



Mauritius–UAE: A Strategic Bridge to Africa

AfrAsia Bank's Nadeem A Carrim explains how the synergy between the Mauritius International Financial Centre (IFC) and the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) creates unique opportunities for value creation across both ecosystems.

In today's competitive global marketplace, few cities rival Dubai's ability to attract world-class businesses and investors. Its continued momentum has enabled the UAE to emerge as one of the most influential financial and commercial hubs across the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia.

This success is underpinned by the UAE's forward-looking diversification strategy, with financial services at its core. The DIFC, supported by a robust regulatory framework and a business-friendly tax regime, has become a magnet for global firms and sovereign investment funds. By mid-2025, the number of hedge funds in DIFC had risen by 72%

year-on-year from 50 to 85, underscoring Dubai's growing financial magnetism.

As a global transit point linking Asia, Europe, and Africa, Dubai is playing a catalytic role in unlocking African potential. Over USD 50 billion of UAE capital is already deployed in Africa's key sectors: energy, infrastructure, logistics, and agribusiness, reinforcing its influence on the continent's development trajectory.

Mauritius and Dubai: Strategic Partners in Growth

Though geographically distant, Mauritius and the UAE share a strong alignment in economic vision.

Dubai stands as a premier hub for global commodity trading and corporate structuring, while Mauritius serves as a trusted platform for trade and finance into Africa, a continent rich in both hard and soft commodities.

Mauritius's investment-grade sovereign rating of Baa3, reaffirmed by Moody's in July 2025, highlights its legal certainty, economic stability, and fiscal appeal — qualities that make it a natural partner for DIFC-based firms scaling into Africa.

The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), signed between the UAE and Mauritius in July 2024, has formalised this strategic bridge, enabling capital, expertise, and opportunity to flow more freely between the two jurisdictions. While Mauritius channels significant Foreign Direct Investment into Africa, an increasing number of African entrepreneurs and funds are now leveraging Dubai as a cross-border investment and financing hub. This synergy between the Mauritius IFC and the DIFC creates unique opportunities for value creation

across both ecosystems.

Bridging Purpose and Performance: ESG and Green Finance

Dubai brings scale, speed, and global reach; Mauritius complements this with a strong focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, and on Green and Sustainable Finance. Evolving international ESG regulations are shaping local initiatives, including new mandatory ESG disclosures for financial institutions in Mauritius. These measures help align local frameworks with global green strategies and meet rising investor demands for transparency.

The challenge lies in tailoring sustainable finance taxonomies to local realities while maintaining flexibility to attract foreign investment. With Capital Economics estimating that 9% (USD 82 billion) of investment into Africa flows through Mauritius — and with the continent requiring USD 350 billion for SDG-aligned projects — Mauritius is positioned as a key driver of impactful, sustainable investment.



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AfrAsia Bank: Connecting the Dots Across Africa and Asia

Guided by its vision for the Africa–Gulf corridor, AfrAsia Bank marked a major milestone in June 2025 with the launch of its branch office in the DIFC, its first foothold in the Middle East. Under a DFSA Category 4 license, the Bank is expanding its suite of cross-border financial services and strengthening the strategic link between Mauritius and the UAE.

This development aligns with another significant milestone: the entry of The Access Bank UK Ltd as a new majority shareholder for AfrAsia Bank Limited. As part of Access Bank Plc, one of Africa's largest banking groups with over 60 million customers, The Access Bank UK Ltd brings deep expertise and a global footprint spanning London, Paris, Malta, Dubai, and Hong Kong. This partnership broadens AfrAsia Bank's reach and reinforces its mission to serve clients with

ambitions across Africa, Asia, and the Gulf.

From its Dubai base, AfrAsia Bank is committed to building deeper connections across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt. The Bank delivers bespoke cross-border solutions to High-Net-Worth Individuals, institutional investors, and family offices from wealth structuring and trade facilitation to multi-currency transactional banking, customised treasury management, and private banking services.

By strengthening its pan-African reach and fortifying its presence in the UAE, AfrAsia Bank reaffirms its commitment to serving clients and stakeholders with solutions that span continents. The Mauritius–UAE corridor stands as a vital, stable, and well-connected gateway for global investors seeking to tap into Africa's potential.