LEADERS IN PAYMENTS

CONFERENCE AND AWARDS **2026**

Challenges and Change

22nd September 2026
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

They say expect the unexpected, but when the unexpected happens, it is never what we expected.

This year our region has been blighted by challenges and uncertainty that has stress tested all of the developments and advancements that it has built over recent decades. While the circumstances are unwelcome, they have nevertheless served to prove that the regulations, the systems, the technology and the societal advancements made here are built on solid ground, standing up to the difficulties that have come our way.

The world of payments in our region almost perfectly reflects this general progress, having also evolved through regulation, enhancement systems like Buna, Aani and SARIE, and the implementation of technology, all driven by inherent ambition and imagination. Likewise, regional payments have proved resilient in their ability to function through the challenges and change we are all experiencing.

However, what our modern payments techniques and facilities cannot control or build in resistance to are events that impede levels of trade and commerce with the accompanying transactions and revenue they bring. Or can it? Has the progress that has been made across the grand scope of regional payments helped in ways that without it, circumstances for banks and businesses would have been harder? Have the collective advancements of our regional and global payments services and systems been an example of expectations of the unexpected being successfully met?

Overview

At some of our previous MEA Finance, Leaders in Payments Conference we have asked the question whether payments evolution has either reached its apex or is entering a slower and more sedate period of development. The answer from our esteemed panelists has always been an emphatic - No! The evolution of payments across our region remains ongoing at pace, and despite the days big geo-political issues, it may, after a period of reduced normality, and as with earlier times of challenge, be spurred into speedier development and innovation.

Payments are becoming more than only agile, intuitive and convenient, but also, as these features become more deeply embedded, they can now have real positive influences for economies and societies as efficiencies aid productivity and foster greater inclusion. However, this general positivity does not come without old and new potential downsides that require monitoring or control. BNPL for example is a helpful facility for both customers and merchants, but might it lead to higher levels of public indebtedness, and how do the new businesses running this service scale to accommodate market growth? Agentic Payments is set to bring better money management and optimised spending for consumers, but will it successfully navigate privacy and compliance issues or unexpected, even misaligned purchases?

The discussions set to take place at the 2026 MEA Finance, Leaders in Payments Summit will, as always, be from and about the leading edge of this vital economic function in our region's economies.

Taking a clear and definitive role in this conference is your best opportunity to be clearly visible as one of our region's leaders of payments at this very special time

More than 400 regional banking and technology leaders engaged to hear the latest from the entire spectrum of interested professionals including regulators, technology companies, start-ups, fintechs, innovators and other stakeholders from along the value chain.

What to expect

400+
Regional Banking, Finance, Fintech and Technology Leaders, Standardisation Organisations, Regulators, Financial Trade Associations

30+
Thought Leaders, Innovators and Market Makers & Experts

6
in-depth and lively sessions on the future and state of Payments in the region

Full Day
of Peer Interaction and Networking

1
Awards Winners Presentation Ceremony

- More than 400 regional banking, payments and technology leaders with a format attracting the entire spectrum of interested professionals including regulators, technology companies, start-ups, fintechs, central banks, innovators and other stakeholders from the value chains.
- Solid engagement opportunities for your company with decision makers, to directly detail your company's solutions to today's most pressing payments related issues.
- Exposure to the regional banking communities with your brand visibility in the networking and exhibition area during breaks and through participation in panel discussions and keynote presentations.
- Opportunities to be recognised and celebrated as a bank or technology business at the forefront of payments transformation and progress at the MEA Finance Banking Technology Awards

Be an event partner

We can offer a wide range of options for sponsors depending on your needs, level of engagement and the branding presence and impact you want to achieve during the event.

Individual Event Packages

In addition to our existing packages, we can sit with you to develop a bespoke sponsorship package to provide targeted exposure and engagement before, during and continuing beyond the event.

Who Should Attend

C-Suite

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Technology Officer
- Chief Information Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Chairman
- Chief Audit Executive
- Chief Commercial Officer
- Chief Economist and Head of Research
- Chief of Shared Services Officer
- Chief Risk Officer
- Managing Director
- MD – Head of Treasury, Capital Markets & FI Department & Section Heads
- Partner - Financial Services
- Advisor - Investment Management
- Commercial Advisor
- Executive Director
- Head of Client Relations
- Head of Payments, Remittances & Foreign Exchange
- Head of Regulatory Advisory and Assurance
- Head of Transaction Banking
- Head Corporate Relations and Strategic Partnerships
- Head Digital Strategy and Change
- Head of Corporate Communications
- Head Digital Strategy and Change
- Head of E-Banking
- Head of Market Risk
- Head of AML & Sanctions
- Head of Bancassurance
- Head of CAD, Remedial & Collection
- Head of Central Operations
- Head of Change Management
- Head of Client Experience
- Head of Compliance
- Head of CRM
- Head of Disclosure and Issuance Department
- Head of Enterprise Architecture
- Head of Enterprise Banking Platforms
- Head of External Communications
- Head of Finance
- Head of Financial Institutions
- Head of Government Relations & PR
- Head of Information Security
- Head of Investment Solutions
- Head of Issuance
- Head of Prepaid Cards
- Head of Regulatory Compliance
- Head of Retail Banking
- Head of Risk Specialist
- Head of Strategic Planning
- Head of Strategy – Technology
- Head of Transaction Banking
- Head Product Manager
- Manager Audit & Compliance
- Manager Operational Risk
- Payments & Contract Manager
- Portfolio Specialist - Insights & Strategy
- Project Manager
- Regional Compliance Manager
- Regional Manager - Compliance & Risk Retention & Vigilance Manager
- Senior CRM Project Lead
- Senior CX Manager
- Senior Manager - Digital Transformation
- Senior Manager Treasury
- Information Security, Senior Strategic Advisor
- Senior Trade Officer, Strategy & PMO
- Assistant Vice President – Global Customer Relations
- Associate VP - Strategic Engagements
- AVP Agile Delivery - Retail Banking
- AVP Credit Risk and Portfolio Manager
- FS Strategy Manager
- SVP & Head of Compliance - Personal Banking Group
- SVP & Regional Head - Corporate & Commercial Banking
- Vice President, Compliance
- VP Risk and Change Management
- VP Wealth and Asset Management
- VP - Strategic Initiatives & Bancassurance

MEA Finance Conference

MEA Finance Conferences are known for bringing together over 500 regional banking, investment and technology leaders for a day of immersive discussion on the latest developments and most pressing issues being faced across the sectors of the banking industry across our region.

These one-day, exclusive gathering provide intense and fruitful networking opportunities and include audience presentations and panel discussions, with an array of the region's industry-leading experts, innovators and distinguished speakers who meet to discuss the future of banking and innovation in finance.

2026 Provisional Agenda

DIGITAL DEFENSE
This year the region has faced direct and serious challenges that have impacted commerce and trade, slowing down business and impacting transactions and payments. Has the recent digitisation and standardisation initiatives for regional and cross-border payments helped to mitigate problems associated with conflict conditions? Does digitisation and its reliance on targetable infrastructure such as datacentres or sub-sea cabling make payments more vulnerable in these circumstances? Also, attacks are not only kinetic, with cyber warfare a key strategic tactic. In terms of post-challenge normalisation, will our modern-day reliance on digital and AI systems bring swifter normalisation or a slower recovery?

TRUST ISSUES
AI based agentic payments autonomously execute payments for consumers and businesses, finding, negotiating and paying for goods and services within pre-set limits. Benefits for consumers, business and merchants include frictionless purchasing, automated money management, optimised spending, more conversions and lower operating costs. But questions and risks remain - privacy and compliance issues, wider scope for disputes and chargebacks from unexpected or misaligned purchases, vulnerability to fraud, unclear liability and accountability and diluted brand affirmation from indirect customer interactions. Can agentic payments ever enjoy unquestionable trust or will there have to be accepted trade-offs between it and convenience?

IN FROM THE COLD
Stablecoins are experiencing increasing adoption in the region, having rehabilitated crypto from speculative assets into a practical payment rail with benefits like continual operation, elimination of chargeback fraud, instant settlement and low-cost cross border payments, programmability and financial inclusivity. However, there are concerns about tension between financial privacy and state control, and drawbacks including irreversible loss from human error, no chargebacks for accidental payments or undelivered goods or a lack of deposit insurance. Will stablecoins outperform or replace conventional payments rails and what is the future for stablecoins in our region's payments markets?

BUY NOW CONSOLIDATE LATER
On one hand, the regional BNPL market is quickly consolidating, into one dominated by fewer bigger and well-funded multiple product providing fintechs, motivated by the need for capital-hungry scaling, by local banks increasingly offering their own built-in instalment features and by regulatory oversight. On the other hand, mindful of personal debt issues that can arise from this service, BNPL consolidation can also refer to merging multiple BNPL obligations into more manageable payments through simplified repayments of personal loans. Is BNPL devolving into conventional debt or this form of payments option going to last to become a permanent element in the regional payments infrastructure?

PAYMENTS TECHNOLOGY AND AI
Technology and AI are effectively the anatomy of payments –bringing new services, agility, convenience and reducing human error, impeding financial crime, providing data derived efficiencies and accurate digital transactions. What roles can we expect Agentic AI to play across the payments spectrum? Can Payments as a Service allow banks to more easily and economically modernise their legacy systems? What vulnerabilities might reliance on technology bring and what more can they bring to the payments world that we do not already have? Can payments technology assist with ensuring successful payments in less accessible or challenging places and environments?

BORDER CROSSING
Much has been achieved regionally and globally to smooth the path for cross-border payments, but challenges, whether inherent or unpredictable, still remain. Pain points like high costs for corporate transfers, settlement and correspondent banking delays, regulatory fragmentation, patchy data standardisation and unpredictable FX costs still weigh on the cross-border payments experience despite reform efforts. Add to this the rising tide of geo-political tensions, then many of the challenges we thought overcome, remain stubbornly present. How have recent innovations like the 2025 implementation of Swift's ISO 20022 begun to ease paths and can cross border payments ever become truly painless?

Sponsorship Benefits

Use your exhibition space to launch new product/service or demonstrate your technology and service

Gain valuable input and feedback from your target industry

Exclusive orientation and meeting support to help your brand advance through beneficial collaborations

Save your valuable time and resources and realise multiple sales and marketing goals

Engage your target audience by presenting thought leadership and participating through panels

Be present in front of your potential clients and build trust and confidence in your brand

Use Booth Space to invite and host your existing and potential clients and reinforce your brand in the market

Leverage your physical presence to meet face to face with prequalified audience to generate high quality leads

Sponsorship Options

Benefits	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Lunch	Lanyard	Badge	Exhibitor
Exclusive to one company only	●			●	●	●	
Opportunity to provide Welcome Note	●						
Interview of Senior Representative	●	●	●				
Access to All Sessions	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Standalone Presentation	●	●					
Panel Member in Discussions	●	●	●	●			
Exhibition Booth Space (3x2 SQM)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Advert in Event Booklet	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Logo on Website with Hyperlink	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Logo on all Marketing Collateral	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Branding on Post Event Report	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cost (USD)	**50,000**	**40,000**	**30,000**	**20,000**	**20,000**	**20,000**	**15,000**

Contact Us

Nap Estampador
E: **nap.estampador@mea-finance.com**
M: **+971 50 1005488**

Editorial contact:
editorial@mea-finance.com

For other queries:
info@mea-finance.com

Dubai office:
#404, Building B, Al Saaha Offices, Old Town
Island Burj Khalifa District, PO Box 487177
Dubai, United Arab Emirates