

Dubai splashes billions on mega projects ahead of Expo

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Dubai, home to Burj Al Arab, the world's tallest building, is splashing billions in order to host Expo 2020 which authorities hope will boost the real estate market and the hospitality sector in the city state

Dubai is splashing tens of billions of dollars on infrastructure and hospitality projects related to the international trade fair Expo 2020, Dubai-based BNC Network said in a report published Sunday.

The value of Expo-related projects underway hit \$42.5 billion in March, according to the Construction Intelligence Report.

It said that \$17.4 billion were invested in infrastructure and transport projects, \$13.2 billion on housing and \$11 billion for hotels and theme parks.

The projects include an \$8 billion expansion of Al Maktoum International Airport—located at the southern pole of the city and tipped to complement Dubai International Airport to the north.

Dubai airport was the world's busiest for international travel in 2017, handling more than 88 million travellers.

Al Maktoum, when complete, will have the capacity to handle 160 million travellers per year.

The emirate is spending \$2.9 billion to develop a new metro line that will link its main transport hubs to the Expo site.

The new line will also link the \$13.4 billion Dubai South Villages and Dubai Exhibition City, projects currently underway.

Authorities expect Expo 2020 to boost the [real estate market](#) and the hospitality sector, creating up to 300,000 new jobs and energising the economy.

The six-month event, the first World Expo to be staged in the Middle East, is expected to attract up to 300,000 visitors per day, half of them from abroad, when it opens in October 2020, according to the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Dubai, a city state which has established itself as a regional business hub and tourism destination, has the Gulf's most diversified economy that is not dependent on oil.

The economy of Dubai, where the population of three million people is comprised mainly of foreigners, is based on finance, property, tourism and leisure.

Over 21 percent of this year's public spending of \$15.5 billion is earmarked for infrastructure projects. Oil income contributes just six percent to public revenues.

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