

Is Autonomous Driving Coming to the UAE?

Self-driving vehicles are already being trialled in several sites around the world, including Shanghai in China and Phoenix in the USA. Now, thanks to a new potential collaboration between the UAE's Advanced Technology Research Council (ATRC) and a South Korean autonomous driving company, the technology could be soon coming to the UAE, as well.

The partnership is still in the developmental stage, but if successful it could be key to introducing autonomous driving to the UAE. Of course, there's a long road ahead until self-driving vehicles dominate the streets, but their advent could bring with them a whole host of safety, productivity and comfort benefits.

Potential partnership in the offing

Last month, the ATRC (an advanced technology research company based in Abu Dhabi) met with representatives from Seoul Robotics, a South Korean industrial autonomous driving company, to discuss possible collaboration. In particular, they would investigate joint research and development programmes, with a special focus on autonomous robotics.

As well as sharing their own insights and experiences with the current and forecasted state of the industrial autonomous driving market, the two entities also discussed Seoul Robotics' proprietary Level 5 Control Software (LV5 software). It's envisaged that the Middle East could provide a lucrative market for such technologies in the near future.

Although the talks remain in their infancy, the CEO of Seoul Robotics Lee Han-bin hinted at further collaboration going forwards. In [his words](#), "the visit facilitated through the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) could lead to further discussions on investment opportunities in Seoul Robotics' pre-IPO round."

Advantages and obstacles

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 1.3 million people are killed in road traffic accidents each year. By replacing human drivers with robotic vehicles, the human margin for error would be eliminated, thus potentially making transport far safer. It would also free up humans to use their time more productively when getting from A to B.

Of course, with so much potential, it's little surprise that the market for autonomous driving companies is expected to explode in the coming years. Fortune Business Insights project a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.8% between 2023 and 2030, reaching a total value of \$67.73 billion in that time. McKinsey's outlook is even more bullish, as they estimate that the industry could generate some \$300-\$400 billion by 2035.

However, if those exciting forecasts are to come to pass, the developers and manufacturers still have much work ahead of them. Safety is understandably the foremost concern when it comes to driverless vehicles, especially if and when they come into contact with human-piloted cars, since the latter have a tendency to be less predictable than their computer counterparts. The whole question of liability and insurance is another thorny sticking point for autonomous driving to overcome. Nonetheless, it does seem that self-driving cars could be coming to the UAE sooner rather than later.