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AI data centres in the Middle East and North Africa: energy, water and cost

What is being built, what it takes in electricity and water, what it costs, where the numbers disagree, and the experts to ask.

Prepared by Rawad and our team at the request of Ricardo Khoury. Every figure carries a numbered source (list at the end). Where we did our own arithmetic from published figures, it is marked “our calculation”.

Energy
How much electricity the new AI data centres need, and what share of national power that is.

Water
How data centres use water, why published estimates differ so much, and what it means for the Gulf.

Cost
What it costs to build and run them here, compared with other regions, and who disagrees.

The answer in eleven points

1. **The world's data centres are doubling their electricity use.** 415 TWh in 2024 (about 1.5% of global electricity), up 17% in 2025, and about 945 TWh by 2030 in the IEA's base case: just under 3% of world electricity.[1,2]

2. **The Gulf is a small share of that today, growing fast.** UAE data centres used about 3 TWh in 2025, 2% of the country's electricity.[18] Saudi data centres used about 2.8 TWh in 2024 (0.85%); by 2030 that becomes 10 to 42 TWh, between 2.8% and 11.6% of national demand, depending on how much AI is built.[4]

3. **What is announced is far larger than what runs.** Saudi Arabia had 476 MW operational in early 2026[15]; the region's third-party capacity is about 500 MW, forecast to reach about 1.5 GW by 2030.[16] Announced projects are counted in gigawatts: a 5 GW campus in Abu Dhabi[30], 1.9 GW targeted by HUMAIN by 2030 and 6 to 6.6 GW by 2034.[13]

4. **North Africa is at an earlier stage, with tighter power and water.** Egypt has about 60 MW of data centres running[40] and Morocco 1.5 MW[37], against plans of hundreds of megawatts in each. Egypt makes about 80% of its electricity from gas, increasingly imported,[39] and has about 500 m^3 of water per person a year, half the UN water-poverty line.[47] Morocco still makes most of its electricity from coal[50] and is turning to desalination for its drinking water.[52]

5. **Heat costs energy.** Saudi data centres average a PUE of about 1.5 (range 1.5 to 1.8), against about 1.1 for AI facilities in cool climates: so a Gulf site needs about 35% to 65% more electricity for the same computing (our calculation from [4]).

6. **Most of a data centre's water is not used on site.** About half of the water across the data-centre value chain goes into generating its electricity, about 30% into on-site cooling, the rest into fuel supply and manufacturing.[5]

7. **Published water figures differ by about twenty times because they count different things.** Direct cooling only: 222 billion litres worldwide in 2025.[7] Cooling plus power plus chips: 560 billion litres in 2023.[11] A wider “water footprint” of the electricity: 4.5 trillion litres in 2025.[5] Ask any expert which one they mean.

8. **In the Gulf the water risk is security, not price.** Most Gulf countries rely on desalination for 70% or more of their drinking water, and Iranian strikes have hit desalination plants in Bahrain and Kuwait during the Iran war.[11] Gulf power plants are mostly cooled with seawater.[11]

9. **Building is cheapest in the Middle East.** About $9.20 per watt in the UAE, $9.80 in Qatar and $10.80 in Saudi Arabia, against $12 to $13 in Europe, Asia and North America (2026).[14] Industrial power costs about $0.05 to $0.07 per kWh in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.[19,4]

10. **The cost advantage is debated.** A December 2025 study estimates the total cost of a 100 MW data centre is similar in the US and the UAE.[20] KAPSARC finds that how fully the machines are used matters more to cost than the electricity price.[4]

11. **The prize is large, and so is the planning task.** The World Economic Forum estimates AI could unlock more than $1 trillion in value across MENA by 2030, if power, water and data-centre capacity keep pace.[10] The UAE's own report calls for water to be planned together with energy and AI, ahead of the UN Water Conference it co-hosts in Abu Dhabi on 8 to 10 December 2026.[5]

Start here: the studies to read first

1. **IEA, Energy and AI (2025) and Key Questions on Energy and AI (2026).** The world baseline for data-centre electricity and the scenarios to 2035.[1,2]
2. **IEA, Powering Artificial Intelligence (2026).** Where AI capacity sits against water stress, and the water used upstream in power.[3]
3. **KAPSARC, AI and Energy: The Future of Data Centers in Saudi Arabia (December 2025).** The most detailed national study in the region: capacity, electricity, emissions and cost.[4]
4. **UAE Mission to the UN with Eurasia Group, Crosscurrents (October 2026).** The AI, water and energy link for the region, with five recommendations.[5]
5. **UN University (UNU-INWEH), Environmental Cost of AI's Energy Use (June 2026).** The carbon, water and land footprint of AI's electricity, by source.[6]
6. **Turner & Townsend, Data Centre Construction Cost Index (2026).** What it costs to build, market by market.[14]
7. **For North Africa: BMI (Fitch Solutions) on Morocco (June 2026) and Enterprise on Egypt (September and October 2026).** The running and announced capacity in each country.[37,39,40]

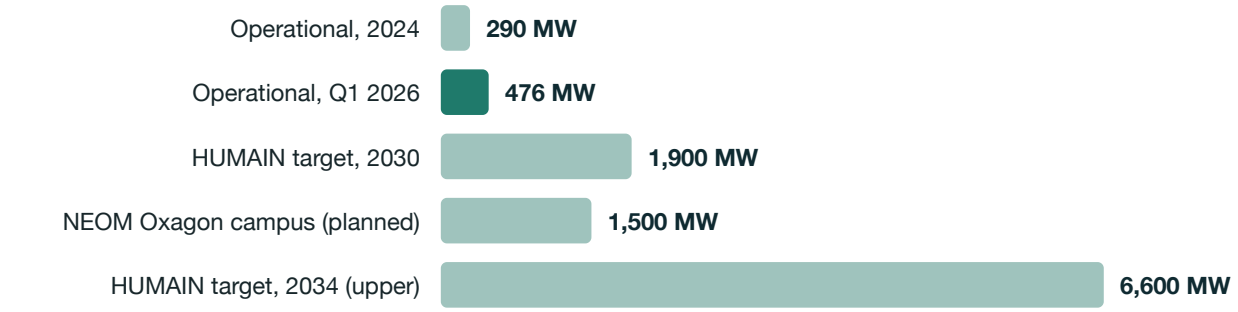
1. What is being built

The region's ambitions are measured in gigawatts, but the capacity actually running is still counted in hundreds of megawatts. Deloitte stresses the gap between capacity “announced” and capacity “built, commissioned and carrying customer load”: a project can be fully funded and permitted and still be a year away from carrying load.[15]

Country / project	Running today	Announced or targeted
Saudi Arabia	290.5 MW of IT capacity in 58 facilities (2024)[4]; 476 MW operational in Q1 2026, seven times 2021[15]	HUMAIN: up to 1.9 GW by 2030, 6.0 to 6.6 GW by 2034[13] (another report gives about 3 GW by 2030[11]). NEOM Oxagon AI campus: 1.5 GW planned, first 300 MW from 2028[4]
UAE	400+ MW of colocation capacity, the largest in the GCC[17]	UAE-US AI Campus, Abu Dhabi: 5 GW site; Stargate UAE 1 GW cluster, first 200 MW due in 2026[30,15]
Region (third-party capacity)	About 500 MW[16]	About 1.5 GW by 2030[16]; UAE and Saudi Arabia to add 2 to 3 GW of IT power by 2030 and hold over 80% of the region's capacity[13]
Morocco	14 data centres, 1.5 MW in operation (Q2 2026); 140 MW under construction[37]	$1.2 billion AI data centre: 40 MW first phase, up to 500 MW[31]; a 500 MW green campus planned at Dakhla[32]
Egypt	14 data centres, about 60 MW[40]	A $1 billion data-centre project agreed in September 2026 by Vodafone Business, Cassava Technologies and Elsewedy Electric[33]; plans of 400 to 500 MW in all, not yet funded[39] (section 5)

Scale check: S&P Global puts the UAE and Saudi Arabia's combined share of the world's data-centre IT power at under 2%.[13]

Saudi Arabia: operational capacity versus targets (MW)



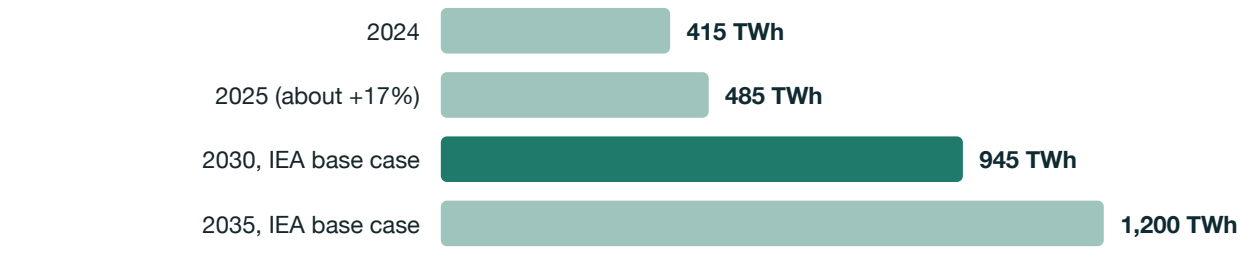
Sources: KAPSARC [4]; Deloitte [15]; S&P Global via Khaleej Times [13].

2. Energy

The global picture

The IEA estimates data centres used about 415 TWh in 2024, around 1.5% of the world's electricity, growing 12% a year over the previous five years.[1] Demand rose 17% in 2025, and faster still for AI-focused data centres.[2] In the IEA base case, consumption reaches about 945 TWh by 2030 (just under 3% of world electricity) and about 1,200 TWh by 2035.[1] AI-focused data centres grow much faster than the rest: their electricity use triples over the period.[2] The United States (45% in 2024), China (25%) and Europe (15%) dominate today.[1]

World data-centre electricity use (TWh)



Sources: IEA [1], [2]. 2025 is about 485 TWh (415 TWh plus 17%); another UN report uses 448 TWh for 2025 [6].

What it means for Gulf grids

UAE. The country used about 173 TWh of electricity in 2025, of which data centres took about 3 TWh, or 2%.[18] Data-centre demand is expected to reach about 6 TWh by 2030, double 2025.[17]

Saudi Arabia. KAPSARC's December 2025 paper is the most detailed public study for the region.[4] Data centres used about 2.8 TWh in 2024 (0.85% of national electricity). By 2030:

KAPSARC scenario, 2030	Capacity	Electricity	Share of national demand	With efficiency measures
Baseline (little AI)	about 1,050 MW	10.16 TWh	2.79%	—
Moderate growth	about 2,000 MW	20.15 TWh	—	17.62 TWh
High growth	about 4,100 MW	42.23 TWh	11.55%	36.76 TWh

Source: KAPSARC [4]. Efficiency measures cut demand by about 13%, up to about 5 TWh a year in the high case. Emissions in 2030 range from 5.8 to 24.0 Mt of CO_2 on a fossil grid; meeting the 50% renewables target cuts that by about 68% (24.0 to 7.7 Mt in the high case).[4]

Heat: the efficiency penalty

Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) measures how much electricity a site needs in total for each unit used by its computers. Existing Saudi data centres average about 1.5 (range 1.5 to 1.8); AI facilities in cool climates run at about 1.1, and the best recorded value is 1.028.[4] Across the world, cooling takes from about 7% of a data centre's electricity in efficient hyperscale sites to over 30% in less efficient ones.[1] Our calculation: at a PUE of 1.5 to 1.8, a Gulf site needs about 35% to 65% more electricity than a cool-climate site at 1.1 for the same computing. KAPSARC still finds Saudi Arabia cost-competitive at a PUE of 1.6 to 1.8.[4]

Where the power comes from

The UAE's renewable capacity grew 117% between 2022 and 2025 to more than 7.7 GW, with a target of over 23 GW by 2031; Abu Dhabi targets 60% of its energy from renewable and clean sources by 2035.[5] Saudi Arabia targets 50% renewables.[4] The UAE is investing heavily in nuclear energy to power data centres.[13] The World Economic Forum notes MENA can connect new data centres to the grid within two to five years, faster than mature markets, but warns this advantage could erode if data centres cannot absorb volatile AI loads without destabilising power and water systems.[10]

3. Water

How a data centre uses water

- **On site, for cooling.** Servers are cooled either by chilling air blown over them or, increasingly in the Gulf, by running cold treated water through plates that sit directly on the chips.[11] Evaporative cooling typically consumes one to three cubic metres of water per megawatt-hour of computing, most in the hot months.[9]
- **Off site, for electricity.** Thermal power plants need cooling water. About half of the water across the data-centre value chain goes into generating electricity, about 30% into on-site cooling.[5] The World Economic Forum estimates 72% of a data centre's water consumption happens off site.[9]
- **In chips and construction.** Semiconductor manufacturing is especially water-intensive[5], and building large data centres uses fresh water for concrete, dust control and preparing cooling systems.[11]

The Gulf difference. Gulf power plants are mostly cooled with seawater, which is not in short supply.[11] So the global rule that “most of the water is in the electricity” matters less here; what matters is the fresh water used for cooling on site, which in the Gulf usually comes from desalination or from treated wastewater.

Why the published numbers disagree

Three serious sources give three very different world totals, because they measure different things:

Source	What it counts	Now	2030
Rystad Energy[7,8]	Direct cooling water only	222 billion litres (2025)	644 billion litres with no action; 388 billion with aggressive saving
IEA[11]	Cooling, plus water for the electricity and the chips	560 billion litres (2023)	about 1,200 billion litres
UAE “Crosscurrents” / UN University[5,6]	Wider water footprint of the electricity and cooling	4.5 trillion litres (2025)	9.32 trillion litres; AI's part about 3.7 trillion

The same question, three scopes: data-centre water worldwide, 2030 (billion litres)



Rystad's head of data-centre research: consumption “varies significantly depending on cooling technology, climate and whether we measure water withdrawn or water actually consumed”.[8]

The wider the scope, the larger the number. The UN University report measures the full water footprint of the electricity, by source, and warns that “low-carbon” is not automatically “low-water”: switching from coal to bioenergy, for example, can cut the carbon footprint of electricity by about 70% while increasing its water footprint more than thirty-fold.[6]

The Gulf in numbers

- **Desalination.** Most Gulf countries rely on desalination for 70% or more of their drinking water, and all GCC countries fall below the WHO water-scarcity line.[11] MENA hosts over 40% of the world's desalination capacity, the GCC alone 33%.[29] In 2016, desalination supplied 3% of the Middle East's water but used 5% of its total energy.[28]
- **Real operator data (UAE).** Khazna Data Centers (G42), with 30 facilities in the UAE[5], used about 393,000 m³ of water in 2025 across its owned facilities; 305,116 m³ went to cooling, of which about four litres in five were potable and one in five recycled. Its DXB1 site in Dubai is cooled with treated sewage effluent; air-based cooling is its main method.[12]
- **Market estimates.** One market-research firm estimates UAE data-centre water use rising from about 24 to 61 billion litres between 2025 and 2030, and Saudi Arabia's from about 20 to 88 billion litres.[11] These are far above Khazna's published 0.39 billion litres and are unexplained in the sources we read; treat them as unverified estimates.
- **Hot days.** Water demand from evaporative cooling can spike six to ten times above average on the hottest days; researchers ask developers to report peak use, not only annual totals.[23]
- **Exposure.** The IEA finds that nearly 40% of identified AI data-centre capacity worldwide is in areas of high or extremely high water stress.[3] The UAE's report finds MENA has the highest projected water stress for 2030 and among the greatest overlap between water stress and data centres.[5]
- **Security.** Iranian strikes have hit desalination plants in Bahrain and Kuwait during the Iran war.[11]

The cooling trade-off: water or electricity

Cooling choices trade water for electricity.[3] Rystad estimates that dry cooling saves about 2.15 litres of water per kWh of computing but needs an extra 0.30 to 0.74 kWh of electricity.[8] The UAE report ranks evaporative cooling as low energy but high water, closed-loop liquid cooling as moderate energy and low water, and air-side cooling as high energy with minimal water.[5]

OUR CALCULATION: IN THE GULF, WHICH COSTS MORE ENERGY?

Desalinating 2.15 litres of seawater takes about 0.003 to 0.011 kWh, at 1.55 kWh/m³ (Saudi record, 2026) to 5 kWh/m³ (conventional plants: 4 to 5).[27] Dry cooling spends 0.30 to 0.74 kWh to save the same 2.15 litres.[8] So, measured in energy alone, cooling with desalinated water uses roughly 30 to 220 times less electricity than dry cooling. In the Gulf the case against water cooling is therefore about water security, peak demand and brine, not about energy.

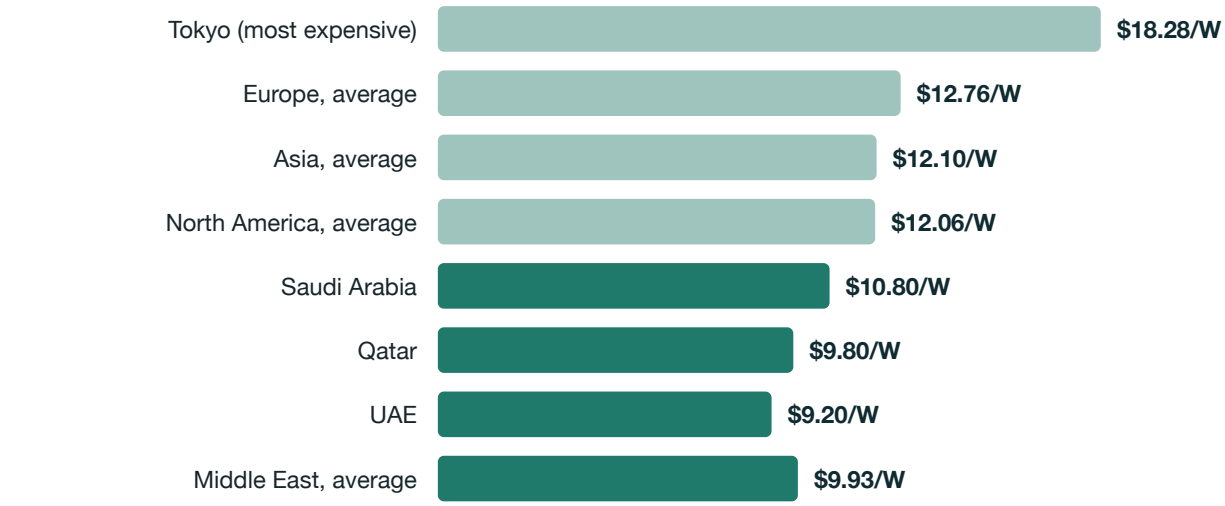
What is already being done

- **Treated wastewater.** Qatar and several other GCC countries have shown major cooling systems can run on non-potable water; about 82% of the region's wastewater is never collected or treated, a resource still largely unused.[24]
- **Liquid cooling.** Several Gulf operators are testing liquid and other high-efficiency cooling that could cut cooling water by up to 90%.[24] Khazna's planned 100 MW AI facility in Ajman uses direct-to-chip liquid cooling.[12]
- **Planning.** The UAE's report recommends a voluntary global declaration on water use in AI, linking permits to local water and energy realities, transparent reporting of direct and indirect use, low-water technologies, and water risk in siting and investment decisions.[5]

4. Cost

Building

Data-centre construction cost, 2026 (US$ per watt)



Source: Turner & Townsend Data Centre Construction Cost Index, 10th edition, 2026 [14]. Larger AI facilities carry a cost premium from labour shortages and delivery risk.

451 Research expects average build costs of about $11 million per MW in the UAE and $13 million in Saudi Arabia over 2026 to 2030, against $12 million in Europe and $13 million in North America.[13] These figures are for the building and its power and cooling, not the computers inside. For scale: HUMAIN's plan for 500 MW of AMD hardware is worth about $10 billion[21], which is about $20 million per MW (our calculation), more than the building.

Running

Industrial electricity costs about $0.05 to $0.07 per kWh in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.[19] Saudi Arabia's cloud-computing tariff is 18 halalah per kWh (about $0.048) and its industrial tariff 20 halalah (about $0.053).[4] KAPSARC finds that utilisation and hardware efficiency have the largest effect on the cost of computing; tariffs and PUE have a moderate effect. Doubling electricity to $96/MWh at a PUE of 1.7 raises costs by at least 10%, and further tariff cuts would bring little benefit.[4]

OUR CALCULATION: ONE MEGAWATT OF COMPUTING IN THE GULF, FOR ONE YEAR

Electricity	1 MW × 8,760 hours × PUE 1.5 = about 13,140 MWh[4]
Electricity bill	at $48 to $53 per MWh: about $630,000 to $700,000 a year[4]
Cooling water, if evaporative	about 9 to 26 million litres (1 to 3 m³ per MWh)[9]; KAPSARC uses 25 to 30 million litres[4]
Energy to desalinate that water	at 1.55 to 5 kWh/m³: about 14 to 150 MWh, or 0.1% to 1.1% of the site's electricity[27]
Price of that water	at $0.28 to $0.53 per m³ (Gulf desalination tariffs awarded since 2020)[25,26]: about $2,400 to $16,000 a year
Building	about $9 to $13 million, once[13,14]; computers about $20 million[21]

Conclusion: for an operator, water is cheap and electricity is the main running cost. For the country, the question is where the water comes from and how secure that supply is.

The counter-view

A study by the Centre for the Governance of AI (December 2025) estimates that the total cost of a hypothetical 100 MW data centre is similar in the US and the UAE. It finds the US keeps structural advantages, including cheaper energy, a more hospitable natural environment and a robust data-centre industry, and concludes that hyperscaler interest in the UAE is likely not driven by an intrinsic cost advantage but by subsidies, business opportunities or hedging against US delays. Its authors call the estimates provisional, as public data is sparse.[20] KAPSARC, in contrast, cites a source finding Saudi AI data centres could have a total cost of ownership up to 30% lower than comparable markets.[4]

The money

- The UAE and Saudi Arabia have committed more than $100 billion to reorient their economies around AI and technology.[11]
- Stargate UAE's 1 GW cluster is backed by up to $10 billion; Microsoft has committed $15.2 billion to UAE data centres since 2023.[17]
- Investment in AI data centres across the GCC is expected to reach $5 to $7 billion in 2026 alone.[22]
- Worldwide, the largest operators are set to spend more than $700 billion of capital in 2026, mostly on new data centres.[3]
- The World Economic Forum, with Bain, estimates AI could unlock more than $1 trillion in economic and sustainability value across MENA by 2030.[10]

5. North Africa: Egypt and Morocco

North Africa is at an earlier stage than the Gulf. The World Economic Forum puts the combined installed data-centre capacity of Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa below 500 MW.[55] In both countries below, the announced megawatts are many times what runs today, and power and water are tighter than in the Gulf. This section does not cover Algeria, Tunisia or Libya.

	Egypt	Morocco
Running	14 data centres, about 60 MW[40]; other estimates give 15 to 60 MW, with about 20 MW of new capacity firmly committed[39]	14 data centres with 1.5 MW in operation (Q2 2026); 140 MW under construction and 400 MW in planning[37]
Announced	Plans of 400 to 500 MW, not yet funded[39]: Africa Data Centres Egypt, 20 MW within three years and up to 200 MW for up to $1 billion[39]; Gulf Data Hub and Elsewedy, up to 192 MW for $2.1 billion[39]; Khazna, 25 MW in Maadi, under an Egypt-UAE agreement for up to 1 GW in phases[39,40]; INTRO's Kemet, 80 MW, $1.2 billion[41]	Iozera in Tetouan, 386 MW for $500 million; Naver's AI hub near Casablanca, 500 MW, first phase 40 MW[37]; Igoudar Dakhla, a 500 MW green campus, studies launched in April 2026[54]; an AI factory in Nouaceur, 36 MW by the end of 2027[32]
Electricity	Natural gas made 81% of the power mix in 2024[42], increasingly imported[39]; power cuts to ration gas began in July 2023[46]. A record 40.2 GW peak was met in August 2026[44]. Renewables' share stood at about 12% from 2020, probably higher in 2025[43]; the target is now 45% by 2028[44], without a published demand forecast to check it against[45]	Coal made 58% of electricity in 2025 and renewables 26%, expected at 52% and 34% by 2030 (IEA figures)[50]. Renewables are 46.1% of the 12,314 MW installed, aiming for 52% by 2030[51]. Grid limits are slowing projects, including in Casablanca; large projects are arranging their own renewable supply[37]
Water	About 500 m³ of water per person a year, half the UN water-poverty line; demand of 88.55 billion m³ against 65.35 billion of renewable resources, with 23.2 billion m³ reused[47]. The Nile gives more than 98% of the fresh water[48]. More than 100 desalination plants make about 1.2 to 1.3 million m³ a day[49]	Desalination gives 25% of drinking water, with a target of 60% by 2030; 17 plants make 345 million m³ a year and four more add 540 million by 2027; all new plants are to run on renewable power[52]. The Casablanca plant is due to start in February 2027[53]

OUR CALCULATION: WHAT THE ANNOUNCED PROJECTS WOULD MEAN

Egypt, electricity	400 to 500 MW run all year at a PUE of 1.5 need about 5.3 to 6.6 TWh a year: about 2% to 2.5% of the 263 TWh Egypt's state power company plans to generate in 2026/27[45], today mostly from gas[42]
Morocco, electricity	A 500 MW campus needs roughly 600 to 750 MW of supply at a PUE of 1.2 to 1.5: about 5% to 6% of Morocco's whole installed capacity[51]. On the grid most power still comes from coal[50], so the emissions depend on the dedicated renewable supply[37]
Water	A 100 MW site with evaporative cooling uses about 0.9 to 2.6 million m³ a year (1 to 3 m³ per MWh)[9]: under 0.01% of Egypt's national water demand[47]. The question is local: where the site draws its water, on the hottest days[23], and the cooling water of the gas and coal plants that power it[5]

6. Risks and open questions

Risk	What the sources say
Announced capacity may not arrive	The gap between announced and running capacity is large[15,16]; HUMAIN says it won't build ahead of demand[11]; KAPSARC recommends sequencing projects to avoid overcapacity and stranded assets.[4]
Water security	Dependence on desalination, and strikes on desalination plants during the Iran war.[11]
Peak demand	Cooling water and electricity both peak on the hottest days.[23] AI loads can create sharp, unpredictable spikes.[10]
Weak data	No standard measure for water; estimates differ by about twenty times (section 3). The UAE's report asks for transparent, comparable reporting.[5] Public statements by UAE and Saudi officials on water have not included formal plans for AI data-centre water use.[11]
North African grids	Grid limits already slow data-centre projects in Casablanca[37]; Egypt rationed power in 2023 to save gas[46] and still makes most of its electricity from gas[42].
Emissions	Saudi data centres could emit up to 24 Mt of CO_2 in 2030 on a fossil grid, or about 7.7 Mt with 50% renewables.[4]
Public acceptance	In the US, 75 major projects worth about $130 billion were blocked or delayed by local opposition in the first quarter of 2026, often over water and power.[9]

Questions worth putting to the experts

1. Which water figure do you use (direct cooling, consumption including power, or full footprint), and why?
2. For a Gulf site, is evaporative cooling with desalinated or treated water better or worse overall than dry or liquid cooling?
3. How much of the announced Gulf capacity do you expect to be running by 2030?
4. What share of national electricity and desalinated water could data centres take in each Gulf country by 2030?
5. Which regulations on water reporting, siting or tariffs are coming in the region?
6. In Egypt and Morocco, where would the power and the cooling water for the announced data centres come from?

7. The experts to ask

All have published work on this subject. We do not know them personally; the routes below are their public institutional channels.

Who	Why them	How to reach
Prof. Kaveh Madani Director, UN University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)	Led the June 2026 UN report on the carbon, water and land footprint of AI's electricity; named 2026 Stockholm Water Prize laureate.[6]	UNU-INWEH, unu.edu/inweh
Dr. Miriam Aczel Researcher, UNU-INWEH	Lead author of the same report: methods and the trade-offs between carbon, water and land.[6]	UNU-INWEH, unu.edu/inweh
Prof. Shaolei Ren Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UC Riverside	A leading researcher on AI's water footprint, including peak-day water demand.[23]	UC Riverside; his email is published on his papers (shaolei@ucr.edu)
Khaled Alshehri Fellow, KAPSARC (Riyadh)	Lead author of the most detailed public study of Saudi data-centre energy, emissions and cost (Dec 2025).[4]	KAPSARC, kapsarc.org
Nick Kraft Senior Analyst for Water and Agriculture, Eurasia Group	Led the research behind the UAE's "Crosscurrents" report on AI, water and energy (Oct 2026).[5]	Eurasia Group
IEA Energy and AI team International Energy Agency, Paris	Authors of the reference global studies (2025 and 2026), including the analysis of AI capacity in water-stressed areas.[1,2,3]	iea.org
Jessica Obeid Founding partner, New Energy Consult (Dubai)	Energy engineer and policy consultant; formerly head of energy transition at SRMG Think, resident fellow at Chatham House and chief energy engineer at UNDP in Beirut. On data centres: the Gulf's competitive advantage will depend on how sustainably it can power and cool them.[11,34]	New Energy Consult; World Economic Forum profile
Dr. Naser Alsayed Gulf water and energy policy researcher	PhD in environmental law and policy (SOAS); writes on Gulf water security for AGSI and the Middle East Institute; quoted as senior fellow at the Fiker Institute, Dubai.[11,35]	AGSI author page; Fiker Institute
Mohammed Soliman Senior fellow, Middle East Institute (Washington)	Technology, geopolitics and business in the region; quoted on the physical limits facing the Gulf's data-centre boom.[36,38]	mei.edu
Youssef Brouziyne Regional representative for MENA, International Water Management Institute (IWMI)	Co-author on MENA's water reality for AI; IWMI works with Saudi Arabia's ministry on treated-water reuse.[24]	IWMI
Dr. Minh Khoi Le Global Head of Data Center and Hydrogen Research, Rystad Energy	Built the global model of data-centre cooling water and the dry-cooling trade-off.[7,8]	Rystad Energy
Alan Coary Director and Data Centre lead for the Middle East, Turner & Townsend	Construction cost of data centres in the region.[14]	Turner & Townsend
Karikari Achireko Director for Corporate Strategy and Global Partnerships, Africa Sustainable Energy Centre (ASEC)	Wrote for the World Economic Forum on whether Africa's power grids are ready for AI data centres.[55]	ASEC; World Economic Forum
Elisabetta Baronio ESG Director, Khazna Data Centers (UAE)	The operator side: published water, energy and climate-risk data for UAE facilities.[12]	Khazna Data Centers

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Prepared by Rawad and our team, 24 November 2026, from published sources available on that date. Figures are as published by each source; where sources disagree, both are shown. Calculations marked “our calculation” combine published figures and are indicative only.