



بنك الإمارات دبي الوطني  
Emirates NBD

## Commodities

5 January 2020

### Oil market highlights

Oil markets snapped back into reality after the start of the New Year as a US airstrike killed a senior Iranian military official. After a 2019 that was peppered with high risk geopolitical events, 2020 appears to be starting as intensely. Benchmark futures prices spiked in response to the news with Brent touching an intraday high of USD 69.50/b and WTI moving up over USD 64/b. Oil futures have gained for eight of the last nine weeks, bolstered by optimism that the China-US trade war would come to an end and now receiving support from a revived geopolitical risk premium.

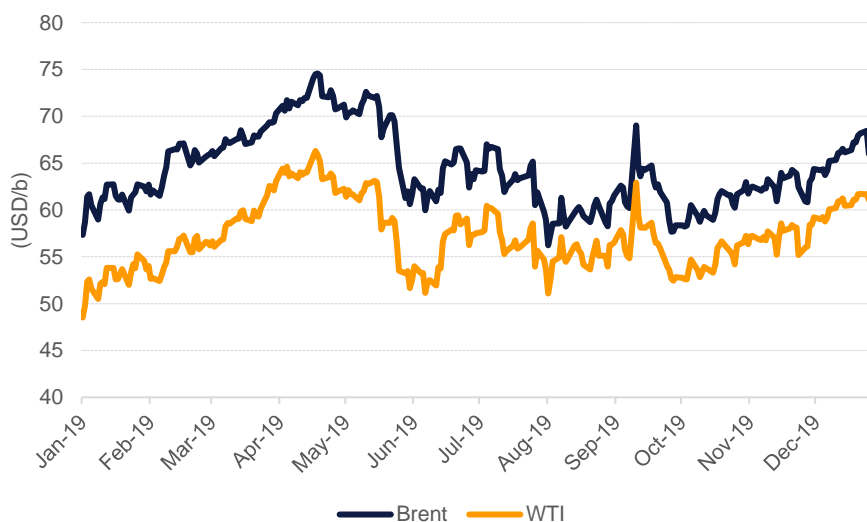
The immediate fear in oil markets is whether supplies flowing out of the Gulf region or from Iraq are disrupted, either from the Strait of Hormuz being blocked or pipelines being cut. Already the UK has announced its navy will accompany British-flagged vessels moving through the region and the US will be sending more troops into the Middle East. However, like we saw in 2019, the impact of risk events themselves on oil prices can be fairly short-lived if markets do not assess any substantial change to physical flows. Taking the attacks on Aramco's Abqaiq facilities as a guide, a sharp move higher in spot prices unwound relatively quickly as the market assessed the overall impact on production and considered ample sources of alternative supplies.

Our expectation for Q1 was for benchmark prices to decline as a sizeable inventory build is on the cards. We maintain our view for Brent prices to average USD 59/b this quarter and WTI at USD 57/b although we did note in our Oil 2020 Outlook that unplanned outages as a result of geopolitical tension posed an upside risk to prices. The risk of prolonged tensions between the US and Iran, with the potential for escalation, will act like the US-China trade war in reverse: as markets are wary that further attacks could be forthcoming, prices may have an upside bias in the short-term.

Beyond spot prices, the reaction in oil markets has been relatively measured so far. Freight costs for taking a VLCC from the Gulf to Singapore were little changed while the spread of Brent over Dubai—a gauge for the relative scarcity of either crude—held steady at around USD 2.50b/. Forward curves for benchmarks strengthened in the first few trading days of 2020: Dec spreads for 2020/21 in both Brent and WTI are above USD 4/b in backwardation while near-dated time spreads are holding around recent levels of USD 0.23/b in WTI and USD 0.84/b for Brent in the 1-2 month spread.

The start of 2020 also markets the start of the implementation of IMO 2020. An escalation in tension that could send oil prices, shipping rates and insurance costs higher will hardly be welcome as the global shipping industry adjusts to higher fuel costs.

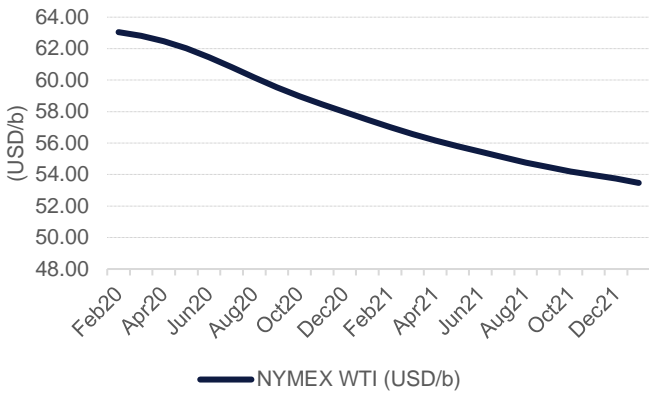
#### Geopolitics kick off 2020 for oil markets



Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research

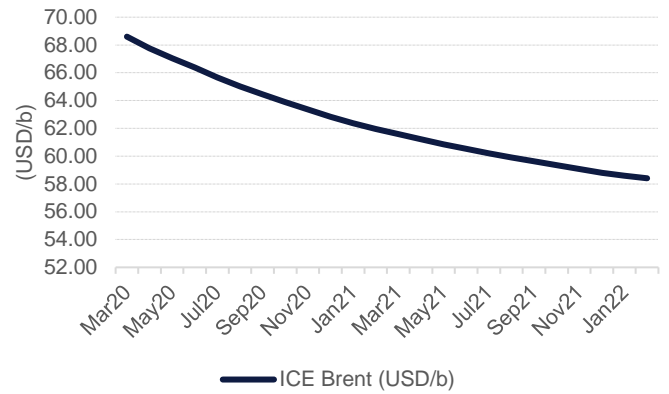
Edward Bell  
Commodities Analyst  
+971 4 609 3055  
edwardpb@emiratesnbd.com

### WTI forward curve



Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: USD/b.

### Brent forward curve



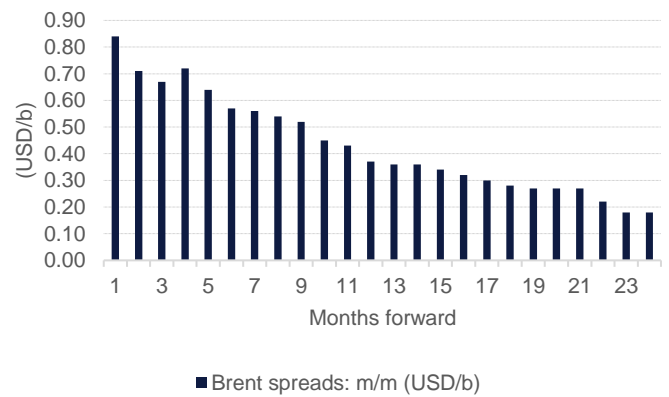
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: USD/b.

### WTI time spreads



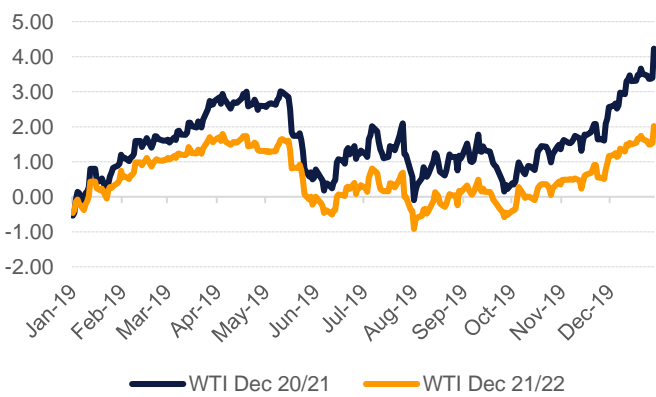
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: USD/b.

### Brent time spreads



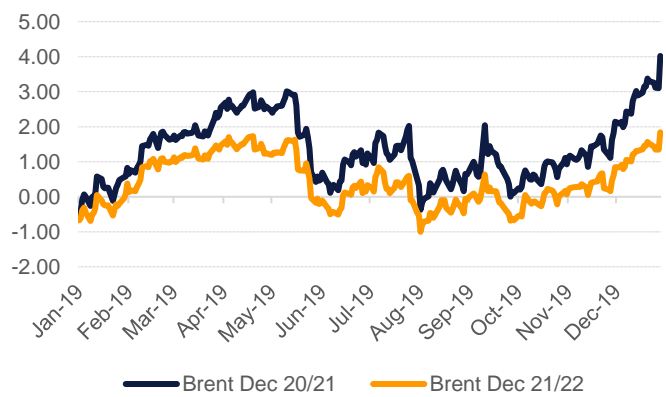
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: USD/b.

### WTI December spreads

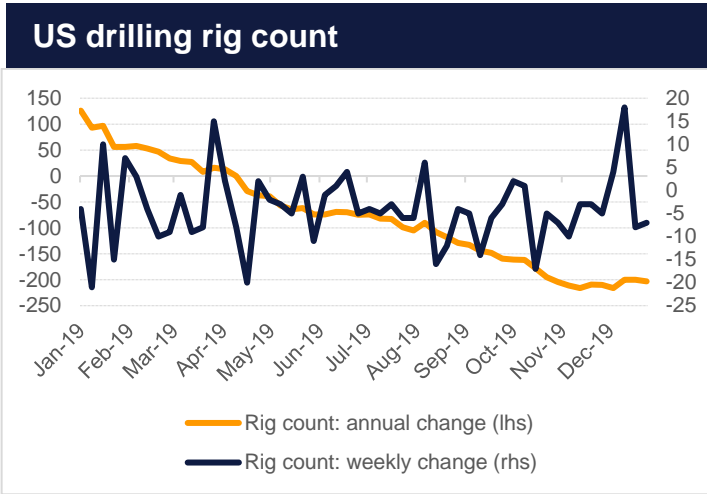


Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: USD/b.

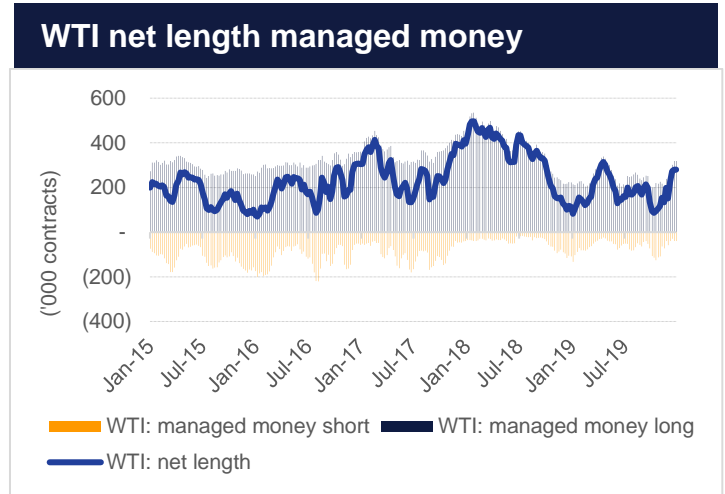
### Brent December spreads



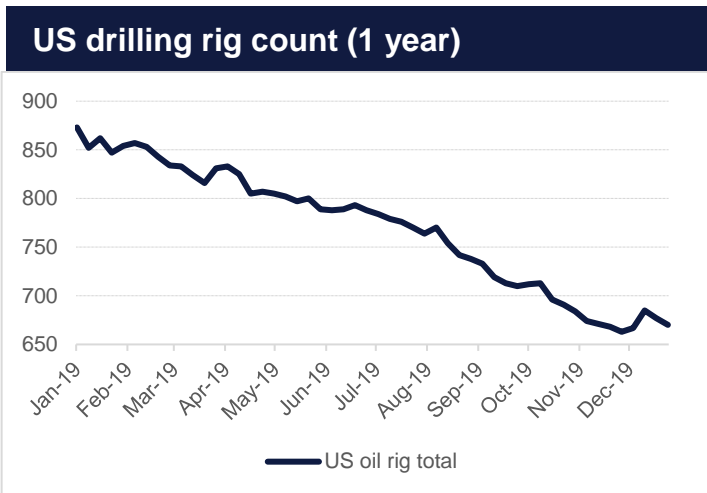
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: USD/b.



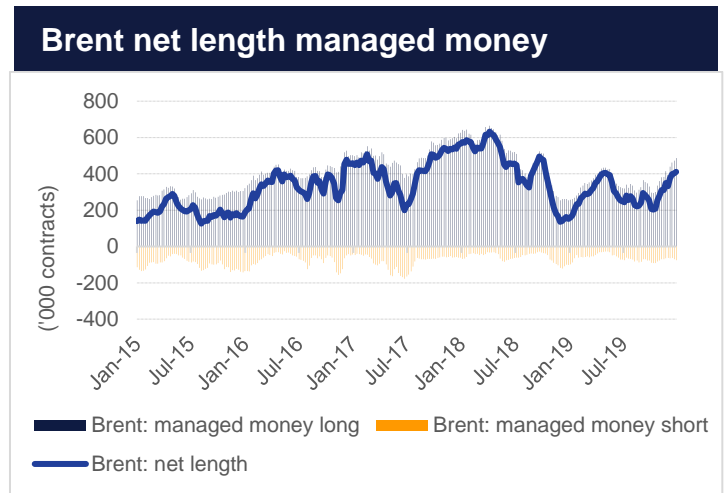
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research.



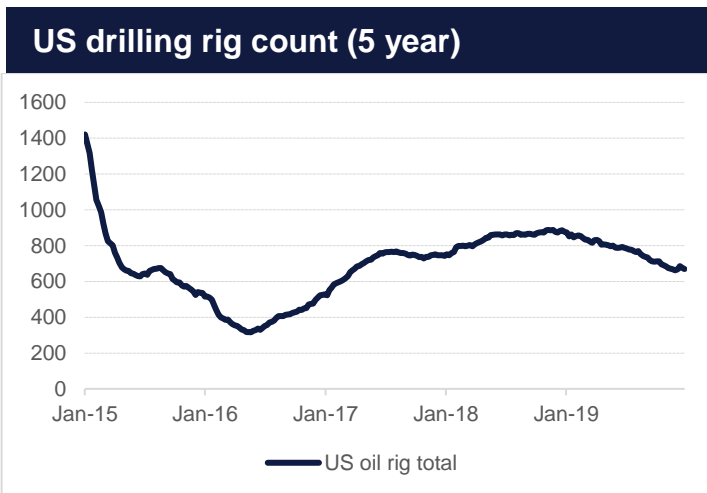
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: NYMEX futures and options only.



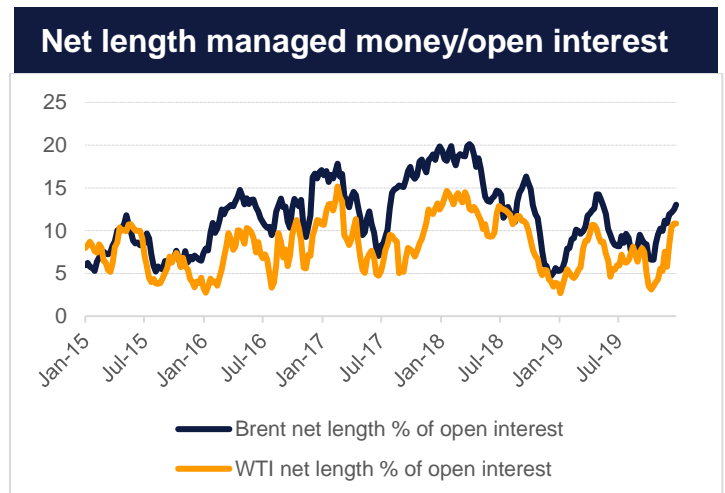
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research.



Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research.



Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research.



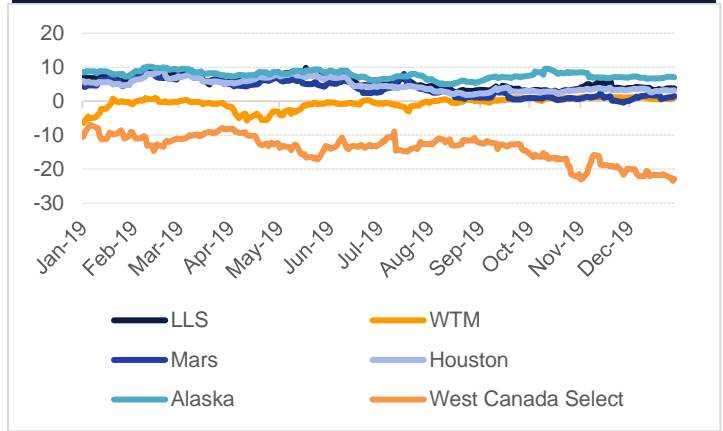
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research.

### Total crude stocks: US



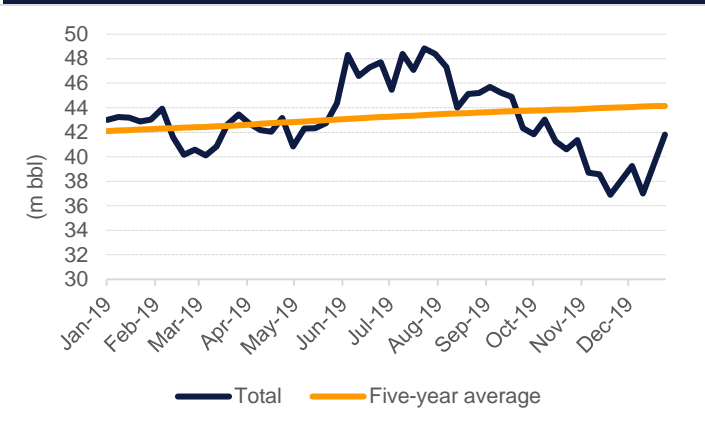
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research.

### North America prices



Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: spread to WTI USD/b

### Total inventories: ARA



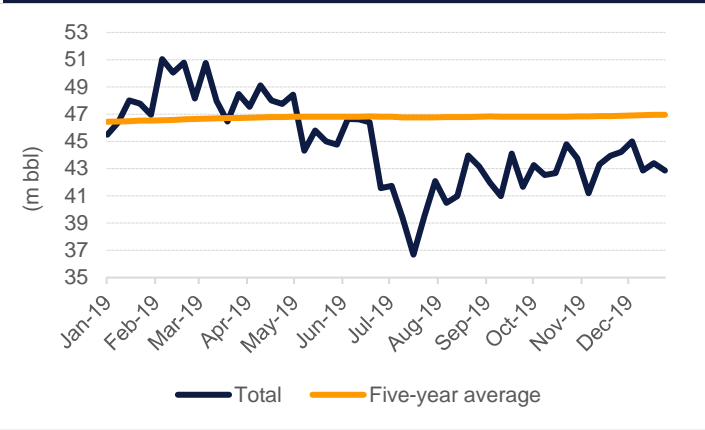
Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: products only.

### Brent/Dubai spread



Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: USD/b.

### Total inventories: Singapore



Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: products only.

### Dubai 1-3 month spread



Source: Bloomberg, Emirates NBD Research. Note: USD/b.

## Disclaimer

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ACCESS FOR THE PUBLICATION BEFORE THE USE THEREOF. By continuing to access and use the publication, you signify you accept these terms and conditions. Emirates NBD reserves the right to amend, remove, or add to the publication and Disclaimer at any time. Such modifications shall be effective immediately. Accordingly, please continue to review this Disclaimer whenever accessing, or using the publication. Your access of, and use of the publication, after modifications to the Disclaimer will constitute your acceptance of the terms and conditions of use of the publication, as modified. If, at any time, you do not wish to accept the content of this Disclaimer, you may not access, or use the publication. Any terms and conditions proposed by you which are in addition to or which conflict with this Disclaimer are expressly rejected by Emirates NBD and shall be of no force or effect. Information contained herein is believed by Emirates NBD to be accurate and true but Emirates NBD expresses no representation or warranty of such accuracy and accepts no responsibility whatsoever for any loss or damage caused by any act or omission taken as a result of the information contained in the publication. The publication is provided for informational uses only and is not intended for trading purposes. Charts, graphs and related data/information provided herein are intended to serve for illustrative purposes. The data/information contained in the publication is not designed to initiate or conclude any transaction. In addition, the data/information contained in the publication is prepared as of a particular date and time and will not reflect subsequent changes in the market or changes in any other factors relevant to their determination. The publication may include data/information taken from stock exchanges and other sources from around the world and Emirates NBD does not guarantee the sequence, accuracy, completeness, or timeliness of information contained in the publication provided thereto by or obtained from unaffiliated third parties. Moreover, the provision of certain data/information in the publication may be subject to the terms and conditions of other agreements to which Emirates NBD is a party.

None of the content in the publication constitutes a solicitation, offer or recommendation by Emirates NBD to buy or sell any security, or represents the provision by Emirates NBD of investment advice or services regarding the profitability or suitability of any security or investment. Moreover, the content of the publication should not be considered legal, tax, accounting advice. The publication is not intended for use by, or distribution to, any person or entity in any jurisdiction or country where such use or distribution would be contrary to law or regulation. Accordingly, anything to the contrary herein set forth notwithstanding, Emirates NBD, its suppliers, agents, directors, officers, employees, representatives, successors, assigns, affiliates or subsidiaries shall not, directly or indirectly, be liable, in any way, to you or any other person for any: (a) inaccuracies or errors in or omissions from the publication including, but not limited to, quotes and financial data; (b) loss or damage arising from the use of the publication, including, but not limited to any investment decision occasioned thereby. (c) UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO NEGLIGENCE, SHALL EMIRATES NBD, ITS SUPPLIERS, AGENTS, DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, REPRESENTATIVES, SUCCESSORS, ASSIGNS, AFFILIATES OR SUBSIDIARIES BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR DIRECT, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, CONSEQUENTIAL, SPECIAL, PUNITIVE, OR EXEMPLARY DAMAGES EVEN IF EMIRATES NBD HAS BEEN ADVISED SPECIFICALLY OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES, ARISING FROM THE USE OF THE PUBLICATION, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, LOSS OF REVENUE, OPPORTUNITY, OR ANTICIPATED PROFITS OR LOST BUSINESS. The information contained in the publication does not purport to contain all matters relevant to any particular investment or financial instrument and all statements as to future matters are not guaranteed to be accurate. Anyone proposing to rely on or use the information contained in the publication should independently verify and check the accuracy, completeness, reliability and suitability of the information and should obtain independent and specific advice from appropriate professionals or experts regarding information contained in the publication. Further, references to any financial instrument or investment product is not intended to imply that an actual trading market exists for such instrument or product. In publishing this document Emirates NBD is not acting in the capacity of a fiduciary or financial advisor.

Emirates NBD and its group entities (together and separately, "Emirates NBD") does and may at any time solicit or provide commercial banking, investment banking, credit, advisory or other services to the companies covered in its reports. As a result, recipients of this report should be aware that any or all of the foregoing services may at times give rise to a conflict of interest that could affect the objectivity of this report.

The securities covered by this report may not be suitable for all types of investors. The report does not take into account the investment objectives, financial situations and specific needs of recipients.

Data included in the publication may rely on models that do not reflect or take into account all potentially significant factors such as market risk, liquidity risk and credit risk. Emirates NBD may use different models, make valuation adjustments, or use different methodologies when determining prices at which Emirates NBD is willing to trade financial instruments and/or when valuing its own inventory positions for its books and records. In receiving the publication, you acknowledge and agree that there are risks associated with investment activities. Moreover, you acknowledge in receiving the publication that the responsibility to obtain and carefully read and understand the content of documents relating to any investment activity described in the publication and to seek separate, independent financial advice if required to assess whether a particular investment activity described herein is suitable, lies exclusively with you. You acknowledge and agree that past investment performance is not indicative of the future performance results of any investment and that the information contained herein is not to be used as an indication for the future performance of any investment activity. You acknowledge that the publication has been developed, compiled, prepared, revised, selected, and arranged by Emirates NBD and others (including certain other information sources) through the application of methods and standards of judgment developed and applied through the expenditure of substantial time, effort, and money and constitutes valuable intellectual property of Emirates NBD and such others. All present and future rights in and to trade secrets, patents, copyrights, trademarks, service marks, know-how, and other proprietary rights of any type under the laws of any governmental authority, domestic or foreign, shall, as between you and Emirates NBD, at all times be and remain the sole and exclusive property of Emirates NBD and/or other lawful parties. Except as specifically permitted in writing, you acknowledge and agree that you may not copy or make any use of the content of the publication or any portion thereof. Except as specifically permitted in writing, you shall not use the intellectual property rights connected with the publication, or the names of any individual participant in, or contributor to, the content of the publication, or any variations or derivatives thereof, for any purpose.

YOU AGREE TO USE THE PUBLICATION SOLELY FOR YOUR OWN NONCOMMERCIAL USE AND BENEFIT, AND NOT FOR RESALE OR OTHER TRANSFER OR DISPOSITION TO, OR USE BY OR FOR THE BENEFIT OF, ANY OTHER PERSON OR ENTITY. YOU AGREE NOT TO USE, TRANSFER, DISTRIBUTE, OR DISPOSE OF ANY DATA/INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE PUBLICATION IN ANY MANNER THAT COULD COMPETE WITH THE BUSINESS INTERESTS OF EMIRATES NBD. YOU MAY NOT COPY, REPRODUCE, PUBLISH, DISPLAY, MODIFY, OR CREATE DERIVATIVE WORKS FROM ANY DATA/INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE PUBLICATION. YOU MAY NOT OFFER ANY PART OF THE PUBLICATION FOR SALE OR DISTRIBUTE IT OVER ANY MEDIUM WITHOUT THE PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF EMIRATES NBD. THE DATA/INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE PUBLICATION MAY NOT BE USED TO CONSTRUCT A DATABASE OF ANY KIND. YOU MAY NOT USE THE DATA/INFORMATION IN THE PUBLICATION IN ANY WAY TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ANY DATA SOLD OR CONTRIBUTED TO BY YOU TO ANY THIRD PARTY. FURTHERMORE, YOU MAY NOT USE ANY OF THE TRADEMARKS, TRADE NAMES, SERVICE MARKS, COPYRIGHTS, OR LOGOS OF EMIRATES NBD OR ITS SUBSIDIARIES IN ANY MANNER WHICH CREATES THE IMPRESSION THAT SUCH ITEMS BELONG TO OR ARE ASSOCIATED WITH YOU OR, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED WITH EMIRATES NBD'S PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT, AND YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU HAVE NO OWNERSHIP RIGHTS IN AND TO ANY OF SUCH ITEMS. MOREOVER YOU AGREE THAT YOUR USE OF THE PUBLICATION IS AT YOUR SOLE RISK AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE PUBLICATION AND ANYTHING CONTAINED HEREIN, IS PROVIDED "AS IS" AND "AS AVAILABLE," AND THAT EMIRATES NBD MAKES NO WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, AS TO THE PUBLICATION, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, MERCHANTABILITY, NON-INFRINGEMENT, TITLE, OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE OR USE. You agree, at your own expense, to indemnify, defend and hold harmless Emirates NBD, its Suppliers, agents, directors, officers, employees, representatives, successors, and assigns from and against any and all claims, damages, liabilities, costs, and expenses, including reasonable attorneys' and experts' fees, arising out of or in connection with the publication, including, but not limited to: (i) your use of the data contained in the publication or someone using such data on your behalf; (ii) any deletions, additions, insertions or alterations to, or any unauthorized use of, the data contained in the publication or (iii) any misrepresentation or breach of an acknowledgement or agreement made as a result of your receiving the publication.

---

## Emirates NBD Research & Treasury Contact List

**Emirates NBD Head Office**  
12th Floor  
Baniyas Road, Deira  
P.O.Box 777  
Dubai

**Aazar Ali Khwaja**  
Senior Executive Vice President  
Global Markets & Treasury  
+971 4 609 3000  
aazark@emiratesnbd.com

**Tim Fox**  
Head of Research &  
Chief Economist  
+9714 230 7800  
timothyf@emiratesnbd.com

---

### Research

**Khatija Haque**  
Head of MENA Research  
+9714 230 7803  
khatijah@emiratesnbd.com

**Aditya Pugalia**  
Financial Markets Research  
+9714 230 7802  
adityap@emiratesnbd.com

**Daniel Richards**  
MENA Economist  
+9714 609 3032  
danielricha@emiratesnbd.com

**Edward Bell**  
Commodity Analyst  
+9714 609 3055  
edwardpb@emiratesnbd.com

**Mohammed Altajir**  
FX Analytics and Product Development  
+9714 609 3005  
mohammedtaj@emiratesnbd.com

---

### Sales & Structuring

**Group Head – Treasury Sales**  
Tariq Chaudhary  
+971 4 230 7777  
tariqmc@emiratesnbd.com

**Saudi Arabia Sales**  
Numair Attiyah  
+966 11 282 5656  
numaira@emiratesnbd.com

**Singapore Sales**  
Supriyakumar Sakhalkar  
+65 65785 627  
supriyakumars@emiratesnbd.com

**London Sales**  
+44 (0) 20 7838 2241

**Egypt**  
+20 22 726 5040

---

### Emirates NBD Capital

**Hitesh Asarpota**  
Head of Debt Capital Markets.  
+971 50 4529515  
asarpotah@EmiratesNBD.com

---

### Investor Relations

**Patrick Clerkin**  
+9714 230 7805  
patricke@emiratesnbd.com

### Group Corporate Affairs

**Ibrahim Sowaidan**  
+9714 609 4113  
ibrahims@emiratesnbd.com

**Claire Andrea**  
+9714 609 4143  
clairea@emiratesnbd.com