

Stalled property projects in the UAE are under more environmental pressure than those in any part of the world.

Laith Haboubi, the business development director at Mapei, the world's largest producer of adhesives and chemicals for the construction industry, talks about some of the challenges. "The Middle East is one of the most aggressive environments for concrete. There are high temperatures and huge amounts of salt and sand.

"Most developments are coastal and they can be wind-blown. Most high-rises are protected below ground but builders are rarely worried about them above ground.

"In a situation where a tower has been half-completed ... the steel rebar left exposed would definitely be an area for concern. The longer concrete is left exposed, the shorter its durability. The amount of time you can leave concrete depends on the quality of the concrete. There are lots of different types.

"If it is weak, porous concrete, it could have corrosion within two to three years easily. In other situations, where there is better quality concrete, it can be left exposed for 10 to 15 years without sustaining significant damage.

"There is a point where all this just becomes economically unviable and older structures are not worth keeping. Many companies can offer repair and protection. Some 90 to 95 per cent of the time they are still economically viable to restore the structural integrity of works."

Source: [www.thenational.ae](http://www.thenational.ae)