

# DUBAI BUSINESS FORUM USA

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## Dubai Business Forum US

### Opportunities Driving Mutual Growth

**12 November 2025 – New York City**

As AI disruption and increasing market complexity shape the global business landscape, the most successful companies aren't just fast, they are precise and adaptive. Dubai has cemented itself as a global hub for investment and trade, offering a strategically designed and located launchpad for enterprises built to thrive.

Through its fully digitized government channels and services, streamlined licensing platforms and competitive tax environment, the city has established itself as a destination for business acceleration and world-class governance and is the world's top destination for Greenfield FDI projects. Crucially, Dubai's tangible infrastructure truly sets it apart. Hyperscale data centers, seamless logistics corridors and a purpose-built AI & Web3 Campus advance not only innovation but real-world implementation of AI across critical sectors, from supply chains and mobility to financial services and public administration.

At the heart of this vision is the D33 Economic Agenda, a bold plan to double GDP by 2033 through full digital transformation, global investment partnerships and innovation. These initiatives are reinforced by specialized free zones, where capital, regulation and talent intersect to create cohesive, high-performance ecosystems.

For high-growth businesses expanding their global footprint or multinationals seeking to reorient global operations, Dubai offers more than geographic advantage; it offers strategic leverage. Deep institutional ties, harmonized digital policy and advanced trade infrastructure create an operational core where businesses can expand with confidence, reach across continents and engage in trusted, long-term growth.

As the global economy recalibrates, the question is no longer just where to grow, but how. Dubai offers a compelling answer by combining openness with stability and agility with sophistication. What role will AI governance, international standards and cross-border collaboration play in shaping Dubai's model? Moreover, how can this model redefine the future of investment, innovation and global enterprise?

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## Plenary Forum Programme

8:00 - 9:00	<b>Registration and Networking</b>
9:00 - 9:05	<b>Welcome by Master of Ceremony</b> Ms. Amna Nawaz, Co-Host, PBS News Hour, PBS
9:05 - 9:20	<b>Scaling Global Opportunity: The USA-Dubai Strategic Partnership</b> Dubai attracted \$14.2 billion in foreign direct investment in 2024, ranking it among the world's top destinations for new projects. For U.S. companies, the city's mix of zero personal income tax, 200+ global flight connections and booming sectors from fintech to clean energy offers a springboard into the Middle East, Africa and Asia. American firms are growing in strategic importance and are already among the top investors in the digital and technology sector in Dubai. With the city operating as an increasingly vital hub for innovation and capital, how can U.S. businesses partner with Dubai to seize the moment and scale opportunity?
	<b>Confirmed Speaker:</b> H.E. Eng. Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansoori, Chairman, Dubai Chambers
9:20 - 9:25	<b>Welcome Address</b> H.E. Amna Almheiri, Consul General, Consulate General of the United Arab Emirates in New York
9:25 - 9:40	<b>Setting the Scene: Navigating the Future of U.S.-Dubai Trade and Investment</b> As global trade realigns, the U.S. and Dubai are redefining their relationship with over \$32 billion in bilateral trade in 2024 estimated by the Office of the United States Trade Representative. Explore the data, deals and trends from AI to supply chain realignment shaping their economic future. Dive into key growth sectors including fintech, clean energy, health tech and digital infrastructure and tackle critical questions. Where is capital flowing now, what are the operational and regulatory bottlenecks and what winning strategies are leaders using for success?
	<b>Confirmed Speaker:</b> Mr. Anthony O'Sullivan, UAE Managing Partner, EY

**9:40 - 10:05**

**Unlocking \$4 Trillion: Private Capital's Role in the Next Economic Cycle**

Private capital firms have more than \$4 trillion of dry powder — how will they invest it? Michael Koester, co-founder of 5C Investment Partners, will discuss the rise of alternative financing, the challenges brought by a slowdown in realizations, and the role it can play in building and diversifying economies in the Gulf and beyond.

**Confirmed Moderator**

Liz Hoffman, Business & Finance Editor, Semafor

**Confirmed Speaker**

Mr. Michael Koester, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, 5C Investment Partners

**10:05 - 10:30**

**How Is Dubai Opening New Pathways for U.S. and Global Business?**

Dubai's model for international business is rooted in governance, partnership and performance. As the UAE and U.S. deepen ties across investment, technology and trade, two of Dubai's key economic leaders outline real opportunities for U.S. business and the strategic vision driving them. The pathways for business success are well established and according to Dubai Chambers over 3,500 American companies are registered in Dubai, many with a strategic hub in the city. How is Dubai empowering businesses to succeed through targeted support, streamlined access and bold initiatives like the D33 Economic Agenda?

**Confirmed Moderator**

Mr. Justin B. Smith, Co-Founder and CEO, Semafor

**Confirmed Speakers**

H.E. Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, President and CEO, Dubai Chambers

H.E. Hadi Badri, CEO, Dubai Economic Development Corporation

**10:30 - 11:05**

**Dubai's Fintech Footprint: Shaping the Future of Global Finance**

Dubai has quickly become a fintech hotspot, fueled by strategic policies like the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33) and the "We the UAE 31" initiative. This year alone fintech investments have surged by 35% according to the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). What are the policies that make Dubai a leading fintech destination and why are companies flocking there? Leaders discuss Dubai as a magnet for fintech founders and investors and explore the key factors driving its ascent on the global stage.

**Confirmed Moderator**

Sonali Basak, Chief Investment Strategist, iCapital

**Confirmed Speakers**

John Caplan, CEO and Director, Payoneer

Monica Brand Engel, Managing Partner and Co-Founder, Quona Capital

Rami Tabbara, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Stake

**11:05 - 11:45**

**Open for Business: Dubai as a Launchpad for Global Expansion**

Dubai has become an innovative proving ground for U.S. companies with global ambitions, where capital, talent, and policy converge to enable expansion into fast-growing markets across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. With more than 70% of Fortune 500 firms anchoring their regional headquarters in the city, Dubai now serves as both a safe haven and a springboard for international growth.

In this conversation, leading investors and strategists will explore how American firms can navigate the opportunities and potential hurdles of building beyond traditional markets, and what Dubai's rise reveals about the new guideposts of global business.

**Confirmed Moderator**

Justin B. Smith, Co-Founder and CEO, Semafor

**Confirmed Speakers**

Bob Diamond, Founder and CEO, Atlas Merchant Capital

Arshad Ghafur, President, Middle East & North Africa, Bank of America

Matt Higgins, CEO and Co-Founder, RSE Ventures

**11:45 - 12:10**

**Wall Street to the Gulf: Why U.S. Investors are Banking on Dubai**

In a shifting global economy, Dubai and the broader Middle East are fast emerging as dynamic investment hubs. Investor appetite in the region continues to grow, fueled by expanding economies, active sovereign wealth funds, and Dubai's role as a gateway for global capital. Leading U.S. investors explore what's driving their engagement and the opportunities shaping cross-border investment in this rapidly evolving market.

**Confirmed Moderator**

Sonali Basak, Chief Investment Strategist, iCapital

**Confirmed Speakers**

Jose Minaya, Global Head of BNY Investments and Wealth, BNY

Stephanie von Friedeburg, Global Head, Public Sector Banking, Citi

**12:10 - 13:30**

**Networking Lunch**

**13:30 - 14:05**

**The New Geography of Opportunity: Allocating Capital in the Digital Era**

Amid a shifting geopolitical landscape, the global map of capital is being redrawn, and Dubai has become a critical global financial hub. Investors seek to capitalize on the AI revolution, an industry projected to contribute up to \$320 billion to the Middle East economy by 2030 according to PwC. Leaders from influential investment firms and tech companies uncover the mechanisms that are reducing uncertainty and risk and attracting global capital, from AI-native regulation to data-driven infrastructure. How are they using these new tools and technology to redefine the next frontier of asset management and investment?

**Confirmed Moderator**

Zain Asher, Anchor, CNN

**Confirmed Speakers**

May Nasrallah, Chairwoman (MENA) and Partner, PJT Partners

Jared Cohen, President of Global Affairs and Co-Head of the Goldman Sachs Global Institute, Goldman Sachs

Noor Sweid, Founder and Managing Partner, Global Ventures

**14:05 - 14:30**

**The Rise of Quick Commerce: Redefining Urban Convenience**

Dubai's fast-paced lifestyle, dense urban geography, and world-class digital infrastructure have created the perfect conditions for Q-commerce to thrive. As ultra-fast delivery platforms reshape how consumers shop for essentials, the model is emerging as a bellwether for innovation in logistics, retail, and tech-enabled urban living. This conversation will explore what is fueling the boom, the competitive pressures driving new efficiencies, and what Dubai's rapid adoption can teach global markets about the next frontier in digital commerce.

**Confirmed Moderator**

Nayeema Raza, Host, "Smart Girl Dumb Questions" Podcast

**Confirmed Speakers**

Bassel Alnahlaoui, Chief Business Officer, Careem

Wassim Makarem, Chief Retail Officer, talabat

**14:30 - 14:55**

**The Talent Multiplier - Winning Over the Global Workforce**

Capital is global, and now, so is talent. Dubai has become a magnet for the world's best and brightest minds with its progressive visas and hyper-connected infrastructure. According to INSEAD, Dubai holds the top spot globally for attracting talent. Discover how U.S. companies can leverage Dubai as a strategic hub to attract, retain, and manage a diverse, world-class workforce for the new globally connected world of work.

**Confirmed Moderator**

Shakuntala Santhiran, International Broadcast Journalist and Moderator

**Confirmed Speakers**

Rabea Ataya, CEO and Founder, Bayt.com

Jon Clifton, CEO, Gallup

**14:55 - 15:30**

**Accelerating Ambition: Startups, Incubators and Dubai's Next Tech Frontier**

Dubai today ranks third in global VC ecosystem growth. With that investment, the city is making an ambitious push into the startup space, aiming to become a global hub for breakthroughs not just in AI but in fintech, quantum computing and robotics. Backed by seed funding, accelerators and institutional capital, the city is working to build not just companies, but a lasting culture of scientific innovation. How is Dubai attracting the world's top founders and competing with established tech powerhouses?

**Confirmed Moderator**

Nayeema Raza, Host, "Smart Girl Dumb Questions" Podcast

**Confirmed Speakers**

Mohamad Ballout, CEO & Co-Founder, Kitopi

Mona Ataya, Founder, Mumzworld

Arjun Mohan, CEO, TENDERD

**15:30 - 15:50**

**Afternoon Networking Break**

**15:50 - 16:10**

**The Dubai Model: Beyond Free Zones – Building the Next Generation Investment and Innovation Ecosystem**

Dubai Integrated Economic Zones Authority (DIEZ) exemplifies how Dubai's economic model has evolved beyond traditional free zones to create a fully integrated platform that combines business enablement, innovation, and strategic investment.

Through its network of specialized zones, DIEZ drives growth across priority sectors such as technology, logistics, and advanced manufacturing.

Complementing this ecosystem, Oraseya Capital, DIEZ's venture capital arm, invests in high-potential startups and emerging technologies, reinforcing Dubai's role as a launchpad for global innovation.

This fireside chat will explore how DIEZ's unique model—bridging infrastructure, policy, and capital—empowers companies and investors from the U.S. and around the world to scale from Dubai. What insights can be drawn from this integrated approach to fuel sustainable growth and expand cross-border investment?

**Confirmed Moderator**

Nayeema Raza, Host, "Smart Girl Dumb Questions" Podcast

**Confirmed Speaker**

Dr. Juma Al Matrooshi, Assistant Executive Chairman - Investments & Partnerships, Dubai Integrated Economic Zones

**16:10 - 16:40**

**Dubai's Crypto Moment: Building a Global Hub**

Dubai's recent moves into the world of cryptocurrency have been nothing short of monumental. From a \$9B investment into a blockchain-focused financial hub in the Maldives to sweeping regulatory and infrastructure initiatives at home, the Emirates' influence in the crypto industry grows by the day. What role will Dubai play in the future of the global cryptocurrency industry? What do entrepreneurs, investors, and businesses across the world need to know to plan ahead?

**Confirmed Moderator**

Shakuntala Santhiran, International Broadcast Journalist and Moderator

**Confirmed Speakers**

Ola Doudin, CEO, BitOasis

Dr. Marwan Alzarouni, CEO of AI, Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism

Nicolas Cary, Co-Founder and Vice Chairman, Blockchain.com

**16:40 - 17:10**

**The Next Frontier: How AI is Digitizing Our Senses**

Technology is helping us understand one of our least understood senses, allowing computers to utilize and reproduce scents. In Dubai, where innovation is central to the city's D33 vision, this frontier has the potential to transform industries in the Gulf and beyond, from detecting diseases earlier to creating more sustainable products and strengthening economic security.

**Confirmed Moderator**

Ben Smith, Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Semafor

**Confirmed Speaker**

Dr. Alex Wiltschko, CEO, Osmo

**17:10 - 17:15**

**Closing Remarks**

## **Enabling Growth Series**

Three closed-door roundtables will introduce key stakeholders of Dubai's economic ecosystem to U.S. business innovators to foster strategic dialogue, deepen partnerships and unlock new pathways for trade and investment between the United States and Dubai.

**14:00 - 14:50**

### **Investment Opportunities in the Sectors of the Future Round 1**

This high-level roundtable brings together leading family business principals and top investors from the U.S. and Dubai to exchange strategies on intergenerational wealth, cross-border growth, and emerging investment opportunities. The discussion will spotlight capital flows into priority D33 sectors – including technology, healthcare, sustainability, and logistics – while exploring the role of family enterprises in driving long-term economic resilience. Designed to spark collaboration, co-investment, and peer learning across two influential networks.

**15:00 - 15:50**

### **Dubai USA Business Dialogue**

This exclusive session will convene CEOs and senior representatives from leading U.S. chambers of commerce and other relevant entities, alongside the leadership of Dubai Chambers. The roundtable will explore future areas of collaboration to support our respective members in accessing new growth opportunities across priority sectors outlined in Dubai's D33 economic agenda. The discussion will focus on building cross-market connectivity, trade facilitation, and sharing best practices.

**16:00 - 16:50**

### **Investment Opportunities in the Sectors of the Future Round 2**

This high-level roundtable brings together leading family business principals and top investors from the U.S. and Dubai to exchange strategies on intergenerational wealth, cross-border growth, and emerging investment opportunities. The discussion will spotlight capital flows into priority D33 sectors – including technology, healthcare, sustainability, and logistics – while exploring the role of family enterprises in driving long-term economic resilience. Designed to spark collaboration, co-investment, and peer learning across two influential networks.