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Company formation in Kenya

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Flag



Coat of arms

Common form	Private limited company [1]
Registry	Business Registration Service (BRS) [1]
Minimum capital	None [1]
Directors	1 director [1]
Local director	Not required [1]
Corporate tax	30% [2]
VAT / sales tax	16% [2]
Typical timeline	Usually 1–2 weeks [1]
Tax treaties	Domestic rates and treaty list [7]
Currency	Kenyan shilling (KES)

In short: To set up a company in Kenya, most founders form a private limited company, registered with the Business Registration Service (BRS). [1] Minimum capital: none. Corporate tax: 30%. Registration: usually 1–2 weeks (as of November 2026).

Short guide. Tax figures come from PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries (reviewed 17 July 2026); company-law details summarise official guidance and can change. Confirm requirements with the Business Registration Service (BRS) before filing.

Companies in **Kenya** are registered online with the **Business Registration Service** through the eCitizen portal. Corporate tax is 30%; Nairobi is East Africa's main regional business hub.

Business structures

Most founders in Kenya form a private limited company, registered with the Business Registration Service (BRS). [1] Other forms are listed below.

- **Private limited company** – the usual company form for private businesses

Requirements

Minimum share capital in Kenya (2026): none. Directors required: 1 director. Local resident director: not required. [1]

- A company name that is available, checked with the registry.
- Share capital: none.
- Directors: 1 director.
- Local residency: not required.
- A registered office address in Kenya.
- Articles of association; standard templates are often available.

Registration process

Typical time to register a company in Kenya (2026): usually 1–2 weeks. [1] The usual steps are:

1. Choose the company form and check that the name is available.
2. Prepare and sign the articles of association.
3. File the registration with the Business Registration Service (BRS).

4. Receive the company's registration number, and pay in the share capital where required.
5. Register for corporate tax and VAT or sales tax with the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA).

Taxation

The corporate tax rate in Kenya in 2026 is 30%. [2] Standard VAT or sales tax: 16%. [2]

Tax	Rate and notes
Corporate income tax	30%
VAT / indirect tax	16%
Withholding tax on dividends to non-resident companies	15%

Ongoing compliance

Annual compliance in Kenya: Companies file annual financial statements and tax returns with the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), and keep their details up to date with the Business Registration Service. [1]

Double tax treaties

Kenya has a network of double tax treaties. A double tax treaty decides which country may tax cross-border income and usually caps the withholding tax the paying country can charge.

Domestic withholding tax on payments to non-resident companies

Dividends	Interest	Royalties
15%	15 to 25%	20%

The reduced rate for each partner country is set by the treaty concerned; PwC's withholding tax summary for Kenya lists them.

Domestic rates from the PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries withholding tax quick chart (November 2026). Treaty

benefits require proof of tax residence and are subject to anti-abuse rules.

Frequently asked questions

How long does it take to register a company in Kenya?

Typical registration time in Kenya: usually 1–2 weeks (as of November 2026), once all documents are ready. Opening a bank account and tax registrations can take longer.

What is the minimum share capital for a company in Kenya?

Minimum share capital in Kenya: none (as of November 2026).

What is the corporate tax rate in Kenya in 2026?

The corporate tax rate in Kenya in 2026 is 30%. See the Taxation section for reduced rates and other taxes.

Can a foreigner own 100% of a company in Kenya?

Yes, for most activities, though some sectors restrict foreign ownership or require approval. Local director rule in Kenya: not required.

What withholding tax applies to dividends paid from Kenya?

Kenya withholds 15% on dividends paid to non-resident companies under domestic law, often reduced by a tax treaty. See the Double tax treaties section.

Official registries and resources

- Business Registration Service (BRS)
- Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA)

Figures as of November 2026. Rates, thresholds and procedures change; confirm with the official registry, the tax authority or a local adviser before filing.

See also

- Comparison of company formation by country
- Company formation in South Africa
- Company formation in Mauritius
- Company formation in Angola
- Company formation in Botswana
- All countries

References

Entries marked **Official** are the registry, government and tax authority sources for this country; footnote numbers in the infobox point to them.

1. Official Business Registration Service (BRS) . Government of Kenya. Accessed November 2026.
2. Official Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) . Government of Kenya. Accessed November 2026.
3. Kenya: Corporate – Taxes on corporate income (reviewed 17 July 2026) . PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries. Accessed November 2026.
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5. Quick charts: Value-added tax (VAT) rates . PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries. Accessed November 2026.
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7. Kenya: Corporate – Withholding taxes . PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries. Accessed November 2026.

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