

## Could Biofuels Be Introduced at UAE Fuel Stations?

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At present, biofuels account for just 3% of the global demand of 100 million barrels of fuel per day, as well as 3.6% of global transport energy consumption. However, some forward-thinking countries have already attempted to make their implementation more widespread at garages and petrol stations – and the UAE could benefit from following suit.

That's especially true given that one local company is making impressive headway in the industry. Lootah Biofuels, based in Dubai Industrial City (DIC), has the capacity to produce 100,000 litres of usable biofuel on a daily basis and is confident that it would be able to supply all government-owned fuel stations if legislation was put in place to encourage the eco-friendly energy source.

### A cleaner alternative

Biofuels are a preferable option to fossil fuels since they can be generated from renewable sources and waste products, such as used animal fats and vegetable oils. This would eliminate the necessity of extracting crude oil, gas and coal from the Earth, which climate scientists agree is vital for meeting the environmental goals agreed upon at the Paris Climate Summit in 2015.

Indeed, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has stated that adoption of biofuels must increase to 15% of global transport consumption if the world is to meet its targets. As a result, several governments across Europe, as well as those in Japan and Malaysia, have since introduced legislation which oblige petrol stations to offer biofuel options to their customers.

### Lootah Biofuels on the up

Lootah Biofuels will be hoping that the Emirati authorities follow suit. Since the company's inception in 2009, when its founder Yousif Lootah bought a prototype converter capable of producing 20 litres of biodiesel, it has moved into a new factory in al Quoz and is expected to open another one in Abu Dhabi this year.

At present, Lootah Biofuels purchase used materials from some 16,000 sources, including popular fast-food chains such as KFC, hotels and private residents. It then processes these fats and oils onsite, converting them into biofuels and supplying them to over 100 customers, including overseas clientele. In 2022, it was responsible for curbing around 700 tonnes of emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>.

## Diversifying to develop

Mr Lootah is well aware of the need to continually evolve in a sector as demanding as energy. After initially investigating the use of biofuels in Europe, his company began collecting second-hand cooking oils in the UAE to make his product. He has since branched out into bio-racing fuels and soaps, sanitisers and other cosmetics, as well as providing consultation services to others in the market.

Meanwhile, sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) is another area which he is keen to explore in the near future. Airlines such as Etihad and Emirates have already experimented with SAFs and Lootah Biofuels are eager to supply clients not just locally, but also in Europe. However, road vehicles and the UAE fuel stations which supply them will remain the immediate focus for now.