

What Is Dubai's 'Robotic Economy'?

The relentless march of technology has seen Big Data, AI and machine learning infiltrate almost every aspect of our lives – and this trend is only expected to intensify in the near future. With advances in robotic capabilities, companies operating in all sectors should be able to benefit from enhanced productivity, lower running costs and better profit margins.

Cognisant of this fact, the Dubai Future Foundation is launching a robotics and automation programme. The initiative is aimed at boosting both technologies in a range of different industries and marking the emirate out as one of the top 10 cities in the field worldwide, with an expected contribution of 9% to the country's GDP in the next 10 years.

A variety of advantages

Deploying AI and robotics in sectors as varied as healthcare and medicine to consumer and retail can yield a plethora of benefits for companies and their customers alike. Not only can it lead to a wider range of goods and services, faster response times and a better consumer experience, but it can also slash inefficiency, optimise productivity and cut overheads.

Meanwhile, deploying robots in roles that have traditionally been performed by humans can free the latter up to tackle more meaningful and profitable endeavours. At the same time, it also precludes the need to place workers in potentially hazardous situations, thus enhancing workplace safety in a variety of industries, too.

Substantial economic stimulus

Of course, the bottom line of all of these advantages is a financial one: trimmed expense sheets and fatter profit margins. In fact, experts believe that AI alone could contribute some \$13 trillion to the global economy by 2030, while the Dubai authorities are targeting a contribution of 9% of GDP by 2033.

In any case, such lucrative results won't simply happen overnight. According to the Managing Director of Oxford Economics Middle East, interested parties will need to work hard to implement key pillars. "Firstly, a clear, long-term strategic plan," [explained Scott Livermore](#). "Second, significant public investment into research and development, business science parks to develop an ecosystem, building the right education infrastructure, as well as offering incentives to get firms investing in technology."

A blueprint for success

The Dubai Future Foundation seem to be following that advice to the letter. In order to build their 'Robotic Economy', the DFF's programme will concentrate largely on five key areas:

Connected Mobility and Logistics, Consumer Services and Tourism, Extreme Environments, Healthcare and Production and Manufacturing.

In order to reap the projected gains, the Foundation is aiming to install 200,000 robots in these sectors, with some early projects already showing the efficacy of the strategy. In the world of supply chain logistics, for example, global leaders DP World have already achieved full automation in many of their terminals and are experiencing greater efficiency, productivity and safety as a result. Other industries will soon follow suit and the age of the automatons looks here to stay.