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UAE-German Working Group on hydrogen, industrial fuels, meets in Dubai to discuss future cooperation



“The drive towards real-time digital payments in the UAE is set to accelerate this year with the introduction of a scheme, due for launch in fourth quarter. The UAE Instant Payments Platform (IPP) will enable transfers between bank accounts on a 24x7x365 basis. As part of the country’s National Payments Systems Strategy, the IPP aims to provide best-in-class services, promote financial inclusion, and increase financial stability ... [Read more on Page 6.](#)



The UAE-German Working Group, an initiative by the two countries to boost cooperation in hydrogen and industrial fuels, convened its first meeting in Dubai to discuss a set of future directions and priorities in this regard and ways to unify the vision and goals for cooperation in the coming years.

It also discussed directions supporting the hydrogen and industrial fuel sector.

Sharif Al Olama, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure for Energy and Petroleum Affairs, led the meeting from the UAE side, whereas Ernst Peter Fischer, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the UAE, chaired the meeting from the German side.

At the meeting were Yousef Al Ali, Assistant Under-Secretary for Water, Electricity and Future Energy Affairs; Elien Von Zitwitzer, Director of Bilateral Energy Cooperation at the German Federal Ministry for Economics and Climate Protec-

tion, and several concerned officials from both sides.

The meeting was informed that specialist technical groups had been formed to develop the hydrogen market in the two countries. The first working group is concerned with developing hydrogen business and technology while the second will develop policies and legislation in hydrogen, to realise the vision of both countries, and to achieve the roadmap for leadership in hydrogen for the UAE, launched at the Global Climate Change Summit (COP26) in Glasgow.

The roadmap represents a comprehensive national plan to support low-carbon local industries, achieve climate neutrality and enhance the country’s position as a source of hydrogen. This is within the framework of consolidating the directions of rational leadership by promoting future solutions to support the Global Climate Initiative. The latest of these is the UAE’s strategic initiative for climate neutrality 2050, the first in the Middle East and North Africa. >

Sharif Al Olama stressed that the joint working group announced in November 2021 aims to maximise the benefit of bilateral cooperation in the field of clean energy between the two countries, especially green hydrogen, by strengthening cooperation and strengthening ties between the two governments and the private sector and research institutes. The group is working on organising a forum to discuss obstacles to the market's absorption of green hydrogen, promot-

ing ambitions to expand the horizons of clean energy production, and supporting the Paris Agreement on climate change.

He said that the UAE can be a global centre for clean energy in all its forms, especially hydrogen, and it is currently one of the leading countries in developing this field.

Al Olama praised the bilateral relations between the UAE and Germany, which have witnessed tremendous progress over

the past few years, thanks to the leadership of the two countries, mutual trust, respect, and shared interests.

The meeting is part of a high-level steering group established from the "Declaration of Intent" of the cooperation agreement signed by the UAE and Germany in 2017.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395303029680>

Three in four UAE consumers typically purchase online; e-commerce market value jumps to \$5 billion in 2021

Proactive government policies, trust in online payments, and advanced telecommunication infrastructure have contributed to the e-commerce growth in the UAE, according to a report launched by EZDubai in partnership with Euromonitor International



The UAE e-commerce sector has continued to show growth in 2021, according to a recent report launched by EZDubai, the fully dedicated e-commerce zone in Dubai South, in partnership with Euromonitor International, the world's leading provider for global business intelligence, market analysis, and consumer insights.

Total e-commerce in the UAE, reached just over \$5 billion in 2021 and is anticipated to surpass \$8 billion by 2025.

More consumers in the UAE made online purchases across all categories during 2021, compared to 2020, with three

in four respondents typically purchasing online, according to the report.

The fastest-growing sectors by industry from 2021 – 2025 will be homewares and home furnishings; food and beverage; and media products.

Countries in the Middle East are in a strong position to enable further e-commerce development due to the high GDP-per-capita and internet penetration, the report stated.

The UAE and Qatar are in the strongest position, with GDP-per-capita above

\$40,000 and internet penetration above 90 percent.

Both countries have successfully implemented fiber access in homes and have the highest active mobile-broadband subscriptions in the region.

Online shopping in the MENA region is fast catching up with global powerhouses such as China, with many online retailers scaling up services during Covid-19.

By 2021, the total market size is expected to reach an estimate of \$31.7 billion.

Factors behind the e-commerce

boom in the MENA region

The expansion of e-commerce in the MENA region is mainly driven by strong internet penetration rates, high possession of digital devices, rising incomes, improving logistic advancements, and the increasing presence of global and recognised players that have brought variety and availability to local consumers amidst the pandemic.

While the MENA is mostly a cash-based economy, after the pandemic, consumers shifted quickly to adopt credit and debit cards, driven by increased trust and the improvement of company operations.

According to the report, in the UAE, credit/debit cards are the preferred method of payment.

UAE consumers purchase from cross-border retailers to access a wider range of products or search for lower prices or higher quality products not offered locally.

The UAE also has affordable shipping costs for consumers looking to purchase outside the region.

The leading countries, which UAE consumers purchase from include the USA, India, and China. These purchases are often related to apparel and footwear, as well as beauty and personal care.

Foreign e-commerce (UAE consumers purchasing outside of the country) is rising fast, from 23 percent of total e-commerce sales in 2019 to 26 percent in 2021. This is expected to rise to 32 percent in 2025.

The MENA is an active region for attracting local and international investments in e-commerce.

With the current pace of developments and growing consumer preference for online retail, the region will see e-commerce growth of over \$18 billion in absolute value terms over 2021-2025 reaching over \$49 billion in 2025.

Commenting on the report, the CEO of the Logistics District – Dubai South, Mohsen Ahmad, said: “We are pleased to launch the second e-commerce report in partnership with Euromonitor and share the latest insights on the sector with our stakeholders. The growth that is wit-



nessed in the UAE and the MENA region encourages us to work harder and closer with our e-commerce players in order to boost the sector, so that the emirate’s e-commerce market becomes a global powerhouse.

“The relentless government support as well as the services and solutions that we tailor for our clients to fulfil their objectives, are key factors in the advancement of the sector. At EZDubai, we will continue to cater to the rising demand that comes in tandem to the growth of online buyers and internet penetration.”

The general manager of Euro-monitor International in Dubai, Hussein Doughan, said: “The launch of the second such report in the MENA region, is due to several factors, among which is the growth of the e-commerce sector that reached over \$31.7 billion in 2021.”

He added: “We are delighted to present the report in partnership with EZDubai, and to provide industry players with a strong understanding of the key opportunities in the e-commerce industry through market growth performance, key success factors and category analysis.”

EZDubai was designed to attract leading e-commerce companies and create a benchmark with its infrastructure.

The e-commerce zone – which was launched in January 2019 by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the

Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai – aims to promote the emirate’s position as a hub for regional e-commerce.

<https://www.arabianbusiness.com/industries/retail/three-in-four-uae-consumers-typically-purchase-online-e-commerce-market-value-jumps-to-5-billion-in-2021>

The UAE is first MENA region and 10th globally in its overall influence in the Global Soft Power Index 2022



The position of the UAE in the GSPI 2022 as the 10th globally and first regionally in its overall influence in soft power, reflects our leading position and good reputation worldwide

Mohammed bin Rashid



It was launched during the virtual Global Soft Power Summit in London

The Index involved more than 100,000 respondents across 101 nations

The world's most comprehensive index on perceptions of soft power



1

The UAE ranked first regionally and 15th globally in the overall GSPI ranking



12

the UAE ranked 12th globally in the overall covid-19 score



10

The UAE scored 10 in the "Internationally Admired Leaders" pillar



8

The UAE achieved the 8th position globally in the "Strong and Stable Economy" pillar



9

The UAE is the 9th globally in "Supporting Economic Recovery" after Covid-19



11

The UAE ranked 11th in the "Influential media" pillar



10

The UAE ranked 10th globally in the "Influential in diplomatic circles"

UAE is first MENA region, 10th globally in overall influence: GSPI

The United Arab Emirates has been ranked first regionally and 10th globally for Influence in the Global Soft Power Index (GSPI) 2022.

The UAE advanced to 15th place globally in the overall GSPI ranking, up from last year's 17th in the GSPI 2021. The country sits at the top in the region and remains at the forefront of the countries in the Middle East and North Africa, achieving progress in all indicators and sub-indicators.

In a tweet posted on his official Twitter account, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, said, "The GSPI 2022, ranked the UAE as the 10th globally and first regionally in its overall influence in soft power. This reflects our leading position and good reputation worldwide."

His Highness added, "More than 100,000 respondents worldwide chose the UAE as the first regionally and 15th globally in the Global Soft Power Index 2022. Our country also ranked 10th globally in its influence, enhancing our status and positive impact."

Sheikh Mohammed stressed that the country's progress in all indicators and sub-indicators results from the unique model it provides.

H.H. noted, "The UAE's soft power lies in its development model, which brings together the best ideas and minds across the world and gathers people of all races to build the best development experience in the world."

The UAE continued its progress in the GSPI 2022, developed by "Brand Finance" British company. The index interviewed more than 100,000 people from 101 countries worldwide to assess the various axes of soft power and its positive influence. The UAE's overall Soft Power score improved more than 11 percent, progressing to 15th place globally, up from 17th place in 2021.

The UAE's performance in the 2022 Index that included 120 countries had many core strengths, including its distinguished position as a leading destination for Business and Trade, the ease to do business within a stable economic environment.

Also, the country has a positive impact as the most influential in the region and its reputation as one of the most generous and helpful countries internationally. The UAE has improved its reputation among developed nations during the past year.

The UAE also recorded an outstanding performance in the main indicators during 2022 compared to 2021. The UAE ranked 10th globally in the "Overall Influence" index compared to 12th in the previous year. The UAE ranked 20th globally in the "Reputation" index.

The UAE achieved an overall stable performance in all pillars, especially in the "Culture and Heritage" pillar, where it ranked the 24th, by advancing seven positions from 2021, where it ranked the 31st.

The UAE's performance on the "International Relations" pillar has shown genuine improvement, as it ranked 11th up from last year's 16th ranking, showing a strong reputation for being "Influential in diplomatic circles" and "Helpful to other countries in need". The country's improving perceptions regarding environmental protection could move UAE into the top 10 in the future.

Also, the UAE ranked first regionally and 10th globally in the "Influence" pillar, the 10th globally in the "Influential in diplomatic circles", and the 11th globally in the "International relations" pillar. The UAE's reputation score has marginally improved, and it has moved up to 20th globally, by far the highest among all Arab nations.

The UAE achieved the 8th position globally in the "Strong and Stable Economy" pillar, the 9th globally in "Supporting Economic Recovery" after Covid-19, and the 10th globally in "Business and Trade". The "Future Growth Potential" of the UAE has improved, ranking 11th globally in the 2022 index.

The UAE is perceived to have managed the pandemic of COVID-19 effectively, which made it a distinguished model regionally and globally. The country succeeded in facing challenges in a balanced way through its proactive policies and procedures.

In this context, the UAE ranked 12th in the overall COVID-19 score. The country ranked 12th in the "Helping other countries manage and recover from COVID" pillar, and 13th in the "Health and wellbeing of its people, including vaccination".

The UAE ranked 10th globally in the overall influence, while the nine countries that preceded the UAE are among the countries with a large population density. Many countries in the region have advanced in the "Influence" pillar, while the UAE remains at the forefront regionally. The progress achieved by countries in this pillar came in the developing markets of the Middle East and Asia.

Due to its developed strong educational system over the past years, the UAE achieved score improvements across the "Education & Science" pillar, ranking 17th in 2022.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395303029961>

UAE's upcoming instant payments platform offers real-time benefits for banks

The instant payments interface gives banks a chance to take on fintechs' nimbleness



The drive towards real-time digital payments in the UAE is set to accelerate this year with the introduction of a scheme, due for launch in fourth quarter. The UAE Instant Payments Platform (IPP) will enable transfers between bank accounts on a 24x7x365 basis.

As part of the country's National Payments Systems Strategy, the IPP aims to provide best-in-class services, promote financial inclusion, and increase financial stability. It could be assumed that digital transactions already dominate the payments landscape in the country, particularly when you think of how successful the real-time schemes have been in other countries like India.

However, until recently — despite the noteworthy digitalisation of its economy, and its impressive smartphone penetration — the UAE has remained heavily dependent on cash. According to McKinsey & Company, only about a third of retail transactions are conducted electronically, due to factors such as underdeveloped digital-payments infrastructure and services, underbanked consumer and merchant segments, and a cultural bias toward cash.

This changed following the onset of the pandemic which placed immense pressure on businesses to provide frictionless experiences to consumers, reduce operating costs, and enhance the level of transparency and security. Consequently, the sector is forecast to become a \$14 billion market by 2030.

With the imminent introduction of the IPP, the market for real-time and digital payments will receive a significant boost. Research conducted by ACI Worldwide projects that real-time payments will surpass a 5 per cent share of all digital payment transactions in the UAE by 2024.

It's clear that the customer appetite for real-time payments exists, and as participation in the IPP scheme is mandatory for all financial institutions, banks in the UAE are now under pressure to rethink their payment infrastructures and explore new business models. But with challenge lies opportunity.

So, rather than only striving to meet regulations, regional banks should recognise the potential that real-time payments have to positively impact their business.

Real-time, real benefits

For consumers, real-time payments offer unparalleled convenience. These systems enable instant, 24x7 secure interbank electronic funds transfers that can be initiated through smartphones, tablets, and digital wallets. The majority of current use cases for real-time payments centre mainly around low-value, person-to-person and consumer-to-business payments.

As they connect to the IPP, UAE banks will be able to both, capture these rising transaction volumes, and offer customers accurate-to-the-second account information. In doing so, they will be able to attract and retain customers by meeting their growing expectations for real-time payments and information.

Banks can also turn to real-time payments to counter the threat they face from the new breed of fintechs that have made significant inroads into the market in recent years. After all, banks are better positioned to capitalise on the benefits of real-time payments and deliver them to their customers. They have richer product portfolios and greater scale than their fintech counterparts.

As they become familiar and comfortable with bank-provided real-time payments from their account, UAE consumers will also become more amenable to additional services made possible by real-time payments. For example, banks will start providing digital overlay services, such as Request to Pay, that will undoubtedly translate to an increase in customer spending, the ability to engage with entirely new consumer segments and arguably most importantly, allow these traditional banks to fend off advances from the growing number of fintechs.

In the retail segment, by and large, for most UAE consumers, their bank is their most trusted financial institution. They would welcome a real-time P2P solution that gives them control of their money and the perceived extra layer of safety that comes from being a bank-operated service.

For banks, this would mean further entrenching themselves with their customers, which will go a long way in fostering brand loyalty and helping to avoid attrition and churn — metrics that are particularly important for banks in the digital era.


Prime time for real-time

The imminent introduction of the IPP presents the opportune moment for UAE banks to win over customers with new value-added services that ride on real-time rails. That means developing payments modernisation strategies and revenue models that leverage — rather than resist — real-time's strengths. And, if handled well, better, more seamless customer experiences.

https://gulfnews.com/business/banking/uaes-upcoming-instant-payments-platform-offers-real-time-benefits-for-banks-1.86368556?utm_campaign=ACI-CORP-2022-Middle-East-Press-Coverage&utm_content=oktopost-twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter

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