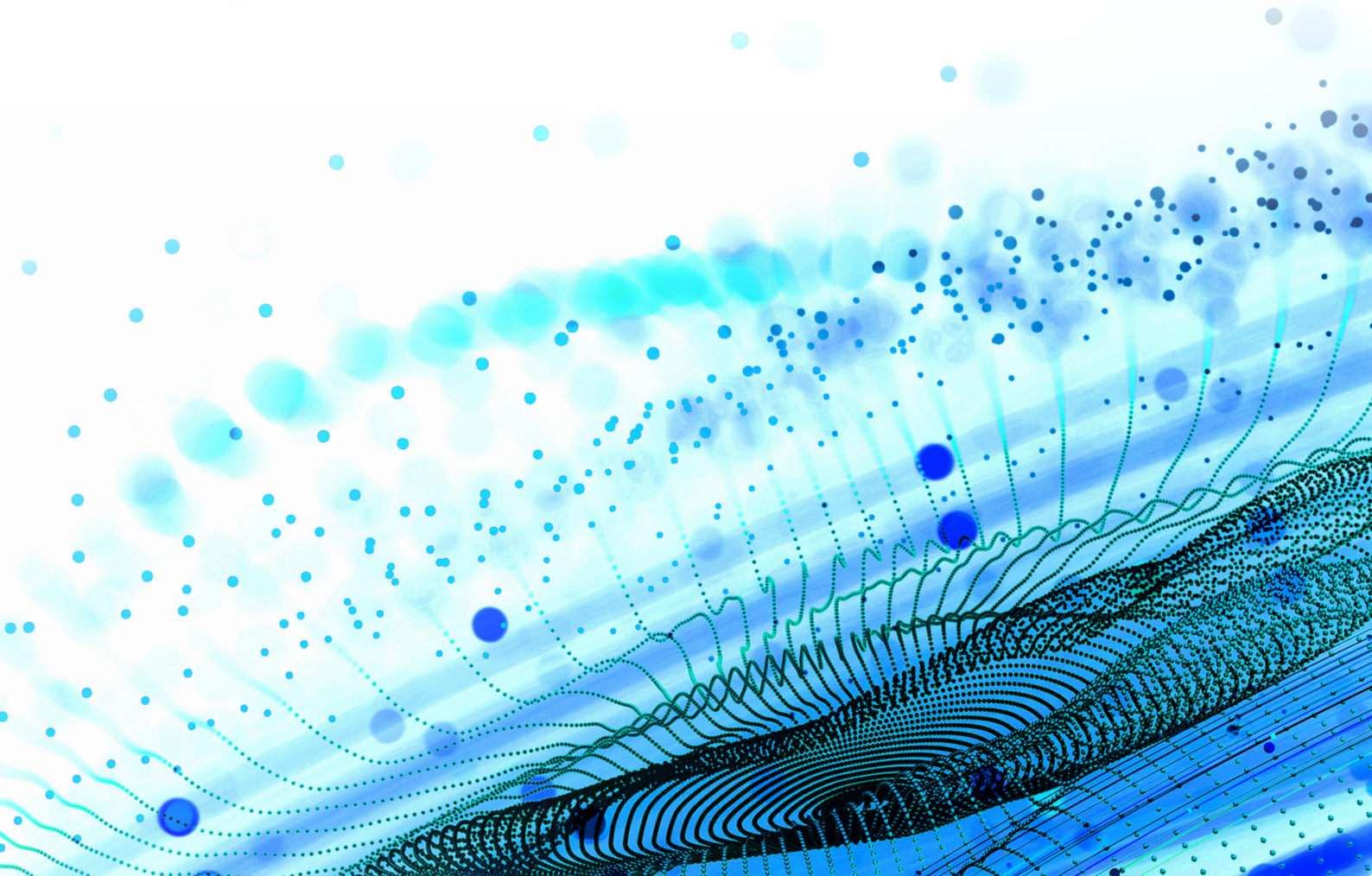




THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE UAE

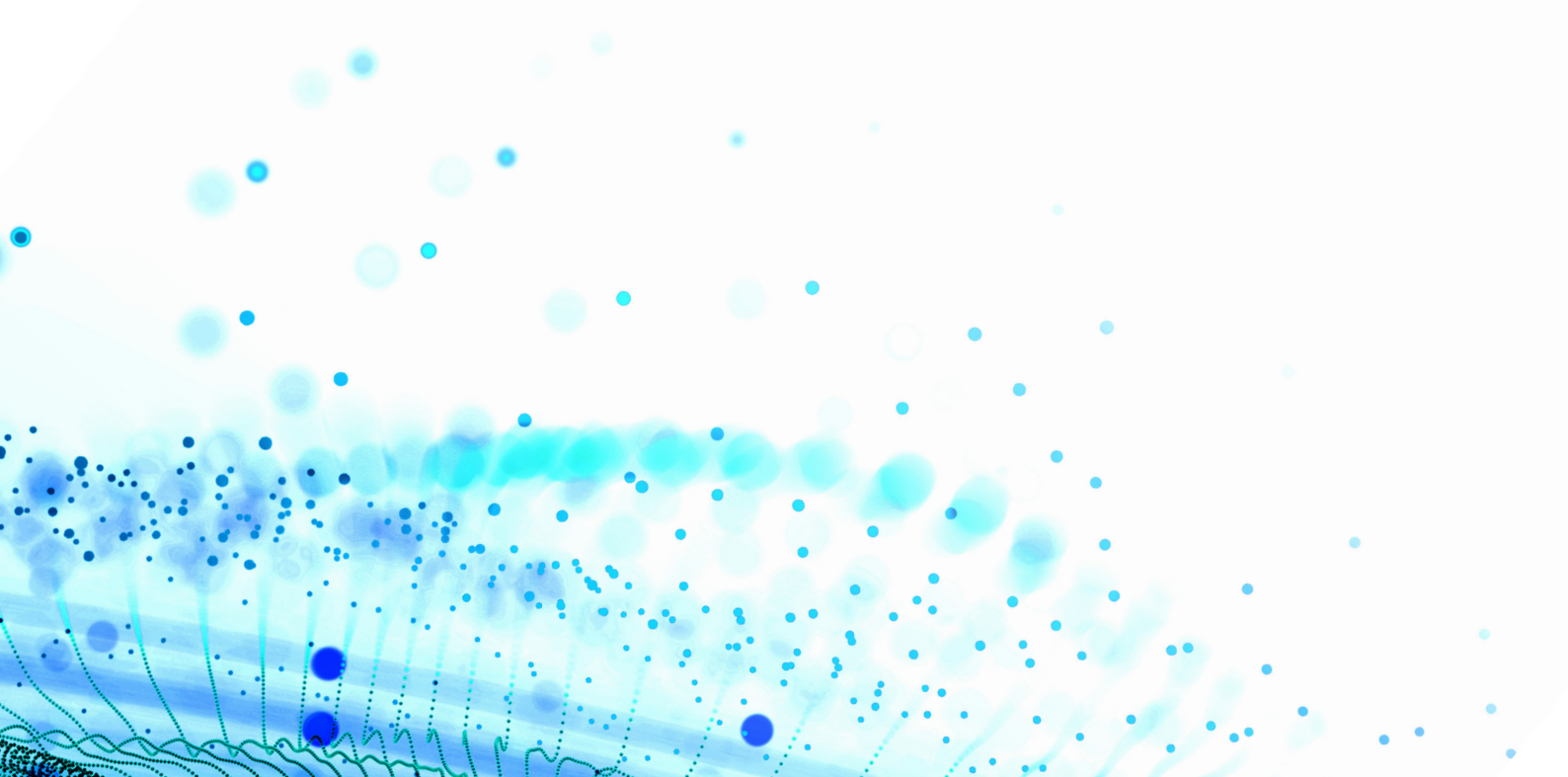
Written by TRENDS Research & Advisory



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SECTION 1

Introduction - The UAE's Strategic Leadership in Global AI Innovation



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not merely a technological advancement; it is the most revolutionary force in human history, poised to redefine global economies and reshape the very fabric of modern life. Across sectors and continents, AI is transforming how we live, work, and understand the world. As the world's most powerful tool for innovation, AI is touting a future where new possibilities emerge at unprecedented speed and scale.

Economically, the UAE's AI market is projected to grow from USD 3.47 billion in 2023-2024 to USD 46.33 billion by 2030. The nation has also attracted significant AI investments, securing its position as a global AI hub.

In this historic movement, the UAE has strategically positioned itself as a leader on the global AI stage. Recognizing the magnitude of AI's impact, the UAE has implemented a visionary AI Strategy with the goal of establishing itself as the foremost AI-powered nation by 2031. This strategy is designed to transform the UAE's economy, catalyze new industries, and secure its place at the forefront of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

With groundbreaking innovations—such as Falcon LLM, a state-of-the-art large language model developed by the UAE's Technology Innovation Institute, and the establishment of the world's first Ministry of Artificial Intelligence—the UAE is setting the global standard in AI and technology. Its journey of excellence continues to inspire the world.

The UAE's bold commitment is backed by extraordinary investments in AI infrastructure and talent. The nation has developed high-tech innovation hubs, including Dubai's Artificial Intelligence and Robotics Hub, Abu Dhabi's Hub71 and Dubai AI Campus, which attract leading AI pioneers and empower groundbreaking research. These hubs are more than mere centers for innovation; they are the bedrock of a rapidly evolving ecosystem that makes the UAE a global magnet for cutting-edge AI solutions.

Moreover, the UAE has enacted progressive legislation that not only facilitates the seamless integration of AI across industries but also ensures robust governance and ethical AI deployment. This foresight ensures that as AI transforms healthcare, energy, tourism, and education sectors, it does so responsibly and with societal benefit at its core. The UAE AI and Blockchain Council oversees these efforts, orchestrating multi-stakeholder partnerships that unite local and federal entities in a coordinated push for AI-driven excellence.

Aligned with the UAE Centennial 2071, the country's AI Strategy aims to make the UAE the best place in the world to live, leveraging AI to enhance quality of life, drive sustainable economic growth, and secure its competitive edge. As AI continues to push the boundaries of what is possible, the UAE is not merely responding to this transformative force; it is actively shaping it. The nation's proactive approach, combined with its ambitious vision and strategic investments, firmly establishes the UAE as a world leader in the AI revolution, marking a new era of limitless potential.

The UAE's leadership in AI is evident through its achievements:

- **5th Globally in Stanford's AI Index 2024: The UAE ranks among the top five nations worldwide, showcasing its cutting-edge advancements in AI.**
- **1st in the Arab World, 28th Globally in Tortoise Media's AI Index: Leading the Arab world, the UAE has built an AI infrastructure that rivals global players.**
- **18th in Government AI Readiness Index 2023: Reflecting its readiness for AI integration in public services.**

The UAE's strategic commitment to AI is more than a vision—it is an orchestrated endeavor supported by extensive investments across research and development (R&D), pioneering public-private partnerships, dynamic startup ecosystems, and cutting-edge educational programs designed to shape the AI leaders of tomorrow.

1. Pioneering AI Research and Development (R&D)

The UAE has positioned itself at the forefront of AI R&D, funding and fostering groundbreaking research initiatives across healthcare, energy, and digital finance. The establishment of dedicated R&D centers and partnerships with leading global universities and institutions reinforces the UAE's commitment to generating world-class AI innovations within its borders.

2. Forging Public-Private Partnerships

Recognizing that true AI innovation requires collaboration, the UAE has forged strong public-private partnerships that bring together government bodies, private enterprises, and international tech giants.

In September 2024, President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan met with executives from BlackRock, Microsoft, and Nvidia during his visit to the United States. These discussions culminated in landmark agreements to accelerate AI-driven projects, ensuring the UAE remains at the forefront of technological innovation.

These partnerships are instrumental in enabling large-scale AI initiatives that would be unattainable by any single entity. These collaborations have enabled the rapid deployment of AI solutions across key sectors, from smart cities to autonomous transportation, effectively making the UAE a real-world testbed for next-generation AI applications.

- \$30 billion AI partnership: BlackRock, Global Infrastructure Partners, Microsoft, and MGX joined forces in September 2024 to invest in advanced data centers and power infrastructure, enabling robust AI capabilities.
- \$1.5 billion Microsoft investment in G42: Announced in April 2024, this partnership underscores Abu Dhabi's vision for AI-driven transformation.
- \$1 billion workforce development fund: G42 and Microsoft also unveiled a plan to establish this fund to upskill the UAE's AI workforce and expand regional talent pools.

3. Empowering Startups and Entrepreneurship

The UAE's startup ecosystem is a critical engine for AI innovation, with dedicated free zones and funding mechanisms that empower entrepreneurs to build and scale AI-driven businesses. With Dubai Future Accelerators, Abu Dhabi's Hub71, and Dubai AI Campus, the UAE has become a global destination for startups focused on AI. The UAE has emerged as a fertile ground for startups and entrepreneurial ventures, particularly in the AI and technology sectors.

- Over 1,000 startups have been nurtured within the DIFC Innovation Hub, spanning fintech, AI, and advanced technology domains.
- 75 AI businesses are already operating at the newly launched Dubai AI Campus, with plans to grow this number to over 500 companies by 2028.

4. Building AI Talent Through Comprehensive Educational Programs

To ensure a pipeline of skilled professionals equipped to lead in AI, the UAE has established a network of AI-focused educational programs at all levels. Initiatives range from the UAE University's AI research programs to the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence, the world's first graduate-level AI university.

5. A Robust Legislative and Ethical Framework

The UAE's proactive approach to AI legislation and ethics ensures that AI integration occurs within a robust regulatory framework. This approach not only fosters innovation but builds public trust in AI technologies by prioritizing data privacy, fairness, and transparency. The UAE AI and Blockchain Council oversees this framework, guiding ethical AI development and promoting standards that protect individuals and society at large.

6. An Innovation Hub for AI Testing and Deployment

With strategically positioned innovation hubs, the UAE provides an unparalleled ecosystem for testing and deploying AI at scale. Dubai's Artificial Intelligence and Robotics Hub and Abu Dhabi's

Hub71, are designed to accelerate AI solutions from ideation to practical implementation. These hubs serve as a sandbox for experimenting with cutting-edge AI technologies across industries, ensuring that the UAE remains at the forefront of AI advancements globally.

7. Dubai AI Campus: A Strategic Milestone in Shaping the Digital Economy

On May 18, 2024, H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum inaugurated the Dubai AI Campus, a flagship initiative located at the DIFC Innovation Hub. This milestone reinforces Dubai's vision of becoming a global leader in the digital economy by fostering innovation, accelerating AI adoption, and creating a thriving ecosystem for technology-driven businesses.

As the largest AI and advanced tech cluster in the MENA region, the Dubai AI Campus is designed to drive digital transformation and economic growth. By 2028, it is expected to host 500+ companies and create 3,000+ high-value jobs, aligning with the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33) to generate AED 100 billion annually through digital initiatives. This strategic initiative positions Dubai as a preferred destination for tech enterprises and talent, fostering a culture of innovation and ensuring the emirate remains at the forefront of the global digital economy.

In establishing a thriving AI ecosystem, the UAE is not simply embracing AI; it is leading a global AI renaissance. Through strategic investments, R&D, a strong foundation of public-private partnerships, support for startups, educational programs, and forward-thinking legislation, the UAE is positioning itself as a global epicenter for AI, creating an environment that attracts international talent and propels the nation—and the world—toward an AI-driven future.

AI legislation and guidelines that illustrate the UAE's commitment to ethical, impactful AI practices:

1. The UAE Ethical Charter of Artificial Intelligence: This charter sets out ethical guidelines for AI development and usage within the UAE, emphasizing the importance of transparency, accountability, and fairness in AI systems. Its principles ensure that AI technologies respect individual rights and align with societal values, establishing a framework for trustworthy AI in sectors ranging from healthcare to education.

2. Federal Law on Data Protection (Federal Decree-Law No. 45 of 2021): Implemented to protect data privacy, this law is essential for AI, as it governs how personal data is collected, processed, and shared, ensuring that AI technologies operate within clear privacy boundaries. This legislation aligns with international standards, which makes the UAE a reliable hub for AI research and deployment.

3. The UAE Artificial Intelligence and Digital Economy Council: This council was formed to oversee AI and digital economy-related policies, ensuring regulatory alignment across government bodies and accelerating AI integration in key industries. This council's oversight provides a structured environment for public-private collaboration, facilitating innovation while maintaining compliance with established guidelines.

4. The UAE Cybersecurity Strategy: Given that cybersecurity is integral to AI's safe application, this strategy provides a framework to protect AI systems and data from cyber threats. By securing digital infrastructures, the UAE bolsters public trust in AI applications, particularly in sensitive finance and healthcare.

These legislative frameworks underscore the UAE's commitment not only to fostering AI innovation but to implementing it in ways that prioritize ethical considerations and societal benefit. Including these details will highlight the UAE's proactive stance in building an AI ecosystem that is both progressive and responsibly governed.

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SECTION 2

Economic Impact - Exploring AI's Role in Advancing UAE's GDP and Its Journey Toward an AI-Driven Economy



Russian President **Vladimir Putin** recently praised the UAE's remarkable advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), stating:

“We know the level of international rankings that the UAE reached last year. The UAE has climbed this ranking with astonishing simplicity, achieving remarkable milestones & leaping through multiple positions.”

Impact of AI in the UAE - The Game Changer

The impact of AI on the Middle East is projected to be significant, with the region expected to accrue 2% of the total global benefits of AI by 2030, equivalent to US\$320 billion.

This shift towards AI and advanced technologies is part of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and governments and businesses in the Middle East are faced with a choice: embrace this technological disruption or risk being left behind. For the region, being left behind is not an option.

Abdallah Abu-Sheikh, Founder of Astra Tech and CEO of Botim, stated that AI is expected to significantly transform the UAE's economy, potentially contributing up to 14% of the country's GDP by 2030—an estimated value of around \$100 billion (AED 367 billion).

By 2028, the AI market in the global energy sector is expected to reach \$14.52 billion, growing at an annual rate of 24.6 percent. These figures highlight the immense potential for economic growth and development that AI offers to the UAE, emphasizing the importance of embracing this technological revolution.

With the annual growth in AI's contribution to the region's economy ranging between 20% and 34% per year, the UAE is expected to experience the fastest growth. This rapid growth is not surprising, as the UAE has invested significantly in AI technology compared to the rest of the Middle East.

UAE ranks within the top 50 countries globally on the Global Innovation Index, indicating its strong ability to innovate and the outputs of their innovation.

This suggests that such high level of investment in AI technology is likely to yield substantial returns, further highlighting the importance of embracing AI for economic growth and development in the UAE and the region at large.

The economic impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the UAE's GDP and its transition to becoming a leading AI-driven economy is multifaceted and pivotal in shaping the nation's future growth.

Detailed analysis:

1. AI's Contribution to UAE's GDP: The UAE has positioned AI as a cornerstone of its economic strategy, aiming to diversify away from oil dependency. The government's initiatives as well as the UAE AI Strategy 2031, are geared towards integrating AI across various sectors to boost productivity and innovation.

- GDP Growth: AI's integration into healthcare, finance, manufacturing, logistics, and tourism industries has the potential to significantly boost the UAE's GDP. According to estimates, AI could contribute \$96 billion to the UAE's GDP by 2030, representing about 13.6% of the country's total GDP.
- Sectoral Impact: The sectors most impacted by AI include:
 - Healthcare: AI-driven advancements in diagnostics, treatment planning, and telemedicine are improving healthcare efficiency and outcomes, potentially saving billions in medical costs.
 - Finance: AI is revolutionizing fintech with robo-advisors, automated trading systems, fraud detection, and customer service chatbots, driving growth in the financial sector.
 - Retail & E-commerce: AI's role in predictive analytics, customer behavior analysis, and personalized marketing helps businesses optimize operations, enhance customer experience, and reduce costs.
 - Energy & Utilities: AI enhances predictive maintenance, energy efficiency, and smart grid management in the energy sector, directly contributing to economic sustainability.

2. UAE's Transition to an AI-Driven Economy: The UAE's focus on AI is not just about technological adoption but also about creating an ecosystem that fosters innovation, research, and development in AI. Key initiatives driving this transition include:

- Legislation and Governance:
 - UAE AI Strategy 2031: The government aims to make the UAE a global hub for AI by increasing its adoption across industries and preparing a skilled workforce. The national AI strategy includes policies that encourage research and development (R&D) investments in AI, development of AI regulations, and the establishment of AI ethics frameworks.
 - AI Ethics: The Ethical Charter of AI outlines principles for the responsible use of AI, focusing on transparency, fairness, accountability, and privacy protection. These frameworks ensure that AI technologies align with the country's values while facilitating trust and adoption.
- AI-Driven Infrastructure:
 - The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation and other government bodies are heavily investing in AI research centers and establishing AI innovation hubs e.g. AI Lab in Abu Dhabi. These facilities are designed to nurture AI talent and foster collaboration between the

government, private sector, and academic institutions.

- The Dubai Future Foundation also plays a significant role in shaping the future of AI through the Dubai 10X initiative, which aims to position Dubai as a leader in future technologies by using AI to improve governance, city planning, and public services.
- Private Sector Involvement:
 - DarkMatter and G42 are spearheading AI-driven solutions for security, healthcare, and smart city initiatives, contributing to the nation's technological infrastructure.
- Education and Talent Development:
 - The UAE AI & Robotics Program for Good aims to build a future-ready workforce by investing in AI education and training. In line with the UAE's national agenda, leading institutions such as New York University Abu Dhabi, Khalifa University, and the American University in the Emirates offer specialized degrees and advanced training programs in AI, Robotics and Mechatronics fostering talent to drive innovation and technological advancement.
 - The AI Fellowship Program and the AI National Program aim to equip young Emiratis with the skills needed to lead AI initiatives in the future.

3. Economic Impacts Beyond GDP:

- Job Creation and Transformation:
 - While AI is expected to automate certain jobs, it will also create new roles in data science, machine learning, and AI ethics. The transition involves reskilling the workforce to adapt to new technological paradigms.
 - Customer service, education, logistics, and manufacturing will see a transformation as AI applications reduce costs, enhance productivity, and optimize operations.
- Investment and Innovation:
 - The UAE has been proactive in attracting foreign investments in AI, with funds being allocated to startups and AI-driven enterprises. As a result, the UAE is positioning itself as a major hub for global AI innovation, not only in the Middle East but also internationally.
- Global Competitiveness:
 - By investing in AI, the UAE aims to become a global leader in innovation and maintain its competitive edge. AI will help the country enhance its business environment, making it easier for companies to operate and innovate.

Additional forecasts and insights about AI's economic impact on the UAE:

1. UAE AI Strategy 2031:

- The UAE AI Strategy 2031 emphasizes that AI will significantly enhance the nation's competitiveness in global markets and play a major role in diversifying the economy.

2. Sectoral Economic Benefits:

- Healthcare: AI's integration into healthcare could save up to \$1.2 billion in costs annually by improving healthcare outcomes and reducing inefficiencies.
- Retail and E-Commerce: AI-powered retail solutions could boost productivity in the retail sector by about 4.8% annually.
- Transport & Logistics: Autonomous vehicles and AI-driven logistics solutions are expected to generate a \$4.5 billion impact by 2030.

3. Job Creation and Transformation:

- While AI will automate several tasks, it's projected to create around 30,000 jobs in AI-related fields, including data scientists, AI specialists, and robotics engineers, contributing to higher-skilled labor growth.

“Our next phase will focus on ensuring that AI is deployed effectively & that the economic & societal benefits are realised.”

H.E. Omar Sultan Al Olama

Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy & Remote Work Applications, UAE

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SECTION 3

Key AI Projects – An In-Depth Analysis of UAE’s Pioneering Initiatives Shaping the Nation’s Ambitious AI Roadmap



AE's Strategic Leap in AI: Key Developments in 2024

1. Artificial Intelligence & Advanced Technology Council (AIATC)

- Established in January by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, AIATC spearheads the country's AI and tech strategies, ensuring long-term leadership in these critical areas.

2. Generative AI and Open-Source Leadership

- In February, the Technology Innovation Institute (TII) launched the Falcon Foundation to drive open-source Generative AI model development. Later that month, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman highlighted the UAE's potential as a "regulatory sandbox" for testing AI applications.

3. AI-Driven Investments and Economic Growth

- AIATC announced the creation of MGX in March, a technology investment company aimed at advancing cutting-edge technologies for future generations.

4. Strategic AI Frameworks and Governance

- April marked the launch of the Dubai Universal Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence, designed to accelerate AI adoption and innovation. Alongside this, Dubai announced new AI commercial licenses, fast-track land allocation for data centers, and Chief AI Officer appointments across government entities.

5. Advanced AI Models and Infrastructure

- In August, TII introduced Falcon Mamba 7B, a state-of-the-art large language model ranked first globally as an open-source State Space Language Model (SSLM).
- September brought the unveiling of two new Microsoft-G42 data centers in Abu Dhabi, dedicated to advancing Responsible AI practices.

6. Global AI Recognition and Competitive Edge

- In November, the UAE ranked 5th overall in the global AI Index by HAI, achieving 2nd place in Education & Diversity, and 3rd in Policy, Governance, and Infrastructure.
- Recognized for its groundbreaking Digital Assets Law and innovative AI licensing frameworks, setting the stage for regulatory excellence and investor confidence.

Federal-Level Initiatives

- **2017: National AI Strategy 2031** – Launched with the vision of making UAE a global AI leader by 2031, across healthcare, security, and education.
- **2018: First Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence** – Omar Sultan Al Olama appointed to lead UAE's AI agenda.
- **2018: AI & Blockchain Council** – Established to provide strategic recommendations on AI and blockchain policies.
- **2019: Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI)** – World's first university dedicated to graduate AI programs, promoting advanced AI research and education.
- **2021: National Program for Coders** – Announced to develop a digital talent pool, training 100,000 coders.
- **2021: Mubadala's \$1 Billion Investment in AI Startups** – Mubadala invests in global AI-focused startups to bolster a robust AI ecosystem.
- **2021: Artificial Intelligence Lab (Federal)** – Launched to drive AI research in transportation, climate, and healthcare.
- **2022: G42 \$10 Billion AI Fund** – G42 (Abu Dhabi-based tech company) creates a \$10 billion fund for AI and cloud infrastructure, expanding UAE's influence in AI innovation.
- **2022: UAE Ethical Charter for AI** – Implements ethical guidelines for responsible AI use, focused on transparency and accountability.
- **2023: \$500 Million AI Research Investment** – UAE announces funding to expand AI research platforms and support emerging tech.
- **2024:** UAE announces \$500m investment in AI, research platform
- **April 2024: \$500 Million UAE Government Investment** – Aimed at AI research platforms and enhancing UAE's global AI standing
- **Ongoing: UAE's AI Everything Conference** – Annual global AI summit promoting knowledge exchange and partnerships in AI.

Dubai Initiatives

- **2016: Dubai Blockchain Strategy** – Establishes blockchain infrastructure, later integrated with AI for secure digital governance.
- **2017: Smart Dubai Initiative** – Introduces AI applications in public safety, transportation, and utilities, aiming to make Dubai the “smartest” city.
- **2018: Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) FinTech Hive** – Regulatory sandbox allowing AI-based fintech solutions to be tested with regulatory oversight.
- **2019: Dubai Autonomous Transportation Strategy** – AI-based strategy with a goal to make 25% of all transportation autonomous by 2030.
- **2020: Dubai’s AI in Health Initiative** – Expands AI-driven health diagnostics, especially relevant in pandemic responses.
- **2021: Dubai’s AI Roadmap for City Operations** – Prioritizes AI-driven city management, integrating AI in infrastructure monitoring and predictive maintenance.
- **Ongoing: Dubai Future Foundation** – Supports innovation through initiatives including Dubai Future Labs, an AI-driven laboratory focused on prototyping in robotics and automation.

Abu Dhabi Initiatives

- **2018: Hub71 Technology Ecosystem** – Abu Dhabi establishes Hub71 to attract tech startups, offering capital and mentorship with a strong AI focus.
- **2019: ADGM Digital Sandbox** – Abu Dhabi Global Market introduces a digital sandbox for AI and fintech firms, encouraging innovation in a regulatory-safe environment.
- **2020: G42’s COVID-19 Response with AI** – G42 uses AI for data analytics, contributing to COVID-19 testing, tracking, and analysis across the UAE.
- **2021: G42 Partnership with Mubadala on Biotech and AI** – Expands AI’s role in healthcare and genomics.
- **2022: Aldar’s AI Real Estate Investment** – Abu Dhabi’s Aldar Properties uses AI to enhance property management and sustainability.
- **2023: Advanced AI Data Center in KIZAD** – G42 inaugurates a large AI-driven data center in Khalifa Industrial Zone, strengthening regional AI infrastructure.
- **April 2024: Microsoft’s \$1.5 Billion Investment in G42** – To accelerate AI development and facilitate the global expansion of Abu Dhabi’s G42, a tech leader in AI solutions

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SECTION 4

Conclusion - Insights and the Potential of AI for Tomorrow



AI Strategy 2030, Hub71 and Dubai AI Campus are fueling AI entrepreneurship, with the sector expected to grow 20% to 34% annually in the UAE. The UAE is further fostering talent through Mohamed bin Zayed University of AI, positioning itself as a global AI hub.

The Dubai AI campus brings together leading global partners, including Amazon Web Services, Microsoft, Oracle, and Nvidia, to deliver world-class resources **dedicated innovation labs, high-performance computing platforms, and tailored AI licenses**. Businesses in the cluster also benefit from DIFC's independent legal framework and Dubai's pioneering **Digital Assets Law**, creating a robust foundation for growth and investment.

This is more than a tech hub; it's the heartbeat of tomorrow's economy. The Dubai AI Campus is where visionary ideas meet unstoppable opportunities.

With ethical legislation, including the Ethical Charter of AI, the UAE is ensuring secure, responsible AI deployment. These efforts are paving the way for a future where AI drives economic growth, job creation, and innovation, establishing the UAE as a global leader in AI.

The findings indicate that the UAE's strategic investments in artificial intelligence are set to yield significant economic benefits while positioning the nation as a leader in this transformative technology. The ongoing commitment to fostering innovation through various initiatives underscores the UAE's vision for an AI-powered future that promises enhanced efficiency across multiple sectors.

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