

ICE UAE in-person Learned Event

Built on Trust: Carbon, Certification and the Making of Sustainable Cities

** The event features David Porter (ICE President for 2025–2026) as guest of honour.*

Date: Wednesday, 21 October 2026

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM (with networking & refreshments from 6:00 PM)

Location: Heriot-Watt University Dubai, Knowledge Park

[Click here to register](#)

Event Overview

Organised by the ICE United Arab Emirates, with contributions from speakers from CARES and Expo City Dubai, this session explores the critical role of sustainable infrastructure, innovation and regulatory assurance in shaping the future of the UAE's built environment. Bringing together perspectives from urban development and materials compliance, the event will examine how engineers can deliver infrastructure that supports a growing and prosperous population while addressing climate change, resource efficiency and long-term resilience.

The session will explore key sustainability challenges and opportunities, including energy and carbon impacts, climate resilience, emerging modes of transportation and the development of compact, sustainable urban environments. It will also highlight the increasing importance of embodied carbon in construction materials and demonstrate how sustainable infrastructure principles are being integrated into large-scale developments such as Expo City Dubai.

In parallel, the event will provide an overview of the UAE Steel Regulation and its implications for structural and civil engineers. Attendees will gain insights into evolving requirements for reinforcing steel, including quality assurance, independent conformity assessment, verified environmental performance and digital product traceability. The discussion will examine how certification frameworks, Dynamic QR codes and Digital Product Passports are enhancing transparency, compliance and confidence across the construction supply chain, while setting new benchmarks for sustainability and accountability in the UAE construction sector.

Event Agenda

18.00 Networking and refreshments

18.30 Opening remarks by David Porter – ICE President for 2025 – 2026

18.35 Presentation 1 "Sustainable Infrastructure and Drivers of Innovation" | Speaker Dr Yianni Spanos, Vice President – Sustainability, Expo City Dubai

19.00 Presentation 2 "Engineering Confidence: Understanding the UAE Steel Regulation" | Speaker Lee Brankley – Chief Executive Officer, CARES

19.30 Q & A

20.00 Closing

Speakers

Lee Brankley – Chief Executive Officer, CARES

Lee has enjoyed a long and successful career in the steel industry, joining the Certification Authority for Reinforcing Steels (CARES) more than 30 years ago and rising to become General Manager before his appointment as Chief Executive Officer in 2015. Since then, he has transformed CARES operational capability, built strong relationships among stakeholders and delivered transformational sector-leading digital and sustainability strategies for the steel industry. He has led projects in the design, development and implementation of digital solutions to improve the process of delivering and managing steel supply chains with a focus on digitalisation. Under his leadership CARES now has operations in the UK, Hong Kong, Singapore, the UAE and Australia.



Dr Yianni Spanos, Vice President – Sustainability, Expo City Dubai

As Vice President – Sustainability at Expo City Dubai, Dr Spanos oversees all the Sustainability department's activities, including implementation of new initiatives, reporting and safeguarding the quality of the living environment, with a broader focus on sustainability certifications and decarbonisation. Dr Spanos' leadership is integral to Expo City's role as the UAE's first Green Innovation District, combining his technical expertise with high-level strategic insights to ensure the District's environmental mission remains on track.

A strategy and sustainability leader with more than 20 years' experience in energy transition, climate change and sustainable strategies for major projects, Dr Spanos is known for his ability to develop and deliver advanced solutions that recognise the interconnectedness of different programmes, align technical delivery to budgets, and support stakeholder communication and engagement on sustainability. He has provided consultancy and advisory services for developing projects across sectors such as education, healthcare, hospitality and leisure, renewable energy, sports, real estate and urban planning. Dr Spanos has been in the Arabian Gulf region since 2013, working closely with world event organisers and developers of future global destinations.

A chartered engineer, holding a PhD in Physics from Coventry University and a Global Executive MBA from INSEAD, his undergraduate and postgraduate academic studies focused on engineering, construction management and building services. Dr Spanos is a member of the Energy Institute, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, and the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers.



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