



Fact Sheet

Dubai: The Environment

Dubai is committed to a programme of sustainable tourism in line with current global trends towards responsible travel and protecting the environment. With the emirate developing apace, the importance of environmental sustainability has never been more important, and Dubai has responded with a detailed programme to ensure that its natural habitat can be preserved to complement the myriad projects that are taking place.

Quite literally, sustainable tourism is when travellers not only learn about the destination but also how to help sustain its character while deepening their own travel experiences. It is designed to conserve resources as well as showcasing the region's architecture, cuisine, heritage, aesthetics and ecology to ensure visitors have an experience of the highest quality.

“Infrastructure, Land and Environment” in Dubai’s Strategic Plan

Unveiled by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in 2007, the Strategic Plan 2015 focuses on the overall realisation of sustainable development. In the run up to 2015, Dubai intends to:

- Optimise land use and distribution while preserving natural resources
- Maintain Dubai as a safe, clean, attractive and sustainable environment by updating and aligning its internal regulations with international standards and developing the required enforcement mechanisms
- Adopt a sustainable development approach through integration of environmental outcomes within development policies
- Raise environmental awareness regarding sustainable development

The Middle East Centre for Sustainable Development (MECSD)

On 27 October 2007, the MECSD was established by the Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) regulatory arm of Dubai World and Pacific Control Systems in line with the Strategic Plan 2015. The following day, the Centre received a second, implicit endorsement through the introduction of Sheikh Mohammed’s Green Building Directive which changes the way in which buildings are constructed to make them more environmentally friendly, and which is designed to cut water consumption in the emirate by some 40 per cent. On 1 January 2008, Dubai became the first city in the Middle East (and one of only a few worldwide) to adopt the green building strategy, promoting in-built efficiency. Henceforth, all buildings being constructed in the emirate have to conform to eco-aware building principles and must be certified by the MECSD, to help developers meet global standards.



Essentially, the MECSD was created to educate architects and developers about the Green Building Directive and all the relevant terms and conditions that need to be met in order for a building to be certified 'Green'. And as Dubai's construction becomes greener, so more companies are taking tenancies in green buildings or redesigning their corporate HQs to be environmentally friendly in order to meet corporate social responsibility (CSR) targets. Many companies are striving to top the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System, which is the international standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Dubai's own standard, from the Emirates Green Building Council (EGBC) replicates LEED and has already witnessed a dramatic shift in developer attitudes. In 2008, Metito (a world leader in water/wastewater treatment and water desalination systems) was one of the first in the UAE to earn the much-coveted LEED Gold Level for its Headquarters in Technopark, Dubai.

Dubai Green Tourism Award

Dubai Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) launched the first-ever Dubai Green Tourism Awards in June 2009 as part its commitment towards sustainable tourism and incorporate best environmental practices within the booming tourism sector. The objectives of the awards are to encourage the hotel establishments to use and implement environmental systems and tools to reduce the negative impact of CO2 in the hospitality industry. The award also rewards hotels who introduce initiatives that highlight the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes and develop awareness/educational culture within the hospitality sector about sustainable tourism.

Ecobility Energy Solutions LLC

Ecobility Energy Solutions LLC was unveiled on 6 May 2008 and aims to lead private sector sustainable development and carbon footprint reduction in the UAE by focusing on renewable energy, resource conservation and sustainable buildings – with over £3.5 billion invested to-date – and expected to receive over £10 billion of investment by 2010.

Emirates Energy Award

In January 2007, the Dubai Quality Group (DQG) introduced the Emirates Energy Award to promote sustainable energy within GCC countries by increasing awareness among individuals and policy makers on the importance of optimising energy utilisation. The award is presented annually by Sheikh Mohammed.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PROJECTS IN DUBAI

Green Community Dubai

Green Community (commissioned by Properties Investment LLC) aims to provide a daily way of life within a secure community which encompasses landscaped gardens, stone streets and a relatively traffic-free



environment. Covering 67 hectares of residential, leisure, retail and commercial properties, the development prides itself on its modern and beautiful surroundings with natural greenery serving as the key to peace and tranquillity. The development aims to offer residents a unique way of living outside the city.

The Emirates Al-Maha Desert Resort and Spa

Opened in 1999, Emirates Al Maha Desert Resort and Spa is located at the heart of the 225 square kilometre Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve. Some 4.7 per cent of Dubai's total land mass was set aside for conservation, under the watchful eye of South African ecologist and game park veteran, Tony Williams. The reserve was a conscious effort by the government to re-establish flora and fauna in the emirate, and further promote sustainable tourism. One of the Reserve's biggest successes has been the reintroduction of the Arabian Oryx, a large white antelope that had been poached to almost-extinction in the 1960s. Fears for the Oryx were so great in fact, that Dubai's herd was granted asylum in Arizona to prevent extinction. However, since the creation of the Reserve, the local herd of 110 Arabian Oryx has risen to over 300. Other animals that have also prospered in the Reserve include three species of gazelles, two types of desert fox, and the sand skink, an eight-inch lizard with porcelain-like skin.

The Al Maha Desert Resort has been recognised worldwide for its environmental endeavours. In 2004 it received the World Legacy Award for Natural Travel by the National Geographic and Conservation International, as well as a nomination from the World Travel & Tourism Council as an outstanding case study in the blueprint for future tourism.

Solar power, water recycling and use of natural materials are all part and parcel of the operation, but for guests the emphasis remains on luxury, underlining the potential of marrying premium travel with sustainable tourism ethics. In keeping with Al Maha's eco-friendly concept, all water is recycled back to its groundwater source.

Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort and Spa

The Development has been awarded several Development and Environmental Professionals' Association (DEPA) and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) awards for the environment. In addition, it is a member of Kuoni's Green Planet network, and was audited for its environmental credentials by TUV Rhineland (Technischer Überwachungsverein, a German safety monitoring agency), winning a 93.5 per cent rating.

Initiated by the hotel's chief engineer who came up with the idea of a water treatment plant, the resort now runs a variety of schemes; steam from the laundry is used to heat the swimming pool water, waste water is recycled and used for the landscaped gardens, and paper, printer cartridges, bottles, plastic, cans and oil are all recycled. As well as receiving financial rewards for new ideas, employees are encouraged to recycle materials used in their offices and in the hotel.

Grand Hyatt Dubai



In 2007, Grand Hyatt Dubai converted its main water heating system from diesel oil-fired to solar powered in a bid to reduce climate change and running costs. The new solar panel heating system has dramatically reduced carbon emissions. The first commercial installation of its kind in the UAE, it is also the largest in the whole of Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuaries

Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuaries is situated at the head of Dubai Creek, and includes three watch towers which are fully equipped with modern facilities for bird watchers and other visitors. The total area of the sanctuary is 6.2 square kilometres and is surrounded by a buffer zone. The Sanctuary is home to over 88 species of birds, as well as an estimated 313 species of wild fauna and flora. Avid ornithologists have been able to spot around 25,000 birds each January, when the avian population of the sanctuary peaks. The density of waders in the sanctuary varies according to the seasons, standing at 21 birds per hectare in spring and autumn, and soaring to 60 birds per hectare in winter. Plans are afoot to develop other major sanctuaries in Hatta, Al Awir and Jebel Ali.

Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo

Suspended within Dubai Mall, the project is home to over 33,000 creatures across over 85 species. The Aquarium offers schoolchildren of all ages a chance to find out more about aquatic life at The Ocean School which has a varied curriculum including adaptation, survival tactics and reproduction. The interactive programme enables students to observe, investigate and discuss ecological concepts and allowing them to appreciate and value the aquatic environment.

Al Badia

The government is working closely with golf developers to ensure that the indigenous flora and fauna are protected as well as minimising water consumption at courses. Al Badia, the 18-hole championship golf course situated in Dubai Festival City, is one of several golf courses in the emirate that make use of the salt tolerant and environmentally-friendly Paspalum grass, which enables partially desalinated water to be used in fairway maintenance.

Nakheel

One of the leading real estate developers in the UAE, Nakheel is also committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of its offshore developments following the signing of a strategic agreement on 15 January 2007 with the United Nations University (UNU).

The agreement on Marine Ecosystem Management engages a team of leading coastal management experts and includes a review of Nakheel's existing monitoring activities. The partnership will also see the development of a comprehensive environmental monitoring programme for the waters of the Arabian Gulf that will help maintain sustainable marine ecosystems and mitigate adverse impacts.



Under the four-year agreement, plans will be designed and implemented for sustainable management of the marine environments in and around Nakheel's major coastal development projects.

In January 2008, Nakheel launched Blue Communities – a major sustainability project under the direction of Sheikh Mohammed. Almost two-thirds of the world's population live in coastal communities and the long-term aim of the project is for Nakheel to provide leadership in the development of sustainability in these areas. Almost £30 million will be invested over three years to raise awareness of coastal development issues not just in Dubai, but around the world, and the project will also engage non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders to help drive the initiative.

