



**AFCM**  
ARAB FEDERATION OF  
CAPITAL MARKETS

**ADX**

سوق أبوظبي للأوراق المالية  
Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

# AFCM ANNUAL 20 CONFERENCE 26

September 29 & 30 | ABU DHABI

**Brochure**





## ABOUT AFCM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The AFCM Annual Conference stands today as the premier gathering for the Arab capital markets community, uniting decision-makers, policymakers, and financial professionals from regional and international institutions. Over the years, it has become a cornerstone event that promotes knowledge exchange, policy dialogue, and cross-border cooperation.

The 2026 edition in Abu Dhabi, hosted by Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), and in collaboration with Arqaam Capital, the Exclusive Corporate Access Partner, will provide a vital platform to explore key themes shaping today's financial landscape, from market modernization, digital transformation to cross-border connectivity and evolving market infrastructure. Discussions will cover energy trading, market making, derivatives, ETFs, and the impact of AI valuations on markets, among other topics, to reflect the dynamic forces driving the next phase of capital market growth in the Arab region.

With Abu Dhabi's dynamic financial landscape as its backdrop, the AFCM Annual Conference 2026 will reaffirm the Federation's commitment to driving innovation, deepening regional ties, and positioning the Arab world's capital markets as an integral force in the global financial arena.



## Rami El-Dokany

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce the upcoming Annual Conference of the Arab Federation of Capital Markets (AFCM), taking place in Abu Dhabi on September 2026.

Each year, this flagship event serves as a vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation among financial market leaders from across the Arab world and beyond. The 2026 edition, hosted in partnership with Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), will once again bring together senior representatives from stock exchanges, regulators, clearing and settlement institutions, brokerage firms, and asset managers to explore the evolving landscape of Arab and global capital markets.

The choice of Abu Dhabi, a city that has become synonymous with progress, innovation, and financial excellence, reflects AFCM's vision of positioning the Arab region at the forefront of global market transformation. The discussions and partnerships forged at this conference will no doubt play a key role in advancing market development, strengthening regional integration, and enhancing the competitiveness of Arab financial markets on the world stage.

We invite all our esteemed members, partners, and industry stakeholders to save the date and join us in Abu Dhabi for what promises to be a dynamic and inspiring event shaping the future of Arab capital markets.

## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL



## MESSAGE FROM THE GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



## Abdulla Salem Alnuaimi

Abu Dhabi, the Capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is a vibrant global financial center with a future ready economy, progressive business and investment policies, world-class infrastructure, resilient economy and a secure society. The annual GDP statistical estimates confirm Abu Dhabi's steady progress in economic transformation, with non-oil activities reaching a record 54.7 per cent contribution to GDP. The strong performance of Abu Dhabi's economy underscores the success of economic policies that facilitate business expansion and global trade which resulted in around 300 per cent increase in the foreign investments in Abu Dhabi over a decade.

At ADX, we understand our responsibility in facilitating and creating greater market liquidity. We play a defining role in opening Abu Dhabi to global capital flows and serve as a credible global investment hub, supporting cross-border trading and collaborations. We constantly strive to enhance our capital markets through innovative investment products, digital market infrastructure to keep ahead and abreast of the market changes and developments.

The AFCM 2026 creates an opportunity for exchange members to exchange perspectives, forge meaningful partnerships, and draw on the region's diversity to foster innovation and growth. "The 2026 Conference" will delve into topics such the evolving role of market makers, the integration of AI in liquidity provision, digital securities and next generation of investment vehicles, the dynamics of margin trading in a declining interest-rate environment and more. The sessions may present innovative insights and effective strategies as we collaborate to that could potential influence and define the future of capital markets. Thus, I welcome you to Abu Dhabi in 2026 and look forward to AFCM delivering another enriching experience for all participants and attendees.

## About the Arab Federation of Capital Markets (AFCM)

The Arab Federation of Capital Markets was established in June 1978 to be the guiding body for the Arab stock exchanges, under the recommendation of the Arab Central Banks Conference, held under the auspices of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The headquarter of the Arab Federation of Capital Markets is located in Beirut, Lebanon.

The AFCM is the Arab industry group for 18 exchanges and 7 Clearing houses (CSD's), and multiple of affiliate members (financial institutions, brokerage firms) from all around the Arab regions (GCC, Levant and Arab African countries). The Federation was set up to contribute to the development of regulations and promoting harmonized and proactive legislations, and exchanging viewpoints and providing opportunities for cooperation among members.

## About Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX)

The Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) was established on 15 November 2000 pursuant to Local Law No. (3) of 2000, which granted the Exchange legal rights with independent financial and administrative status, as well as the necessary supervisory and executive powers necessary to carry out its functions. On 17 March 2020, the ADX was converted from a public entity into a Public Joint Stock Company (PJSC) in accordance with Law No. (8) of 2020.

The ADX Group, a market infrastructure group comprising the Exchange (ADX) and its post-trade ecosystem, including its wholly owned subsidiaries AD Depository and AD Clear, was established. Through its integrated and globally aligned business structure, the ADX Group supports efficient, transparent, and resilient capital markets across trading, clearing, settlement, and custody.

The ADX Group is part of ADQ, one of the region's largest holding companies, with a broad portfolio of leading enterprises across key sectors of Abu Dhabi's economy. The ADX provides an efficient and regulated marketplace for the trading of securities, including equities issued by public joint stock companies, bonds issued by governments and corporations, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), and other financial instruments approved by the UAE Securities and Commodities Authority (SCA). The ADX is the second-largest exchange in the Arab region by market capitalization. Its strategy of delivering stable financial performance through diversified revenue streams is aligned with the UAE's national development agenda, "Towards the Next 50", which aims to build a sustainable, diversified and high-value-added economy.



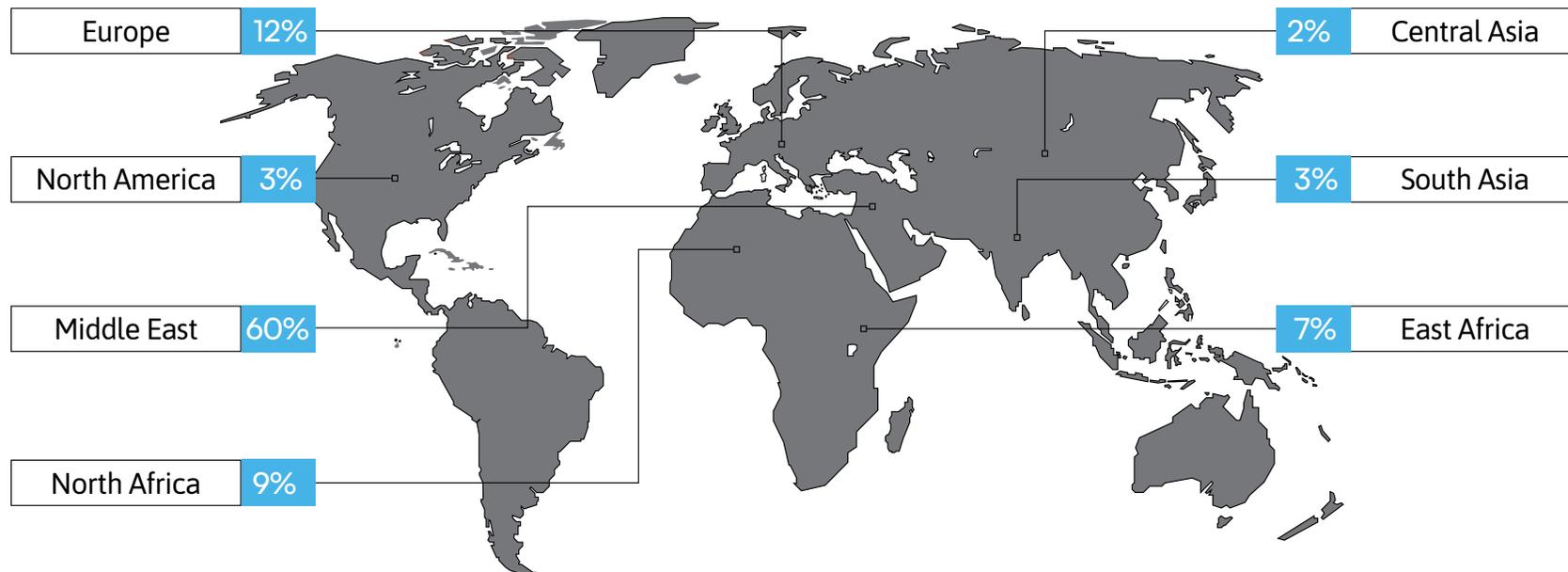
# WHO ATTENDS

## WHO ATTENDS THE CONFERENCE

- Stock Exchanges • Clearing Houses (CSDs/CCPs) • Brokerage Firms • Asset Management Firms • Governmental Institutions • Central Banks • Investment Banks • Regulatory Institutions • Commodity Exchanges • Financial Market Data Providers • Global & Regional Federations • Global Research and Advisory Companies • Rating Agencies • International Startups • Consultancy Firms • Global Fintech Associations • International Experts and Analysts •

25+ Speakers

The conference will feature speakers and attract attendees from across the globe.



C-LEVEL  
54%

MANAGERS  
18%

DIRECTORS  
12%

FOUNDERS  
12%

OTHERS  
4%

# Agenda

**AFCM ANNUAL 20  
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## Day 1

09:00 - 09:30

**Opening Ceremony**

09:30 - 10:15

**Panel 1 - Future of Business: Spotlight on Abu Dhabi**

10:15 - 10:30

**Presentation: Global and GCC Outlook 2026**

10:30 - 11:00

**Coffee Break**

11:00 - 11:45

**Panel 2 - From ETFs to Dual Listings: Redefining Access, Liquidity, and Market Integration**

- How do ETFs contribute to liquidity creation and price discovery in smaller or emerging markets? Are regional exchanges ready to host locally listed ETFs that provide exposure across multiple Arab markets or asset classes? What are the regulatory and infrastructure requirements to expand ETF ecosystems, e.g., market-making rules, authorized participants, and transparent NAV mechanisms? Could ETFs be a bridge toward regional integration, effectively becoming “mini dual listings” of underlying markets?
- Why are issuers pursuing dual listings today? Is it for investor diversification, brand expansion, or currency hedging? Could we imagine an “Arab Passport” for issuers and ETFs, where a single prospectus enables access to multiple exchanges? Are dual listings the stepping stone to a unified Arab capital market, or simply a branding exercise?
- How are fintechs, robo-advisors, and digital brokers changing ETF and IPO access for retail investors? The potential of cross-border APIs and digital book-building tools to connect issuers with investors in real time. Could AI-driven analytics match issuer profiles with investor mandates, personalizing IPO and ETF distribution? Exploring tokenized ETFs and on-chain share registries: are these futuristic concepts or near-term opportunities?
- What are the biggest regulatory barriers preventing ETFs and dual listings from scaling regionally? How important is harmonized disclosure, accounting, and ESG reporting for cross-border products? The role of mutual recognition agreements between regulators and CSDs: how close are we? Should regulators adopt a tiered approach, starting with bilateral agreements before moving toward regional passporting?

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# Agenda

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## Day 1

11:45 - 12:30

### Panel 3 - Market Making and Liquidity Provision: Building Depth and Efficiency in Arab Markets

- The Evolving Role of Market Makers in Modern Market Structure: How are market-making frameworks maturing across Arab exchanges from manual quotes to algorithmic participation? How can exchanges design balanced obligations and incentives to sustain liquidity without distorting fairness?
- Technology, Automation, and Algorithmic Liquidity: The rise of automated quoting systems and smart-order engines, how is AI transforming liquidity provision? How can data analytics and market microstructure tools help regulators and exchanges monitor liquidity health? What operational and connectivity upgrades are required for cross-venue market making across multiple GCC exchanges?
- Incentive Design and Governance: What incentive models, rebates, fee reductions, spread-based rewards, or co-location privileges, work best in the regional context? How can exchanges measure effective liquidity contribution, not just quote presence? What mechanisms ensure transparency and fairness in market-making contracts?
- Liquidity Resilience and Stress Periods: How do MMs and LPs perform under high-volatility or low-volume conditions? Can centralized liquidity buffers or circuit-breaker coordination enhance market stability? How can exchanges use real-time data to anticipate liquidity drops?
- The Future: Regional Liquidity Ecosystem: Can Arab exchanges coordinate to establish cross-listed market-making programs or pan-Arab LP networks? How might the development of derivatives, ETFs, and fixed-income products deepen overall liquidity? How can regulators, exchanges, and MMs collaborate to promote transparent, automated, and fair liquidity ecosystems?

12:30 - 13:00

**Coffee Break**

13:00 - 13:15

**Presentation**

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**Day 1**

**13:15 - 14:00**

## **Panel 4 - The AI Valuation Mirage: Are We Living Through the Next Dot-Com Bubble?**

- Echoes of the Dot-Com Era: How do current AI-driven valuations compare with the tech exuberance of 1999-2000? Are we seeing a repeat of the “winner-takes-all” narrative that inflated internet valuations two decades ago? What lessons from Cisco, AOL, and Pets.com apply to today’s AI giants and chip makers? Is this a structural transformation or a speculative rerun powered by liquidity and hype?
- The Concentration Trap - When Markets Narrow to a Handful of Names: Why are global indices increasingly dependent on five to seven AI megacaps? What systemic risks emerge when market breadth collapses and passive funds amplify the trend? Are exchanges over-exposed to volatility driven by a small cluster of AI stocks?
- The Economics Behind the Hype: Are AI valuations justified by productivity gains, pricing power, and demand visibility, or are they extrapolated dreams? What are analysts missing in discount-rate assumptions and terminal growth models? How will rising energy costs, capex intensity, and compute scarcity affect profitability? Could AI’s “infrastructure gold rush” resemble the fiber-optic overbuild of the dot-com boom?
- Investor Psychology and Narrative Dynamics: How do fear of missing out (FOMO) and momentum trading distort rational valuation? The role of media amplification and ETF inflows in creating feedback loops. Are investors buying AI reality or AI rhetoric? How can institutions detect when enthusiasm becomes self-referential speculation?
- Market Implications and Contagion Risk: What happens if AI valuations unwind — how would it affect broader equity indices, derivatives positions, and sentiment? Can AI-linked volatility indices or derivatives serve as early warning systems? How should exchanges and regulators prepare for a sector-led correction in a liquidity-driven environment?

**14:00**

**Lunch**

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# Agenda

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**Day 2**

**09:45 - 10:15**

**10:15 - 11:00**

**11:00 - 11:45**

## **Fireside Chat**

### **Panel 5 - Derivatives as a Catalyst for Market Transformation: From Risk Transfer to Regional Integration**

- The Derivatives Renaissance: From Hedging to Strategic Infrastructure. Are Arab markets ready to move beyond single-stock futures toward multi-asset ecosystems integrating equity, rates, FX, and commodities? How can derivatives transform markets into 24-hour risk-transfer engines rather than daytime trading venues? How to balance innovation with prudential controls as the region scales up leverage?
- Clearing, Margining, and the New Economics of Efficiency: How are CCPs redefining capital efficiency through portfolio margining and cross-product netting? Could a regional clearing framework for derivatives reduce fragmentation and attract global counterparties? Technology enablers: API clearing, instant margin calls, and smart-contract-based collateralization.
- Derivatives as the Bridge Between Asset Classes: How can equity derivatives evolve into cross-asset hedging instruments linked to sovereign debt, energy, and ESG indices? The potential of carbon, volatility, and interest-rate futures to deepen market sophistication. Can Arab markets design "oil-volatility to equity" correlation products to manage regional macro risk?
- Regional Cooperation and the Future Liquidity Map: Is it time for an Arab Derivatives Alliance linking GCC, North African, and Levant exchanges for cross-listing and clearing? How to create unified benchmarks, GCC index futures, regional rates curves, or Arab commodity contracts? Coordinating regulatory harmonization and data standards to enable cross-border hedging.

### **Panel 6 - Accelerating Settlement Cycles and Reinventing the Clearing Model: The New Post-Trade Frontier**

- Global Shift Toward T+1 - Operational and Strategic Implications: How will the move to T+1 settlement reshape trading, clearing, and settlement processes globally? What are the readiness levels of Arab markets, and what operational gaps exist? How can exchanges and brokers manage liquidity compression and collateral stress under shorter settlement timelines.
- Technology Foundations for Acceleration: What technological upgrades are needed in clearing houses core systems to support intraday and near-instant settlement? The role of real-time affirmation, STP, and automated reconciliation in achieving operational excellence. How ISO 20022 messaging, APIs, and cloud-native architectures can reduce settlement risk and improve interoperability.
- The Evolving Role of Clearing Houses - From Safekeeping to Strategic Infrastructure: How are they repositioning themselves as data, fintech, and service platforms rather than passive utilities? Can regional clearing houses diversify revenue while maintaining stability? How should they manage tokenized securities and DLT-based settlement models?
- Governance, Risk, and Interoperability Challenges: How can regulators ensure operational resilience and systemic stability under compressed settlement cycles? Can interoperability between GCC and North African clearing houses foster regional post-trade integration and cross-listing efficiency? How to structure collaboration between exchanges and regulators to mitigate risk while enabling innovation.

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# Agenda

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## Day 2

11:45 - 12:15

12:15 - 13:00

13:00 - 13:15

13:15 - 13:30

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### Coffee Break

#### Panel 7 - Fund Structuring and Domiciliation: Building the Next Generation of Investment Vehicles

- The New Logic of Fund Structuring: How is fund structuring evolving under global transparency, AML, and ESG disclosure regimes? What legal and regulatory features make a fund domicile competitive, governance, cost, distribution rights, or reputation? How can fund design anticipate tokenization, digital units, and on-chain compliance?
- Regional Fund Domiciliation - The Next Frontier: Why do many Arab asset managers still register funds in Luxembourg, Dublin, or Cayman, and what must change to attract them home? What are the advantages of creating domestic fund hubs in Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, or Saudi Arabia? How can regulators establish mutual recognition and passporting frameworks for regional fund distribution?
- Innovation in Legal and Operational Structures: Growth of umbrella fund models, segregated portfolios, and feeder-master frameworks. How are Sharia-compliant fund structures evolving to include ESG, green, or tech themes? The emergence of private equity, venture, and real-asset funds under simplified regulatory categories. Leveraging special purpose vehicles (SPVs) and trust-based regimes to support flexibility while preserving investor protection.
- Technology, Tokenization, and Fund Operations: How can DLT, blockchain, and smart contracts streamline fund administration, subscriptions, and redemptions? The rise of tokenized funds, digital units with real-time reporting and embedded compliance. Integration of AI in NAV calculation, audit verification, and AML screening. Opportunities for Arab exchanges and depositories to host digital fund registries and cross-border distribution APIs.
- Governance, Custody, and Investor Protection: Strengthening the three-line defense, fund boards, custodians, and auditors, in new fund architectures. The challenge of governance harmonization across multi-jurisdictional funds. How to ensure transparency in fee disclosure, valuation practices, and related-party transactions. Building investor confidence through technology-enabled reporting and oversight.

### Presentation

### Presentation

# Agenda

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**Day 2**

**13:30 - 14:15**

## **Panel 8 - The Brokerage Renaissance: Adapting to Automation, Regulation, and the New Investor**

- The Impact of T+1 and Real-Time Settlement: How are shortened settlement cycles affecting liquidity management, funding, and back-office operations for brokers? What tools and automation capabilities are required to support real-time trade affirmation and collateral optimization? How can brokers coordinate with custodians and CSDs to ensure seamless post-trade processes?
- Technology Transformation and the Rise of Digital Brokerage: How can AI, APIs, and cloud platforms enhance trading execution, risk management, and client engagement? The shift from manual workflows to fully automated order and settlement pipelines. How can brokers leverage data analytics to improve pricing, order routing, and market insight?
- The New Retail Investor and the Democratization of Access: How are mobile-first trading apps, micro-investing, and social platforms changing investor behavior in the Arab world? The role of brokers in educating and protecting retail investors while enhancing accessibility. What can be learned from international zero-commission models, and are they sustainable in regional markets?
- Regulation, Compliance, and Conduct in the Digital Age: How will regulators adapt supervision models to algorithmic trading, robo-advisory, and digital distribution? How can brokers prepare for data-governance, ESG disclosure, and cybersecurity mandates?
- Reinventing the Brokerage Business Model: Is brokerage evolving from a transaction-driven to an advisory and analytics-driven business? Opportunities for brokers to offer value-added services such as portfolio analytics, margin optimization, and ESG advisory. How can regional brokers leverage partnerships with fintechs and exchanges to expand reach and lower operational cost?

**14:15 - 14:30**

**Closing Ceremony**

**14:30**

**Lunch**

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# Rediscover Inspiring Moments

## Our Previous Success

### The Market 2.0 - Bahrain 2025

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Bahrain Bourse hosted the Market 2.0 conference, in partnership with AFCM, on November 20th at Sheraton Hotel – Bahrain.

Attendees

300+

Speakers

45+

### AFCM Annual Conference – Tunisia 2025

Under the patronage of the presidency of the Tunisian government, Tunis Stock Exchange hosted the Arab Federation of Capital Markets Annual Conference titled "AFCM Annual Conference - Tunisia 2025", in collaboration with the African Securities Exchanges Association (ASEA), on May 13th and 14th, 2025, at the Four Seasons Hotel Tunis.

8

Panels discussions

### AFCM Annual Conference – Qatar 2024

Under the patronage of HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the state of Qatar, and the participation of HE Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the Secretary General of the Arab League, Qatar Stock Exchange hosted, the Arab Federation of Capital Markets Annual Conference on April 29th and 30th at the Ritz-Carlton, Doha.

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Attendees

250+

Speakers

50+

Panels discussions

500+  
Attendees

Panels  
discussions

5

Speakers  
25+



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