

The region's premier event
for trade and exports

GTR MENA 2025 DUBAI

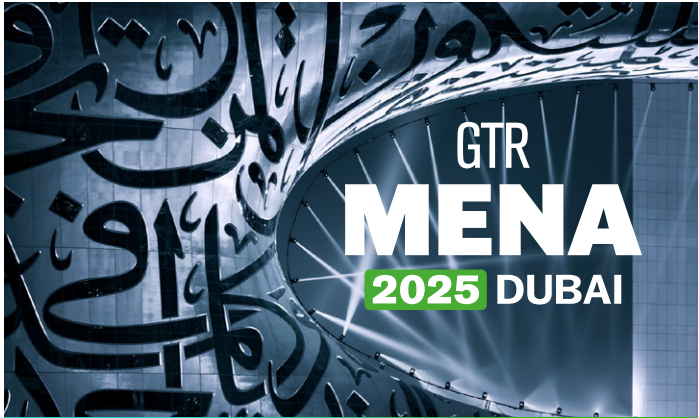
#GTRMENA

Jumeirah Emirates Towers (Godolphin Ballroom), Dubai, UAE
February 18-19, 2025

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The region's premier event for trade and exports

Having celebrated the largest ever edition of GTR MENA in 2024, welcoming a record-breaking 1,136 attendees, GTR is excited to return to Dubai on February 18-19, 2025 bigger, better and ready to host the region's leading content and networking platform for the global trade, export, commodity and supply chain finance community.

The annual two-day conference will provide high value networking opportunities, enabling delegates to catch up with industry friends, forge new business connections and meet with highly esteemed exhibitors from leading trade service providers across the Middle East and North Africa. Over 80 industry experts will explore the latest trends and developments, highlighting both challenges and opportunities whilst offering future projections of the market.

The GTR team looks forward to welcoming you there!

"A one-stop-shop for all business partners to meet."

H Ashraf, Novelis

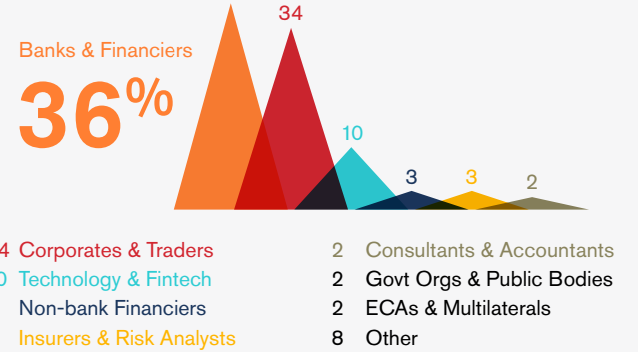
Jumeirah Emirates Towers (Godolphin Ballroom)
Dubai, UAE

February 18-19, 2025

6 big topics



Attendees by sector in 2024

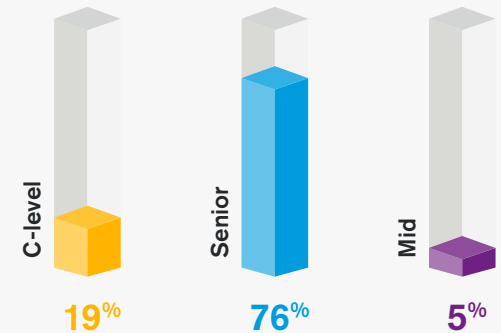


Vital statistics in 2024

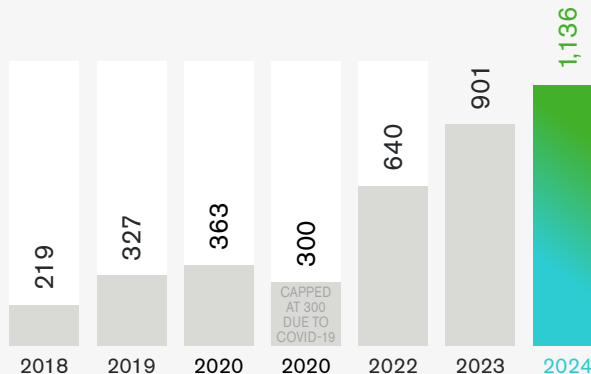


[Click here to find out more](#)

Job titles represented in 2024



Year-on-year attendee increase



Find out more

Tom Easey
Business Development Manager
+44 (0)20 8772 3004

SPONSORSHIP

[Click here to email](#)

Jeff Ando
Director, Content & Production
+44 (0)20 8772 3015

SPEAKING

[Click here to email](#)

James Henderson
Senior Marketing Executive
+44 (0)20 8772 3013

MARKETING & MEDIA

[Click here to email](#)

Day One: Tuesday 18 February Morning

08.00-09.00 Registration and refreshments

09.00-09.05

Chair's opening remarks

Laura Buckwell, Journalist & Broadcaster

09.05-09.15

Keynote: Consolidating Dubai's economic position

As the economic development arm of the emirate, the Dubai Economic Development Corporation (DED) has a mandate is firmly in line with the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33) to further consolidate Dubai's position as one of the world's top three global cities. This opening address will consider the priorities for promoting economic growth, from attracting greater foreign direct investment (FDI) to the need for recruiting and retaining world class talent.

Mohamed Sharaf, Chief Operating Officer (COO) for Investment Attraction, Dubai Economic Development Corporation (DED)

09.15-09.25

Keynote: Sharing responsibility in driving trade forward

This address will consider how the trade landscape is changing as a result of shifting geopolitical, digital and sustainability trends, sharing key data points including growth forecasts for the GCC and showcasing the region's value in driving trade growth.

The session will highlight the UAE's role as a trade facilitator, from the embedding of trade finance capabilities with logistical infrastructure to addressing the trade finance gap through enabling cross-border trade for businesses of all sizes. It will also detail how various partnerships and collaborations are emphasising the need for greater leadership among stakeholders, as well as discussing how digital transformation is changing supply chains/finance – from blockchain to AI and using alternate data – and opening new pathways for smarter trade and financing.

Ahmad Al Hassan, Chief Financial Officer, DP World GCC

09.25-09.35

Driving partnerships, boosting exports and supporting a developmental vision

With exports playing a big role in the UAE's economic development, from generating investment in industry to driving progress in technology and advancement of key skills to boost productivity, this session will highlight the importance of having the necessary infrastructure in place to create a nurturing and fostering environment for businesses to thrive.

Points for consideration will include building strong partnerships with international and local financial institutions to fund transactions, as well as the significance of forging alliances with governments and development finance institutions across a range of geographies in the provision of financing facilities and payment guarantee schemes. The session will also consider the importance of dynamic strategic planning in promoting sustainable development in alignment with the UAE's wider vision.

Natasha Abdullelah Saleh, Project Manager, Abu Dhabi Export Office (ADEX)

09.35-10.05

Leadership, innovation and sustainability: Driving economic growth through empowerment

Reflecting on the key role SMEs have to play as the bedrock of global trade, this special 'fireside chat' will highlight the success of the UAE's economic development model, and how the many competitive advantages it enjoys – from its geographical location to a business-friendly regulatory environment to the development of world class physical and technological infrastructure – will be central in reaching its ambitious targets for non-oil trade.

This session will address a range of themes, from the need for innovative credit solutions and strategic collaborations to boost the competitiveness of UAE enterprises worldwide, to the role of trade facilitation and export promotion initiatives in supporting UAE-based companies. It will also address the role of regulatory reforms in streamlining business processes to enhance ease of doing business and the importance of access to cutting-edge facilities, mentorship, networking opportunities and funding support.

Raja Al Mazrouei, Chief Executive, Etihad Credit Insurance (ECI) & **Martin Tricaud**, Group Head of Investment Banking, First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) *in conversation with* **Laura Buckwell**, Journalist & Broadcaster

10.05-10.45

State of play: The view from global trade finance industry leaders

A key indicator of the crucial role that both the UAE and the wider GCC has as a centre for global trade, February 2025 will also see the ICC Banking Commission Global Technical Meeting taking place in Dubai, providing a forum for senior figures from the world of banking and finance to meet and discuss key global and regional trends and their potential impact on the trade landscape.

This session will bring trade finance leaders together to provide an update on the current state of play, from the latest efforts to close the trade finance gap to stressing the importance of greater bank engagement in industry initiatives such as the ICC Trade Finance Register. Other points for consideration will include an update on key developments within the regulatory landscape and the applicability of ICC rules, ever more significant in light of the innovation and technological transformation being seen within the market.

Moderator: Vincent O'Brien, Director, ICC UAE
Caryn Pace-Messenger, Managing Director, Global Trade & Supply Chain Finance, Bank of America
Merlin Dowse, Executive Director, Global Trade Finance Product Management, J.P. Morgan
Xu Jun, Deputy General Manager, Global Transaction Banking, Bank of China
Sinan Ozcan, Senior Executive Officer & Board Director, DP World Trade Finance

10.45-11.20 Networking break

"A key trade event in the MENA region bringing together leading industry experts."

N Kumar, United Arab Bank

"An excellent platform to network and unlock opportunities to explore the Middle East and Africa trade and finance focus."

Z Meyer, Nedbank CIB

"A well thought out agenda to cover current trends and challenges in trade and very well represented by all stakeholders."

K Syed, Dubai Islamic Bank

Day One: Tuesday 18 February **Morning Streams**Select either **Stream A** or **Stream B****Stream A**Chair: Laura Buckwell, Journalist & Broadcaster**11.20-12.00****Building partnerships and achieving collaboration to bolster international trade**

The signing of various recent partnership agreements across all corners of the ecosystem (financial institutions, fintechs, government entities) offers further demonstration of the importance of strategic collaboration in enhancing the provision of international trade services and maximising the reach of financing solutions, crucial in unlocking new growth opportunities for businesses across the UAE. This session will consider the significance of such developments, with talking points including:

- Leveraging combined expertise and resources to ensure a seamless and efficient trading experience for companies operating in the UAE
- Bolstering economic development and strengthening the region's position as a global hub for trade and investment
- The role of technology in enabling SMEs to conduct business with verified buyers and sellers and access loans and solutions
- Collaborating with anchor clients across supply chain finance initiatives to help promote UAE business flows and volumes
- Using trade as an economic multiplier to support developing countries and establish new partnerships to boost trade flows through GCC ports

Moderator: Laura Buckwell, Journalist & Broadcaster

Mark Emmerson, Head of Global Transaction Banking, Al Masraf

Sachin Rustagi, Head of Trade Finance, Wio Bank

Farooq Siddiqi, Ventures Lead, SC Ventures

Brendan Du Preez, Global Head of Trade Finance Product Management, Mashreq Bank

12.00-12.30**Expanding horizons: Opening new doors for trade**

Various ambitious transformation programmes have placed the region front and centre when it comes to trade opportunities, with several priority sectors identified as being ripe for growth, whilst increasingly complicated dynamics have seen a shift in potential flows. This session will provide the opportunity for business leaders to share their perspectives and highlight priorities in a vibrant and dynamic operating environment. Among the themes to be considered:

- Creating a manufacturing hub: Identifying priority sectors, purchasing and procurement practices and establishing localised production facilities
- Beyond financing: Addressing the changing role of banks in realigning and adapting to the specific needs of customers to remain competitive
- "It takes two to tango": Highlighting the importance of both import and export flows in building sustainable trading relationships
- Fostering the leaders of tomorrow: Igniting new industries and creating an ecosystem providing employment opportunities for local talent
- The sustainability promise: Providing the necessary infrastructure to capitalise on opportunities in line with regional diversification programmes

Moderator: Rohini Kamath, Head of Commercial Banking Trade, UAE, HSBC

Torsten Richter, Director, Treasury & Funding, CEER National Automotive Company

Vinit Mishra, Head of Treasury, Nutrisco (ETG Group)

Ben Jones, Chief Financial Officer, Kent Group

12.30-13.15**Diversification, state support and 'flight to quality': The commodity financing melting pot**

The global commodities market is an increasingly challenging environment, with concerns over 'flight to quality' and the impact on the bankability of smaller traders at a time when their larger counterparts are often choosing to self-finance. Meanwhile, the recent provision of ECA-backed revolving credit facilities to support non-oil commodity exports demonstrate the GCC's desire to showcase its significance as a producer of strategically important non-hydrocarbon resources. This session will delve deeper into the latest trends in the regional and global commodity financing space, addressing a range of points including:

- To what extent has the nature of bank participation in commodity finance shifted? Are these trends permanent or cyclical?
- Working capital: What are the main challenges when it comes to financing (payment terms, off-balance sheet)?
- Tackling the energy transition: Are the goalposts constantly moving and what does this mean for your average trader in terms of their day-to-day?
- The importance of the 'end user': Has suspicion over the 'trader-to-trader' model marked a change when it comes to reputational risk?
- How significant is access to the insurance market, particularly for larger traders looking to refinance their books?
- Where does the modern trader stand when it comes to the digitisation process? Does lack of interoperability mean paper is still preferred?

Moderator: Laura Buckwell, Journalist & Broadcaster

Selima Mehiri, Head of Trade & Working Capital, APAC & Middle East, Barclays

Ishwar Haswani, Chief Executive Officer, E3 Energy DMCC

Charlie Steers, Director, Regional Head of Commodity Trade Finance MENAT, HSBC

Alexander Peters, Chief Financial Officer, Torq Commodities

Warren Rogers, Head of Trade Finance, Tether

13.15-14.15 Lunch

"GTR MENA 2024 provided invaluable insights into emerging market trends and offered essential networking opportunities for banking professionals."

P Singh, United Arab Bank

"GTR MENA is a recurring committed event on my calendar as I get to connect with all key industry players, from economists to policy makers, banks, FIs, corporate treasurers, CFOs, finance professionals and technology providers."

U Pirzada, Al Majdouie Holding Co

Day One: Tuesday 18 February **Morning Streams**

Select either **Stream A** or **Stream B**

Stream B

Chair: Peter Matza, Council Member, Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT)

11.20-12.05

Delivering trade growth: Do banks need to be less cautious?

Geopolitical conflict, high inflation and rising interest rates all have a potentially debilitating impact on trade growth, with many companies often finding it harder to secure financing in a higher-risk climate. This session will consider:

- Do banks need to offer more tailored trade finance solutions to support importers and exporters, from risk management products such as hedging to other facilities?
- The counterparty: Highlighting the difference in bankability and comfort between dealing with large companies compared to smaller trading entities, including the extra due diligence and cost often required
- To what extent should borrowers be looking to be more transparent and utilise greater data and access to information to facilitate discussions with their bank to help secure lending?
- Is there sufficient awareness of the availability of non-traditional finance, from DFIs to export credit, microfinance, venture capital, private equity, crowd funding and impact investing?
- What is the advice for a company struggling to access finance in a higher-risk and higher-cost environment?

Moderator: Amr El Haddad, Head of Transaction Banking, National Bank of Kuwait

Isabella Pateman, Chief Risk Officer, BACB

Rebekah Fajemirokun, Head of Trade Finance, Eminent Energy

Eleonore Treu, Legal & Director of ICC Austria Trade Finance Week, ICC Austria

George Koukis, International Business Development Director, Receivables & SCF Solutions, Qualco

Ehsaan Ahmed, Executive Vice-President, Head of Transaction Banking, RAKBANK

12.05-12.30

From East to West: Disruption, diversification and opportunity

The impact of regional conflict on supply chains continues to intensify; with vessels diverted around the Cape of Good Hope, shippers are seeing significant increases in transit times and operational costs, disruptions which have led to service reconfigurations and volume shifts, with straining infrastructure resulting in port congestion, delays, and shortages in capacity and equipment. With the timeline for easing these disruptions and returning to 'normal' remaining uncertain, this session will consider to extent to which this crisis underscores the critical need for businesses to bolster supply chain resilience and for carriers to reassess their risk mitigation strategies. Points for consideration will include the role of the GCC in finding alternative trade corridors as well as the potential opportunities provided, from exciting developments in renewables to expansion of port infrastructure, and how they align with the various economic diversification programmes being undertaken by countries throughout the region.

Robert Besseling, Founder & Chief Executive, Pangea-Risk

12.30-13.15

Seizing the African opportunity

The size of the opportunity that the African market presents for the GCC cannot be overstated, with the two regions already conducting high volumes of trade. This is only expected to improve with the proposed reductions in tariffs as a result of the full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This session will examine this relationship more closely, addressing the following talking points:

- How can GCC nations fully benefit from closer trade ties with African markets? What is the nature of the opportunity?
- Improving the trade balance: Is the market likely to see more of a two-way street when it comes to trade flows between the two regions?
- 'Skin in the game': What investment levels are required to enable full implementation of the AfCFTA?
- Finding solutions on the ground: Tackling practical challenges including developing Africa-focused logistics companies
- Highlighting the role of digital innovation in providing critical services to support and promote African trade and AfCFTA implementation

Moderator: George Wilson, Head, Institutional Trade Finance, Investec; Chair of Africa Regional Committee, ITFA

Geoffrey White, Chief Executive Officer, Africa, Agility
Zhann Meyer, Head, Agricultural Commodities, Nedbank CIB

Olasunkanmi Owoyemi, Managing Director, Sunbeth Global Concepts

Robert Besseling, Founder & Chief Executive, Pangea-Risk

13.15-14.15 Lunch

“GTR MENA was a great success and this is a testament to the quality of the speakers, hospitality, programme relevance and excellent organisation. Having hosted many events I can say this was among those that were impeccably organised.”

R Farrage, Forbes Middle East

“An excellent value-adding event that facilitates outstanding networking across the trade finance industry.”

M Emmerson, Al Masraf

Day One: Tuesday 18 February **Afternoon Streams**

Stream A

Chair: Laura Buckwell, Journalist & Broadcaster

14.15-15.00

Milestones reached but challenges ahead: How can digital reach the parts others can't?

It often feels like the market is never far from celebrating the latest digitisation milestone in the current climate, from the regulatory and legislative progress of MLETR and ETDA to the launch of various state-led pilots, whilst a recent report by the Digital Container Shipping Association (DSCA) stated that usage of electronic bills of lading (eBLs) in containerised trade has more than doubled since the start of last year. However, despite these clear signs of progress, fears persist that a lack of information is stifling digitalisation globally, especially among SMEs, with "information asymmetry" meaning that many companies remain unaware of the resources and technologies available.

This session will consider how the trade finance industry can bring all sides of the ecosystem together to collectively boost trade digitalisation efforts, from changing the perception of the use of digital documents – from DNIs to eBLs, still often seen as the domain of large multinational businesses – to the role of government in providing favourable policies, legal frameworks and investment, as well as the way in which banks are increasingly investing in technology as a driver for increasing efficiencies, streamlining processes and ultimately reducing costs.

Moderator: Carlos Teixeira, Global Head, Business Strategy, Lending, Finastra

Pamela Mar, Managing Director, ICC Digital Standards Initiative (DSI)

Sunil Senapati, Chief Executive Officer, XDC Trade Network

Syed Imtiaz Hussain, Regional Head of Product & Propositions, MENAT, HSBC

Nicolas Pochon, Lead, Trade Finance & Supply Chain Finance, Tesselate

Joon Kim, Managing Director; Global Head, Trade Finance, Working Capital & Solution Structuring Platform Group, Treasury Services, BNY Mellon

15.00-15.45

Supply chain finance: Still booming or on a downward curve?

Common perception across both the Middle East and wider regional and global markets has been of a surge in the use of supply chain finance, part of a wider trend towards open

account products, with more clients keen to learn about the different offerings available and more large businesses encouraging their suppliers – often SMEs – to join their reverse factoring programmes, leaning on the buyer's credit status to secure lower-cost financing. However, higher interest rates, sticky inflation and greater regulatory scrutiny of the SCF product has seen a reduction in appetite for such programmes, with many being pared back as a result.

This session will seek to get to the bottom of this supposed trend, addressing the following:

- What are the main challenges limiting the usage of supply chain programmes, from high interest rates to legislation to technology barriers?
- To what extent are higher costs and other external pressures seeing a decrease in demand for buyer-led SCF with suppliers withdrawing from programmes?
- How significant is the potential impact of the introduction of rules requiring buyers to disclose details of their SCF programmes in their financial statements?
- Are more comprehensive fintech solutions required? To what extent are corporates looking for digital SCF providers that enable them to submit invoices and also suppliers to notify parties of invoices to discount?
- How might the emergence of digital negotiable instruments (DNIs) such as electronic promissory notes and digital bills of exchange potentially reinvigorate SCF uptake?
- Is understanding of the benefits of SCF in the region still holding back adoption? Could it potentially play a bigger role in the implementation of ESG?

Moderator: Renganathan Kandiyur, Head of Product Development, Group Transaction Banking, Bank ABC

Mohamed El Ghamry, Head of Corporate Banking, WBG, Corporate Banking, National Bank of Fujairah

Toby Shore, Senior Director, Group Treasury, Risk & Insurance, Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA)

Hamayoun Khan, Head of Trade Finance & Working Capital, Commercial Bank of Dubai

Abdulla Al Taei, Chief Operating Officer, United Arab Bank

15.45-16.05 Networking break

Select either **Stream A** or **Stream B**

Stream B

Chair: Peter Matza, Council Member, Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT)

14.15-15.00

Today's landscape and tomorrow's innovations: Transforming trade through digital working capital solutions

As digitalisation reshapes trade finance, the implementation of comprehensive regulatory support remains critical, with initiatives such as e-invoicing – which looks set to be implemented by 2026 and aims to integrate VAT and tax regulations – enhancing confidence in the accuracy of financial transactions whilst reducing risks linked to double financing and over-invoicing. Additionally, establishing general registry systems will add another layer of security, from e-signatures and electronic assignments to remote identification methods which will help supplier onboarding and KYC handling.

This session will explore how these e-solutions can secure trade finance further and streamline the creation of contractual relationships in electronic environments. Points for discussion will include:

- The importance of robust legal frameworks in recognising digital financial instruments (DNIs) such as bills of exchange and promissory notes: How important is this not only for validating transactions but also for fostering a conducive environment?
- Multi-jurisdiction adaptation of the Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR): How legislative measures can facilitate the transition from traditional documents to digital solutions
- Highlighting the role of electronic registry systems in facilitating the digital management of transactions and receivables, allowing for easier access to financing, simplifying processes and reducing the potential for fraud
- Advocating greater global collaboration between governments, businesses, financial institutions and fintech providers to develop comprehensive solutions that address the diverse needs of the market

Moderator: Neal Harm, Secretary General, FCI

Reda Ezzat, Senior Vice-President, Head of Structured Trade Finance, Mashreq Bank

Asli Karapinar, Vice-President, Cash Performance, Data & Transformation, Schneider Electric

Syed Khurruam Zaeem, Managing Director, Head of Trade, Working Capital & Transaction Banking, Africa Middle East, Standard Chartered Bank

Zul Javaid, Chief Executive Officer, Haifin

Ahmad Hamam, Senior Head, Product & Channel Implementation, Transaction Banking Product, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank

15.00-15.45

Revitalising the role of trade credit in the MENA region

Various agreements struck involving private credit insurance providers, financial institutions and export credit agencies represent further evidence of increased collaboration in the provision of trade credit, as the region's ongoing process of diversification continues, with strong focus on boosting the role of non-oil sectors within the economy, including a key role for SMEs.

This session will consider what these initiatives mean for the wider growth of the credit and political risk insurance market in the region. Points for discussion will include working with strategic partners to unlock participation from global financial markets in line with national industrial strategies, opening supply chain bridges and increasing attractiveness of the region as a hub for supply chains and manufacturing. The conversation will assess how the unrivalled expertise of the private insurance market and its ground-breaking agreements have a critical role to play in supporting the global energy transition, as well as the role state agencies have to play in offering their own insurance products to exporters and banks across a range of strategic industry sectors.

Moderator: Peter Matza, Council Member, Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT)

Leo Tyndall, Chief Executive Officer, Tyndall Insurance

Niraj Kumar, Head of Global Transaction Banking, United Arab Bank

Alexandre Toussaint, Senior Underwriter, Political Risk Insurance & Credit, Africa Specialty Risks

Zena Brake, Credit Director, Middle East, Allianz Trade

15.45-16.05 Networking break

Day One: Tuesday 18 February **Afternoon Plenary**

Afternoon plenary

Chair: Laura Buckwell, Journalist & Broadcaster

16.05-16.25

Introducing ISTTP: A new universal protocol for digital trade

This special fireside chat will showcase the ISTTP protocol, an exciting new development in the ongoing industry efforts to tackle the problem of "identification, identity, authentication" of documents in trade and supply chain finance. Drawing inspiration from key concepts promoted by technology providers such as self-sovereign identity, record immutability, tokenisation and key management – having identified significant shortcomings in existing technologies – the conversation will consider how such a solution could potentially empower millions of SMEs to access more customers, capital and services without the need for complex software installations, as well as enabling larger organisations to discover more suppliers and trading partners while saving cost and time.

Stephan Wolf, Chair, Verifiable.Trade Foundation

16.25-16.55

Trade finance as an asset class: The investor perspective

As global demand for trade finance continues to increase, institutional investors have been presented as a potential solution when it comes to liquidity issues ("the trade finance gap"). But what of the investor perspective? In an environment of heightened geopolitical tensions, volatility within the bond markets and with inflation still high, trade finance potentially stands to benefit from its perception as a resilient, versatile and stable alternative. This session will bring this important position to the conversation, considering the following questions:

- How are structural changes paving the way for institutional investors to enter the market?
- With bank funding being scaled back, to what extent does this open the door to new entrants?
- Can fintech innovation help reduce costs and make the financing of smaller volumes more economical?
- How might trade finance fit within an investor's current portfolio? How does the short term differ from the longer term?

Rene Canezin, Managing Partner & Co-Founder, Evolution Credit Partners & **Laetitia Alonso**, EMEA Sales Executive, Komgo *in conversation with* **Rasheed Hinnawi**, Chairperson, Middle East Regional Committee (MERC), ITFA

16.55

Chair's closing remarks

Followed by evening networking reception

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Day Two: Wednesday 19 February Morning

08.00-09.00 Coffee and networking

09.00-09.05

Chair's morning remarks

Laura Buckwell, Journalist & Broadcaster

09.05-09.45

'KYT': How well do you Know Your Treasurer?

The role of treasurer is a broad one, widely varied depending on a range of factors, and constantly evolving in a fast-moving climate. Walking the line between short-term challenges such as cash flow, interest rates and inflation, foreign exchange and regulatory compliance, and longer-term strategic imperatives including ESG, investment strategy, debt management and digitisation requires specific skillsets and great adaptability, whilst within smaller businesses and start-ups treasury will not always be a standalone function. But how well does the trade finance community understand the workings of treasury?

This session will provide the opportunity for delegates to improve their understanding of the corporate treasury function, reflecting on expert findings from the Association of Corporate Treasurers and offering unique first-hand insights from an esteemed group of regional treasury leaders.

Moderator: Naresh Aggarwal, Associate Director, Policy & Technical, Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT)

Ramy Fahmy, Regional Treasury Lead, MENA, Jacobs

Nader Aboushadi, Group Treasurer, Sidara

Nora Sena, Regional Treasurer, MEA, Pakistan & Turkey, Nestle

Marcelo Moulin, Head of Trade Sales, Middle East & Pakistan, Citi

09.45-10.30

Fighting the good fight: Compliance, financial crime and the role of technology

GCC markets find themselves in the crosshairs of global compliance, with S&P Global data suggesting that various countries across the region are primary locations for nefarious practices such as fraud, money laundering and sanctions evasion.

This session will consider the extent to which trade finance banks have been put on notice, as jurisdictions seek to clamp down on such practices, from the monitoring of ship-to-ship transfers – often used to disguise the origin of cargoes and skirt the oil price cap imposed by the US and its allies – to automating labour-intensive manual checking processes for suspicious transactions. It will also consider the increasingly significant role that new technologies have to play in the regulatory and compliance process, considering the direction of travel in a complex global operating environment.

Moderator: Laura Buckwell, Journalist & Broadcaster
Charles Ike, Vice-President, Maritime Trade, Pole Star
Dr Krishna Prasad K S, Managing Director, Aster Marine Cargo

Eric Orsini, Global Head of Compliance & Regulatory Affairs, Lloyd's List Intelligence

Mark Lakin, Partner, Stephenson Harwood

Sarath Sasikumar, President & Co-Founder, Cleareye.ai

10.30-11.00 Networking break

11.00-11.45

How is the push towards sustainability in the MENA region playing out?

COP27 in Egypt and COP28 in the UAE brought a sharp focus on the importance of climate and sustainability, whilst the energy transition brings sizeable new opportunities in trade, as more companies seek to integrate sustainability into their core strategies and operations.

This session will consider some of the key themes within this conversation, from the increasing trend for companies to build out dedicated sustainability teams to the large amounts of funding allocated from the banking sector for ESG activities, in line with long-term commitments. The discussion will also address the importance of data in fostering sustainable agricultural trade and responsible supply chains, the role of various advisory services to help corporates and banks develop common understanding

and goals, as well as how greater collaboration from governments and the private sector are required to push these initiatives forward.

Moderator: Farrukh Siddiqui, Founding Partner, Emerging Capital Management Partners

Bruno Massera, Chief Financial Officer, International Markets, BRF

Gina Lim, Managing Director, Head of Asian Corporates, Commodities, International Centre Sales, DBS Bank

Hussein Al Hussein, Head of Strategic Partnerships, Farm To Plate

Lisa Knudsen, Vice-President & Head of ESG, RAKBANK

11.45-12.20

Shifting sands: How is the regional ECA market evolving?

The MENA region has long been seen as one of the most lucrative export finance markets across a range of sectors including construction, transportation, telecommunications and utilities, with recipients of export credit agency (ECA) support including big-name multinationals and an increasingly large number of smaller companies operating down the supply chain. However, movement away from oil and gas has seen ECA business volumes fall, as increased focus on diversification changes the sector's dynamics. This session will consider some of these recent changes, addressing a range of themes including:

- Has the market seen an expansion of the ECA remit, particularly where greater capacity is needed to meet increased demand?
- How have the structures of ECA-backed financing and the products offered changed in recent times?
- Are banks still willing to offer longer-term financing even with the protection offered by ECA cover?
- To what extent are greater ESG-related requirements proving significant when it comes to executing ECA-supported projects?
- Highlighting the increasingly significant role regional ECAs are playing in supporting transactions

Moderator: Peter Matza, Council Member, Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT)

Madiha Aslam, Structured Finance Director, Innovo Projects

Graham Scopes, International Export Finance Executive, MEAP: UAE Country Head, UK Export Finance

Laszlo Varnai, Associate Director, Recovery Advisers

12.20-13.00

Risk sharing, FI support and private sector development: A greater role for multilaterals

At a time of geopolitical and economic uncertainty both globally and specifically in the MENA region, increased focus has been placed on the role of multilateral development financial institutions (DFIs) and the role they have to play in formulating a coordinated response to keep trade and supply chains flowing, with billions pledged in the seemingly never-ending effort to close the trade finance gap.

With the MENA region sitting at the centre of global trade and its role as a hub for exports ever-growing, this session will provide the opportunity to hear from senior figures from within these institutions and consider the latest trends. Themes for consideration will include risk sharing arrangements and cooperation agreements with local banks, bringing trade finance facilities to companies whose risk profiles lie beyond the reach of the private sector, private sector development programmes to support local corporates – particularly important in freeing up capital in markets impacted by sovereign rating downgrades – and the role of innovation and technology in expanding reach into new territories for trade finance facilitation.

Moderator: Marc Auboin, Counsellor, Economic Research & Statistics Division, World Trade Organization (WTO)

Nathalie Louat, Director, Trade & Supply Chain Finance, International Finance Corporation (IFC)

Steven Beck, Director, Trade & Supply Chain, Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Shona Tatchell, Director, Trade Facilitation Programme, European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD)

Gwen Mwaba, Managing Director, Trade Finance & Correspondent Banking, African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)

13.00-14.15

Chair's closing remarks

Followed by networking lunch

Day Two: Wednesday 19 February ITFA Middle East Regional Committee Seminar

ITFA Middle East Regional Committee Seminar

Proceedings at GTR MENA 2025 will conclude with a special afternoon seminar hosted by our partners from the Middle East Regional Committee of the International Trade & Forfeiting Association (ITFA).

14.15-14.20

Welcome and opening remarks

Naura Hussain, Director, Trade Asset Sales & Syndications, Africa & Middle East, Standard Chartered Bank

14.20-15.00

Basel 3 implementation: Navigating the impact on trade finance

The implementation of Basel 3 regulations has introduced significant changes to the global financial landscape, with implications for trade finance. This panel will explore, with a ME focus, how financial institutions and treasurers are adapting to stricter capital requirements, liquidity measures and risk-weighted asset calculations. Industry leaders will discuss challenges, opportunities and innovative strategies to ensure compliance while maintaining the flow of trade finance, a critical driver of global commerce. Gain insights into how stakeholders are collaborating to balance regulatory demands with business growth and resilience.

Moderator: Rasheed Hinnawi, Chairperson, Middle East Regional Committee (MERC), ITFA

Aksel Movsisyan, Senior Manager, Policy & Legal, Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA)

Amr El Haddad, Head of Transaction Banking, National Bank of Kuwait

Aditi Sanyal, Partner, Norton Rose Fulbright (Middle East) LLP



"An excellent platform for networking and gaining great insight into trade and treasury from across the globe."

A David, ALEC Group

15.00-15.40

Accounting standards: What is new?

Evolving accounting standards continue to reshape the trade finance landscape, introducing new frameworks that impact how transactions are reported and assessed. This panel will delve into recent updates in trade finance accounting standards, where experts will discuss the implications of these changes for financial institutions and corporates, offering practical insights on navigating compliance while optimising financial reporting. Join us to explore the latest developments and their impact on transparency, risk management and strategic decision-making in trade.

Moderator: Ramkumar Balasubramian, Chief Financial Officer, Middle East & Africa, Barclays

Supriya Kubal, Director, Financial Services, Audit, KPMG

Denis Darko, Director, Financial Services, MENA, Ernst & Young

15.40

Closing remarks

Close of GTR MENA 2025

"GTR MENA is a must attend event and to be marked in your calendar."

V Varghese, Genuine International Automobile

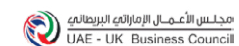
"The best conference to attend. The networking is excellent and the hosts are perfect."

I Loktionov, Panasia Energy

"An excellent networking forum!"

S Huraiz, GE Healthcare

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