



UAE INTRODUCES ITS PLANS FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

UAE Circular Economy Policy 2021-2031, adopted in January 2021, establishes a comprehensive framework to attain sustainable management and effective use of natural resources in the UAE, through regenerative consumption and production, thus moving away from a degenerative linear (take, make, use, dispose) economy. A circular economy is an economic development approach that benefits companies, society, and the environment. It emphasizes reusing and recycling resources rather than using them up.

Objectives of the UAE Circular Economy

In order to improve the quality of life for all residents and to protect and enhance the local and regional environment, the policy aims to utilize the country's natural, physical, human, and financial resources in the most efficient and sustainable way possible.

- Achieve sustainable management of the economy and efficient use of natural resources.
- Promote circular economy and Sustainable Consumption Production patterns that reduce environmental stress and meet basic needs.
- Encourage the private sector to shift to cleaner industrial production methods and techniques including the use of Artificial Intelligence.

The UAE circular economy rests on three key principles:

1. Preserving and enhancing natural capital by controlling finite stocks and balancing renewable resource flows.
2. Optimising resource yields by circulating products, components, and materials at the highest utility at all times in both technical and biological cycles.
3. Fostering system effectiveness by revealing and designing out negative externalities (water, air, soil, noise pollution; climate change; toxins; congestion; negative health effects related to resource use).



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Image Source: UAE Circular Economy Policy 2021 - 2031

Priority Sectors

Sustainable Manufacturing

Sourcing local and imported manufactured products that are more efficiently designed, manufactured, repaired, reused, remanufactured, and recycled to avoid pollution and reduce waste. Consumers all over the world are now leaning into sustainable materials and manufacturers are challenged to rethink their design, production, and shipping processes to create more regenerative products. Following are some of the benefits UAE expects from promoting sustainable manufacturing: reduce GHG Emissions and other pollutants, create a more productive, competitive, advanced and innovative manufacturing sector, and create both low and high-skill green jobs.



Image Source: UAE Circular Economy Policy 2021 - 2031

Green infrastructure

At the moment, more than half of the world's population lives in cities, with projections of the number increasing to two-thirds by 2050. It is estimated that 70 to 75 percent of the UAE's solid waste is derived from construction and demolition (C&D). As part of its efforts to develop infrastructure that uses more resources and materials efficiently and does not waste material, the UAE aims to design, construct, rebuild and demolish infrastructure in a manner that minimizes pollution and material waste. Its expected outcomes and benefits include: reducing GHG Emissions and other pollutants, creating more productive urban systems, improving access to goods, services and housing, and creating healthier, more livable cities.



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Sustainable Transport

It is estimated that the transport industry contributes 23% to global GHG emissions. Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority has endorsed a long-term plan to have zero emissions of public transport in Dubai, by 2050. The UAE hopes that non-polluting and non-congested modes of transportation will make people's movement around the country easier and more efficient. With this initiative, UAE aims to reduced GHG Emissions and other pollutants (including air pollution), reduce congestion and travel times, create more livable and healthier cities, reduce the number of traffic accidents, and increase access to jobs and services.



Sustainable food production and consumption

Currently, 90% of the UAE's food is imported, making food sustainability one of the country's priorities. Around 60% of UAE's freshwater demand is derived from agricultural sectors, so water scarcity can be greatly affected. A significant shift has also been seen in consumers' food consumption, with sustainable and healthier products becoming more popular. UAE looks forward to reducing GHG Emissions and other pollutants (and possibly even sequestering carbon in soils), improving the overall health of the UAE's ecosystem, and increasing the public's access to healthy and nutritious food.

In July 2022, the UAE Circular Economy Council approved 22 policies aimed at accelerating the implementation of the circular economy model. Apart from the 4 focus areas, 16 more circular economy activities have been identified those offer opportunities for businesses, including upcycling textile waste into new products and developing artificial intelligence-enabled waste management solutions.

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