

# Support Functions

## Operations and IT

At EDB, operational excellence and technological strength are the foundations that enable the Bank to deliver on its national mission. In 2024, the Operations & IT teams worked behind the scenes — yet at the very heart of progress — driving system upgrades, platform launches, cybersecurity enhancements, and infrastructure growth that allowed the Bank to scale, innovate, and serve the UAE's evolving needs.

### Banking platform

A key highlight of EDB's digital transformation journey in 2024 was the successful launch of the SmartConnect Cash Management platform — a milestone in modernising the Bank's service offering for business clients.

Launched in the first quarter of the year, SmartConnect was designed to streamline and simplify cash flow management, offering businesses a secure, digital-first way to manage transactions, liquidity, and payments in real time.

The initial phase introduced seven new cash management products, including Bill Payments, Wage Protection System (WPS) services, Cash Collections, Payment Gateway integration, Corporate Cards, and Blue Collar Salaries.

Alongside this, 10 new platform features were rolled out, significantly extending the Bank's ability to meet a broader range of client needs with greater flexibility and convenience.

By the end of 2024, SmartConnect had successfully onboarded 50 clients, executing approximately 30 transactions per month with an electronic throughput (eThroughput) of approximately 7–8 million AED per month — establishing a strong foundation for scaling digital transaction services into 2025 and beyond.

A key digital transformation highlight was the successful launch of the **SmartConnect Cash Management** platform.

**50** new clients  
successfully onboarded

Circa **30**  
transactions per month

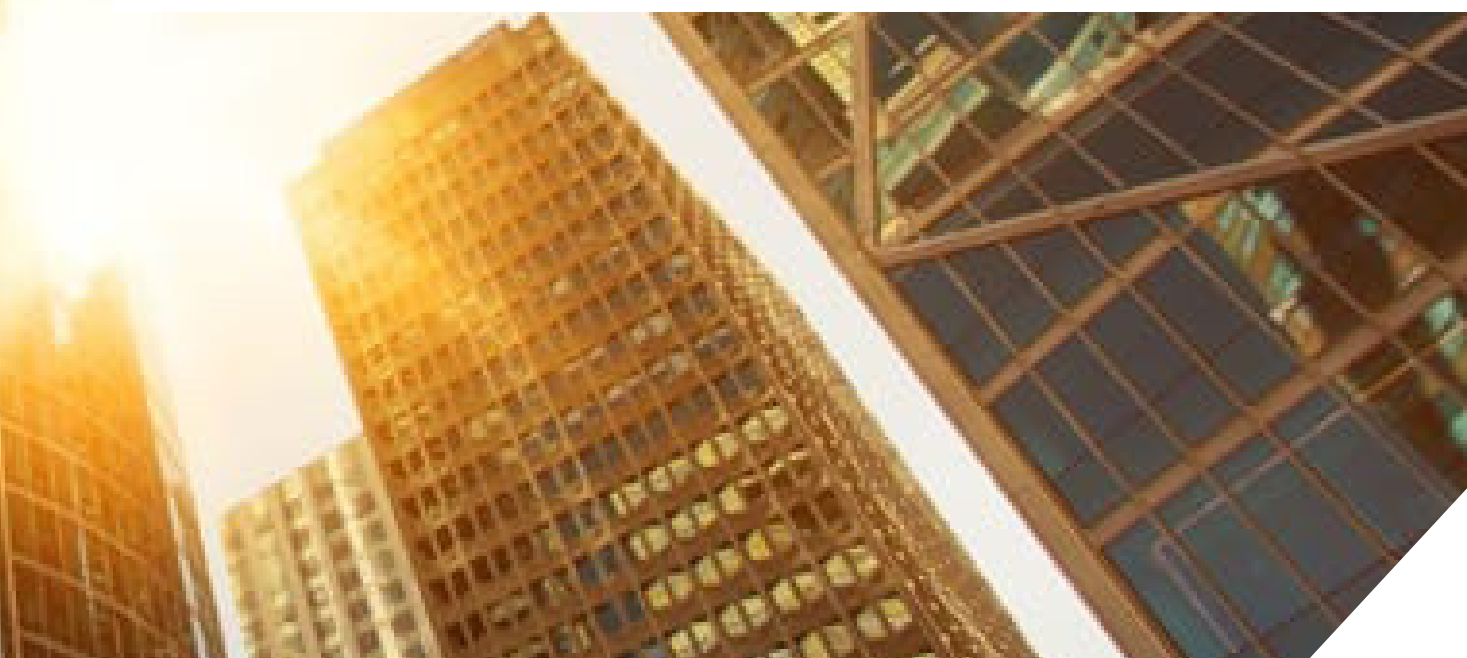
AED **7-8**mn  
per month eThroughput

## Trade finance

In 2024, EDB took a significant step in strengthening its Trade Finance capabilities, bringing new breadth and depth to the Bank's service offering for industrial and institutional clients.

The division successfully operationalised the Trade Finance platform, introducing 10 new trade and working capital products to better support client needs — from supply chain financing to liquidity management solutions. This expansion enabled the Industrial Finance unit to enhance cross-selling opportunities, deepen client relationships, and diversify income streams across key sectors.

To support the rollout, the team launched a new suite of Trade Finance applications and updated the Bank's operational framework — introducing revised terms and conditions, tariffs, and standard operating procedures to ensure consistency, compliance, and ease of use for clients and teams alike.



# Support Functions continued

## Operations and IT continued

### Centre of excellence and enterprise project management office

In 2024, EDB sharpened its focus on operational excellence, with the Centre of Excellence (CoE) and the Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) working hand in hand to drive best practices across every corner of the Bank.

The CoE concentrated on three core pillars: Service Delivery, Customer Experience, and Operational Excellence — each designed to enhance internal efficiency, improve customer outcomes, and embed a culture of continuous improvement.



For **Service Delivery**, the CoE reviewed and streamlined process flows, driving efforts to reduce turnaround times and enhance service responsiveness.



In **Customer Experience**, the focus was both reactive and proactive — managing complaints, gathering survey feedback, and implementing best-in-class initiatives. Using Net Promoter Score (NPS) surveys, mystery shopper programmes, and inter-departmental scoring methodologies, the CoE created a dynamic system for assessing and improving client satisfaction.



Under **Operational Excellence**, audits were conducted to minimise redundancies, remove workflow bottlenecks, and optimise document management across both back-office and client-facing operations.

To underpin these efforts, the CoE established a centralised knowledge repository in 2024 — a structured hub containing the Bank's key processes, policies, and operational documentation.

Every new product or initiative launched now requires the creation of associated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Service Level Agreements (SLAs), Business Requirement Documents (BRDs), and Change Requests (CRs) — with issues tracked and resolved systematically.

In parallel, the Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) continued to oversee all major projects across the Bank. Operating independently, the EPMO applied advanced project management methodologies, providing weekly visibility reports to the Executive Committee to ensure leadership oversight and alignment with strategic objectives.

The CoE also played a key role in enhancing internal collaboration by establishing service-level agreements between back-office teams and key client-facing divisions, including Wholesale & Institutional Banking (WIB) and mSME Banking.

## Performance and security

In 2024, the Operations & IT division reinforced one of EDB's most critical priorities: ensuring operational resilience and security evolve alongside the Bank's growth.

The year began with a focus on strengthening cybersecurity capabilities, expanding the Bank's cyber team and conducting a phishing awareness campaign across the organisation. Staff received lessons-learned feedback and follow-up sessions, building greater awareness and readiness across all business units.

A major milestone came in October, when EDB achieved ISO/IEC 27001:2022 certification for its Information Security Management System — reaffirming the Bank's commitment to regulatory compliance, cyber risk mitigation, and secure financial operations.

In December, the IT team conducted its annual health check of Core Banking Systems, optimising performance and ensuring that critical platforms remain robust and future-ready. This was complemented by a series of disaster recovery simulations — deliberately shutting down and restoring key systems to validate EDB's ability to respond quickly and effectively to operational disruptions.

Beyond resilience, 2024 was a year of technological transformation. The division accelerated the integration of Robotic Process Automation (RPA), automating ten key processes across the Bank.

The impact has been tangible:

**100%** **accuracy** in transactional processing

**30%** **reduction** in process times

**AED 1+ million** **cost savings** annually

**690+ mins** per day **redirected from manual tasks** to strategy and customers

RPA has proven to be a powerful enabler, allowing the Bank to operate with greater precision, speed, and scalability, in line with its digital-first ambitions.



**Information Security Management System (ISO/IEC 27001:2022)**

# Support Functions continued

## Operations and IT continued

### Transforming reconciliation through automation

WIB is leveraging Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to revolutionise the Bank Reconciliation process by replacing manual workflows that were once slow, labour-intensive, and prone to error.

The automated solution extracts data from multiple systems and statements, including EDB's Core Banking platform, Transact T24. It compares transactions, identifies mismatches, and generates reconciliation reports with precision.

This transformation has dramatically improved operational efficiency, reducing turnaround time from four hours per day to under 15 minutes, while significantly enhancing accuracy, reliability, and scalability across the Bank's reconciliation operations.

### Performance measurement

In 2024, WIB advanced its service quality agenda through three core initiatives:

- 1 Net Promoter Score (NPS)** to capture and respond to real-time customer feedback trends.
- 2 Inter-Departmental Surveys (IDS)** to strengthen collaboration between teams, identify service gaps, and enhance internal communication.
- 3 Mystery Shopper Programs** to independently audit service delivery, ensuring consistency and uncovering targeted training needs.

These tools, combined with regular tracking through an intranet dashboard and quarterly reporting, help ensure that service excellence is systemic, measurable, and transparent.

Beyond customer experience, EDB reinforced its operational resilience credentials in 2024 by achieving ISO 27031 certification for the fifth

consecutive year — a strong endorsement of the Bank's commitment to ICT Readiness for Business Continuity that affirms EDB's capability to protect its critical operations against disruption risks.

In addition, IT conducted a comprehensive security assessment of the Bank's infrastructure, identifying areas for further reinforcement and strengthening EDB's multilayered cybersecurity defences — ensuring that as the Bank grows, its resilience grows even stronger.

### Headquarters expansion

In the first quarter of 2024, the Operations & IT division expanded its physical footprint by doubling its office space at EDB's Dubai headquarters, consolidating its teams into a single, integrated unit. This expansion was designed to support the division's growing responsibilities across infrastructure, digital platforms, and service delivery, enabling closer collaboration and greater operational efficiency.





## Looking ahead

### Operations

As EDB moves into 2025, the Operations team will continue to focus on building a stronger, more agile foundation to support the Bank's long-term strategic ambitions.

Aligned with EDB's four strategic priorities for the year ahead, the Centre of Excellence (CoE) will establish four specialised working groups, led by senior managers from across divisions.

These groups will be tasked with defining and documenting operational policies, procedures, and workflows — creating a structured framework to enhance efficiency, consistency, and scalability for current initiatives and future growth.

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Alongside this, Operations will continue to maintain and expand the back-office IT infrastructure that underpins all of EDB's platforms.

The goal is to deliver an even more seamless experience for clients as they access an increasingly diverse range of financial and non-financial services — including future value-added offerings such as tax management, human resources management, and customer relationship management (CRM) services.

### IT

In 2025, the IT division will continue building the digital foundations needed to support EDB's next phase of growth, innovation, and operational resilience.

A key milestone will be the launch of Phase Two of SmartConnect in the first half of the year — expanding the platform's capabilities to offer even greater functionality, control, and client experience.

At the same time, IT will deepen EDB's use of intelligent automation by expanding the integration of bots to improve operational efficiency, while laying the groundwork for broader adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and analytical applications across the Bank.

Two specific AI use cases will be prioritised in 2025:

- 1 Credit decisioning**, reducing turnaround times for credit approvals and improving customer responsiveness.
- 2 Recruitment review and selection**, enhancing the speed, accuracy, and objectivity of candidate screening and hiring processes.

Another major focus will be the development of a comprehensive cloud strategy. The Bank will assess options for transitioning its data centre hosting from its current on-premises environment to a public, private, or hybrid cloud solution — evaluating each model's impact on customer experience, operational efficiency, cost management, security, and resilience.