

## Etihad Rail and Keolis forge landmark joint venture to launch UAE passenger rail service



Etihad Rail, the developer and operator of the UAE National Railway Network has announced a landmark joint venture with Keolis, a world-renowned leader in passenger transport, to introduce its passenger rail services in the UAE. This partnership marks a significant milestone in Etihad Rail's mission to deliver world-class rail services that will redefine the way people travel across the country.

Drawing on Keolis' international expertise and proven track record across 13 countries, combined with Etihad Rail's world-class infrastructure, this partnership is designed to create a new international standard for passengers experience.

Passenger services will launch in 2026, marking a significant milestone in Etihad Rail's vision for modern, efficient, and customer-centric rail travel, and the history of the UAE's railway network.



*"The UAE is on the cusp of a dynamic new era in mobility, and at Etihad Rail we are proud to be driving this transformation under the guidance of our Chairman, His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. This joint venture marks a bold step forward towards launching passenger services in the nation. By partnering with Keolis, an organisation that matches our vision and goals, we are enhancing our operational readiness with the highest levels of efficiency."*

*Keolis brings extensive expertise in safely and efficiently managing complex rail networks, while keeping passenger satisfaction as a priority. Its proven success both locally and globally makes it the ideal partner for what we aim to achieve. This partnership is about more than building railways; it is about shaping the future of transport in our nation and setting the stage for the launch of our passenger services in 2026. We are determined to provide a seamless, world-class rail service that will transform the travel experience and enhance the quality of life in the UAE." - Azza Alsuwaidi, Deputy CEO of Etihad Rail Mobility*



*"We are extremely proud of this strategic partnership with Etihad Rail. We will leverage their high-quality rail infrastructure by bringing our expertise in launching new operations and delivering service excellence to offer a safe and sustainable mobility solution across the United Arab Emirates. Alongside our operation within the Gulf Cooperation Council region, this new contract reinforces our position as a trusted partner and marks the beginning of a long-term commitment with Etihad Rail."*

Marie-Ange Debon, Chairwoman and Group Chief Executive Officer

The joint venture will focus on several key areas, including implementing best practices and innovative solutions to establish seamless operations, prioritizing passenger comfort and convenience through modern amenities and services, and promoting environmentally friendly transport solutions that align with the UAE's sustainability goals. Furthermore, the partnership will support and enhance the foundational work already laid by Etihad Rail, ensuring smooth integration and a sustainable path toward long-term success.

With this partnership, both organisations reinforce their commitment to deliver exceptional services and unlock new value for passengers and communities in the UAE. The collaboration is more than an operational step, it is a strategic leap toward a connected, dynamic, and people-first rail future in the Emirates.

#### About Etihad Rail

Etihad Rail was established under Federal Law No. 2 with the mandate of overseeing the development, construction, and operation of the UAE's national freight and passenger railway network. Part of the 'Projects of the 50', the National Railway Network is the largest project to consolidate the strength of the union for the next fifty years.

Since 2016, Etihad Rail has successfully operated the Shah-Habshan-Ruwais route, transporting granulated sulphur for export, and establishing rail as a safe and sustainable mode of transport with a proven track record. In 2023, construction on the network expansion was completed, marking the inauguration of the UAE National Railway Network, now spanning a length of 900 km from Ghuwairat to Fujairah, as well as the launch of full freight operations. Etihad Rail continues to develop its passenger services, which will be operated along the same network in the future.

Etihad Rail connects the emirates, linking industrial and commercial centres with 11 terminals, including four major ports: Ruwais Inland Terminal, Ruwais Port, ICAD, Khalifa Port, DIC, Jebel Ali Port, Al Ghail Dry Port, Fujairah Port, Ghuwairat Terminal, Shah Terminal, and Habshan Terminal.

#### About Keolis

Keolis is a pioneer in the development of public transport systems and partners with public transport authorities to deliver shared mobility services that enhance liveability for local communities. As a world leader in the operation of automated metro, tram systems and heavy rail, Keolis transports 9 million passengers every day and draws on a potent and open innovation policy with all its partners and specialist subsidiaries to support its core business and develop new, innovative and bespoke shared mobility solutions for modes including trains, buses and coaches, trolleybuses, on-demand transport, services for people with reduced mobility, river and sea shuttle services, bike share services and long-term rental, car sharing and all-electric driverless shuttles. The Group is 70%-owned by SNCF and 30%-owned by the Caisse de Dépôt et Placement du Québec (Quebec Deposit and Investment Fund) and employs 70,000 people across 13 countries\*. In 2024, it posted revenue of €7.7 billion.

\*Keolis is historically established in France and has additionally developed operations in Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, India, the Netherlands, Qatar, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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