

EXECUTIVE FACTSHEET & INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

GCC Rail Network Progress & Key Freight Lanes (2026 Edition)

A concise status report on physical completion, cross-border freight corridors, technical specifications, and strategic alignment for C-level executives and supply chain directors.

1 National Segment Completion & Timeline Matrix (2026 Status)

COUNTRY / CORRIDOR	LENGTH (EST.)	PHYSICAL PROGRESS	STATUS LEVEL	TARGET OPERATIONAL
United Arab Emirates	684 km (Main)	90%	OPERATIONAL (FREIGHT)	Commercial Operational
UAE–Oman (Hafeet Rail)	238–303 km	45–50%	UNDER TRACK-LAYING	2027–2028 (Proof-of-Concept)
Saudi Arabia Spine	663–672 km	35%	DESIGN / TENDERING	2029–2030
Kuwait Segment	111–145 km	20%	CONSULTANCY SIGNED	2030
Qatar Connection	283 km	15%	PLANNING & ALIGNMENT	2030
Bahrain Link	36 km (inc. Bridge)	10%	FEASIBILITY / DESIGN	2030+

Executive Takeaway: Overall network completion crossed the 50% milestone in mid-2026. The **UAE–Oman Hafeet Rail link** serves as the first active cross-border proof-of-concept, unlocking early rail capacity between Sohar Port and Abu Dhabi industrial zones.

2 Technical Core Specifications & Capacity Parameters

TRACK GAUGE & AXLE LOAD

1,435 mm / 32.4 Tonnes

Standard gauge built for heavy-haul freight and high double-stack container clearance.

FREIGHT TRAIN SPEEDS

80 – 120 km/h

Consistent speed profile across national frontiers to guarantee predictable schedules.

PASSENGER TRAIN SPEEDS

200 – 220 km/h

Designed to share infrastructure with freight utilizing advanced ETCS Level 2 signalling.

PROJECTED FREIGHT VOLUME

200M → 271M Tonnes

Target annual freight volume from Year 1 operation scaling up to 2045.

3 Strategic Analysis: GCC Rail vs. Parallel Logistics Corridors

How the GCC Railway interacts with major national landbridges and international trade transit initiatives.

CORRIDOR / INITIATIVE	PRIMARY GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS	STRATEGIC FUNCTION	INTERACTION WITH GCC RAIL
GCC Railway Network	Kuwait to Oman (Eastern Arabia Coastal Spine)	Intra-GCC trade integration, removing road friction, and linking major free zones and ports.	Core Primary System
Saudi Landbridge	Jeddah (Red Sea) to Dammam (Arabian Gulf)	East-West transcontinental landbridge bypassing maritime routes around Bab al-Mandab.	Highly Complementary: Connects Red Sea ports directly into GCC rail spine.
IMEC & Green Corridors	India – Middle East – Europe Corridor	Intercontinental trade, clean energy (Hydrogen), and digital connectivity infrastructure.	Synergistic Overlay: GCC Rail serves as the physical Middle East rail trunk.

4 Key Commercial Bottlenecks to Watch (2026–2030)

- 1. Customs Union Digital Harmonization:** Physical rails are ahead of policy alignment. Transit speed depends on automatic cross-border electronic data sharing (FASAH, Bayan, Etihad Rail DB).

2. Last-Mile Drayage & Yard Handling Fees: Uncoupling containers at rail ramps introduces secondary trucking and crane fees (LoLo) that must be accounted for in Total Landed Cost models.

3. Interoperability & Signalling Protocols: Uniform deployment of ETCS Level 2 signalling across all six national rail authorities is essential to eliminate locomotive changes at borders.

Model Multimodal Landed Costs on Tendify

Evaluate freight rate differentials, simulate duty charges, and streamline compliant proforma invoices across GCC corridors.

Platform Access