

# Innovation and ambition: Dubai Trade's digitalisation success story

Deciding to create the world's largest manmade harbour from scratch nearly 50 years ago required significant foresight and confidence. The bold, innovative approach paid off. Today, Dubai is a vital, world-class trade, logistics and manufacturing hub. Jebel Ali Port is the largest seaport in the Middle East and one of the world's top ten container ports, connecting the markets of East and West. Immediately next-door, the Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza) enables easy import, export and logistics as well as manufacturing.

Similarly, the creation of Dubai Trade more than two decades ago, to digitise trade processes in Dubai, was based on confidence and innovation – along with collaboration and transparency among all stakeholders.

Launched in 2003, Dubai Trade is an innovative trade facilitation platform that integrates the digital services of various



trade and logistics service providers in Dubai, including DP World, Dubai Customs and Jebel Ali Freezone, in addition to key government agencies and Trade Value Added Services under a Single Window.

The platform has more than 180,000 users, including freight forwarders, hauliers, freezone companies, clearing agents, airline agents, shipping agents and cargo owners.

“The key objective of Dubai Trade is to position Dubai as the ideal base for trading across borders, combining a unique geographical location, state-of-the-art



دبي التجارية  
DUBAI TRADE

infrastructure, an excellent business ecosystem, and seamless, digitally-enabled processes and platforms,” says Chief Operating Officer, Mohamed AbuHamra.

“The system has evolved into a comprehensive digital platform that offers end-to-end trade and logistics services to various entities involved in trade operations in Dubai. It has become an essential tool for businesses looking to operate efficiently and effectively in Dubai’s bustling trade environment.”

Over the years, Dubai Trade has continued to expand its range of services – it currently offers a wide range of digital services, including Customs clearance, port operations, payment services, Free Zone services, voyage planning and management, cargo handling, digital payments, value-added services, permits and certificates, amongst others. The platform has also been updated to incorporate the latest technological advancements, ensuring that it remains a cutting-edge platform that meets the evolving needs of businesses in Dubai, says Mohamed AbuHamra.

AbuHamra describes Dubai Trade as a Digital Single Window constituting end-to-end trade and logistics services. The latest developments are designed to transform the platform, expanding to connect downstream services. Examples include a Digital Delivery Order Platform, which facilitates delivery order issuance between cargo owners and agents; a Food Supply Chain Integration Platform integrating the end-to-end food

supply chain, streamlining processes between multiple agencies and food importers; and Certificate Issuance for key trade documents such as the certificate of origin, automating the end-to-end export services.

By providing a streamlined flow of services designed around the needs of the customer and eliminating manual documentation and paperless trade transactions, Dubai Trade is absolutely aligned with the UAE’s Digital Government Strategy 2025, says AbuHamra.

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“Dubai Trade creates collaboration opportunities for customers through a transparent, robust yet personalised system,” he explains. “This results in reduced waiting time and costs for shipping agents, freight forwarders and cargo owners. It also enriches logistics professionals through tailored orientation and certification courses.”

The overall mission is to connect the end-to-end value chain, and to become the global leader in digital trade facilitation.

Dubai Trade has just been welcomed as a new member of the International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSEA). AbuHamra says: “Our decision to join IPCSEA recognises the increasing importance of being part of this international community, to share and exchange views across the industry. In addition, Dubai Trade can also leverage IPCSEA’s growing member base to gain better insights, ideas and understanding of industry best practices.”

Dubai Trade is looking forward to attending IPCSEA events and also hopes to lead or host an event, he adds. “We aim to actively engage and share our expertise in trade facilitation, leveraging 20-plus years of experience. We are well-positioned to provide valuable insights and introduce innovative solutions that will add value and contribute to driving industry standardisation and harmonisation.”

