T&I News

ISSUE #2005
MAY 2026

TECHNOLOGY • INVESTMENT • INNOVATION

UAE • DUBAI • ABU DHABI • SHARJAH

FROM AI SPEND TO AI RETURN

Why the Gulf's Next Advantage Is Redesigned Workflows, Sovereign Infrastructure and Smarter Capital

OUTCOMES OVER TOOLS.
Inside the shift from AI deployment to measurable operating results across the Emirates.

5.3x
MORE VALUE WHEN WORK IS REDESIGNED

~75%
OF AI HIGH-PERFORMERS REDESIGN WORKFLOWS

AI ADOPTION
Workflow ROI

INFRASTRUCTURE
Chips • Compute • Energy

DIGITAL FINANCE
Banks vs Platforms

www.tai.news info@tai.news

MAY BRIEFING

2x	4	AIM 2026	ONE VISION
CULTURE OVER MINDSET	DIMENSIONS OF AI ROI	DUBAI DIGITAL ECONOMY	A FUTURE-READY UAE

In this edition, T&I News moves from AI ambition to AI accountability — asking why so much regional AI spend still fails to show a return, what infrastructure the next digital economy will run on, who ends up owning the future of finance, and how the UAE is turning digital sovereignty into an economic model.

01 **The Gulf's AI ROI Problem Is a Workflow Problem**
Many organisations measure the wrong unit of transformation. The real source of value is redesigned work.

02 **AI Infrastructure: Data, Chips, Energy**
At AIM Congress 2026, leaders framed compute, semiconductors and power as the foundation of digital economies.

03 **Who Owns the Future of Finance?**
Banks, digital platforms or AI — a fireside look at where value and trust are shifting.

04 **Digital Sovereignty Meets Diversification**
The UAE positions sovereign AI, cloud and data as a new business model for growth.

COVER STORY • ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Gulf's AI ROI Problem Is a Workflow Problem

Measure work redesign, not excitement • Adapted from T&I News commentary by Dr. Gleb Tsipursky

~75%	~25%	5.3x	4
HIGH-PERFORMERS REDESIGN WORK	OTHERS WHO DO	MORE VALUE FROM REDESIGN	ROI DIMENSIONS

The AI investment conversation is changing. As businesses ask harder questions about whether rapid AI spending delivers the performance promised, the evidence points to a useful answer: many organisations are measuring the wrong unit of transformation. McKinsey's State of AI in 2026 found a striking gap — nearly three-quarters of AI high-performers report fundamentally redesigning workflows, compared with roughly a quarter of everyone else.

That matters for the Gulf. The UAE and its neighbours have invested heavily in AI infrastructure, platforms, talent and public-sector transformation. The next competitive question is how quickly institutions turn those assets into measurable operating results. Buying a stronger model or another enterprise licence rarely answers that on its own.

WHY IT MATTERS

- **Reframes AI success from tool deployment to redesigned, measurable work.**
- **Directly links regional AI spend to enterprise value capture.**
- **Clarifies the human role as machines take on more of each task.**
- **Gives leaders a scorecard beyond logins and prompt counts.**

Start With the Outcome, Not the Tool

The common pattern is easy to recognise: a company buys an AI assistant, gives access, runs training, then counts logins as adoption. One step gets faster while every old handoff, approval and queue around it survives. The stronger approach starts with a business outcome — reduce loan-processing time, shorten response cycles, improve compliance accuracy — then maps the full process to decide where AI should assist, where it should act, and where a handoff can disappear.

> *"The region does not need to slow its AI ambition. It needs to aim that ambition at the operating model — treating AI as a reason to redesign work, clarify accountability, and measure real outcomes."*

Measure the Workflow, Not the Excitement

Usage only tells leaders whether people touched the tool. A useful AI scorecard connects four dimensions: efficiency, quality, business impact and employee experience. Microsoft's 2026 Work Trend Index reinforces the point — culture, manager support and talent practices accounted for more than twice the reported AI impact of individual mindset. Each major AI investment should attach to a named workflow, a baseline, a target outcome and clear metrics.

DIGITAL ECONOMY • AIM CONGRESS 2026

AI Infrastructure: The Foundation of the Next Digital Economy

Data, chips, energy and global competitiveness • Reported from AIM Congress 2026, Dubai

Artificial intelligence is moving from an emerging technology into a core component of national competitiveness — and with it, the infrastructure needed to develop, deploy and scale AI. At AIM Congress 2026 in Dubai, the Digital Economy Leaders' Panel examined the ecosystem behind the AI economy: compute, semiconductors, data centres, energy and cloud.

Strategic infrastructure. Advanced AI needs significant computing power, specialised chips, large-scale storage and reliable energy — making data centres and cloud platforms central to national digital strategies and a growing competitive advantage.

Chips and compute. Semiconductors sit at the centre of the ecosystem, so supply chains are now strategically important. Countries that build sufficient compute capacity can support domestic innovation while hosting international companies and researchers.

Energy and digital growth. Large data centres demand reliable electricity, tying AI expansion to energy-efficient computing and resilient power. Pairing modern power infrastructure with data-centre capacity supports growth and sustainability together.

Public and private capital. Scaling this infrastructure needs cooperation: governments set policy and strategy, while institutional investors and technology firms supply capital, expertise and operations through public-private partnerships.

WHY IT MATTERS

- **Opens a new investment cycle across data centres, chips, energy and cloud.**
- **Positions the UAE to host the compute powering regional digital economies.**
- **Creates diversification openings for emerging economies in AI supply chains.**

FINANCE • AIM CONGRESS

Who Owns the Future of Finance? Banks, Digital Platforms or AI?

The financial sector is entering a major period of transformation as artificial intelligence, embedded finance and digital platforms reshape how money is managed, moved and invested. At AIM Congress 2026, the debate centred on where value and customer trust ultimately settle — with traditional banks, with the digital platforms embedding financial services into everyday apps, or with the AI systems increasingly making the decisions in between.

Running alongside it, the UAE is positioning **digital sovereignty** as a pillar of economic diversification — using sovereign AI, cloud and data capabilities to build a new business model that keeps critical digital infrastructure, and the economic value it generates, closer to home.

KEY TRENDS

01. AI Return Beats AI Spend

Leaders shift focus from buying tools to redesigning workflows, attaching each AI investment to a baseline, a target outcome and a metric.

02. Infrastructure Becomes Strategy

Compute, semiconductors, data centres and energy are now treated as strategic national assets and a fresh investment cycle.

03. Finance Is Being Rewired

Embedded finance, digital platforms and AI decisioning challenge banks for ownership of value and customer trust.

04. Digital Sovereignty Rises

The UAE ties sovereign AI, cloud and data capability directly to economic diversification and resilience.

05. Energy-Aware Computing

Data-centre growth pushes demand for efficient compute and renewable power, linking technology and energy investment.

06. Culture Drives Impact

Manager support and talent practices outweigh individual mindset — making organisational design central to AI results.

KEY DEALS

AIM Congress 2026 Anchors Dubai's Digital Economy Agenda

A global platform convening ministers, investors and technology leaders around AI infrastructure, capital and cross-border cooperation.

Strategic Value

- Infrastructure investment pipeline
- Global partnership formation
- Digital economy positioning
- FDI attraction

Strategic Infrastructure: Chips, Compute & Energy

Public-private focus on semiconductors, data centres and power to build AI-ready, resilient digital ecosystems.

Strategic Value

- Sovereign compute capacity
- Supply-chain resilience
- Energy-efficient growth

MEASA Gateway: Family Offices Eye Cross-Border Capital

Family offices explore new pathways for capital across the Middle East, Africa and South Asia via the UAE hub.

Strategic Value

- Cross-border capital flows
- Emerging-market access
- Private wealth mobilisation

Digital Sovereignty as a Business Model

The UAE aligns sovereign AI, cloud and data with diversification, keeping value and control of digital infrastructure regional.

Strategic Value

- Data & cloud sovereignty
- Economic diversification
- Long-term competitiveness