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Dubai is home to some of the best logistics facilities in the world and its location, both geographic and strategic, is a natural business gateway between East and West. The logistics industry constitutes more than 14 percent of Dubai’s GDP. The sector is expected to grow at a steady CAGR of 5.7 per cent until 2020. And under Dubai Plan 2021, the city aims to become one of the top five logistics centres in the world by improving the trade openness ratio and ease of doing business.
In April 2017, Berlin-based industrial manufacturing giant Siemens announced its plan to set up its global logistics headquarters in Dubai. Additionally, Amazon’s growing interest in the region is evident by its acquisition of UAE online retailer Souq.com. The US-based retail giant is expected to expand its operations in Dubai and leverage its world-class logistics infrastructure. Emirates SkyCargo recently opened a new pharmaceuticals facility at Dubai International airport (DXB) to accommodate growing demand for pharmaceutical and cold storage products. The expansion of cold-chain logistics services at DXB and Dubai World Central (DWC) is expected to further increase air freight volumes in the UAE.

Dubai’s non-oil foreign trade in 2017 reached US$354.4 billion, registering a US$7 billion increase from 2016 figures. Dubai’s re-exports grew 9 percent in 2017 to US$98 billion, while imports touched US$212 billion and exports totalled US$39.2 billion. The emirate’s foreign free zone trade grew 5 per cent to US$118 billion, while direct trade touched US$225 billion and customs warehouse trade weighed in at US$10.6 billion.
Dubai has emerged as a focal point for global distribution, and its low logistics costs and superb infrastructure have led to massive foreign investment. According to the World Economic Forum, the United Arab Emirates leads the Middle East and North Africa region in enabling trade, ranking 23rd globally. With its unrivalled setup, there is no other location in the region which can match Dubai’s efficiency, viability or profitability as a logistics hub. Not only is Dubai regarded as a transportation and logistics hub, it is also seen as a gateway to target the developing markets of Africa and Asia.

It is the biggest re-exporter and importer in the region and plays a major role in the Gulf Cooperation Council’s (GCC) trade. The UAE handled 15.4 million TEU in 2017 up by 4 percent year-on-year. Much of this passed through Jebel Ali Port, which is the world’s tenth largest handling some 11,000 vessels annually.
According to a recent analysis by the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry Expansion, infrastructure projects and new investments are expected to fuel the expansion of the logistics sector over the next five years. The positive outlook is supported by expectations of strong growth in the air and sea freight markets. Capacity expansion and infrastructure investment are also expected to strengthen the competitiveness of logistics service providers.

The sector expanded by around 4 percent in 2017 and is forecasted to post a compound annual growth rate of 5.7 percent between 2015 and 2020. This rapid rate of expansion will be driven in large part by activities related to Expo 2020 Dubai as well as by factors related to expanding trade among countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and Dubai’s own and federal-level development planning efforts.
In addition, Dubai is planning to invest US$35.7 billion on the development of DWC and an adjacent logistics hub – known as Logistics District - across a free zone-designated area stretching 145-sq-km. The project is designed to turn Dubai’s second airport into the world’s biggest with an estimated eventual capacity of 220 million passengers and 16 million tonnes of cargo.

Another iconic project taking shape at the moment and planned to change the shape of the region’s logistics sector is Etihad Rail, a US$ 200 billion project that will transverse the GCC countries once it is completed. Phase one of the three-phase project was completed in 2015 with commercial freight operations beginning at the end of that year. And as the advent of technology is transforming every industry sector, Dubai’s Hyperloop One is set to radically change the way people and goods move from one point to another.

Through a US$50 million investment by DP World, Virgin Hyperloop One is working to develop a network of closed, low-pressure tubes through which passengers and cargo pods will move at very high speed. Though the project is still in its initial phase of development, a hyperloop line connecting Dubai and Abu Dhabi could theoretically reduce the travel time between the two cities from the current one hour by car to about 12 minutes.
The government is doing its part to improve Dubai’s overall logistics capacity and capability by developing facilities and free zones. Dubai Plan 2021 aims for the city to become one of the top five logistics centres in the world by improving the trade openness ratio and ease of doing business. Furthermore, the logistics industry is also benefitting from government initiatives of providing incentives for using the air and seaports as stopovers for the transportation of goods globally.
Dubai government’s 2018 budget included a 19.5 percent increase in state expenditure over the previous year, much of it targeting transport-related projects, mainly roadways, airports, metro lines as well as innovations in logistics and new technologies related to the sector.

And through its Maritime Vision 2030 Dubai has set a number of short-term growth targets and regulatory upgrades and improvements to build upon the city’s strength in the sector which has seen it grow to be named as the world’s fifth most competitive maritime capital globally. Container logistics and dry bulk cargo handling are among the fastest growing sub sectors of the maritime industry in Dubai and the authorities are investing heavily to ensure that this growth is sustainable.
LOCATION & CONNECTIVITY

- Dubai is a key connecting hub between the markets of the East and West ideally located to bridge the crucial time zone gap between the markets of the East and West to enable 24/7 services and connectivity.

- Easily accessible through two international airports – Dubai International (DXB) and Dubai World Central (DWC) – within a 4 hour flight of one-third of the world’s population, and within 8 hours of two-thirds.

- 90 airlines operate 6,500 flights a week from DXB, to 240 destinations.

- 15 passenger carriers operate an average of 153 flights weekly to more than 30 international destinations across 10 countries from DWC.

- DXB passenger numbers are projected to reach 103.5 million by 2020 while passenger traffic across Dubai’s two primary airports is forecasted to rise to 200 million by 2030.

- Home to the world largest manmade port – Jebel Ali – a premier gateway for over 90 weekly services connecting more than 140 ports worldwide. Expansions currently underway at the Port will bring total handling capacity to 22.1 million TEU by 2018.

- With its diverse and mature consumer base, Dubai has a proven track record of being the launch-pad to test and expand operations across the wider Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

- Non-oil trade between Dubai and Africa is valued at US$34 billion having amounted to US$192 billion over the 2012-2017 period.

- Non-oil trade between Dubai and India reached US$27 billion in 2017, representing 7.6 per cent of Dubai’s total non-oil foreign trade for the same year, and is projected to increase by 5% to US$30 billion by 2020.
TALENT POOL

• Dubai is an incubator for exceptional home-grown talent and a magnet for the world’s most ambitious, sophisticated and forward-thinking scientists, engineers, technologists and innovators who yearn for a rewarding, career-enhancing ecosystem to thrive, prosper and change the world.

• Dubai ranks 6th globally in a list with the most attractive cities for a global workforce according to Boston Consulting Group.

• The Dubai government is implementing talent attraction strategies designed to increase its intake of knowledge workers by 40% by 2021.

• Dubai is home to over 200 nationalities, bringing together one of the world’s richest and most diverse pool of languages and skills to suit any business.

• The UAE ranks 4th globally in availability of skills and competencies in the talent pool and 5th worldwide in the Appeal index, which measures the extent to which a country taps into the overseas talent pool, according to the IMD World Talent Ranking.
FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

• Dubai ranks among the top 10 international cities in attracting foreign investment estimated at US$7.4 billion in 2017, an increase of 7.1 per cent compared to 2016.

• Liberal and pro-investment policy decisions had gone a long way in setting Dubai on a path towards achieving comprehensive and sustainable development based on innovation and high productivity.

• Foreign direct investment has played an instrumental role in realising these achievements through its contribution to job creation and technology diffusion.

• Dubai is ranked #1 in the world in terms of FDI technology transfer and #3 as location for AI & Robotics.
The Maritime Standard Tanker Conference is a key event attended by decision makers and opinion formers in the shipping and tanker industry. The event provides a platform for these stakeholders to come together and discuss the challenges and opportunities that exist for ship owners and operators in the market, as well as those delivering products and services to the sector. The theme for 2018’s edition was ‘Getting the most out of more positive markets’, and delegates heard from a host of top speakers and panelists with expertise in different aspects of the tanker shipping industry.

The event is held annually at the Dubai World Trade Centre.
Seatrade Maritime Middle East is the region’s largest gathering of professionals and decision makers from the shipping and maritime industry. The annual event attracts over 8,000 attendees from more than 90 countries, including owners, charterers, operators, and anyone involved with the offshore, oil and gas, and ports industries. Attendees can network, visit the exhibition, and attend the Seatrade Maritime Awards. There’s also a free conference programme, with talks and panel discussions from a line-up of international experts.

The event is held annually at the Dubai World Trade Centre.