

# In-house market overview Middle East

2024



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## Introduction

Thank you for choosing Taylor Root for your salary guide and market report for the Middle East in 2024. We extend our gratitude to our clients and candidates for their contributions in creating this report.

This last year has seen unprecedented growth across multiple industries within the Middle East, and the legal, compliance, governance and risk markets have been no exception. Businesses have needed to recruit and expand their teams to keep up with the demand and new legislation across the region.



## In-house legal market overview

We have seen huge developments across several sectors such as TMT, financial services, energy and infrastructure.

Public sector and government spending across the Middle East on a wide array of mega, infrastructure and investment projects has both grown economies and kept private sector organisations very busy. The GCC nations have demonstrated their capabilities as they continue their transformation journeys whilst achieving all time economic highs.

We have seen extensive development in the laws across the GCC, which ensures they are continuing to adopt international best practices. Each year, the UAE makes significant changes to its laws, from non-Sharia compliant marriages, new corporate tax law, to mandatory unemployment insurance. Saudi Arabia

have introduced the New Civil Transactions Law (the Saudi Civil Law) and changes to rules governing international law firms, as well as continuing to make pro-business legal reforms across multiple areas. They continue to be one of the world's fastest-growing major economies.

On top of all the investment driven by the Saudi Vision 2030, the UAE tourism industry and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, the wider Middle East region has benefited with the increase of oil process, boosting revenues in oil-rich nations such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Iraq.









## In-house salary guide

Taylor Root has recently assessed the current legal market compensation, using latest and up to date market data across the Middle East.

These numbers comprise of data taken from active sourcing, trusted HR sources, as well as the many candidates and clients we work with across the Middle East.

We have used the following criteria to formulate the numbers below:

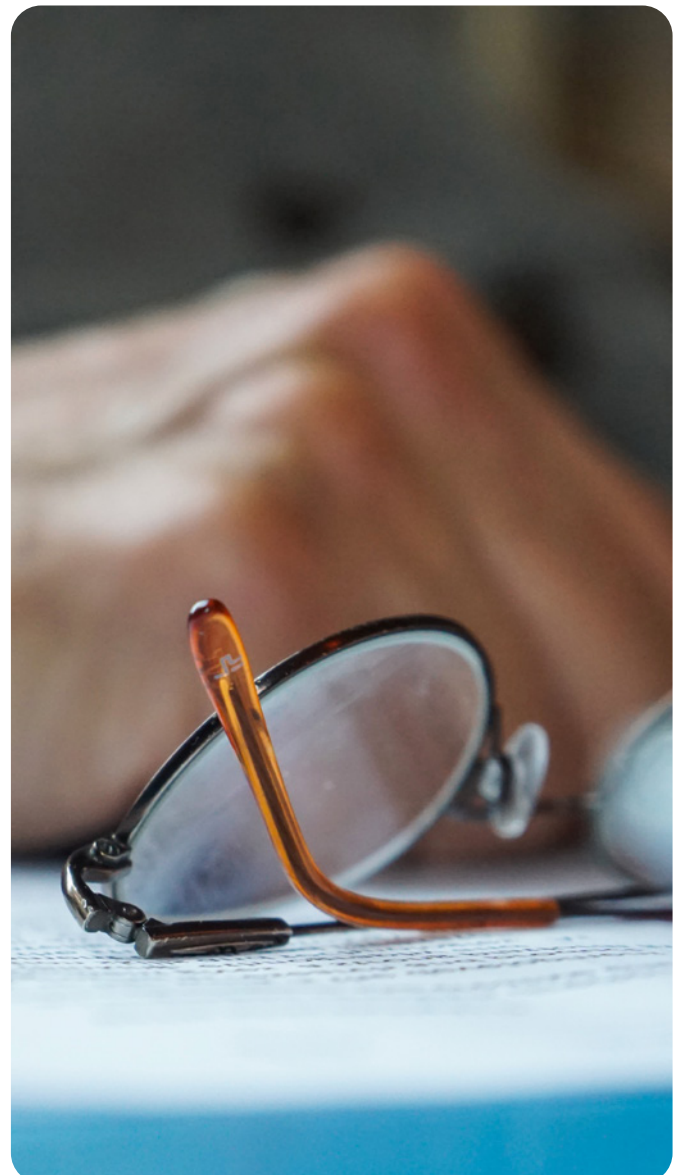
### Annual fixed compensation to comprise of

	Base salary
	Housing allowance
	Transport allowance
	Any other fixed cash monthly

We have not included school fees, bonus, stock options, flight allowance or any other variable benefits as there are too many different variations which do not provide reliable data. For example, candidates who are single with no children vs married with children.

Organisations with heavy transactional responsibilities (i.e. international M&A) or uniquely skilled lawyers that are rare in the market (i.e. technology and IP) tend to be better compensated, or need to be paid more to attract the right candidates, compared to more operational corporates. Some organisations will also pay more for fluent Arabic speaking candidates – but usually only if all other qualifying criteria are also met. Candidates that come from the top law firms will usually also command a higher salary.

The market ranks the best lawyers in terms of their private practice training, technical ability and experience, meaning such candidates will be in high demand and will ordinarily be attracted to market leading organisations. Therefore, to source and retain such talent, the compensation package must be commensurate and competitive.



Qualified lawyers pay scale table for the UAE, February 2024

	Compensation range	Bonus range
NQ	300,000-360,000	10-15%
1-2 years	300,000-420,000	10-15%
3-4 vears	360,000-540,000	10-20%
5-6 years	420,000-600,000	10-20%
7-8 years	480,000-720,000	10-20%
9-10 years	600,000-840,000	10-20%
10+ years	660,000-960,000	10-25%
Head of Legal/Legal Director	720,000+	10-25%
General Counsel	960,000+	15-30%
Chief Legal Officer	1,200,000+	15-30%







Salaries are in AED (basic, living and transportation).  
Salaries in Qatar and Saudi Arabia are on average 15-25% higher than UAE salaries.  
For local GCC nationals, typically salaries will be an additional 15-20% higher



## Roles we recruit

We specialise in the permanent appointments of in-house legal professionals for a range of clients, including multinational corporations, regional organisations and government entities across multiple industries.

We work closely with local and international legal talent with various expertise, including but not limited to; corporate, M&A, commercial, banking and finance, capital markets, intellectual property, regulatory, compliance, governance, disputes and litigation:

	Chief Legal Officer		Senior Legal Counsel
	General Counsel		Legal Manager
	Head of Legal		Legal Counsel
	Legal Director		Legal Advisor



## Risk and compliance overview













KSA and UAE are both thriving economies and at very different stages of their development.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has high ambitions and is inviting the world to see the rapid changes that have been implemented in recent years. It is fantastic to witness the evolving culture, infrastructure, investments and the opportunities being created for all locals and international talent. The Kingdom is increasingly becoming a major global partner to multiple businesses across the banking and financial services sectors, subsequently attracting more and more international talent as they look to diversify, learn, develop and partner with major institutions across the globe.

The UAE has also seen significant growth due to its rapidly maturing economy. It has shown great agility in how firms are being attracted to and supported in the region and a direct result of this is the increasing number of firms that are being licensed by the financial services regulator in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The population in the UAE is at an all-time high with a substantial increase in demand from expats looking to work and live in the Middle East region. In addition, our clients are continuously looking to hire local talent in order to meet the increasing Emiratisation targets, with some key clients looking to achieve these targets by 2026.

The UAE continues to make efforts to tackle money laundering and terrorist financing through taking active measures to develop and enhance compliance within its financial crime control frameworks across not only the banking and financial services sector but also government entities, law firms, C&I and professional services firms. We can see this through the increase in demand for hiring Chief Compliance Officers, Money Laundering Reporting Officers as well as Governance and Risk professionals.

### Roles we recruit

	Chief Compliance Officer
	Chief Compliance Officer
	Head of Compliance Advisory
	Group Head of Compliance and Risk
	Head of Financial Crime - MLRO
	Deputy Head of Compliance
	AML Manager
	Deputy MLRO
	Head of Risk
	Risk Manager
	Head of Governance
	Governance Manager



## About Taylor Root

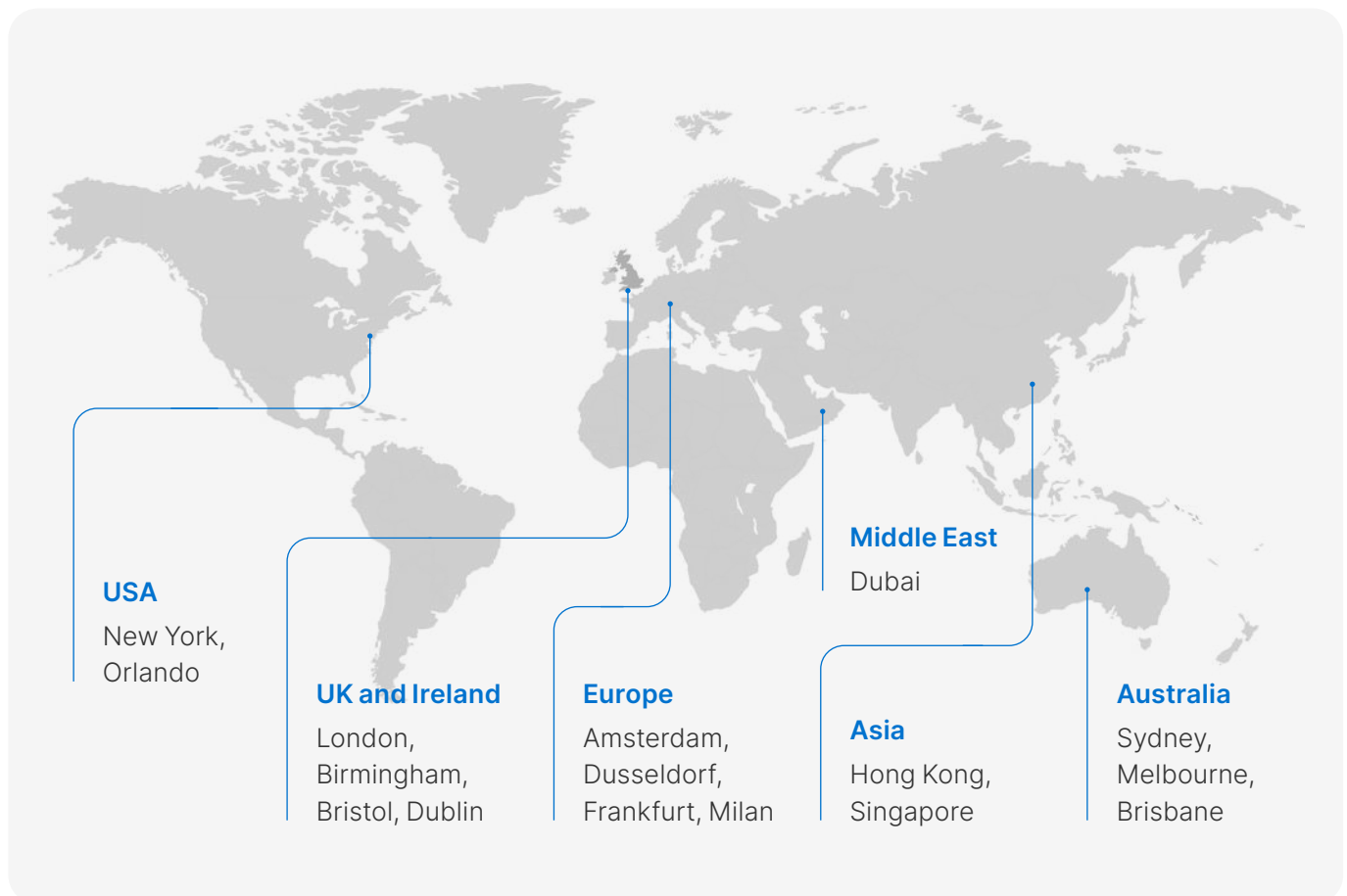
We are a global legal, risk and compliance search and recruitment consultancy and have been a market leader for more than 30 years.

We help global law firms and businesses to build and expand their legal, risk, compliance, and corporate governance functions. Whether you're hiring your first In-house Counsel, expanding your associate team in a certain practice area or expanding your risk department internationally, we partner with businesses at every step of your journey.

Our services include contingent and retained search, permanent, temporary and interim recruitment as well as consultancy solutions.

Wherever we operate we have made an impact, from Düsseldorf to Dubai, New York to Shanghai or Milan to Melbourne. From pioneering specialist recruitment in particular locations, to shaping how our clients have approached hiring, our influence is evident everywhere.

Today, we have 16 international offices-a truly global network of search and recruitment experts. Put simply, no one can match our global reach, or our history.



## Meet the team

Contact one of our expert legal, risk and compliance consultants - they have an extensive understanding of every global market that we cover.



**Shane Morton**

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## About our specialist recruitment brands

We're part of The SR Group, a global search and recruitment company that includes specialist search and recruitment consultancies Brewer Morris, Carter Murray, Frazer Jones, Keller West and Taylor Root.

With strong management, a clear vision and the recruitment, training and retention of inspiring people, we have developed successful brands synonymous with quality around the world. Each of

these brands support clients on mandates at all levels of seniority, from entry-level through to Heads of, Director and C-Suite positions on both a permanent and interim basis.

**brewer  
morris**

Brewer Morris is a trusted tax, treasury and senior finance search and recruitment consultancy.

Through integrity, flexibility, specialist

expertise and always delivering results, we've built lasting relationships with professionals and businesses.

[brewermorris.com](https://brewermorris.com)

**carter  
murray**

Carter Murray is a global search and recruitment consultancy dedicated to marketing and sales.

Through deep expertise within our

markets, we're consistently able to fulfil even the most complex briefs and match the best specialist to every role.

[cartermurray.com](https://cartermurray.com)

**frazer  
jones**

Frazer Jones is a global HR executive search and recruitment consultancy.

We help HR professionals thrive and empower HR leaders to put people and

culture at the heart of their business – creating a more progressive future, for everyone.

[frazerjones.com](https://frazerjones.com)

**keller  
west**

Keller West is a global IT specialist search and recruitment consultancy.

We help companies worldwide to navigate the evolving world of technology and

talent. Our teams connect businesses with the right digital, data, cyber security and infrastructure experts.

[kellerwest.com](https://kellerwest.com)

**taylor  
root**

Taylor Root is a global legal, risk and compliance search and recruitment consultancy.

Forming lasting partnerships with our

clients and candidates, we are constantly evolving and continue to shape the world's legal, risk and compliance markets.

[taylorroot.com](https://taylorroot.com)

