The opening of the first Apple Store in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) gets pushed back by "at least a month" to October 2015, The National reports, even as the company plans to open more outlets in the region.



The Dubai Mall of Emirates is to house the first UAE Apple Store. The company is also reportedly planning to open a second location in the Dubai Mall, as well an Abu Dhabi store.

News of the store opening delay comes as Bloomberg reports Apple managed to get an exemption from UAE foreign ownership laws-- according to "two people with knowledge of the matter" Apple will get 100% of operation ownership in the region.

UAE regulations state businesses operating in the region must either have 51% ownership by Emiratis or a company wholly owned by them unless based in free-zones. However the government does admit it is currently working on more foreigner-friendly investment laws.

“Apple was licensed in the UAE through the ministry of economy according to the requirements of, and in compliance with the Commercial Companies Law, as well as the ministerial resolution on foreign company branches,” director of trade registration at the Ministry of Economy Ahmad Al-Hosani states.

The UAE is a potentially lucrative market for Apple-- according to the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority active mobile subscriptions in the region reach 17 million. Smartphones make 61% of the total, with the iPhone 5s being the most popular handset.

Interestingly, local retailers are not worried about Apple entering the fray. As E-City store owner Albatha Group tells The National "[Apple] wants all its products in as many outlets as possible. Tourists may want to visit the Apple store, but most people in the UAE will be buying from their local shops."

Go Opening of Official Apple Stores in the UAE to "Create Excitement" for its Products (The National)

Go Apple Said to Plan Dubai Stores After Winning Exemptions (Bloomberg)