinated institutional landscape form an operating environment that offers clarity and direction for innovators evaluating opportunities in North and West Africa.





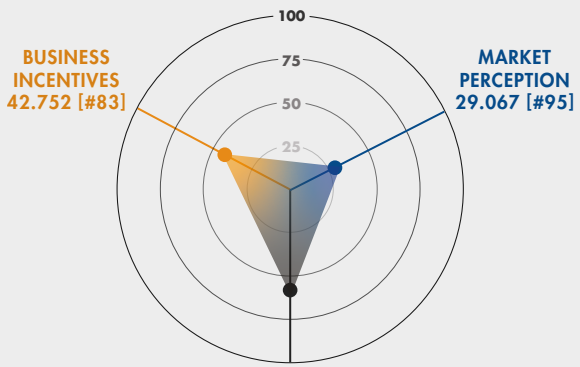
81. Côte d'Ivoire

GLOBAL RANK
#81

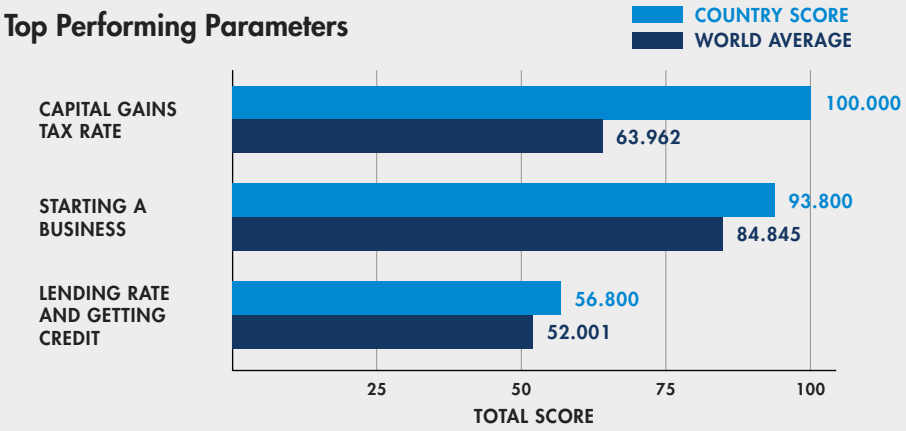
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#12

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Côte d'Ivoire leads Western Africa in Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure.

- Côte d'Ivoire ranks 2nd in Western Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- The country ranks higher in IBEI compared to its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment relative to startup ecosystem outcomes.
- The country ranks 1st in Western Africa in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- The country also ranks 3rd in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which evaluates cross-border accessibility and international movement, represents an area where Côte d'Ivoire has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Capital Gains Tax Rate is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Côte d'Ivoire's overall positioning.
- Overall, Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional access to capital, competitive tax-related performance, and solid incentive conditions within Western Africa.

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Country Overview

Côte d'Ivoire is charting an economic path built on diversification and its position as one of West Africa's most important commercial hubs. This long-term orientation has brought steady investment in infrastructure, digital services, and administrative reform. As a result, the country is becoming more attractive to innovators looking for a strategic base in the region.

One of the most notable developments is the use of free zone frameworks to nurture technology-driven activity. The VITIB Free Trade Zone in Grand-Bassam functions as a dedicated technology park with fiscal incentives and streamlined customs procedures. Companies that depend on reliable infrastructure and predictable rules often gravitate toward this environment. The zone signals Côte d'Ivoire's ambition to host firms serving both regional and international markets.

The national Investment Code reinforces this direction. It offers tax relief and administrative simplifications for projects in priority sectors, lowering early operating costs and giving firms more room to reinvest. At the same time, the push to digitise company registration and licensing is reducing friction for new and expanding businesses.

Institutional support adds structure to this landscape. The Investment Promotion Center acts as the main point of contact for local and foreign investors and coordinates access to incentive programmes. Agence Côte d'Ivoire PME helps smaller firms build capability through advisory services and training. VITIB, which manages the Grand-Bassam zone, provides tailored assistance for companies working in information technology and digital services.

Côte d'Ivoire now offers a business environment shaped by stable governance, focused free zone incentives, and a clearer institutional framework. For founders looking at West Africa, the country provides defined procedures, predictable investment rules, and dedicated platforms suited to technology and service-based ventures.



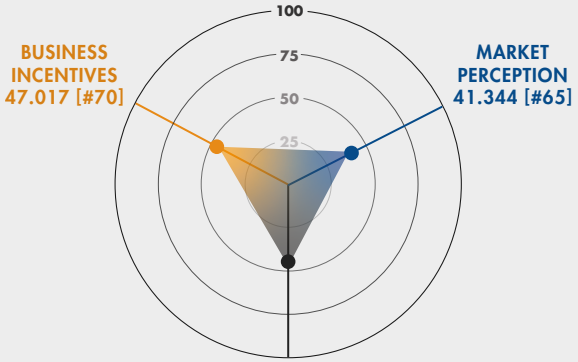
82. Paraguay

GLOBAL RANK
#82

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#13

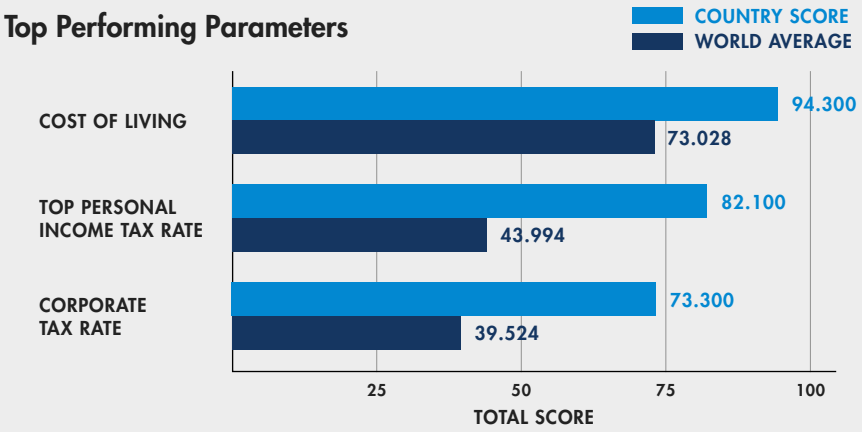
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
43.971 [#104]

Top Performing Parameters



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Paraguay leads Latin America & the Caribbean in Taxation.

- Paraguay ranks 7th in South America in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Paraguay's position in IBEI is higher compared to its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment relative to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- The country ranks 4th in South America under the Market Perception Pillar, indicating comparatively favorable assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The country ranks 1st in Latin America & the Caribbean in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions including corporate, personal, and capital taxation.
- Paraguay also ranks 3rd in Latin America & the Caribbean in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which evaluates cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- Paraguay's Regulation & Governance Functional Category ranking highlights an area with scope for further improvement relative to its overall Index position.
- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate and Cost of Living are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Paraguay's overall positioning.
- Overall, Paraguay demonstrates a business environment characterized by highly competitive tax conditions and strong regional openness.

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Country Overview

Paraguay has rapidly gained visibility as an accessible base for internationally mobile founders, attracting a growing number of expats and entrepreneurs. Its business environment is shaped by low taxation, a territorial tax system, and straightforward residency options, which together position the country as a cost-efficient operational hub in South America.

Corporate and personal tax obligations are comparatively light, and the territorial model limits taxation to income generated within Paraguay. This structure appeals to founders and investors with international revenue streams seeking predictable and flexible planning conditions.

Residency procedures further reinforce Paraguay's attractiveness. Foreign entrepreneurs can obtain permanent residency by establishing or investing in a business, allowing company formation and residency to be completed within a unified administrative process.

A range of incentive regimes supports export-oriented activity. Free Zones, the Maquila Law, and related programmes offer reduced or exempted taxes for qualifying manufacturing, processing, and service operations. These tools have helped Paraguay punch above its economic weight, drawing interest from firms looking for competitive operating costs and access to regional markets.

Institutional support comes from the Directorate General of Migration, which oversees investor-linked residency procedures, and REDIEX, the national investment and export agency. Their promotion efforts have contributed to Paraguay's growing reputation as an emerging hotspot for relocation and business formation.

Overall, Paraguay combines low taxation, business-linked residency, and clear incentive structures, making it an increasingly notable destination for founders seeking a straightforward and internationally oriented environment.





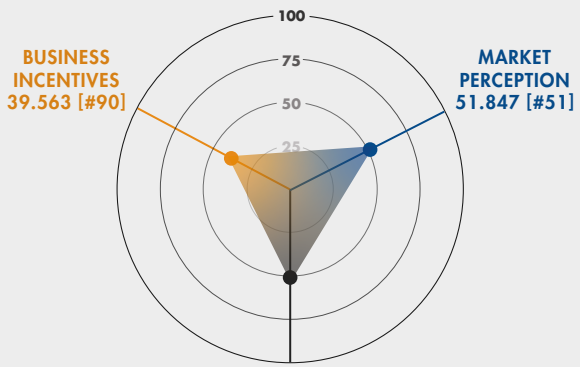
83. Namibia

GLOBAL RANK
#83

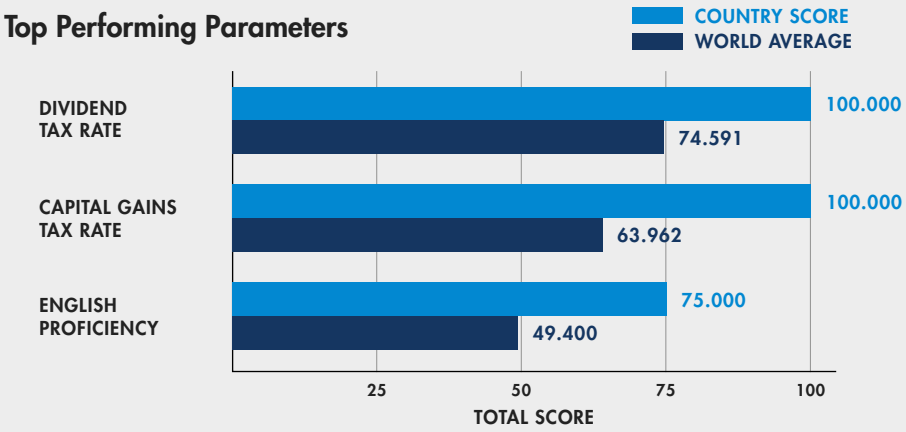
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#13

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Namibia is prioritising an enabling environment for founders and innovators by widening access to funding, strengthening coordination, expanding digital services and deepening links to regional markets. As a country, our focus on sport and the creative and cultural industries is opening new pathways for enterprise growth. A sustainable economy requires continuous innovation, where we collectively build solutions across both established and emerging sectors."



Dino Ballotti
Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture

Namibia leads Africa in Market Perception.

- Namibia ranks 2nd in Southern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index.
- Namibia's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- Namibia also places 1st in Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, indicating favorable regional assessments related to governance, stability, and international accessibility.

- The country ranks 1st in Southern Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The country ranks 3rd in Sub-Saharan Africa and Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which evaluates cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Namibia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Capital Gains Tax Rate is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Namibia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Namibia demonstrates a business environment characterized by competitive taxation performance, strong regional perception, and solid cross-border accessibility within Southern Africa.

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Country Overview

Namibia's business environment is shaped by stable institutions and a policy framework that does not shift abruptly. Firms operating in the country can generally plan around clear rules and a predictable administrative setting.

Mining is a central part of the economy, with long-standing operations in diamonds, uranium, and other minerals. Alongside this, there is increasing activity in renewable energy, especially green hydrogen, supported by government efforts to attract investment into large-scale projects. These developments add new sectors to the economic landscape without replacing established ones.

Infrastructure forms another part of the operating environment. The Port of Walvis Bay provides a direct route to regional markets and functions as a logistical entry point for firms trading within the southern African region. Regional integration through SACU and SADC offers structured access to surrounding economies, allowing goods to move across borders under agreed rules.

Some organizations that are working towards enhancing the business environment include the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board which assists investors with procedures and sector requirements. Development-focused financial institutions offer additional tools for firms seeking capital. While the overall environment is steady, further reducing administrative complexity and expanding support for firms aiming to grow would help strengthen the country's broader business climate.

Our Local Partner

Republic of Namibia
Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts & Culture



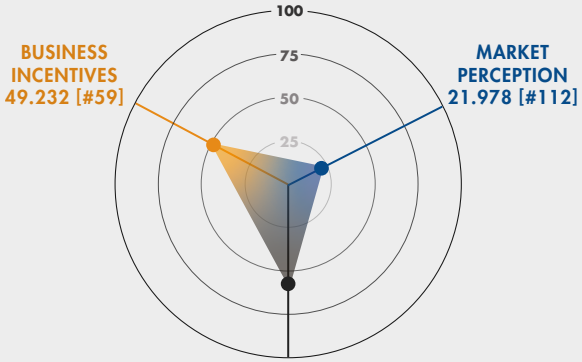
84. Kyrgyzstan

GLOBAL RANK
#84

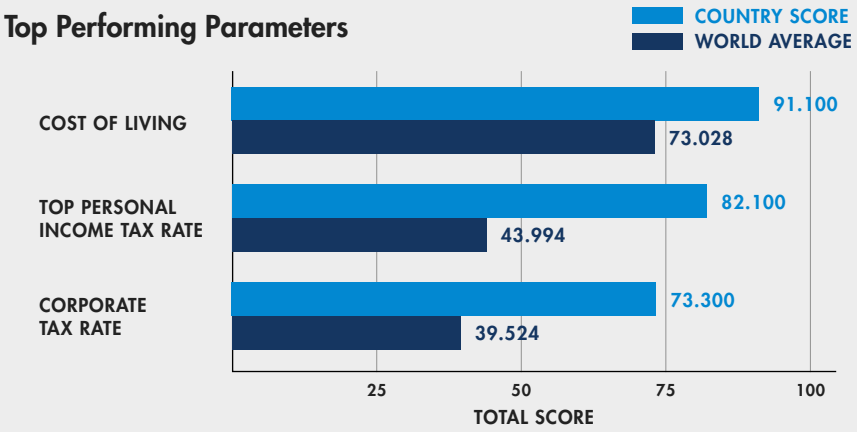
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#15

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Kyrgyzstan leads Asia Pacific in Taxation.

- Kyrgyzstan ranks 3rd in Central Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- It also places 2nd in Central Asia under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- The Market Perception Pillar, which captures assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility, represents an area where Kyrgyzstan has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- Kyrgyzstan ranks 1st in Asia Pacific in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- Kyrgyzstan ranks 2nd in Central Asia in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which evaluates cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The country ranks 3rd in Central Asia in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate, Dividend Tax Rate, and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Kyrgyzstan's overall positioning.
- Overall, Kyrgyzstan demonstrates a business environment shaped by competitive taxation conditions, solid regional openness, and supportive operating conditions within Central Asia.

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Country Overview

Kyrgyzstan has an investment-oriented policy framework built around low taxes and legal provisions intended to protect foreign capital. The environment is arranged to make market entry straightforward for international entrepreneurs while allowing space for the local innovation ecosystem to develop.

Foreign founders can apply for the Investment Visa, a residence category linked to a minimum investment amount in the domestic economy. This option offers a defined path for relocation for individuals planning to establish or expand business activity in the country.

Investment rules are outlined in the Law on Investments, which sets guarantees for foreign capital and establishes equal treatment for domestic and international investors. The framework is meant to provide predictable conditions for long-term planning and reduce uncertainty for firms assessing opportunities in the market.

Several institutions work within the innovation and technology sector. The High Technology Park of the Kyrgyz Republic offers a structured environment for IT-oriented companies, and the Investment Council under the Cabinet of Ministers provides a platform for private-sector input on regulatory matters. These organisations contribute to adjustments in the broader business climate.

The overall setting combines low tax obligations, a legal structure with defined protections for foreign investors, and institutional mechanisms that aim to support entrepreneurial activity.



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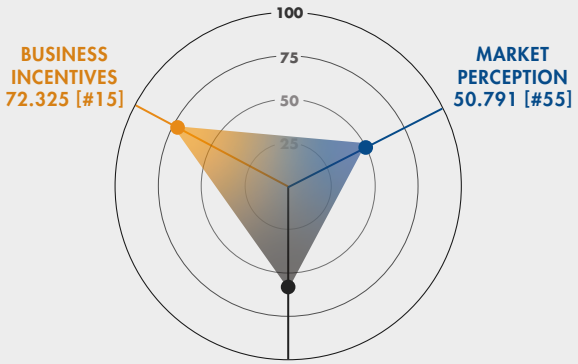
85. China

GLOBAL RANK
#85

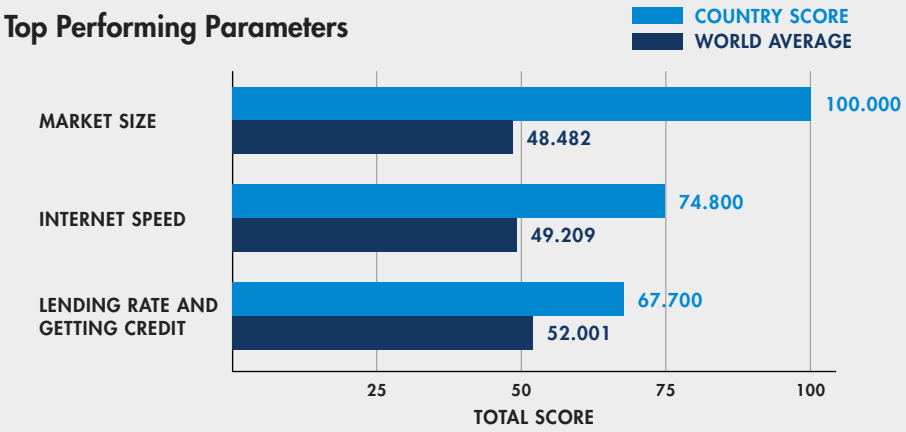
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#16

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"The Covid lockdown inevitably caused the business environment to deteriorate for about 3 years but the business sentiment is finally showing signs of improvement. Investors can look forward to more industries posting stronger earnings this year."



Wong Kok Hoi
Founder, Executive Chairman & Chief Strategist, APS Asset Management

China leads Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation countries in Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure.

- China ranks 4th in East Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- China ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger evaluations of its startup ecosystem alongside broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 2nd under the Market Perception Pillar within the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) region, reflecting assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The country places 1st in Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) region under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions.

- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where China has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Funding per Capita, Lending Rate & Getting Credit, and Credit Rating are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, while Market Size is an inherent structural Parameter, contributing to China's overall positioning.
- Overall, China demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong capital-access conditions and scale-related structural advantages.

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Country Overview

China's business environment rests on large-scale industry, dense supply chains, and decades of coordinated state planning. Continuous investment in transport, manufacturing capacity, and digital systems has created an economy that functions at global scale and offers a stable operating base for firms across major regions.

The domestic market drives much of the country's economic momentum. Massive demand, abundant technical talent, and rapid production cycles allow companies to move from development to commercialization faster than in most economies. This combination explains China's central role in global manufacturing and technology.

Innovation is concentrated in a handful of major hubs. Shenzhen focuses on hardware and advanced manufacturing. Shanghai blends finance, technology, and international commerce. Beijing anchors research and deep-tech activity. Hangzhou stands out in digital services and platform businesses. Hong Kong links China to global markets. These clusters form the core of China's modern innovation system.

Experimentation is built into the policy framework. Free Trade Zones and municipal pilot areas test reforms in trade, investment rules, financial openness, and digital administration. National strategies continue to push for technological upgrading and industrial modernization. Fiscal incentives, research funding, and dedicated capital-market platforms support these aims.

Foreign founders face a different business environment. Market entry can be complex, and regulatory structures often favor enterprises with established local footprints. Hong Kong remains a key interface for international firms, yet broader openness would expand China's appeal as a global hub.

China's industrial scale, coordinated planning, and network of innovation-heavy cities give it lasting economic influence. Modernization in these areas will determine how the country evolves as a centre of production, technology development, and long-term economic activity.

Our Local Partner

APS
Since 1995



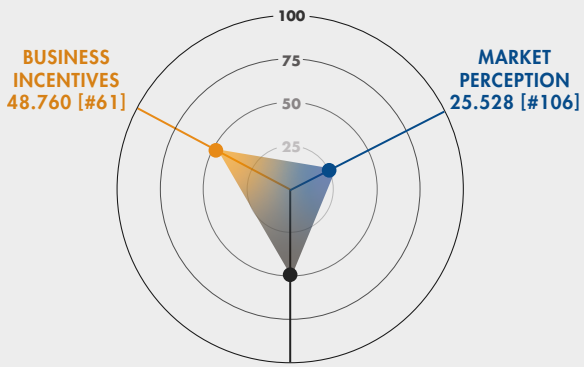
86. Ecuador

GLOBAL RANK
#86

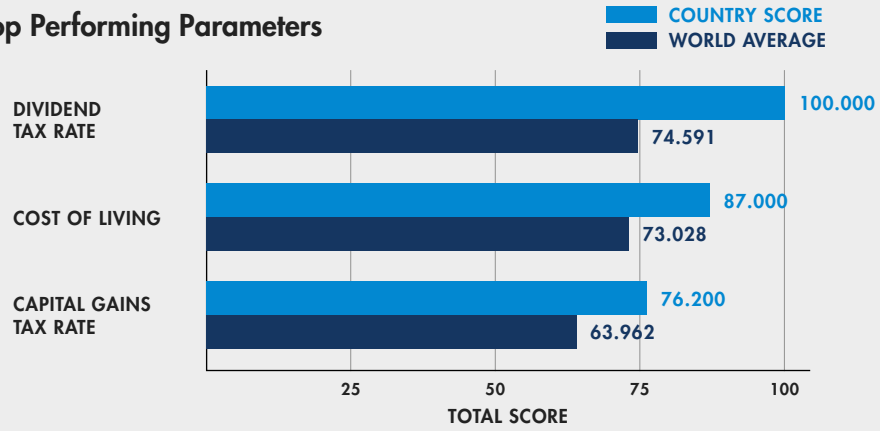
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#14

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Ecuador ranks 4th in Latin America & the Caribbean in Business Incentives.

- Ecuador ranks 8th in South America in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Ecuador's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- The country places 4th in Latin America & the Caribbean under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- Ecuador ranks 6th in Latin America & the Caribbean in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where Ecuador has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Dividend Tax Rate is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Ecuador's overall positioning.
- Overall, Ecuador demonstrates a business environment characterized by competitive tax-related conditions and supportive incentive assessments within Latin America.

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Country Overview

Ecuador's business environment is shaped by investment-oriented policies and the growing importance of Free Trade Zones. The country has focused on creating a predictable framework for new investment, supporting business formation and cross-border commercial activity. These features form a central part of Ecuador's economic positioning.

Corporate taxation follows a structured system with differentiated obligations depending on a company's profile. New investments can qualify for reduced commitments under defined conditions, making taxation a relevant consideration for capital-intensive projects.

Relief for investors is delivered through mechanisms linked to investment activity. The special economic zone system and the public-private partnership decree classify national and foreign investors as eligible for exemptions from several taxes and duties. These incentives reduce operational costs and support long-term economic commitments.

Entrepreneurs and investors may use the temporary investor residence permit, the Residencia Temporal Inversionista, which provides a residence pathway for individuals who invest in qualifying assets or approved ventures.

Free Trade Zones form a significant component of Ecuador's strategy. These zones offer rules-based relief on taxes and duties, and the Investment Law, the Ley Orgánica para el Desarrollo Económico y Sostenibilidad Fiscal, expanded access so domestic and foreign investors receive equal treatment.

A range of institutions supports the business environment. The Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fisheries oversees investment policy and the Free Trade Zone framework. PRO ECUADOR provides export and investment promotion services. IMPAQTO operates a leading hub and incubation network, while Kruger Labs functions as a corporate-backed accelerator offering structured support to startups.

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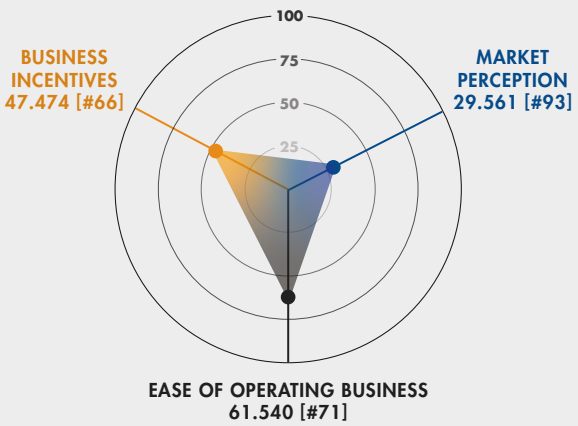
87. Tunisia

GLOBAL RANK
#87

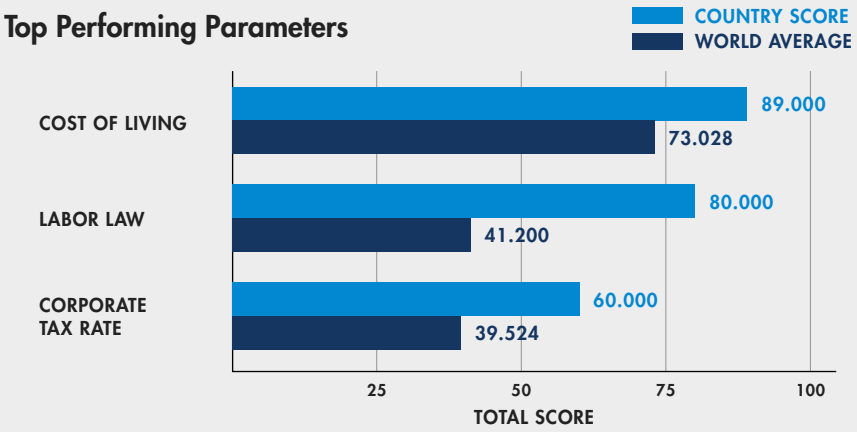
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#14

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Tunisia leads Northern Africa in Business Incentives.

- Tunisia ranks 2nd in Northern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- The country ranks 1st in Northern Africa under the Business Incentives Pillar, indicating positively assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the subregional level.
- Tunisia places 1st in Northern Africa in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- The country also ranks 1st in Northern Africa in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category highlights an area with scope for further improvement relative to Tunisia's overall Index performance.
- At the Parameter level, Corporate Tax Rate and Cost of Living are assessed within the top 25% of the Index contributing positively to Tunisia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Tunisia demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional incentive and governance assessments.

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Country Overview

Tunisia has steadily built a reputation for structured innovation policy, anchored in long-running reforms that give clarity to technology-minded founders and investors. The country's national strategy links digital development with predictable rules for company formation, creating an environment that is increasingly oriented toward early-stage enterprise building.

At the centre of this framework is the Startup Act, one of Tunisia's most internationally recognized policy initiatives. The Act grants accredited companies a full exemption from corporate taxation during the accreditation period and unlocks additional advantages, including foreign-currency accounts, simplified import rules, and streamlined administrative procedures. For founders developing new products or business models, this regime remains one of the country's most distinctive structural features.

Foreign entrepreneurs follow standard residence and work-permit channels when establishing local operations, aligning Tunisia's administrative pathways with broader regional practice. This approach supports cross-border activity while leaving the core incentives attached to the accredited company itself.

The wider innovation landscape is supported by institutions that ensure coherence between policy and implementation. The Ministry of Communication Technologies oversees the Startup Act and its accreditation process. Startup Tunisia manages programs linked to the Act, including the ANAVA fund, which provides financing instruments for young companies. The Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations works with international partners on initiatives that expand access to capital, while the Agency for the Promotion of Industry and Innovation maintains a nationwide network for entrepreneurial support. Flat6Labs Tunis adds further structure through accelerator programmes and guidance for early-stage teams.

These elements reflect a business environment built on clear legislation, operational predictability, and a sustained commitment to fostering innovation-led enterprise across Tunisia.

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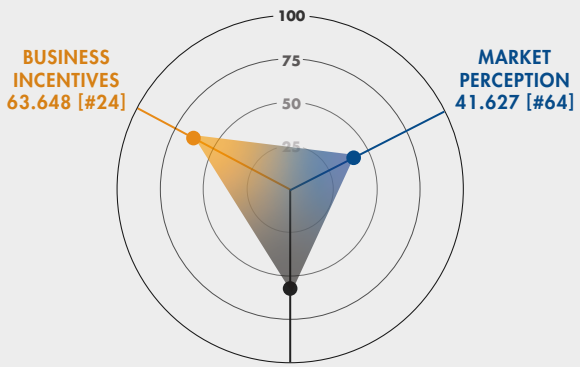
88. Oman

GLOBAL RANK
#88

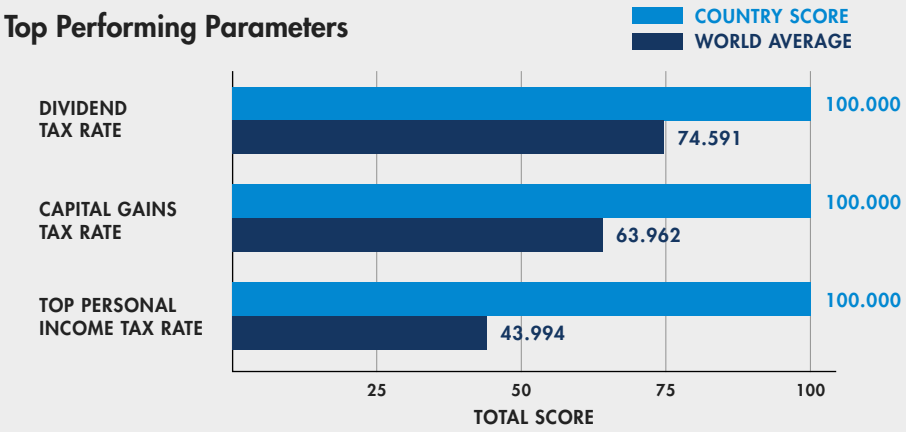
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#15

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Oman ranks 4th in the World in Taxation.

- Oman ranks 6th in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and 9th in the Arab League in the IBEI 2026.
- Oman's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- The country ranks 6th in the Arab League under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The country places 4th globally in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- Oman also ranks 5th in the GCC in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- The Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement, represents an area where Oman has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, Capital Gains Tax Rate, and Corporate Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Oman's overall positioning.
- Overall, Oman demonstrates a business environment characterized by competitive tax-related conditions and solid regulatory assessments within the GCC.

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Country Overview

Oman has been developing a modern, innovation oriented business environment shaped by national initiatives that promote entrepreneurship, technology adoption, and foreign investment. Programs such as the Rising Omani Startups Programme and the National Innovation Center highlight the country's aim to build capacity in advanced technology sectors while supporting early stage ventures.

Corporate taxation is applied through a standard framework, with reduced obligations available for certain Omani owned small and medium sized enterprises that meet eligibility conditions. The absence of wealth, inheritance, and capital gains taxes for individuals reinforces the overall appeal of the fiscal environment. In addition, companies operating in designated Free Zones can access a unified package of incentives, including full corporate tax exemptions for extended periods and other relief measures for approved activities. These incentives apply to both domestic and foreign firms that meet sector and operational criteria.

Foreign entrepreneurs can obtain long term residency through the Golden Residency Program, which supports business establishment, investment activity, and property ownership. The program allows full foreign ownership in most sectors and facilitates banking access, making it a practical route for founders who intend to manage operations in Oman.

Institutional support is provided through a wide network of organizations. The Oman Investment Authority functions as a major state backed investor in high growth sectors. The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development supports a large number of small and medium sized companies through funding, incubation, and grants. The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology leads national digital and innovation policy, while the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation oversees entrepreneurship education.

Taken together, these fiscal tools, residency pathways, and institutional programs reflect a coordinated national effort to expand Oman's entrepreneurial landscape and encourage the growth of innovative firms.



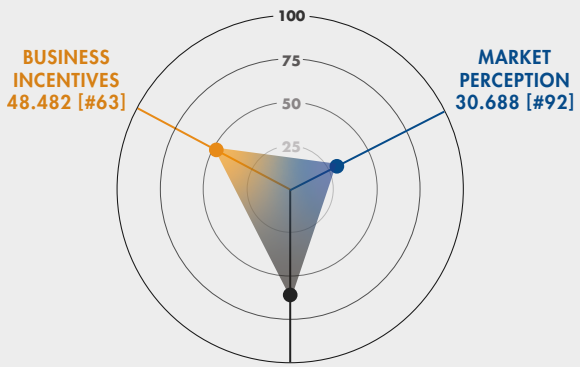
89. Guatemala

GLOBAL RANK
#89

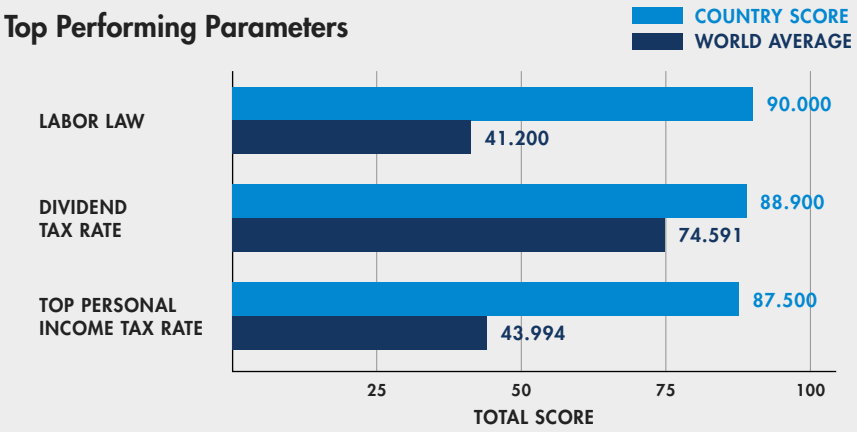
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#15

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Guatemala leads Central America in Taxation.

- Guatemala ranks 5th in Central America in the Innovators Business Environment Index.
- The country ranks higher in the IBEI compared to its position in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- Guatemala places 1st in Central America under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- The country ranks 1st in Central America in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where Guatemala has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Guatemala's overall positioning.
- Overall, Guatemala demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong tax-related assessments within Central America.

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Country Overview

Guatemala is developing a business environment that appeals to foreign investors and entrepreneurs. Incentives, accessible residency pathways, and efforts to simplify administrative procedures support this direction and channel investment into sectors with strong economic potential.

Corporate taxation uses a standard net-income system, however, companies in special economic zones can benefit from exemptions on income tax, VAT, and customs duties. These conditions work well for export-oriented firms and companies with intensive operational needs.

Residency options are straightforward for founders and investors. The passive-income route grants permanent residency to applicants who can show stable monthly earnings. An investor visa is also available for individuals who meet a defined investment threshold.

Support for investment comes through Invest Guatemala, the national promotion agency. It helps investors understand regulatory requirements, access available incentives, and evaluate opportunities across priority sectors.

Guatemala offers predictable taxation, targeted incentives, clear residency routes, and institutional support that makes business formation and expansion accessible to internationally oriented companies.





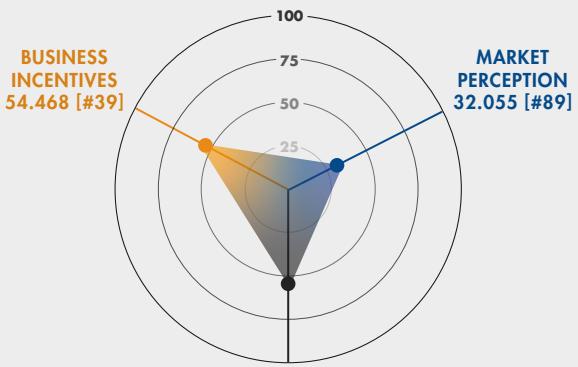
90. Türkiye

GLOBAL RANK
#90

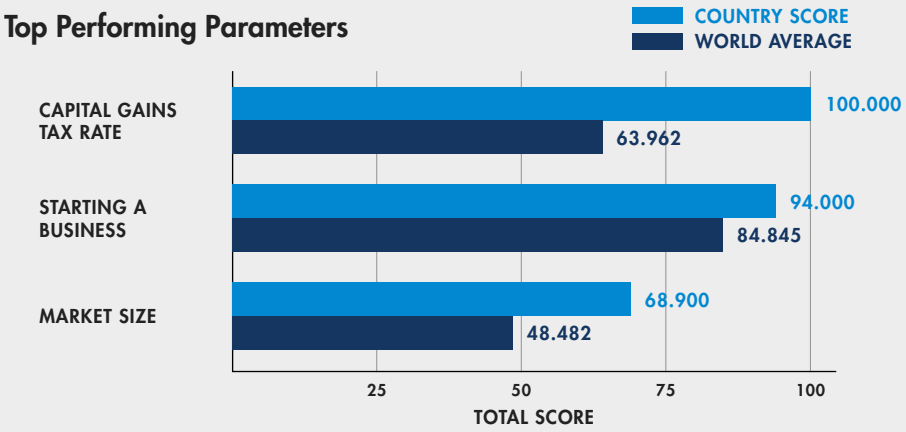
EUROPE RANK
#42

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Türkiye ranks 3rd among the OECD Countries in Taxation.

- Türkiye ranks 15th in Asia and 22nd in Eastern Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Türkiye's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 exceeds its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 12th in Eastern Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting the assessment of fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- Türkiye places 3rd among OECD countries in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Türkiye has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Capital Gains Tax Rate and Market Size are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Türkiye's overall positioning.
- Overall, Türkiye demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong scale-related advantages and competitive tax-related parameters among the OECD countries.

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Country Overview

Türkiye sits at one of the most strategic crossroads in its region. Trade routes linking Europe, Asia, and the Middle East run through the country, giving it a natural role in logistics, manufacturing, and cross-border commerce. Its economy benefits from a broad industrial base, export-focused production, and a growing technology sector. Major urban centres bring these strengths together by concentrating skilled workers, universities, and modern business services. Yet macroeconomic instability remains a major constraint. High inflation and currency volatility make long-term planning difficult and can discourage investment.

Meanwhile, initiatives like the Turkey Tech Visa offer a clear entry route for international founders and technical specialists. Additional benefits are available to companies in specialised economic zones. Free Zones, Organized Industrial Zones, and Technology Development Zones each provide their own combination of tax benefits, simpler procedures, and dedicated infrastructure. These conditions give companies more predictability than the general regulatory landscape. Public institutions add a further layer of support. The Investment Office of the Presidency, regional development agencies, and TÜBİTAK help guide investment, fund research, and promote commercialisation.

With restored macroeconomic stability and targeted reforms, Türkiye has the potential to become one of the region's most competitive locations for international business.

"The most inspiring aspect of doing business in Turkey is that human relationships remain at the core of commerce. This cultural strength enables founders to build trust-based, sustainable models. Growing here teaches you to turn emotional intelligence into a strategic advantage."



Şerza Saka
Founder, Kalp



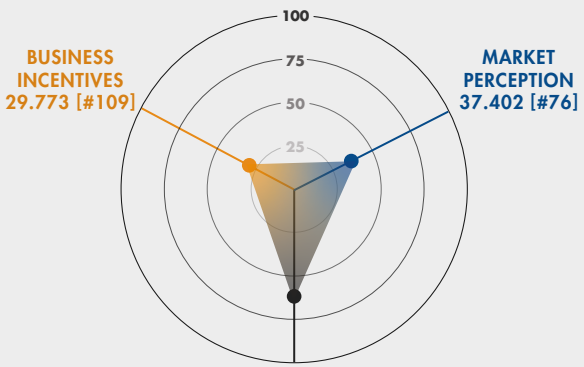
91. Rwanda

GLOBAL RANK
#91

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#17

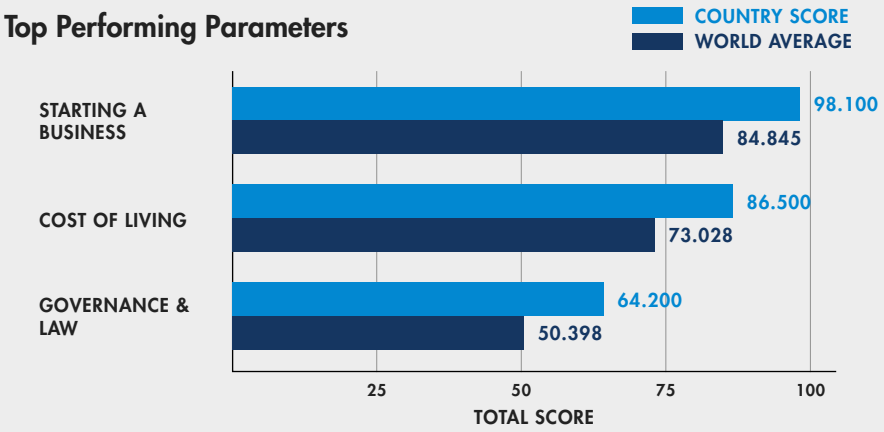
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
61.213 [#73]

Top Performing Parameters



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Rwanda leads Africa in Regulation & Governance.

- Rwanda ranks 2nd in Eastern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Rwanda's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- The country ranks 2nd in Eastern Africa under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies at the regional level.
- Rwanda ranks 1st in Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- The country places 2nd in Eastern Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility within the subregion.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Rwanda has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Starting a Business is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Rwanda's overall positioning.
- Overall, Rwanda demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong governance assessments and supportive operating conditions within Eastern Africa.

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Country Overview

Rwanda can be cited as one of Africa's major stability and governance success stories. Clear rules, efficient administration, and a sustained push for digital transformation have shaped its economic direction. The country aims to position itself as a regional centre for technology, skills, and investment, though its recent innovation momentum has levelled off. New, more ambitious initiatives could help reignite that trajectory.

A central part of Rwanda's offer to internationally oriented firms is its preferential regime for regional and international headquarters. Eligible companies can access a 0% corporate tax rate, sending a strong signal to global operators looking for a base to manage cross-border activity. Additional structures exist for holding companies, investment vehicles, and firms serving international markets, giving mobile founders a clear and competitive framework.

Foreign entrepreneurs can operate through the Business Entrepreneur Permit, which provides a multi-year pathway for establishing and running commercial activity. Fast, reliable business registration reinforces this route and remains one of Rwanda's distinguishing strengths.

Rwanda's innovation ambitions take shape in dedicated platforms such as Kigali Innovation City and Kigali Innovation Park. These hubs bring together technology firms, research institutions, and training programmes, supporting the country's move toward more knowledge-intensive sectors.

Institutional support gives the broader ecosystem its structure. The Rwanda Development Board handles investment facilitation, business registration, and innovation policy, while the Rwanda Innovation Fund directs capital toward early-stage firms with regional potential.

Rwanda's business environment is built on regulatory clarity, internationally focused tax structures, and well-organised national support for technology and enterprise. With renewed ambition, it could regain stronger momentum in its innovation agenda.



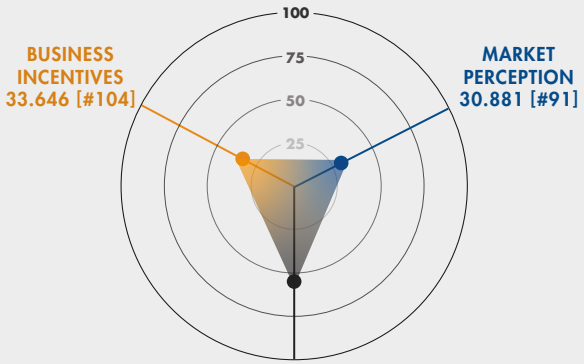
92. Mongolia

GLOBAL RANK
#92

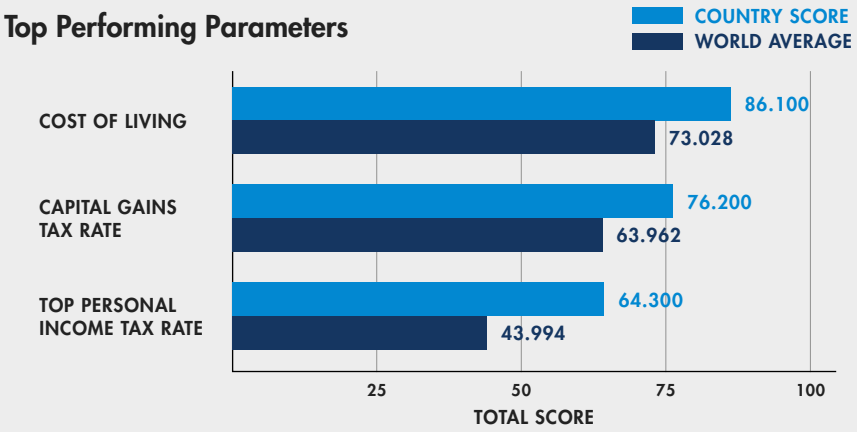
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#18

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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"Mongolia offers a supportive digital legal framework, a fast-growing tech scene, and a young, tech-savvy workforce with minimal language barriers. Open-minded youth, a close-knit ecosystem, and the "Digital Nation" strategy and "Digital First" policy position the country as a unique and fast-growing technology and innovation hub."



Zolzaya Jargalsaikhan
Director, National Information Technology Park of Mongolia

Mongolia ranks 2nd in East Asia in Taxation.

- Mongolia ranks 5th in East Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Mongolia's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 exceeds its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 2nd in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) region in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- The country ranks 5th in CAREC under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility at the regional level.

- Mongolia places 2nd in East Asia in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Mongolia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Mongolia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Mongolia demonstrates a business environment characterized by highly competitive taxation performance and solid digital-infrastructure assessments within East Asia.

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Country Overview

Mongolia is beginning to show stronger intent around innovation, and policymakers are increasingly aware of the need to modernise the business environment. The direction is positive, although the next stage will require more resources and more concrete initiatives to match the ambition.

The country's investment framework shapes much of its current appeal. Free Trade Zones and a rules-based system for foreign investment give founders predictable conditions for cross-border activity and export-oriented operations. The Investment Law of 2013 remains the key pillar. It offers tax exemptions, credits, longer land-possession terms, higher foreign-employee quotas, and simplified visa processes for qualifying projects. These incentives provide practical advantages for investors and early-stage companies.

Support for business formation and digital-sector development is growing. The National Information Technology Park operates as a government-led hub and incubation centre and partners with the Japan International Cooperation Agency on Digital Mongolia. Startup Mongolia strengthens the ecosystem through community programmes and mapping efforts, while the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry contributes advocacy and SME support. Invest Mongolia guides firms through incentives, licensing, and Free Trade Zone rules, and the MonJa Accelerator, backed by JICA, offers structured programmes for emerging startups.

Mongolia combines a clear set of investment incentives with an early but expanding network of ecosystem institutions. The foundations are in place; scaling them will determine how far the country can advance as a destination for founders and international investors.

Our Local Partner

iT park Mongolia | National Information Technology Park



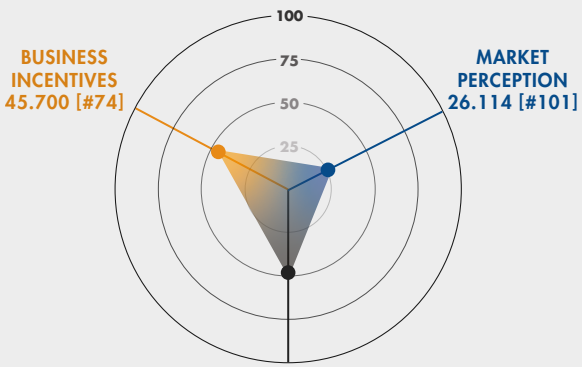
93. Bolivia

GLOBAL RANK
#93

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#16

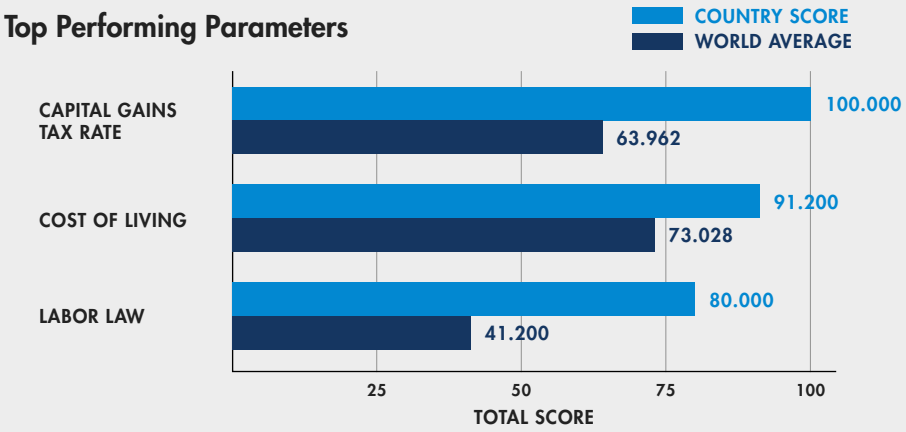
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
46.893 [#99]

Top Performing Parameters



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Bolivia ranks 2nd in Latin America & the Caribbean in Taxation.

- Bolivia ranks 9th in South America in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Bolivia's position in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- The country places 8th in Latin America under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- The country places 2nd in Latin America & the Caribbean in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- Bolivia ranks 5th in South America in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where Bolivia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, Dividend Tax Rate, and Capital Gains Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Bolivia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Bolivia demonstrates a business environment characterized by competitive tax-related assessments and solid regional openness.

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Country Overview

Bolivia's business climate has long been shaped by political volatility, yet recent policy shifts suggest room for improvement as new economic directions emerge. The country continues to build a framework that encourages private-sector activity, even as its economy remains heavily rooted in natural resources.

A key feature of Bolivia's approach is its incentive for reinvestment. Law 1613 allows companies that reinvest profits or dividends to reduce their withholding obligations. For founders who want to expand operations rather than distribute earnings, this mechanism offers a practical financial advantage.

Foreign entrepreneurs can enter through established migration routes. Temporary residence permits accommodate business activity, and a Specific Purpose Visa is available for investors or individuals planning entrepreneurial work. These options give founders formal pathways to operate and build locally.

Policy tools also target long-term capital deployment. While sector-specific regulations remain central, the reinvestment incentive stands out for early-stage teams and firms with multi-year plans.

Entrepreneurship support comes from organisations such as FundaPro, which runs training and capacity-building programmes for small and medium-sized enterprises. This work strengthens the local business base and helps founders access development resources.

Bolivia offers a defined environment for investors and operators, built around reinvestment incentives and regulated entry routes for foreign entrepreneurs. With clearer economic direction, the country has the potential to create a more predictable and growth-friendly business setting.



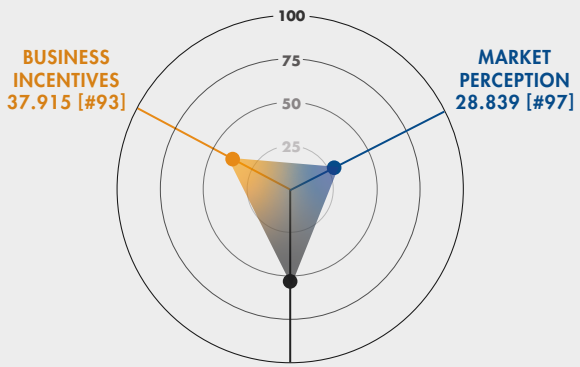
94. Egypt

GLOBAL RANK
#94

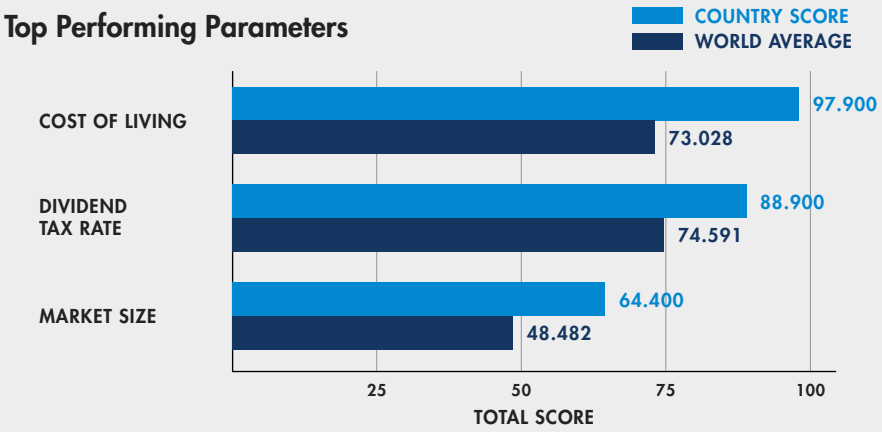
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#18

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Egypt ranks 2nd in Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure in Northern Africa.

- Egypt ranks 3rd in Northern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Egypt's placement in the IBEI is behind its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 3rd in North Africa under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies within the region.
- The country ranks 3rd in Northern Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- Egypt places 2nd in Northern Africa in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Egypt has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living and Market Size are assessed as inherent structural parameters within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Egypt's overall positioning.
- Overall, Egypt demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong scale-related structural advantages and solid regional mobility and capital-access assessments.

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Country Overview

Egypt sits at the centre of several major economic corridors, and its large domestic market gives the country weight within the region. This scale, combined with its geography, supports a wide mix of industries and allows Egypt to operate as a commercial bridge between Africa, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. The government has been trying to shift the economy toward more diversified and technology-driven activity, a direction that is now visible in policy and infrastructure choices.

Long-term strategies such as Egypt Vision 2030 and the Digital Egypt programme point the country toward administrative modernisation and greater use of digital tools. Improvements in e-government systems and public-service delivery have made operating conditions clearer for firms, especially those working in knowledge-based sectors. Technology districts add another building block by concentrating ICT skills and giving internationally active companies a defined base.

Special economic zones remain part of the country's economic architecture. They vary in structure but share the goal of supporting industrial concentration and export-oriented activity. These areas sit alongside broader efforts to expand services, upgrade production capacity, and deepen participation in regional value chains.

Innovation-related work is supported by national programmes that promote applied research, entrepreneurship, and technology development. For example, ITIDA supports the ICT sector, connects companies to international partners, and helps strengthen the country's place in global technology networks.

If ongoing reforms continue and business-environment gaps narrow, Egypt has the potential to unlock far more of its economic capacity and strengthen its appeal to internationally oriented founders.





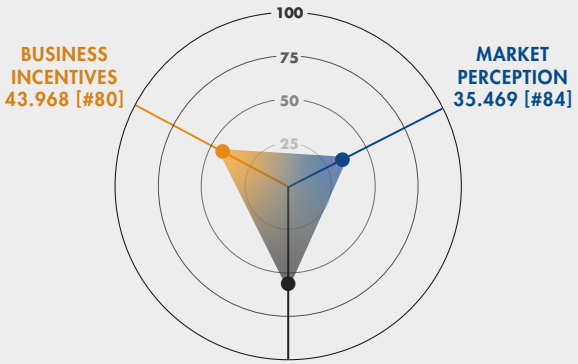
95. Nigeria

GLOBAL RANK
#95

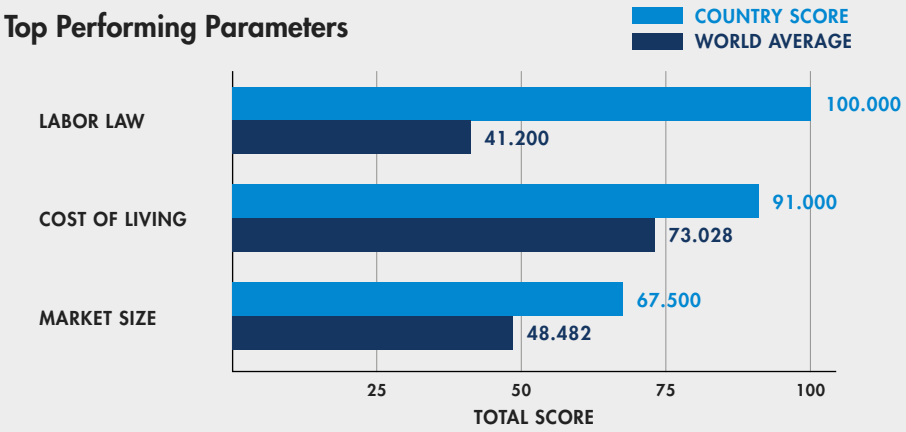
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#19

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Nigeria leads Western Africa in Global Mobility & Openness.

- Nigeria ranks 3rd in Western Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Nigeria's placement in the IBEI sits below its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- Nigeria places 3rd in Western Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility within the subregion.
- The country ranks 3rd in Sub-Saharan Africa under the Business Incentives Pillar, indicating assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- The country ranks 1st in Western Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where Nigeria has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living and Market Size are inherent structural Parameters assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Nigeria's overall positioning.
- Overall, Nigeria demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong scale-related structural advantages and leading regional openness.

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Country Overview

Nigeria is home to Africa's most active startup ecosystem, reflecting a combination of strong entrepreneurial talent, a large domestic market, and widespread digital adoption. Its scale supports a broad range of industries, while growing connectivity continues to strengthen links between consumers, firms, and public services.

The country's technology sector has expanded rapidly, particularly in areas such as fintech, digital commerce, and software services. Urban innovation clusters, most notably Yaba in Lagos, concentrate talent, venture activity, and support networks, enabling startups to scale and engage with regional and global markets. This vibrant output highlights the depth of Nigeria's entrepreneurial capacity.

At the same time, the broader business environment has not yet fully matched this level of entrepreneurial energy. Continued reforms are essential to provide more predictable regulation, improve administrative efficiency, and strengthen infrastructure in ways that better support company formation and long-term growth.

National institutions are working to address this gap. The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) plays a central role in shaping digital-economy priorities and aligning private-sector innovation with longer-term development objectives. Fiscal and structural mechanisms, including export support tools, industrial clustering initiatives, and free-trade zones, also contribute platforms for firms active in manufacturing, logistics, and emerging technology fields.

Overall, Nigeria combines exceptional market scale and startup momentum with a business environment that is still evolving. Strengthening regulatory clarity, infrastructure, and investment conditions will be key to ensuring that the country's entrepreneurial output translates into sustained economic performance and global competitiveness.



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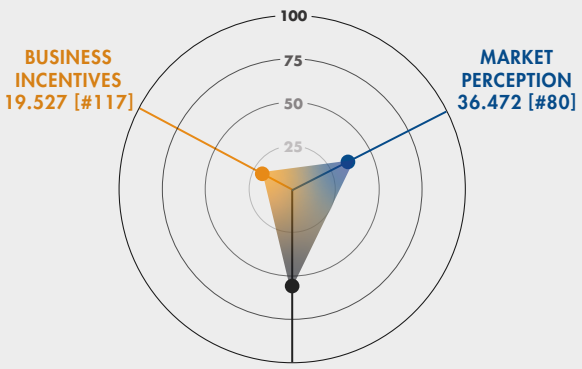
96. Dominican Republic

GLOBAL RANK
#96

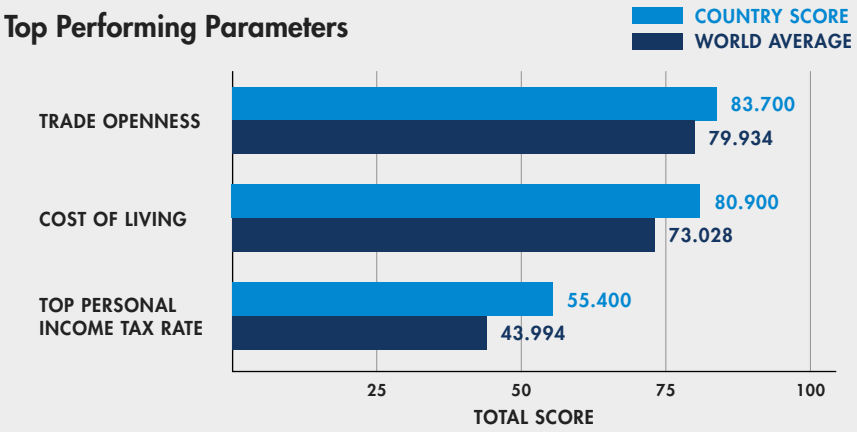
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#17

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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The Dominican Republic ranks 2nd in Taxation in the Caribbean.

- The Dominican Republic ranks 3rd in the Caribbean in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- The Dominican Republic's position in the IBEI is higher than its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- The country ranks 3rd in the Caribbean under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, which evaluates conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- The country ranks 3rd in the Caribbean in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- The Dominican Republic also ranks 2nd in the Caribbean in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The Business Incentives Pillar represents an area with scope for further improvement relative to the country's overall Index placement.
- At the Parameter level, the Dominican Republic scores between 50-75% for the Top Personal Income Tax Rate, Trade Openness and Financial Tools Openness.
- Overall, the Dominican Republic demonstrates a business environment characterized by comparatively strong regional capital-access and taxation assessments within the Caribbean.

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Country Overview

The Dominican Republic has positioned itself as an investment oriented economy that uses targeted incentives to attract foreign capital and support sector development. The country's legal framework includes several mechanisms to encourage investment, particularly in areas such as tourism, renewable energy, real estate, and free trade zones.

The standard Corporate Income Tax framework is complemented by specific laws that offer meaningful relief for qualifying investors. Law 171-07 provides benefits for foreign nationals who invest above a defined threshold. Eligible investors may receive exemptions on import duties and dividends, making the regime attractive for individuals who wish to establish residency while structuring long term business operations.

The immigration framework supports investor led business activity. The country offers an Investor Visa and a residency by investment pathway, both linked to a common minimum investment requirement. Successful applicants can obtain permanent residence and operate businesses under a recognized legal status. These pathways provide international founders with a clear point of entry into the Dominican Republic's business environment.

Tax incentives extend beyond personal investment programmes. The country has a long standing system of benefits for companies located in free trade zones. These zones allow firms to access exemptions that support export oriented activity and encourage reinvestment. Additional incentives in tourism and renewable energy reinforce sector specific development goals and help attract both domestic and foreign investors.

Institutional support is led by ProDominicana, the national Investment and Export Promotion Agency. The agency promotes investment opportunities, helps explain regulatory frameworks, and provides guidance on incentive regimes. Its role contributes to strengthening the overall business environment and supporting foreign entrepreneurs entering the country.

Overall, the Dominican Republic offers a structured investment landscape centred on incentives, investor residency options, and sector based support mechanisms.



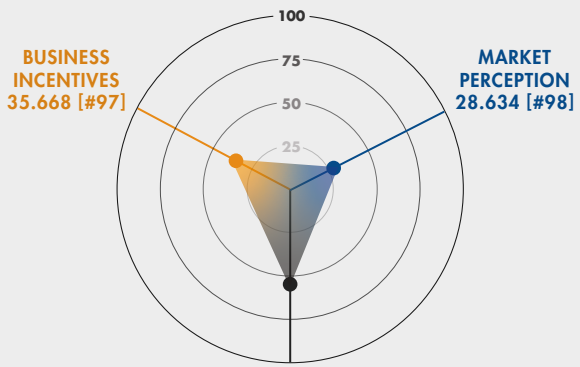
97. Zambia

GLOBAL RANK
#97

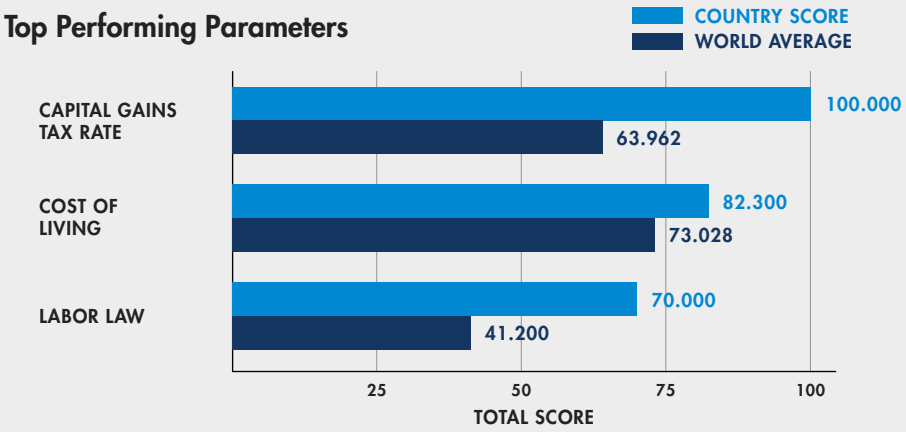
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#20

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Zambia leads Southern Africa in Regulation & Governance.

- Zambia ranks 3rd in Southern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Zambia's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to its actual startup ecosystem output.
- The country ranks 7th in Sub-Saharan Africa under the Business Incentives Pillar, indicating assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- The country ranks 2nd in Southern Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions including corporate, personal, and capital taxation.
- Zambia also places 1st in Southern Africa in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Zambia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Capital Gains Tax Rate and Labor Law are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Zambia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Zambia demonstrates a business environment characterized by comparatively strong taxation and governance assessments within Southern Africa.

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Country Overview

Zambia's business landscape is influenced by a national strategy focused on strengthening investment flows and advancing industrial development. By presenting itself as a regional market gateway, the country is expanding its incentives to create a more supportive environment for domestic and international entrepreneurs.

Corporate income taxation follows a standard framework, but Zambia also offers significant advantages through its priority sector incentives and Multi Facility Economic Zones (MFEZs). These zones provide substantial relief for qualifying projects, which can be attractive for founders seeking cost efficient entry into the market.

Zambia's broader support landscape combines institutional backing with sector focused initiatives. The Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) works across investment promotion, facilitation, and incentive administration under the Zambia Development Agency Act. Alongside it, the Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) supports the growth of the information and communications technology sector, including startup oriented programmes aimed at digital innovation.

Together, these elements present a business environment oriented toward long term investors who intend to operate in priority sectors or take advantage of the country's economic zones. Zambia's combination of investment based entry channels and targeted fiscal incentives forms the core framework for founders evaluating opportunities in the market.



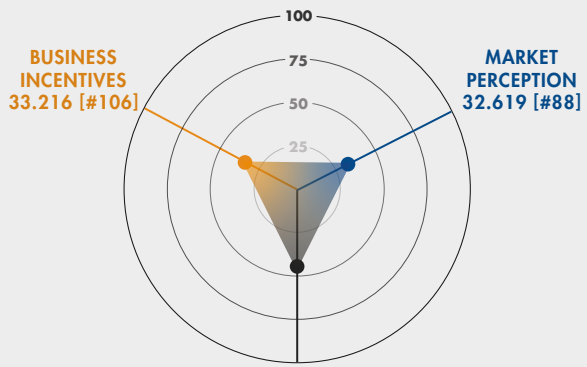
98. Tanzania

GLOBAL RANK
#98

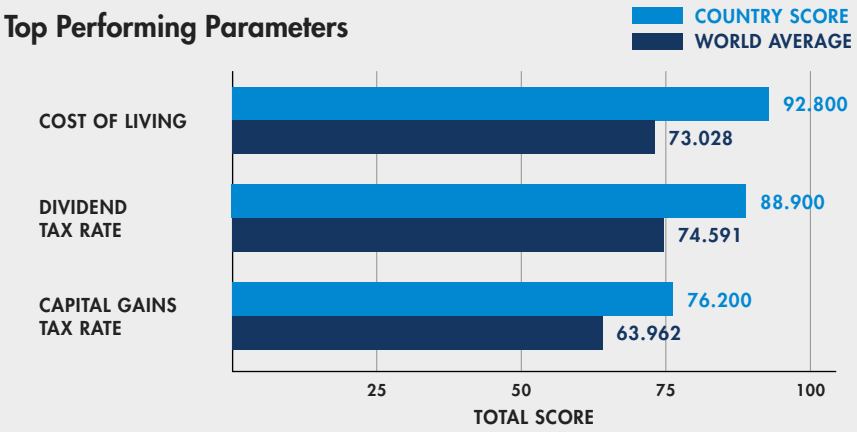
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#21

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Tanzania ranks 7th in Africa in Taxation.

- Tanzania ranks 3rd in Eastern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index.
- Tanzania's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to startup ecosystem outcomes.
- The country ranks 2nd in Eastern Africa under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the subregional level.
- Tanzania places 10th in Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The country ranks 7th in Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- Tanzania also ranks 10th in Africa in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living is an inherent structural Parameter assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Tanzania's overall positioning.
- Overall, Tanzania demonstrates a business environment characterized by competitive cost conditions and solid incentive assessments within Eastern Africa.

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Country Overview

Tanzania's economic direction is shaped by long-term development plans and a growing consumer market that encourages broader private-sector activity. The country continues to align regulatory reforms with its national development vision, placing emphasis on improved infrastructure, administrative clarity, and the gradual expansion of digital services.

With the Digital Tanzania agenda, the country aims to expand connectivity and modernise public services, offering businesses more consistent access to online government systems. These efforts complement wider reforms that streamline procedures for investment and enterprise formation.

Entry routes for foreign entrepreneurs follow established investment pathways. Residence permits for business owners and broader visa categories for commercial engagement provide a workable framework for individuals who intend to explore opportunities, establish operations, or participate in local partnerships. This approach supports international participation without relying on specialised categories.

Supporting the business environment, the Tanzania Investment Centre coordinates facilitation for new projects and acts as a central point of contact for investors. Similarly, the Commission for Science and Technology oversees research policy and manages funding instruments such as the National Fund for Advancement of Science and Technology and the Fund for Innovators, which support experimentation and applied research.



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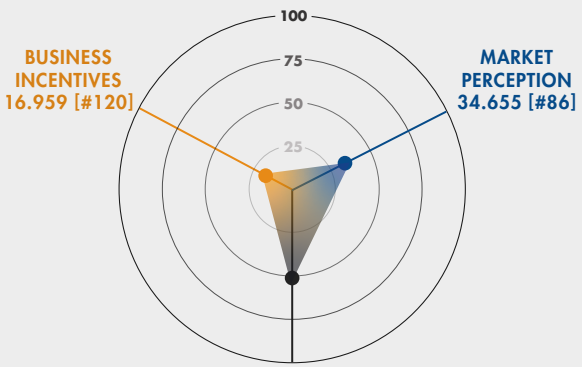
99. Uganda

GLOBAL RANK
#99

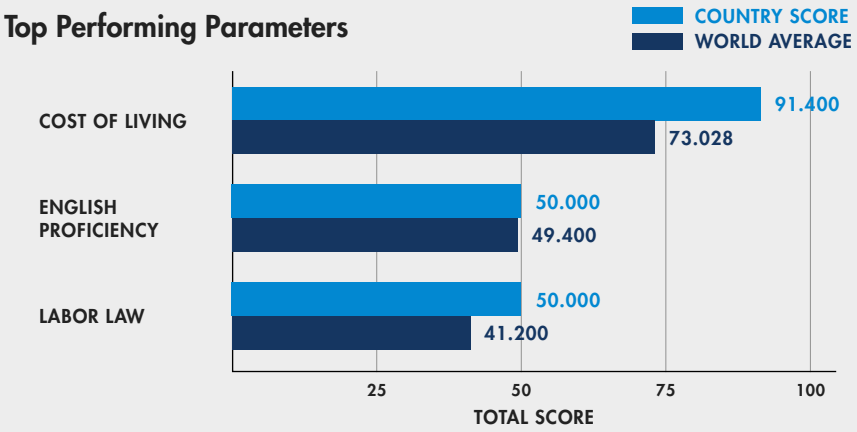
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#22

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Uganda ranks 2nd in Eastern Africa in the Digital Infrastructure.

- Uganda ranks 4th in Eastern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Uganda's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 stands above its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 3rd in Eastern Africa under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Uganda also ranks 3rd in Eastern Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The country places 2nd in Eastern Africa in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- Uganda ranks 2nd in Eastern Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which evaluates cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The country also ranks 2nd in Eastern Africa in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- The Business Incentives Pillar represents an area where Uganda has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.

- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living is an inherent structural Parameter assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Uganda's overall positioning.
- Overall, Uganda demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional accessibility and operational assessments, supported by favorable cost conditions.

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Country Overview

Uganda has a fast-growing population, a strong human-capital base, and a policy direction that increasingly supports investment, industrial activity, and digital capability. These structural advantages give the country significant long-term potential. Particularly, further pro-business reforms would meaningfully accelerate economic performance.

As part of its industrial policy, Uganda also has Free zones and these areas offer multi-year incentives for manufacturing, processing, and export-oriented operations. The aim is to attract projects that deepen Uganda's industrial capacity and strengthen links with regional markets.

Digital capability continues to expand thanks to several organizations. The Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and National Guidance, together with the National Information Technology Authority Uganda, lead national digital initiatives, supporting infrastructure upgrades and the growth of technology-driven sectors. Programmes backed by partners such as UNDP Uganda add catalytic funding and operational support for early-stage ventures.

Uganda's demographic momentum, talent potential, and evolving institutional support creates a foundation for founders and investors. This environment could advance further with continued reforms focused on ease of doing business and regulatory predictability.



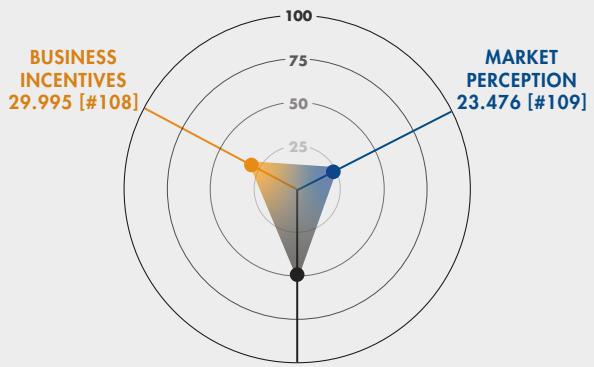
100. Pakistan

GLOBAL RANK
#100

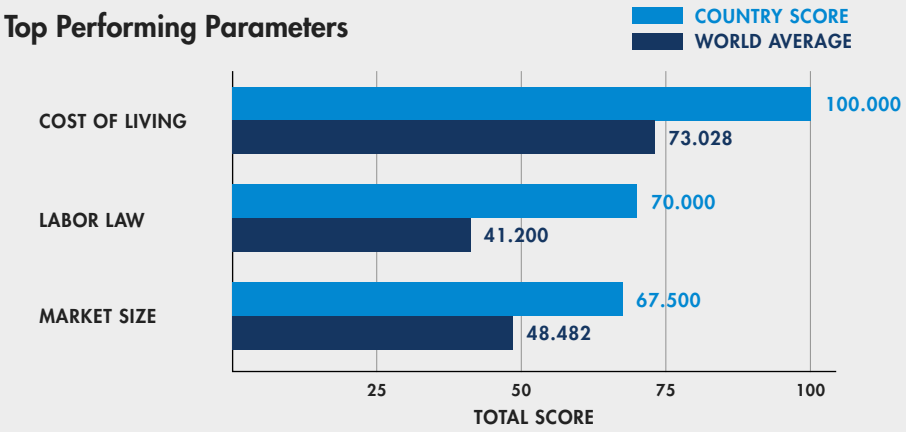
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#19

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Pakistan ranks 3rd among the CAREC member nations in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category.

- Pakistan ranks 2nd in South Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Pakistan's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 stands above its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 7th under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar within the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) region, indicating assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Pakistan places 3rd in CAREC in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility, represents an area where Pakistan has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living and Market Size are inherent structural Parameters assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing to Pakistan's overall positioning.
- Overall, Pakistan demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong scale- and cost-related structural advantages.

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Country Overview

Pakistan sits on a deep well of entrepreneurial and technical talent. Its domestic market is large, its IT workforce is well known internationally, and digital services have become a core part of the country's economic identity. Yet, ongoing instability continues to hold back momentum. With stronger macroeconomic consistency, Pakistan could unlock far more of its potential.

Digitalisation has reshaped parts of the regulatory landscape. The Pakistan Single Window has begun to streamline trade and administrative procedures, cutting the number of steps required for cross-border activity. Broader e-government efforts are moving in the same direction by simplifying compliance and company administration. The Digital Pakistan Policy provides the overarching agenda for improving connectivity, payments infrastructure, and public digital services.

The incentives available to technology-oriented firms are becoming more defined. Special Technology Zones offer long-term benefits to eligible companies and investors. Sector-specific measures reduce the tax burden on IT and IT-enabled exports, which remain one of Pakistan's strongest performing areas. The Pakistan Startup Fund now adds early financing for young ventures that often struggle to raise their first round of capital.

International founders can enter through standard business and investment visa routes, while returning citizens receive temporary relief on certain foreign-sourced income—a practical bridge for those reconnecting their work with the domestic economy.

A group of institutions drives much of this activity. The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication sets sector strategy. Ignite manages the National Incubation Centers and implements the Pakistan Startup Fund. The Pakistan Software Export Board helps technology firms expand and reach global markets. Invest Pakistan guides foreign investors and maintains the national facilitation framework.

Pakistan's digital agenda is expanding, its incentives are clearer, and its institutions are more active than in previous years. If economic stability improves, the country's combination of talent, scale, and technology capability could turn Pakistan into one of the most dynamic business environments in the region.



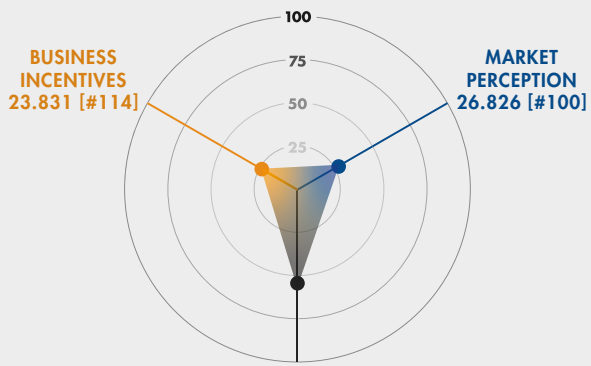
101. Senegal

GLOBAL RANK
#101

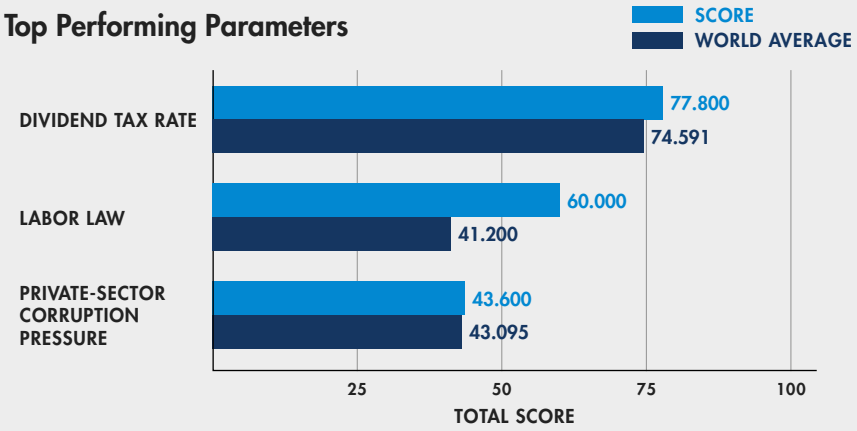
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#23

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Senegal leads Western Africa in Regulation & Governance.

- Senegal ranks 4th in Western Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Senegal's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 stands above its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 4th in Western Africa under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies within the subregion.
- Senegal ranks 1st in Western Africa in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- The country places 2nd in Western Africa and 6th in Africa in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- The Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement, represents an area where Senegal has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Private-Sector Corruption Pressure is one key strength of the Senegal business environment with a score between 50–75%.

- Overall, Senegal demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong governance assessments and improving access to capital within Western Africa.

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Country Overview

Senegal's recent economic direction reflects a gradual shift toward clearer regulation and institutional reliability, supported by reforms that aim to make business formation more predictable. Policymakers have steadily expanded the set of tools available to local and international entrepreneurs, signalling long-term commitment rather than short-term intervention.

Senegal has introduced legal instruments that give innovative firms firmer footing. The Startup Act defines the criteria for recognised early-stage companies and opens access to support programmes, exemptions, and training initiatives. Special Economic Zones complement this approach by offering streamlined procedures and conditions intended to attract production and service-oriented projects. Both frameworks form part of a wider policy effort to encourage formalization and support long-term business development.

Institutional capacity continues to expand. APIX manages the national one-stop platform for company registration and leads investment facilitation. The Délégation générale à l'Entreprenariat Rapide des Femmes et des Jeunes operates grant and loan programmes that strengthen early-stage activity. The SME Development Agency provides advisory services and capability-building initiatives for established and emerging companies.

These elements create a business environment characterized by clearer administrative processes, long-term support instruments, and institutions that are increasingly oriented toward innovation and enterprise growth.



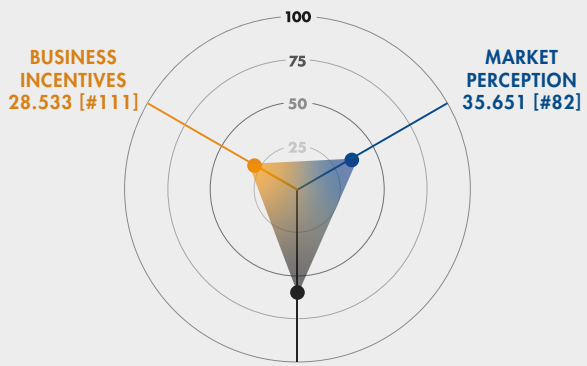
102. Ghana

GLOBAL RANK
#102

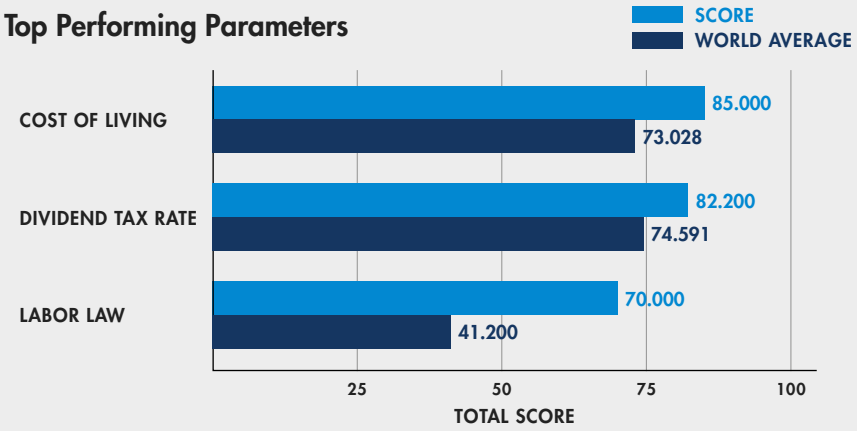
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#24

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Ghana leads Western Africa in Ease of Operating a Business.

- Ghana ranks 5th in Western Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Ghana's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 stands above its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- Ghana ranks 1st in Western Africa under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies within the subregion.
- The country places 2nd in Western Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Business Incentives Pillar highlights an area with scope for further improvement relative to Ghana's overall Index placement.
- The country ranks 4th in Africa in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- At the Parameter level, Dividend Tax Rate and Cost of Living record scores within the 50–75% bracket of the Index.
- Overall, Ghana demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong governance and operational assessments within Western Africa.

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Country Overview

Ghana's economic direction is increasingly defined by steady services-sector expansion, a maturing regulatory framework, and a national push toward digitalisation. These developments have contributed to a business environment that balances regional integration with domestic institutional strengthening, offering a clearer landscape for innovators assessing opportunities in West Africa.

A central feature of Ghana's approach is its long-standing focus on export-led growth. Free Zones play a prominent role in this strategy, providing a structured environment with a decade-long corporate tax holiday for eligible firms.

Ghana has also taken steps to strengthen its position within the wider African innovation landscape. A cross-border fintech passporting arrangement with Rwanda allows licensed firms to operate across both jurisdictions under a simplified regulatory framework. This initiative reflects Ghana's interest in supporting scalable digital models and reducing barriers for companies that operate regionally.

Several institutions give shape to the country's business environment. The Ghana Investment Promotion Centre links work authorisation to investment activity and provides facilitation services that support longer-term engagement. The Ghana Free Zones Authority manages incentives for export-focused companies, while the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre guides investors through procedures and certification. Public sector bodies such as the National Information Technology Agency and the Accra Digital Centre reinforce the foundations for digital adoption and enterprise development.





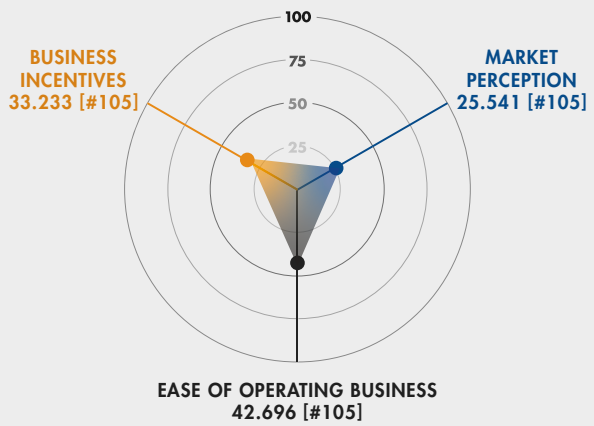
103. Nepal

GLOBAL RANK
#103

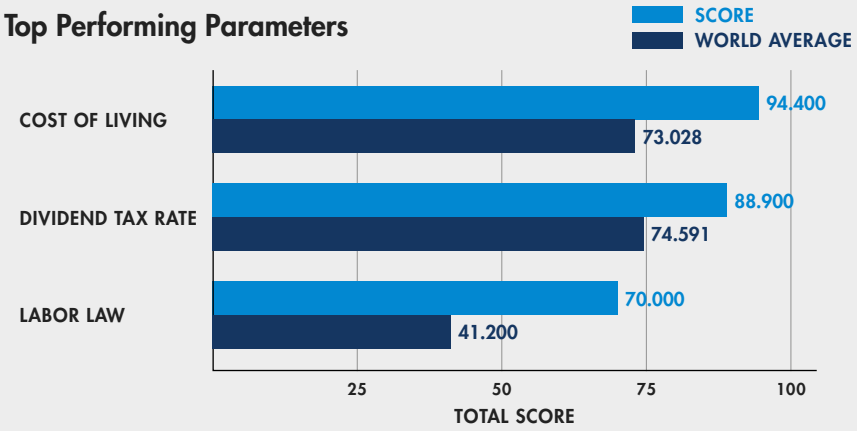
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#20

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Nepal leads South Asia in Taxation.

- Nepal ranks 3rd in South Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Nepal's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions compared to its actual startup ecosystem outcomes.
- The country ranks 3rd in South Asia under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessed fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- Nepal ranks 1st in South Asia in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures tax-related conditions.
- The country places 2nd in South Asia in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which evaluates cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- Nepal ranks 3rd in South Asia in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Nepal has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living is an inherent structural Parameter assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Nepal's overall positioning.
- Overall, Nepal demonstrates a business environment characterized by competitive taxation performance, strong regional mobility assessments, and favorable cost conditions within South Asia.

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Country Overview

Nepal's business environment is transitioning from agriculture toward services, hydropower, tourism, and IT-enabled activity. A low-cost operating base and gradual regulatory improvements contribute to a setting that is becoming more accessible for businesses. The country also benefits from a young workforce which supports growing familiarity with digital tools and service-sector opportunities.

Hydropower is an important component of Nepal's long-term strategy, with large projects and electricity-trade arrangements supporting future development in energy-intensive industries. Nepal's geographic position between India and China further shapes its commercial orientation. Tourism and labour mobility remain significant external-earnings pillars, while the growing use of digital payments, e-government services, and domestic IT capabilities signals a steady shift toward more technology-driven services.

Infrastructure gaps continue to affect the pace of business activity. However, ongoing investment in electricity, connectivity, and transport networks is gradually improving conditions for firms operating in Nepal. These developments support the country's broader transition toward a more diversified and service-oriented economy.

Nepal offers a business environment with clear resource potential, a young and globally connected talent base, and emerging opportunities in renewable energy, tourism, and digital services.





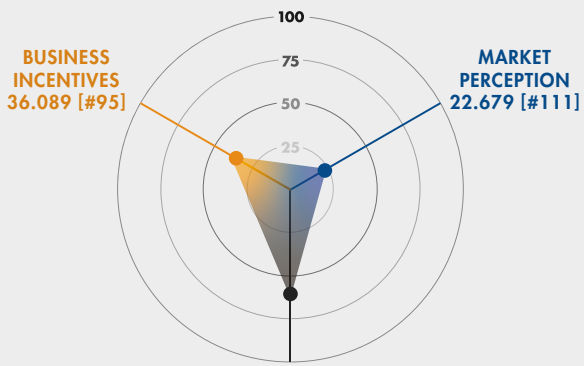
104. Sri Lanka

GLOBAL RANK
#104

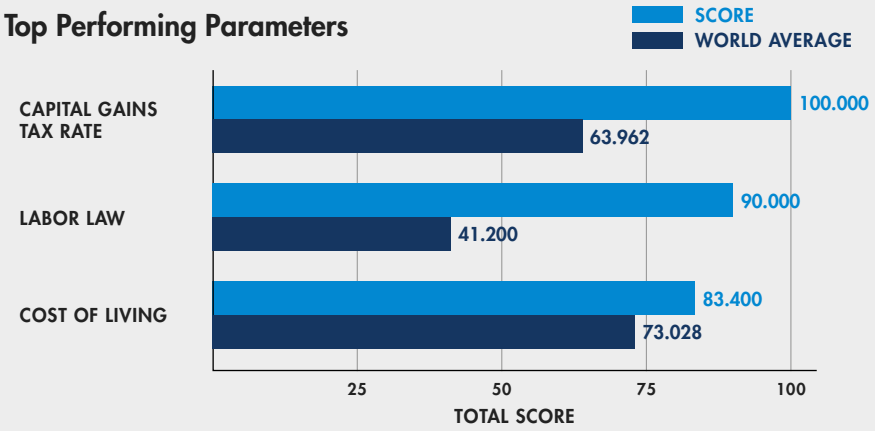
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#21

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Sri Lanka ranks 1st in South Asia in Regulation & Governance.

- Sri Lanka ranks 4th in South Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Sri Lanka ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup-ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 2nd in South Asia under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting positively assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.
- Sri Lanka also ranks 2nd in South Asia under the Business Incentives Pillar, indicating favorable evaluations of fiscal and financial incentive conditions at the regional level.
- The Market Perception Pillar, which captures assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility, represents an area where Sri Lanka has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- It ranks 1st in South Asia in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which measures legal, regulatory, and procedural conditions affecting business activity.
- The country places 2nd in South Asia in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting comparatively competitive assessments of tax-related conditions.
- Sri Lanka ranks 2nd in South Asia in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- At the Parameter level, Capital Gains Tax Rate is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Sri Lanka's overall positioning.

- Overall, Sri Lanka demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regulatory and governance performance, supportive incentive and operational conditions, and solid digital infrastructure.

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Country Overview

Sri Lanka is emerging from a period of significant economic turmoil and is now entering a phase of stabilization that provides a more constructive foundation for internationally oriented businesses. Recent initiatives signal a clearer long-term direction, combining targeted investment policies, new residency pathways, and ongoing digital-government reforms.

The tax framework follows a standard structure, with favourable provisions for firms engaged in service exports, including technology and business-process outsourcing. This supports companies operating across borders and aligns with Sri Lanka's ambition to expand its contribution to regional service industries.

Residency options have also evolved. The Golden Paradise Residence Visa offers long-term status for individuals making qualifying investments in approved projects, creating more predictable conditions for founders and investors establishing a local presence.

Colombo Port City serves as one of the country's flagship economic initiatives. Developed as a specialised zone with its own regulatory model and investment provisions, it is designed to attract financial, professional-services, and technology firms. As the project progresses, it is expected to form part of Sri Lanka's long-term strategy to draw globally connected business activity.

Institutional support reinforces this direction. Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) advances national digital policy and operates initiatives such as Startup Sri Lanka and Spiralation. The Export Development Board supports capability building for small and medium-sized enterprises, and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce offers structured platforms for business engagement and dialogue.

Taken together, these elements reflect a business environment moving toward greater structure and predictability, supported by export-oriented incentives, long-term residency options, and coordinated institutional programmes that help founders navigate operations in Sri Lanka.



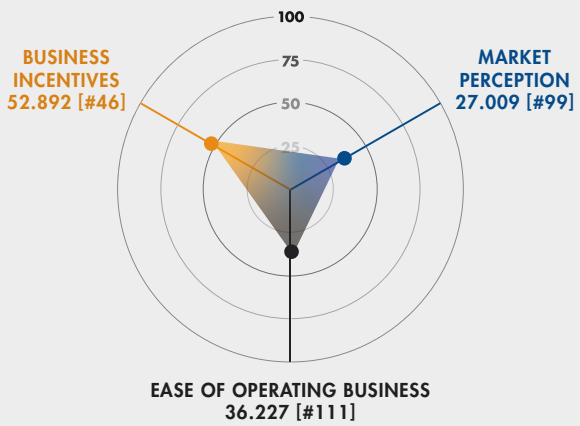
105. Russia

GLOBAL RANK
#105

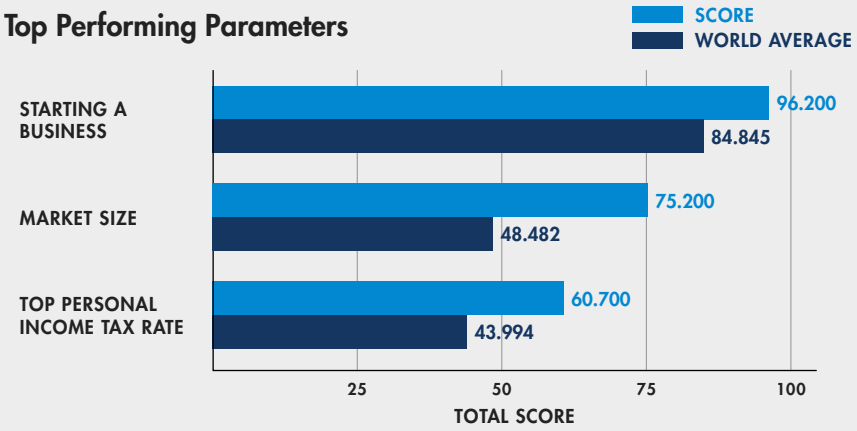
EUROPE RANK
#43

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Russia ranks 17th in Eastern Europe in Business Incentives.

- Russia ranks 23rd in Eastern Europe in the IBEI, reflecting a mid-range position within the regional business-environment landscape.
- Russia ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup-ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 17th in Eastern Europe under the Business Incentives Pillar, reflecting assessments of fiscal and financial incentive conditions.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Russia has scope to further improve performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, Starting a Business, and Market Size are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Russia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Russia demonstrates a business environment shaped by structural scale advantages and select operational strengths.

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Country Overview

Russia's business environment is built on an exceptional talent base and deep technological capability, supported by long-standing strengths in engineering, science, and domestic production. These foundations enable significant innovation potential, though limited global integration has constrained the extent to which this potential translates into internationally scaled business activity. Much of the country's entrepreneurial talent operates outside its borders, reflecting structural conditions that make global expansion more challenging.

The tax framework remains broadly conventional, but Russia applies targeted incentives for technology-focused companies. Qualifying IT firms benefit from substantially reduced profit-tax rates, including periods of zero taxation followed by long-term preferential rates. These measures are intended to give technology companies more room to reinvest, supporting early growth and strengthening the domestic innovation base.

Institutional support reinforces this direction. The Skolkovo Innovation Center functions as a major platform for research-driven and high-tech activity, offering structured programmes, infrastructure access, and advisory services for companies developing software, engineering solutions, and applied technologies. Its ecosystem connects teams to local networks and provides a predictable environment for innovation-led projects.

Together, these elements illustrate a business environment shaped by strong human capital, targeted support for technology development, and maturing innovation institutions. Greater global integration and more founder-friendly structural reforms could unlock significantly more of Russia's underlying potential, given the scale and quality of its talent and technical capability.



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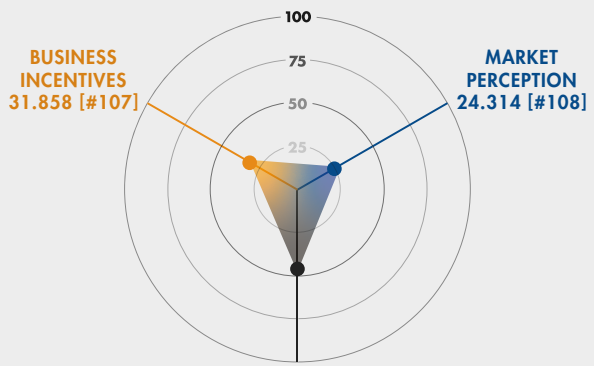
106. Bangladesh

GLOBAL RANK
#106

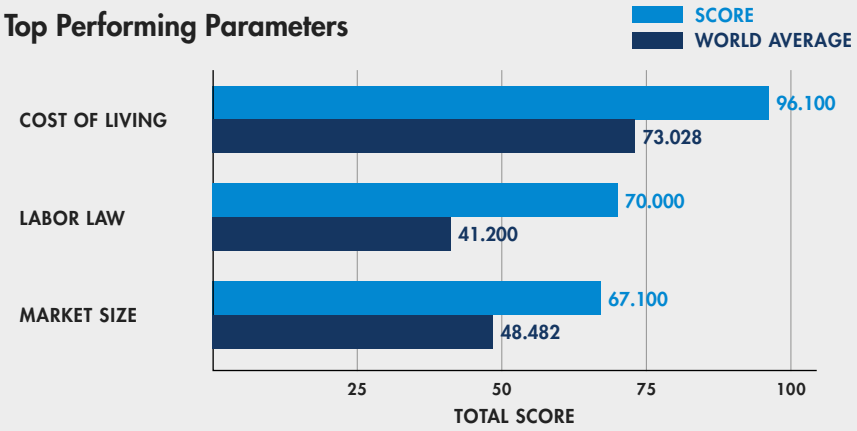
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#22

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Bangladesh ranks 3rd in South Asia in Market Perception.

- Bangladesh ranks 5th in South Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Bangladesh ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 3rd in South Asia under the Market Perception Pillar, reflecting positive assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- Bangladesh ranks 4th in South Asia under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, indicating comparatively supportive conditions for establishing and running companies.
- The Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement, represents an area where Bangladesh has scope to further improve performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living and Market Size are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Bangladesh's overall positioning.
- Overall, Bangladesh demonstrates a business environment supported by structural cost and scale advantages.

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Country Overview

Bangladesh has a large population, strong inherent economic potential, and steady progress in industrial and digital development. The country has expanded its role in global value chains through sustained manufacturing growth while gradually building the foundations for more technology-driven activity.

Foreign entrepreneurs typically enter through established business and investment routes, which provide workable pathways for company formation and operational management. These processes align with national efforts to improve regulatory clarity and attract internationally active investors.

Long-term policy priorities focus on export competitiveness and innovation. Economic Zones and Export Processing Zones offer fiscal incentives, streamlined procedures, and one-stop facilitation designed to support companies serving global markets. Startup Bangladesh Limited, the government's venture investment arm, adds capacity through co-investment programmes and fund-of-funds commitments targeting early-stage and scaling firms.

Technology development is reinforced by several specialised organisations. The Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority manages the country's expanding network of technology parks and associated incentive schemes. The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority operates the national one-stop service platform and assists investors during market entry.

Bangladesh's long-term opportunity is substantial, driven by its population size, industrial depth, and growing digital capabilities. Continued improvements in business-environment stability, particularly around regulatory predictability and operational conditions, will be helpful to fully realizing the country's economic potential.



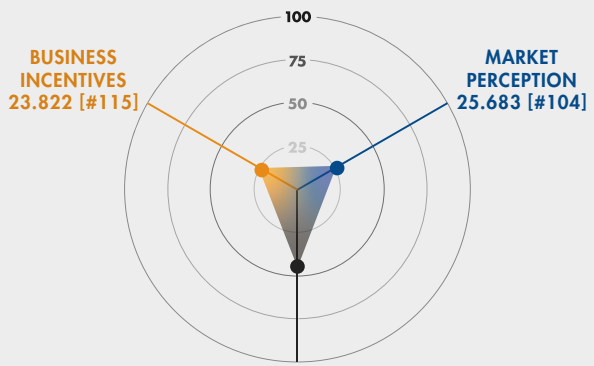
107. Liberia

GLOBAL RANK
#107

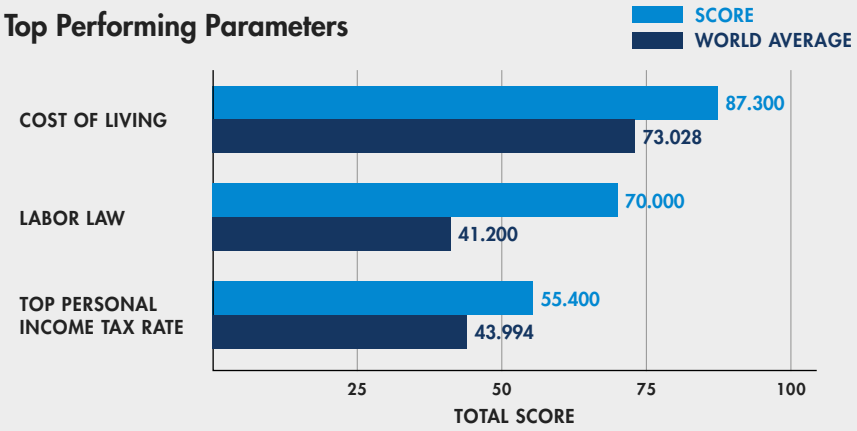
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#25

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Liberia ranks 4th in Western Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness.

- Liberia ranks 6th in Western Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- The country ranks 5th in Western Africa under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting comparatively supportive conditions for establishing and running companies within the subregion.
- The Business Incentives Pillar represents an area where Liberia has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- Liberia ranks 4th in Western Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement, pointing to relatively favorable regional accessibility conditions.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Liberia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Liberia presents a business environment shaped by cost advantages and improving operational accessibility, alongside relatively stronger regional performance in cross-border mobility within Western Africa.

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Country Overview

Liberia's economic narrative is increasingly defined by steady reform, renewed investment planning, and a gradual shift toward more structured industrial development. Recent years have seen the government focus on improving the regulatory foundations of commerce, strengthening the institutions that support market entry, and modernizing administrative processes. For innovators evaluating frontier markets, this direction offers a clearer sense of Liberia's long-term orientation.

The country's business landscape is anchored by a set of incentives designed to support activity in priority sectors. Special Economic Zones and Free Zone regimes form part of this strategy, providing regulated environments where companies benefit from simplified procedures and purpose-built infrastructure. These instruments are complemented by an investment code that allows certain projects to secure tailored conditions when aligned with national development objectives, particularly in areas such as manufacturing, logistics, and export-led activity.

Access for foreign founders and investors follows established business pathways. Entry procedures have been simplified through measures such as visa-on-arrival options and streamlined re-entry arrangements, which accommodate both exploratory visits and ongoing commercial engagement. These mechanisms reduce friction and allow companies to build local presence at a pace suited to their operational needs.

Institutional capacity continues to expand. The National Investment Commission supports investors through guidance on procedures and facilitation of major projects. The Liberia Special Economic Zones Authority oversees zone development and administers related incentives, while the Ministry of Commerce and Industry shapes industrial policy and manages programmes for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. These bodies collectively reinforce the foundations for business formation and longer-term activity.

Together, Liberia's reform efforts, emerging industrial platforms, and gradually strengthening institutions contribute to a business environment that emphasises predictability, access, and structured facilitation for companies exploring opportunities in the wider West African region.



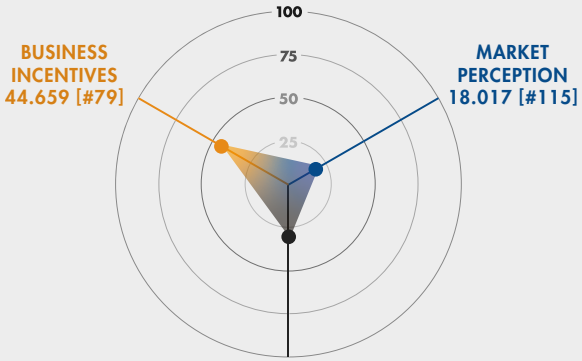
108. Tajikistan

GLOBAL RANK
#108

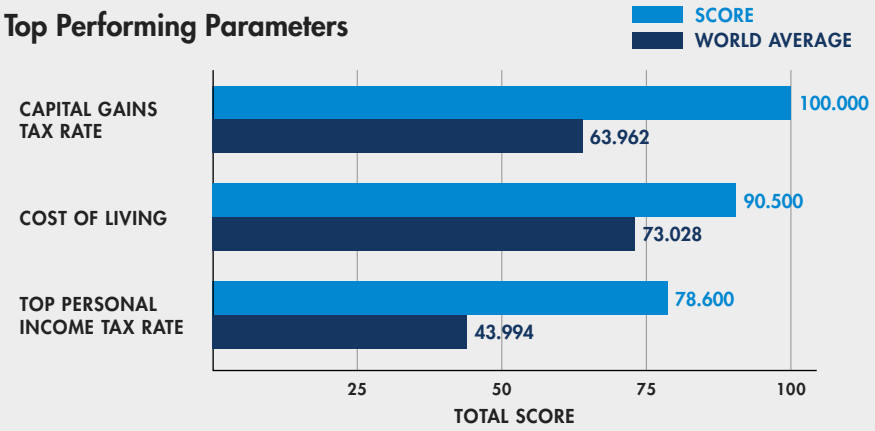
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#23

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Tajikistan ranks 3rd in Central Asia in Taxation.

- Tajikistan ranks 4th in Central Asia in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- The country ranks 3rd in Central Asia and 4th in Asia Pacific in the Taxation Functional Category, which evaluates corporate, personal, and capital-gains tax conditions, reflecting comparatively favorable tax-related assessments.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Tajikistan has scope to further strengthen its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, Corporate Tax Rate, and Capital Gains Tax Rate contribute positively to Tajikistan's overall assessment.
- Overall, Tajikistan presents a business environment characterized by competitive tax conditions, alongside opportunities to improve digital-enabling foundations.

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Country Overview

Tajikistan is shaping a more supportive business environment through targeted help for small and medium-sized enterprises and a slowly expanding digital sector. Current initiatives focus on giving entrepreneurs basic operational support and access to early-stage financing.

The tax system uses differentiated rules, with obligations varying by sector and company size. SMEs, producers of goods, and eligible technology or digital startups can choose simplified turnover-based regimes. These lighter systems help young firms manage costs and preserve cash flow during their first phases of growth.

Foreign entrepreneurs face a relatively straightforward framework. Non-residents are taxed only on income earned in Tajikistan, and full foreign ownership of local companies is allowed. Profits can be repatriated, and residency is available through business or investment visas. These conditions offer practical ground rules for internationally active founders looking to establish a presence.

Visa options include business and investment categories that allow foreign nationals to operate or invest in local enterprises. Simplified procedures make long-term engagement more accessible.



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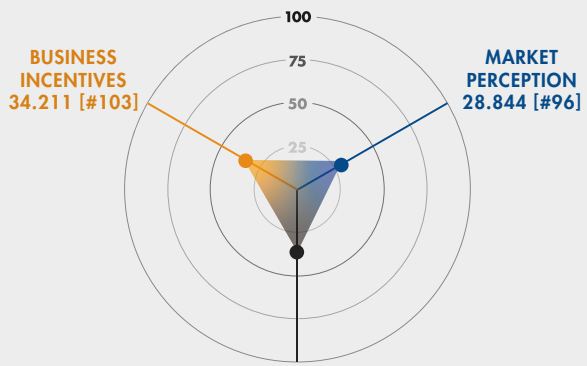
109. Algeria

GLOBAL RANK
#109

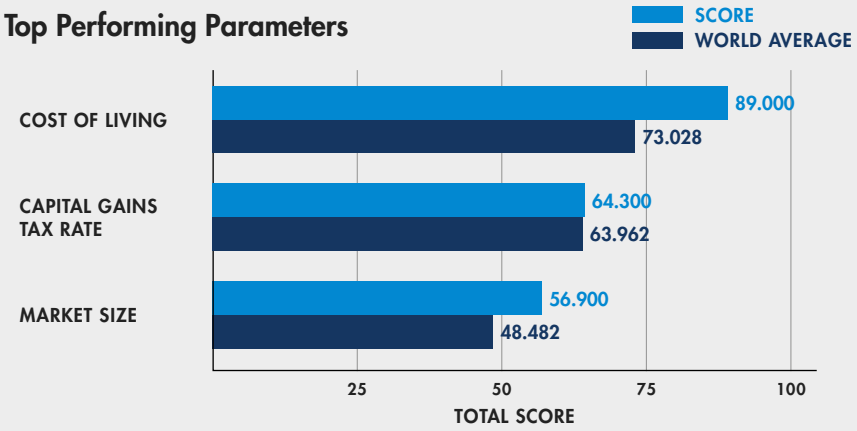
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#26

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Algeria ranks 3rd in Northern Africa in Taxation.

- Algeria ranks 4th in Northern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Algeria's placement in the IBEI stands above its ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, indicating comparatively stronger assessments of its underlying business-environment conditions relative to startup ecosystem output.
- The country ranks 3rd in Northern Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, which assesses governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility, reflecting relatively positive regional sentiment.
- Algeria also ranks 3rd in Northern Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which evaluates corporate, personal, and capital-gains tax conditions, indicating comparatively favorable tax-related assessments within the subregion.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, measuring Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Algeria has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Algeria's overall positioning.
- Overall, Algeria demonstrates a business environment shaped by cost advantages and solid regional perception indicators, alongside opportunities to strengthen its digital infrastructure foundations.

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Country Overview

Algeria's business environment reflects a growing effort to modernize its investment framework while maintaining a structurally stable economy anchored in industry, construction, and tourism. Recent reforms focus on improving the predictability of investment processes and strengthening institutional support for both domestic and foreign investors. This approach aims to make the country an increasingly accessible destination for companies seeking opportunities in North Africa.

Corporate taxation in Algeria is structured by sector and offers competitive features for priority industries. Manufacturing activities benefit from a lower rate, while construction, public works, tourism, and general sectors operate under differentiated obligations. This structure is designed to stimulate investment in productive areas of the economy.

Foreign investors operate within a framework built around clearly established investment entry routes. The country's tax system provides stability through its sector-based structure, and visa pathways for entrepreneurship are available through business and investment channels that facilitate operational presence and local engagement.

Algeria's main competitive strength lies in its institutional support for investment. The Algerian Agency for Investment Promotion functions as a one-stop shop for investors and coordinates the implementation of investment policies. Through this structure, investors can obtain guidance, approvals, and administrative facilitation in a consolidated manner. The agency reflects Algeria's broader policy objective of streamlining procedures and enhancing transparency.

Algeria's evolving investment promotion framework and prioritisation of key sectors provide a solid foundation for businesses seeking long-term, structured entry into the Algerian market.



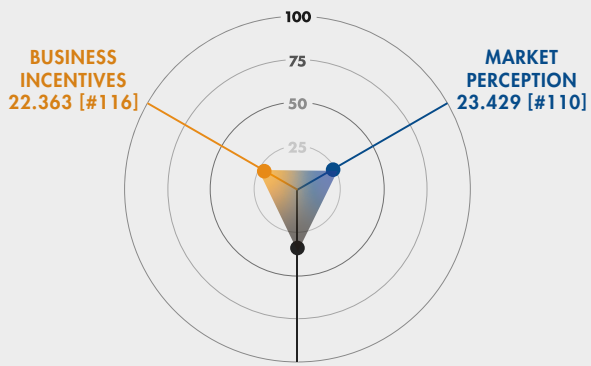
110. Guinea

GLOBAL RANK
#110

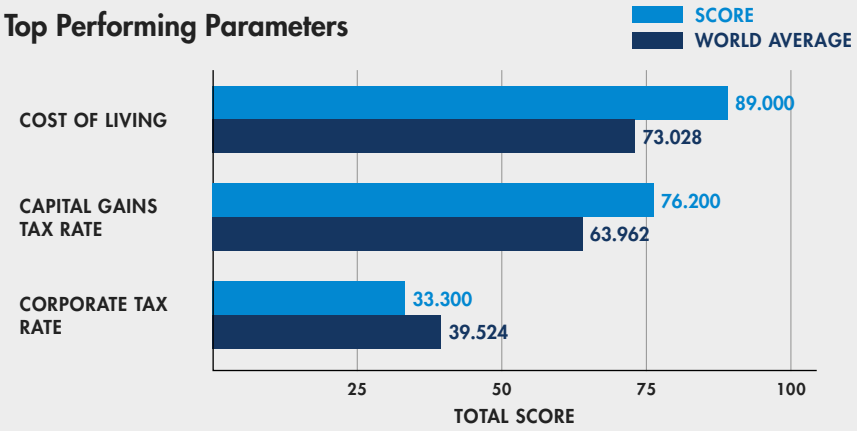
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#27

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Guinea ranks 4th in Western Africa in the Taxation.

- Guinea ranks 7th in Western Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- The country ranks 4th in Western Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which evaluates corporate, personal, and capital-gains tax conditions, indicating relatively favorable tax-related assessments within the subregion.
- Guinea also places 6th in Western Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement, reflecting moderate regional connectivity.
- The Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, assessing Internet Speed and Internet Freedom, represents an area where Guinea has scope to further strengthen its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Guinea's overall positioning.
- Overall, Guinea presents a business environment characterized by cost advantages and comparatively supportive taxation conditions.

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Country Overview

Guinea's business environment is shaped by a developing investment landscape and ongoing efforts to improve administrative processes for foreign entrepreneurs. The country is gradually strengthening its institutional support for investors and modernizing its entry systems, creating a foundation for a more structured business environment as reforms continue.

Foreign nationals intending to engage in business activities can enter through Guinea's e-visa system, which offers an Entry Visa suitable for commercial and investment-related travel. This pathway supports business mobility within the broader regulatory framework and offers formal access channels for founders planning operational steps in the country.

Governmental actors remain central to shaping the business environment. The national investment administration, often referenced through external guidance such as the US Embassy's investment resources, plays a key role in supporting new investors, providing initial information, and directing businesses through the appropriate procedures. These institutions form the primary interface for foreign founders seeking to establish operations in the country.



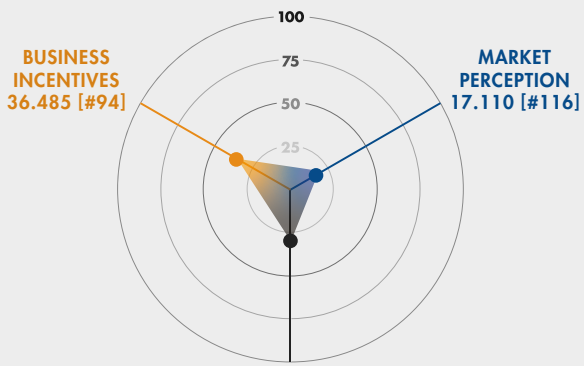
111. Cambodia

GLOBAL RANK
#111

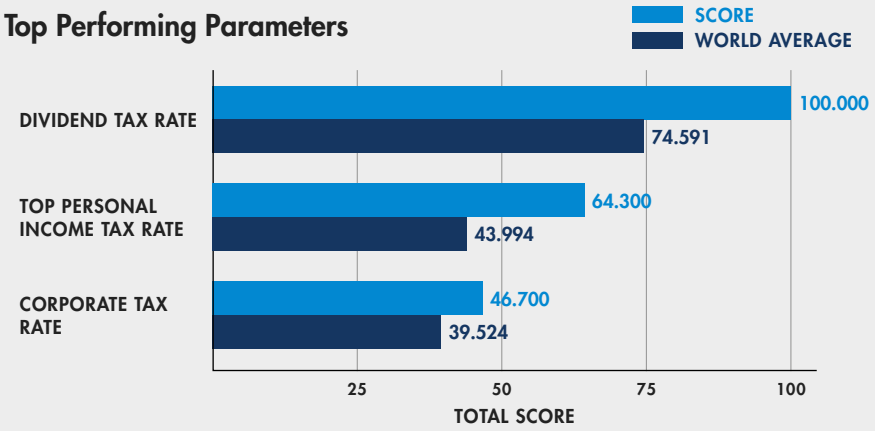
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#24

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Cambodia's startup ecosystem is rapidly emerging, fueled by a young population—over half under 30. This demographic advantage drives digital adoption, entrepreneurial energy, and openness to innovation. With growing access to mobile technology and digital payments, the ecosystem is building a solid foundation for scalable ventures with the potential to transform the country's economic future.



Sokhuy Lay
Deputy Team Leader/
Technical Lead of 3Ei Project,
Swisscontact Cambodia

Cambodia ranks 6th in Southeast Asia in Digital Infrastructure.

- Cambodia ranks 7th in Southeast Asia and ASEAN in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Cambodia's ranking in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 is higher than its placement in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- The country ranks 7th in ASEAN under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting assessed conditions related to establishing and running companies.

- Cambodia places 6th in Southeast Asia in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- It also ranks 7th in Southeast Asia in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting assessments of tax-related conditions.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which evaluates legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where Cambodia has scope to further strengthen its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Dividend Tax Rate and Top Personal Income Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Cambodia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Cambodia demonstrates a business environment characterized by selective tax-related strengths at the Parameter level and opportunities to further enhance regulatory and institutional foundations.

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Country Overview

Cambodia shows an ambition in attracting investment and entrepreneurial activity. This is supported by updated investment legislation and incentive schemes designed to draw higher-value sectors, signaling a clear intention to strengthen the country's position within Southeast Asia.

Yet, the business environment faces challenges that influence how founders and investors evaluate long-term operations in the country. A major issue is the presence of fraudulent commercial activity in parts of the economy, affecting institutional credibility and raising due-diligence requirements for internationally-oriented businesses.

The regulatory framework provides incentives through the Qualified Investment Project (QIP) scheme, offering tax holidays, VAT and duty exemptions, and enhanced deductions for approved projects. These benefits improve the feasibility of larger or export-driven ventures that meet qualification criteria.

Overall, improving credibility, enforcement, and support for high-quality enterprise formation will determine how effectively Cambodia can realise its economic potential.

Our Local Partner

swisscontact



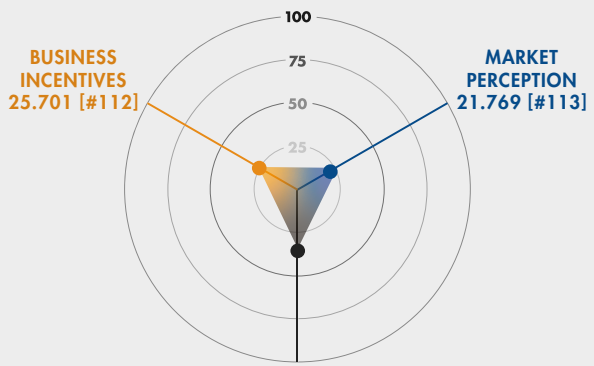
112. Nicaragua

GLOBAL RANK
#112

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#18

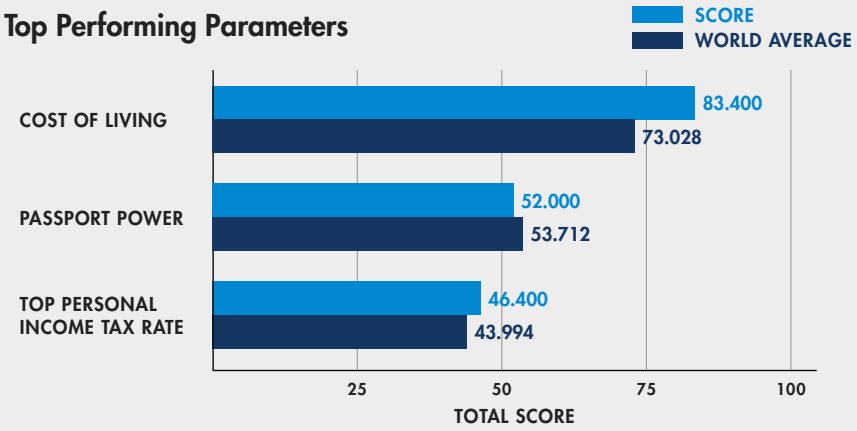
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
35.733 [#112]

Top Performing Parameters



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Nicaragua ranks 3rd in Central America in Taxation.

- Nicaragua ranks 6th in Central America in the IBEI, placing it in the lower half of business-environment performers within the subregion.
- The country ranks 3rd in Central America in the Taxation Functional Category, which assesses tax-related conditions across corporate, personal, and capital-income measures in a regional context.
- Nicaragua also places 4th in Central America in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- The Regulation & Governance Functional Category, evaluating legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks, represents an area where Nicaragua has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, the Top Personal Income Tax Rate is assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Nicaragua's overall positioning.
- Overall, Nicaragua demonstrates a business environment shaped by taxation strengths, alongside opportunities to further strengthen institutional and regulatory foundations.

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Country Overview

Nicaragua's economic environment is shaped by its territorial tax system, which creates favourable conditions for internationally oriented founders and investors. This system allows income earned outside the country to remain untaxed, providing a practical advantage for individuals with global or remote revenue streams. For some founders, this functions as a de facto non-domicile structure and provides a level of flexibility uncommon in the region.

Corporate taxation follows a straightforward framework with a corporate income tax applied to net taxable income. Nicaragua's free trade zones operate under separate incentive schemes, and companies established within these zones may qualify for extensive tax exemptions and multi-year relief periods that are significant for export-oriented or manufacturing operations.

Residency pathways also influence the business environment. Nicaragua offers an investor residency programme that requires a defined minimum investment in real estate, business activities, or approved agricultural or forestry projects. This structure makes residency accessible to early-stage founders or small investors. The country also provides an Entrepreneur Residency Visa for individuals planning to carry out entrepreneurial activities, broadening the options for foreign applicants who wish to establish long term operations.

These residency mechanisms are supported administratively by the General Directorate of Immigration and Foreigners, which oversees visa issuance and residency procedures under the national immigration framework.



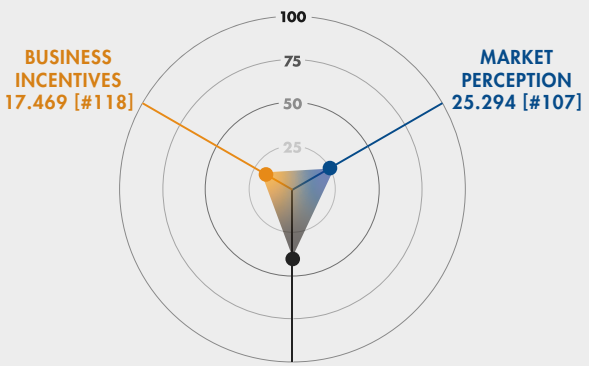
113. Mauritania

GLOBAL RANK
#113

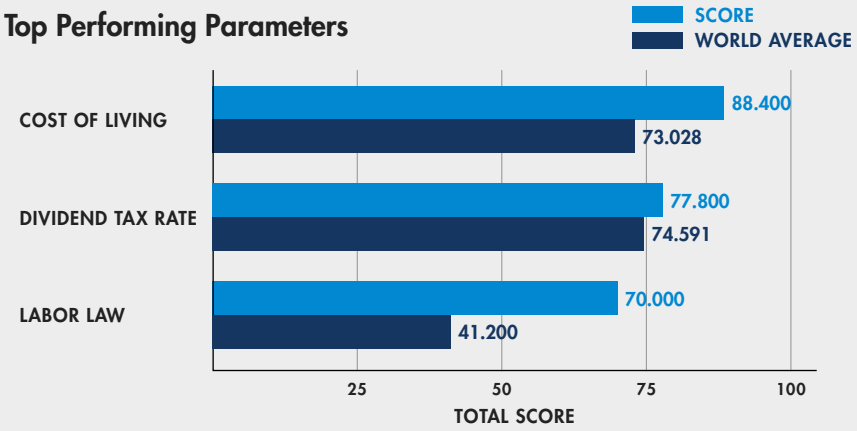
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#28

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Mauritania ranks 5th in Western Africa in Taxation.

- Mauritania ranks 8th in Western Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, which assesses conditions related to establishing and running companies, Mauritania ranks 7th in Western Africa.
- The country also ranks 7th in Western Africa under the Market Perception Pillar, which captures assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility.
- The country ranks 5th in Western Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which evaluates tax conditions.
- Mauritania also places 5th in Western Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, reflecting assessments of cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- At the Parameter level, Cost of Living stands out as a structural strength which Mauritania stands within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Mauritania presents a business environment characterized by cost advantages and mid-range regional performance across taxation, mobility, and operational conditions.

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Country Overview

Mauritania's business environment is shaped by an evolving investment framework that aims to encourage private sector development and attract investors seeking opportunities in a frontier market. The economy relies heavily on natural resources, and recent reforms have focused on improving conditions for small and medium sized enterprises and export-oriented activities. This has created a clearer structure for businesses that wish to enter priority sectors while contributing to national development goals.

The investment code introduces various regimes for companies that meet specific criteria. Small enterprises making qualifying investments can access preferential treatment, and export-zone companies may benefit from incentive frameworks. These targeted regimes are designed to provide a more supportive environment for firms aligned with the country's priority sectors.

Mauritania's personal tax and visa frameworks follow general business and investment pathways, with foreign entrepreneurs typically engaging through established channels linked to operational or export commitments.

The country's approach centers on structured investment incentives that emphasize on-the-ground activity, capital deployment, and contributions to the productive economy. Rather than focusing on internationally branded relocation programs, Mauritania prioritizes activity-based regimes connected to national development objectives.

The Agence de Promotion des Investissements en Mauritanie, the national investment promotion agency, plays a central role in improving the business environment. It manages the country's incentive regimes, supports investor engagement, and provides guidance for enterprises navigating regulatory processes, forming the backbone of institutional support for both domestic and foreign investors.

Overall, Mauritania's business landscape offers incentive-based opportunities for firms prepared to invest and operate locally, supported by a developing institutional framework focused on expanding private sector participation.



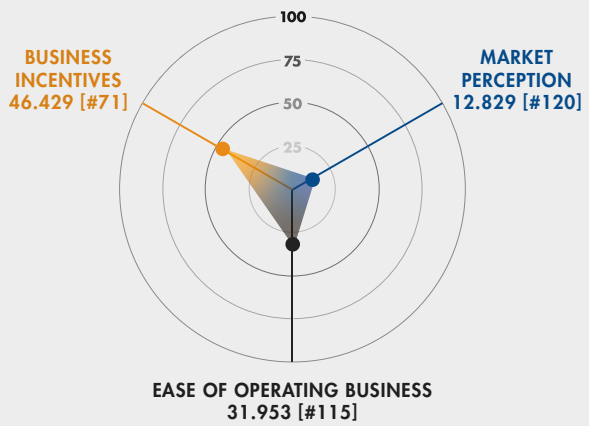
114. Lebanon

GLOBAL RANK
#114

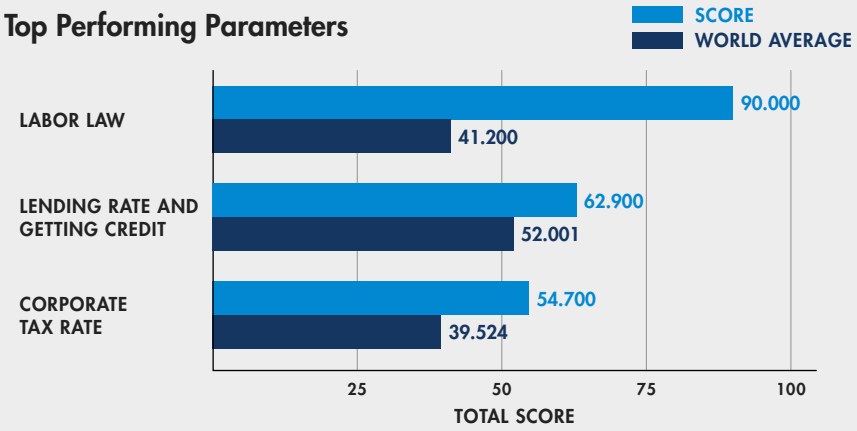
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#29

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Lebanon ranks 6th in the Middle East in Digital Infrastructure.

- Lebanon ranks 11th in the Middle East in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Lebanon ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- Under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, which assesses conditions related to establishing and running companies, Lebanon ranks 11th in the Middle East.
- The country ranks 6th in the Middle East in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting comparatively stronger assessments of Internet Speed and Internet Freedom Parameters.
- Lebanon places 9th in the Middle East in the Taxation Functional Category, which evaluates tax conditions.
- It also ranks 9th in the Middle East in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, reflecting moderate assessments of cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- At the Parameter level, Lending Rate & Getting Credit and Corporate Tax Rate stand out in the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Lebanon's overall Index profile.
- The Market Perception Pillar, which captures assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility, represents an area where Lebanon has scope to further improve its performance.

- Overall, Lebanon presents a business environment characterized by selective financial and cost-related strengths, supported by comparatively solid digital conditions.

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Country Overview

Lebanon is home to an exceptional talent base, with a strong entrepreneurial spirit, fueled by its educational system, global diaspora, and long history of commercial activity. Despite periods of instability, this environment has supported the growth of technology and digital ventures, attracting founders seeking access to regional markets. However, ongoing political and economic instability limits the country's full business potential, with stability being a prerequisite for more ambitious economic initiatives to succeed.

Lebanon's corporate income tax follows a single standard rate for resident companies, but targeted incentives are available through specific economic development programs aimed at fostering growth in key sectors.

The Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL) is one of the key institutions in supporting businesses. Under Investment Law 360, IDAL offers various incentives for qualifying sectors, such as Information Technology, Technology, and Telecommunications. These include tax exemptions and reductions in permit and fee costs within designated zones, helping to improve the financial feasibility of new projects.

The financial sector, led by Banque du Liban (the Central Bank of Lebanon), has also played a key role in fostering entrepreneurship. Circular 331 was introduced to channel funding into startups and the broader knowledge economy, catalyzing early-stage venture investment and strengthening connections between financial institutions and innovation.

In conclusion, Lebanon's business environment has the massive advantage of a skilled talent pool and strong institutional support. However, further political stability will enable the country to unlock its potential as a regional business hub.



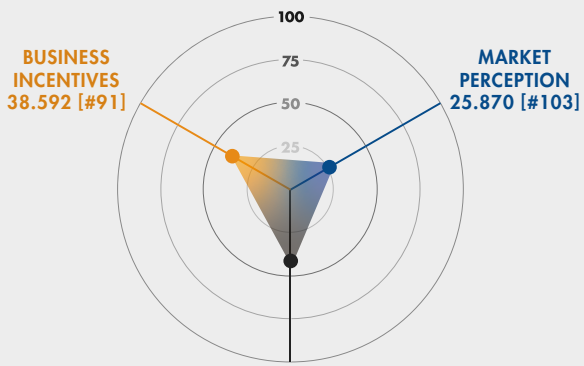
115. Belarus

GLOBAL RANK
#115

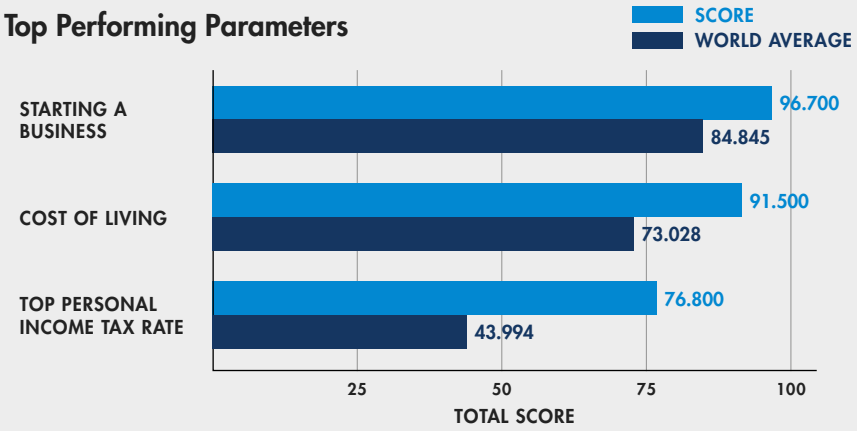
EUROPE RANK
#44

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Belarus ranks within the top 25% of the Index for Starting a Business.

- Belarus ranks 24th in Central & Eastern Europe in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Belarus ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.
- Under the Business Incentives Pillar, which evaluates fiscal and financial incentive conditions, Belarus ranks 23rd in Central & Eastern Europe.
- The country also ranks 23rd in Central & Eastern Europe under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, reflecting assessments of operational and procedural conditions.
- The Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, which measures credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility, represents an area where Belarus has scope to further improve its performance within the Index.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, Starting a Business, and Cost of Living, Belarus stands within the top 25% of the Index.
- Overall, Belarus presents a business environment shaped by selective cost- and tax-related strengths at the Parameter level.

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Country Overview

Belarus has a highly skilled and technically strong population, with a track record of globally successful technology companies originating from the country. However, sustained outflows of entrepreneurs and technology talent have weakened domestic momentum, making improved global integration an important condition for recovery and renewed competitiveness.

The business environment is strongly shaped by a technology-driven narrative centred on the High Technology Park (HTP) in Minsk. The Park serves as the country's flagship platform for IT and software development and is known for its favourable regulatory regime, streamlined procedures, and incentives targeted at founders and technology firms. This framework has positioned Belarus as a specialised base for digital entrepreneurship within the region.

Corporate taxation follows standard national rates, but the High Technology Park operates under a substantially different regime for qualifying startups and technology companies. Residents benefit from a full exemption from corporate profit tax, a significantly reduced personal income tax rate for founders and employees, and relief from value-added tax (VAT) and several other levies. These measures create a highly competitive fiscal environment for companies engaged in software development, digital services, and other approved technology activities.

The High Technology Park also offers advantages related to residency and work permissions. Founders, investors, and qualified specialists associated with the Park can access expedited procedures for residence and work permits. This structure supports international recruitment and allows foreign decision-makers to operate locally while managing their ventures.

Institutionally, the Park functions as a central regulatory and ecosystem driver. Additional organisations support innovation and business development, including the Belarusian Innovative Foundation, which provides long-term repayable financing for innovation projects, and the State Committee for Science and Technology, which supports research and development through grants and policy initiatives. Financial institutions such as Belagroprombank and SME Bank complement this framework by offering financing instruments for early-stage and growing companies.

Overall, Belarus retains strong technological foundations and proven entrepreneurial capacity. Reconnecting with global markets and creating conditions that encourage talent retention will be essential to translating these strengths into a more resilient and internationally competitive business environment.



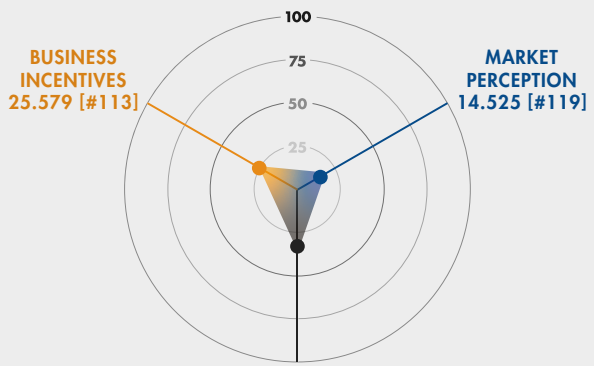
116. Angola

GLOBAL RANK
#116

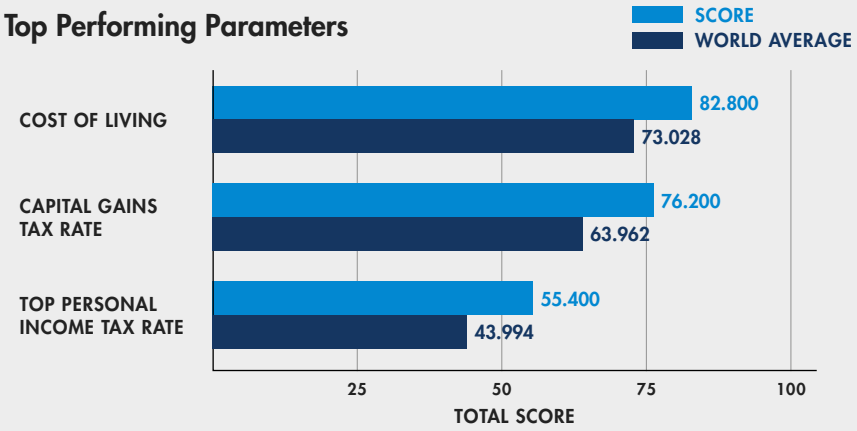
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#30

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Angola is one of the largest economies in Africa with a young population. The country is focused on the diversification besides oil and gas sector, offering great growth potential for investor, particularly due to its regional integration. The country's entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem have been more atractive. Recently, there have been notable milestones such as the approval of the Startup Law and the successful investment round of the startup ANDA (mobility solutions) of approximately US$3 million.



José Bucassa
Founder, H2i - Hub To Innovation

Angola leads Central Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Angola ranks 1st in Central Africa in the IBEI 2026, representing the highest overall business-environment assessment within its subregion.
- Angola ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup-ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment conditions.

- Under the Business Incentives Pillar, which evaluates fiscal and financial incentive conditions, Angola ranks 1st in Central Africa, reflecting the strongest regional assessments in this dimension.
- The country also ranks 1st in Central Africa and 5th in Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which measures corporate, personal, and capital-related tax conditions.
- Angola places 1st in Central Africa in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting comparatively stronger assessments of Internet Speed and digital-access conditions within the subregion.
- The Market Perception Pillar, which captures assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility, represents an area where Angola has scope to further improve its performance.
- At the Parameter level, the Top Personal Income Tax Rate ranks within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Angola's overall positioning.
- Overall, Angola demonstrates a business environment characterized by strong regional performance in incentives, taxation, and digital infrastructure, alongside opportunities to strengthen perception-related dimensions within the broader African context.

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Country Overview

Angola is strengthening its investment climate through reforms aimed at attracting foreign capital and supporting private sector development. Recent economic policy emphasizes diversification, gradually creating a more structured environment for business formation and expansion.

The Private Investment Law provides three pathways for investment approval: the prior declaration regime, the special regime, and the contractual regime. These frameworks offer differing levels of negotiation and facilitation depending on the size and strategic relevance of the proposed activity.

Foreign founders have access to an Investor Visa route, which is tied to the country's investment approval processes. Applicants typically require an investor certificate as part of the process, reflecting Angola's preference for structured entry through verified investment commitments. This visa pathway is designed for individuals establishing businesses or contributing capital to Angolan ventures.

Business support remains focused on investment facilitation and emerging innovation initiatives. Organizations such as H2innovation are involved in strengthening entrepreneurship and enabling business development.. In addition, broader institutional reforms and investment-related legislation continue to shape the operating environment for both domestic and foreign founders.

Angola's business environment is defined by its investment law framework, investor visa pathways and gradual reforms aimed at attracting capital. While founder-specific incentives are limited, the evolving policy landscape and structured investment regimes provide a foundation for businesses seeking to enter or expand in the Angolan market.

Our Local Partner

H2 Hub to Innovation
Delivery Value



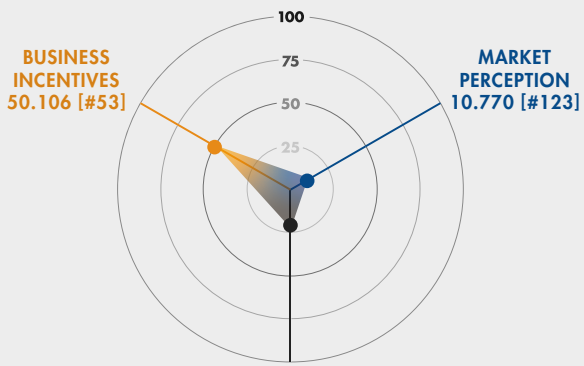
117. Iraq

GLOBAL RANK
#117

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#31

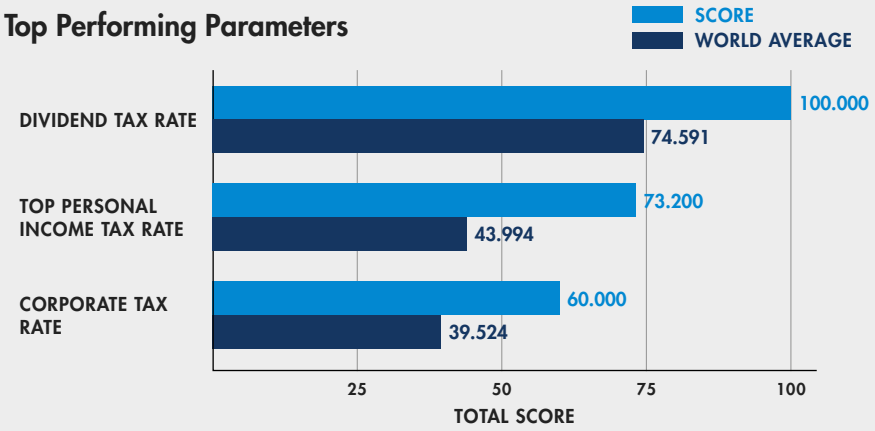
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
20.931 [#119]

Top Performing Parameters



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Iraq stands within the top 25% of the Index for Tax-related Parameters.

- Iraq ranks 12th in the Middle East in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Under the Business Incentives Pillar, which evaluates fiscal and financial incentive conditions, Iraq ranks 8th in the Arab League.
- The country places 7th in both the Arab League and the Middle East in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting assessments of tax-related conditions.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate, Dividend Tax Rate, and Corporate Tax Rate stand out within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Iraq's overall Index profile.
- Overall, Iraq presents a business environment shaped by comparatively favorable tax parameters and incentive assessments within the regional context.

For deeper insights or customized analysis of 125 countries' business environments, explore our **Research Membership**.

Country Overview

Iraq is recovering from a prolonged period of instability and is gradually shaping a more structured investment environment. As conditions stabilize, the country has the potential to become a fast-growing economy, supported by its scale, resource base, and growing institutional focus on formalizing business activity.

The business environment is increasingly defined by a rules-based investment framework that combines nationwide incentives with the distinct administrative environment of the Kurdistan Region. Efforts to standardise procedures and clarify investor pathways are intended to provide greater long-term operating certainty for companies entering the market.

An example of these efforts is Investment Law No. 13 which gives licensed projects multi-year exemptions from taxes and fees, with extended periods available when local ownership is involved. Capital goods used during project development can also qualify for relief, helping reduce early operational costs. Together, these measures provide investors with a more predictable legal foundation for planning and expansion.

The Kurdistan Region adds an additional layer through regionally administered incentives and dedicated investor entry routes that facilitate business establishment. These mechanisms complement the national framework and expand options for internationally active founders engaging through licensed investment structures.

Several organisations contribute to the country's evolving entrepreneurial landscape. The National Investment Commission oversees investment licensing and acts as a central point of contact for incoming projects.

Overall, Iraq's business environment is defined by structured incentives, regional differentiation, and a growing support ecosystem, with continued stabilization key to translating these frameworks into sustained economic growth and increased attractiveness for investors and entrepreneurs.





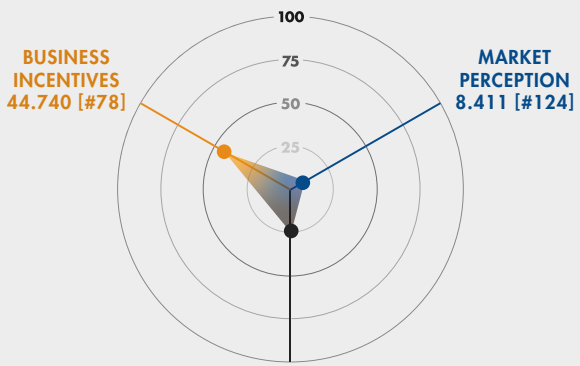
118. Myanmar

GLOBAL RANK
#118

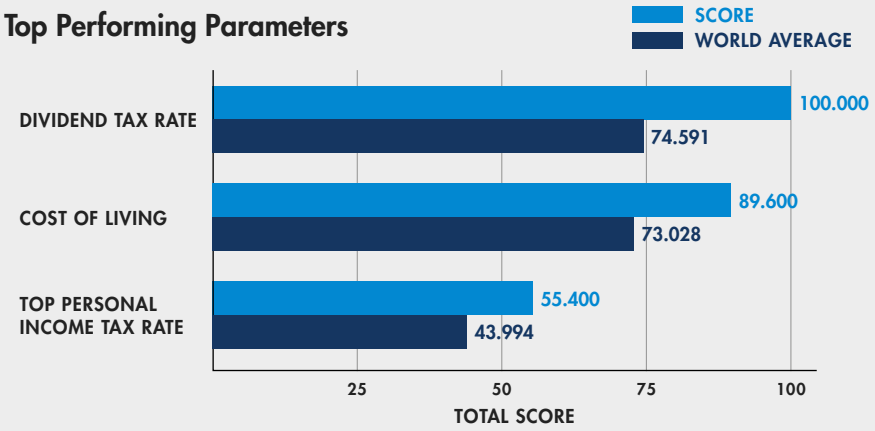
ASIA PACIFIC RANK
#25

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Myanmar ranks 8th in Southeast Asia and ASEAN in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- Myanmar ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup-ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment assessments.
- Under the Business Incentives Pillar, which evaluates fiscal and financial incentive conditions, Myanmar ranks 7th in Southeast Asia.
- The country places 8th in Asia Pacific and 4th in Southeast Asia in the Taxation Functional Category, indicating relatively favorable tax-related evaluations.
- At the Parameter level, Dividend Tax Rate and Cost of Living are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Myanmar's overall positioning.
- Overall, Myanmar presents a business environment characterized by selective cost- and tax-related strengths.

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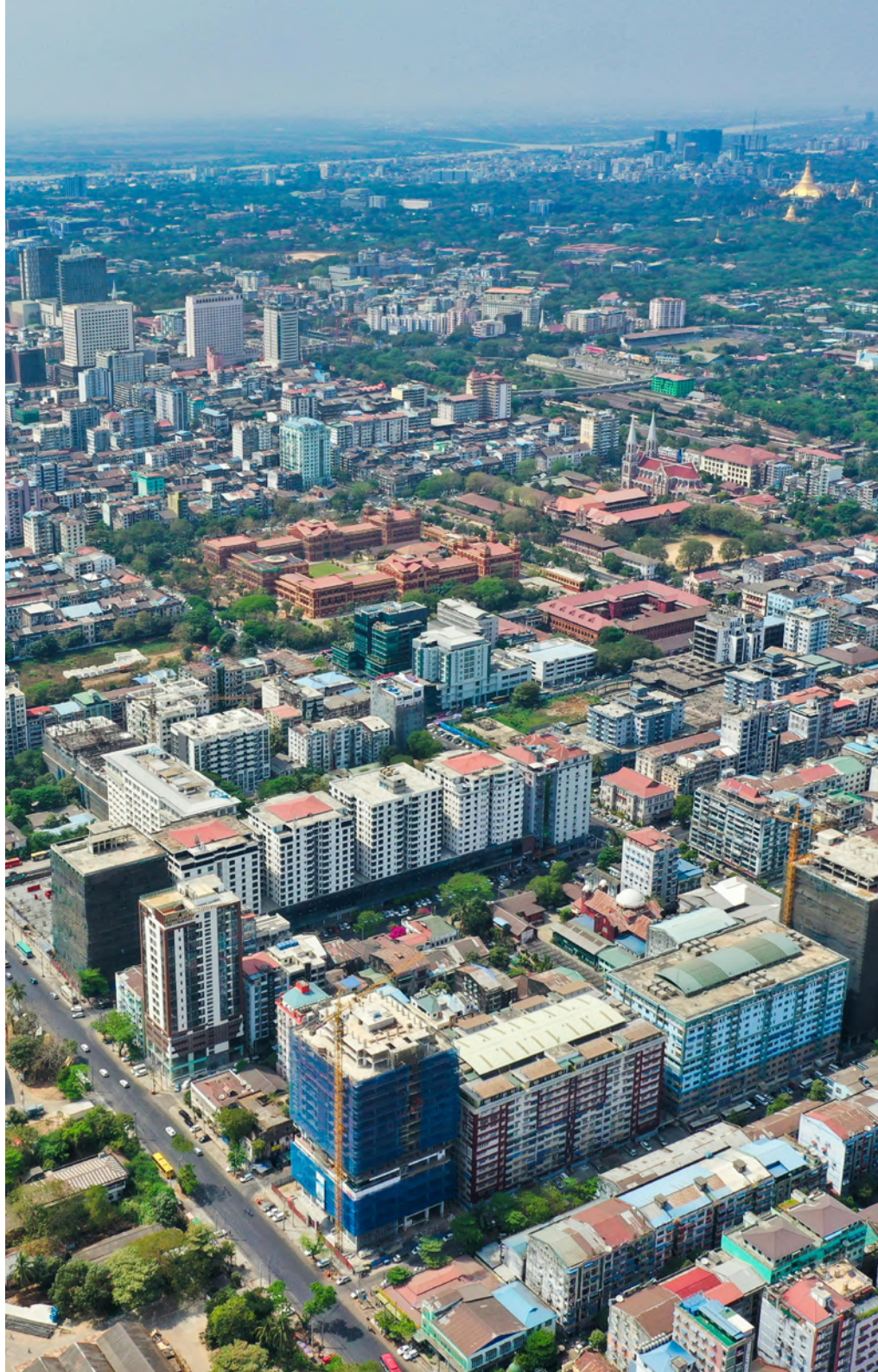
Country Overview

For a period of time, Myanmar's economic opening and regulatory modernization created momentum toward a more structured and investment-oriented economy. Recent instability has slowed progress and reduced international engagement.

Corporate taxation follows a standard framework; however, reduced obligations are available for listed companies and certain small and medium-sized enterprises. Foreign investors with approved projects may access fiscal incentives such as tax holidays, accelerated depreciation, reduced taxation on export-oriented profits, deductions for research and development, and exemptions from customs duties for eligible imports. Such measures support long-term capital investment.

On an institutional level, the Myanmar Investment Commission oversees investment approvals and incentive allocation, and the SME Development Center offers training, funding programmes, and advocacy for smaller enterprises.

Myanmar has economic potential, and sustained stability combined with renewed international integration could create a more enabling business environment.





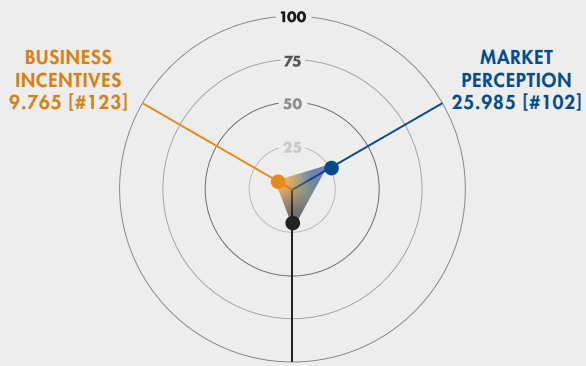
119. Zimbabwe

GLOBAL RANK
#119

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#32

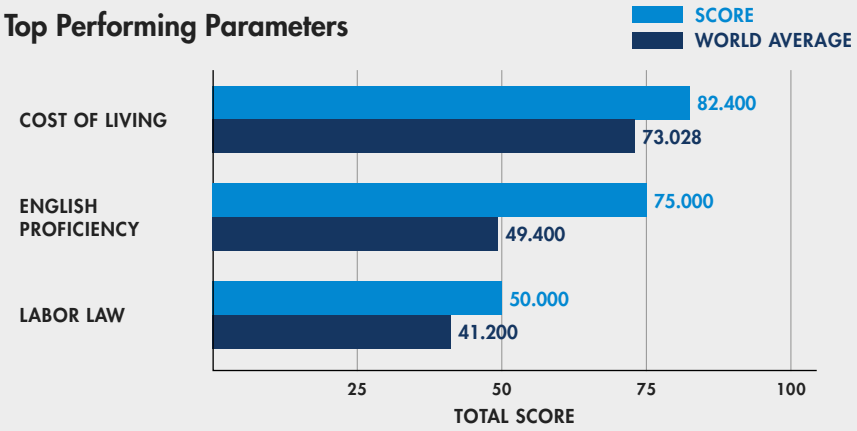
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
19.948 [#120]

Top Performing Parameters



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Zimbabwe ranks 3rd in Southern Africa in Taxation.

- Zimbabwe ranks 4th in Southern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Zimbabwe ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment assessments.
- Under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, which assesses conditions related to establishing and running companies, Zimbabwe ranks 4th in Southern Africa.
- The country places 3rd in Southern Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, reflecting comparatively favorable tax-related assessments within the subregion.
- Zimbabwe also ranks 3rd in Southern Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- At the Parameter level, English Proficiency and Cost of Living are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Zimbabwe's overall positioning.
- Overall, Zimbabwe presents a business environment characterized by cost advantages, strong regional accessibility, and relatively supportive operational and tax conditions within Southern Africa.

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Country Overview

Zimbabwe's business environment benefits from a large domestic market, and a central position in Southern Africa's trade and transport networks. Agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and services each contribute to the country's long-term economic structure, forming the backdrop for commercial activity and regional exchange.

Within this setting, policy frameworks support sectors linked to industrial development and export capacity. Special Economic Zones are part of this broader economic architecture, offering designated environments for production and trade without anchoring the narrative to specific incentives or administrative mechanisms. A multicurrency system continues to facilitate everyday business transactions and provides a foundation for commercial planning.

Institutional support is delivered through national bodies responsible for investment facilitation, economic administration, and regulatory clarity. The Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency serves as a key interface for firms seeking guidance, while the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority plays a role in maintaining predictable administrative procedures.

Taken together, these elements describe a business environment defined by sectoral diversity, regional connectivity, and institutions that provide structure for both domestic and internationally oriented enterprises.



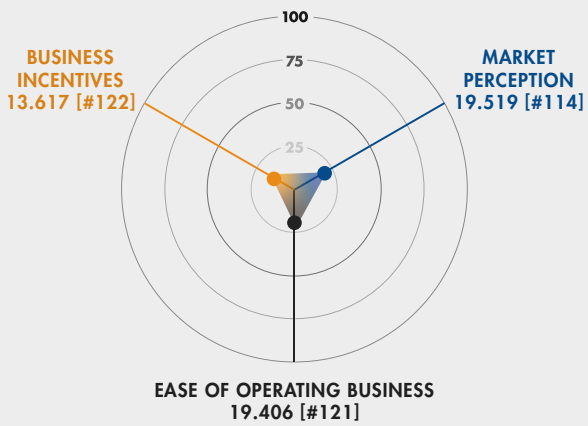
120. Ethiopia

GLOBAL RANK
#120

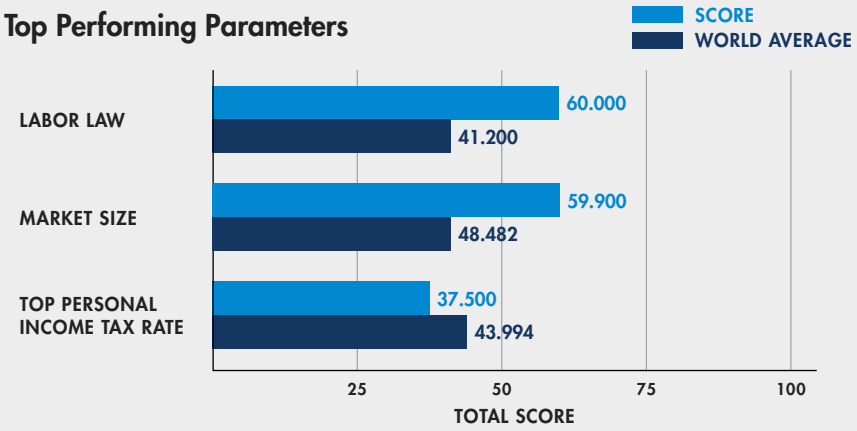
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#33

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Ethiopia ranks 4th in Eastern Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness.

- Ethiopia ranks 5th in Eastern Africa in the IBEI 2026, placing it in the mid-range of business-environment performers within the subregion.
- Ethiopia ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment assessments.
- The country ranks 4th in Eastern Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- At the Parameter level, Market Size stands out as a structural strength, with a score in the 50–75% range of the Index, contributing positively to Ethiopia's overall positioning.
- Overall, Ethiopia presents a business environment shaped by its scale advantages and regional accessibility.

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Country Overview

Ethiopia combines a large population, strong human-capital potential, and clear government ambition to drive long-term economic growth. Its large domestic market and position within East Africa give entrepreneurs potential access to a wider regional consumer base and key trade corridors. Moreover, businesses can benefit from competitive labour

costs and a growing workforce.

Recently, Ethiopia has increased its emphasis on digitalisation through the Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy, which guides reforms in digital infrastructure, skills development, and enterprise creation. This approach has made innovation a more visible part of the country's economic agenda. At the institutional level, the Ethiopian Investment Commission provides incentives to investors, while industrial parks offer structured settings for manufacturing and export-oriented activity. At the same time, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology oversees business-capability programmes and national innovation policy.

Overall, Ethiopia offers a business environment with significant scale and ambition. More consistent and concrete reforms, especially in regulatory implementation, will help the country fully unlock its economic potential.





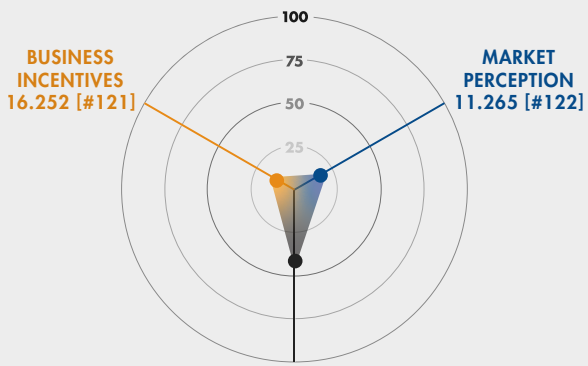
121. Cameroon

GLOBAL RANK
#121

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#34

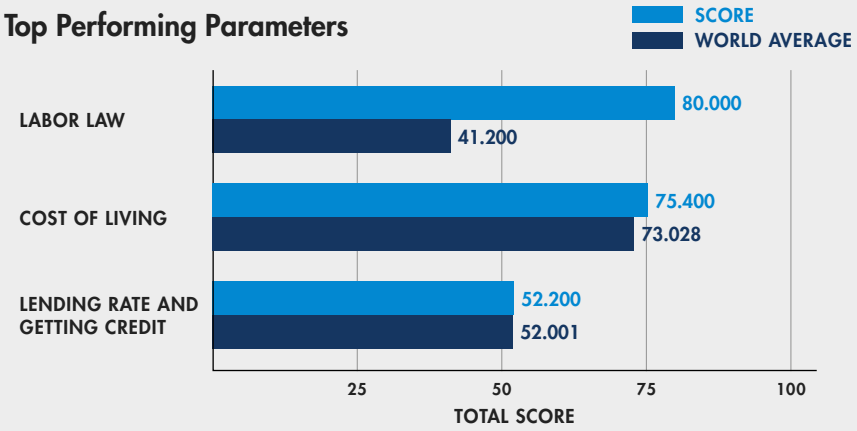
Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



EASE OF OPERATING BUSINESS
41.888 [#107]

Top Performing Parameters



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Cameroon leads Central Africa in Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure.

- Cameroon ranks 2nd in Central Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Cameroon ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment assessments.
- Under the Ease of Operating a Business Pillar, which assesses conditions related to establishing and running companies, Cameroon ranks 1st in Central Africa, reflecting the strongest regional evaluation.
- The country also ranks 1st in Central Africa in the Regulation & Governance Functional Category, which evaluates legal, regulatory, and procedural frameworks.
- Cameroon places 1st in Central Africa in the Access to Capital & Financial Infrastructure Functional Category, reflecting comparatively strong regional assessments of credit availability, banking connectivity, investment channels, and financial-tool accessibility.
- At the Parameter level, Cameroon ranks within the top 25% of the Index for Labor Law, reflecting flexibility in hiring and firing regulations.
- Overall, Cameroon presents a business environment characterized by strong regional performance across operational, regulatory, and capital-access dimensions, supported by comparatively flexible labor-market conditions within Central Africa.

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Country Overview

Cameroon has been building a more supportive environment for entrepreneurship through public sector initiatives and partnerships that encourage digital adoption, skills development, and innovation. Efforts such as the National Incubator and the NOWEDIF Digital Entrepreneurship Program reflect a broader ambition to strengthen the role of young companies in economic diversification. These programs contribute to an emerging narrative around digital entrepreneurship and capacity building.

Corporate taxation applies under a standard framework. Innovative technology startups may access special incentives designed to reduce regulatory and financial barriers during early stages of growth. Foreign investors may also benefit from reduced withholding obligations on dividends and interest when tax treaties apply, which can improve the position of cross border investment structures.

Residence and entry pathways for entrepreneurs are based on general business, work, and investor visa categories. These routes enable foreign founders to establish companies, engage in operational management, and maintain long term presence in the country once standard requirements are met.

Institutional support for entrepreneurship is centered around several key organizations. The Ministry of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises oversees national policy and runs the National Incubator, which provides training, incubation, and support services for new ventures. The Cameroon Business Forum functions as a public-private dialogue platform advocating regulatory improvements and business environment reforms. Financing for young companies is strengthened by the SME Bank, which tailors financial products to startup and small enterprise needs.



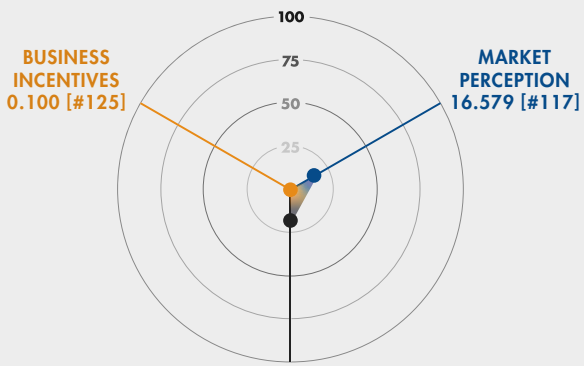
122. Congo

GLOBAL RANK
#122

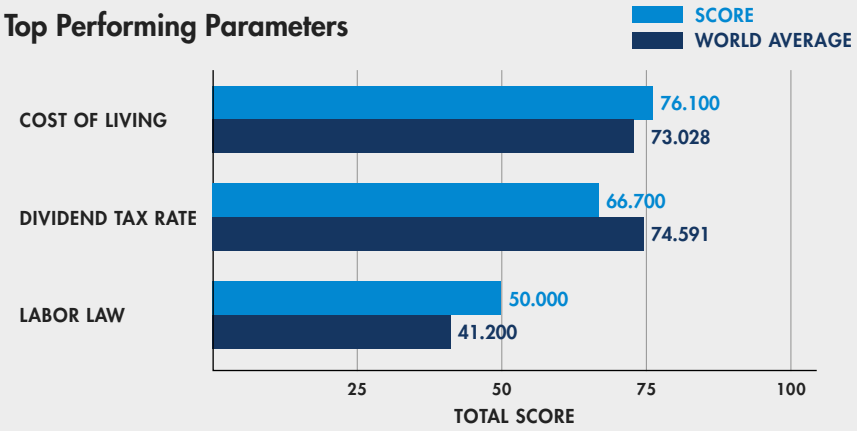
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#35

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Congo leads Central Africa in Market Perception.

- Congo ranks 3rd in Central Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Under the Market Perception Pillar, which captures assessments related to governance, stability, mobility, and international accessibility, Congo ranks 1st in Central Africa.
- The country also ranks 1st in Central Africa in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- Congo places 2nd in Central Africa in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which evaluates Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- At the Parameter level, Labor Law records a score in the 50–75% range of the Index, reflecting assessed flexibility in hiring and firing regulations.
- Overall, Congo demonstrates a business environment shaped by strong cross-border accessibility and enabling digital infrastructure within Central Africa.

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Country Overview

Congo's business environment is influenced by efforts to strengthen investment promotion and develop a more structured platform for entrepreneurship and enterprise growth. The country's shift toward Special Economic Zones has become a defining element of its economic narrative, as these zones provide clearer rules for investors and support activity in trade, processing, and logistics.

Corporate taxation is applied through a standard framework, and companies are subject to minimum tax requirements except for micro and small enterprises. Foreign-sourced income may be exempt under territorial principles, which can benefit internationally active investors.

Investors have access to specific residency pathways. A business visa is available for individuals engaged in commercial activity, and an investor residence permit can be obtained through the Agence de Promotion des Investissements du Congo. This process supports foreign nationals who establish qualifying projects.

Special Economic Zones form a central component of Congo's incentive strategy. These zones offer relief from income tax, value-added tax, and customs duties, together with simplified import and export procedures. This structure reduces administrative burdens and project costs for companies in manufacturing, distribution, and related sectors.

Institutional support is provided by several organizations. The Agence de Promotion des Investissements du Congo functions as a one-stop shop for business registration and investment incentives. The Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie, d'Agriculture et des Métiers contributes through advocacy and SME assistance. The Ministère des PME et de l'Artisanat focuses on entrepreneurship policy and support for micro-enterprises. Innovation activity is supported by the Global Technology Hub, which provides incubation services and coworking facilities.

Overall, Congo combines tax-based incentives, institutional support, and developing innovation infrastructure to encourage investment and business growth.



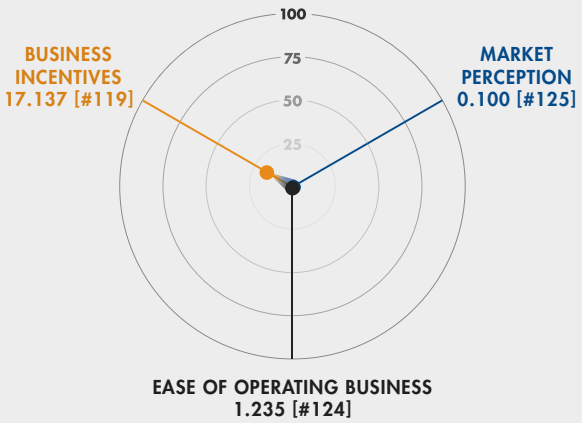
123. Somalia

GLOBAL RANK
#123

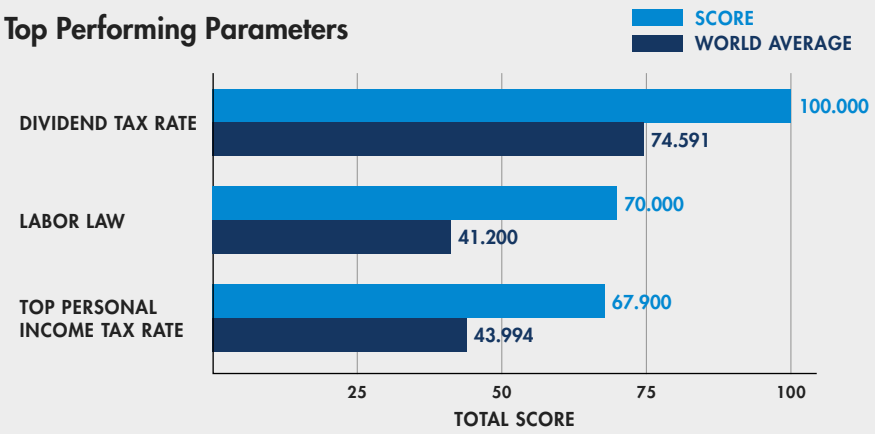
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#36

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Somalia ranks 2nd in Eastern Africa in Taxation.

- Somalia ranks 6th in Eastern Africa in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Under the Business Incentives Pillar, which evaluates fiscal and financial incentive conditions, Somalia ranks 4th in Eastern Africa.
- The country ranks 2nd in Eastern Africa and 10th in Africa in the Taxation Functional Category, which tax conditions.
- Somalia also places 5th in Eastern Africa in the Digital Infrastructure Functional Category, which evaluates Internet Speed and Internet Freedom.
- At the Parameter level, Top Personal Income Tax Rate and Dividend Tax Rate are assessed within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Somalia's tax-related profile.
- Labor Law is also assessed within the top 25% of the Index, reflecting measured flexibility in hiring and firing regulations.
- Overall, Somalia presents a business environment shaped by relatively favorable tax parameters and enabling digital infrastructure within Eastern Africa.

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Country Overview

Somalia continues to demonstrate entrepreneurial resilience, with pockets of private-sector activity emerging despite long-standing structural challenges.

However, the business environment still faces institutional and stability-related limitations, which affect scalability, investment confidence, and long-term planning. Regulatory and administrative frameworks are in an ongoing process of development. Moreover, while company registration and taxation follow generally applicable rules, the overall environment lacks the predictability and depth required for large-scale or sustained foreign investment.

International organisations help to create a more conducive business environment. For instance, The Response Innovation Lab plays a notable role by supporting innovation initiatives, encouraging problem-solving approaches, and connecting Somali entrepreneurs with international networks.

Overall, Somalia's business environment reflects strong entrepreneurial intent alongside structural fragility. Greater stability and continued institutional strengthening would be decisive in enabling the country to translate existing entrepreneurial energy into sustained economic activity and wider investor engagement.

Our Local Partner

RESPONSE INNOVATION LAB





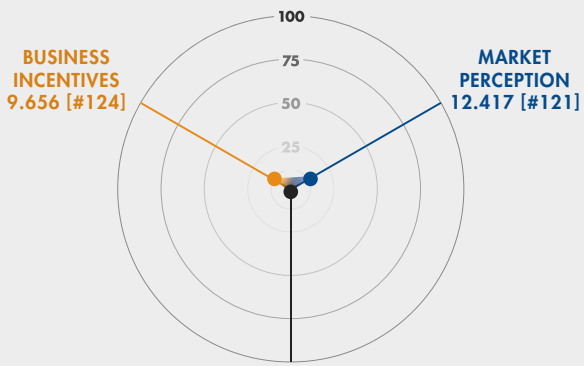
124. Venezuela

GLOBAL RANK
#124

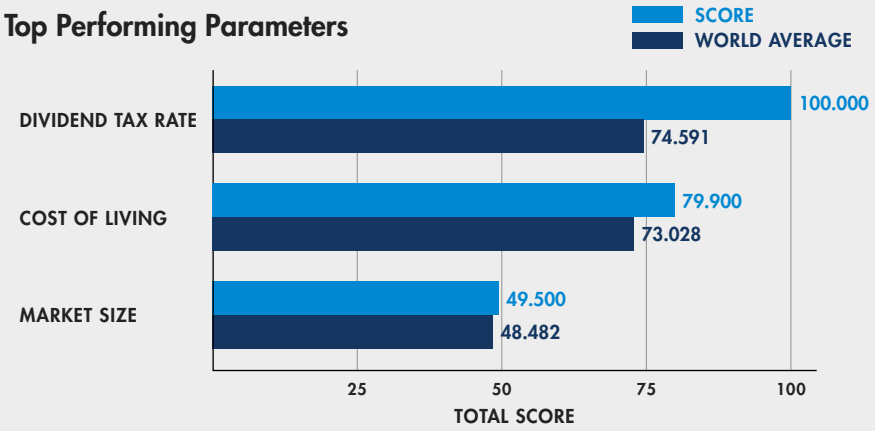
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN RANK
#19

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Venezuela ranks within the top 25% of the Index in Dividend Tax Rate.

- Venezuela ranks 10th in South America in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.
- Venezuela ranks higher in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 than in the IBEI, indicating comparatively stronger startup-ecosystem outcomes relative to its broader business-environment assessments.
- The country ranks 9th in South America in the Taxation Functional Category, which evaluates tax conditions.
- At the Parameter level, the Dividend Tax Rate ranks within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Venezuela's tax-related profile.
- Overall, Venezuela presents a business environment characterized by selective tax-parameter advantages within the South American context.

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Country Overview

Venezuela has significant talent and economic potential that has been heavily affected by prolonged instability. Over an extended period, macroeconomic disruption and institutional uncertainty have contributed to large-scale outmigration of entrepreneurs, professionals, and technical talent, weakening the depth of the domestic business ecosystem.

Despite these constraints, early signs of re-engagement are beginning to appear. Formal structures for company registration and investment remain in place, providing a basic operational framework for both local and foreign founders who choose to establish activity in the country. The corporate tax system follows a defined structure, and foreign entrepreneurs may access residency through an investor visa route tied to qualifying business investment. This pathway allows founders to formalize operations and maintain a local presence.

Entrepreneurial support is largely driven by domestic institutions and academic actors rather than internationally oriented relocation schemes. Programs such as Emprendetech, developed by IESA, focus on strengthening entrepreneurial skills, technology adoption, and early-stage company development. These initiatives help rebuild human capital and operational capability among founders who remain active in the market.

Overall, while the emergence of renewed entrepreneurial activity and formal investment pathways signals cautious progress, bold and sustained economic reforms will be necessary to restore business confidence, reverse talent outflows, and enable the country to translate its potential into durable economic growth.





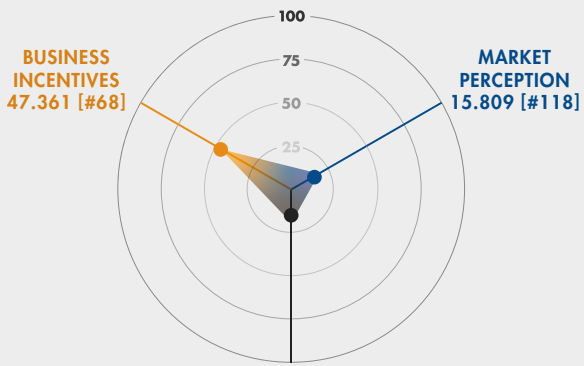
125. Iran

GLOBAL RANK
#125

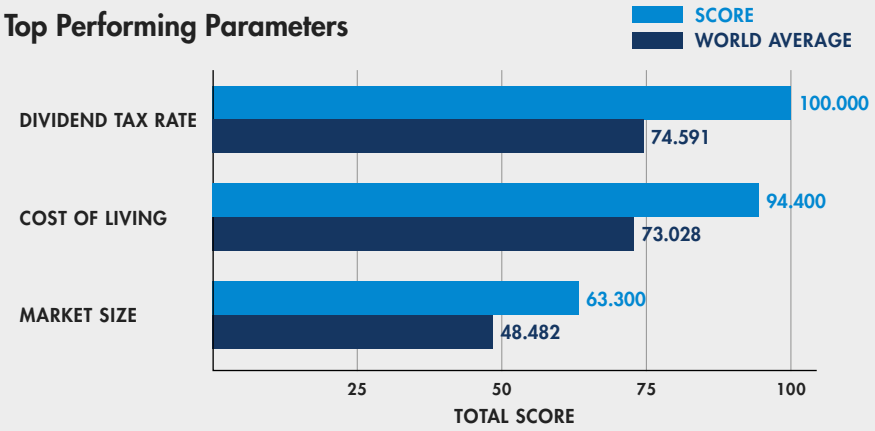
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST RANK
#37

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



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Iran ranks 13th in the Middle East in the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026.

- The country places 5th in the Middle East in the Global Mobility & Openness Functional Category, which measures cross-border accessibility and international movement.
- Iran ranks 8th in the Middle East in the Taxation Functional Category, which evaluates tax-related conditions.
- At the Parameter level, Dividend Tax Rate and Capital Gains Tax Rate rank within the top 25% of the Index, contributing positively to Iran's tax-related profile.
- Separately, Cost of Living and Market Size are also assessed within the top 25% of the Index, reflecting inherent structural characteristics that support scale and affordability.
- Overall, Iran presents a business environment shaped by selective tax-parameter advantages, inherent scale and cost characteristics.

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Country Overview

Iran has a large domestic market and one of the world's strongest underlying talent and science bases. The country produces a high volume of engineers, scientists, and technically trained professionals, giving it massive long-term economic potential.

At the same time, Iran's ability to translate this potential into sustained economic outcomes is constrained by limited global integration. International isolation restricts access to capital, markets, technology partnerships, and cross-border collaboration, which significantly reduces the impact of the country's human-capital strengths. As a result, much of Iran's entrepreneurial and scientific capacity remains underutilized in global terms.

The regulatory framework itself is relatively clear and investment-oriented. A standard corporate income tax applies across most sectors, while incentives are available in free-trade zones and less-developed regions. Manufacturing and mining projects in these areas may qualify for multi-year tax holidays, reflecting a policy focus on value-adding activity and regional development.

Foreign nationals can establish a presence through an investment-based residence permit, which grants renewable multi-year residency to individuals who make qualifying investments in approved sectors or financial instruments.

Institutional support is coordinated by the Iranian Investment Organization for Economic and Technical Assistance, which guides investors through national regulations and incentive frameworks, including those linked to free-trade zones.

Iran has the talent, scientific depth, and domestic scale to become a significant economic force. Greater openness and global integration would be decisive factors in unlocking this potential and enabling Iran's business environment to deliver results proportionate to its underlying strengths.

RECOGNITIONS

The Innovators Business Environment Index measures business environment performance at the country level using data, modelling, and comparative indicators. Alongside these results, we introduce a complementary set of awards that allow us to recognize, in our view, standout progress that goes beyond what can be captured by rankings alone.

While the Index focuses on benchmarking national performance, business environment transformation takes place across multiple levels, including national governments, regional authorities, and city administrations. The awards framework reflects this reality by highlighting exceptional reform momentum and institutional execution wherever it occurs, whether at the national, regional, or city level.

These awards are informed by data, but are primarily guided by our observations of how reforms are being implemented in practice, including policy choices, institutional delivery, and improvements to real-world operating conditions for businesses. Rather than reflecting ranking positions, the awards are intended to spotlight transformation, execution capacity, and the direction of change.

The recipients of these awards may not yet be the largest, however, in our view, they represent some of the most compelling examples of business environment transformation over the past year.



Country of the Year - Saudi Arabia

Few countries have reshaped their business environment as decisively over the past year. The Country of the Year distinction is awarded to a country that, in our assessment, has demonstrated exceptional progress in strengthening its business environment through active policy intervention rather than inherited structural advantages.

> **In the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026, Saudi Arabia recorded the highest score on policy levers, reflecting the scale and effectiveness of government actions across foreign direct investment outflows, startup ecosystem promotion, business environment analysis, and strategic economic planning.**



On this basis, we have selected Saudi Arabia as Country of the Year, as the results point to a business environment undergoing rapid and deliberate transformation.

At the heart of this shift lies Vision 2030. More than a long-term aspiration, the strategy has become the central framework for reform. Structural reforms introduced under Vision 2030 have positively affected the business environment. For example, the decision to end the kafala sponsorship system and transition to a contract-based employment framework marks a turning point for the labour market. Greater worker mobility and flexibility make Saudi Arabia a more attractive destination for skilled international talent. Moreover, founders now benefit from 100% foreign ownership across sectors such as information technology, healthcare, real estate, logistics, and consulting, eliminating the need for local sponsors. The country has also streamlined the company registration process through digital platforms, cutting setup times from months to days via simplified licensing and visa procedures. Special economic zones, including NEOM and Riyadh-based zones, further reinforce this environment with tax incentives, investor protections, and tailored regulatory frameworks.

Within this broader Vision 2030 architecture, the National Technology Development Programme (NTDP) plays a key role in enhancing the business environment. NTDP operationalises national priorities through a portfolio-based approach aimed squarely at the needs of innovators. NTDP focuses on addressing challenges in the business environment such as access to capital, scale-up financing, market readiness, and relocation. By tackling practical bottlenecks rather than offering symbolic incentives, NTDP has made the business environment more enabling in practice, particularly for technology-driven companies.

> **What makes Saudi Arabia's progress distinctive is the combination of ambition and delivery.**

The country is not relying on its size, nor on its wealth, to carry it forward. Instead, it is building institutions, testing policies, and learning quickly. Reforms are increasingly coherent, confidence among innovators is rising, and the pace of change is accelerating. For the scale and speed of that transformation, Saudi Arabia merits recognition as Country of the Year.



Regional Government of the Year - Catalonia

The Regional Government of the Year distinction is awarded to a regional authority that, in our assessment, has demonstrated exceptional progress in strengthening its business environment through active policy execution, institutional reform, and long-term strategic investment. In a global context where investment competition is intensifying and capital is becoming more selective, this recognition highlights regions that are not simply benefiting from favourable conditions, but are deliberately reshaping their economic foundations.



> **This year's recognition goes to Catalonia, which over the past year has accelerated institutional delivery, strengthened investment attraction capacity, and built structural advantages that are repositioning the region as a high-value platform for innovation and international business.**

The results are increasingly visible on the global stage. Barcelona has been ranked first in the European Union for foreign direct investment strategy by fDi Intelligence (Financial Times Group). At the same time, the city has emerged among the world's top destinations for AI foreign investment projects, according to IBM's Plant Location International unit.

Macroeconomic performance further reinforces this trajectory. According to BBVA Research's Catalonia Economic Outlook, the region records GDP growth rates well above the European average. Moreover, Catalonia has reached record employment levels exceeding 3.9 million workers, while unemployment continues to decline, signaling expanding private-sector activity and sustained business confidence.

Looking ahead, the regional government has articulated a clear forward-growth agenda. Catalonia aims to attract €6 billion in foreign investment and generate 45,000 new jobs by 2030, representing a 60% increase in projected investment impact over the next five years. This target reflects a strategic shift away from short-term promotional activity toward long-horizon economic positioning and structural competitiveness.

At the operational centre of this transformation stands ACCIÓ – Catalonia Trade & Investment, the region's flagship competitiveness and internationalisation agency. Through its international office network and integrated business services model, ACCIÓ has significantly reduced friction for investors and entrepreneurs, strengthening Catalonia's reputation as a globally accessible business destination.

Catalonia's competitive edge is further reinforced by its commitment to building long-term productive capacity. Flagship assets such as MareNostrum 5, one of Europe's most powerful supercomputers, and the Barcelona Cable Landing Station, a neutral Mediterranean digital interconnection hub, provide firms with access to world-class computing power, advanced scientific infrastructure, and global connectivity. These investments demonstrate a focus on building productivity-enhancing economic foundations, rather than relying on incentive-driven business environment measures.



> **What ultimately distinguishes Catalonia is its ability to convert improvements in the macro business environment into tangible economic performance.**

By prioritising institutional capacity, long-term infrastructure, and investment readiness over short-term incentives, the regional government has created a textbook example of how policy-led competitiveness can translate into stronger investment flows, job creation, and productivity growth. Therefore, for the effectiveness and credibility of this approach, Catalonia earns recognition as Regional Government of the Year.

City of the Year - Medellín

The City of the Year distinction is awarded to a city that, in our view, has demonstrated exceptional progress in strengthening its business environment through municipal leadership, targeted reform, and institutional innovation.



> **This year, we have selected Medellín for its ability to build a distinctive city-level competitiveness model, actively shaping local business conditions rather than relying solely on national frameworks.**

Medellín's approach has focused on systematically lowering barriers for entrepreneurs and businesses while strengthening the structural foundations required for innovation-led growth. The city has streamlined business formation procedures, enabling company registration within 24 hours, and introduced progressive tax incentives that reduce early-stage financial pressure on new firms. Access to finance has been expanded through public-backed guarantee mechanisms and partnerships with financial institutions, improving credit availability for startups and SMEs. In parallel, regulatory sandboxes have been introduced to allow technology-driven companies to test new solutions within supervised frameworks, accelerating market entry while maintaining regulatory oversight.

These reforms have been supported by sustained investment in digital infrastructure and innovation capacity. As Colombia's first District of Science, Technology, and Innovation, Medellín has committed more than US$100 million in recent years to expand digital connectivity, strengthen skills development, and consolidate innovation hubs. The city has also deployed smart-city systems that improve mobility, energy management, security, and environmental monitoring, strengthening operational efficiency and the quality of the business operating environment.

The impact of this strategy is increasingly visible in Medellín's innovation ecosystem performance. In the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, the city recorded startup ecosystem growth exceeding 40%, reflecting accelerating entrepreneurial activity, ecosystem connectivity, and international visibility. At the same time, Medellín's investment promotion capacity has strengthened significantly, with the city facilitating more than US$400 million in national and foreign investment in 2025 alone.

At the operational centre of this transformation stands Ruta N, Medellín's flagship innovation and entrepreneurship agency. Ruta N has played a central role in translating city strategy into execution by supporting startup development, facilitating access to venture capital, strengthening corporate–startup collaboration, and coordinating ecosystem platforms such as C4IR Medellín, FutuMed, and StartIA. This delivery-focused model has helped align innovation policy with real business needs.



What ultimately distinguishes Medellín is its decision to build competitiveness at the city level rather than relying solely on national business environment conditions. Through a coordinated reform strategy, Medellín has created its own institutional advantages by integrating regulation, access to finance, digital infrastructure, innovation hubs, and ecosystem delivery into a unified urban economic model. This approach has enabled the city to move beyond incremental improvement and establish a distinct, scalable platform for business and innovation.

For demonstrating how municipal leadership can actively shape economic outcomes and create competitive advantage from the ground up, Medellín earns recognition as City of the Year.

Region of the Year - Central Asia



Alongside the country-level results of the Innovators Business Environment Index 2026, we introduce the Region of the Year distinction for the first time. This recognition goes beyond Index performance to spotlight regions demonstrating exceptional collective progress, reform momentum, and strategic transformation. In its inaugural year, Central Asia is named Region of the Year, reflecting both its rapid economic expansion and its position as the fastest-growing startup ecosystem globally, as recorded in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index (GSEI) 2025.

The following countries are the region's high-flyers, driving Central Asia's momentum by recording the highest annual ecosystem growth rates in the GSEI 2025 and ranking among the region's leading performers in the IBEI 2026, combining fast-growing startup ecosystems with conducive business environments. Below, we highlight standout actions and achievements by these countries over the past year, further showing the momentum of their business environment.

Uzbekistan

- Announced the rollout of a 15-minute digital business registration system, streamlining company formation through a unified government platform during 2025.
- Introduced new support measures for digital startups and fintech sandbox participants, including planned free access to e-government services.
- Expanded the "Zero Risk" programme, introducing subsidised office rentals (up to 12 months), remote banking access for foreign specialists, and new mortgage financing mechanisms to attract international talent and support regional growth.

Kazakhstan

- Astana Hub residents created more than 28,000 new tech sector jobs by early 2025.
- Became the largest recipient of greenfield investment projects in North and Central Asia by the end of 2025.
- Recorded 6.3% GDP growth in non-oil sectors during the first half of 2025, marking the fastest expansion in 14 years.

Azerbaijan

- Advanced its Digital Economy Development Strategy 2026–2029 through the Innovation and Digital Development Agency, with a strong focus on AI deployment and digital infrastructure modernization.
- Expanded the MyGov e-government platform to over 1.5 million users by mid-2025, while increasing the number of officially recognized digital documents.
- Adopted the Artificial Intelligence Strategy in March 2025, setting national priorities for AI implementation and economic integration.

METHODOLOGY



Methodology

The StartupBlink Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI) is a global benchmark that evaluates how conducive national environments are for innovators. It provides a unified framework for assessing how easily innovators can start, operate, and trust the business environment around them, focusing on the regulatory, institutional, and infrastructural conditions that enable ideas to become ventures.

While the StartupBlink Global Startup Ecosystem Index (GSEI) measures ecosystem outcomes such as startup activity and innovation performance, the IBEI evaluates the foundational enablers that make the realization of those outcomes possible.

The IBEI methodology is intentionally designed around the founder experience. It isolates the structural, regulatory, and institutional conditions that reduce friction and build confidence - the factors most strongly correlated with business formation and innovation readiness. Unlike indexes that emphasize inputs or policy "programs," the IBEI focuses on the real-world environment that innovators encounter in practice.

Guiding Principles

The IBEI measures practical enablers - the regulatory, institutional, and infrastructural conditions that make innovation possible. The framework is governed by five principles:

- **Founder Experience:** The IBEI prioritizes measurable conditions that directly affect the ability of innovators to start, operate, and scale ventures.
- **Objectivity**: Reliance solely on measurable and verifiable datasets.
- **Comparability**: Consistent scoring logic applied across all countries.
- **Transparency**: Clear documentation of data lineage and methodological updates.
- **Continuity**: A stable structure that supports multi-year policy analysis.

The Index is organized around three pillars, each reflecting a core dimension of the founder experience.

Ease of Operating a Business

This pillar answers the question: "Can I operate a business easily?" It measures the practical frictions associated with starting and operating a business.

Parameters:

- **Starting a Business** - measures financial and procedural costs to incorporate a business.
- **Financial Tools Openness** - measures the ability to pay, send money and general availability of business financial digital tools for a given country.
- **Cross-Border Banking** - measures the availability and connectivity of international banking services.
- **Internet Freedom** - measure of censorship and open use of the internet in a given country.
- **Resolving Insolvency** - measures the efficiency of a country's legal and institutional framework of handling insolvency of a local company.
- **Labor Law Rigidity** - measuring the rigidity of labor laws to hire and fire employees.
- **Cost of Living** - cost of living in a given country.
- **Internet Speed** - mobile and fixed broadband speed of internet.

Business Incentives

This pillar answers: "Can I operate profitably?" It captures the fiscal and financial conditions that influence long-term operational viability.

Parameters:

- **Funding Availability per Capita** - funding of startups in a given country per capita
- **Corporate Tax Rate** - corporate tax rate of a given country
- **Market Size** - size of the local market in a given country based on GDP and Population.
- **Capital Gains Tax** - National statutory tax rate on capital gains.
- **Lending Rate and Getting Credit** - measures the lending rate and ease of accessing credit in a given country
- **Dividend Tax** - national-level tax on dividends.
- **Top Personal Income Tax** - top national statutory marginal personal income tax rate
- **Trade Openness** - measures how easy it is to trade goods across a country's borders.

Market Perception

This pillar answers: Can I trust the system? It assesses the institutional credibility, governance quality, and global accessibility that shape founder confidence.

Parameters:

- **Governance & Law** - measures how safe, predictable, honest, and well-functioning a country's governance system is.
- **Credit Rating** - average sovereign credit rating from Moodys, S&P, and Fitch.
- **English Proficiency** - proficiency of the country's population in English language.
- **Private-Sector Corruption Pressure** - captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain.
- **Passport Power** - measures the number of countries accessible visa-free to citizens of a given country.



To support deeper analysis, all parameters are also grouped into five functional categories.

Pillar/Functional Category	Ease of Operating a Business	Business Incentives	Market Perception
Regulation & Governance	■ Starting a Business ■ Resolving Insolvency ■ Labor Law Rigidity		■ Governance & Law ■ Private-Sector Corruption Pressure
Access to Capital & Financial Tools	■ Financial Tools Openness ■ Cross Border Banking	■ Funding Availability per capita ■ Market Size ■ Lending Rate and Getting Credit Combination	■ Credit Rating
Digital Infrastructure	■ Internet Freedom ■ Internet Speed		
Taxation		■ Corporate Tax Rate ■ Capital Gains Tax Rate ■ Dividend Tax Rate ■ Top PIT Rate	
Global Mobility & Openness	■ Cost of Living	■ Trade Openness	■ English Proficiency ■ Passport Power

Data Sources

The IBEI is the result of a proprietary algorithmic synthesis that harmonizes StartupBlink's internal data streams with a comprehensive ecosystem of internationally recognized information sources. To ensure maximum fidelity and global relevance, our model ingests and cross-references data from a multitude of authoritative bodies—including key benchmarks from IMF, World Bank, and UN—to generate a unified, high-value output. This multi-source architecture allows us to bridge proprietary insights with the broader landscape of global data standards.



Normalization and Scoring

All parameters are normalized to a 0–100 scale, where higher scores indicate more enabling conditions.

Directionality is standardized so that lower friction (e.g., faster incorporation, lower tax) produces higher scores.

Wealth or economic size does not directly influence results, ensuring comparability between developed and emerging economies.

Reward and Penalty Logic

After countries are scored for the various parameters, the IBEI applies calibrated Rewards and Penalties to scores, to better reflect real founder experience:

- **Rewards:** Bonus points for countries where certain characteristics or enablers exist, removing friction and facilitating innovators.
- **Penalties:** Penalty points for additional friction, including long registration times or restrictive currency rules.

Both Rewards and Penalties are applied in cases where only a limited number of countries exhibit certain behaviors. These adjustments are intentionally modest to preserve fairness. Exact coefficients remain confidential to ensure consistency and discourage index gaming.

Aggregation and Weighting

- Each parameter contributes to its pillar score; pillar scores determine the overall IBEI score and IBEI ranking.
- The weighting logic is explicitly designed around the founder journey – Start ➔ Operate ➔ Trust – to ensure the index reflects real-world business environment conditions.
- Additional targeted adjustments apply where policies are exceptionally enabling or restrictive.

Numeric weights are proprietary, while conceptual transparency is maintained.

AI-Assisted Estimation and Data Treatment

When official data are unavailable, the IBEI follows a structured hierarchy:

1. Use the latest official dataset or trusted aggregator.
2. Apply proxy indicators from comparable economies.
3. Use AI-assisted estimation informed by correlated parameters, with all such values flagged via metadata.
4. Conduct manual expert validation before inclusion.

AI-assisted estimation is used strictly to preserve global coverage and comparability, not to replace official sources. All such values undergo expert validation to ensure alignment with real-world founder experience.

All interpolations are fully traceable and internally auditable.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



StartupBlink Global Partners

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Our Team

Our team works tirelessly to track innovation economies around the world and remain at the forefront of innovation economy research. In this section, we introduce the team behind this report.

Interested in joining our team? Apply here.



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If you would like to be one of our contributors, apply here.

Parting Words

We are proud to create this massive and open Index used by hundreds of thousands of decision-makers. Where you choose to be will greatly impact your chances of success. We always welcome feedback from our readers, feel free to share it with us. Good luck with building whatever you are working on.

Innovators Business Environment Index 2026

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ANNEXES



Annex A: Technical Diagnostics and Validation Methods of the IBEI

This annex presents the technical diagnostics, statistical checks, and robustness analyses applied in the construction of the Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI). It documents the statistical diagnostics, data treatment steps, and aggregation logic used in building the index, providing transparency into how the IBEI behaves under empirical examination.

Distribution Diagnostics and Normalization Behavior

This section examines the behavior of IBEI parameters following data preparation and normalization, to ensure that scores are statistically sound and reflect meaningful differences in business environment conditions faced by innovators.

Distributional Characteristics of Parameters

Across the full parameter set, raw indicators exhibit uneven distributions, reflecting differences in institutional maturity, regulatory frameworks, and economic structures across countries. Several parameters—particularly those related to market size, funding availability, and digital infrastructure—display right-skewed distributions, where a small number of countries record substantially higher values than the global median.

To ensure that such skewness does not result in disproportionate influence on final scores, all parameters were subjected to distribution diagnostics prior to normalization. These diagnostics included visual inspection, assessment of skewness and kurtosis, and evaluation of value dispersion based on minimum, maximum, median, and mean values.

Parameters with highly concentrated upper tails were treated conservatively to preserve relative ordering while preventing disproportionate influence by a small number of extreme observations. Where appropriate, logarithmic transformations were applied to reduce distributional skew and improve comparability across countries. In selected cases, winsorization was used to limit the influence of extreme values while retaining the overall structure of the data. Expert review followed a predefined checklist covering interpretability, monotonicity, sensitivity to outliers, and consistency with the conceptual definition of each parameter.

Importantly, the objective of normalization in the IBEI is not to force statistical symmetry, but to ensure that observed variation reflects meaningful differences in innovator experience, rather than structural scale effects.

Normalization Behavior and Scale Integrity

All parameters are normalized to a standardized 0-1 scale, with directionality aligned so that lower friction and more favorable business environment conditions result in higher scores. For reporting and interpretability purposes, final index scores and rankings are subsequently rescaled to a 0-100 format, without altering relative distances between countries.

Post-normalization diagnostics indicate that:

- Parameter score distributions retain sufficient spread to meaningfully differentiate countries.
- Parameters do not become overly compressed into narrow value ranges, which would otherwise reduce their ability to distinguish between different business environments.
- Extreme raw values do not translate into disproportionate normalized advantages, as the effects of skewness are mitigated through logarithmic transformation or conservative winsorization where appropriate.

Post-normalization inspection indicates that high-income economies do not uniformly cluster at the upper bound of parameter distributions. Several parameters display wide dispersion among countries with comparable income levels, suggesting that scores are not mechanically driven by economic size or wealth. This supports the conclusions that IBEI scores primarily reflect institutional, regulatory, and business environment conditions, rather than mechanically tracking economic output or fiscal capacity.

Correlation Structure and Redundancy Checks

This section examines the statistical relationships between IBEI parameters to identify potential redundancy and ensure that the index captures multiple dimensions of the innovators' business environment rather than duplicating the same underlying signal.

Inter-Parameter Correlation Analysis

Pairwise correlation analysis was conducted across all normalized parameters. Several parameters exhibit moderate to strong correlations, particularly among indicators related to governance quality, regulatory effectiveness, and institutional trust.

In limited cases, strong correlations were observed between multiple parameters capturing the same dimension of the business environment. Where parameters were found to measure substantively overlapping concepts with no incremental informational value, a single representative parameter was retained to avoid double-counting.

In other cases, highly correlated parameters captured different dimensions of the business environment within a shared operational or institutional context. These parameters were retained and combined into composite measures, with internal weighting informed by conceptual relevance, correlation strength, and consistency with the underlying pillar definitions. This approach preserves relevant signals while preventing mechanical score inflation and more accurately reflects real-world business environments.

Following this process, the risk of unintentional duplication at the aggregation stage is substantially reduced, and each retained parameter contributes distinct information to the final score.

Correlation analysis was performed on normalized parameter values to ensure comparability and to assess relationships as they influence final index outcomes, rather than raw input values.

Scope of Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis within the IBEI is used strictly as a diagnostic and validation tool, not as a basis for outcome-driven reweighting or mechanical indicator exclusion. Correlations do not imply causation, and the index does not attempt to infer directional relationships between parameters.

The purpose of this analysis is to confirm internal coherence, manage redundancy risks, and preserve the conceptual integrity of the index framework as defined in the methodology.

The following visualizations are presented as diagnostic tools, allowing readers to inspect the internal structure, coherence, and dispersion of scores across pillars rather than to draw substantive country-level conclusions. Specifically, the heat maps allow inspection of (i) pillar independence, (ii) cross-pillar dispersion, and (iii) the absence of systematic clustering that would suggest structural redundancy.

Country Performance Across Key Metrics

Pillar level heatmaps

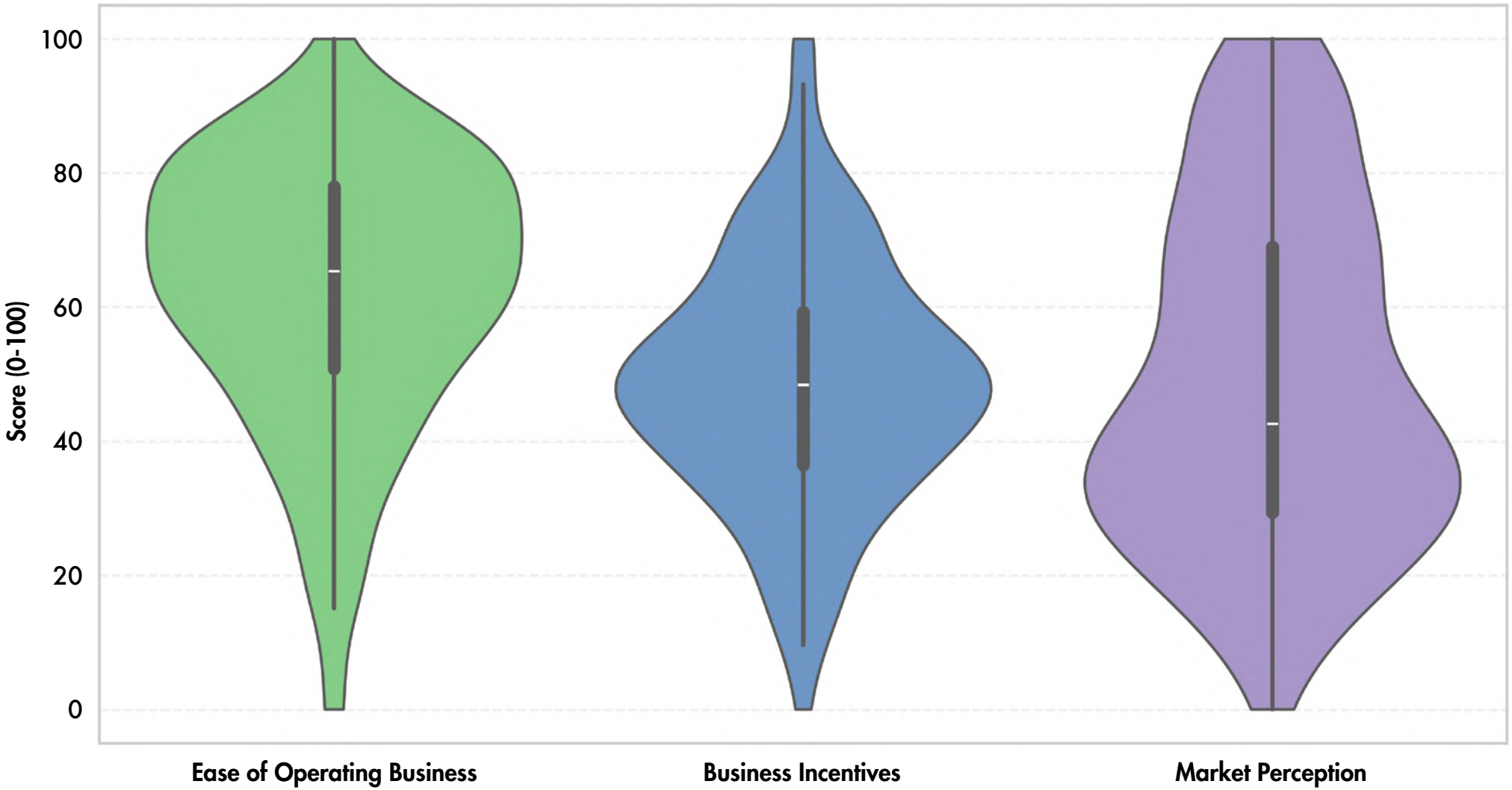
	Ease of Operating Business	Business Incentives	Market Perception
United States	100.0	76.5	88.5
Singapore	84.9	100.0	100.0
United Kingdom	86.2	76.8	87.1
Switzerland	70.4	75.0	91.7
United Arab Emirates	73.1	98.2	71.2
Canada	88.2	53.5	91.5
The Netherlands	85.4	50.4	94.1
Japan	89.2	60.5	73.5
Saudi Arabia	60.5	84.2	51.6
Estonia	86.0	73.2	81.5
New Zealand	87.1	57.7	94.5
Sweden	86.2	53.0	94.9
Luxembourg	74.8	67.0	90.1
Ireland	83.3	58.3	90.7
Cyprus	77.2	78.0	64.4
Belgium	82.9	61.8	79.4
Australia	84.9	49.2	93.8
Bulgaria	79.4	79.1	60.3
Finland	88.9	45.5	91.5
Denmark	86.1	41.0	99.3
Norway	84.2	43.6	96.7
Lithuania	79.6	62.7	74.4
Germany	79.0	52.6	87.2
Israel	74.1	67.8	75.8
Romania	79.5	73.2	59.9
Austria	78.6	45.3	88.6
Iceland	80.4	47.4	86.1
France	85.3	52.6	73.1
Taiwan	83.1	72.4	78.8
Czechia	77.7	58.5	74.4
Portugal	86.6	45.9	72.9
South Korea	72.4	40.2	73.6
Greece	77.6	59.3	69.5
Hungary	72.4	73.3	62.1
Latvia	81.7	53.7	69.0
Slovakia	77.2	58.0	66.9
Georgia	81.3	47.6	54.4
Croatia	74.2	56.7	67.0
Spain	82.1	49.1	61.3
Poland	69.6	54.2	66.6
Slovenia	81.4	34.6	76.9

	Ease of Operating Business	Business Incentives	Market Perception
Brazil	74.7	61.2	40.2
Italy	80.7	43.8	59.8
Bahrain	63.0	93.2	50.9
Uruguay	69.1	51.4	67.8
Puerto Rico	87.7	35.6	59.9
Colombia	71.3	46.3	39.5
Malaysia	78.0	69.1	68.6
Malta	72.7	34.8	73.3
Serbia	68.5	53.9	53.1
North Macedonia	69.8	64.2	42.9
Vietnam	59.6	67.0	37.0
Indonesia	64.5	71.9	42.9
India	68.1	51.5	37.8
Peru	69.3	49.7	47.2
Thailand	72.4	71.9	35.6
Chile	83.7	35.1	64.4
Mexico	77.0	41.8	38.0
Qatar	66.3	73.6	61.2
Albania	67.5	48.7	42.6
South Africa	68.3	41.1	49.4
Philippines	60.8	48.0	49.8
Panama	68.3	45.1	38.8
Moldova	62.7	54.2	39.3
Kosovo	66.6	49.9	39.8
Armenia	69.0	61.1	43.9
Ukraine	59.4	52.1	32.8
Kenya	61.3	47.3	39.7
Kazakhstan	62.4	59.1	35.7
Cape Verde	42.5	49.6	48.1
Kuwait	65.4	71.6	51.6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	44.6	60.9	37.3
Costa Rica	66.0	40.7	54.7
Azerbaijan	55.8	41.1	36.6
Argentina	62.0	35.8	41.1
Jamaica	69.4	38.3	52.6
Jordan	55.7	60.8	31.3
Uzbekistan	46.9	50.1	29.4
El Salvador	63.2	35.6	34.7
Morocco	63.5	29.4	38.5
Cote d'Ivoire	57.5	42.8	29.1
Paraguay	44.0	47.0	41.3

	Ease of Operating Business	Business Incentives	Market Perception
Namibia	50.2	39.6	51.8
Kyrgyzstan	57.0	49.2	22.0
China	57.5	72.3	50.8
Ecuador	48.9	48.8	25.5
Tunisia	61.5	47.5	29.6
Oman	56.9	63.6	41.6
Guatemala	60.6	48.5	30.7
Turkey	54.0	54.5	32.1
Rwanda	61.2	29.8	37.4
Mongolia	54.6	33.6	30.9
Bolivia	46.9	45.7	26.1
Egypt	52.7	37.9	28.8
Nigeria	56.1	44.0	35.5
Dominican Republic	55.4	19.5	36.5
Zambia	54.1	35.7	28.6
Tanzania	44.1	33.2	32.6
Uganda	50.8	17.0	34.7
Pakistan	48.8	30.0	23.5
Senegal	54.5	23.8	26.8
Ghana	59.8	28.5	35.7
Nepal	42.7	33.2	25.5
Sri Lanka	60.7	36.1	22.7
Russia	36.2	52.9	27.0
Bangladesh	46.7	31.9	24.3
Liberia	44.8	23.8	25.7
Tajikistan	30.5	44.7	18.0
Algeria	36.5	34.2	28.8
Guinea	34.1	22.4	23.4
Cambodia	30.0	36.5	17.1
Nicaragua	35.7	25.7	21.8
Mauritania	40.4	17.5	25.3
Lebanon	32.0	46.4	12.8
Belarus	41.6	38.6	25.9
Angola	33.6	25.6	14.5
Iraq	20.9	50.1	10.8
Myanmar	24.2	44.7	8.4
Zimbabwe	19.9	9.8	26.0
Ethiopia	19.4	13.6	19.5
Cameroon	41.9	16.3	11.3
Congo	18.1	0.1	16.6
Somalia	1.2	17.1	0.1
Venezuela	0.1	9.7	12.4
Iran	15.1	47.4	15.8

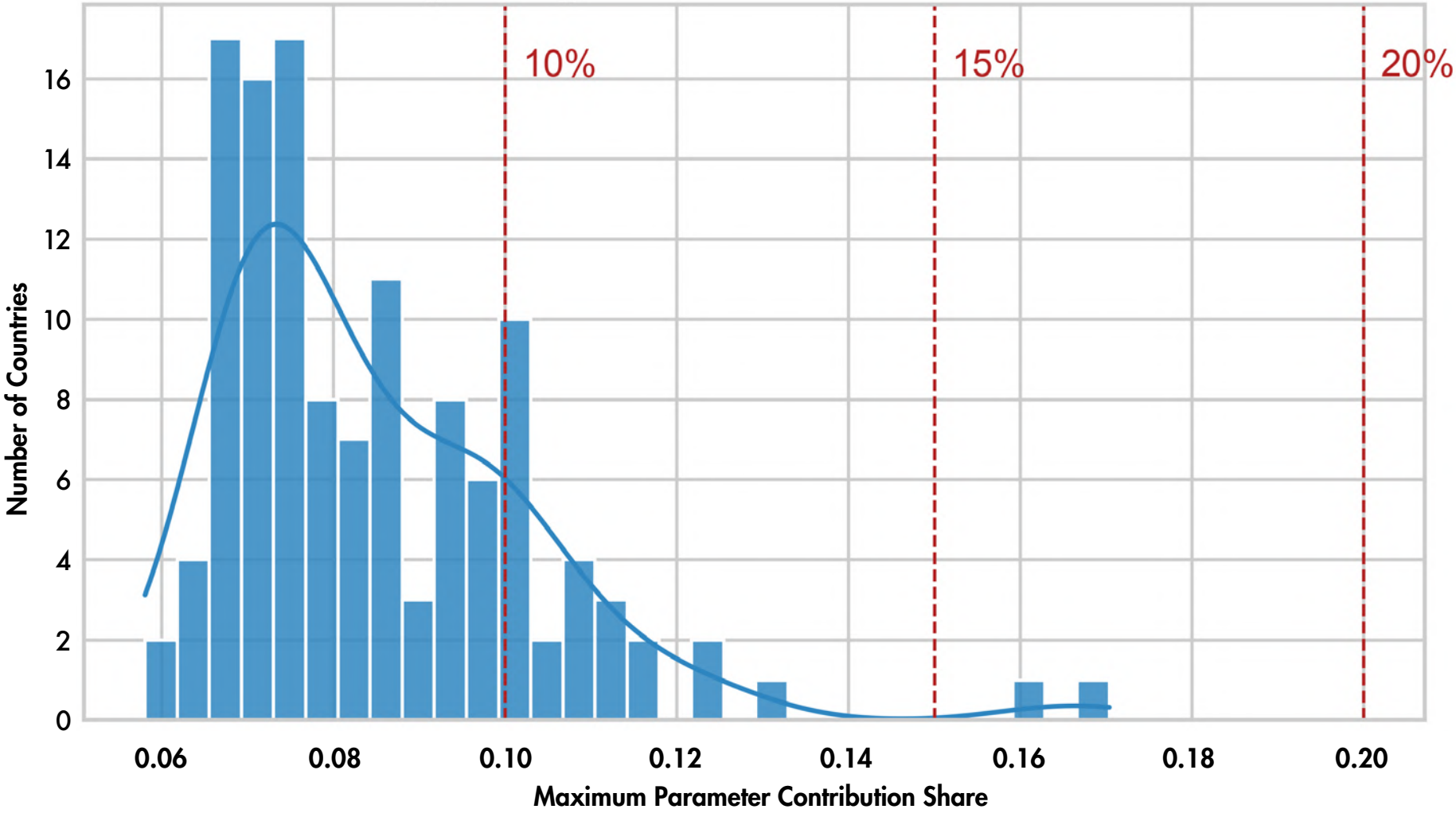
Score Distribution Across Pillars

This illustrates the distribution of normalized pillar scores to verify that aggregation does not compress country performance into narrow bands and that meaningful differentiation is preserved.



Largest Single-Parameter Share of Total Score

This shows the distribution of the largest contribution made by any single parameter to the total IBEI score across countries. For each country, parameter values were expressed as shares of the summed parameter score, and the maximum share was recorded. Most observations fall below the 10% threshold, with fewer cases extending into higher ranges. Only in limited instances does a single parameter account for more than 15% of the total score. The reference lines provide context for interpreting the degree of concentration observed across countries.



Interpretation Boundaries and Methodological Limits

The IBEI measures structural business environment conditions relevant to innovators. It does not assess innovation outcomes, startup success rates, or short-term economic performance. High IBEI scores therefore indicate more enabling conditions, not guaranteed innovation output or investment inflows.

To enable global comparison, the index uses standardized and internationally comparable data. As a result, some local or sub-regional differences and on-the-ground practices may not be fully captured, which is a common limitation of country-level benchmarking.

Where official data are unavailable, AI-assisted estimation is applied following a documented hierarchy and validation protocol designed to preserve coverage and comparability. Such values are used conservatively, flagged internally, and should be interpreted with appropriate caution when comparing countries with limited official data availability.

Finally, year-over-year comparability is supported through methodological continuity and data freezing. Changes in scores across editions should be interpreted in the context of underlying policy developments and data updates, rather than as isolated performance shifts.



Annex B: Pillar Rankings

Beyond the overall ranking, the Index assesses performance across three core Pillars. This section highlights the top-performing countries within each Pillar, showing where countries excel in specific dimensions of the founder experience. Pillar-level rankings illustrate how different countries achieve strong results through distinct profiles, even when their overall positions vary.



Ease of Operating a Business



Business Incentives



Market Perception

Pillar Rankings

Ease of Operating a Business

This Pillar measures how simple, fast, and operationally frictionless it is to start, run, and maintain a business in a country. It captures the practical, day-to-day conditions that affect business formation and operations, including administrative efficiency, regulatory burden, and cost-related barriers.

Pillar Rank	Country	Pillar Score
1	United States	100.000
2	Japan	89.187
3	Finland	88.911
4	Canada	88.196
5	Puerto Rico	87.693
6	New Zealand	87.139
7	Portugal	86.620
8	United Kingdom	86.249
9	Sweden	86.224
10	Denmark	86.083
11	Estonia	85.988
12	The Netherlands	85.397
13	France	85.259
14	Australia	84.922
15	Singapore	84.875
16	Norway	84.163
17	Chile	83.673
18	Ireland	83.321
19	Taiwan	83.133
20	Belgium	82.925
21	Spain	82.103
22	Latvia	81.707
23	Slovenia	81.436
24	Georgia	81.348
25	Italy	80.654

Pillar Rankings

Business Incentives

This Pillar evaluates how financially attractive a country is for entrepreneurs and investors. It focuses on fiscal conditions such as taxation, incentives, access to funding, and other cost-related factors that influence the financial viability and scalability of businesses.

Pillar Rank	Country	Pillar Score
1	Singapore	100.000
2	United Arab Emirates	98.233
3	Bahrain	93.210
4	Saudi Arabia	84.163
5	Bulgaria	79.126
6	Cyprus	78.000
7	United Kingdom	76.778
8	United States	76.519
9	Switzerland	75.033
10	Qatar	73.594
11	Hungary	73.263
12	Estonia	73.221
13	Romania	73.188
14	Taiwan	72.428
15	China	72.325
16	Indonesia	71.889
17	Thailand	71.874
18	Kuwait	71.611
19	Malaysia	69.123
20	Israel	67.758
21	Vietnam	67.041
22	Luxembourg	67.031
23	North Macedonia	64.212
24	Oman	63.648
25	Lithuania	62.658

Pillar Rankings

Market Perception

This Pillar measures how a country is viewed globally as a place to do business. It reflects perceptions of governance quality, credibility, transparency, stability, human capital, and international mobility, capturing the broader institutional and reputational environment in which businesses operate.

Pillar Rank	Country	Pillar Score
1	Singapore	100.000
2	Denmark	99.261
3	Norway	96.670
4	Sweden	94.946
5	New Zealand	94.450
6	The Netherlands	94.121
7	Australia	93.838
8	Switzerland	91.696
9	Canada	91.542
10	Finland	91.507
11	Ireland	90.749
12	Luxembourg	90.076
13	Austria	88.627
14	United States	88.540
15	Germany	87.155
16	United Kingdom	87.143
17	Iceland	86.112
18	Estonia	81.515
19	Belgium	79.441
20	Taiwan	78.790
21	Slovenia	76.930
22	Israel	75.782
23	Czechia	74.390
24	Lithuania	74.382
25	South Korea	73.589