

Rail projects taking a leading role in UAE, says GlobalData's MEED

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Global Data's MEED says that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is focusing a lot of its attention on the rail sector as it emerges from the pandemic.

The data and analytics company says the country is seeking to stimulate economic growth and navigate the energy transition following COVID-driven downturn and disruption.

Colin Foreman, Deputy Editor at GlobalData's MEED, said: "Investing in rail makes sense for the UAE in 2022. In the short term, it creates jobs and business opportunities for people and companies working on projects; while, in the longer term, it stimulates trade as an 'economic enabler'.

"The increasingly important environmental aspect is that rail travel reduces carbon emissions by taking freight and passenger vehicles off the road, which will help the UAE reach its target of being a net-zero carbon emitter by 2050."

In December 2021, the UAE launched a AED50 billion (\$13.6 billion) program to create an integrated cargo and passenger transport system that runs across the country. Project activity has moved forward since

then, with construction work continuing to advance on Etihad Rail stage two, which will provide freight and passenger services. Further, tendering is ongoing for the passenger rolling stock and talks are also understood to be under way with contractors working on the project to build the passenger stations serving the network.

In addition to stage two of Etihad Rail, firms have also been invited to bid by mid-March for a contract to provide preliminary engineering consultancy services for its high-speed rail project.

Colin said: "The plan is to develop a high-speed rail line connecting Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Etihad Rail is also considering two other lines: one to join Abu Dhabi with Al-Ain and another to connect Dubai and Sharjah. Meanwhile, a team comprising UK-based Atkins and Grimshaw, US-based Parsons, and France's Egis have restarted design work for the planned extensions to the green and red lines of the emirate's metro network for the Roads & Transport Authority."