



# What Is the UAE Environmental Policy?

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Last month, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA) announced the launch of the UAE Environmental Policy. The announcement was made by MOCCA Minister Dr Abdullah Belhaif Al Nuaimi via a virtual press briefing.

Agreed upon by the cabinet in November 2020, the policy is aimed at preserving precious ecosystems, promoting ecological products and services, supporting the country's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), enhancing economic opportunities and diversifying income streams, as well as improving the quality of life for everyday Emiratis.

"In line with the forward-thinking visions and directives of its leadership, the country's environmental efforts have included establishing a comprehensive legislative and regulatory framework, and launching multiple initiatives, programmes and projects aimed at protecting the environment, preserving natural resources, and ensuring the sustainability of biological diversity," [explained Dr Al Nuaimi](#).

"To build a better future for current and future generations while keeping pace with local and global developments, the UAE Cabinet has adopted the policy that will create a platform for building on our achievements in the field of environmental sustainability."

## The policy pillars

It is understood that the Environmental Policy will comprise eight separate pillars, as discussed and agreed upon by MOCCA and their strategic partners. These include:

- **Climate Change.** As perhaps the biggest challenge facing humanity today, climate change is a key priority for the policy. This pillar focuses on diversifying the energy mix with a view to reducing carbon emissions, with a projected target of increasing the share of clean or renewable energy to 50% of overall output by 2050.
- **Environmental Protection.** This pillar promotes the preservation and conservation of the environment, biodiversity and natural resources of the UAE. Targets already identified include safeguarding 20% of coastal and marine areas and 22% of inland water areas, in addition to undertaking the rehabilitation of 80% of degraded terrain, by 2030.
- **Air Quality.** As outlined in the National Agenda of UAE Vision 2021, improving air quality is a key objective of the Emirati government. MOCCA



hopes to bring the Air Quality Index (AQI) score of the nation up to 90% by 2021 and 100% by 2040.

- **Food Safety and Security.** In the wake of [14 countries pledging to end overfishing](#) in their waters, the UAE is looking to bring its own food security legislation into line with international best practices. Relevant targets include reaching a perfect 100 score on the Food Safety Index by 2040.
- **Sustainable Local Crop Production.** This pillar will focus on making the UAE self-sufficient in terms of agriculture by promoting new salt- and drought-resistant forms of produce and employing artificial intelligence (AI) and other forward-thinking technologies to optimise farming.
- **Sustainable Local Livestock Production.** This pillar will take its lead from the previous one by adopting environmentally friendly practices with regard to animal husbandry. It will also seek to make the UAE a leader in the field of camel breeding research by 2040.
- **Integrated Waste Management.** The UAE has long targeted becoming a model for the rest of the world to follow in minimising waste and implementing a circular economy. To this end, MOCCAЕ hopes to treat 75% of all solid waste emanating from urban epicentres by 2025 and 85% by 2035.
- **Environmentally-Sound Chemical Management.** This pillar concentrates on introducing legislation aimed at ensuring chemicals are safely consumed and disposed of throughout their entire life cycle. Targets include eliminating the use of substances which can harm the ozone layer altogether by 2040.