



AL-FUTTAIM LOGISTICS **RESILIENCE IN MOTION**

Engineering resilient vehicle supply corridors at speed:
a case study and operating framework



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Executive Summary

In March 2026, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and a wave of force majeure declarations by ocean carriers shut down the Gulf's principal finished-vehicle entry points overnight. Within days, Al-Futtaim Logistics had rapidly established multimodal parallel gateways outside the strait: a revived corridor through Port Sultan Qaboos in Muscat, a new deep-water entry point at Khorfakkan, and an international trans-shipment route from Hambantota, Sri Lanka.

Together, these routes have moved over 25,000 finished vehicles into the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and supported OEMs to return to full production capacity.

The response combined rapid infrastructure mobilisation, AI-enabled operational visibility and cross-border coordination to restore regional vehicle flows within weeks rather than months.

This paper sets out what was built, how it was built, and what the response demonstrates about designing resilient logistics corridors under live operational pressure.

It is offered as a case study and a working framework for organisations across the logistics and ports sector planning for future disruptions to regional supply chains.

The Disruption

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and subsequent carrier force majeure actions removed the region's established RoRo (roll-on / roll-off) shipping routes with almost no notice. For automotive distributors across the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, this meant finished vehicles due for delivery were suddenly stranded, at risk of production backlogs, dealer stockouts and lost sales during a period when demand remained strong.

Al-Futtaim's response was guided by an existing resilience strategy: 5 Ports, 5 Countries, 1 Team.

That groundwork, built before the disruption, meant we could move from concept to first vessel discharge in a matter of weeks rather than starting from a blank slate, a distinction that sits at the centre of the framework set out later in this paper.



Three Gateways, One Response

With each vessel carrying over 1,000 finished vehicles to be cleared within 24 hours against quayside capacity of roughly 300 units, the team identified additional yard space 4.5 kilometres away, an undeveloped site with no power, water, lighting or security, and mobilised a fully operational yard within 17 hours. Driver resources were scaled to more than 100 drivers within five days to support continuous vessel discharge and yard operations, supported by shuttle buses rotating crews between the port and yard.

The resulting discharge rate of 149 units per hour compares with a global maximum of 105 units per hour recorded at one of Europe's largest automotive ports and a leading global RoRo hub. Across seven vessels to date, Khorfakkan has moved over 11,500 finished vehicles.

1 Khorfakkan: Building a new entry point in weeks

Khorfakkan Port sits outside the Strait of Hormuz and offered fast vessel turnaround, but it had never handled RoRo cargo at scale and lacked the infrastructure to do so. Al-Futtaim established the first large-scale RoRo operation at the port, transforming Khorfakkan into a strategic alternative gateway for finished-vehicle imports into the GCC. Al-Futtaim took operational control on 13 April 2026, and the first vessel, BYD Shenzhen, discharged on 3 May, supported by approvals for a dedicated cargo corridor.

2 Muscat: Reviving a dormant gateway

Al-Futtaim resumed commercial RoRo operations at Port Sultan Qaboos after a 13-year hiatus, restoring the port as an alternative gateway for finished vehicle movements into the GCC. Working with OEM and carrier partners, we reinstated the route, with the first vessel discharged on 25 April 2026 using a two-leg GCC continuity model: bonded transfer to Khazaen Dry Port, followed by duty-suspended onward movement to the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait.

The route required overcoming limited expertise in commercial cargo handling, complex cross-border documentation and Omani transport regulations. We addressed these challenges through knowledge transfer to local teams and the in-house development of two tracking and documentation applications. To date, nearly 13,500 vehicles have moved through the corridor.



3 Hambantota: An international trans-shipment corridor

To strengthen resilience beyond the immediate region, the team developed a trans-shipment model, discharging cargo at Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka before moving it via feeder RoRo vessels to Khorfakkan and onward through bonded GCC corridors. The route has reached a sustained capacity of 9,000–12,000 finished vehicles per month across multiple voyages and has supported OEMs in restoring production to normal capacity.

The Hambantota–Khorfakkan dual-gateway corridor reduced reliance on traditional Gulf entry points while maintaining vehicle availability across the GCC, demonstrating how geographically diversified supply routes strengthen regional resilience during disruption.



Innovation Under Pressure

Visibility was the hardest problem to solve at speed. With the Khorfakkan yard unstructured and not yet organised into bin locations, our team designed and deployed an AI-enabled logistics visibility platform within 72 hours. This linked each vehicle's VIN to its driver, model, destination and distributor, and feeding live dashboards used by operations teams and distributors alike.

Similar purpose-built applications were developed for the Muscat corridor to manage loading, invoicing and customs documentation. None of these tools existed before the disruption; all were designed, built and deployed while operations were live.

Results at a Glance

25,000+

Finished vehicles moved into the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia within weeks of the Strait of Hormuz closing in March 2026

149/hr

Khorfakkan discharge rate

105/hr

Global RoRo discharge maximum

17 hrs

Yard mobilisation time

11,500+

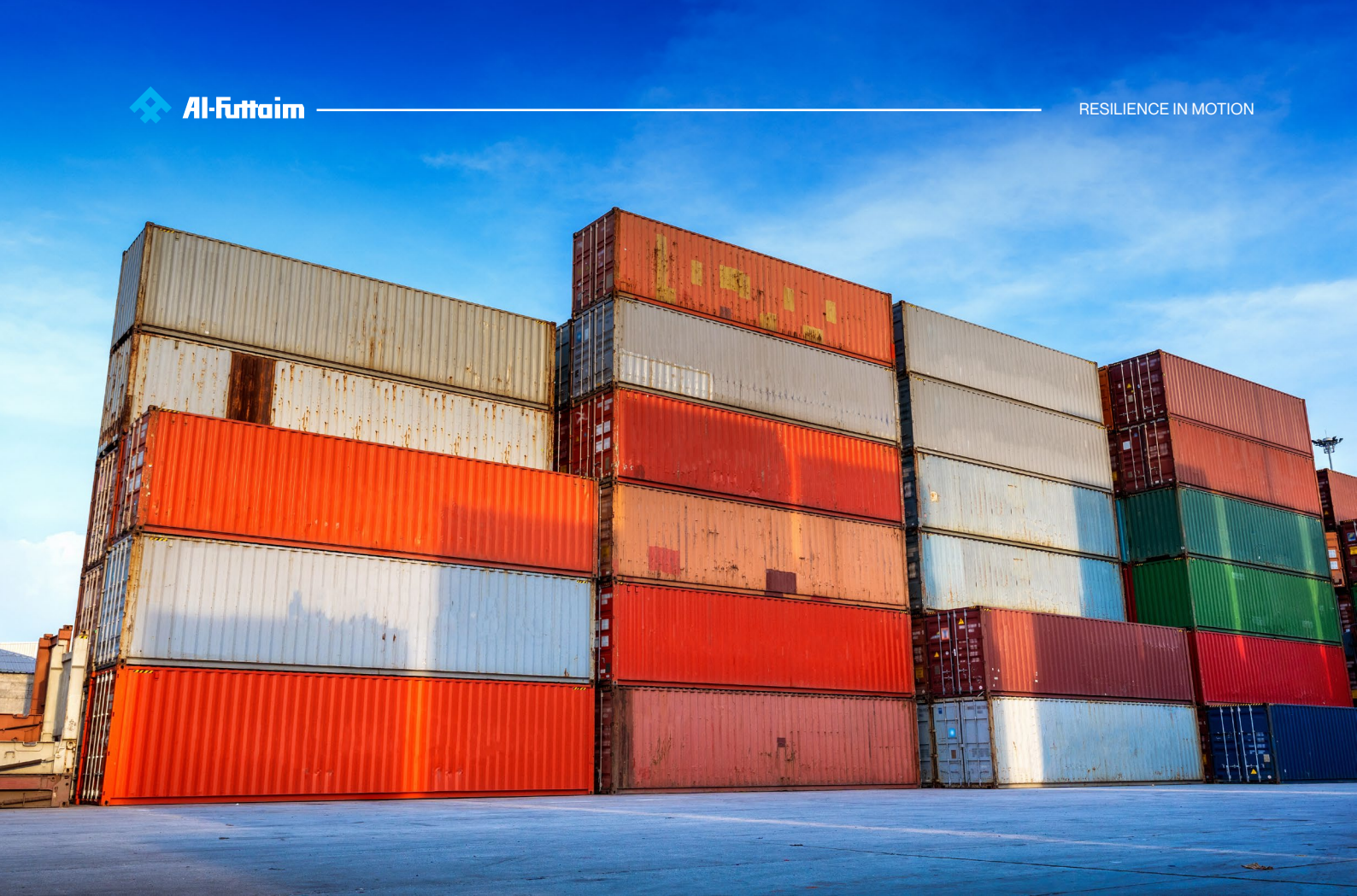
Vehicles via Khorfakkan

~13,500

Vehicles via Muscat

9,000–12,000/mo

Hambantota corridor capacity



A Framework for Regional Resilience

Each of these three gateways were designed, negotiated and operationalised in parallel, under live pressure, with no precedent to draw on at two of the three sites. Read together, they point to a repeatable operating model rather than a single contingency fix.

Five principles run through all three corridors

Pre-position contingency routes before they are needed

1

The 5 ports, 5 countries, 1 team, multi-gateway resilience strategy existed before the disruption, which is what allowed Al-Futtaim to move from concept to first vessel discharge in weeks rather than months.

Resilient regional corridors

Restored in weeks rather than months

2

Build AI technology alongside operations, not after them

Bespoke real-time tracking and documentation tools were built and deployed within days of each corridor opening, rather than retrofitted once volumes stabilised.

3

Transfer knowledge to local teams early

At Muscat in particular, sustained throughput depended on building local capability in commercial cargo handling and cross-border documentation, not on running the corridor remotely.

4

Treat infrastructure gaps as solvable at pace

The mobilisation of a fully operational yard within 17 hours, alongside scaling more than 100 drivers within five days, demonstrates that both infrastructure and workforce capacity can be expanded rapidly when the operating model is ready to move.

5

Design for multiple jurisdictions concurrently

Each corridor carried its own customs regime, documentation requirements and regulatory constraints; the three were run in parallel rather than sequentially.

Looking Ahead

The Strait of Hormuz closure will not be the last disruption to affect Gulf supply chains. What this response shows is that resilience can be engineered at speed, provided the underlying operating model, technology capability and cross-border coordination are already in place before they are needed, rather than assembled after the fact.

The Hambantota–Khorfakkan dual-gateway model further demonstrates how geographically diversified supply routes can reduce dependency on traditional Gulf entry points while maintaining vehicle availability across multiple regional markets.

Al-Futtaim is sharing this case study as a contribution to the wider planning conversation across the logistics and ports sector: on how corridors are pre-positioned, how quickly supporting technology can be built under pressure, and how local capability is developed so that a route remains resilient once the initial response has passed.

