

# UAE–USA Partnerships (2022–2025): A Strategic Executive Overview

**Introduction:** The United Arab Emirates and the United States have entered an era of unprecedented partnership across strategic sectors. From co-investments in cutting-edge **technology** and **AI infrastructure** to deepening **defense alliances**, **energy collaborations**, **infrastructure development**, **space exploration**, and **real estate ventures**, the UAE–US relationship has become a robust two-way street. This growing alliance – forged through high-profile deals and reciprocal commitments – provides a powerful backdrop for engaging investors and institutions at a high-level MIT/Harvard startup event. The following overview highlights the most significant partnerships and bilateral engagements (2022–2025), underscoring why this climate is uniquely favorable for innovation and investment.

## Technology Collaboration: AI, Data Centers & Digital Economy

*UAE–US leaders have elevated technology cooperation as a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship.*

The technology sector has become a linchpin of UAE–US ties, with a focus on **artificial intelligence (AI)**, cloud services, and data infrastructure. In recent years, **American tech giants and Emirati firms have forged landmark partnerships** to build digital capacity:

- **Microsoft’s Strategic Investment:** In 2023, Microsoft invested approximately \$1.5 billion in Abu Dhabi-based AI company **G42**, recognizing it as a conduit to expand Azure cloud data centers in the region <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>. This stake not only provided Microsoft access to G42’s AI expertise and regional networks, but also helped **align G42 with U.S. standards** – for instance, G42 severed ties with Chinese firms (e.g. Huawei) as a result of the partnership <sup>3</sup>.
- **OpenAI and National AI Initiatives:** The UAE has actively embraced U.S. AI innovation. In 2025, the UAE government signed a pioneering **partnership with OpenAI to deploy ChatGPT technology nationwide**, becoming the first country to enable nationwide access to ChatGPT’s premium services <sup>4</sup>. The partnership aims to integrate OpenAI’s tools across government, energy, healthcare, and education sectors to accelerate innovation <sup>5</sup>. Moreover, OpenAI is reportedly helping develop a *massive* new AI computing campus in Abu Dhabi (planned at 5 gigawatts capacity), which would rank among the world’s largest data center complexes <sup>6</sup>. OpenAI and its U.S. partners (including Oracle, NVIDIA, and Cisco) are anchor tenants for this UAE-based AI cluster, reflecting a **significant expansion of American AI infrastructure into the Middle East** <sup>7</sup>.
- **Data Centers and Cloud Infrastructure:** The UAE is emerging as a global hub for data centers, attracting major U.S. investment. **KKR**, the U.S. private equity firm, announced in 2025 a commitment of over **\$5 billion** (with Gulf partners) to expand data center capacity in the Gulf region <sup>8</sup>. Abu Dhabi’s G42 itself has **built four times more computing capacity in the U.S. than in the UAE**, underlining the deep integration of resources <sup>9</sup>. Meanwhile, **Dubai’s DAMAC Group** signaled

plans to invest *up to \$20 billion* in U.S. data center projects <sup>9</sup> – a striking example of a Middle Eastern tech investor pouring capital into American digital infrastructure.

- **Joint Ventures for Digital Infrastructure:** In a notable 2025 deal, Abu Dhabi's sovereign fund **ADQ** teamed up with U.S.-based **Energy Capital Partners (ECP)** in a 50–50 partnership to develop **over \$25 billion** worth of new power generation projects, aimed primarily at supplying electricity to U.S. hyperscale data centers <sup>10</sup>. This venture will build *25 gigawatts* of capacity to serve cloud and AI companies, underlining how UAE capital is enabling the backbone infrastructure for America's digital economy <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup>. According to ADQ's CEO, the rise of AI and high-density computing presents "attractive opportunities" to invest in critical power infrastructure, and UAE investors are *prime positioned* to help meet these needs securely and at scale <sup>12</sup> <sup>10</sup>.

Overall, **technology collaboration is accelerating:** American firms gain regional access and capital support, while the UAE gains cutting-edge tech and know-how. This symbiosis in AI research, cloud services, and data infrastructure is actively championed by both governments as a pillar of future economic growth. It creates fertile ground for startups and innovators – supported by initiatives like the UAE's national AI strategy and U.S. companies' global expansion plans – to jointly develop the next generation of tech solutions.

## Defense and Security Partnerships

Defense cooperation has long underpinned UAE–US relations, but since 2020 it has **deepened into new levels of strategic alignment**. The Trump administration catalyzed a breakthrough by brokering the **Abraham Accords** (UAE–Israel normalization in 2020), which unlocked advanced U.S. defense sales to the UAE. President Trump affirmed he had "no problem" selling the UAE the F-35 stealth fighter – a platform the Emiratis had sought for years <sup>13</sup>. In late 2020, the United States formally **agreed to a \$23 billion arms package** for the UAE, including 50 **F-35 Lightning II** jets, 18 MQ-9 Reaper drones, and advanced munitions <sup>14</sup>. This represented a historic defense deal, making the UAE only the second Middle Eastern state (after Israel) authorized to acquire America's most advanced fighter aircraft.

While the F-35 sale was paused in 2021 amid U.S. concerns (related to technology security and the UAE's parallel ties with China), the underlying defense partnership has **intensified in other areas**. Emirati officials have remained committed to the F-35 deal and indicated they would seek its completion under more favorable U.S. leadership <sup>15</sup>. Indeed, by 2024–25 there were signs of revival: sources noted the UAE would ask a new Trump administration to fulfill the F-35 agreement, underscoring how critical the capability is to UAE's strategic plans <sup>15</sup>.

Beyond fighter jets, the UAE continues to be a major purchaser of U.S. defense systems – from **missile defense batteries** (THAAD and Patriot systems already protect its skies) to **attack helicopters and naval hardware**. Joint training exercises and intelligence cooperation have also expanded, reflecting mutual commitments to regional security. The **longstanding U.S. air and naval presence** in the UAE (Al Dhafra Air Base, Jebel Ali port visits, etc.) has evolved into deeper operational integration, including discussions on interoperability of new technologies like air defense networks and unmanned systems.

Notably, the UAE's defense industry is also partnering with American firms. Abu Dhabi's state-owned **EDGE Group** (a defense technology conglomerate) has inked deals with U.S. contractors to develop next-

generation weapons and cybersecurity tools. There is a clear intent to **co-produce and co-develop** systems in the UAE, leveraging American tech and Emirati resources. Such collaboration not only strengthens the UAE's capabilities but also opens new markets for U.S. defense companies.

*Strategic Impact:* These defense engagements cement trust at the highest levels of government. They also assure investors that **geopolitical ties are strong and stable**, reducing risk for long-term projects. The willingness of the U.S. to share its most advanced military technology with the UAE speaks to a **remarkable level of confidence**. For an investor audience, this translates into a favorable environment backed by security guarantees – an essential foundation for any major business venture in sensitive sectors.

## Energy Cooperation and Climate Initiatives

Energy has traditionally been the bedrock of UAE-US economic relations (given the UAE's role as a top oil producer), but **recent partnerships go far beyond oil**, encompassing renewable energy, clean tech, and two-way infrastructure investment. **Both countries have committed capital and technology to each other's energy future**, aligning commercial goals with climate priorities:

- **\$100 Billion Clean Energy Partnership (PACE):** In November 2022, the U.S. and UAE launched the *Partnership for Accelerating Clean Energy* (PACE), a landmark initiative to catalyze **\$100 billion** in financing for clean energy projects worldwide by 2035<sup>16</sup>. This strategic MOU aims to deploy **100 GW of renewable power** globally, with joint investments in solar, wind, nuclear (advanced SMRs), and green hydrogen projects<sup>16</sup><sup>17</sup>. Under PACE, the UAE (through entities like Masdar and ADNOC) and U.S. counterparts will provide technical and funding support for sustainable energy projects in not only both countries but also emerging markets<sup>17</sup>. Sultan Al Jaber – the UAE's Industry Minister and Special Climate Envoy – noted this partnership delivers “*climate progress together with energy security and inclusive growth*”, signaling how **clean energy collaboration has become a cornerstone** of the bilateral agenda<sup>18</sup>.
- **Growing Emirati Investment in U.S. Energy:** The UAE has dramatically scaled up its investments in U.S. energy assets. In 2025, it announced plans to **raise UAE's cumulative investment in the U.S. energy sector to \$440 billion by 2035**, a five-fold increase from current levels<sup>19</sup><sup>20</sup>. This capital is targeting everything from upstream oil & gas development to LNG export infrastructure and clean fuel technologies. For example, ADNOC's international arm (called **XRG**) committed to support a major **LNG export terminal in Texas** (NextDecade's project) as part of this push<sup>21</sup>. Such deals give the UAE a stake in U.S. energy security and an avenue to diversify its own portfolio beyond crude oil.
- **U.S. Investment in UAE Energy:** The partnership is mutual. During President Trump's 2025 Gulf visit, it was highlighted that **U.S. companies will invest \$60 billion** in UAE energy projects over the coming years<sup>22</sup><sup>20</sup>. Already, several marquee agreements have been signed: **ExxonMobil** and **Japan's INPEX** agreed to boost production capacity at Abu Dhabi's giant Upper Zakum offshore oil field, **Occidental Petroleum** is exploring expansion of the Shah gas field, and **EOG Resources** won a concession for onshore oil exploration in Abu Dhabi<sup>23</sup>. These deals bring American capital and technology into the UAE's energy sector, ensuring it remains on the cutting edge of efficiency (and supporting the UAE's goal to maximize output while lowering carbon intensity).
- **Carbon Capture and Advanced Energy Tech:** The UAE and U.S. are also partnering on next-generation energy technologies. A notable example is a joint initiative between **ADNOC and**

**Occidental** to develop **carbon capture and direct air capture (DAC)** facilities. In 2023 the two companies agreed to evaluate a \$500 million joint venture for a *megaton-scale DAC plant* in Texas, aiming to remove CO<sub>2</sub> directly from the atmosphere. This kind of collaboration in carbon management – leveraging U.S. innovation (Occidental’s 1PointFive subsidiary) and Emirati investment – shows the alliance is tackling the climate challenge through innovation, not just financing.

In summary, **energy collaboration now spans the full spectrum**: conventional oil and gas (ensuring market stability and security of supply), **clean energy deployment at scale**, and **cutting-edge climate tech**. This balanced approach allows both nations to pursue energy transition ambitions while reinforcing each other’s energy security. For investors and startups, this means abundant opportunities in everything from **solar parks and wind farms to energy storage, carbon tech, and hydrogen supply chains**, all backed by bilateral support. The UAE’s role as a global energy investor, coupled with U.S. technology and project expertise, creates a powerful engine for new ventures in the energy domain.

## Infrastructure Development and Industrial Investment

Beyond tech and energy, the UAE–US partnership is driving major investments in infrastructure and industrial capacity – often via collaborations between **sovereign wealth funds and private equity leaders**. These deals not only improve physical and financial infrastructure but also signal a long-term, strategic commitment to shared prosperity:

- **Sovereign Funds & PE Alliances:** Abu Dhabi’s sovereign investors are highly active in the United States, working hand-in-hand with American investment firms. **Mubadala Investment Company** (which manages \$300B+ for the UAE) has become a significant U.S. investor, backing sectors from real estate to private equity and life sciences. In 2022 alone, Mubadala deployed over \$29 billion globally despite headwinds, including a **\$500 million investment in U.S.-based Brightspeed** (a telecom broadband provider) alongside Apollo Global Management <sup>24</sup>. It also formed a partnership with **KKR** to jointly invest in private credit opportunities <sup>25</sup> – illustrating how UAE capital is aligning with top U.S. asset managers to finance growth. These partnerships give American firms access to patient Middle East capital, while the UAE benefits from financial returns and know-how.
- **ADQ’s Infrastructure Push:** Another Abu Dhabi fund, **ADQ**, made headlines with the aforementioned \$25 billion U.S. infrastructure initiative with Energy Capital Partners (focused on power plants and data centers) <sup>26</sup>. ADQ, chaired by Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed, is aggressively building out critical infrastructure platforms. Its U.S. venture with ECP will concentrate on new-build power generation for high-growth industries – a strategic play that addresses U.S. capacity needs and provides stable, long-term returns for the UAE <sup>27</sup> <sup>28</sup>. Such moves align with the UAE’s broader strategy to channel petrodollar surpluses into productive assets abroad, especially in America’s infrastructure which is in need of renewal.
- **Emirati Industrial Investment in the U.S.:** In a striking example of reverse investment, the UAE is *creating manufacturing jobs on American soil*. **Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA)** – co-owned by Mubadala – announced plans to invest in constructing a new aluminum smelter in the United States, which would be the first new U.S. aluminum plant in 35 years <sup>29</sup>. This EGA project, part of the 2025 investment framework, would *nearly double U.S. domestic aluminum production capacity* <sup>29</sup>. It demonstrates the UAE’s commitment to U.S. industrial resurgence and diversification beyond oil. The

White House lauded this as a cornerstone of the 10-year, **\$1.4 trillion UAE investment framework** agreed in 2025 <sup>30</sup> . While not all of that jaw-dropping figure represents new capital (it encompasses many projects across sectors), it underscores the **scale of ambition** driving the relationship. The UAE is effectively pledging to become one of the largest foreign investors in the U.S. economy – focusing on critical areas like semiconductors, clean energy, and manufacturing <sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> .

- **Logistics and Connectivity:** The infrastructure story also extends to transportation and logistics. Dubai’s global ports operator, **DP World**, has engaged with American partners to improve port terminals and supply chain links (though large U.S. port acquisitions have faced political hurdles in the past). Meanwhile, U.S. construction and engineering firms are active in the UAE’s infrastructure projects – building **airports, mass transit, and expo facilities**. Such two-way exchange of expertise ensures world-class quality in development projects and opens doors for future collaboration (for instance, smart city infrastructure or rail projects).

From highways to telecom fiber, **infrastructure investment is a two-way street** bolstered by public-sector support. The presence of heavyweight financiers like KKR, BlackRock, Blackstone, and Apollo in UAE-related deals <sup>32</sup> <sup>24</sup> signals confidence in the long-term stability of this alliance. For a forum of investors and innovators, these trends highlight that **ample capital and political will are available for big, bold projects** – whether it’s building factories, rolling out networks, or financing new platforms. The UAE-US infrastructure partnership effectively lays down the physical and financial rails on which entrepreneurial ventures can scale up.

## Space Exploration and Advanced Science Cooperation

In the domain of space and advanced science, the UAE-US partnership has literally reached new heights. The UAE has positioned itself as an emerging spacefaring nation, working closely with American institutions to accelerate its program:

- **Astronaut Missions:** In 2023, Emirati astronaut **Sultan Al Neyadi** completed a *six-month mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS)* – the longest space mission ever by an Arab astronaut. He flew as part of NASA’s SpaceX Crew-6, launching from Florida and returning safely to Earth in September 2023 <sup>33</sup> . During this mission (made possible by a UAE-NASA agreement and a seat on SpaceX’s Dragon capsule), Al Neyadi conducted a spacewalk – *the first ever by a Middle Easterner* – and numerous scientific experiments. This achievement was celebrated by both nations as a milestone in cooperation, showcasing how **U.S. commercial spaceflight is enabling UAE’s ambitions** <sup>33</sup> <sup>34</sup> .
- **Satellite and Space Technology:** The UAE has worked with U.S. partners on critical space projects. Notably, the **Emirates Mars Mission (Hope Probe)** – which entered Mars orbit in 2021 – had significant contributions from U.S. universities (such as University of Colorado and UC Berkeley) in its design and instrumentation. The data from this mission is shared with NASA and the global scientific community. Additionally, UAE’s earth observation and communication satellites frequently use American launch vehicles (SpaceX Falcon 9 rockets have launched several UAE payloads). This underscores the trust in U.S. technology and the UAE’s commitment to peaceful space exploration.
- **Artemis Accords and Moon Exploration:** The UAE became one of the signatories of the **Artemis Accords**, a U.S.-led international agreement to cooperate on lunar exploration and beyond. By aligning with this framework, the UAE has opened doors to participate in NASA’s return to the Moon

(Artemis program) and to collaborate on standards for space conduct. In 2022, during a meeting at the White House, President Biden and President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed discussed deepening cooperation in space exploration among other areas <sup>35</sup>. We see the fruits of this in projects like the UAE's **Lunar Rover (Rashid)**, which was developed in partnership with foreign entities and is set to be delivered via a lunar lander that involves U.S. technology.

- **Education and Research Ties:** Underpinning space (and science) cooperation are strong ties in education and R&D. The UAE has formed partnerships with top U.S. institutions (for example, joint research centers with **MIT**, and **NYU Abu Dhabi** as a thriving campus). Initiatives range from AI research labs to biotech incubators, often funded by UAE investment arms like Mubadala or ADQ. These create a pipeline of talent and innovation exchange – a foundation for any advanced industry including space.

The **symbolism of space collaboration** cannot be overstated: it is a vivid illustration of shared vision for the future. For the investor community, it signals that this bilateral relationship isn't just about near-term profits – it's anchored in long-range scientific and technological endeavors. Space is also an industry with growing commercial opportunities (satellite startups, space tech, data analytics), and the UAE-US cooperation provides an encouraging ecosystem for such ventures to thrive with government blessings.

## Real Estate and Hospitality Ventures

High-profile real estate developments and hospitality projects further showcase the **synergy between Emirati capital and American enterprise**. These ventures not only generate economic returns but also carry significant symbolic value, blending brands and expertise from both countries:

- **Trump Organization & DAMAC Properties:** A flagship example is the partnership between the Trump Organization (a U.S. private company) and Dubai's **DAMAC Properties**. This collaboration delivered two **Trump-branded golf courses and luxury villa communities in Dubai** – the Trump International Golf Club Dubai and a second golf course in development – as part of DAMAC's signature real estate projects <sup>36</sup>. Initiated during the Trump administration, these projects married an American luxury brand with UAE's real estate boom, and were emblematic of the close rapport at the leadership level. Even after President Trump left office, the relationship endured: in 2022, DAMAC's billionaire founder Hussain Sajwani inked a deal with the Trump family to license the Trump brand for a \$4 billion mixed-use resort (golf, hotel, villas) in Oman <sup>37</sup> <sup>36</sup>. While that project is outside the UAE, it underscores Gulf developers' confidence in U.S. partners and the *soft-power diplomacy* such deals entail.
- **UAE Investment in U.S. Real Estate:** In recent years, Emirati developers and funds have made bold forays into U.S. property markets. **DAMAC Properties** again led the way – in 2022 it acquired a prized 1.8-acre oceanfront plot in Surfside, Miami (the site of the former Champlain Towers South) with plans to build an ultra-luxury condominium tower <sup>38</sup>. By 2025, DAMAC broke ground on this project – a twin-tower residence called **The Delmore**, featuring 37 high-end units marketed as “mansions in the sky” with prices starting at \$15 million <sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup>. This marks DAMAC's first U.S. development and signals *confidence in American ultra-luxury demand*. Likewise, Abu Dhabi's and Dubai's sovereign wealth funds (ADIA, Mubadala, etc.) have been steady investors in U.S. real estate for decades – owning stakes in everything from New York City office towers to logistics warehouses. In 2023, global sovereign investments in real estate surged, and ADIA was among those leading the charge,

expanding its U.S. portfolios (including alternative sectors like life-science campuses and data center real estate) <sup>41</sup> <sup>42</sup> .

- **American Hospitality in the UAE:** Conversely, U.S. real estate investors and hospitality brands are active in the Emirates. Major hotel operators (Marriott, Hilton, Four Seasons, etc.) have established flagship properties in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, catering to the UAE's booming tourism. In an unprecedented move, Las Vegas-based **Wynn Resorts** announced in 2022 a plan to open a luxury resort (with a gaming area) in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE – a first-of-its-kind project scheduled for 2026. This \$2 billion development highlights the draw of the UAE's market for American entertainment and hospitality companies. Such projects benefit from the UAE's record of public-private partnership in mega-developments, often with sovereign entities facilitating permits and infrastructure.

Real estate ties, in summary, **reflect mutual trust and aspiration**. The UAE's iconic skylines now feature American-branded ventures, and U.S. skylines are starting to feature UAE-funded projects. For an audience of investors, these stories demonstrate that capital and expertise can cross borders seamlessly when the bilateral relationship is strong. They also indicate robust demand and growth in key sectors (tourism, luxury living, commercial real estate), encouraging further **private-sector collaboration**. Importantly, these ventures often have backing from top financial institutions, showing that the **UAE-US alliance lowers the perceived risk and raises the prestige** of large-scale projects.

## Conclusion: A New Era of Opportunity for Investors and Innovators

The breadth and depth of UAE–USA engagements from 2022 to 2025 – spanning technology, defense, energy, infrastructure, space, and real estate – illustrate a **strategic alliance at an all-time high**. This alliance is not merely political; it is underwritten by **massive capital commitments and industrial cooperation** that benefit both economies. The UAE, once primarily seen as an oil-rich ally, is now emerging as a global leader in AI, climate tech, and investment – and it is doing so in close concert with American partners <sup>43</sup> . In the words of a recent White House statement, the UAE is *“looking to deepen investment ties with Washington”* as it diversifies beyond oil, and **Gulf sovereign funds like Mubadala are already among the biggest investors in the U.S.** <sup>43</sup> <sup>44</sup> .

Crucially, the two governments have created a **framework that actively encourages private-sector and institutional collaboration**. The announcement of a 10-year, **\$1.4 trillion UAE investment framework in the US** is a testament to this vision <sup>30</sup> . While that headline figure includes many planned projects, it sends a clear message: **trillions of dollars will flow into joint initiatives, especially in AI, semiconductors, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing** <sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> . At the same time, U.S. firms are being welcomed into the Middle East with open arms – from Silicon Valley tech companies setting up in Abu Dhabi, to American industrial firms building infrastructure and exporting LNG with Emirati backing <sup>21</sup> . The geopolitical backing (across two U.S. administrations) ensures that these ventures have staying power and government support.

- **Unprecedented Capital Access:** UAE's sovereign wealth funds (Mubadala, ADQ, ADIA) and large conglomerates are actively seeking investments in next-gen technologies and startups – precisely the domain of MITHarvard entrepreneurs. They are armed with billions in dry powder and

mandate to invest in AI, biotech, fintech, and clean tech, often co-investing alongside top U.S. venture capital and private equity firms. This means startups have access to not just Silicon Valley VC, but also **patient capital from the Gulf** that can fuel growth and provide entry to emerging markets.

- **Government Endorsement and Stability:** The bilateral agreements and MOUs (from PACE to defense deals) provide a **safety net of political support**. Projects that align with UAE-US strategic goals can enjoy facilitation at the highest levels. For investors, this reduces regulatory and political risks. It also opens doors – e.g., a climate-tech startup might tap into the \$100B clean energy initiative; a space-tech venture could find support through NASA-UAE programs. The presence of U.S. and Emirati officials in many funds and initiatives (note that delegations in 2025 included heads of major SWFs and U.S. cabinet members) ensures **public-private synergy** <sup>45</sup> .
- **Market Opportunities in Both Regions:** The UAE offers U.S. innovators a gateway to fast-growing markets in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia – with world-class infrastructure and a business-friendly hub in Abu Dhabi/Dubai. Conversely, the U.S. offers UAE entities access to a huge consumer base and an ecosystem of research and talent. A startup or corporate partnership bridging the two can leverage the best of both: the UAE's regional platform (and free zones, funding programs like **Mubadala's ventures**), and the U.S.'s technological edge and entrepreneurial culture.
- **Track Record of Success:** The deals highlighted – from **Microsoft-G42** to **ADNOC-Occidental**, **Trump-DAMAC**, **Mubadala-KKR**, and **OpenAI-UAE** – all serve as proof of concept that collaborations do work and deliver results. They have built trust among parties, created profit, and often broken records (e.g., UAE's investments leading to the first new U.S. smelter in decades <sup>29</sup> , or the region's largest data centers being funded by U.S. capital <sup>8</sup> ). This track record gives new investors confidence that they are entering a **mature, well-traveled corridor of commerce** rather than an uncharted risk.

In essence, the UAE-US partnership has evolved into a comprehensive **economic alliance with strategic depth**. It presents a compelling value proposition for any investor or corporate stakeholder: by engaging in this alliance, one taps into a synergistic network of finance, innovation, and policy support spanning two dynamic markets.

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