

BUSINESS VOICE

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HOME-GROWN

Abu Dhabi invests
\$100 million in next
generation AgTech

Energy: ADNOC's drive to future-proof its operations is paying off *P20*

Start-Ups: Abu Dhabi shapes up as a nucleus for technology and innovation *P28*

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“At the most challenging times, innovation brings new perspectives and creates a path forward.”

These encouraging words were said by His Highness Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Member of Abu Dhabi Executive Council, and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Executive Office, recently, at the launch of Abu Dhabi Inspires – a new programme of initiatives designed to transform the challenges presented by the Coronavirus pandemic into opportunity.

Abu Dhabi Inspires will drive forward innovative responses to current realities. It's a call to action for bright minds to invent concepts, new ideas and fresh solutions to tackle today's new challenges. Businesses and individuals alike are invited to put forward ideas that encourage skill-building, further tech-based innovation and support wellbeing.

Indeed, as we all adapt to new ways of working, this is the time for agile-thinking. This is the time to look at how we can capture emerging opportunities, tap into new trends and explore possibilities that can reshape our world now and into the future.

In this respect, Abu Dhabi Chamber has been busy organising a series of online business meetings between the public and private sectors to discuss and brainstorm ideas that could be beneficial to both sectors.

I continue to be inspired by the stimulus package of economic initiatives being rolled out by the

governments of the UAE and Abu Dhabi to support the economy during this time. I'm heartened and inspired too by the way the local business community has been proactive in adapting measures to ensure business continuity.

As the future of Abu Dhabi becomes increasingly digital, I'm pleased to announce Abu Dhabi Chamber's new website is now online. Over the past years, the government in Abu Dhabi has exerted a lot of effort to enhance the digital future of the Emirate. Launching the new website emphasises our readiness to cope with future requirements and to be fully prepared for a digital world.

Providing the Chamber's services digitally contributes to the government's efforts to realise sustainable economic development and enhance the quality of its electronic services. Now any company, investor or businessman who desires to invest in Abu Dhabi can benefit from the Chamber's new website, on the TAMM platform.

I invite you to explore the services available online via the new website, which is very secure and very easy to navigate.

Mohamed Helal Al Mheiri
Director General, Abu Dhabi Chamber



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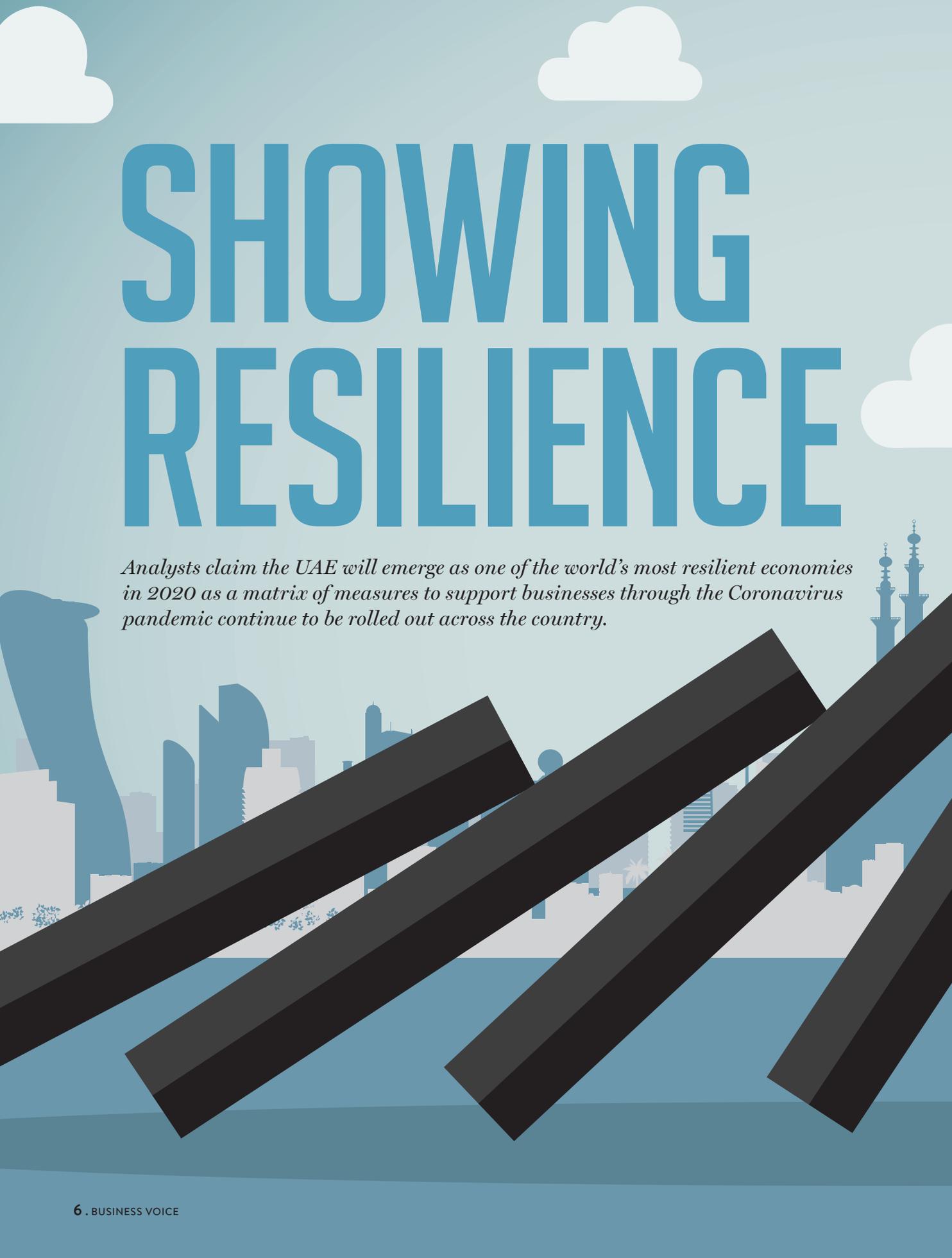


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SHOWING RESILIENCE

Analysts claim the UAE will emerge as one of the world's most resilient economies in 2020 as a matrix of measures to support businesses through the Coronavirus pandemic continue to be rolled out across the country.



The UAE's exemplary handling of the Coronavirus pandemic will see the country emerge as one of the world's most resilient economies in 2020.

Euromonitor International's IPO Market Resilience Index has ranked the UAE as third-resilient economy after China and Saudi Arabia, post COVID-19.

Euromonitor International analysed data from over 100 countries and 79 stock exchanges around the world to determine which financial and macro-economic metrics impacted IPO performance and resilience. The report points to "stronger macro-economic fundamentals and room for aggressive economic policies" among MEA countries as key fundamentals behind its results.

Indeed, after Abu Dhabi Executive Council announced a robust economic stimulus package in March to support companies and facilities affected by the implementation of precautionary measures taken to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus, government and private entities continue to roll out new measures to bolster the economy.

The UAE Ministry of Economy recently announced a reduction in fees for 94 services provided to individuals, companies and the business sector. Fee reductions have been put in place across a range of services, particularly those related to innovation, business activities, investment, production, trade, and import and export activities.

In some instances, fees have been slashed by up to 98%. It's estimated the move will save the business sector around AED113 million across the year.

His Excellency Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri, Minister of Economy, described the new measure as "a distinct and important step being made to support the business and companies sector in the UAE during the current circumstances".

The reduced fees apply across services for commercial registration, commercial agencies, trademarks, origin, auditors and intellectual properties. Businesses can benefit from 25% discounts on collective management licence fees; applications for registering a trademark or trademarks of goods, products or services related to a single category; and publishing official documents for joint stock companies or partnership companies on shares basis, among other services.

Fees for 'To Whom It May Concern' certificates for auditors; ratification of partnership contracts; renewing the registration of branches of national companies in an auditor's schedule, and 'Certificates of Origin' for national products have been cut by 50%. There's a 95% fee reduction for the licence



“AT THE MOST CHALLENGING TIMES, INNOVATION BRINGS NEW PERSPECTIVES AND CREATES A PATH FORWARD. THROUGH ABU DHABI INSPIRES, WE SEEK TO SUPPORT TIMELY CONCEPTS, SUBSTANTIAL IDEAS AND FRESH SOLUTIONS, EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES THAT CAN RESHAPE OUR WORLD”

H.H. SHEIKH KHALID BIN MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN,
MEMBER OF THE ABU DHABI EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND
CHAIRMAN OF ABU DHABI EXECUTIVE OFFICE

to utilise the 'Made in UAE' mark and 98% reduction in renewal fees for the same licence.

H.E. Al Mansouri added: "Reducing fees for services provided by the Ministry of Economy to individuals and companies will reduce the cost of establishing and conducting business in the country and will reduce the burden on commercial and investment institutions, which is to support the main and affected sectors stimulating the economic environment and ensuring the sustainability of the pioneering structure of the national economy and business continuity."

H.E. Al Mansouri stressed that the Ministry of Economy would continue to work around the clock monitoring the business environment and developing urgent solutions, as well as medium and long-term incentive plans, to protect economic gains and accelerate the economy.

Abu Dhabi Ports has also announced a major relief package to address concerns of its customers across its industrial and economic zone subsidiaries. Existing customers can now take advantage of a three-month rent deferment for Q2, a freeze on late payment penalties and an exemption from Tawtheeq fees.

Applications fees will be waived for new investors, who will also benefit from a 25% reduction in land lease rates for the first year, an exemption on Tawtheeq fees and a relinquishing of land fixing fees.

Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, Abu Dhabi Ports Group CEO, said Abu Dhabi Ports was “taking necessary steps to help our industrial and economic zone customers overcome the current challenges brought on by the spread of Coronavirus”.

He added: “Supporting customers in maintaining their competitive advantage is at the core of Abu Dhabi Ports’ decision making. The steps we have announced today reflect our

→ H.E. Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri, Minister of Economy



↓ Fee reductions have been put in place across a range of services, including those related to innovation



commitment to enhancing the growth and stability of our customers and tenants in line with the government directives.”

A subsidiary of Abu Dhabi Ports, Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (KIZAD) has also announced new relief measures for businesses.

The relief package offers existing and prospective KIZAD freezone customers savings of up to 25% on new registrations and renewals, a waiver on the security deposit and two months free on renewals for all packages registered before the end of June this year.

“Small and medium enterprises are the backbone of any economy, and are a vital component of Abu Dhabi’s business landscape,” said Khalid Al Marzooqi, Director Commercial, KIZAD. “As engines for growth and employment, SMEs are one of the main pillars of KIZAD’s business strategy. It is our responsibility to provide businesses with the opportunities to be competitive in their respective markets.”

Approximately 98% of all companies in Abu Dhabi are SMEs, which are responsible for 29% of the Emirate’s GDP and 44% of its non-oil economy.

KIZAD’s relief package is available in three tiers, the first providing 25% savings on renewal or new registrations of three-years, 20% savings for two-year registrations and renewals, and 15% savings for one-year registrations.

Catering to local, regional and international institutions, Abu Dhabi Global Market is a broad-based international financial centre on Al Maryah Island. The financial free zone is a key pillar of Abu Dhabi’s Economic Vision, acting as a catalyst for the growth of the Emirate’s financial services sector.

Abu Dhabi Global Market Registration Authority (ADGM RA) recently unveiled measures designed to support and protect new and existing clients within its community.

The measures include a 50% reduction on the incorporation fee for new ADGM companies and limited liability partnerships until 31 December 2020, as well as a complete waiver of continuation fees for businesses continuing into ADGM from a foreign jurisdiction until the end of the year.

Existing ADGM companies and limited liability partnerships are now able to request an extension on the nine-month timeline for filing of annual accounts by demonstrating to the Registrar the circumstances hindering their ability to comply. An extension of up to three months may be granted.





The latest measures from ADGM come just weeks after it introduced a reduction of either 50% or 100% across a package of eight fees for existing ADGM entities.

“We are committed to serving as an anchor for entities seeking to establish a presence in ADGM and leveraging our resilient ecosystem to support business formation, continuity and growth,” said Dhafer bin Dhafer Al Mheiri, CEO of the ADGM Registration Authority.

He added: “The ADGM Registration Authority has introduced these measures to ensure that potential ADGM entities receive sufficient support in establishing their operations in our community. The incentives announced are an extension of the several measures that ADGM has introduced earlier, as we move to safeguard the growth, and assist in the stability, of our entities and look to continuously foster our thriving business environment.

“We will continue to provide our new and existing entities with the necessary guidance and assistance to establish their operations and continue to grow amid the COVID-19 pandemic.”

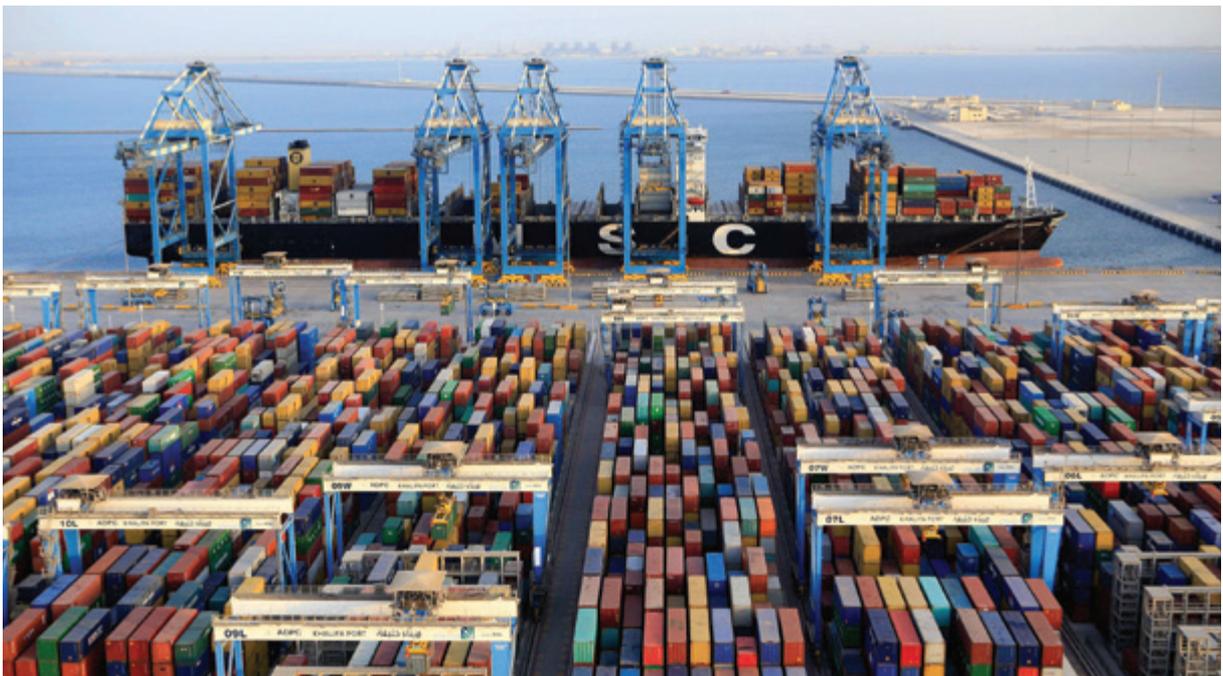
Meanwhile, restaurants, tourism and entertainment facilities within the Emirate can apply for a 20% refund on the annual rental value of their commercial property leases via a new digital service launched by Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (ADDED).

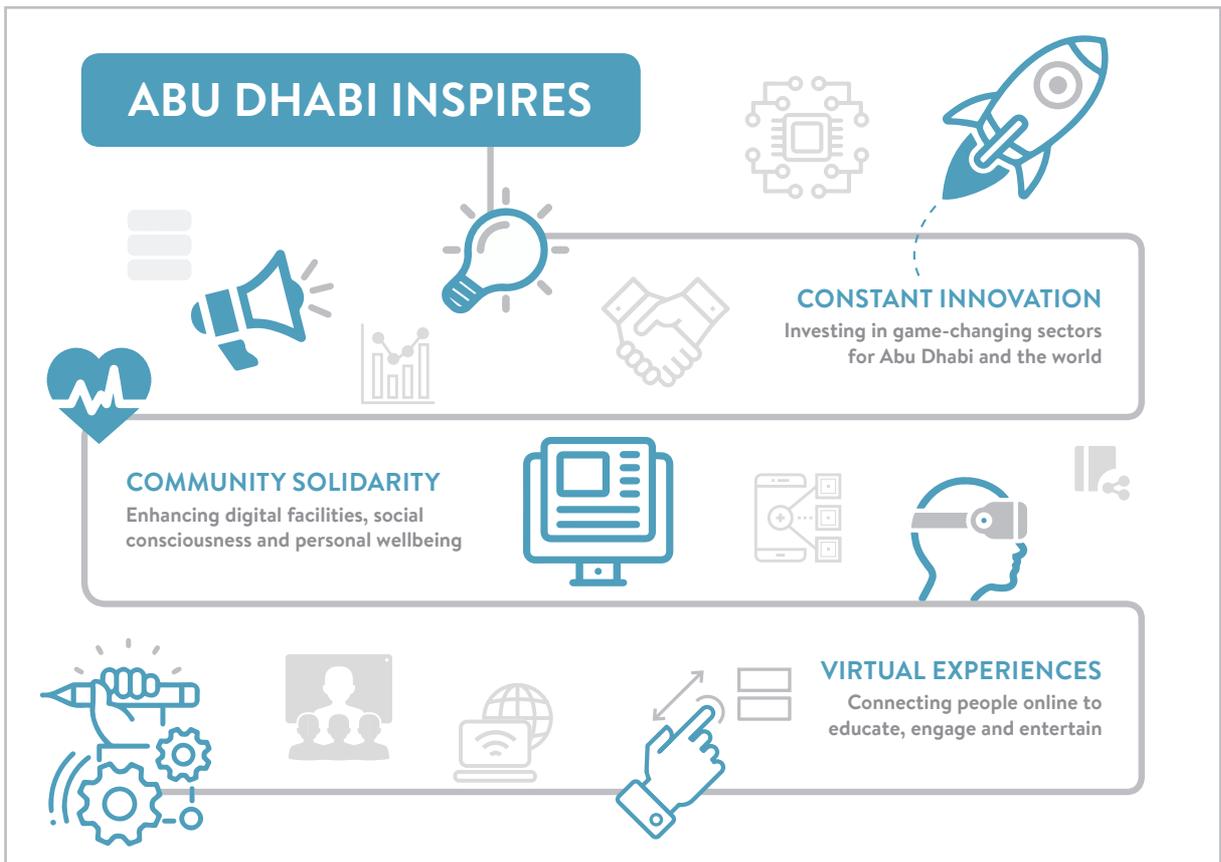
↓ Abu Dhabi Ports’
flagship Khalifa Port



**"WE ARE COMMITTED TO SERVING AS
AN ANCHOR FOR ENTITIES SEEKING TO
ESTABLISH A PRESENCE IN ADGM"**

**DHAHER BIN DHAHER AL MHEIRI,
CEO, ADGM RA**





At the time of its launch in mid-May, His Excellency Mohammed Ali Al Shorafa Al Ham-madi, Chairman of ADDED, explained that the Abu Dhabi Government ensured the refund of 20% of the total rental value paid by investors who started their lease from September 2019, or who renewed – or will renew – their contracts during the period from 1st April 2020 until the end of September 2020.

Owners of restaurants, tourism and entertainment facilities – not including hotels – that are applicable for the refund can apply by visiting the special registration page on the ADDED website.

Furthermore, government entities, businesses people, individuals and the community at large have been invited to get behind Abu Dhabi Inspires, an Emirate-wide initiative designed to “drive forward innovative responses to current realities”.

Launched by His Highness Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Member of Abu Dhabi Executive Council, and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Executive Office, in May, the Abu Dhabi

Inspires programme will support “bright minds to invent, develop and launch tangible ideas that will have a positive impact on people now and into the future”, according to Abu Dhabi Government Media Office.

The programme welcomes input across three pillars: ‘Virtual Experiences’ calls for ideas that connect people online to educate, engage and entertain, with a focus on youth and skills development; ‘Constant Innovation’ encourages concepts for game-changing sectors for Abu Dhabi and the world, with a focus on tech-based innovation, and the ‘Community Solidarity’ pillar calls for projects designed to enhance social consciousness and personal wellbeing through educational and motivational activities.

“At the most challenging times, innovation brings new perspectives and creates a path forward. Through Abu Dhabi Inspires, we seek to support timely concepts, substantial ideas and fresh solutions, exploring possibilities that can reshape our world,” said H.H. Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. ✨



HOME-GROWN

As Abu Dhabi Investment Office invests \$100 million to develop next generation agriculture in the Emirate, new figures recently released reveal that Abu Dhabi farms are already intensifying production.

Underlining the UAE's commitment to stimulating the country's farming industry, Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) has partnered with four agriculture technology (AgTech) pioneers to build new facilities in the Emirate dedicated to developing next generation agriculture.

ADIO will invest AED367 million (\$100 million) between AeroFarms, Madar Farms, RNZ and Responsive Drip Irrigation (RDI). The partnerships will establish new research and development and production facilities in Abu Dhabi, solving complex global agriculture challenges and expanding the profile of local food producers, ADIO said in a statement.

Dr. Tariq Bin Hendi, Director General of ADIO, said: "In line with Abu Dhabi's long-term vision to grow the sector, ADIO partners with companies that have innovation at the core to help ensure long-term success. Each of these companies will add to our already established agriculture ecosystem, and benefit from our plentiful land, natural heat, competitive energy prices and access to research universities and skilled talent."

The deal with New Jersey, USA, headquartered company AeroFarms will see the creation of the world's largest R&D indoor vertical farm. The 90,000 square foot facility will generate around 60 highly skilled roles for horticulturists, engineers and data scientists, and will include an advanced organoleptic research and precision phenotyping

laboratory, an advanced seed breeding centre, a robotics, automation and drones laboratory, plus additional laboratories for phytochemical analysis, machine vision and machine learning.

Formed in 2004, AeroFarms has been named in *Fast Company's* World Changing Ideas awards for the past three consecutive years. David Rosenberg, Co-Founder and CEO, said the company was proud to play "a pivotal role in helping establish the Emirate of Abu Dhabi as a global hub for AgTech innovation". He added: "This new cutting-edge R&D facility leverages our agriculture expertise and science-driven roots."

Home-grown UAE AgTech innovator Madar Farms will build the world's first commercial-scale indoor tomato farm, in Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (KIZAD). "The company is also set to scale up the commercialisation of micro-green growing to help provide a consistent and predictable local food supply that responsibly uses the region's natural resources," according to state news agency WAM.

Florida-based Responsive Drip Irrigation (RDI) spent more than a decade researching and developing its Growstream irrigation technology before it was commercially released last year. Described by the company as "the world's first and only plant responsive irrigation system", Growstream's smart subsurface irrigation tube interacts and responds to chemical signals released by plants' roots.



The ADIO investment will allow RDI to “begin its expansion to the UAE and further develop plant-responsive technology for Abu Dhabi and the Middle East”. It will also conduct research trials to increase crop yields in sandy soils and non-arable land.

Meanwhile, locally-based company RNZ will set up a state-of-the-art R&D centre to research, formulate and commercialise ‘agri-input’ solutions that will help to grow more with less.

The recently announced partnerships are part of ADIO’s \$272 million three-year AgTech Incentive Programme launched last year as part of Abu Dhabi Government’s Ghandan 21 Programme. The AgTech Incentive Programme is designed to accelerate the growth of the Emirate’s burgeoning AgTech ecosystem and promote innovation that is locally relevant and globally exportable. The competitive ADIO packages of cash and non-cash incentives awarded to the companies include rebates of up to 75% on R&D expenditure upon commercialisation of new solutions developed in Abu Dhabi.

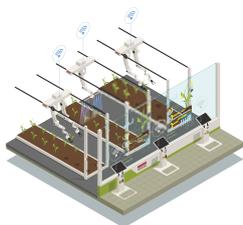


↖ ↑ The deal with AeroFarms will see the creation of the world’s largest R&D indoor vertical farm in Abu Dhabi

To date, ADIO has allocated approximately 40% of the AgTech Incentive Programme funding, according to WAM. The programme is open to local and international companies looking to establish and grow a presence in Abu Dhabi.

ADIO states: “Abu Dhabi is a uniquely attractive location for AgTech companies specialising in desert climates. The Middle East and North Africa is home to the world’s fastest-growing population, and AgTech companies stand to be able to plug themselves into the regional agriculture markets that are continuing to grow in competitiveness against food imported into the region.”

His Excellency Mohammed Ali Al Shorafa Al Hammadi, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi



THE SMART AGRICULTURE MARKET IS ESTIMATED TO GROW FROM \$13.8 BILLION IN 2020 TO \$22 BILLION BY 2025



“IN LINE WITH ABU DHABI’S LONG-TERM VISION TO GROW THE SECTOR, ADIO PARTNERS WITH COMPANIES THAT HAVE INNOVATION AT THE CORE TO HELP ENSURE LONG-TERM SUCCESS. EACH OF THESE COMPANIES WILL ADD TO OUR ALREADY ESTABLISHED AGRICULTURE ECOSYSTEM, AND BENEFIT FROM OUR PLENTIFUL LAND, NATURAL HEAT, COMPETITIVE ENERGY PRICES AND ACCESS TO RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES AND SKILLED TALENT”

TARIQ BIN HENDI,
DIRECTOR GENERAL, ADIO

Department of Economic Development (ADDED), said: “Targeted initiatives, like ADIO’s AgTech Incentive Programme, foster innovation in the Emirate to solve regional challenges and create highly skilled jobs.”

According to a report by MarketsandMarkets, the smart agriculture market is estimated to grow from \$13.8 billion in 2020 to \$22 billion by 2025.

Indeed, AgTech played a key part in the third edition of Agriscape – the international exhibition dedicated to food security and agricultural investments – held at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre late last year. The invitation-only event featured 50 exhibitors offering agri-land and

agri-assets and attracted visitors and buyers from 37 countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Singapore, the USA and Russia.

The AgTech area showcased 11 global innovations for the first time including an intelligent horticulture platform, lighting for indoor farming powered by laser technology, indoor and vertical farming solutions, monitoring water usage, precision irrigation, crop analysis using drone and satellite imagery and soil steaming systems.

At the end of the two-day event, His Excellency Saeed Al Bahri Salem Al Ameri, Director General of Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA), said: “In attracting the strong participation of prominent

agri-food decision makers and investors, the event offered an ideal platform for specialised companies to explore the latest opportunities to invest and expand their agri-land and agri-asset portfolio.”

He added: “The success of Agriscape 2019 in attracting emerging technological innovations in the agri-food sector will enhance Abu Dhabi’s status as an incubator for agricultural innovation, production and future food security.”

Established last year to replace the Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority and the Farmers’ Services Centre in Abu Dhabi, ADAFSA is tasked with developing a sustainable agricultural sector in the Emirate. Its efforts are already yielding impressive results.

Following an ADAFSA drive to increase the amount of cultivated land, create a new farming model using modern techniques and diversify crops, Abu Dhabi produced over 122,000 tonnes of vegetables in the 2018/2019 farming season, recently released figures show.

Around 122,550 tonnes of vegetable crops were produced in both open field and greenhouse farms on 18,711 donums in Abu Dhabi during the farming season 2018/2019, according to ADAFSA. Al Ain accounted for about 61.1% of the Emirate’s total production, producing 74,885 tonnes of vegetables.

Around 44,125 tonnes of vegetables were grown in open field farms. Al Ain farms produced about 19,992 tonnes or 45.3% of the total production, followed by Al Dhafra farms, which



“IN ATTRACTING THE STRONG PARTICIPATION OF PROMINENT AGRI-FOOD DECISION MAKERS AND INVESTORS, THE EVENT OFFERED AN IDEAL PLATFORM FOR SPECIALISED COMPANIES TO EXPLORE THE LATEST OPPORTUNITIES TO INVEST AND EXPAND THEIR AGRILAND AND AGRI-ASSET PORTFOLIO”

**HIS EXCELLENCY SAEED AL BAHRI SALEM AL AMERI,
DIRECTOR GENERAL, ADAFSA**

produced 14,051 tonnes of vegetables (31.8%), while Abu Dhabi farms produced about 10,081 tonnes (22.9%).

The total quantity of vegetables produced in the Emirate’s greenhouses is estimated at 78,425 tonnes during the 2018 – 2019 farming season. Al Ain farms produced about 54,893 tonnes, (70%), followed by Al Dhafra farms, which produced about 12,517 tonnes (16%), while Abu Dhabi farms produced 11,015 tonnes (14%).

“At the beginning of the farming season, ADAFSA launched an agricultural plan to organise production and diversify varieties according to consumers’ needs and conditions of each region,” according to WAM.

“The crop plan includes about 42 varieties of vegetables, fruits, herbs and organic products, enabling farm owners to sell high-demanded, locally-produced products in markets.”

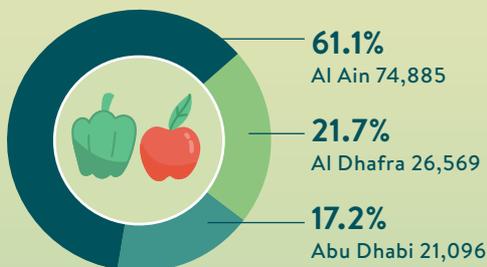


← His Excellency
Mohammed Ali Al
Shorafa Al Hammadi,
Chairman, ADDED

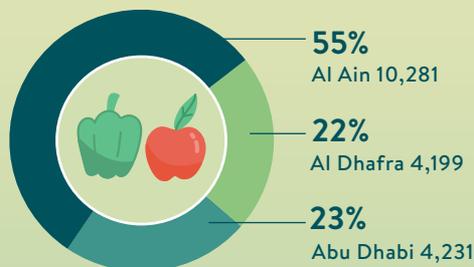
FARM PRODUCTION IN ABU DHABI DURING THE AGRICULTURAL SEASON 2018-2019

PRODUCTION OF VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

PRODUCTION IN TONNES



AREA IN DONUMS



TOTAL PRODUCTION



TOTAL AREA



GREENHOUSE PRODUCTION: 78,425 TONNES



	PRODUCTION (Tonnes)	AREA (Donums)
Abu Dhabi	11,015	666
Al Dharfa	12,517	927
Al Ain	54,893	3,383

OPEN FIELDS PRODUCTION: 44,125 TONNES



	PRODUCTION (Tonnes)	AREA (Donums)
Abu Dhabi	10,081	3,566
Al Dharfa	14,051	3,272
Al Ain	19,992	6,898

FORAGE CROPS: 161,506 TONNES



	PRODUCTION (Tonnes)	AREA (Donums)
Abu Dhabi	113,925	3,808
Al Dharfa	22,025	5,244
Al Ain	125,556	27,207



Source: Abu Dhabi Agricultural and Food Safety Authority

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

Abu Dhabi National Oil Company's ambitious drive to future-proof its operations is paying off as it leverages technology for economic and environmental gains.



Embracing new generation technologies is paying off handsomely for Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC). One of the world's leading energy producers, ADNOC recently announced that its hi-tech Panorama Digital Command Centre has generated over \$1 billion (AED3.67 billion) in business value since its inception three years ago.

ADNOC stepped into the future with its impressive Panorama Digital Command Centre, which takes up an entire floor in the company's Abu Dhabi headquarters. Panorama's 50-metre long curved video wall displays a single source of accurate and real-time data from across ADNOC's entire value chain.

It's a key part of ADNOC's ongoing strategic investments in digitisation and artificial intelligence (AI) to enable the company to drive greater efficiencies, optimise performance, and respond to complex market dynamics with agility and speed, according to ADNOC.

"The importance of embedding digital technology in businesses has never been greater and ADNOC's continuous investment in digital transformation over the last three years allows us to be more resilient, agile and responsive in navigating today's market landscape," said ADNOC's Abdul Nasser Al Mughairbi, Senior Vice President, Digital.

"Our Panorama Digital Command Centre acts as our 'eyes on the ground' and enables speed, accessibility and integration across our operations – key attributes that are required to make smart business decisions."

Devised and created by Schneider Electric, Panorama aggregates real-time information across ADNOC's 14 specialist subsidiary and joint venture companies and uses smart analytical models, AI and big data to generate operational insights and recommendations.

In recent months it has also helped ADNOC navigate the COVID-19 situation and plays an important role in ADNOC's business continuity. Managed by the ADNOC Group Digital team, at the time of writing Panorama was being accessed through secure remote work settings.



↑ His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, during the inauguration of ADNOC's Panorama Digital Command Centre

"We believe in being forward-thinking in our digital investments at ADNOC and are committed to leading the way with our digital transformation efforts to drive further value," added Mr. Al Mughairbi. "We continue to responsibly advance projects for the next phase of our digital journey, including expanding our AI solutions, rolling out new blockchain applications and enhancing our digital modeling capabilities."

Indeed, ADNOC is also stepping up its efforts to help mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus in the UAE by doubling down on its In-Country Value programme to help stimulate economic growth.

In April, His Excellency Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of State and ADNOC Group CEO, said: "As the result of our transformation over the past four years, ADNOC is far stronger, more resilient and better positioned to respond to current market dynamics."



ADNOC'S IN-COUNTRY VALUE PROGRAMME HAS DRIVEN MORE THAN AED44 BILLION (\$12 BILLION) BACK INTO THE UAE ECONOMY AND CREATED OVER 1,500 PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS FOR EMIRATIS



THE PANORAMA DIGITAL COMMAND CENTRE HAS GENERATED OVER \$1 BILLION (AED3.67 BILLION) IN BUSINESS VALUE SINCE ITS INCEPTION THREE YEARS AGO

“Building on this solid foundation, we will continue to invest responsibly and smartly with a firm focus on people, performance, profitability and efficiency, which have always been part of our DNA. In parallel, we will double down on in-country value creation, as well as identify win-win solutions with partners, contractors and suppliers.”

Since it was launched in 2018, ADNOC’s ICV programme has driven more than AED44 billion (\$12 billion) back into the UAE economy and created over 1,500 private-sector jobs for Emiratis.

Earlier this year ADNOC signed a memorandum of understanding with Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (ADDED), to extend the impact and reach of the ICV programme by integrating and standardising it across the Abu Dhabi Government’s procurement process.

The agreement allows businesses to make a one-time application for a unified In-Country Value (ICV) certificate applicable for Abu Dhabi Government’s commercial evaluation process of goods and services procurement.

At the time, H.E. Dr. Al Jaber said the agreement underpinned ADNOC’s commitment “to create, unlock and maximize value for the UAE”.

↑ ADNOC
Panorama Digital
Command Centre



“ADNOC’S CONTINUOUS INVESTMENT IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS ALLOWS US TO BE MORE RESILIENT, AGILE AND RESPONSIVE IN NAVIGATING TODAY’S MARKET LANDSCAPE”

**ABDUL NASSER AL MUGHAIRBI,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, DIGITAL, ADNOC**

He added: “Our partnership with ADDED to unify the process and standards for ICV certification will deepen the impact of the ICV initiative we launched, driving economic diversification and further catalysing the UAE and Abu Dhabi’s socio-economic development.”

Meanwhile, ADNOC’s commitment to innovation and pioneering state-of-the-art technology continues apace. In April, ADNOC and Abu Dhabi Power Corporation (ADPower) issued a joint tender calling for proposals from international companies to partner with both entities on the development and operation of a high-voltage, direct current (HVDC) sub-sea transmission system that will connect ADNOC’s offshore production facilities to ADPower’s onshore electricity grid – the first project of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

It will allow ADNOC to utilize the natural gas currently used to power its offshore facilities for higher-value purposes.

“The project is expected to reduce the carbon footprint of ADNOC’s offshore facilities by up to 30% through ADPower’s efficient onshore power production. It also offers power supply cost optimization potential for ADNOC’s offshore facilities,” said ADNOC in a statement.

Furthermore, it will “drive operational efficiency and system reliability by replacing the existing offshore localized gas turbine generators with diverse, more efficient and environmentally sustainable sources of energy, including renewable and nuclear power”.

Omar Alhashmi, Executive Director – Asset Management at ADPower, said: “As we continue to accelerate the transformation of Abu Dhabi’s water and electricity sector, ADPower is pleased to partner with ADNOC on this important,



“BUILDING ON THIS SOLID FOUNDATION, WE WILL CONTINUE TO INVEST RESPONSIBLY AND SMARTLY WITH A FIRM FOCUS ON PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE, PROFITABILITY AND EFFICIENCY, WHICH HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PART OF OUR DNA”

H.E. DR. SULTAN BIN AHMAD SULTAN AL JABER,
MINISTER OF STATE, ADNOC GROUP CEO

innovative, large-scale effort. Working together, we are reinforcing Abu Dhabi’s global position as we implement this first-of-a-kind mega project that will not only create synergy between two critical industries, but drive the Emirate’s economic growth through long-term value creation.”

ADNOC and ADPower will each own a 30% stake in the project, with the remaining 40% stake available for the selected developers and investors. Implemented on a build, own, operate and transfer basis, the full project will be returned to ADNOC at the end of the transmission agreement.

Described by ADNOC an “important infrastructure project for Abu Dhabi”, once commercially operational in 2025, the high voltage system will have a total installed capacity to generate 3,200 megawatts. 🌟



← ADNOC and ADDED sign an MoU on In-Country Value



LAW OF

ATTRACTION

As KIZAD continues to ramp up investor incentives, India's largest plastics packaging manufacturer signs an AED55 million deal with the thriving Abu Dhabi industrial zone.



Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (KIZAD) continues to play a key role in the Emirate's diversification strategy, attracting investment from around the world.

Shrinath Flexipack Pvt Ltd is the latest company to be drawn to the integrated trade, logistics and industrial hub located near Khalifa Port, in an AED55 million (\$15 million) deal that will see India's leading manufacturer of plastic packaging materials build its first factory in the Middle East.

The Hyderabad plastics company will set up its new facility on a greenfield site within KIZAD's Polymers Park, enabling Shrinath Flexipack to service clients in the Middle East, while also enabling the firm to expand its reach into African and European markets.

Khalid Al Marzooqi, Director Commercial, KIZAD, said the deal with Shrinath Flexipack showed "the true value of our cluster-based approach, which enables companies within the zone to benefit from each other's products and services in close proximity, leading to lower cost of production, faster production cycles, and quicker shipment to market".



He added: “KIZAD’s multimodal connectivity, including Abu Dhabi Ports’ flagship deep-water port, Khalifa Port, is a boon for companies such as Shrinath Flexipack who plan to export and import out of Abu Dhabi.

“The benefits and ease of setting up, combined with our ability to offer the region’s lowest utility rates ensure KIZAD is the ideal location for a business to grow and succeed.”

That sentiment was echoed by Ashish Malani, CEO of Shrinath Flexipack, who said: “Having swift access to key raw materials from within the KIZAD Polymers Park and the ability to ship faster to market, thanks to the world-class infrastructure available at KIZAD, is a major advantage to companies such as ours. We anticipate great success in Abu Dhabi.”

Shrinath Flexipack is part of the Shree Group of Industries, the largest producer of PE stretch and cling films in India. Once in operation, the new Abu Dhabi factory is expected to use ultra-modern European extrusion lines to make stretch and cling films, producing up to 30,000 metric tonnes of plastic goods per annum.

In March, KIZAD, a subsidiary of Abu Dhabi Ports, announced it had cut the land lease tariff on new contracts by 25%, offering companies a competitive advantage by lowering initial investment costs.

“The 25% reduction in the land lease tariff supplements the competitive advantage KIZAD already has to offer businesses looking to establish their base of operations here,” said Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, Group CEO of Abu



↑ The acquisition of a Post Panamax bulk carrier signals Abu Dhabi Ports’ expansion into the solid bulk cargo transshipment market

↑ Shrinath Flexipack Pvt Ltd palette plastic wrapping machine

Dhabi Ports, at the time: “We value long-term partnerships with our customers, and we will continue to bring real, measurable benefits to the industry through the implementation of initiatives, as well as the incentives extended by the Government of Abu Dhabi to help boost the economy of the Emirate and the UAE.”

This is not the first time KIZAD has implemented sweeping, business-friendly measures designed to stimulate investment. Last year it made 75 of its services available to customers free of charge and cut administrative registration fees in line with an Abu Dhabi Executive Council resolution. It’s a strategy that is paying off. KIZAD closed 2019 with more than 500 investors and AED70 billion of investment.

KIZAD is continuously looking for ways to enhance its customer experience. In April it rolled out a new set of digital services, in collaboration with Maqta Gateway. Customers can now access 84 KIZAD services through the online portal.

“Rolling out this new set of services means that our customers now have a broader set of services which they can avail online, from a place of their convenience and a time of their choosing,” said Mohamed Ghareeb, Vice President of Service Delivery, IZ, KIZAD. “Through the digital services, customers can make informed decisions based on real-time analytics, and get up-to-the-minute updates on their service requests.”

At the same time, Abu Dhabi Ports is broadening its portfolio of services. SAFEEN’s recent acquisition of a Post Panamax bulk carrier – the largest vessel ever to join its inventory – signals Abu Dhabi Ports’ expansion into the solid bulk cargo transshipment market.

SAFEEN is Abu Dhabi Ports’ maritime service arm and once the newly acquired vessel undergoes an extensive refit, including state-of-the-art cranes and conveyor system, it will be deployed to support Emirates Steel’s transshipment requirements. With a summer deadweight of up to 101,648 metric tonnes and diesel engines capable of generating up to 15,200 horsepower, the vessel – which will operate under the name Hafeet – includes seven holds for cargo storage. The refit is scheduled for completion by the end of the year with the vessel expected to be in operation in January 2021.

“The acquisition and the eventual commissioning of Hafeet marks a significant step for our SAFEEN team, as it greatly enhances our ability to serve our customers and provide them with world-class maritime services,” said Captain Adil Banihammad, Head of Maritime Cluster and Chief Executive Officer, SAFEEN – Abu Dhabi Ports.

He added: “The vessel is part of a larger expansion strategy by Abu Dhabi Ports aimed at broadening our portfolio of services, and taking our experience and service excellence to the wider bulk transshipment market. We firmly believe that by challenging ourselves and looking beyond our horizons, we will benefit not only our current and future customers, but also our broader Emirate as well.”

Importantly, Abu Dhabi Ports has introduced several measures to ensure that health and safety is maintained across all aspects of its operations in light of the coronavirus situation, while maintaining business continuity.



“WE VALUE LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUR CUSTOMERS, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO BRING REAL, MEASURABLE BENEFITS TO THE INDUSTRY THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INITIATIVES, AS WELL AS THE INCENTIVES EXTENDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ABU DHABI TO HELP BOOST THE ECONOMY OF THE EMIRATE AND THE UAE”

CAPTAIN MOHAMED JUMA AL SHAMISI,
GROUP CEO, ABU DHABI PORTS

As well as conducting temperature screening at all sea checkpoints, and thermal scanning of all vessel crews and offshore personnel operating in Abu Dhabi waters, Abu Dhabi Ports has constructed COVID-19 testing facilities at both Zayed Port and Khalifa Port, accessible to all employees, contractors and subcontractors active in the ports.

Captain Hazzaa Al Junaibi, Corporate Security Manager, Abu Dhabi Ports, said: “Hundreds of thousands of port personnel, ship crews, and offshore workers across the world are running critical maritime operations, day and night, to ensure that the global supply chain continues to move critical cargo to where it is most needed.

“As part of our fight against COVID-19, it is imperative we redouble our efforts to protect the health of these invaluable individuals, so they can continue to support our vital economic and trade lifelines and help mitigate the overall impact of the coronavirus pandemic.” ❁



A GLOBAL BEACON

One year on, Hub71 is playing a pivotal role in Abu Dhabi's ambitions to become a world-renowned nucleus for technology and innovation.

“Abu Dhabi has proven itself as a place where innovation can succeed and inspire,” said His Excellency Jassim Mohammed Buatabh Al Zaabi, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Executive Office, at the launch of Hub71 – a tech initiative supported by some of the world’s most innovative investors with the aim of accelerating the Emirate’s goal of becoming the nucleus of a vibrant tech start-up ecosystem.

“Through the Abu Dhabi Government’s economic programmes and plans, we’re doubling down on our efforts to make Abu Dhabi a global beacon for technology and innovation,” His Excellency further commented at the time.

One year on, the Emirate’s reputation for its growing tech ecosystem is flourishing.

Sovereign wealth fund Mubadala Investments, US technology giant Microsoft Corp. and Japan’s cutting-edge tech fund SoftBank Vision Fund came together to back the new Hub71 start-up acceleration programme in collaboration with Abu Dhabi Global Markets.

Speaking at the launch, Masayoshi Son, Founder and CEO of SoftBank Group Corp, said: “This is a ground-breaking project that will see technology companies, start-ups, academics and investors collaborating to create something truly exciting for the tech sector across the region and beyond.”

To help kickstart the initiative, the Abu Dhabi Government injected AED535 million, managed by the Abu Dhabi Investment Office, to invest in start-ups and venture capitalists (VCs) at Hub 71.

By the time of its recent one-year anniversary, Hub71, located in Al Khatem Tower, on Al Marayah Island, had prospered into an international community of tech ecosystem players and global start-ups covering a wide range of sectors and technologies, including FinTech, HealthTech, PropTech, EdTech, Aerospace, AI & Data Software and more.

Start-ups have access to \$500 million in capital through the Hub71 ecosystem and Abu Dhabi Investment Office's Venture Fund has funded five Hub71 start-ups and one VC to the tune of AED60 million.

Hub71 now boast 51 start-ups after 15 new joiners were selected for its Incentive Programme in April.

The Hub71 Selection Committee prioritised global start-ups in the fields of HealthTech and EdTech, which provide essential technologies to support the private and public sector as they adapt to the challenges of the Coronavirus pandemic, the organisation said in a statement.

"The 15 winning start-ups joining Hub71 will add immense value to Abu Dhabi in terms of knowledge-sharing and ecosystem diversity as the world rapidly accelerates its digital transformation," said Ibrahim Ajami, Interim CEO of Hub71 and Head of Ventures, Mubadala Investment Company.



“OUR INVESTMENT IN INCOUNTRY PROVIDES US WITH ACCESS TO A DYNAMIC CLOUD PLAYER WHICH PROVIDES A UNIQUE DATA RESIDENCY SERVICE, WITH MASSIVE GLOBAL POTENTIAL”

IBRAHIM AJAMI, INTERIM CEO, HUB71 AND HEAD OF VENTURES, MUBADALA

SECTORS AND TECHNOLOGIES WITHIN THE HUB71 COMMUNITY



HEALTHTECH



FINTECH



E-COMMERCE



AI DATA & SOFTWARE



MOBILITY



HARDWARE



PROPTech



AEROSPACE



EDTECH



“Like our start-ups, Hub71 is rising to the challenges that COVID-19 is presenting, and we are adapting to the needs of our wider community alongside the government, businesses and our community of entrepreneurs. With the addition of these 15 start-ups, Hub71 is perfectly positioned to support a digital transformation across all verticals, accelerating a shift in the way that essential services are consumed.”

HealthTech start-up Aumet is one of the companies selected to join the Hub71 Incentive Programme, which provides start-ups with up to 100% free housing, office space and health insurance for two years for seed companies and 50% subsidies for emergent companies for three years, worth around AED3.5 million (\$950,000).

US-based Aumet connects 50,000 medical manufacturers from across the globe to distributors for essential items like personal protective equipment (PPE). Founder Yahya Aqel described Abu Dhabi as “a safe, well-connected and supportive place to do business – a springboard to scale our business operations globally”.

Jordan-based Altibbi – the largest end-to-end Arabic-language digital health information platform – is another HealthTech start-up selected to join the Hub71 Incentive Programme, along

↑ Hub71, launched in March 2019

with Kinderly, a UK-founded early childhood EdTech company for parents and their infants.

Kinderly states it is “passionate about ensuring all children have a great start in life, regardless of their background or economic circumstances” and defines its mission as “to create digital resources and tools for childcare professionals that support children’s progress and learning”.

Also among the winners are two UAE FinTech start-ups, Mamo Pay and NymCard. Co-founded by Mo El Saadi, Imad Gharazeddine and Asim Janjua, payment app Mamo Pay’s mission is “to empower people to effortlessly access their money through a platform that demonstrates simplicity, empathy and utility”, while NymCard is a “modern cloud-based card issuing and processing platform enabling the next generation of payments in MENA”.

In all, the Hub71 Incentive Programme received 124 applications from 37 different countries during Q1 2020, with fledgling companies from Greece, Brazil, Singapore, Ireland and Canada among the winners for the first time.

Since its inception, Hub71 and its partners have introduced new platforms to assist its residents and the broader community.



In January, it launched the region's first Microsoft Reactor Programme – a centre for technical learning and knowledge-sharing where developers and start-up founders can connect with the local community. The programme provides a curriculum to help these professionals strengthen their expertise around emerging markets, such as cloud services and Artificial Intelligence.

Microsoft for Start-Ups is designed to support start-ups as they build and scale their companies, while Hub71's Corporate Engagement Programme connects companies with high growth start-ups.

Separately, in April, high growth start-up and US data residency hosting platform InCountry – which is active in over 80 countries and plans to have a presence in around 100 countries by the end of the year – chose to set up its Middle East headquarters at Hub71.

Named by Gartner as a 2020 Cool Vendor in Privacy, the San Francisco-based data residency-as-a-service platform has recently experienced rapid growth due to the growing data-sovereignty needs of multi-national organisations all over the world. Establishing its Middle East base at Hub71 allows InCountry to capitalise on the UAE's growing cloud market, which Gartner predicts is set to increase by 21% year-on-year.

↑↓ The Hub 71 Selection Committee prioritised global start-ups in HealthTech and EdTech

InCountry is backed by a long list of strategic international investors, including Caffeinated Capital, Felicis Ventures, Arbor Ventures, Ridge Ventures, Bloomberg Beta, Charles River Ventures, Global Founders Capital, Parade Ventures, Mstate and Mubadala Capital - Ventures.

“Our investment in InCountry provides us with access to a dynamic cloud player which provides a unique data residency service, with massive





“OUR PHILOSOPHY OF RESPECTING EACH COUNTRY’S DATA RESIDENCY REGULATIONS AND SOVEREIGNTY, WHILE ENABLING COMPANIES TO ADOPT THE LATEST CLOUD SOFTWARE, HAS REALLY RESONATED IN THE MIDDLE EAST”

PETER YARED, CEO AND FOUNDER, INCOUNTRY

global potential,” said Ibrahim Ajami, Head of Ventures, Mubadala Investment Company and Interim CEO of Hub71.

“A key pillar of Mubadala Capital’s ventures’ strategy is to leverage its international network and bring innovative portfolio companies to Abu Dhabi. The fact that InCountry has taken the decision to join Abu Dhabi’s Hub71 – is testament of resilient tech ecosystems that are able to weather the storm during major macroeconomic upheaval. We look forward to supporting InCountry as they expand their presence across the MENA region.”

Peter Yared, CEO and Founder of InCountry, said: “Our philosophy of respecting each country’s data residency regulations and sovereignty, while enabling companies to adopt the latest cloud software, has really resonated in the Middle East.”

He added that establishing regional headquarters at Hub71 would allow InCountry to take advantage of its holistic tech ecosystem – “providing us with greater market access, world-class talent and flexible regulatory frameworks enabling us to better serve our customers”. 🌟

GLOBAL START-UPS JOIN HUB71 IN Q1 2020

Applications received from

37 DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES

120+

APPLICATIONS were received for the latest cohort

15

NEW START-UPS have joined the ecosystem including HealthTech and EdTech start-ups



WINNING START-UPS



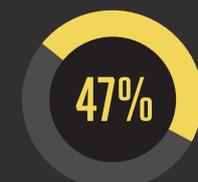
are UAE companies



were part of a tech accelerator programme



had secured funding from a Hub71 Accelerator or VC partner



were emergent companies with 6-25 employees



MONEY MATTERS

As banking institutions release results for the first quarter of 2020, the Central Bank of the UAE's forward-thinking Targeted Economic Support Scheme is being well received.

Latest figures released by the Central Bank of the UAE show that the country's gross banking assets rose to AED3.128 trillion (\$851 billion) during the first quarter of 2020 – an increase of 8.1% compared to Q1 2019.

The statistics revealed an increase in the value of deposits, which reached AED1.852 trillion in March – a 5.9% growth compared to AED1.748 trillion in March 2019.

Gross credit figures also increased to AED1.768 trillion in March – an increase of 5.6%. Domestic credit rose from AED1.529 trillion in March 2019 to AED1.595 trillion, while the value of government credit amounted to AED229.1 billion and the private sector recorded an amount of AED1.149 trillion.

Total investments by banks in the UAE reached AED377.6 billion in March – up 2.7% compared to AED367.8 billion during the same month last year.

In March, the Central Bank of the UAE (CBUAE) announced an AED100 billion stimulus package as a counter-measure to tackle the impact of Coronavirus.

The Targeted Economic Support Scheme (TESS) included AED50 billion of zero-interest, collateralised loans for UAE-based banks. It also entailed AED50 billion funds freed up from banks' capital buffers. Participating banks were invited to use the funding to offer temporary relief to private sector and retail customers for a period of up to six months.

In April, CBUAE further extended the duration of the TESS programme allowing participating banks and finance companies to extend their customers' deferrals of principal and interest until 31 December 2020.

For banks participating in the TESS programme, the CBUAE also granted an extension of the capital buffer relief to 31 December 2021. For banks and finance companies participating in the TESS scheme, the CBUAE granted an extension of the zero-cost funding facility against collateral until December 31, 2020.

His Excellency Abdulhamid Saeed, the recently-appointed Governor of the Central Bank of the UAE, said: "I am confident that the scheme will act as a catalyst to strengthen economic activity and effectively mitigate financial risk, while also ensuring that businesses are prepared for the post-COVID-19 era. I would like to thank participating banks for their collaboration and positive response to support their affected customers at this unprecedented time."

He added: "We urge banks and financial institutions to act in the best interest of retail clients, private sector corporates and SMEs, which are the growth engine of our economy."

The Central Bank's TESS initiative has been well-received. By early May, 75% had been

TOTAL INVESTMENTS BY BANKS IN THE UAE REACHED AED377.6 BILLION IN MARCH – UP 2.7% COMPARED TO AED367.8 BILLION DURING THE SAME MONTH LAST YEAR

drawn-down from the AED50 billion liquidity facility, equivalent to AED37.2 billion total consumption of allocated funds.

In May, the Central Bank of the UAE also released its Annual Report 2019. At the time of its issuance, CBUAE Chairman, His Excellency Hareb Masood Al Darmaki, said that the bank continuously reassesses its strategic objectives and focus areas to align with the government's agenda in order to support the UAE's long-term economic development.

"In the past year, we continued our efforts to build a central bank that can respond to the challenges of our time. The Central Bank of the UAE, which supports the nation's financial and monetary stability, made notable efforts to achieve its strategic goals, thereby advancing the UAE Vision 2021 of building a diversified, knowledge-based and competitive economy," said H.E. Al Darmaki.

↓ Central Bank of the UAE





“OUR ROLE IS TO SUSTAIN THE PULSE OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND HIGH PRIORITY WAS GIVEN TO THE MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES”

H.E. HAREB MASOOD AL DARMAKI,
CHAIRMAN, CBUAE

↓ FinTech Abu Dhabi

He added: “Our role is to sustain the pulse of the local economy and high priority was given to the micro, small and medium enterprises. We worked to ease the financial constraints and collaborated closely with other stakeholders. Globally and, increasingly, locally, FinTech advances are playing a vital role in revolutionising financial services by enhancing efficiency and accessibility.”

FinTech has been a particular area of increasing focus for the CBUAE in recent times. Late last year the central bank announced it was setting up a dedicated FinTech Office to create an enabling and tech-friendly environment to facilitate financial technology innovations.

The fourth annual FinTech Abu Dhabi festival, jointly hosted and organised by the CBUAE and Abu Dhabi Global Market, is scheduled to take place at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, from 24th - 26th November this year.

“Bringing together international and local thought-leaders and policy-makers, financial and technology institutions, FinTech start-ups, unicorns, investors, academia and innovators, the event promises a deep-dive into trending topics and business issues that will shape the digital economy of the future,” according to state news agency WAM.



Elsewhere, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank PJSC (ADCB) recently announced a net profit of AED209 million for Q1 2020. In May 2019, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank officially merged with Union National Bank and the combined entity acquired Al Hilal Bank.

↓ Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank

Total shareholders' equity at the end of the quarter stood at AED49 billion, while the bank distributed AED2.644 billion in dividends to shareholders in Q1 2020. Its net loans stood at AED247 billion and customer deposits at AED263 billion as of 31st March 2020.

Current account and savings account (CASA) deposits increased by AED6 billion from the year-end, a 6% increase quarter-on-quarter, to AED108 billion. CASA deposits improved to 41.1% of the total customer deposits compared to 38.9% as of 31 December 2019.

ADCB's total liquid assets as at the end of Q1 2020 stood at AED108 billion.

The bank said that net interest and income from Islamic financing increased 6% year-on-year to AED2.789 billion on account of improved cost of funds. Interest expense improved 29% to AED1.606 billion.

ADCB added that its operating profit, excluding integration costs, increased 8% year-on-year to AED2.293 billion, primarily driven by cost synergies and higher revenues.

Commenting on ADCB's performance, Ala'a Eraiqat, Group Chief Executive Officer and



““ADCB WAS THE FIRST BANK IN THE UAE TO ROLL OUT A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME OF RELIEF MEASURES FOR CUSTOMERS, WHICH INCLUDE DEFERMENT OF LOAN INSTALMENTS, FEE REDUCTIONS AND WAIVERS, RESCHEDULING OF WORKING CAPITAL FACILITIES AND TEMPORARY INTEREST RATE REDUCTIONS FOR BUSINESSES”

ALA'A ERAIQAT, CEO, ADCB GROUP





Board Member said: “In the face of the unprecedented economic and social challenges presented by COVID-19, ADCB’s priority is to support customers, employees, business partners and communities above all other matters.

“ADCB was the first bank in the UAE to roll out a comprehensive programme of relief measures for customers, which include deferment of loan instalments, fee reductions and waivers, rescheduling of working capital facilities and temporary interest rate reductions for businesses.”

↑ First Abu Dhabi Bank

↓ The Central Bank of the UAE announced an AED100 billion stimulus package

At the time of writing, over 32,000 ADCB customers had received deferrals under the TESS scheme. The bank had also invested AED9 million to support distance learning for students and “to express gratitude to frontline healthcare professionals”.

Mr. Eraiqat added: “As a fully unified and resilient banking group, ADCB benefits from a robust balance sheet, scale, efficiency and durable business model to weather the current turbulence in the global economy.”

While supporting its employees and customers through the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB), the UAE’s largest bank, also reported a “resilient performance” in Q1 2020 with a net profit of AED2.4 billion.

André Sayegh, Group Chief Executive Officer, said: “Despite market headwinds, we have maintained a robust balance sheet and our capital, liquidity and funding position remain strong. In addition to being a major supporter to the private sector in the UAE, we continue to work closely with the UAE Government and other public sector entities in the financial domain to support the economy in all respects.

Mr. Sayegh added: “As we move into the second quarter and beyond, we will continue to take the necessary actions to maintain our robust foundation and financial strength, and to enable us to continue to support our clients and communities through these challenging times. As a driver for UAE economic growth and prosperity, we remain confident in our ability to continue delivering long-term value for all our stakeholders.”



Photo: CBUAE

WIDENING THE



Figures recently released by the Statistics Centre – Abu Dhabi (SCAD) show that the value of non-oil foreign merchandise trade through Abu Dhabi ports hit AED37.1 billion in January and February this year. That's up AED1.3 billion – or 3.6% – compared to the same period last year.

Imports increased from AED17.11 billion to AED19.25 billion (12.5%), while re-exports were valued at AED7.81 billion.

According to SCAD, Saudi Arabia continued to be the key trading partner of Abu Dhabi with two-way trade value standing at AED8.531 billion across January and February. Saudi Arabia accounted for 23% of the Emirate's total trade during that period.

Two-way trade with the US was valued at AED2.4 billion, followed by the UK and Japan, at AED1.8 billion and AED1.74 billion respectively.

In May, the value of Abu Dhabi's foreign trade in pharmaceutical and pharmacist products during

GATEWAY

Authorities in Abu Dhabi are stepping up measures to support import and export trade as the Emirate consolidates its position as a vital transit gateway.



the first quarter of this year was AED799.7 million. Imports were valued at AED589.6 million, exports at AED85.6 million, and re-exports at AED125.4 million.

Across 1,469 transactions carried out in the first three months of 2020, the weight of Abu Dhabi's foreign trade in pharmaceutical and pharmacist products was 2,300 tonnes, according to the General Administration of Customs. "There is an escalation of demand for pharmaceutical

and pharmacist products, which are considered one of the most important strategic materials, especially in the current global circumstances," reported state news agency WAM, adding that the inspectors of the General Administration of Abu Dhabi Customs were ensuring shipments of medicines and pharmaceutical products were reaching the markets quickly and efficiently to meet the needs of pharmacies, hospitals and medical centres.

Abu Dhabi Customs recently launched an economic stimulus package to support importers.

Importers in Abu Dhabi can now benefit from seven new incentives, including the postponing of payment of custom duties and pre-clearance services prior to the arrival of shipments.

The package, introduced in May, allows for postponing the payment of customs duties of importers for 90 days by opening facilities accounts for clients of Abu Dhabi Customs. Accordingly, the payment of customs duties due on goods entered into the country is postponed for three months from the date of the customs statement.

Also, bank guarantees will be returned and replaced with corporate guarantees following a request and letter of guarantee issued by a company that wants to avail of this benefit.

The stimulus package announced by the General Administration of Abu Dhabi Customs is aimed at supporting the vital sectors and companies, especially small and medium entities, to help them cope with the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The customs body is now offering pre-clearance services ahead of the shipment arrival. By clearing goods before they arrive, the authority said that it would save companies time and costs associated with the process.

A self-clearance service will also allow companies to clear shipments themselves without resorting to customs brokers.

Companies can now issue a customs warehouses licence without paying any fees. It can organise deposit and exit details from warehouses without service payments.

The transit period has also been extended from three to five days. Companies can transfer

→ His Excellency
Mohammed Ali Al
Shorafa Al Hammadi,
Chairman, ADDED



their shipments according to the custom transit status within a period of five days for the purposes of the arrival of goods.

The temporary admission insurance fee has also been cancelled. There will only be a collection of Dhs50 service fee for insurance reimbursement service of re-export of entered goods under the temporary admission status.

His Excellency Rashed Bin Lahej Al Mansoori, Director-General of the General Administration of Abu Dhabi Customs, said the incentives package was designed to enhance the competitiveness of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and ensure business continuity for companies in all sectors.

↓ Abu Dhabi
Customs is offering
pre-clearance
services ahead
of shipment





↓ Abu Dhabi
Department
of Economic
Development

“WE NEED ALL COMPANIES IN THE UAE TO KNOW HOW TO ACCESS THE FULL RANGE OF ADEX FINANCIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TODAY TO ADVANCE THEIR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS”

H.E. MOHAMMED SAIF AL SUWAIDI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ADFD AND CHAIRMAN OF THE ADEX EXPORT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meanwhile, in March, Abu Dhabi Exports Office (ADEX) allocated Dhs550m (\$150m) to support the strategic expansion of the nation’s export businesses and continued diversification of the UAE economy. In May it embarked on a national campaign to help business leaders use its financial products and services to help stimulate global export business in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADEX was set up in 2019 by Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) as a means to grow the volume and value of exports by supporting businesses across non-oil sectors in the UAE through the provision of direct loans and guarantees to overseas buyers from the public and private sectors seeking to import goods and services from the UAE.

ADEX facilitates exports by providing credit to foreign buyers while paying UAE companies

on their behalf. It offers transaction-specific financing or a revolving line of credit, with short, medium and long-term financing available to foreign buyers at competitive interest rates.

The national awareness campaign sees ADEX establish partnerships with Departments of Economic Development and Chambers of Commerce and Industry across all emirates. Together they will co-host a series of forums educating UAE export business leaders on how to use the ADEX suite of export credit facilities. Through various Chambers, ADEX will reach out to Chamber member companies – especially national manufacturing companies – inviting them to take part in workshops, online education forums and webinar sessions.

“We need all companies in the UAE to know how to access the full range of ADEX financial products and services available today to advance their business development efforts,” said His Excellency Mohammed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of ADFD and Chairman of the ADEX Export Executive Committee. “We want them to know ADEX is here to support them not only through the COVID-19 economic recovery period but to expand their businesses and drive our national economic diversification strategy well into the future.”

H.E. Al Suwaidi added: “We all share a responsibility to support the financial health and development of our national companies. Working directly with Chambers of Commerce and the government entities that make up our national export community, we can ensure our



national companies are fully aware of how to access and use the services available to them to build their business during this challenging time and beyond.”

In May, AEDX also partnered with Etihad Credit Insurance (ECI) to boost the range of financial products available to help UAE companies. As part of the collaboration, UAE exporters will have access to ECI’s database of more than 300 million companies around the globe, allowing them to connect with potential new customers.

“Together we can help enhance UAE businesses and exporters’ cash flow and safely develop business expansions,” said Massimo Falcioni, Chief Executive of ECI. “We can make sure they get paid for those transactions in advance, improving their cash flow. And we can assist them through our extensive database of companies to access new markets and reduce the cost of exports.”

New digital platform Abu Dhabi Export Gateway, designed to help local exporters boost the Emirate’s GDP output, is also scheduled to be online in the coming months. The brainchild of Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (ADDED), it will offer an integrated approach to exporting at least 100 high-quality local products from across 10 sectors in the

→ His Excellency Rashed Bin Lahej Al Mansoori, Director-General of the General Administration of Abu Dhabi Customs



↓ The value of Abu Dhabi’s foreign trade in pharmaceutical and pharmacist products during Q1 2020 was AED799.7 million

Emirate, which can be exported to more than 60 target markets worldwide.

The first phase of the gateway is scheduled to be operational late August and will feature about 20 different services for exporters. Also a knowledge platform, it will supply data and statistics





about the leading local exports, as well as information about the economic performance of key sectors in Abu Dhabi and the UAE.

His Excellency Mohammed Ali Al Shorafa, Chairman, ADDED, said the Abu Dhabi Export Gateway will “serve the growing volume of the Emirate’s foreign trade”.

He added: “The gateway brings new value to the export industry as it will provide a set of innovative technical solutions and digital content in line with the vision of the Abu Dhabi Government to increase the level of exports and increase the size of national companies’ trade in global markets.”

The team managing the project will frequently review the needs of local companies

↑ General Administration of Abu Dhabi Customs

and the volume of demand in foreign markets. Based on the results, the platform will add other global markets and target sectors, as well as a range of smart digital services to enhance local companies’ exporting capabilities and practices.

“ADDED seeks to enhance its support to local exporters through this project,” said Bader Al Jenaibi, Acting Director of Foreign Trade and Export Support, ADDED. “We also look to continue our field visits, workshops and meetings to learn more about their challenges, needs and opportunities so we can propose solutions that will enhance their competitiveness in international markets.” ❁

THE BENEFITS OF ADEX



ADEX facilitates exports by providing credit to foreign buyers to import goods from the UAE



UAE exporters are paid by ADEX on behalf of the foreign buyer



Support can be transaction-specific or involve a revolving line of credit



Services extend to foreign buyers of products/ services of an overseas UAE-related company (at least 30% UAE ownership)



ADEX offers short-, medium- and long-term financing facilities for the foreign buyer (up to 15 years)



ADEX offers competitive and attractive interest rates



BROTHERLY TIES

Cemented through economic arrangements and cultural respect, the mutually advantageous relationship between the UAE and India is stronger than ever.

“**T**he UAE is one of the largest investors in India and one of our most important trading partners, and will also help India in our goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy.”

That was the message from Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways and Commerce and Industry of India, at the conclusion of the seventh meeting of the UAE-India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments, held in Abu Dhabi.

“The UAE-India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments is an important pillar of our deep economic relations,” he added. “It is a platform to communicate our mutual requirements and vision for the future, and has helped boost bilateral investments and cooperation.”

Established in 2012, the UAE-India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments initiative is just one example of how both countries are working together to strengthen ties. Indeed, last summer Navdeep Singh Suri, then Ambassador of India to the UAE, said: “We can say with great confidence that we are entering the golden era of our friendship.”

From \$180 million in the 1970s, bilateral trade between the two countries exploded to \$57 billion by the end of 2018. It increased further to \$60 billion during financial year 2018-19, with exports from India to the UAE totalling \$30.2 billion for the period, while exports from the UAE to India reached \$29.8 billion, making India the largest trading partner of the UAE, and making the UAE India’s third largest trading partner – after China and the US.



“BOTH COUNTRIES ARE WORKING CLOSELY AND VIGOROUSLY TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMITMENT OF \$75 BILLION INVESTMENT BY THE UAE IN INDIA. I FEEL IMMENSELY PROUD OF CONVEYING THAT INDIA-UAE RELATIONS ARE AT THEIR BEST EVER”

NARENDRA MODI,
INDIAN PRIME MINISTER

UAE-India relations accelerated after Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, visited the UAE in August 2015 – the first Indian Prime Minister to do so in 34 years. His state visit to the UAE last August was his third visit in four years.

“India has embarked on the ambitious, yet achievable, path to be a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25,” Prime Minister Modi told state news agency WAM at the time. “We are targeting about \$1.7 trillion dollar worth of investments in the coming five years. To achieve this vision, the government is working to promote inflows from domestic as well as foreign sources.”

“Many of our companies are investing here in the UAE,” he added. “Both countries are working closely and vigorously to implement the commitment of \$75 billion investment by the UAE in India. I feel immensely proud of conveying that India-UAE relations are at their best ever.”

His Excellency Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, the UAE’s Minister of Climate Change and Environment, also met with Prime Minister Modi when he travelled to India last year



↑ His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, receives Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his 2019 state visit to the UAE

for the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, in Gandhinagar. They discussed building on the strong existing ties between the two countries, and discussed ways to facilitate cross-pollination of successful experiences.

Addressing UAE and Indian businesspeople at the summit, H.E. Dr. Al Zeyoudi, said: “UAE investments in India are valued at an estimated \$8 billion, of which \$5.33 billion is in the form of foreign direct investment, while the remaining is portfolio investment, making the UAE the 10th biggest investor in India in terms of foreign direct investment.”

He added that the UAE’s investments in India spanned multiple sectors, including services, power, construction development, air transport, food, and hotels and tourism.

Another UAE-India landmark event in recent years was the currency swap agreement between both countries, in 2018. The historic agreement allows businesses on both sides to bypass the US dollar or any other foreign currency and trade directly in UAE dirhams and the Indian rupee, leading to large savings for business communities on both sides.

India’s energy security is also a top priority for the UAE with Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) being the only foreign oil and gas company, to date, to invest in India’s strategic petroleum reserves programme. ADNOC is also a stakeholder in one of India’s largest refinery and petrochemical complexes, which will be constructed at Ratnagiri in Maharashtra.

Strategic energy co-operation between the UAE and India was bolstered in March 2019

↓ Medical supplies are loaded onto a plane bound from the UAE to India





when ADNOC awarded exploration rights for Abu Dhabi Onshore Block 1 to a consortium of two Indian oil companies, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Indian Oil Corporation Limited.

The consortium holds a 100% stake in the exploration phase, and is expected to invest up to AED626 million (\$170 million) to explore for and appraise oil and gas opportunities in the block.

According to data released by the United Nations in September, an estimated 3.3 million Indians live and work in the UAE.

As such, the expat Indian community contributes significantly to the Indian economy. Expats sent approximately Dhs80.96bn (\$22.04bn) back to their home countries in the first half of 2019, revealed statistics from the Central Bank of the UAE (CBUAE). Over 37% of total remittances sent in the second quarter of the year was attributed to the Indian population in the UAE.

The UAE and India also share strong cultural bonds. Last year, the UAE Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development staged a Zayed-Gandhi Digital Exhibition, at Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi. Organised in collaboration with the Mahatma Gandhi Digital Museum in New Delhi, the exhibition celebrated the humanitarian values and legacies of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founding father of the UAE, and Mahatma Gandhi, the spiritual leader of India.

“The exhibition sheds light on the unique vision of the two leaders in the fields of construction, development, kindness, humanity and environment. It also offers the multicultural community residing in the UAE an insight into the lives of the two men who carried the same values and principles but belonged to different

↖ H.E Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment, met with Prime Minister Modi in India, last year

↑ The UAE-India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments

↓ Zayed-Gandhi Digital Exhibition

cultural backgrounds,” said Her Excellency Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, at the launch of the exhibition.

In recent months both countries have been keeping in contact to review the two nations’ efforts to combat the Coronavirus. “The economic and trade relations between the UAE and India are steadily growing and have not been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to the continued coordination between the two friendly nations,” said state news agency WAM in April.

In May, the UAE sent seven metric tonnes of medical supplies to India to assist approximately 7,000 medical professionals as they work to combat the virus there.

His Excellency Dr. Ahmed Abdul Rahman AlBanna, UAE Ambassador to India, said: “UAE assistance to India comes in recognition of the profound and brotherly ties our two countries have shared throughout the years.” 🌟



Abu Dhabi Chamber Organises a Series of Brainstorming Meetings

Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry recently launched a new initiative to set up a series of online meetings between the public and private sectors, allowing all parties to discuss and brainstorm about the challenges presented by the Coronavirus.

The virtual meetings are just one way in which the Chamber continues to support the determined efforts of the Abu Dhabi Government to ensure business continuity.

Presiding over a virtual business meeting the Chamber had organised that brought together the public sector with representatives of the private sector in the Emirate, His Excellency Mohamed Helal Al Mheiri, Director General of Abu Dhabi Chamber, praised the stimulus package of economic initiatives launched by Abu Dhabi Government, which keeps pace with Coronavirus developments and provides proactive solutions to protect Abu Dhabi's economic stability.

His Excellency Rashid Abdul Karim Al Balushi, Undersecretary of the Department of Economic Development,

and His Excellency Tariq Abdul Qadir bin Hindi, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Investment Office, took part in the meeting along with a working group representing the American Chamber of Commerce in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, as well as British, Australian and Canadian businesses.

During the meeting, the measures and initiatives taken by the Abu Dhabi Government to stimulate the Emirate's economy in light of the Coronavirus challenges were reviewed.

The representatives of the private sector appreciated the efforts made by the governments of the UAE and Abu Dhabi to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus and the integrated and comprehensive preventive and precautionary measures adopted to preserve the health and safety of citizens, residents and all components of society.

They thanked Abu Dhabi Chamber for organising the meeting, which enabled them to express their views and convey their aspirations and proposals to the relevant government agencies.



Online Consultation Session Proves a Success

The Abu Dhabi Businesswomen Council of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry held an online consultation session recently with businesswomen and women entrepreneurs operating in the UAE.

More than 50 businesswomen took part in the session. Titled 'Improving Marketing and Increasing Sales During

the Pandemic', it touched on a number of subjects including how to maintain your position in the market, how to keep services up to expectations, flow revenues, when to increase and decrease sales, advertising during crises and how to manage projects during crises.

Held in cooperation with the National SME Programme of the

Ministry of Economy and Dubai Entrepreneurship Academy, the session fell under Abu Dhabi Businesswomen Council's five-year strategic plan to increase the role of women in the Emirate's economic development and to boost women's entrepreneurship goals through training, consultation and business incubation.