



GlobalRail

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Etihad Rail

Transport Infrastructure Exhibition & Conference

30 September - 2 October 2025 | ADNEC Centre Abu Dhabi, UAE

STRATEGIC CONFERENCE BROCHURE

DRIVING THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORT AND GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY

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Chairman's message



Etihad Rail is cultivating a thriving transportation ecosystem for our region and the rest of the world that is rooted in collaboration, prosperity, and opportunity. Through the consistent support of His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of the Presidential Court, and the UAE's wise leadership, we aim to further solidify the position of our national project at an international level.

This support is further underscored by the establishment of Global Rail, which provides Etihad Rail with a platform that will enrich the regional transport and logistics sector, ensuring its growing demands are met, and thus further driving its development.

H.H. Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Chairman
Etihad Rail

The Transport Sector at a Glance

With the demand for moving passengers and goods growing at an unprecedented rate, the emergence of a new global paradigm, characterised by green transitions, shorter innovation cycles, the growth of e-commerce, and rapid rise of emerging economies, has propelled rail's clear advantages over other transport modes, into the spotlight.

Acting as a backbone for the integration of air, sea, road and shared mobility systems, rail networks have the potential to revolutionise global transport networks, paving the way for the interconnected transport ecosystems of the future.

Global Rail 2025 will unite transport and network operators, port authorities, financiers, freight and logistics providers, technologists and solution providers, to accelerate the transition towards smart, integrated, and sustainable transport ecosystems.

CAGR of 8%

Global Transportation Market 2024–2032

\$16 Trillion

2032 Forecasted Global Transportation Market Size

CAGR of 6%

Expected Growth Rate of the GCC Freight and Logistics Market 2024–2032

40,000+ KM

Length of Planned Rail Network in GCC Under Development

9.5 bn

Global Passenger Traffic in 2025

About the Host

At the center of the UAE’s mobility and logistics future



As the developer and operator of the UAE’s national rail network, Etihad Rail redefines the movement of goods and people across the UAE and wider GCC, cementing its role as the developer of the nation's most transformative transport infrastructure project. As part of the expansive GCC Rail Network, Etihad Rail unlocks unprecedented efficiencies in logistics, trade, and mobility—connecting industrial zones, ports, and cities with a seamless, high-capacity transport system.

With a planned 1,200-kilometer network spanning all seven emirates, Etihad Rail strengthens supply chain resilience, positioning the UAE as a global logistics powerhouse. It’s ambitious expansion into passenger services—including the much anticipated, high-speed Abu Dhabi-Dubai link - stands to set a new global benchmark for intercity travel, while cross-border connections reinforce the UAE’s status as an international gateway.

Beyond connectivity, Etihad Rail drives sustainability, cuts carbon emissions and accelerates the transition to cleaner, smarter transport solutions. As the cornerstone of the UAE’s future transportation ecosystem, it stands as the foundation for economic growth, trade expansion, and sustainable mobility.

Key Facts:

Total Planned Network

1,200 km connecting all seven emirates

Operational Network

900 km in service for freight transport

Freight Capacity

Designed to handle up to 60 million tonnes annually by 2030

Passenger Services

High-speed network planned, including Abu Dhabi-Dubai route (30-minute travel time) up to 350km/h

Environmental Impact

Cuts CO₂ emissions by 2.2 million tonnes annually (equivalent to removing 375,000 vehicles)

Why Abu Dhabi?

Abu Dhabi is a global trade and logistics hub, leveraging its strategic location and world-class infrastructure to connect approximately 4.5 billion people within a four-hour flight radius. As the UAE diversifies its economy, its logistics market is projected to reach USD 58.5 billion by 2032, driven by e-commerce growth and progressive government policies. A key enabler of this expansion is the GCC rail network, a transformative initiative enhancing economic integration and sustainable transportation by linking logistics hubs to major international trade routes.

At the heart of this transformation, Etihad Rail is revolutionising mobility with a 1,200 km network connecting all seven emirates and extending into the GCC. Designed for freight and high-speed passenger services, the network aligns with the UAE’s vision for smart, intermodal mobility, integrating rail, road, air, and sea transport. By 2030, the UAE aims to be a global leader in e-mobility and sustainable logistics, reinforcing its position as a key gateway for international commerce.

About the Event

Network with rail, logistics and mobility leaders pioneering connectivity, sustainability and resilience for transport’s connected future.

Global Rail 2025 is the must-attend event for the future of transport where policy makers, transport operators, logistics leaders and tech pioneers converge to drive resilience, connectivity and sustainability in future transport systems.

As cities grow and supply chains adapt to a shifting global landscape, rail stands at the intersection of smart mobility, seamless connectivity, and sustainable trade. It is the backbone of an integrated transport future—linking high-speed networks, urban transit, and freight corridors to drive resilience, efficiency, and decarbonization. Global Rail 2025 is where visionaries across policy, logistics, and technology unite to redefine transport—unlocking the full potential of rail to power connected mobility and commerce, on a global scale.

Global Rail in Numbers

10,000⁺

International Attendees

200⁺

Exhibiting Companies

200⁺

Visionary Speakers

800⁺

Conference Delegates

100⁺

Participating Countries

30⁺

MoUs signed in 2024

15⁺

Ministerial Delegations

14⁺

Exhibition Sectors

6


Expansive Halls

Exhibition Sectors

Air, ports, rail operators	Freight and logistics
Rolling stock	AI, technology and digitization
Infrastructure and construction	Urban and multimodal integration
Security and safety	Smart mobility
Signaling and control	Traffic management
Predictive maintenance	Sustainability
Consulting and engineering	Passenger experience

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About the Strategic Conference

The Global Rail and Transport Infrastructure Strategic Conference will gather over 120+ thought leaders and industry experts from across the rail, transport, logistics, and mobility value chain to discuss the latest project updates, innovations, and technology to drive connectivity, resilience and sustainability across transport modes and networks.

Through a series of panel discussions, fireside chats and exclusive project insights, the Strategic Conference will act as a global platform for driving transformation and progress in the global transportation sector. Policymakers, c-suite and senior decision makers pioneering policies, innovation and project implementation, will convene to discuss critical challenges and opportunities to drive progress towards sustainable, interconnected and resilient transport networks of tomorrow.

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Spain is at the forefront of rail innovation, and we want to be where the opportunities are—and that undoubtedly means here, in the United Arab Emirates. I applaud this country's bold commitment to rail and high-speed development.

H.E. Óscar Puente
Minister of Transport and Sustainable Mobility
Spain



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Etihad Rail



Global Rail Strategic Conference Pillars

PILLAR 1

Navigating the mega-trends shaping the future of global transport ecosystems

PILLAR 2

Building future-proof transportation networks for a connected tomorrow

PILLAR 3

Driving inclusive and sustainable transportation through collaboration, strategic partnerships, and innovation

Strategic Conference Themes



High-Speed Rail
project delivery



Trade and corridor
development



Intermodal
operations



Shared
mobility



Micromobility



End-to-end
sustainable
transport



First-last mile



Policy and
governance



Sustainable
financing and
investment



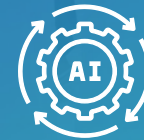
Urban planning &
transit-oriented
development



Interoperability
and network
harmonisation



Safety and
security



AI and
Automation



Multi-modal
and intermodal
integration



Metro and
light rail



Freight
logistics



Mobility-as a
service (MaaS)



Smart mobility
solutions

STRATEGIC CONFERENCE AGENDA

DAY 1 - TUESDAY - 30 SEPTEMBER

NAVIGATING THE MEGA-TRENDS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL TRANSPORT ECOSYSTEMS

10:00 – 10:45

OPENING CEREMONY

10:15 – 10:45

MINISTERIAL PANEL DISCUSSION: Future proofing transport: securing economic growth amid global shifts

Global trade is at an inflection point, shaped by economic volatility, shifting geopolitical alliances, and mounting climate pressures. Resilient transport networks are not just enablers of trade, they are the backbone of economic security, shaping a nation’s competitiveness and ability to adapt to disruption. This ministerial discussion will examine the policies, investments, and partnerships needed to future-proof transport corridors, safeguard supply chains, and secure trade ecosystems against uncertainty. From digital transformation to sustainable logistics, the conversation will explore how governments can strike a balance between resilience, efficiency, and long-term economic growth in an increasingly fragmented world.

10:45 – 11:15

VIP EXHIBITION TOUR

11:20 - 11:30

OPENING STRATEGIC CONFERENCE KEYNOTE

11:30 – 12:00

OPENING PANEL: Transport’s great dilemma: can we grow while going green?

Meeting the rising demand for transport while cutting emissions requires a fundamental shift in how infrastructure is planned, financed, and operated. How can policy frameworks align economic expansion with climate goals, ensuring that regulation and incentives drive sustainable investment? What role will digitalization and advanced technologies - such as AI-driven logistics - play in enabling emissions reductions at scale? At the same time, shifting trade routes and evolving global supply chains are reshaping transport networks. How can transport systems adapt to these changes while maintaining resilience, cost-effectiveness, and environmental responsibility? Success depends on an integrated approach - where policy, technology, and investment work in tandem to create transport systems that are both future-ready and climate-aligned.

Attendee insights: This session will examine how policy, technology, and investment can align to expand transport and logistics capacity while driving meaningful progress on sustainability.

12:00 – 12:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: Securing the future: can rail deliver on its supply chain promise?

Rail is frequently championed as a solution to supply chain security, offering reliability, capacity, and a lower carbon footprint; however, underinvestment, infrastructure bottlenecks, and regulatory fragmentation continue to challenge its ability to deliver the resilience and efficiency the industry demands. Freight forwarders and operators must navigate mounting disruptions—from geopolitical shifts to cyber threats—while addressing interoperability gaps that hinder cross-border flows. Yet, rail alone cannot secure supply chains. True resilience depends on seamless integration with ports, road freight, and air cargo, creating a multimodal system that enhances flexibility, mitigates risks, and ensures continuity in an increasingly unpredictable global trade landscape. What gaps still exist — and how can enhanced interoperability, targeted investment, and coordinated policy action transform rail into the backbone of secure, future-ready logistics networks?

Attendee insights: Panelists will discuss whether rail is rail capable of meeting the evolving demands of global supply chains.

12:30 - 13:00

PANEL DISCUSSION: Shaping the future of mobility: tackling the data sharing dilemma

Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) is the key to a seamless, user-centric transport future, but its success depends entirely on data—how it’s shared, processed, and leveraged at scale. Real-time information on demand, availability, and pricing must flow effortlessly between public and private operators, yet concerns over privacy, security, and competitive interests create barriers that threaten to stall progress. At the same time, the sheer volume of mobility data demands advanced cloud computing capabilities to ensure scalability, responsiveness, and integration across modes. The future of mobility depends on unlocking this data dilemma - finding a framework where secure, interoperable, and high-capacity data ecosystems enable MaaS to fulfill its potential as the foundation of connected and intelligent transport networks.

Attendee insights: Transport operators, technologists and policy makers will discuss balancing interoperability with data security, ensuring MaaS can scale while protecting user trust and commercial interests.


13:00 - 13:40

NETWORKING LUNCH

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13:45 – 14:00

KEYNOTE Agentic AI: mobility’s next frontier?

AI is already transforming mobility, but the next leap forward lies in agentic AI—systems capable of autonomous decision-making, continuous learning, and real-time adaptation. From self-optimizing traffic management to fully autonomous transport ecosystems, agentic AI has the potential to revolutionize efficiency, safety, and user experience. However, its deployment raises critical questions: how do we ensure trust, accountability, and interoperability across complex, multimodal networks? With vast amounts of data to process and act upon, these AI-driven systems will demand unprecedented computational power and seamless integration with cloud infrastructure. As mobility evolves, the challenge is not just harnessing agentic AI’s potential, but defining the governance and safeguards needed to ensure it enhances, rather than disrupts, the future of transport.

Attendee insights: Hear how agentic AI revolutionizing mobility through autonomous decision-making and real-time adaptation

14:00 – 14:30

AI LEADERS PANEL: Scaling AI in transport: forging partnerships for smart, sustainable ecosystems

AI is poised to reshape transport, but scaling its impact requires more than just technological advancements—it demands strategic partnerships that bridge industries, governments, and technology providers. From predictive maintenance and real-time traffic optimization to autonomous systems and seamless multimodal integration, AI’s potential is vast, yet fragmented adoption limits its transformative power. True scalability hinges on collaborative ecosystems where data flows securely, infrastructure evolves in tandem with innovation, and AI-driven efficiencies align with sustainability goals. The future of intelligent transport will not be built in silos; it will be forged through partnerships that turn isolated breakthroughs into a cohesive, smart, and sustainable mobility network.

Attendee insights: AI leaders will explore the pivotal role of cross-sector collaboration in unlocking the full potential of AI — from predictive maintenance and real-time traffic optimization, to seamless multimodal integration.

14:30 – 15:00

PANEL DISCUSSION: Autonomous transport’s tipping point: will smart cities unlock its full potential?

Autonomous transport is set to revolutionize urban mobility, but its success hinges on the seamless integration with smart city infrastructure. Advanced sensor networks, AI-driven traffic management, and real-time data exchange between vehicles and city systems are key to optimizing efficiency, safety, and sustainability. By leveraging intelligent roadways, adaptive signaling, and edge computing, cities can create an environment where autonomous vehicles operate reliably, reducing congestion and emissions while enhancing accessibility. Unlocking this potential requires collaboration between policymakers, technology providers, and urban planners to ensure regulatory frameworks, digital infrastructure, and investment strategies align with the future of mobility.

Attendee insights: Policymakers, technology providers, and urban planners will discuss collaborative strategies to build adaptive, connected cities that enable safe, efficient, and sustainable autonomous mobility.

15:00 – 15:15

FIRESIDE CHAT: Quantum computing: a giant leap for the future of mobility?

Quantum computing has the potential to reshape mobility by addressing computational challenges that traditional systems cannot solve efficiently. With the ability to process vast datasets and simulate complex scenarios at unprecedented speeds, quantum algorithms could optimize traffic flow, improve predictive maintenance for transport infrastructure, and enhance decision-making for autonomous systems. In multimodal transport networks, quantum models could enable more efficient route planning and energy distribution, reducing congestion and emissions. However, practical implementation remains a challenge, with significant hurdles in hardware development, algorithm design, and industry adoption. While quantum computing is still in its early stages, its application in mobility could redefine the way transport systems are designed and managed in the future.

Attendee insights: Understand the transformative potential of quantum computing in traffic optimization, predictive maintenance, and multimodal transport, along with the technical and adoption challenges that must be addressed to bring these solutions to scale.

15:15 – 15:45

PANEL DISCUSSION: Putting decarbonization back on track: is policy accelerating or stalling modal shift?

Shifting freight and passenger transport from road to rail is widely recognized as a critical strategy for reducing emissions, yet progress remains fragmented. While policy frameworks increasingly emphasize sustainability, the effectiveness of incentives, regulations, and investment priorities varies across regions. Infrastructure bottlenecks, regulatory misalignment, and market dynamics continue to challenge large-scale modal shift. Are current policies providing the necessary momentum, or are they inadvertently reinforcing existing transport patterns?

Attendee insights: Are policy interventions translating into tangible shifts towards rail and public transport or are deeper structural changes needed to align decarbonization goals with real-world outcomes?

15:45 – 16:05

FIRESIDE CHAT: Profit growth versus green goals: can transport crack both?

The push to decarbonize logistics is reshaping supply chains, but the transition often comes with financial and operational trade-offs. Stricter emissions regulations, rising energy costs, and evolving consumer expectations are driving companies to adopt greener solutions, from alternative fuels and electrification to digital optimization and modal shift. However, balancing sustainability with profitability remains a challenge, as upfront investments and infrastructure gaps can slow progress. How are logistics providers navigating these competing pressures?

Attendee insights: This discussion explores the economic realities of green logistics, the role of policy and innovation, and whether sustainability can become a competitive advantage rather than a cost burden.

16:05 – 16:35

PANEL DISCUSSION: Beyond the capital: is bi-lateral and multi-lateral funding delivering meaningful impact?

Bi-lateral and multi-lateral funding mechanisms are designed to drive infrastructure development, economic growth, and sustainable transport, yet their effectiveness remains a subject of debate. While these financial structures provide essential capital, the question remains: do they lead to long-term, tangible improvements, or are they hindered by bureaucracy, conditionalities, and misaligned priorities? Are recipient countries able to leverage these funds effectively, or do donor-driven agendas dictate priorities? And what changes are needed to make international funding more agile, transparent, and results-driven?

Attendee insights: This panel will examine the critical factors shaping the success of multi- and bilateral funding, from governance and transparency to regulatory frameworks and national alignment.

16:35 – 17:15

PROJECT UPDATE SERIES: Transport mega-projects redefining global trade and economic prosperity

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DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY - 1 OCTOBER

BUILDING FUTURE-PROOF TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS FOR A CONNECTED TOMORROW

10:00 – 10:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: Intermodal disruption: are emerging transport corridors key to advancements in global trade?

As new transport corridors like the Middle Corridor, BRICS-led initiatives, IMEC, and China's Belt and Road Initiative reshape global trade dynamics, the potential of seamless intermodal integration has never been greater. By connecting rail, road, maritime, and air transport, these corridors can reduce transit times, cut costs, and bolster supply chain resilience. This session will explore how digital connectivity, diversified transport modes, and coordinated investment strategies can future-proof trade routes — while addressing the regulatory and policy frameworks needed to turn vision into reality.

Attendee insights: Gain a strategic understanding of how intermodal integration is unlocking new trade opportunities across emerging economic corridors — and what's required to ensure they are commercially viable, resilient, and globally connected.

10:30 – 11:00

PANEL DISCUSSION: Collide or collaborate: can intermodal business models balance competition and collaboration?

Intermodal transport operates in a paradox—shared infrastructure and seamless connectivity demand collaboration, yet market competition drives efficiency and innovation. Logistics providers, rail operators, and freight forwarders must integrate networks while protecting commercial advantage, raising the question: can cooperation strengthen resilience without compromising differentiation? Success will depend on redefining partnership models, where collaboration becomes a strategic advantage rather than a trade-off. As intermodal transport evolves, can operators master both competitive agility and cooperative efficiency?

Attendee insights: Panelists will explore how transport operators can balance collaboration and competition to build a seamless, efficient intermodal ecosystem that benefits operators, customers, and passengers.

11:00 – 11:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: Revolutionising trade: how smart ports drive intermodal innovation

Ports are evolving from static gateways into intelligent trade hubs, seamlessly integrating maritime, rail, road, and inland logistics. Smart ports leverage AI, automation, and real-time data to optimize cargo movement, but their true potential lies in intermodal hub development—where ports connect with inland terminals and multimodal corridors to create a fluid, resilient supply chain. By reducing bottlenecks, balancing freight demand, and enhancing supply chain visibility, intermodal hubs play a critical role in driving efficiency and sustainability. However, unlocking their full value requires investment, regulatory alignment, and collaboration across public private sectors.

Attendee insights: Gain insight into how smart ports and intermodal hubs are reshaping global trade through seamless connectivity and infrastructure designed for a more agile, future-ready logistics ecosystem.

11:30 – 12:00

PANEL DISCUSSION: Bridging sea and air: can ports and airports sync for growth?

Sea-to-air logistics promises maritime cost efficiency with the speed of air cargo, however gaps in maritime and air freight infrastructure, scheduling, and digital integration create inefficiencies that ripple across supply chains. Mismatched handling capacity, disconnected data systems, and fragmented scheduling force cargo into costly delays rather than smooth multimodal transitions. Unlocking sea-to-air at scale requires more than physical connectivity—it demands intelligent coordination powered by digital twin technologies, AI-driven scheduling, and automated cargo handovers that synchronize operations across ports and airports in real time.

Attendee insights: This session will explore how next-generation infrastructure and digitalization can transform sea-to-air from an underutilized model into an efficient, precision-driven logistics solution.

12:00 – 13:00

NETWORKING LUNCH

13:00 – 13:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: Nextgen passenger rail: redefining value in future networks

As passenger expectations evolve and urbanization intensifies, the rail sector faces a complex challenge: how to deliver scalable, high-quality service without compromising affordability or accessibility. This session explores the recalibration of value in the next generation of passenger rail—moving beyond the MaaS framework to examine how operators and policymakers can balance the interdependent pillars of price, capacity, and customer experience. What trade-offs are acceptable in tomorrow’s networks? How can systems be designed to ensure inclusive access while still meeting rising service expectations?

Attendee insights: uncover strategies for equitable, efficient, and resilient passenger rail ecosystems.

13:30 – 14:00

PANEL DISCUSSION: Rail versus aviation: competition or collaboration for regional connectivity?

Where do airlines and rail operators see each other—as rivals fighting for market share, or as partners in shaping end-to-end connectivity? What economic and policy incentives determine whether they compete or collaborate? And does the push for decarbonization create new synergies or deepen the divide?

Attendee insights: This session will explore whether smarter coordination between rail and aviation can unlock a more resilient and sustainable regional mobility framework.

14:00 – 14:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: Connected and shared mobility: breaking down urban barriers

Integrating connected and shared transport remains a persistent challenge, restricted by fragmented infrastructure, siloed data systems, and regulatory inertia. How can mobility providers, city planners, and policymakers align interoperability standards that truly enable seamless travel? What are the economic and governance models that incentivize collaboration rather than competition? And can technology alone solve the urban mobility puzzle, or is a fundamental shift in policy and planning required?

Attendee insights: Panelists will discuss actionable solutions to ensure connected and shared mobility becomes a cornerstone of efficient, accessible, and sustainable urban transport.

14:30 – 15:00

PANEL DISCUSSION: First – last – mile: can transit oriented development close the gap?

The success of public transport hinges not just on core networks but on how easily people can access them. First–last mile connectivity remains a persistent challenge, often limiting ridership and diminishing the impact of major transit investments. Can transit-oriented development (TOD) provide the missing link, or does the gap between policy, infrastructure, and real estate remain too wide? Is TOD the silver bullet for first–last mile integration or will deeper structural barriers—land use policies, funding models, and community buy-in—continue to hinder progress? How can urban planners, developers, and transport authorities collaborate to design walkable, transit-friendly spaces that reduce car dependency? And does the promise of TOD hold up across different urban contexts, or is its success limited to high-density, well-funded cities?

Attendee insights: This session will explore practical strategies for bridging the first–last mile gap, leveraging policy, planning, and investment to transform transit nodes into vibrant, well-connected urban hubs.

15:00 – 15:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: Redefining value in the MaaS ecosystem: who pays, who profits and who set the rules?

Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) promises seamless, user-centric transport, but beneath the vision lies a complex web of competing interests. As digital platforms integrate public and private mobility options, the question of value—who creates it, who captures it, and who controls it—becomes increasingly contentious. Is MaaS primarily a tool for public benefit, or does it risk becoming another fragmented, profit-driven marketplace? This discussion will unravel the power dynamics shaping the MaaS ecosystem. Who should bear the financial burden—governments, private operators, or consumers? How do revenue models balance commercial viability with accessibility and equity? And as data becomes the currency of mobility, who ultimately dictates the rules of engagement?

Attendee insights: Panelists will debate whether MaaS is on track to deliver a truly integrated transport future – or if misaligned incentives and regulatory uncertainty will prevent it from reaching its full potential.

15:30 – 16:00

PANEL DISCUSSION: Compliance vs interoperability: can real estate developers balance free zone rules with global supply chain demands?

As supply chains become more digitized and globally integrated, logistics operators and multinational tenants are demanding greater flexibility, speed, and interoperability from the spaces they occupy. Yet within free zones, developers must navigate local compliance requirements—from zoning regulations to customs processes—that often constrain design, access, and operations. This session explores how real estate developers can reconcile these competing forces—delivering infrastructure that satisfies regulatory obligations while enabling tenants to operate seamlessly across borders. What are the practical barriers to creating interoperable, future-proof logistics spaces in free zones? And how can developers, regulators, and occupiers collaborate to co-design solutions that unlock both compliance and commercial agility?

Attendee insights: How can real estate developers, regulators, and occupiers collaborate to balance free zone compliance with the need for interoperable, tenant-ready logistics infrastructure that supports global supply chain efficiency?

16:00 – 16:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: Next-gen high speed mobility technologies: disruptive innovation or CAPEX burden?

High-speed mobility is evolving rapidly, with cutting-edge technologies promising to redefine transport efficiency and connectivity. But are these innovations true game-changers, or do they come with a price tag that outweighs their benefits? As hyperloops, maglev systems, and next-generation rail technologies push the boundaries of speed and sustainability, the debate over their viability intensifies. This session will examine whether next-gen high-speed transport is a necessary leap forward or an overambitious CAPEX drain. Do the long-term economic and environmental gains justify the upfront investment? Are these technologies scalable, or will they remain niche solutions for select corridors?

Attendee insights: Panelists will explore whether the economic and social benefits of next generation mobility systems outweigh the upfront investment.

16:30 – 17:10

PROJECT PRESENTATION SERIES #2: High speed rail as a catalyst for economic growth and development



Rail is essential to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, accounting for just 0.4% of transport-related greenhouse gas emissions. The UAE, through Etihad Rail, is making significant strides in expanding rail as a primary transport system. As a global leader with over 80 years of experience and more than 30 in high-speed operations, Renfe is proud to participate in Global Rail—an event set to become a key platform for the industry.

Raul Blanco Diaz
Former President
Renfe



DAY 3 - THURSDAY - 2 OCTOBER

DRIVING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION THROUGH COLLABORATION, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, AND INNOVATION

10:00 – 10:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: How can global rail partnerships drive economic, modal and social transformation?

Cross-border rail has the potential to transform regional economies, reduce reliance on road and air transport, and enhance global connectivity. Yet, despite its promise, fragmented regulations, mismatched infrastructure standards, and geopolitical complexities often hinder seamless international rail operations. Can greater collaboration between governments, operators, and investors unlock the full potential of cross-border rail? Examining the frameworks needed to accelerate rail integration across borders raises key questions: what policy alignments and financial mechanisms can make cross-border projects more viable and how can interoperability challenges—ranging from signaling systems to customs procedures—be overcome?

Attendee insights: How can policymakers, regulators and operators collaborate to overcome the complexities in cross-border rail and foster more efficient transport corridors for both passengers and freight.

10:30 – 11:00

PANEL DISCUSSION: Aligning transport finance with climate goals: shifting from reporting to emissions reduction

While ESG frameworks and climate disclosures are now standard practice, many transport projects still struggle to translate financial pledges into measurable decarbonization outcomes. Bridging this divide requires a shift in financial instruments and investment strategies to prioritize tangible emissions reductions over compliance-based reporting. Mechanisms must be in place to ensure that capital flows effectively support low-carbon infrastructure, fleet electrification, and modal shift. Collaboration between investors, policymakers, and transport operators is essential to driving systemic change - moving beyond green labels to real-world impact.

Attendee insights: This session will provide practical insights into moving beyond ESG compliance to financing transport projects that achieve real-world carbon reductions.

11:00 – 11:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: From pilots to production: how can we fast-track transport innovation cycles?

The gap between successful pilot projects and large-scale deployment remains one of the biggest hurdles in transport innovation. While new technologies - from AI-driven traffic management to next-generation rail systems - show promise in controlled environments, many struggle to transition into widespread use due to regulatory delays, funding constraints, and integration challenges. Are current procurement and regulatory processes equipped to support rapid innovation? And how can public and private stakeholders work together to create agile frameworks that accelerate adoption without compromising safety and efficiency?

Attendee insights: This panel will explore strategies to streamline deployment, scale solutions faster, and ensure that promising transport technologies move beyond pilot projects to full-scale impact.

11:30 – 11:50

NETWORKING AND COFFEE BREAK

11:50 – 12:20

PANEL DISCUSSION: Integrating shared mobility into mass transit networks: can public-private collaboration bridge the gap?

Seamlessly integrating shared mobility with mass transit has the potential to enhance accessibility, reduce congestion, and improve first-last mile connectivity. However, misaligned incentives, regulatory complexities, and infrastructure limitations often prevent shared mobility services from complementing public transport effectively. What role should public agencies and private mobility providers play in creating a unified network? Can policy frameworks and data-sharing agreements enable true integration without compromising competition? And how can financial and operational models be structured to ensure shared mobility enhances – rather than disrupts – mass transit systems?

Attendee insights: The discussion will explore the practical steps needed to turn fragmented mobility services into a cohesive, user-centric transport ecosystem to the benefit of passengers.

12:20 – 12:50

PANEL DISCUSSION: On time, on budget: examining stakeholder collaboration strategies for high-speed rail success


Delivering high-speed rail projects on schedule and within budget requires strong collaboration between governments, investors, operators, and contractors. However, regulatory hurdles, financial constraints, and shifting priorities often lead to delays and cost overruns. Securing stakeholder buy-in and ensuring consistent government backing are critical to keeping projects on track—but how can these be achieved? Public policy support plays a crucial role in maintaining project momentum, while hybrid PPP models can help balance risk and investment. Technologies such as digital twins, AI-driven project management, and real-time data integration offer new ways to enhance transparency, efficiency, and coordination. By strengthening stakeholder engagement and leveraging innovation, high-speed rail projects can overcome common barriers and deliver long-term economic and mobility benefits.

Attendee insights: Panelists will discuss actionable stakeholder collaboration strategies to ensure high-speed rail projects are delivered on schedule, within budget, and with long-term economic and mobility benefits.

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12:50 – 13:05

FIRESIDE CHAT: Beyond speed: unlocking hydrogen’s role in sustainable mobility

Hydrogen-powered transport is emerging as a key solution for decarbonizing mobility, particularly on routes where full electrification is not feasible. While hydrogen trains and vehicles offer a zero-emission alternative, challenges remain around fuel cell efficiency, infrastructure investment, and cost viability. Exploring hydrogen’s role in sustainable transport requires a closer look at advancements in technology, the financial frameworks supporting large-scale deployment, and the policy incentives driving adoption. The discussion will assess whether hydrogen can become a mainstream transport solution or if its application will remain limited to specific use cases in the shift toward net-zero mobility.

Attendee insights: Explore fuel cell innovation, infrastructure readiness, and the economic viability of hydrogen mobility, with a focus on policy, investment, and decarbonization impact.

13:05 – 14:00

NETWORKING LUNCH

14:00 – 14:30

PANEL DISCUSSION: Steering change: can market forces and policy shift consumers to greener transport?

Encouraging a shift toward greener transport requires a delicate balance between market incentives and policy interventions. While regulatory measures can drive sustainability targets, consumer adoption ultimately depends on affordability, convenience, and infrastructure readiness. Examining the interplay between policy and market dynamics highlights key questions: can financial incentives and carbon pricing accelerate change without creating economic burdens? How can transport providers and policymakers reshape behavioral norms through pricing strategies, digital integration, and public awareness campaigns?

Attendee insights: The discussion will assess the most effective approaches to making sustainable mobility the default choice for consumers, exploring the role of policy incentives, infrastructure investment, and technological innovation

14:30 – 15:00

PANEL DISCUSSION: Can public-private partnerships make TOD the blueprint for sustainable urbanization?

Transit-oriented development (TOD) has the potential to create thriving, connected urban spaces while reducing congestion and emissions. However, its success depends on the effective alignment of public policy, private sector investment, and long-term urban planning goals. How can governments create regulatory frameworks and incentives that attract private investment without compromising affordability and accessibility? What financing mechanisms can ensure that TOD projects deliver both commercial returns and public benefits? This discussion will explore the policies, partnerships, and innovative funding models needed to maximize the economic, social, and environmental impact of TOD.

Attendee insights: This session will examine strategies for aligning public and private sector interests to ensure TOD drives economic growth, enhances accessibility, and promotes livability.

15:00 – 15:15

FIRESIDE CHAT: Building the transportation innovation ecosystem: enabling 10x growth and scalable disruption

Achieving exponential growth in transport innovation requires more than just new technologies—it demands a fully integrated ecosystem that fosters collaboration, investment, and rapid scalability. From AI and automation to new business models and regulatory frameworks, creating the right conditions for disruption is critical to unlocking the next wave of transformation. What funding mechanisms, policy frameworks, and partnerships are needed to enable 10x growth? And how can innovators ensure that transport disruptions are not only scalable but also sustainable and future-proof?

Attendee insights: The discussion will explore how to scale transport innovation, attract investment, and create an ecosystem that enables disruptive growth while ensuring long-term viability.

15:15 – 15:45

PANEL DISCUSSION: Arbitration vs. litigation in transport disputes: choosing the right track for resolution

When transport disputes arise, selecting the right resolution method can significantly impact costs, timelines, and business continuity. Litigation provides a structured legal process, while arbitration offers flexibility, confidentiality, and industry-specific expertise. But which approach best serves transport operators, suppliers, and investors facing complex disputes? Factors such as enforceability across jurisdictions, cost implications, and the speed of resolution all play a critical role in determining the most effective path. Understanding these trade-offs is key to mitigating risks, protecting commercial interests, and ensuring seamless operations in an increasingly interconnected transport landscape.

Attendee insights: Understanding when to opt for arbitration or litigation is key to managing transport disputes efficiently. Insights will focus on cost, enforceability, and speed, helping stakeholders choose the most effective resolution strategy.

15:45 – 16:30

PROJECT PRESENTATION SERIES: Collaborative finance: can it build sustainable and inclusive transport infrastructure?

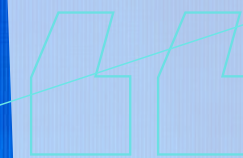
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Andrew DeLeone

President
Africa, Middle East & Central Asia (AMECA) Region
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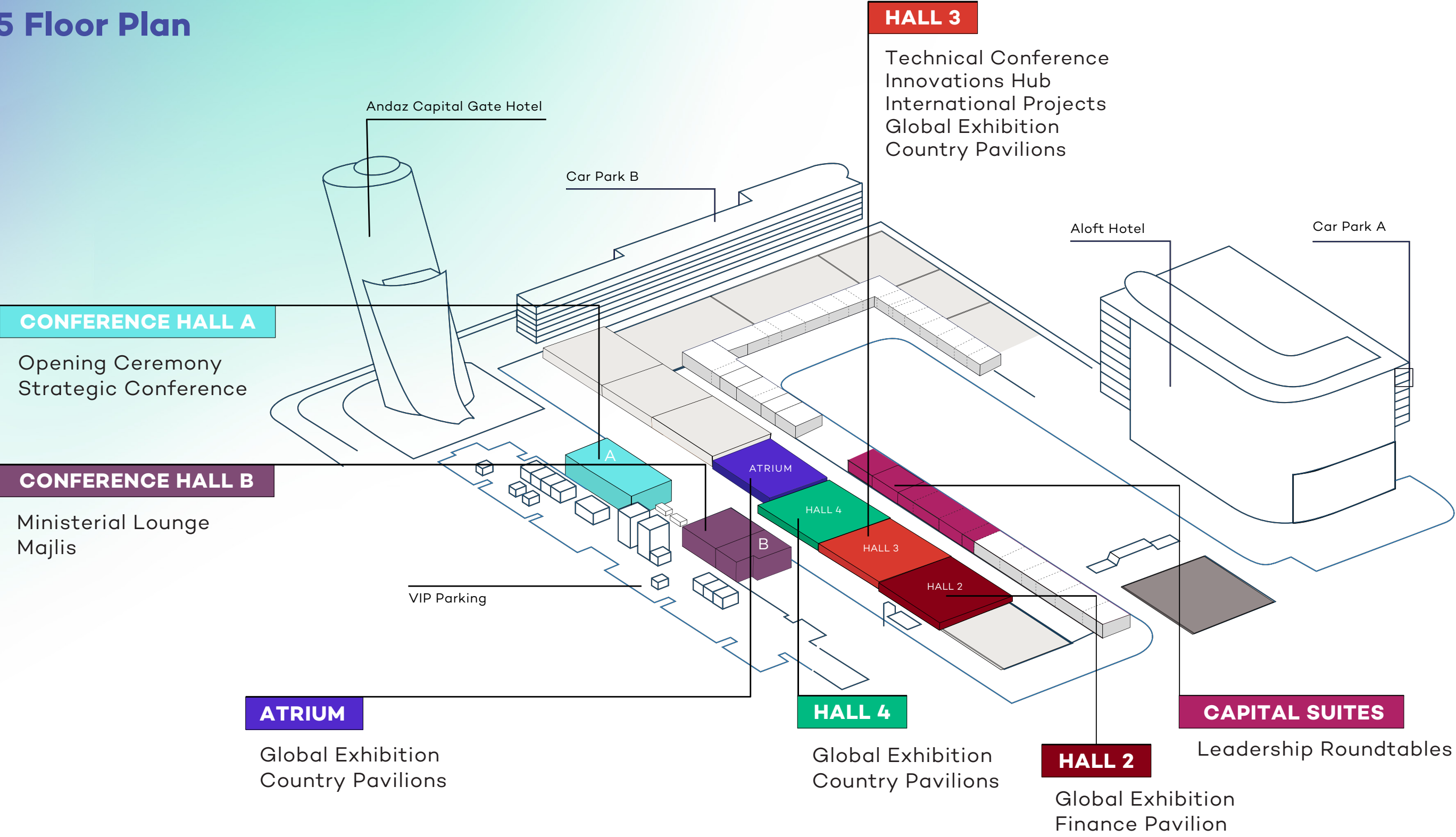
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