



**EXPO 2020 إكسبو 2020**  
دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

## BusinessConnect

31 January, 2016

### Technology & Innovation Seminar – Executive Summary

As part of our on-going series of engagements with the business community, we invited Technology & Innovation professionals, representing companies of all sizes, to join us for an open discussion around a variety of topics relating to the ICT aspects of Expo 2020.

#### We began by providing an overview of our vision for Expo 2020:

- **Creating wonder, optimism and hope:** The Great Expos of the past captured people’s imaginations. They showcased the greatest innovations, including the first mobile phone and the first typewriter, and foretold the future. They also captured the essence of their time and left behind iconic architecture. Overall, they created a sense of excitement and hope. It is this wonder and optimism that we hope to capture for Expo 2020.
- **‘Connecting Minds, Creating the Future’:** Our theme recognises that we live in a time of unprecedented interdependence, in which partnership and collaboration are the keys to progress and prosperity. It defines what Expo 2020 aims to achieve and the essential impact it hopes to make on humankind. It will also provide the backbone for the content, organisation and delivery of the event. Everybody who engages with our Expo is a co-creator - together we will create the future.
- **Our three subthemes:** *Opportunity, Mobility and Sustainability* are the enduring and interrelated forces that embody our dreams and challenges, and play a decisive role in shaping the complex world of today and tomorrow. Our theme and subthemes will be brought to life through the site masterplan, through a rich calendar of events and opportunities for networking and collaboration, and through the wondrous, multisensory and fully immersive exhibits that will feature throughout the Expo itself.
- **Seamless operations:** Located within the Dubai South District, equidistant between Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and within close proximity to major air and shipping hubs, the Expo site was carefully chosen to ensure the best possible operational and logistical efficiencies for participants; ease of access for all visitors; and a high level of international visibility. It will also place the Expo at the heart of the city’s new economic growth corridor.
- **The most inclusive and international event in World Expo history:** We expect to welcome more than 200 participants including nations, multilateral organizations, NGOs, educational institutions and corporate partners, as well as 25 million visits, 70% of which will originate from outside of the UAE - the

largest proportion of international visitors in Expo history. We will also operate a 'One Nation, One Pavilion' policy, with support offered to developing countries to ensure consistent, high quality participation – another World Expo first.

- **A transformative legacy:** One of our key priorities for Expo 2020 is to leave a transformational legacy, not only for Dubai and the UAE, but also for the wider region along a number of dimensions: economic, social, physical, cultural and reputational.
- **The role of technology:** We believe that technology and innovation have a pivotal role to play in providing both visitors and participants with a memorable experience. This begins from the very moment they first become aware of Expo 2020, and continues even after they have left Dubai, as they continue to engage with the Expo and fellow participants and visitors virtually. It also extends beyond the Expo gates and into their wider experience of the UAE – including the booking of flights and accommodation, and the planning of their arrival at the site itself.

**Throughout the morning, we heard from a wide variety of participants, each offering expert advice and insight. From this input, a number of key themes emerged:**

- **Deploying technology throughout our journey:** The role of technology extends far beyond the showcasing of new innovations during the event itself – it will play a critical part in helping us to communicate, plan and deliver an exceptional Expo. For example, as the public face of our event, Expo 2020 expects to attract over 30,000 volunteers from a variety of age groups, nationalities and backgrounds. We therefore require a platform that can harness their enthusiasm and support; educate, inspire and organise them; and ensure that their individual skill sets are put to the best possible use, well before the gates open in October 2020.
- **Using technology to ensure inclusivity:** As the most inclusive event in World Expo history, technology can help ensure that diverse groups of people are able to enjoy the same level of experience. This could mean providing immediate voice translation for those who do not speak English or Arabic, offering on-site transport options for those with restricted mobility, or delivering engaging content for blind or deaf visitors in an alternative format.
- **The importance of streamlining solutions:** Previous mega-events have perhaps been guilty of introducing too many apps and tools that confuse users and are ultimately abandoned. As far as possible, and without becoming too dependent on one system, we need to offer both participants and visitors a streamlined and centralised technology platform that performs numerous functions, offers significant added value, and potentially introduces something new to the market.
- **Consistently world-class:** Innovative technology must be consistently

deployed across the site to help us achieve our ambition of offering an exceptional experience in each and every pavilion and public area. Whilst the technologies themselves may vary, they should be of a consistent quality. For this reason, it is also important that participants are fully engaged and committed to our technology strategy and offered the necessary support where required.

- **Keeping it simple:** Technology exists to make our lives easier. It should reflect human behaviour and enhance, rather than reduce, our interactions with each other. This could be as simple as connecting participants with shared areas of interest or linking volunteers with certain language skills with visitors in need. It must be accessible for every possible kind of user and not forget to address the most basic of requirements – from helping locate the nearest bathroom, to providing real time information about traffic conditions around the site.
- **Implementing technology that can become part of our legacy:** The technology solutions that are implemented for the Expo must not only cater to our millions of visitors and participants, but also continue to bring benefits to the city and its residents long after the event itself has closed. This will require the formation of new relationships with the relevant technology partners to ensure that what is developed, is aligned with existing growth plans and meets the long-term requirements of the wider city, or can be transferred and utilised in other ways.
- **Staying ahead of the curve:** Technology is ever changing – what is cutting edge today, is old news tomorrow. Whilst we can already begin to detail our needs and requirements, it is impossible to select all of the specific solutions that we will deploy at the Expo in four years' time. To ensure that we deliver a truly world-class event, it is important that we remain responsive and adaptive to trends and new innovation. This could be driven by an advisory board designed to track and report on new advances in technology, or through more informal means, such as regular surveys conducted amongst the tech community.
- **An inclusive and transparent procurement process:** A broad, 'hands-off' approach to procuring technology providers is not always the most effective, and the collaborative process requires a human, face-to-face element, with companies engaged around their specific areas of expertise. Expo 2020 is committed to a transparent and inclusive procurement process with a clear framework, but there will also be numerous opportunities for additional dialogue and knowledge sharing between now and 2020 involving businesses of all sizes, scale and scope. We also understand the need to avoid working in silos – we must clearly articulate our requirements and invite companies to offer solutions, rather than sourcing products and services individually.
- **The collective expertise of the tech community:** Public-Private-Partnerships are part of Dubai's DNA and are a well-established model for projects of this scale in the region. They are a viable option for technology providers, including SMEs, to be part of the Expo. Equally, potential vendors could also be grouped by specialty, with the opportunity for them to bid as a cluster.
- **The importance of testing:** Technology can only be helpful to us when it works. Dubai's bustling airports and vibrant events calendar represent an

excellent opportunity to test and finesse the technologies that will be implemented for the Expo ahead of time. We must also ensure that sufficient testing time is factored into the master schedule.

### **What happens next?**

We want to bring the idea of 'connecting minds' to life right from the very beginning, and that means furthering the conversations that began at BusinessConnect, and continuing to work with a number of local, regional and international businesses as both thought partners and delivery partners.

Please make sure that your organisation is registered on our [eSourcing Portal](#), as this will be the primary gateway for all procurement opportunities. We also encourage you to follow us on social media for all the latest Expo-related news and updates, including information around upcoming events.

Finally, we kindly ask that you take a few minutes to complete a [short survey](#) about BusinessConnect, so that we can continue to offer interesting and relevant opportunities for participation.