



# What Is the Dubai Green Economy Initiative?

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The Dubai Green Economy Initiative is a governmental scheme aimed at guaranteeing the country's long-term financial stability whilst simultaneously protecting our environment. Operating under the slogan "A Green Economy for Sustainable Development", the Initiative will focus on the development and implementation of new policies and programmes in a range of different sectors.

Agriculture, energy, investment and transportation are just some of the industries which fall under the Initiative's remit. Among other projects, the UAE government is pursuing greater deployment of energy efficient protocols, a transition to cleaner forms of energy generation, widespread uptake of eco-friendly farming practices and enhanced use of carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology.

## Uniquely placed to contribute

As a country which has relied upon fossil fuels for the majority of its economic portfolio, the UAE is uniquely placed to make significant changes to its energy and investment policies going forwards. That's also true given its problems with food security and water scarcity, which is why the Dubai Green Economy Initiative aims to reimagine the way all facets of Emirati life function.

One industry which could comprise a particular area of focus is agriculture. At present, 85% of food consumed in the UAE is imported, but the country is targeting a significant improvement in the sustainability of its agricultural sector. It already implements environmentally-friendly techniques like [the use of sewage sludge as fertiliser](#), and is now looking at precision agricultural, hydroponics and other forward-thinking methods of boosting its food production capacity.

The Initiative ties in with other ambitious environmental policies that have been introduced by the Emirati government in recent years. For example, the Initiative dovetails nicely with UAE Vision 2021, the UAE Energy Strategy 2050 and the UAE Centennial 2071 on its emphasis on leveraging technology to encourage greener credentials across the country.



## Trees to the rescue

But while tech certainly has a role to play in Dubai's green transformation, Mother Nature has answers all of her own. With that in mind, the striking lack of tree cover across the UAE is another area being targeted by the Initiative. Arid temperatures and the scarcity of rainfall are one reason why forestation is lacking in the country, but a new drive to bring more foliage into urban environments could help the cause.

Indeed, a recent study found that a single tree is capable of absorbing 20 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, 20kg of dust and 80kg of lithium, mercury and lead-based contaminants on an annual basis. In monetary terms, the value provided by a tree is equivalent to \$73 in air conditioning, \$75 in wildlife shelter, \$75 in erosion control and \$50 of pollution mitigation. Cumulatively, if that \$273 was placed into a 5%-interest savings account, it would accumulate over a period of 50 years into a staggering total of \$57,151 – and all from a single tree!

As a means of enhancing tree cover in the UAE, Dake Rechtsand has teamed up with Goumbook to launch the Heritage Forest drive. This project asks businesses of all sizes to embrace the spirit of Ramadan by giving back to the planet and planting between 100 and 1,000 trees on their premises. The expense involved in doing so may be minimal, but the potential benefits are there for all to see and enjoy.