

WHITE PAPER
CONSTRUCTION IN 2025:
PAVING THE WAY TO
2030 AND BEYOND

Table of Contents



3 Foreword

4 Executive Summary

7 Introduction

8 Leading Trends

10 Key Challenges

13 Opportunities

14 Conclusion

Foreword

The global construction industry is undergoing a fundamental shift driven by rapid urbanization, technological advancements, and the urgent need for sustainability. As countries worldwide rethink how they build, the Middle East has emerged as a pioneer in large-scale, transformative developments.

Saudi Arabia's construction market is at the center of this transformation, driven by the Kingdom's Vision 2030 program and its ambition to diversify the economy and reduce reliance on oil. With \$1.5 trillion in projects underway, Saudi Arabia is now the world leader in giga projects, reshaping the global construction landscape. Developments like NEOM, Diriyah Gate, Jeddah Central, and King Salman International Airport are not just about infrastructure - they are engines for creating new economic sectors in tourism, technology, and entertainment, attracting investment and generating jobs.

At the same time, the United Arab Emirates continues to lead in construction innovation, focusing on sustainable urban development, smart infrastructure, and modular construction techniques. Together, these two markets are defining the future of global infrastructure, setting new benchmarks for scale, sustainability, and digital transformation.

A Construction Industry at a Turning Point

The industry is at a critical juncture. Mega projects in Saudi Arabia and the UAE are creating unprecedented opportunities for growth and advancement, but they also present new challenges in supply chain resilience, workforce capabilities and sustainability compliance.

At the same time, the construction sector remains one of the most significant contributors to global carbon emissions, accounting for nearly 40% of the world's total. This is driving an urgent shift towards green building standards, energy-efficient materials, and optimised AI-driven project management. In the Gulf, sustainability is no longer a choice, it's a requirement. The region's mega projects are proving that scale and sustainability can go hand in hand, setting a global benchmark for the future of construction.

Regulation is evolving as well. Governments are introducing stricter sustainability mandates, smart city initiatives, and investment incentives. Construction related businesses that want to stay competitive must be prepared to invest in advanced technologies, rethink sourcing strategies, and build workforces capable of delivering on these new expectations.

The next five years will shape the trajectory of global construction. The industry is evolving at an unprecedented pace, and firms that act now will be the ones shaping the future.

Marco Fahd

Founder, Chairman and CEO
Versatile International



Executive Summary

The Gulf's construction sector is at a turning point. Fuelled by ambitious national strategies, the region is home to some of the largest and most technologically advanced infrastructure projects in the world. With over \$1.5 trillion in active developments, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are setting new benchmarks for innovation, sustainability, and large-scale urban planning.

Yet, as the industry undergoes rapid transformation, it faces mounting pressures - rising costs, skilled workforce shortages, and supply chain disruptions. Against this backdrop, firms must navigate a complex landscape where AI adoption, sustainability commitments, and sourcing strategies will determine competitive advantage.

This white paper, informed by industry insights from a commissioned survey of construction professionals in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, explores the forces shaping the sector and the strategic decisions industry leaders must make to stay ahead.

AI and Automation are Reshaping the Industry

Once among the least digitized sectors, construction is now embracing AI at an unprecedented pace. Automation is no longer a novelty but a necessity, helping firms optimize scheduling, reduce rework, and enhance supply chain efficiencies. Despite these benefits, adoption remains inconsistent, with costs and implementation challenges creating barriers. As AI continues to reshape project management, firms must determine where and how to invest, particularly in areas like resource allocation, scheduling optimization, and risk management, to maximize returns. While AI, including robotics, predictive data analytics, and automated workflows, is improving cost efficiency, upfront investment remains a challenge. Firms must carefully assess how these AI solutions align with their digital transformation strategies to bridge the existing gaps and fully capitalize on the opportunities they present.

What This White Paper Delivers

'Construction in 2025: Paving the Way to 2030 and Beyond' provides real insights from construction professionals in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, offering a data driven view of:

- The impact of rising costs, supply chain constraints, and the growing demand for skilled labour.
- How AI and automation are reshaping project execution and improving efficiency.
- The industry's transition to sustainable construction, green materials, and carbon-neutral development.
- Strategies companies are adopting to stay competitive in an evolving market.

Methodology

These insights are based on industry-wide perspectives, drawn from a commissioned survey conducted by Ipsos-Mori of senior construction professionals across the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The survey captured views from a diverse cross-section of the industry, including developers (4%), architects and designers (11%), engineers (39%), contractors (42%), and project management consultants (4%). This distribution ensures a comprehensive representation of key stakeholders influencing the region's construction landscape.

57%

of professionals in the UAE and KSA identify AI and automation as the most significant trend in the sector.

61%

of respondents in the UAE rank AI as the top transformative force, compared to **50% in KSA.**

60%

of professional are already integrating AI-powered project management tools to improve scheduling and resource allocation.

Sustainability Moves from Ambition to Obligation

Sustainability has shifted from a competitive advantage to an industry-wide imperative. Regulatory pressures, investor expectations, and environmental concerns are driving change, but so too is the increasing demand from people who want to live in sustainable communities.

Today, individuals are seeking environments that align with their values, emphasizing sustainable living not just in terms of industry practices but also how they experience and engage with their surroundings. 55% of professionals across the region prioritize local sourcing as a sustainability strategy to reduce emissions.

While the UAE has made strong commitments to green building, sustainability adoption in Saudi Arabia is still evolving, influenced by the Kingdom's focus on large-scale infrastructure development.

72% of construction professionals in the UAE consider sustainability a top priority, while 31% in Saudi Arabia identify it as a key focus area.

Companies are embedding sustainability into procurement and materials sourcing, but **cost concerns** remain a significant barrier to wider adoption.

Saudi Arabia's giga projects are integrating AI-driven resource management to **align with sustainability goals** while managing scale and complexity.

Supply Chains and Sourcing Strategies Under Pressure

The construction sector is balancing the need for local resilience with the efficiency of global supply chains. With rising material costs and logistical bottlenecks, firms must reassess sourcing strategies to ensure stability. While local sourcing enhances economic resilience and reduces transportation emissions, international procurement remains essential for accessing specialized materials and maintaining quality.

55%

prioritize regional supply chains, reflecting a push for sustainability and economic resilience.

48%

still highlight the importance of international partnerships, underscoring the ongoing need on global networks.

Delivery delays and material shortages remain key concerns, prompting firms to adopt hybrid sourcing strategies that balance local & international procurement.

Value engineering and alternative materials are increasingly used to mitigate cost pressures without compromising quality.

Cost Pressures & Workforce Challenges are Testing the Market

The cost of doing business in the construction sector is rising. Inflation, raw material price volatility, and a growing skills gap are putting additional strain on project timelines and budgets. As demand accelerates, firms must invest in workforce development and process optimization to maintain productivity, competitiveness, and cost effectiveness.

57% of industry professionals cite rework as the leading cause of rising project costs, highlighting the need for improved oversight and AI-driven efficiencies.

Construction costs in the Gulf are **rising faster** than in many other regions, primarily due to increased demand, rising raw material costs, and supply chain disruptions.

Labor shortages remain a critical challenge, prompting firms to explore automation and digital solutions to bridge the skills gap.

Investment in workforce training is **becoming a priority** across the Gulf, with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Vision 2030 both emphasizing human capital development as key to their future growth.

Conclusion & Strategic Priorities

The Gulf's construction sector is undergoing a profound transformation. The coming years will determine which firms successfully navigate the transition to AI-driven efficiency, sustainability-led growth, and resilient supply chains. To remain competitive, companies must act decisively in the following areas:

- 1. Embrace AI and Automation with a Strategic Lens:**
AI-powered tools must be deployed with a clear return on investment, balancing efficiency gains with upfront costs.
- 2. Sustainability Must Be Embedded Across the Supply Chain:**
Green building and local sourcing strategies should be integrated into long-term planning, not treated as compliance measures and balanced efficiently with rising costs.
- 3. Supply Chain Agility Is Now a Competitive Advantage:**
Firms must develop flexible sourcing strategies that mitigate risks from global disruptions while maintaining material quality.
- 4. Workforce Investment Is a Critical Priority:**
Talent shortages, both skilled and general, will not be solved overnight. A dual approach is needed – upskilling existing workers and attracting new talent to the industry, while leveraging automation to improve efficiency where possible.

The Gulf's construction sector is not just adapting to global trends—it is shaping the future of the industry. The next decade will be defined by the decisions made today.

Introduction

The construction industry has long been a barometer of economic ambition. In the Middle East, it is more than that - it is a vehicle for transformation. With \$1.5 trillion in active projects, the region is engaged in an infrastructure boom that is reshaping economies as much as skylines. At the helm are Saudi Arabia and the UAE, two nations pursuing distinct but complementary visions of growth.

Saudi Arabia is executing the world's most ambitious giga projects, with over \$1 trillion in developments as part of Vision 2030, its long-term strategy to diversify the economy and reduce dependence on oil revenues. The most audacious of these is NEOM, a \$500 billion smart city that promises AI-driven infrastructure, renewable energy, and autonomous transport. The Line, a 170-km urban corridor without cars or carbon emissions, offers a blueprint for future city planning. Meanwhile, Diriyah Gate, Qiddiya, and the Red Sea Project are recasting the Kingdom as a global tourism, culture, and entertainment hub.



The UAE, by contrast, is perfecting the art of sustainable, high-tech urban growth. Dubai's 2040 Urban Master Plan aims to double the city's population to 7.8 million, expand green space by 105%, and integrate AI-powered mobility networks. Meanwhile, Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, a long-term strategy to transform the emirate into a sustainable and diversified economy, prioritizes innovation, knowledge-based industries, and infrastructure development. Complementing this, the Abu Dhabi Plan 2030: Urban Structure Framework Plan provides a roadmap for sustainable urban expansion, smart mobility solutions, and enhanced quality of life, reinforcing Abu Dhabi's status as a regional leader in innovation-driven growth.

The rationale for these projects is clear: they are not just about urban expansion but about economic diversification, technological leadership, and global positioning. Infrastructure, when deployed strategically, is a multiplier for growth, attracting foreign investment, creating high-skilled jobs, and reinforcing long-term competitiveness. Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE are using construction not only as a tool for economic transition but also as a statement of their global ambitions.



Yet, ambition alone does not guarantee success. The scale of these developments presents both opportunities and challenges - from ensuring efficient supply chains to developing a highly skilled workforce and meeting ambitious sustainability targets. Yet, with strong government backing, technological advancements, and an increasingly sophisticated construction sector, the Gulf is well-positioned to turn vision into reality. The region is defining what the future of construction looks like.



Future-Ready or Stuck in the Past? Unpacking Trends in Gulf Construction

The Gulf construction sector is undergoing a profound transformation, with AI and automation leading the charge. Once a laggard in terms of digitization, the industry is now adopting cutting-edge technologies to drive innovation. Equally pressing is the rise of sustainability, with companies prioritizing green building and environmentally conscious practices. Both trends - AI and sustainability - are now non-negotiable if companies want to remain competitive in this rapidly evolving landscape.

Survey Findings: Adoption Trends



AI and Sustainability: The Twin Pillars of Innovation in Gulf Construction

AI and sustainability aren't just trends - they are essential for the future of Gulf construction. AI is revolutionizing every stage of the construction process, from design to project management, by enhancing efficiency and minimizing costly errors. With 60% of firms in the UAE and KSA already using AI-driven management tools, the technology is proving instrumental in optimizing scheduling, resource allocation, and risk management.

Beyond efficiency, AI is also supporting the region's sustainability goals. It enables developers to track key metrics like the carbon footprint of materials, helping the UAE and KSA - leaders in global green building initiatives - measure and reduce environmental impact. Projects like Sharjah's Sustainable City and Masdar's clean power facility set the bar for eco-friendly construction practices.

Partnerships are also reshaping procurement strategies. The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA), for instance, has partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to promote sustainable urban development. Collaboration with sustainability-driven organizations is leading to innovation in low-carbon steel usage and reduced reliance on international resources, supporting the broader circular economy. Such initiatives not only streamline operations but also align with the region's sustainability objectives.

Spotlight on Innovation: Qiddiya

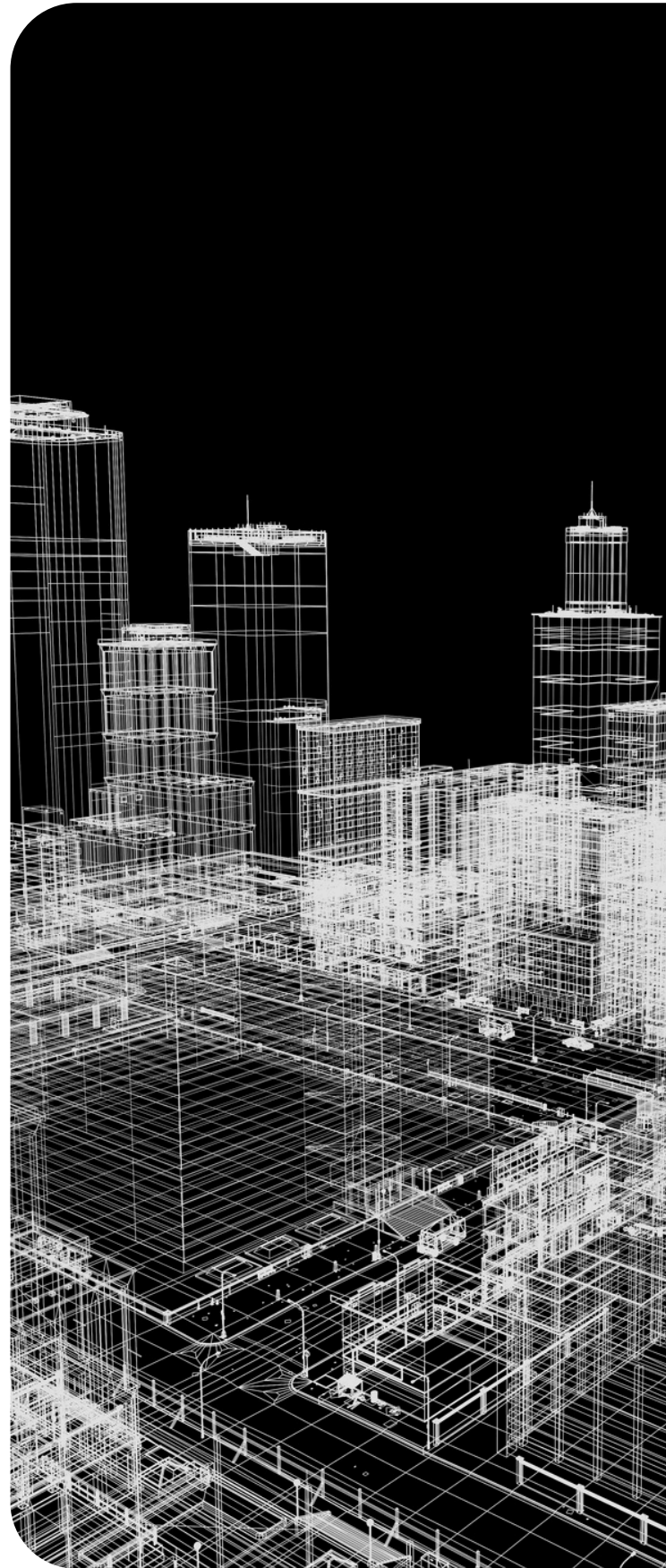
Qiddiya is embracing digital transformation in construction through the use of AI-powered project management tools and Building Information Modeling (BIM). These technologies are enabling real-time tracking of progress, predictive maintenance, and optimized resource allocation across the development. By integrating data-driven insights into every phase of construction, Qiddiya is setting a new standard for efficiency and risk mitigation - highlighting how AI can enhance delivery timelines to shape the future of construction.

Optimizing Sourcing Strategies for a Resilient Future

The Gulf construction industry is recalibrating its sourcing strategies to build more resilient supply chains. Local sourcing, essential for economic resilience and reducing carbon emissions, is a priority. However, international sourcing remains crucial for accessing specialized materials and expertise required for large-scale projects.

Geopolitical tensions, however, pose a threat to the stability of supply chains and material costs. Saudi Arabia's push to reduce reliance on foreign imports, including the use of locally quarried limestone for megaprojects, demonstrates a commitment to both sustainability and economic independence. Yet, as regional experts note, exclusive reliance on local resources is unrealistic. Gulf-based suppliers cannot fully meet the sustainable demands of major projects, making international sourcing an ongoing necessity.

As Vision 2030 continues to drive construction activity in the region, companies are increasingly adopting a dual sourcing strategy. This combination of local and global partnerships not only optimizes efficiency but also ensures sustainability is maintained without compromising quality or project timelines.

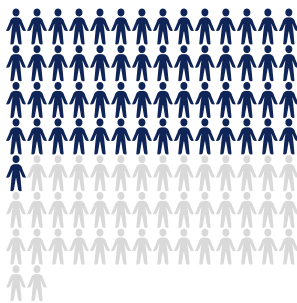


Key Challenges to Smart Construction in 2025

As the construction sector accelerates its technological adoption, the pressure to overcome persistent challenges - such as rework and supply chain inefficiencies - intensifies. The rise of AI and automation is playing a pivotal role in addressing these issues, but a more skilled workforce, cultivated through strategic training programs, remains critical for companies aiming to stay ahead. This is especially true in light of national strategies like Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which is fostering a new generation of construction specialists to navigate these challenges.

Survey Findings: Key Challenges in Construction

- 1.** Cost increases and project complexity remain the top concerns.
- 2.** Most respondents emphasize the urgent need for skilled talent and enhanced training programs.
- 3.** Supply chain delays are still a major hurdle, with companies prioritizing local sourcing and integrating new technologies for greater efficiency.



57%

of industry professionals cite rework as the primary driver of costs.

The Cost of AI and Sustainability: Finding the Balance

In 2025, rising construction material costs, driven by supply chain disruptions, stricter labor laws, and growing demand fueled by Saudi Vision 2030 and UAE Vision 2031, will become even more pronounced. With projects like Saudi Arabia's megaproject pipeline and ambitious UAE developments, substantial financial investment is essential to maintain the pace of innovation.

Furthermore, the adoption of sustainable materials - such as carbon-negative concrete - adds further pressure on budgets as developers weigh the costs of international sourcing against the environmental benefits.

This financial strain highlights the need to tackle rework head-on. With 42% of companies allocating a significant portion of their budgets for contingencies, reducing this margin is a priority, especially as developers navigate the complexities of new, sustainable materials and emerging providers.

Developing Talent for the Future of Construction

Addressing these challenges requires a forward-thinking approach to talent development. Companies are increasingly investing in skilled labor and training programs, aligning with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 to foster a more capable workforce. This initiative not only addresses labor shortages but also creates a new generation of specialists equipped to handle the evolving demands of the construction industry.

For example, Saudi Binladin Group's commitment to talent acquisition and upskilling reflects a broader regional trend. By blending training initiatives with public-private partnerships, companies are nurturing professionals who can adapt to industry shifts and meet ambitious development goals. Similarly, Al Bawani - one of the leading construction firms in Saudi, is investing in local talent through structured training programs and strategic hiring, aligned with Saudization goals, partnering with local universities and institutions to offer job placements tailored to engineering and project management roles.

Key Challenges to Smart Construction in 2025

Streamlining Supply Chains for Greater Efficiency

Supply chain delays continue to hinder progress, but a focus on local sourcing and innovative technologies can help streamline processes. Saudi Arabia's leading gigaprojects including Diriyah, Qiddiya, NEOM are increasingly looking to local limestone quarries to reduce delays, minimize transportation emissions, and support sustainability goals. This strategy not only accelerates timelines but also contributes to regional economic growth.

Additionally, advanced technologies like enhanced tracking, forecasting, and risk management systems are improving supply chain visibility and precision, making it easier for engineers, contractors, and project managers to optimize resources.

Prioritizing Sustainability: Integrating Micro Factors with Green Goals

Sustainability is no longer optional - it's integral to the future of Gulf construction. However, the industry still faces two key barriers: a shortage of skilled labor and the need for better supplier collaboration.

Survey Findings: Key Challenges in Sustainable Construction



The Skilled Labor Dilemma

The Gulf region's construction industry is under immense pressure to meet the growing demand for skilled workers. With the simultaneous launch of multiple large-scale projects, competition for talent has intensified, creating a bottleneck that could disrupt timelines and inflate costs. This is compounded by the increasing need for specialized knowledge in areas like sustainability, sourcing, and design.

National initiatives like Vision 2030's Human Capability Development Program are helping address this gap by aligning education with industry needs. However, the fluctuating availability of skilled labor remains a challenge, and companies must navigate this bottleneck while managing the pressure to deliver on time and within budget.

Supplier Collaboration: Redefining Supply Chains

Effective supplier collaboration is vital to achieving sustainability targets. However, varying levels of sustainability capabilities among suppliers - especially new market entrants - pose a challenge. Developers must carefully evaluate their partners, weighing the cost of international sourcing against the environmental benefits of local sourcing.

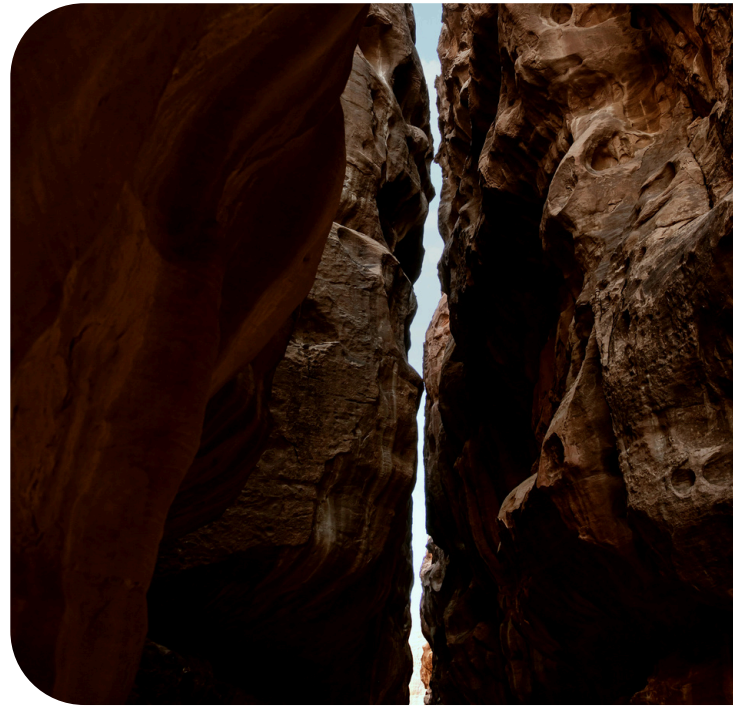
This challenge has given rise to the need for specialist procurement consultants who can help firms select the right suppliers and avoid costly mistakes. By leveraging AI for real-time supplier coordination and fostering long-term partnerships, construction companies can streamline their procurement processes, reduce delays, and ensure that sustainability goals are met.

To meet sustainability goals, effective supplier collaboration is crucial. A transparent and agile supply chain accelerates the adoption of green materials and drives industry-wide innovation. Those who embrace technology and nurture long-term supplier relationships will lead the sector.

Spotlight on Innovation: NEOM's Approach

NEOM is redefining the construction paradigm by embracing AI not as a job disruptor, but as a catalyst for workforce transformation. AI-powered workforce development ensures that professionals can focus on higher-value tasks, while automated processes increase efficiency across the board. The NEOM Suppliers Portal, a real-time platform connecting contractors with sustainable material suppliers, further streamlines procurement and ensures compliance with green standards.

By leveraging AI in both workforce development and procurement, NEOM is creating a model for future construction- a model where technology and human ingenuity drive a more efficient, sustainable, and forward-thinking economy.



Opportunities for Growth

As 2030 is only half a decade away, the Gulf is poised for significant growth and innovation in construction. Companies are focusing on regional expansion, modular construction, and sustainability to drive their future growth. The region is rich with potential, and the time to seize these opportunities is now.

Survey Findings: Key Opportunities for Growth

1. Regional expansion is the primary focus for scaling operations in 2025, according to construction professionals across the UAE and KSA.

62%



According to professionals, modular and prefabricated construction methods are emerging as the main priority in the UAE.

41%



According to professionals in Saudi Arabia, sustainability is the primary focus.

Expanding Horizons: Construction Growth Across the Region

Regional expansion remains a top priority for construction firms, driven by Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's long-term strategic goals. As Gulf nations pursue diversification efforts to reduce their dependence on oil revenues, construction companies are accelerating their expansion both within the region and internationally. This expansion trend, underpinned by the Gulf's growing influence in global construction, is expected to continue, for the years ahead.

Major companies such as Arabtec, Al Habtoor Group (UAE), Saudi Aramco and Zahid Group (KSA) are already expanding operations outside their home countries, attracting foreign investment, and contributing to the region's economic transformation. This momentum solidifies the Gulf's position as a global leader in the construction industry, shaping the future of large-scale projects across the Middle East and beyond. With a number of neighbouring countries in the GCC region keen to emulate the success of Saudi Arabia and the UAE in terms of infrastructure, firms within the region are taking advantage of this regional expansion, as this also supports sustainability goals, creating more localized supply chains.

Innovative Building Practices: Embracing Modular and Prefabricated Solutions

In the UAE, modular and prefabricated construction methods are gaining significant traction, offering enhanced efficiency and waste reduction. By assembling pre-manufactured components on-site, these techniques accelerate project timelines and minimize material wastage.

Pioneering companies like Emaar Properties are at the forefront of this shift, incorporating modular construction into projects such as the Dubai Mall Za'abeel expansion. Emaar is also exploring cutting-edge technologies like 3D concrete printing to further improve efficiency and sustainability. As developers increasingly recognize the benefits of modular and prefabricated methods - such as reduced on-site labor and material transportation - these approaches are set to become the norm, particularly in the construction sector, where pre-fabricated methods reduce time and labour costs. This evolution supports the UAE's goal of becoming a hub for construction innovation and sustainability.

Driving Sustainability: Saudi Arabia's Green Construction Revolution

In Saudi Arabia, sustainability has emerged as a central pillar of growth, driven by Vision 2030's emphasis on diversifying the economy and investing in renewable energy and green technologies is propelling a profound shift in construction practices.

This commitment is reflected in major gigaprojects like the Red Sea Project and NEOM, which prioritize sustainable building techniques and environmentally friendly materials. These projects are setting new global standards for integrating sustainability into large-scale construction. As these projects unfold, Saudi Arabia is positioning itself as a global leader in sustainable development, attracting foreign investment, fostering technological innovation, and creating employment opportunities. They are critical to the nation's goal of achieving economic diversification and sustainability, setting the stage for future global leadership in green construction.

Conclusion: Recommendations for Industry Leaders

The Gulf's construction industry is undergoing its most profound transformation yet. Fuelled by unprecedented investment and an appetite for innovation, the region is not just building cities, it is rewriting the rules of urban development. The ambition is immense. So are the opportunities.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are redefining how large-scale infrastructure is planned, executed, and sustained. Destination-scale developments such as Diriyah Gate and Qiddiya are setting global benchmarks for AI integration, green building, and supply chain optimisation and resilience. The challenge is not whether these projects can be built, but whether companies are ready to operate at the scale and speed required.

Sustainability is no longer a choice but a necessity. As regulatory frameworks tighten and investor expectations rise, firms that fail to integrate sustainable practices into their supply chains will struggle to compete. Meanwhile, AI and advanced technology are not just future ambitions - they are actively being used across the industry today. The challenge is no longer about adoption but about optimizing these tools to tackle key industry pressures, such as skilled workforce availability, rising costs, project efficiency, and supply chain resilience. The companies that can harness these innovations effectively will be best positioned to navigate the evolving construction landscape and maintain a competitive edge.

The pressure on labor markets is growing. As Gulf nations seek to diversify their economies, firms must invest in skills development to build a digitally capable, future-ready workforce. Automation will not replace jobs; it will create new demand for specialized skills, requiring companies to rethink their workforce strategies.

The next decade will define the future of construction, and the Gulf will be at its center. Those that embrace AI, sustainable development, upskilling employees and resilient supply chains will thrive. Those that do not will struggle to keep up. This is the moment to build.

Key Strategic Priorities for Industry Leaders:



Continue to Harness AI and Automation:

- Reduce project overruns through AI-powered oversight.
- Embed digital tools to improve efficiency and compliance.
- Treat AI as an operational necessity, not an experimental tool.
- Enable further supply chain optimisation, through nascent technologies and AI.



Make Sustainability a Competitive Advantage:

- Go beyond compliance—integrate sustainability into every phase of construction.
- Adapt to new global regulations to maintain investor confidence.
- Use AI-driven analytics to measure sustainability impact in real time.



Develop a Workforce for the Future:

- Invest in learning, development and training programs to support local job creation.
- Upskill teams in digital construction and AI-driven project management.
- Ensure the next generation of workers is equipped for a transformed industry.



Strengthen Supplier Networks:

- Combine local sourcing with global expertise to build resilient supply chains.
- Improve transparency and efficiency with digital procurement systems.
- Ensure supply chains align with sustainability commitments.



Adopt Modular Construction at Scale:

- Use prefabrication to cut costs and reduce project delays.
- Streamline logistics.
- Treat modular methods as a standard, not a niche approach.

The Road Ahead

With ambitious projects underway, the GCC region has emerged as a global leader in the construction and infrastructure sector, driving innovation and setting new benchmarks for the industry. In terms of the road ahead, artificial intelligence and automation are emerging as clear priorities, with the majority of industry professionals surveyed in the UAE and Saudi Arabia recognizing their transformative potential. Yet, while tools like AI-powered project management and predictive analytics are driving measurable improvements in cost and schedule control, challenges around implementation and upfront investment persist.

Sustainability, once seen as an aspirational goal, is now a baseline expectation—ranking as a top priority for professionals across the region. In Saudi Arabia, progress is building momentum through large-scale developments that are increasingly embedding sustainable practices from the ground up. Regional sourcing, meanwhile, is gaining traction as a strategy to enhance resilience and reduce emissions, but firms are still relying on global supply chains to access specialized materials and maintain quality.

The pressure points are clear: rising costs, delivery delays, and workforce shortages are testing the market. The message is unambiguous: now is the time to double down on strategic investment. Whether through smarter sourcing, AI integration, or targeted workforce development, firms must retool for agility and resilience. Those who act decisively today will be the ones leading tomorrow—delivering projects faster, smarter, and more sustainably in a region that is rapidly redefining the future of construction.

Governments, investors, and industry leaders worldwide are watching how nations in the Gulf region deliver on their bold ambitions. These ambitions prove that scale and speed do not have to come at the expense of efficiency, sustainability and quality. What is being built today will define the region for generations to come.



Marco Fahd
Chairman and CEO at Versatile International