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for trade and exports

GTR MENA 2026 DUBAI



#GTRMENA

Dubai, UAE
February 10-11, 2026

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The region's premier event for trade and exports

Following the record-breaking success of GTR MENA 2025, which saw an unprecedented record 1,326 attendees gather in Dubai, GTR is delighted to return for next year's event on February 10-11, 2026.

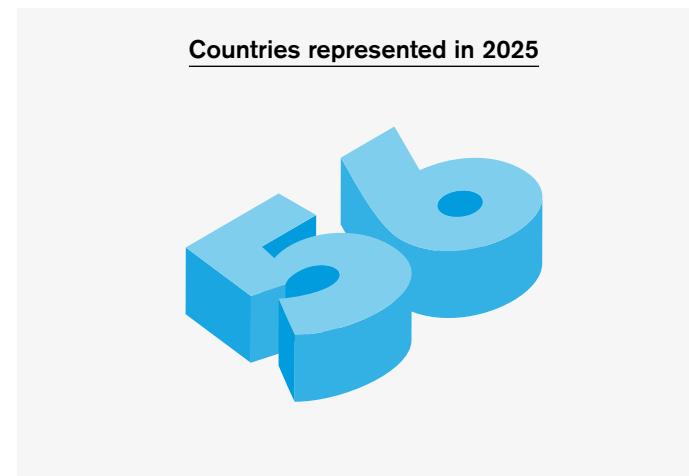
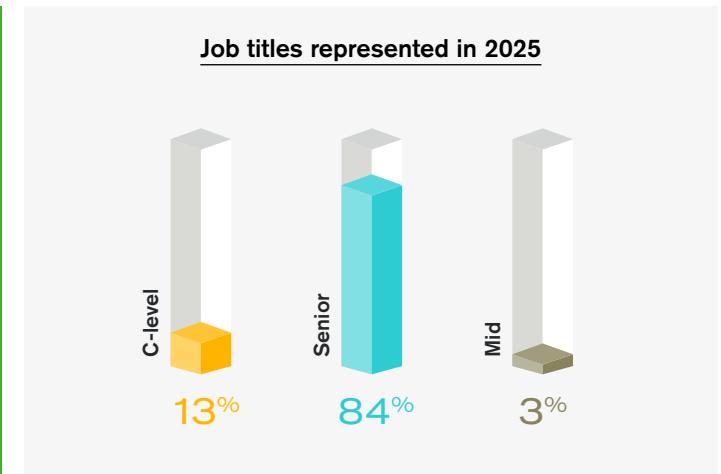
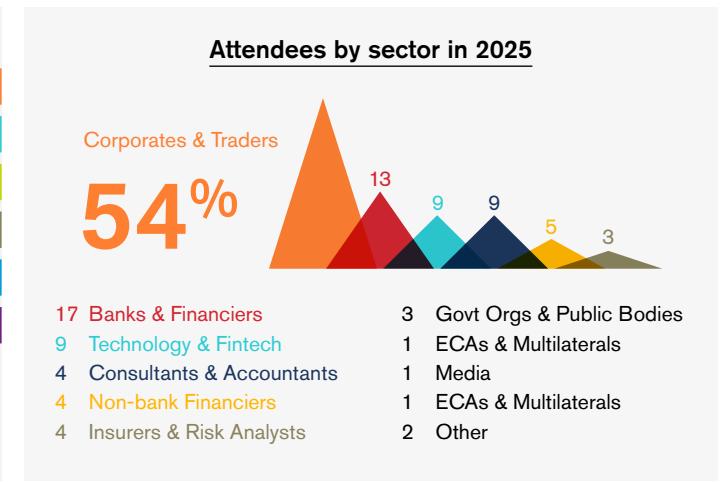
As the region's leading trade, export, commodity, and supply chain finance gathering, GTR MENA 2026 will once again serve as the premier gathering for industry leaders to connect, exchange insights and explore new business opportunities.

The two-day conference will offer unparalleled networking opportunities, bringing together key stakeholders from across the Middle East and North Africa alongside top-tier exhibitors representing leading trade finance institutions and service providers. With around 80 expert speakers, attendees will gain critical market intelligence, insights into the latest trends, and forward-looking analysis on the evolving landscape of trade and export finance in the region.

The GTR team looks forward to welcoming you to a must-attend event shaping the future of trade in MENA and beyond.

Jumeirah Emirates Towers – Godolphin Ballroom
Dubai, UAE

February 10-11, 2026



Day One: Tuesday 10 February Morning

08.00-09.00 Registration and refreshments

09.00-09.05

Chair's opening remarks

Jane Witherspoon, Journalist & Broadcaster

09.05-09.40

The tariff dividend: Can the MENA region benefit from global uncertainty?

Concerns over tariffs are driving the creation of regional production hubs, as companies seek to localise their supply chains. The Middle East is particularly well placed to benefit from this trend, with opportunities provided for the manufacturing and logistics sectors in particular, as firms seek to leverage the region's strategic location, world-class infrastructure and many pre-existing trade agreements. This session will explore this trend and consider the potential implications:

- Highlighting the Middle East's position at the crossroads of Asia, Europe and Africa, both as a location for production and re-export activities and importance of reducing reliance on single, vulnerable supply chains
- World-class infrastructure: How focus on developing logistical excellence – including advanced ports and transportation hubs – helps to support increased regional and global trade volumes
- A manufacturing base: With production shifting away from other markets, how can the GCC leverage its connectivity to serve diverse markets and create new investment and economic opportunities?
- How companies can take advantage: From mapping exposures to building local relationships and leveraging regional strengths (all whilst remaining flexible to sudden changes)

Nicolas Michelon, Managing Partner, Alagan Partners

Robert Besseling, Founder & Chief Executive, Pangea-Risk

Joon Kim, Managing Director, Global Head, Cash & Trade Platform, BNY

09.40-10.20

The outlook for the region: How the Middle East can diversify trade

Trade diversification remains a priority as the GCC seeks to reduce reliance on oil and gas and move beyond traditional trade routes. Such diversification has seen a shift to exporting a wider range of manufactured goods and services, increasing overall export diversity and providing greater economic stability. This session will consider a range of talking points including:

- How the broadening of partnerships and signing of trade agreements with new trading allies helps to reduce reliance on hydrocarbons and move beyond traditional trade routes
- Creating new revenue streams and more resilient economic growth through investment in sectors such as technology, tourism and renewables
- Expanding economic and trade ties with markets such as China and India to offer significant growth potential beyond traditional oil and gas exports
- Strengthening intra-regional connectivity through improved trade linkages to build more robust and integrated regional markets to better withstand external shocks
- Highlighting the importance of infrastructural development in trade diversification, from large-scale projects to regional transformation programmes

Moderator: Jane Witherspoon, Journalist & Broadcaster

Haitham Al Khazaleh, Director of Underwriting & Reinsurance, Etihad Credit Insurance (ECI)

Sriram Muthukrishnan, Group Head of Product Management, Global Transaction Services, DBS Bank

Deyana Petrova Cherneva, Regional Head of Global Trade Finance, Middle East, North Africa & Turkey (MENAT), HSBC

Shajimon Majithu, Head of Financial Institutions & GTB, Al Masraf

10.20-11.00 Networking break



Highlights from

GTR
MENA
2025 DUBAI



"As always, GTR MENA continues to stand as the region's premier trade finance event, offering great opportunities to stay updated on industry trends, connect with clients and vendors, and develop professional relationships."

R Ezzat, Mashreq

Day One: Tuesday 10 February Morning Stream A

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

Stream A

11.00-11.45

Boosting resilience: How are companies mitigating their supply chain risks?

Geopolitical tensions have irrevocably changed the nature of global trade, with disruption in the Red Sea forcing vessels to bypass the Suez Canal and take longer routes around the Cape of Good Hope, often resulting in increased transit times, higher operational costs and greater pressure on ports. Similarly, the use of tariffs and sanctions as geopolitical instruments have also contributed to increased supply chain disruption. With this 'new normal' now established, this session will examine how companies are mitigating these risks. Points for consideration will include:

- How are companies managing the additional transit times and operational costs that comes from diverting freight routes? Will the consumer ultimately bear the cost?
- To what extent has rerouting and the resulting congestion applied additional pressure to port infrastructure? Has there been a shortage of shipping capacity as a result?
- How significant will the potential diversification of trade routes prove for the region's many trade and logistics hubs? Does this pose a risk to its role at the centre of global trade?

- Does this highlight the fragile nature of critical maritime chokepoints and their vulnerability to geopolitical events? Is this likely to lead to shifts in global logistics strategies?
- How important is the identifying and securing of new suppliers to buffer against tariff and sanctions risks? To what extent are companies leveraging digital tools and data analytics for real-time monitoring and predictive modelling?
- Are firms increasingly examining their supply chain contracts to identify clauses that mitigate exposure to tariff changes (such as "Material Adverse Change" or "Change in Law" clauses)?

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

Ahmad Aboud, Group Chief Financial Officer, Ghassan Aboud Holding

Aleem Siddiqui, Head of Finance, Gulf, MBRF Global Foods

Preslav Raykov, Commercial Director & Head of Global Trading, Magic Flame Group

Marcelo Moulin, Director, Head of Trade & Working Capital Sales, Middle East & Africa, Citi

Matt Bullard, Managing Director, Silver Birch

John Monaghan, Chief Innovation Officer, Premium Technology

"The GTR MENA 2025 was very well attended and provided an ideal location for networking. The conference content was well-designed and the speakers/panellists were outstanding. Looking forward to such events from GTR."

K Prasad, Aster Marine Cargo

"Very good experience. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the subject of trade finance and apply it to our companies requirement."

M Siyam, Zamil Steel

11.45-12.30

Futureproofing the corporate treasurer of tomorrow

The corporate treasurer's role has evolved from manager of liquidity and risk to wider strategic alignment with the overall objectives of the business, often shaped by geopolitical headwinds, an evolving regulatory landscape and the rapid process of digitalisation. This session will assess how this greater strategic impact is manifesting itself, with points for discussion including:

- With the GCC seeing falling interest rates, rising debt costs and increased volatility, what are the key strategies being adopted to manage these trends?
- Cash remains king: How the integration of working capital management remains central when adapting to a fast-moving economic environment in anticipating shifts, seizing opportunities and mitigating risks
- How central is the utilisation of technology across treasury processes when it comes to facilitating cross-border transactions and ensuring enhanced liquidity management?
- To what extent is investment in digital transformation key to giving treasurers the tools needed to thrive? Do today's treasurers need to be more tech-savvy than their predecessors?
- With digital assets and tokenisation increasingly talked about, what should treasurers consider and be aware of before taking a leap into this space?
- Treasury as a bridge to finance: How working capital optimisation and greater access to funding sources makes the role of the modern treasurer even more important

Nora Sena, Regional Treasurer, MEA, Pakistan & Turkey, Nestle; Council Member, Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT)

Ruchirangad Agarwal, Corporate Banking Practice Leader, Asia & Middle East, Crisil Coalition Greenwich

12.30-13.15

Competition or consolidation: GCC trade finance – balancing growth with risk

With the GCC declared "the best performing sub-region across the globe for trade finance", the opportunities on offer are increasingly attracting overseas banks to the country, with particular focus on new trade corridors. As banks expand their teams and their offerings in search of new business, the market has never been more competitive, with lower oil prices and high loan-to-deposit ratios potentially encouraging consolidation among FIs to improve efficiency and scale. This session will assess the impact of this dynamic and the likely implications for the market. Points for consideration will include:

- What percentage of new business being conducted is non-oil? Are there signs that the focus on diversification and various transformation programmes is starting to bear fruit?
- How significant have the various free trade agreements the UAE has signed with countries such as India, Indonesia and Turkey proved in growing trade volumes with those markets?
- Do traditional instruments such as the letter of credit still dominate the product mix? How significant are supply chain finance and receivables finance? What are the key drivers when it comes to innovation?
- Has there been a shift in the traditional roles that local and international banks play in the market? Are the differences now less pronounced?
- To what extent is having a digital platform viewed as a competitive advantage for a bank? Are more banks investing in their digital interface as a result?
- Are local banks still primarily balance sheet lenders? Is commodity finance an area where foreign lenders and non-bank finance providers still dominate?

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

Muhammed Zubair, Head of Global Trade & Commodities Finance, Middle East, Crédit Agricole CIB

Mousa Albahra, General Manager, MENA Credit & Collection, Future Pipe Industries

Fatenah El Danab, Head of Trade & Working Capital, Middle East, Barclays

Sherjan Qaisrani, Global Head of Trade Sales, GTB Management, Mashreq

Jude Manoj Lodiwycksz, Senior Vice-President, Head of Trade Finance, RAKBANK

13.15-14.15 Lunch

Day One: Tuesday 10 February Morning Stream B

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

Stream B

11.00-11.45

Multilateral development banks: A greater role to play?

The role of multilateral development banks (MDBs) has become more important as a result of the various challenges felt across an increasingly interconnected trade landscape, from increased economic and political uncertainty to changes to sustainability and ESG policies, with continued efforts to address an ever-widening trade financing gap emphasising the need for a coordinated global response. This session will bring senior MDB representatives together to address a range of talking points, including:

- Highlighting the increasingly key role MDBs are playing in the advocacy of digital transformation to create the necessary legal and regulatory conditions for digital trade to thrive
- Promoting the adoption and harmonisation of international standards across varying regions, and the how increased collaboration can help expand reach and highlight best practice
- Supporting local currency financing as a means of helping trade markets reduce their vulnerability to exchange rate fluctuations and foreign currency debt burdens

- Advocating for receivables financing – including factoring and reverse factoring – and its crucial role as an instrument for supporting SMEs in emerging markets in particular
- Engaging extensively with policymakers to achieve market integration through policy dialogue, technical assistance and increased efforts to harmonise ESG standards

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

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

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

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

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

Lamin Drammeh, Head of Trade Finance, African Development Bank Group

"I had the pleasure of participating in the GTR MENA 2025 event recently, and it was a great experience. The event was well-organized, bringing together a diverse group of professionals and fostering valuable discussions among different stakeholders. The sessions were insightful, and the networking opportunities were unparalleled. I look forward to future events."

A Karapinar, Scheider Electrics

11.45-12.30

GCC-Africa flows: The emerging trade power bloc

Trade flows between the GCC and Africa are characterised by strong growth potential, with sectors such as agriculture central in the supply of food imports and maintenance of food security in GCC countries, whilst the UAE's role as a re-export hub also has a crucial role in regional trade. Meanwhile, GCC investment has proved key in the development of African infrastructure, including trade-adjacent infrastructure such as logistics, though challenges such as political risk, infrastructure gaps, and access to finance remain. This session will address some of the key touchpoints in this crucial regional dynamic, including:

- Highlighting the crucial role that GCC banks and institutions have to play in financing African infrastructure across key sectors
- Examining how GCC banks, ECAs and DFIs are expanding their operations to provide financial support for local companies conducting business in Africa
- Strategic partnerships: What are the most significant recent examples of regional collaboration and what have been the key learnings?
- To what extent are efforts being made to diversify trade and investment flows? Is more being done to improve access to finance for African businesses?

Moderator: **Zhann Meyer**, Head, Agricultural Finance, Nedbank CIB

Satyavrat Katti, Group Chief Financial Officer, Mount Meru Group

Olasunkanmi Owoyemi, Managing Director, Sunbeth Global Concepts

Makiko Toyoda, Global Manager, Trade & Supply Chain Finance, International Finance Corporation (IFC)

John-Martin Ndawula, Vice-President, Trade Finance & FI Lending, Africa Finance Corporation

12.30-13.15

Supply chain finance: A strategic advantage for corporates?

At a time of uncertainty, supply chain finance (SCF) serves many purposes for corporate financiers, as a means of improving liquidity, boosting resilience and maintaining supplier trust, whilst also adhering to crucial compliance requirements. Meanwhile, the many exciting developments in technology and digitisation leave the product ripe for innovation. This session will shine a light on how these developments are helping to shape the market, and to what extent the product can provide a strategic advantage for corporates. Points for discussion will include:

- How durable is SCF when set against an evolving landscape of bank capital rules and the subsequent potential impact on funding appetite and pricing?
- Exploring how better access to data – from e-invoicing to digital identification – can speed up approvals, reduce disputes and improve supplier KYC
- How significant is proven legal enforceability of digitised trade documentation within the SCF space? Is this likely to improve onboarding prospects?
- Can SCF potentially offset the potential impact on the Middle East region of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)?
- As private credit takes a leading role in closing funding gaps, is the market likely to see more SCF/receivables platforms tapping fund and insurer capital?
- Should greater disclosure requirements around SCF reassure or concern industry practitioners?

Moderator: **Sanjay Desai**, Independent Advisor & Mentor

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

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

Wael Ernaldalin, Head of Global Trade Solutions & Working Capital Management, UAE, BNP Paribas

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

Ankita Ohri, Lead, Supply Chain Financing, Wio Bank

Venkiteswaran Ramasubramoni, Head of Equipment & Technology Finance, National Bank of Fujairah

13.15-14.15 Lunch

Day One: Tuesday 10 February Afternoon Stream A

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

Stream A

14.15-15.05

Fragmented digital trade is a problem – how can we fix it?

Trade digitalisation remains one of the fundamental objectives of the age, bringing with it the opportunity to reduce costs, improve transparency and accountability, and build an ecosystem that works for all, from the largest multinationals to the smallest SMEs in the most emerging markets. Despite some progress being made, technical compatibility issues still hinder the smooth exchange of standardised trade data across borders and systems. Speakers will take a prescriptive approach to this issue in this interactive debate-themed session. Points for debate will include:

- Cross-border paperless trade requires more than a supportive legal framework, with interoperability at the heart; how the data that makes up trade documents needs to be understood, exchanged and usable across multiple systems, jurisdictions and stakeholders
- Focusing on some of the other benefits provided by digitisation other than creating efficiency, including strengthening supply chain integrity; how opportunities for corruption reduce when processes are digital, transparent and traceable
- Highlighting the significance of the inclusion of technology providers in policy discussions, a critical step in acknowledging the role of both the public and private sector in addressing internal system limitations

- Reinforcing the central role of digitalisation, with interoperability as a core guiding principle in boosting productivity, enabling inclusive growth and unlocking development opportunities
- The importance of partnerships in shifting away from independent initiatives towards more coordinated efforts, crucial to reaching full potential in expanding global commerce, creating employment and driving economic development

Moderator: [Vincent O'Brien](#), Director, ICC UAE

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

[Syed Imtiaz Hussain](#), Regional Head of Product & Propositions, Middle East, North Africa & Turkey (MENAT), HSBC

[Hamayoun Khan](#), Head of Trade Finance & Working Capital, Commercial Bank of Dubai

[Tuğberk Seçkin](#), Co-Founder, Interzoon

[Sachin Rustagi](#), Head of Trade Finance, Wio Bank

[Ehsaan Ahmed](#), Executive Vice-President & Head of Transaction Banking, RAKBANK

“Excellent opportunity to update and enhance your knowledge about global trade.”

P Dayal, Emerson FZE

“The event was an excellent opportunity to connect with all people from relevant fields.”

R Ramachandran, DBMSC Steel

15.05-15.45

How is innovation expanding the reach of Islamic trade finance?

Whilst the GCC trade finance market enjoys substantial growth forecasts – the current valuation of US\$185bn is expected to reach US\$290bn by 2030 – it is the Islamic segment that is expected to see the largest expansion, with an anticipated doubling over the same period, creating one of the largest Sharia-compliant financial ecosystems globally. This session will delve deeper into this often overlooked but crucial market segment, tracking the following trends:

- To what extent do increasing flows with markets such as Southeast Asia and Africa present opportunities for GCC banks to facilitate cross-border Islamic finance?
- A compelling opportunity: Highlighting how non-bank financiers are uniquely positioned to capture market share in providing solutions to corporates and SMEs alike
- KYC: Maintaining an effective compliance process incorporating advanced screening, sanctions monitoring and ESG risk insights to deliver fast and reliable due diligence, onboarding clients and suppliers more efficiently
- Can the natural alignment of Islamic finance and sustainability principles have a potentially positive impact on the provision of ‘green trade finance’?
- Highlighting where technological innovations in areas such as artificial intelligence can eliminate key bottlenecks including risk assessment, financial inclusion and governance

Moderator: [Maninder Bhandari](#), Director, Derby Group

[Mohamed Nazih Rashad](#), Vice-President, Head of Trade Finance, Sharjah Islamic Bank

[Dr Fazal Rahim Abdul](#), Head of Sharia Control & ISSC Secretary, Ajman Bank

[Manasi Tripathi](#), BFSI Partner Middle East & Africa, Wipro

16.05-16.50

How are traders, shippers and banks adapting to regulatory challenges?

The global shipping sector is at the sharp end of legal regulatory changes, as geopolitical shocks and uncertainty create new legal, insurance and compliance challenges. This session will address the challenges of managing legal exposure in a fragmented regulatory landscape, responding to changing expectations and enforcement trends, and highlighting best practices for enhancing institutional resilience and agility across organisations. Among the themes to be covered:

- How important is detailed analysis of key legal developments such as the UAE maritime law in helping stakeholders stay informed and prepared for future regulatory shifts?
- As the volume of disputes increases, to what extent do shippers and traders need to better understand how to navigate legal processes relevant to maritime arbitration, court proceedings and attachment proceedings?
- Do compliance officers need to be better versed in using new technologies to build a better picture of what's really happening? How robust are these new technologies from a legal and regulatory standpoint?
- A role for AI: Are large language models starting to prove their worth? Does this provide greater accuracy when it comes to sanctions ‘hits’, reducing manual errors? What are the potential bottlenecks here?
- How are businesses and banks alike demonstrating effective, risk-based compliance that goes beyond symbolic measures in the face of increased scrutiny?

Moderator: [Jane Witherspoon](#), Journalist & Broadcaster

[Mark Lakin](#), Partner, Stephenson Harwood

[Eric Orsini](#), Global Head of Compliance & Regulatory Affairs, Lloyd's List Intelligence

[Robert Soban](#), Director, Maritime Risk & Compliance, Pole Star

15.45-16.05 Networking break

16.50

Close of Day One

Followed by evening networking reception

Day One: Tuesday 10 February Afternoon Stream B

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

Stream B

14.15-15.30

GTR Ventures Tradetech Showcase (MENA)

A staple of GTR's world-leading Asia conference, the GTR Ventures Tradetech Showcase is going on the road for 2026! This innovative format provides a unique opportunity to hear from the latest tradetech innovators, enabling the most forward-thinking fintech companies and early-stage ventures transforming trade and supply chain finance from across the world to feature their capabilities and share their collective vision for how their offerings can benefit the trade finance ecosystem.

Run in coordination with GTR Ventures, the leading venture-building and investment platform for trade and supply chain finance, the showcase allows tradetechs to present their products and services before taking questions from industry experts. The competition is open to startups operating in the MENA region with demonstrable solutions or expertise in trade and supply chain finance. The winning entrant will be announced just before lunch on Day Two.

Participating fintechs:

Raja Debnath, Chairperson, Managing Director, Vefin Group

Natalia Feshakova, Chief Technology Officer, Trade Doc AI

15.30-15.50 Networking break

15.50-16.50

From legacy to longevity: Women, youth and the future of global trade

This session explores how women and youth are central to ensuring the longevity of global trade, not as a diversity initiative, but as a strategic imperative. Women leaders play a pivotal role in preserving institutional knowledge, reshaping leadership models and accelerating the next generation into roles of influence. At the same time, younger professionals bring digital fluency, new expectations of work and a demand for purpose that is already reshaping how trade finance must operate. Through an intergenerational lens, the discussion will examine how trade finance can successfully transition from legacy systems, structures and leadership models to a more resilient, inclusive and future-ready industry.

16.50

Close of Day One

Followed by evening networking reception

“Great environment for all trade parties from financiers, service providers and traders to meet and explore synergies to pattern and grow trade financing.”

M Rathidili, Nedbank CIB

“GTR MENA represents gold standard for trade finance events in the Middle East. A must attend event for trade finance professionals.”

Z Shaikh, Banque Saudi Fransi

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Day Two: Wednesday 11 February

08.00-09.00 Coffee and networking

09.00-09.05

Chair's morning remarks

Jane Witherspoon, Journalist & Broadcaster

09.05-09.45

Trade as an asset class: The next wave of institutional investment

Expanding institutional investor participation in the trade finance asset class, from global non-bank lenders to leaders in tokenised real-world assets, has been identified as a market priority. As investment-grade trade assets come of age amid industry efforts to integrate asset-backed lending into corporate supply chains, this session will provide an update on this most exciting of trends, with talking points including:

- Embedding asset-backed lending into the wider trade finance ecosystem (e-commerce, logistics) to enhance liquidity and streamline supply chains
- Exploring strategies around transparency, standardisation and technology to further enhance the appeal of trade as an asset class
- Highlighting high-yield, low-risk investment-grade opportunities across a range of multi-billion-dollar industry sectors
- The originate-and-distribute model: How can non-bank lenders secure greater allocations of institutional funding?
- Utilising new technologies to strengthen authentication and support fraud prevention across both centralised and decentralised platforms

Moderator: Ian Henderson, Chief Investment Officer (CIO), Alteia Fund

Sinan Ozcan, Senior Executive Officer & Board Director, DP World Trade Finance

David Wigger, Chief Executive Officer, Liquide Finance
Anthony Wadsworth-Hill, Co-Founder & Deputy CEO, Mercore

09.45-10.25

AI in international trade: Levelling the playing field or deepening the divide?

A recent WTO report concluded that artificial intelligence could boost the value of cross-border flows of goods and services by nearly 40% by 2040, due mostly to productivity

gains and lowered trade costs. With trade seen as a key enabler for a more inclusive AI transformation, the time to act is now. This session will provide the opportunity to hear first-hand perspectives on the report, utilising an 'Ask Me Anything'-style format to cut to the heart of the priorities for the trade sector. Sample questions will include:

- What are the most commonly cited benefits of AI for the trade finance market? How would these be ranked in order of priority?
- How do the ways that larger companies utilise AI differ from the approach of smaller firms? Is there a notable difference in the levels of optimism around potential benefits?
- With digital platforms increasingly leveraging AI to assess credit risks, is this expected to make a material difference to levels of financial inclusion?
- To what extent is access to AI-enabling goods such as raw materials and semiconductors exposed to tariffs and other geopolitical concerns? What measures are being taken to safeguard against these risks?

Moderator: Shannon Manders, Editorial Director, Global Trade Review (GTR)

Emmanuelle Ganne, Chief of Digital Trade & Frontier Technologies, World Trade Organisation (WTO)

Samuel Mathew, Managing Director, Head of Documentary Trade, Standard Chartered Bank

Amit Gupta, Vice-President & Head of Data, AI & Fintech Practice, e& enterprise

Ángel Blanco, Managing Director, Head of Platform Solutions, FIS Global

10.25-11.00

Regional trade insights from the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

Despite global headwinds, insights from the International Chamber of Commerce highlight optimism across the Middle East & North Africa, with the MENA region standing out globally for business confidence, driven by the value placed on relationship-driven business (face-to-face) and the strong growth in sectors such as digital trade and e-commerce, crucial in the development of youth skills.

This high-level session will bring senior figures from the ICC together to consider a range of factors, from shifting trade flows and trade finance provisions to live trends such as supply chain disruption and the role of data in tracking risk. The conversation will also focus on the ICC's role in shaping policy in areas such as digital trade, climate action and developing the necessary rules and standards to clarify trade terms and resolve disputes, ensuring smoother international business.

Moderator: Vincent O'Brien, Director, ICC UAE

Caroline MacDonald, Global Head of Network

Engagement, Global Partnerships & Development, ICC
Maisa Qwaider, Secretary General, ICC Jordan
Khatia Bakhrashvili, Secretary General, ICC Georgia
Mouna Kirwan, International Affairs Coordinator, ICC Syria

11.00-11.30 Networking break

11.30-12.00

Interactive session: Fraud, financing and risk management

Fraud continues to dominate headlines with various fraudulent schemes and fictitious trades used to access financing and insurance. This session will look at the key vulnerabilities in trade, including financing structures such as invoice financing and its interaction with credit insurance.

Benefiting from an engaging format encouraging maximum audience interaction, the session will also analyse the worrying trend of the increasing distance between the invoice and the investor in trade finance programmes, discussing the way forward for the industry in terms of risk management.

Baldev Bhinder, Managing Director, Blackstone & Gold

12.00-12.35

How the role of data is changing industry priorities

Access to information has never been more crucial when it comes to business decision-making, with data tools helping companies make informed judgements on their strategic and operational priorities, from insights into market behaviour and emerging trends to identifying growth opportunities and areas for product innovation.

This session will consider the extent to which the importance of improved data quality for corporates and banks alike is being recognised and how businesses can reduce risk, optimise operations, accelerate product development and allocate resources more effectively through enabling and embedding faster data-driven strategies.

Moderator: Neal Harm, Secretary General, FCI

Harry Murphy Cruise, Head of Economic Research & Global Trade, Oxford Economics

Tomasch Kubiak, Policy Manager, Banking Commission, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

Stephan Wolf, Chair, Verifiable.Trade Foundation; Chair, ICC DSI Industry Advisory Board

12.35-13.20

Credit insurance: 'Nice to have' or an essential strategic lever for growth?

As the GCC continues to diversify trade and open new corridors, businesses are increasingly offering longer payment terms to remain competitive, bringing with it greater payment risk. With more turning to the insurance market, this session will examine the growth in regional use of the product in line with global trends. Points for consideration will include:

- Are banks more comfortable lending when receivables are insured? Does this allow companies to enter new markets with more confidence and lock in better working capital facilities?
- Is greater use of risk analytics, including global buyer-data, enabling credit decisions to be more data-driven? Does this make it easier to measure return on investment when it comes to use of the insurance product?
- With global insolvencies forecast to rise both this year and going forward, to what extent is trade credit now essential when it comes to payment risk?
- Whole turnover vs single-buyer cover: What works better for whom? Are banks looking to utilise single buyer cover more to manage large single exposures or for capital relief?
- Has there been a rise in the number of insurers offering trade credit insurance over the past 12 months and has this led to a softening of pricing?
- With increasing geopolitical volatility has there been a corresponding increase in demand for political risk insurance?

Moderator: Chris Hall, Senior Director, Credit Risk Solutions, Global Head of FI Sales, WTW

Aurélien Paradis, Chief Executive Officer, Middle East, AU Group

Anoor Senapathy, Group Chief Financial Officer, Valency International

Tim Warren, Head of Structured Credit & Political Risk, RedRay MGA

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

13.20

Close of conference

Followed by networking lunch

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GTR MENA 2026 Dubai

February 10-11, 2026

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