

### Ranking trends

- **Saudi Arabia** (62), **Jordan** (75), **Bahrain** (43) and **Kuwait** (83), are among the top 10 most improved economies.
- The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** remains the highest ranked economy in the Middle East and North Africa region (16), followed by **Bahrain** (43) and **Morocco** (53).
- The rankings of other large economies include **Algeria** (157), **Egypt** (114), **Iran** (127) and **Tunisia** (78).
- Amid continued political instability, **Iraq** (172), **Syria** (176), **Libya** (186), and **Yemen** (187) are the lowest ranked economies in the region.
- The region's economies perform best in the areas of paying taxes (average rank of 82), dealing with construction permits (87), and getting electricity (86). The region underperforms in the areas of getting credit (118), resolving insolvency (118) and trading across borders (117).
  - It takes 64 days on average to obtain a new electrical connection in the region, compared to a global average of 83 days.

### Reform trends

- 65% of economies reformed in at least one of the areas measured by *Doing Business*. 57 reforms making it easier to do business were implemented in 13 of the region's 20 economies in the past year, compared to 43 reforms implemented by 14 economies in the previous year.
- Areas of getting electricity and protecting minority investors saw the largest number of reforms this year with eight reforms each, followed by getting credit, starting a business, and trading across borders, with six reforms each.
- **Bahrain** implemented a record nine reforms covering almost all areas measured by *Doing Business*.
- **Saudi Arabia** implemented eight reforms, its most since the launch of the study.
- **Kuwait** and **Morocco** also undertook an ambitious reform agenda with seven and six reforms respectively.
- Other notable regional reformers include **Egypt**, **Oman** and **United Arab Emirates**, with four reforms each.
- **Jordan** implemented three reforms and was among the top reformers in the *Doing Business* study.

Examples of reforms in these economies include:

- **Saudi Arabia** made starting a business easier by establishing a one-stop shop that merged several pre- and post-registration procedures. Saudi Arabia also eliminated the requirement for married women to provide additional documents when applying for a national identity card.
- **Bahrain** made enforcing contracts easier by creating a specialized commercial court, establishing time standards for key court events and allowing electronic service of the summons.
- **Jordan** strengthened access to credit by introducing a new secured transactions law, amending the insolvency law and launching a unified, modern and notice-based collateral registry. The secured transactions law broadened the description of debts and obligations and the scope of assets usable as collateral. The amended insolvency law grants secured creditors absolute priority and provides a time limit and clear grounds for relief from automatic stays during reorganization procedures. Jordan also improved access to credit information by providing credit scores to banks, financial institutions and borrowers.

- **Morocco** made trading across borders faster by introducing e-payment of port fees, streamlining paperless customs clearance and extending port hours of operation.

**Noteworthy items:**

- The contracting with the government indicator, the latest area of research of the *Doing Business* study, benchmarks the efficiency, quality and transparency of public procurement system worldwide. It will be added to *Doing Business 2021*.
- This year, *Doing Business* includes three case studies that focus on:
  - prominent regulatory changes implemented by governments since the inception of *Doing Business* across four indicator sets (starting a business, getting credit, paying taxes and resolving insolvency).
  - the efficiency of public procurement worldwide.
  - the positive effects of flexible employment regulation for firms, which impact job creation and productivity growth.

**Rankings Data for the Middle East and North Africa**

Economy	Rank (1-190)	Ease of doing business score (0-100)		# of Reforms	
	DB2020	DB2019	DB2020	DB2019	DB2020
Algeria	157	48.5	48.6	2	0
Bahrain	43	70.1	76.0	2	9
Djibouti	112	58.4	60.5	6	3
Egypt, Arab Rep.	114	58.5	60.1	5	4
Iran, Islamic Rep.	127	58.6	58.5	2	0
Iraq	172	44.7	44.7	0	0
Jordan	75	61.3	69.0	4	3
Kuwait	83	62.6	67.4	2	7
Lebanon	143	54.4	54.3	0	1
Libya	186	32.7	32.7	0	0
Malta	88	65.5	66.1	1	2
Morocco	53	71.7	73.4	4	6
Oman	68	68.8	70.0	0	4
Qatar	77	66.7	68.7	2	3
Saudi Arabia	62	63.8	71.6	5	8
Syrian Arab Republic	176	41.5	42.0	0	0
Tunisia	78	67.2	68.7	4	3
United Arab Emirates	16	81.6	80.9	3	4
West Bank and Gaza	117	59.7	60.0	1	0
Yemen, Rep.	187	30.7	31.8	0	0

Source: *Doing Business* database.

Note: The rankings are based on the average of each economy's ease of doing business scores for the 10 topics included in this year's aggregate ranking. This measure shows how close each economy is to global best practices in business regulation. A higher score indicates a more efficient business environment and stronger legal institutions.