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Operational resilience during  
regional disruption  
Resilience Redefined

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Years in the Middle East

## How to maintain continuity when geopolitical developments affect your people, offices, and technology.

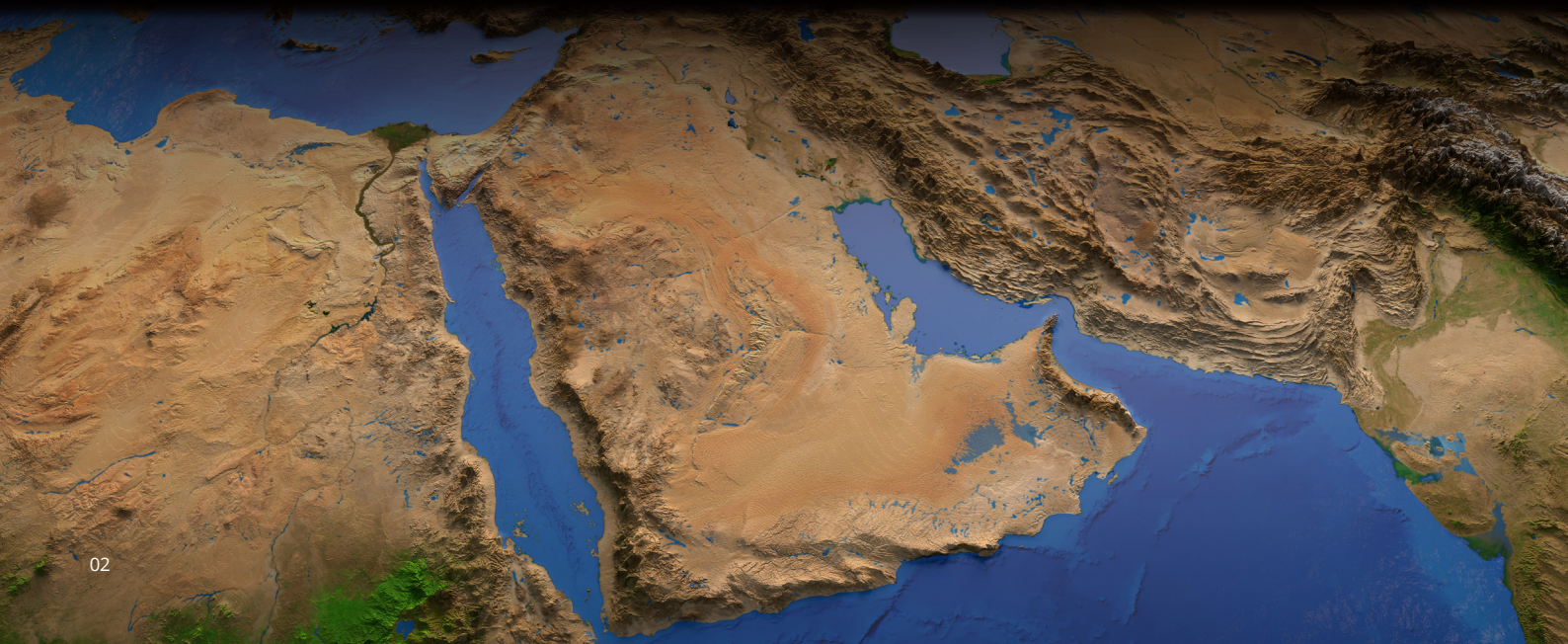
### Resilience Redefined



*The immediate human and operational impact of regional conflict often outpace an organization's preparedness. While financial markets and real estate portfolios absorb the shock, the workforce—the engine of service delivery—faces displacement, disruption, and uncertainty. For businesses across the GCC and broader Middle East, the question is no longer whether to activate contingency plans, but how effectively and how quickly they can do so.*

As geopolitical pressures intensify, organizations are confronting a new dimension of operational risk. Staff may be displaced, evacuated, or unable to commute. Offices may be inaccessible. Technology systems reliant on regional infrastructure may be intermittent. For service-intensive businesses, including professional services and financial institutions to logistics operators and shared services centers, sustaining operations in this environment requires more than a dusted-off Business Continuity Management (BCM) plan. It requires a coordinated, layered response across people, process, and technology.

Critically, many organizations entering this period have been running lean. The efficiency gains of recent years (reduced headcount buffers, consolidated delivery locations, and just-in-time staffing models) now represent points of fragility rather than strength. Building operational resilience in this context means accepting short-term cost to protect long-term continuity.



## Understanding the operational impact

The disruption to normal working conditions during a period of regional conflict is rarely uniform. It manifests across three interconnected dimensions

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### People and workforce displacement

Staff in affected areas may be relocated, evacuated, or managing personal and family safety. Absenteeism can spike rapidly, particularly among expatriate populations who may choose or be required to leave the country. For organizations with concentrated delivery teams in single locations, even a 20-30% reduction in available headcount can place critical processes at risk. The psychological impact on remaining staff like anxiety, distraction, and reduced productivity, is an often underestimated operational variable.

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### Office and infrastructure accessibility

Physical office closures, restricted movement, or precautionary curfews can make on-site operations impossible at short notice. Organizations that have not yet fully operationalized remote working capabilities, in particular those handling sensitive data, client documents, or requiring secure connectivity, may find their digital infrastructure was not designed for this scale of disruption. Power and internet resilience, VPN capacity, and cloud access all become mission-critical.

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### Technology and systems continuity

Regional data centers, cloud nodes, and telecommunications infrastructure can be affected by conflict-related disruption. Organizations relying on locally hosted systems or regional SaaS providers should assess failover readiness and geographic redundancy. System access controls designed for office environments may create friction for remote or multi-location delivery teams, creating further bottlenecks.



## Bridging capacity: Temporary staffing and flexible workforce models

When displacement reduces available headcount, organizations face an immediate choice: absorb the shortfall through overextension of remaining staff (a model with diminishing returns and high attrition risk) or rapidly augment capacity through alternative workforce channels. The latter is increasingly the preferred approach, and the market for contingent and temporary professional staffing in the region has responded accordingly.

### Contingent workforce activation

Organizations with pre-established relationships with staffing agencies and managed service providers are significantly better positioned to deploy contingent workers at short notice. For roles requiring access to proprietary systems, client data, or regulated processes, rapid onboarding and access provisioning become a critical bottleneck. Forward-looking organizations are building pre-cleared talent pools—individuals who have undergone background checks and system access setup—who can be activated within days rather than weeks.

Temporary staffing is most effective where roles are process-defined, output-measurable, and do not require deep institutional knowledge. This includes transaction processing, data entry and reconciliation, first-line client support, and compliance monitoring. For higher-skill functions such as advisory, structuring, or client relationship management, cross-training of existing staff and redeployment from lower-priority functions is typically more effective.

## Key considerations for temporary staffing deployment

Speed to deploy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain a pre-vetted talent pool with cleared access credentials</li><li>• Partner with specialist agencies for rapid professional deployment</li><li>• Streamline onboarding documentation and induction protocols</li></ul>
Scope definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearly define roles, outputs, and access boundaries for temporary staff</li><li>• Avoid scope creep into sensitive or strategic functions</li><li>• Establish performance expectations from day one</li></ul>
Risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement enhanced data access controls and audit trails</li><li>• Ensure confidentiality and data protection agreements are in place</li><li>• Monitor quality output regularly, particularly for client-facing tasks</li></ul>



### A multidimensional workforce response: Alternative resourcing solutions

For many organizations in the Middle East, the deployment of alternative resourcing solutions has historically been framed as a cost-optimization story or a strategic aspiration rather than an operational reality. The current environment is accelerating that transition, reframing the conversation entirely. The shift to distributed and flexible delivery models is no longer an efficiency play, but a business continuity imperative.

The most resilient organizations are not simply outsourcing non-critical tasks. They are deploying what Deloitte's global research describes as a 'multidimensional workforce strategy': a dynamic and deliberate orchestration of capacity across in-house teams, AI-enabled digital workforces, next-generation managed service providers, and specialist partners. This model is not new in concept, but the current period of regional distress is giving it a new urgency.

This distinction matters particularly in the context of the region's broader economic agenda. Governments across the GCC are actively investing in building domestic talent pipelines and raising workforce participation among nationals. Alternative resourcing strategies, when designed thoughtfully, are not in tension with these goals — they are complementary. The aim is not to move work permanently out of the region, but to ensure that the right tasks are delivered through the right channels. This creates space for local talent to focus on higher-value, capability-building roles.

Recent trends underscore the importance of this integrated approach. According to Deloitte's Global Outsourcing Survey, 70%<sup>1</sup> of organizations had brought previously outsourced work in-house over the preceding five years to build internal capability. The current disruption now tests that consolidation decision. Organizations that built robust shared services and strengthened internal delivery teams now find themselves with distributed, activatable capacity. Those that did not are facing a more constrained set of options, highlighting the critical need for a sustainable and diversified workforce model.

“67% of organizations have adopted outcome-based outsourcing models that prioritize measurable results and innovation — up from 45% just two years prior. This trend highlights a clear recognition that external support is not just a cost-saving measure, but a strategic imperative for achieving agility and long-term value.”

– Deloitte Global Outsourcing Survey<sup>1</sup>

## Multidimensional sourcing: The strategic assessment

Effective alternative resourcing is not a single decision but a spectrum of options, each suited to different task types, risk profiles, and organizational readiness levels:

- 1 Can your current delivery model maintain globally consistent service standards across the jurisdictions you operate in, even if your primary location is disrupted?
- 2 Is the technology landscape your teams support evolving rapidly enough that maintaining cutting-edge AI and automation capabilities purely in-house presents a strategic risk?
- 3 Do you face talent scarcity or require continuous upskilling at a scale that makes strategic partnerships with next-generation managed service providers more viable than pure in-house investment — without compromising your local workforce development commitments?

Organizations that identify gaps against these questions are strong candidates for a more deliberate alternative resourcing strategy, one that moves beyond cost optimization to treat external partnerships as structural resilience capabilities.

### Task suitability framework for alternative resourcing solution transition

High suitability	Moderate suitability	Retain in-house/Senior specialist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounts payable/receivable processing</li> <li>• Payroll administration</li> <li>• IT service desk (Tier 1 &amp; 2)</li> <li>• Data entry and validation</li> <li>• Document management</li> <li>• Compliance monitoring and reporting</li> <li>• HR administration</li> <li>• PR/PO processing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial analysis and reporting</li> <li>• Tax compliance support</li> <li>• Technical support (Tier 3)</li> <li>• Contract review and management</li> <li>• Research and due diligence</li> <li>• Customer support (non-complex)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior advisory and relationship management</li> <li>• Strategic decision-making</li> <li>• Regulatory engagement and liaison</li> <li>• Sensitive legal and compliance judgments</li> <li>• Crisis communications leadership</li> </ul>



## A phased operational resilience strategy

Effective alternative resourcing is not a single decision but a spectrum of options, each suited to different task types, risk profiles, and organizational readiness levels:

Timeline	Strategy	Focus areas	Action
Immediate (0-4 weeks)	Activate and stabilize	Uncertainty and safety are paramount; protect people and continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate BCM and crisis response protocols</li> <li>• Account for all staff; activate remote-work failover</li> <li>• Identify critical processes and minimum staffing thresholds</li> <li>• Communicate transparently with clients on SLA status</li> </ul>
Short term (1-3 months)	Augment and adapt	Bridge capacity gaps while maintaining service quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deploy temporary and contingent workforce</li> <li>• Accelerate offshoring of non-critical, rules-based tasks</li> <li>• Cross-train staff across functions to cover critical roles</li> <li>• Re-negotiate or flag SLA risk with key clients</li> </ul>
Medium term (3-12 months)	Redesign for resilience	Build structural flexibility into operating models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalize distributed delivery partnerships on outcome-based metrics</li> <li>• Evaluate next-gen managed service providers for AI-enabled delivery</li> <li>• Automate high-volume transactional processes; build a digital workforce layer</li> <li>• Diversify talent pools across delivery models; upskill teams in AI tools</li> <li>• Review and stress-test BCM plans against multidimensional disruption scenarios</li> </ul>

\* As events evolve, operational assumptions should be revisited regularly and plans adjusted accordingly.



### Building for a more resilient operating model

Organizations that emerge from this period strongest will not simply be those that survived the disruption. They will be those that used the disruption as a forcing function to build operating models that are structurally more resilient, geographically diversified, and technologically enabled.

The current period is accelerating transitions that were already strategically desirable: greater use of offshore and nearshore delivery, more flexible workforce compositions, higher levels of process automation, and more rigorous scenario planning. For business leaders in the Middle East, the question is not whether these changes are coming, but whether they will be reactive or proactive in shaping them.

Operational resilience is not a project with an end date. It is a continuous organizational capability, one that requires investment in people, process, and technology in equal measure. For those who build it deliberately, it becomes a competitive advantage. For those who discover its absence in a crisis, the cost is measured not just in disrupted operations, but in eroded client trust and diminished market position.

***Success in this environment will not be defined by which organizations had the most detailed BCM documentation. It will be defined by which organizations had the governance, the partnerships, and the institutional agility to act decisively when certainty was in short supply.***



For further information

Organizations that act now can turn disruption into structural advantage. Deloitte brings together specialists across its Business Process Solutions offerings to help organizations build and activate operational resilience in periods of uncertainty. For more information, please visit the Deloitte Middle East services page or contact your Deloitte relationship partner.

<sup>1</sup> Source: *The power of a multidimensional workforce: Outsourcing for strategic advantage*  
<https://www.deloitte.com/global/en/services/consulting/perspectives/the-power-multidimensional-workforce-outsourcing-strategic-advantage.html>

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