



The impressive surge of the UAE's service export and its impact on the national economy

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Our reliance upon knowledge and scientific thinking to achieve total development is the only way to bring our nation ahead to the stage of non-oil production.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi



A country's true progress is measured in its ability to innovate, the economic diversification efforts it cultivates, and the resulting strategic global positioning it achieves. The UAE perfectly embodies these criteria.

In the past few decades, the nation has shifted from relying mainly on oil to becoming a diversified powerhouse with substantial contributions from sectors such as tourism, finance, and trade. The latest development in this transformation narrative is the surge in service exports in the country.

In 2023, the UAE's service exports reached AED 606 billion, with more than AED 170 billion coming from digital service exports. The aggregate value of the foreign trade of goods and services reached a substantial value of AED 4.45 trillion in the same year. This impressive growth accentuates the country's strategic initiatives to develop a dynamic, diversified, and stable economy. These developments are also in line with the nation's greater plans of maximising emerging technologies to become a future-ready UAE.



Part I

UAE's diversification efforts and world-class infrastructure





The United Arab Emirates is known for strategically investing in its infrastructure development to enhance its service export capabilities. It is presently home to ports like Jebel Ali Port, which is among the largest and most efficient globally. The Zayed International Airport and Dubai International Airport are also among the busiest and most sophisticated airports worldwide.

In addition, the country's network of free zones, including the Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC) and the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), offers businesses tax incentives, streamlined regulations, and operational flexibility. These infrastructure assets significantly drive international trade, promote tourism, and stimulate global investments. They reflect the UAE's ability to competitively and efficiently export services on the global stage. This commitment to world-class infrastructure underpins the country's successful integration into global markets; thereby, strengthening its service exports sector.

Part II

The introduction of digital technology to digitalise key sectors





In the last couple of decades, the UAE has embraced digital transformation as a core element of its economic strategy. These tech-driven initiatives in the country back strategic plans to conceptualise and produce emerging technologies to actively shape its digital infrastructure; thus, ensuring the nation remains at the forefront of technological advancements. These strides have also boosted the UAE's service exports.

The UAE Digital Government Strategy 2025 and the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy exemplify this commitment. The integration of advanced technologies like artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cloud computing has made way for the modernisation of key service sectors, such as finance, healthcare, and logistics. These technologies have streamlined operations, reduced costs, and facilitated the creation of innovative services that meet international standards.

It's also worth mentioning that the rise in these exports has contributed to job creation, enhanced skills development, and increased foreign exchange revenue, thereby reinforcing the nation's economic resilience and stability.

The success of digital service exports may also be attributed to factors such as the UAE's pro-business conducive regulatory system.

Indeed, the surge in digital services diversifies the economic base, enhances global competitiveness, further attracts foreign direct investment (FDI), and opens greater avenues for start-ups across sectors. Consequently, the record-breaking advancements the country has made year after year prove that its focus on digital infrastructure is key to enhancing its economic framework.

Role of digital transformation in propelling UAE service exports: An in-depth analysis



Read the accompanying article for more information.

Part III

The role of the National Agenda for Economic Growth







As per a recently released report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the UAE ranked 15th globally in outward FDI in 2023. The country's outward FDI exceeded AED 880 billion at the beginning of the year, which shows impressive uptrend trajectory in international investments. The clear and progressive leadership along with the strategic projects designed to yield significant benefits for the country's socio-economic performance help drive this growth.

The National Agenda for Economic Growth, introduced by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, is a strategic blueprint for sustainable development, youth empowerment, and economic momentum. The agenda outlines key priorities for developing the national service exports by 50% and strengthening the UAE's position as a global hub for re-exports. It emphasises enhancing the digital economy, developing human capital, and creating a supportive business environment as core components of this strategy. Moreover, it supports 14 vital sectors, including advanced industries and food security, to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of UAE products in global markets.

The fortified advancement of the country's digital economy is also within the agenda's roadmap. Complementary initiatives like the UAE Digital Government Strategy 2025 and the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, aim to integrate advanced technologies across various sectors. This approach fosters a cohesive and innovative digital infrastructure, which in turn supports the growth of service exports.

Programs such as the UAE Skills Strategy and the National Program for Artificial Intelligence align with the broader goals of the agenda. They equip individuals with the skills necessary to thrive in the digital economy.

The UAE National Agenda for Economic Growth: What are the priorities for developing service exports?



Read the accompanying article for more information.

Part IV

The strategic function of private companies



Private corporate institutions based in the country, like Seed Group, play a strategic function in the development of service export industries and activities. The collaboration between government entities and private sector organisations supports the development of high-value services and attracts high-growth international firms. In turn, high-growth companies are likely to bring advanced technologies and capital. Subsequently, they could revolutionise the UAE's service export capabilities and ignite its economic development forward.

In a similar manner, private firms create an appealing environment for international investments and entrepreneurs. Their partnerships with global businesses highlight the UAE as a prime market for new ventures. Furthermore, the alliances formed by private companies elevate the UAE's credibility as a leading hub for service exports.

UAE in global markets: Why it's an ideal nurturing ground for any business



Read the accompanying article for more information.





As established throughout this e-book, the UAE's exceptional environment for growth and success stems from its strategic vision, innovative policies, and robust economic framework. These elements have collectively created a fertile ground for businesses of all sizes. The UAE's remarkable performance in service exports and total foreign trade further underscores this ideal nurturing ground.

As the UAE continues to implement forward-thinking initiatives and invest in key sectors, it is set to remain a leading global market and a prime destination for businesses looking to thrive and grow.

Additional information and resources



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Become a Royalty Partner

Having a local partner like the Seed Group allows you to gain access to key stakeholders in the public and private sectors, as well as experience accelerated business development through strategic alliances. Working with the royal family office fosters strategic relationships at the highest level, providing our partners with access to otherwise inaccessible right decision-makers.

A screenshot of a web application form titled "Become a Royalty Partner". The form is white and centered on a background of desert dunes. It contains several input fields and a dropdown menu. The fields are arranged in a grid-like fashion. The form includes the following fields:

- Company Name *
- Type of Business (B2B/B2C/B2G) *
- Company Website *
- Company Location *
- Company Industry * (with a dropdown menu showing "Please Select")
- Product/Service *
- Company Phone No.
- Year of Establishment

A small note below the website field reads: "If not applicable, please type N/A".

[Apply now](#)



Over the past 20 years, Seed Group has formed strategic alliances with leading global companies from a variety of regions and industries. These companies have propelled their business interests and goals in the Middle East and North Africa region through the support and strong base of regional connections of the Seed Group. The Group's goal is to create mutually beneficial partnerships with multinational organisations and to accelerate their sustainable market entry and presence within the MENA region.

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