



UAE MEP Design Market Overview & Salary Guide 2025



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the highly anticipated, 2025, UAE MEP Design Market Insights & Salary Guide. This is our 14th publication, solely for the MEP Design industry within the UAE. We are delighted to bring this to you, in partnership with MEP Middle East Magazine.

To produce results that accurately reflect the UAE MEP Design market in 2025, we collate information from our own placement records and research and combined this with information clients and candidates across the UAE have kindly provided us with.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this year's survey & provided such key insights, with special thanks to MEP Middle East for collaborating with us. I hope you enjoy reading & find valuable insights.....



James Mowat
Managing Director, EMEA

2024 Overview & Key Developments

The Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP) sector in the Middle East experienced steady growth in 2024, driven by major infrastructure and real estate developments. While precise data on the total value of MEP project awards remains limited, the overall increase in contract allocations indicates a strong market trajectory.

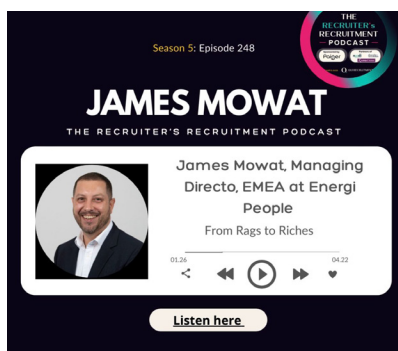
Notable awarded projects include:

- 100MW Data Center in Ajman – A significant addition to the UAE's expanding digital infrastructure.
- Palm Jebel Ali Luxury Villas – A large-scale residential development shaping the luxury housing market.
- Abu Dhabi Sphere Entertainment Complex – A landmark entertainment project aligning with the UAE's tourism and leisure vision.
- Dubai Metro Blue Line – A major urban mobility initiative enhancing connectivity across Dubai.

Industry Trends & Technological Advancements

- Digitalisation & Efficiency – The adoption of Building Information Modeling (BIM) and advanced digital tools has become more prevalent, streamlining project execution and collaboration.
- Sustainability & Green Building Initiatives – With a strong push towards environmental responsibility, energy-efficient solutions and sustainable MEP designs are now a priority, aligning with both regional regulations and global sustainability goals.

Energi People's commitment to the region continues and we have been busy this year, see some examples below:



MARKET INSIGHTS 2025

Emerging Opportunities

Infrastructure Growth & Mega-Projects

Significant projects such as Saudi Arabia's NEOM and the UAE's smart city initiatives will create new opportunities for MEP contractors, engineers, and consultants. As governments continue to invest in large-scale infrastructure, demand for high-quality MEP design and execution is set to rise.

Renewable Energy & Sustainable Design

A regional shift towards renewable energy is accelerating, with increased investments in solar and wind power integration within MEP frameworks. Industry professionals with expertise in sustainable energy systems will be highly sought after.

Smart Building Technologies & IoT Integration

The growing implementation of Internet of Things (IoT) solutions in building management systems is creating demand for MEP firms to develop innovative, data-driven solutions that enhance building performance, energy efficiency, and occupant comfort.

Regulatory Changes & Compliance

Governments are tightening building codes and energy efficiency regulations, requiring MEP professionals to remain up-to-date with compliance standards. This creates new opportunities for consultancy, training, and compliance-focused services.

Talent Shortages & Workforce Strategies

The MEP sector faces a critical talent gap, particularly at Principal to Associate Director levels for professionals with regional expertise. This shortage is most pronounced in the data center sector, where demand for technical specialists with in-country experience far outweighs available talent.

As a result, we strongly encourage clients to consider international talent acquisition to bridge these gaps and sustain project momentum. Looking beyond the local talent pool will be essential for maintaining competitiveness and ensuring project success in 2025 and beyond.



AVERAGE SALARIES Per Month (pm)

The data below is collated from our own placement records and research, combined with information clients and candidates across the UAE have kindly provided us with.

The salaries span across the full MEP disciplines & reflect large international multi-disciplinary, specialist MEP design consultants and locally owned consultants.

You will note the large bandings highlights the disparity in salaries across the region dependant on size of company

Junior Engineer

10,000 - 15,000 AED/pm

0-3yrs experience

Intermediate Engineer

15,000 - 20,000 AED/pm

3-5yrs experience

Senior Engineer

25,000 - 30,000 AED/pm

7-12yrs experience

Principal Engineer

33,000 - 36,000 AED/pm

10-15yrs experience

Associate Engineer

40,000 - 47,000 AED/pm

12+yrs experience

Associate Director

45,000 - 65,000 AED/pm

13+yrs experience

Technical Director

60,000 - 72,000 AED/pm

20+yrs experience

Director

65,000 - 90,000 AED/pm

20+yrs experience

Note: The above salaries are indicative only and subject to experience, location etc. plus benefits.

WHAT CANDIDATES LOOK FOR

In today's competitive UAE job market, attractive salaries alone aren't enough to secure top talent. Candidates are increasingly looking for more holistic packages that address both professional growth and personal wellbeing. Here's what stands out as essential in the eyes of professionals in the UAE:

Health and Family Wellbeing

Non-negotiable for most candidates. Premium health insurance for the employee is expected, with many professionals, particularly those in senior roles, also seeking coverage that extends to immediate family members.

Travel and Mobility

Employees expect annual return flights home as a standard benefit, with family flights being a significant attraction at managerial and senior levels. Candidates will also look favourably on visa sponsorship for themselves, and increasingly, for their families as well. Employers who simplify this process are more attractive to potential hires., especially those from outside the region.

Work-Life Balance

This has become a major factor post-pandemic. Candidates increasingly prefer employers offering remote or hybrid work options to support their lifestyle and family commitments.

Incentives and Rewards

Professionals are drawn to companies where they have clear, achievable company and individual targets that link directly to bonus structures, creating a tangible connection between effort and reward.

Supportive Relocation Policies

Offering relocation assistance isn't just a perk—it's often a deciding factor, especially for international candidates. Covering moving expenses, temporary accommodation, and initial setup costs can set an employer apart from competitors.

Career Growth and Professional Development

Employers that invest in ongoing professional development through sponsored certifications, training programmes, and clear career progression paths significantly increase their appeal. Also upskilling your workforce helps hugely with retention and only benefits the business with increased project skills

Important Job Benefits in UAE

WE ASKED MEP ENGINEERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: WHAT BENEFITS ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU WHEN CONSIDERING A JOB OFFER?

BENEFIT ONE Family Status

Visa or Medical cover for immediate family

38%

BENEFIT TWO Flexible Working

flexible hours to suit family commitments

17%

BENEFIT THREE Annual Leave

More leave to fly home and see friends and family

4%

BENEFIT FOUR Don't Mind - Higher Salary

A higher salary is always welcome but not always the most important to everyone

38%

In short, candidates today seek employers who understand that competitive benefits go beyond financial incentives—addressing professional aspirations, lifestyle flexibility, and family welfare makes an organisation stand out as an employer of choice.

2025 and Beyond

Whilst Saudi Arabia continues to dominate headlines with ambitious mega-projects, the UAE - especially Abu Dhabi - is experiencing a significant resurgence, firmly positioning itself as a hub for growth and innovation in the MEP sector. This renewed activity is fuelled by major infrastructure investments, landmark developments, and particularly, a substantial boom in data centre projects. As digital transformation accelerates across the region, the UAE has emerged as a key player, with developments like the 100MW Data Centre in Ajman underscoring the country's commitment to expanding its digital infrastructure.

However, this rapid growth presents a clear and immediate challenge: the local talent pool, especially skilled engineers and specialists required for complex projects like data centres, is no where near enough to meet demand. The resulting talent shortage - most pronounced at senior and technical leadership levels - necessitates proactive recruitment strategies that look beyond local borders. Employers must actively consider attracting and integrating international talent to sustain this momentum and ensure project delivery timelines and quality standards are met.

As the industry grows, corporate social responsibility, including Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, should remain a priority. Many companies are increasingly committed to diversifying their workforce by hiring more female engineers and leaders, recognising this as essential for innovation and competitiveness. However, significant efforts are still required to tackle existing stereotypes and biases, starting from educational initiatives aimed at inspiring a new, diverse generation of STEM professionals from an early age.

Lastly, attracting talent is only one part of the equation; retention is equally critical. Competitive salary packages must now be complemented by comprehensive employee wellbeing programmes, flexible working conditions, and genuine opportunities for career progression. Employers who successfully adapt to these evolving expectations will not only secure but retain the best talent, positioning themselves as industry leaders in a hugely competitive market.

James Mowat
Managing Director, EMEA



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Managing Director, EMEA

James is Managing Director, EMEA at Energi People with over 20 years of recruitment experience in the built environment, in particular MEP Building Services Engineering across the whole project lifecycle, within the UK, MENA & APAC regions. His experience includes recruiting teams of engineers across the full project lifecycles on some of the world's most iconic buildings; NEOM, Qaddiya, The Line, The Burj Khalifa, Dubai Airport, SIDRA Medical & Research Centre in Qatar and Fvarious hyperscale & colocation data centers throughout the UK, MENA & APAC to name a few.

James is also responsible for driving Energi People's values, and quality of services to clients across the globe, including 360 recruitment - contingency, retained and headhunting - whilst leading the company's permanent recruitment team. As a testament to his industry expertise and strong reputation in the MENA MEP sector, James has served as a judge for several prestigious awards, including the 2023 CBN MEP Middle East Awards, the CIBSE UAE Awards in 2024, and the MEP Middle East Awards for the past three consecutive years.



Bringing **technical** people together

Middle East and North Africa
e. james.mowat@energipeople.com
t. +44 2079 839 030

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www.energipeople.com
Tel: +44 (0) 1252 413080