Together for a Sustainable Future – German Emirati business relations

Welcome to the AHK Gulf Region

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Foreword

THE GERMAN EMBASSY ABU DHABI

Alexander Schönfelder
Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the UAE

This past summer – with its record high temperatures, devastating floods in Libya, Greece and Turkey, and unprecedented wildfires in Canada – has once more made one thing abundantly clear: stopping climate change is the most pressing issue of our time.

For generations, scientists have pointed out the devastating potential of climate change, fuelled by the ever-increasing amounts of greenhouse gas emissions being pumped into the atmosphere. However, humanity's efforts to reduce global CO_2 emissions and thus stop climate change have hitherto been far from sufficient.

With COP28 just around the corner, the year 2023 offers an opportunity with enormous potential to drastically speed up as well as scale up global climate action. We are confident that the UAE are well positioned to host a COP with an impactful outcome.

We draw this confidence from our long-standing and successful cooperation with the UAE in the realms of energy and climate action. This cooperation started long before we concluded our energy partnership in 2018, which we supplemented with a climate pillar in 2022. However, with the framework of this partnership in place, our cooperation has deepened greatly and has already produced remarkable success stories.

In July 2023, the UAE published its first-ever hydrogen strategy: a comprehensive roadmap to make the UAE one of the most important hydrogen producers and exporters in the world. We are immensely proud that Germany – through the Fraunhofer Institute – made major contributions to drafting this strategy. Hydrogen is the energy of the future, and we are working closely with the UAE to set up a global hydrogen market.
In September 2023, we hosted a workshop on carbon trading in Abu Dhabi. Carbon trading is an important instrument in the transition to a climate neutral economy. We are keen to continue working with the UAE on carbon markets in general and aiding in the establishment of a domestic carbon market in the UAE in particular.

German companies also play a vital role in the UAE's energy transition, e.g., by supplying technologically advanced climate solutions of the highest quality, which are used here in the UAE for hydrogen production, among many other purposes.

With a view to COP28, we are delighted that several of our top priorities are mirrored by the UAE's presidency programme, such as the goal to triple renewable energy by 2030. This is vital for maintaining the 1.5-degree target in a world with an ever-increasing demand for energy.

Our Climate and Energy Partnership with the UAE has truly proven to be a shining example of successful cooperation. We are keen to deepen and strengthen this cooperation as we strive towards realising a climate-neutral and prosperous future together with the UAE.

GERMAN CONSULATE GENERAL DUBAI

Sybille Pfaff
Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Dubai and the Northern Emirates

The imperative of sustainability now takes centre stage in the collective consciousness of governments, businesses and societies. The UAE has declared the year of 2023 to be the Year of Sustainability. It thus seems very apt that the German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce (AHK), in this edition of its brochure, focuses on sustainability.
Dubai and the Northern Emirates are beacons of innovation and progress. Dubai, a city known for its transformative ambitions, has embarked on a remarkable journey towards sustainability. The Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050 comes with high ambitions in the battle against climate change. With the goal of producing 75% of its energy from clean sources by 2050, Dubai is poised to become a global leader in renewable energy.

Beyond Dubai, the Northern Emirates are home to diverse ecosystems and fragile landscapes. In this region, where tradition meets innovation, and where the future has taken root in the sands of the desert, the need for sustainable practices is even more pronounced. The preservation of its unique natural heritage, from the dramatic Hajar Mountains to the pristine coastal areas, is a shared responsibility.

With the clock ticking on climate change and environmental challenges, our goal is to create a symbiotic relationship between German expertise and the Emirati vision for a greener and more resilient future:

- German companies, renowned for their innovation in clean technology and renewable energy, have been active participants in the region's sustainability endeavour. As municipalities aim to reduce carbon emissions and enhance energy efficiency, the expertise of German companies is invaluable.
- Dubai has recognised the importance of the circular economy where resources are used efficiently and products are designed for longevity, reparability and recyclability. The city is actively exploring opportunities in this domain, with the goal of minimising environmental impact, while German companies are at the forefront of developing technologies and solutions for waste management, recycling and resource optimisation.
- Sustainable construction practices and smart city development are integral to the UAE's vision for a greener future. Dubai's commitment to building the world's first sustainable city, ‚The Sustainable City,' exemplifies this. With Germany's expertise in green building technologies and urban planning, there exists a wealth of opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- When it comes to mobility, the UAE's dedication to exploring more sustainable means of transportation is evident in Dubai Metro, the world's longest automated driverless metro network. German companies, known for their excellence both in rail systems and in individual transport/EVs, have the potential to be key players in shaping the future of sustainable urban mobility in this vibrant region.
- Dubai's Food Security Strategy aims to diversify sources of food imports, enhance local production, reduce food wastage, and enhance food safety, quality and preparedness to face crises. Considerable potential lies in the field of sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation – areas where German businesses can make a significant impact.

I am very grateful to the AHK for its commitment to fostering connections, knowledge exchange and innovative solutions. With its "Sustainability Series", it has shed light on topics ranging from the ESGs to the role women can play in sustainability. More activities are yet to come to build momentum towards the World Climate Conference COP28 – and beyond! I look forward to facilitating partnerships that will promote sustainable initiatives and strengthen the bond between Germany and the UAE.

Together, we can pioneer a future where sustainability is not just a concept, but a way of life.

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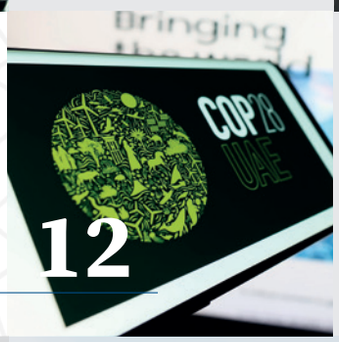

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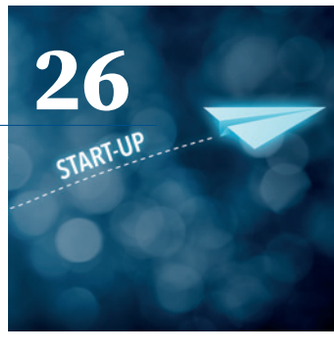

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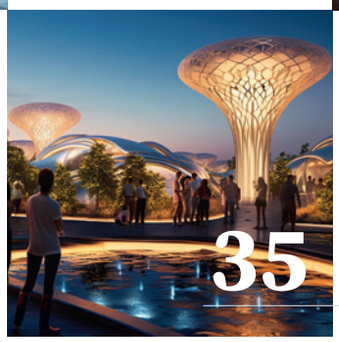

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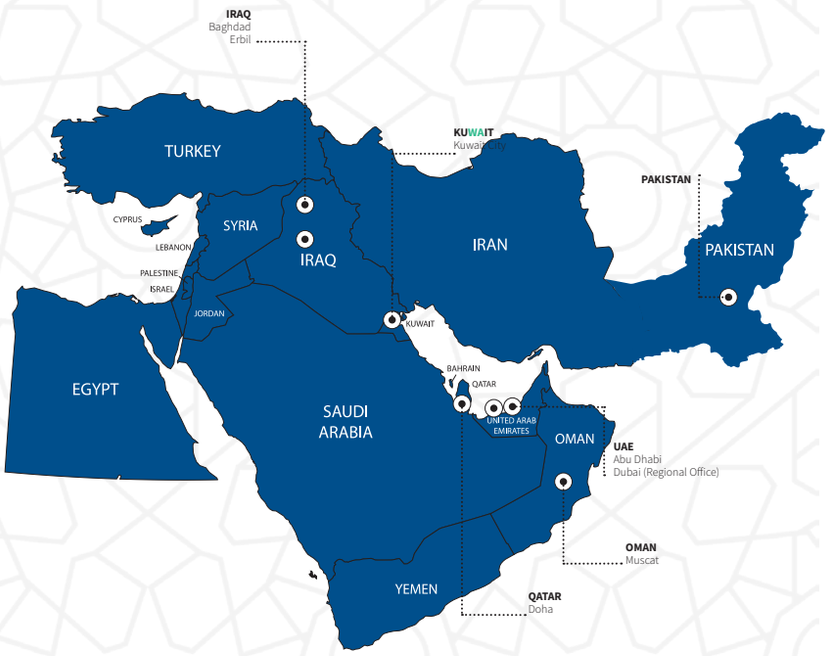
Welcome

THE GERMAN EMIRATI JOINT COUNCIL FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (AHK)

Oliver Oehms
CEO of the German Emirati Joint Council for Industry & Commerce (AHK)
& Delegate of German Industry & Commerce to Iraq

AHK Gulf Region

YOUR PARTNER IN THE UAE, QATAR, OMAN, IRAQ, KUWAIT AND PAKISTAN



WELCOME TO OUR PUBLICATION THAT WE PROUDLY SHARE ON THE OCCASION OF COP28 IN THE UAE AND IN THE "YEAR OF SUSTAINABILITY"!

As the German Emirati Joint Council for Industry & Commerce (AHK) we are at the forefront of climate- and sustainability-related topics. We act as an accelerator and engage with industry players, policymakers as well as relevant stakeholders alike. In the framework of various German Government programs, we have been playing a pivotal role in introducing innovative and sustainable German technologies and business solutions to the United Arab Emirates and the broader region for many years. It is source of immense pride to witness the fantastic progress of our host country, the United Arab Emirates, in implementing global-scale and top-notch milestone projects. We had the privilege to visit the awe-inspiring Mohammed Bin Rashid Solar Park on several occasions, where Siemens Energy in partnership with the Dubai Water and Electricity Authority (DEWA) and EXPO 2020 launched the first industrial scale, solar-powered green hydrogen plant in the Middle East and North Africa – an unequivocal milestone on the path to a greener future in the region. The UAE has consistently demonstrated its ability to execute large scale projects in a short period of time, in collaboration with trusted partners such as Germany.

The well-established bilateral Energy and Climate Partnership that the AHK is steering on behalf of the Federal German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) is a beacon – a "Leuchtturm" – of similar partnerships worldwide.

Assembling over 600 corporate members, the AHK serves as the ideal platform for forward-looking ideas, visions and projects focused on sustainability.

I wish you inspiring insights and happy reading!

We Connect membership with AHK

630+
current member companies

60 %
are subsidiaries of German companies or companies owned by German nationals based in the UAE

20 %
are local companies

20 %
are German companies based in Germany

There are many good reasons to join our strong network. A membership with AHK provides companies as well as individuals with a range of attractive benefits and privileges.

Active professional networking is vital for business success. We offer a unique platform to establish contacts, exchange information, participate in events and to form a common voice towards politics.

Connect with knowledgeable contacts from various industries, institutions and associations as well as from politics by becoming an AHK Member.

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Get in touch: info@ahkuae.com

We Support

Under the service brand DEinternational, we provide companies with professional advice and support, so they can successfully establish and expand their business activities in the region.

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- BUSINESS MEETINGS
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- DELEGATIONS
- CONTACTS TO LOCAL INSTITUTIONS
- BRIEFINGS
- SEARCH FOR LOCAL PARTNERS

Energy Transition Crossroads:

FINDING COMMON GROUND THROUGH INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

Karin Zangerl
Director Abu Dhabi Office

As the world progresses towards achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, the stakes are only getting higher and the urgency of a profound and bold transformation has become as critical as ever.

2023 has shown that climate disasters and extreme weather events are growing more severe, more frequent and more unpredictable with unprecedented heat waves, raging forest fires and devastating floods all around the world. The global average temperature for July 2023 was the warmest ever recorded, up by roughly 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial times.
Climate change is not a challenge for the next decades, but instead a crisis that is already causing hardships and disruptions in human societies and economies.

Society has already witnessed several energy transitions and they've never been swift. They unfolded over the course of a century or more, and they did not completely displace the incumbent technologies – they were an addition rather than a transition. In the six decades since oil overtook coal as the world's number one energy source, the global consumption of coal has almost tripled, with global consumption hitting a record high in 2022. While energy transitions undoubtedly require time, none of these transitions were as acute as the current one to preserve a liveable planet – and above all, it needs to unfold in little more than a quarter-century.

According to the latest World Energy Transition Outlook (Vol. 1) published by the International Renewal Energy Agency (IRENA) in June 2023, the global energy transition is off track to meet the key Paris accord target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. If we fail to dramatically bend the curve on emissions and policies remain unchanged, global warming will rise to catastrophic 2.7°C by 2100.

Addressing emissions from energy- and carbon-intensive industries is essential to improve energy efficiency. However, most of these industries face considerable challenges to decarbonize. With global demand for industrial products projected to grow significantly by 2050, the decarbonization of industries is key to reaching climate neutrality. Just five industries together are responsible for 80 percent of industrial emissions: iron and steel, oil and gas, cement and concrete, chemicals, and coal mining. Fuels such as hydrogen and its derivatives (e.g. low-carbon ammonia) will play a unique role in the energy transition

and currently appear to be the only promising alternative fuels with the potential to decarbonize these industrial processes as well as to offer a complementary solution to electrification and other clean fuels for the road, air, water and rail freight sectors. However, the world still lacks the required infrastructure for widespread hydrogen adoption and there are countless obstacles that hinder the development of a reliable and scalable clean hydrogen economy.

Despite the gloomy forecast there is a clear political momentum to address the necessity of accelerating the energy transition – also prompted by an increasingly challenging macroeconomic environment and energy markets being impacted by an ever-changing geopolitical landscape. Tools and technologies to reach net-zero are available but they urgently require comprehensive policies such as regulatory and governance frameworks, cost-reduction incentives, investment opportunities, supply chain securities, proven business cases and public acceptance for an even faster deployment and to ensure the transition has broad socio-economic benefits. When discussing the energy transition, it's important to embrace a receptive attitude towards all technologies capable of guiding us toward our desired end state.

When looking at the developments in clean and renewable technologies and power capacity, the outlook for a low-carbon transition depicts a glimmer of hope: 2022 saw a remarkable acceleration with record renewable energy installations – 295GW of additional renewable capacity, up nearly 10 percent from the year before. Electric vehicle (EV) sales worldwide exceeded the 10 million mark, expanding their share of the overall car market to 14 percent and predictions estimating further exponential growth in the next years. Clean energy has become more cost-competitive than ever, with renewables being the most affordable power generation option in most regions and dominating the global market for new power generation capacity. Sustainability commitments from companies and financial institutions are at an all-time high, and policy makers are slowly making progress with landmark agreements such as the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in the US or the EU's Fit for 55, RePowerEU and carbon border adjustment mechanism.

While the potential energy transition pathways in developed countries are somewhat clear, for the developing world international collaboration in technology transfer and investments is urgently needed to support the industrial decarbonization process and their own ambitious renewable energy targets. In developing nations, the apparent primary focus on reducing emissions must be harmonized with other pressing concerns such as health, poverty and economic growth. If done correctly, it could result in a more just and equitable industrial development and economic diversification for smaller developing countries.

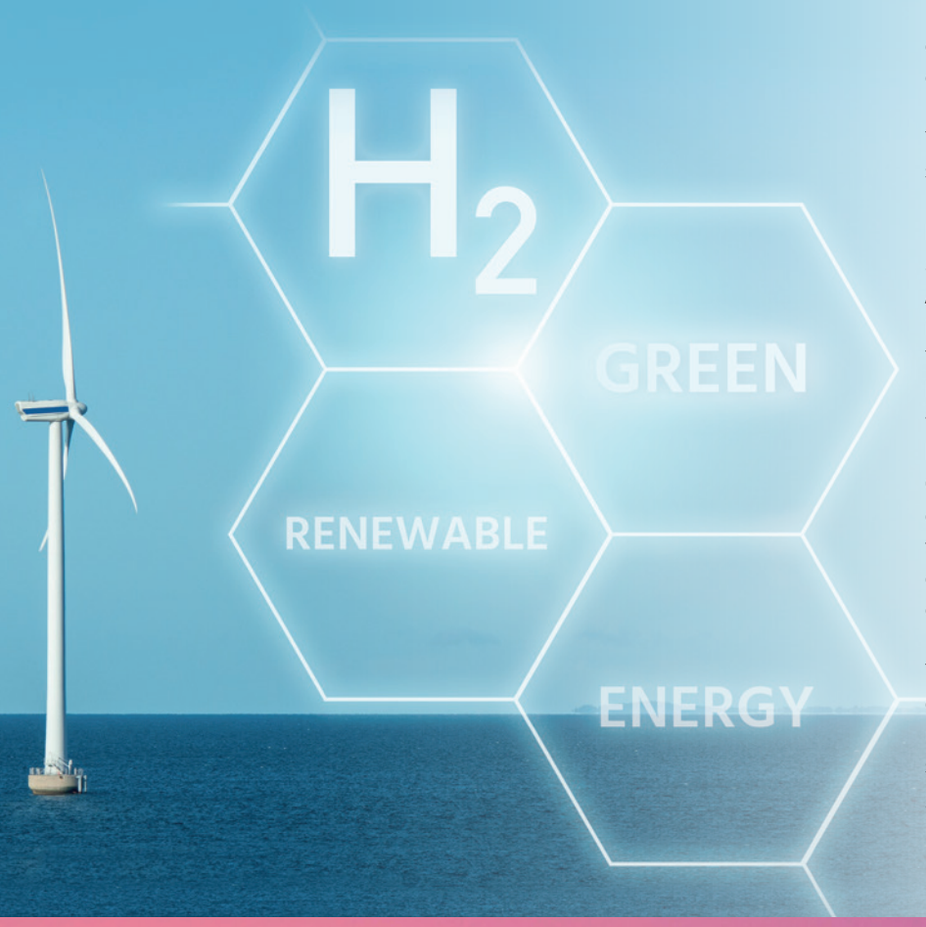
The UAE and Germany are leading advocates of international alliances, partnerships and collaboration which are critical for addressing this shared, global challenge. Whether it is

forging a climate-neutral economy or ensuring the security of supply through climate-neutral energy carriers, international cooperation will prove increasingly important.

Germany's 'Energiewende' represents the decision to fundamentally restructure energy supply, moving away from coal and nuclear energy towards renewable energy sources. Significant energy savings and the expansion of renewables are further key elements of this path.
German engineering spirit and continuous policy development have positioned the country as a pioneer and leader in the global energy transition. Green technology has been driving sustainable development in Germany and around the world. As a global technology and industry hub, the importance of green technologies cannot be overstated. German companies – large industrial corporations as well as many small- and medium-sized companies (SMEs) and family-owned businesses – have long been leading in innovative sustainable energy and environmental technologies in the fields of renewable energy, green hydrogen, energy efficiency, recycling, waste management and water treatment.

Through bilateral energy and climate partnerships and dialogues, Germany's federal government works with around 30 countries on a range of energy, climate and economic topics. Key areas include the expansion of renewable energy and its integration into the system, increasing energy efficiency, the integration of joint climate instruments such as carbon pricing, navigating the ecological and social dimensions of this transition as well as energy security. Germany has always been eager to intensify its collaboration to support its international partners in their efforts to transform their economies towards renewable energies and sustainability.

Similarly, the UAE was the first country in the Arab world to announce a net-zero emission target by 2050 and has remained committed to playing its part in helping to drive the energy transition – at home and abroad. To date, after more than two decades of constant investment in renewable energy infrastructure, the UAE is now home to three of the world's lowest-cost solar plants. Overseas, the UAE has invested more than $50 billion in renewable energy projects across 70 countries and plans to invest an additional $54 billion until 2030. Under the $100 billion Partnership for Accelerating Clean Energy (PACE) deal with the US, both



countries agreed to deploy 100GW of clean energy in both countries as well as in emerging economies by 2035.

Together, the UAE and Germany decided to cement their successful energy sector collaboration by establishing the Emirati-German Energy Partnership in 2017. Five years later, it was expanded with an additional climate pillar and the establishment of the Energy Security & Industry Accelerator (ESIA) with the aim of actively supporting the implementation of joint strategic projects in this field. The private sector has always played a major role in this bilateral Energy & Climate Partnership, paving the way for innovative technologies and solutions developed by German companies and tested in the context of the German Energiewende to be deployed for the UAE's decarbonization and transition efforts. Over the years, the Partnership has prompted and intensified the political dialogue, and offered new opportunities for business cooperation and decisive partnerships.

The energy transition is also a great opportunity for global cross-sector collaboration. These kinds of synergies usually come into fruition through the facilitation of strategic dialogues at international conventions and global forums. Such influential platforms for decision-makers, business leaders and innovators have a real

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convening power around state-of-the-art solutions and technologies making a lasting impact and shaping the global energy agenda. By bringing together different voices in the energy sector and establishing essential channels for knowledge exchange, the industry can address a wide range of subjects spanning the entire energy value chain in collaboration with partners from different sectors.

It is no coincidence that the UAE has been chosen to host the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) at the end of 2023, the largest and most decisive annual climate-related conference on the planet, one year after it was hosted by Egypt, another country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. While this is not the first time a COP has been held in the MENA region, as previous meetings have been held in Morocco in 2001 and 2016, and in Qatar in 2012, UAE's presidency over the 2023 conference comes at a critical juncture with the first-ever stocktake scheduled to conclude at COP28.

The MENA region is not only one of the world's most dynamic and diverse, but it has also become a central player in global climate change diplomacy and a leader in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Nowhere is the energy transition both more of a challenge and an opportunity at the same time. Hydrocarbon-rich countries are actively incorporating viable decarbonization strategies into their energy production processes. This strategic move is aimed at safeguarding their positions as global energy export hubs and further advancing economic diversification efforts. Meanwhile, neighboring nations in the region are diligently exploring innovative and environmentally friendly energy production technologies with the goal to decrease their dependence on fossil fuel imports while enhancing energy security.

Among all of the MENA countries, the UAE has proved itself as especially agile and entrepreneurial, engaging global stakeholders to develop pathways to implement various clean and climate-neutral technologies. Over and over again, it has achieved to bring together actors from all sectors, from industry leaders to policymakers, from leading innovators to the young generation to advance the energy transition in a responsible and sustainable way. These new forms of collaboration at the sector, country and global level, as well as the so called multistakeholder partnerships, reflect a heightened level of ambition, a clear focus on emission reduction and economic diversification, and fresh areas of joint action.
In a country where multilateralism is a key component to its ecosystem and where promises, once made, are kept, the climate crisis, decarbonization efforts and energy transformation will be turned into an immense opportunity with the deployment of major investment, cutting-edge innovation and exceptional talent.

Both UAE's and Germany's hopes and ambitions are high when it comes to delivering realistic and impactful goals to reduce emissions and keep global warming within the pre-agreed upon thresholds. The same can be said about their focus on collaboration and partnerships and recognizing the vital role of technology and the private sector in addressing climate change. The window of opportunity to prevent the worst consequences of climate change is closing fast and it's crucial to establish a resilient energy transition capable of achieving long-term climate ambitions, regardless of the challenges that might impact the journey. Only with nations, cross-industry peers and the wider industrial ecosystem of stakeholders working together will it be possible to advance the collective transition journey to 2050 and rapidly make progress in the relentless quest towards net-zero the world and future generations so desperately require and deserve.

Sources:
IRENA (2023), World Energy Transitions Outlook 2023: 1.5°C Pathway, Volume 1, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi.
Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) (2023), Energy and climate partnerships and energy dialogues, 2022 annual report.

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COP28 and beyond

Nadine Arenja-Ziegler
Head of Communications & Events

The urgency of climate action cannot be overemphasized. Global surface temperature rises at an alarming rate primarily caused by human-induced emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The consequences are evident around the globe in form of more frequent natural disasters and will strongly impact societies.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an annual international climate summit, that provides an essential platform for nations to come together and address the most critical environmental challenges we are facing globally. Besides world leaders, the summit is attended by representatives from civil society, the private sector as well as international organizations. The Conference of the Parties roots back to 1992 when countries decided to join an international treaty with the goal of limiting global warming and its resulting impacts on our planet. Currently there are 198 parties involved in the negotiations.

With the Paris Agreement, adopted back in 2015 during the 21st session of COP, the parties collectively committed to take concrete actions to limit the global temperature increase at a 1.5 degrees Celsius rate. The agreement further seeks to strengthen the ability of countries to react and enhance their resilience to climate impacts.

COP28, hosted by the UAE, marks a milestone as the first Global Stocktake (GST) will assess the world's progress in reaching climate targets set in the Paris Agreement. However, the latest IPCC* reports already stated that it is very likely that the temperature increase will exceed the targeted level. Consequently, the accelerated implementation of climate actions in this decade is a must. The following pillars reflect the main areas of focus addressing the climate crisis.

Mitigation
The efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promoting the transition to clean energy, energy efficiency and an overall low-carbon sustainable economy.

Adaptation
Adaptation refers to the actions and strategies that countries and regions undertake to reduce the adverse consequences of climate change and enhance their capacity to withstand its impacts.

Finance
Emerging countries require financial support to implement mitigation and adaptation measures. The goal is to ensure sufficient, transparent and accessible global funds addressing climate actions.

Loss and Damage
It focuses on providing support to vulnerable communities and countries that are experiencing loss and damage from climate impacts, such as sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and slow-onset events like desertification. The loss and damage fund will be a key element addressing those issues.

The civil society, communities, non-governmental institutions and of course the private sector will play a pivotal role in pushing for more ambitious policies in response to the escalating climate crisis. They can hold governments accountable and can act as drivers of knowledge exchange, technology development and innovation.

* The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Sources: COP28UAE, IPCC, United Nations Climate Change

WOMEN IN SUSTAINABILITY

ESG

AHK Sustainability Series 2023

As a semi-governmental institution, the AHK acts as a catalyst in building bridges between policy makers and the private sector fostering long-term partnerships and driving actions towards a green economy.

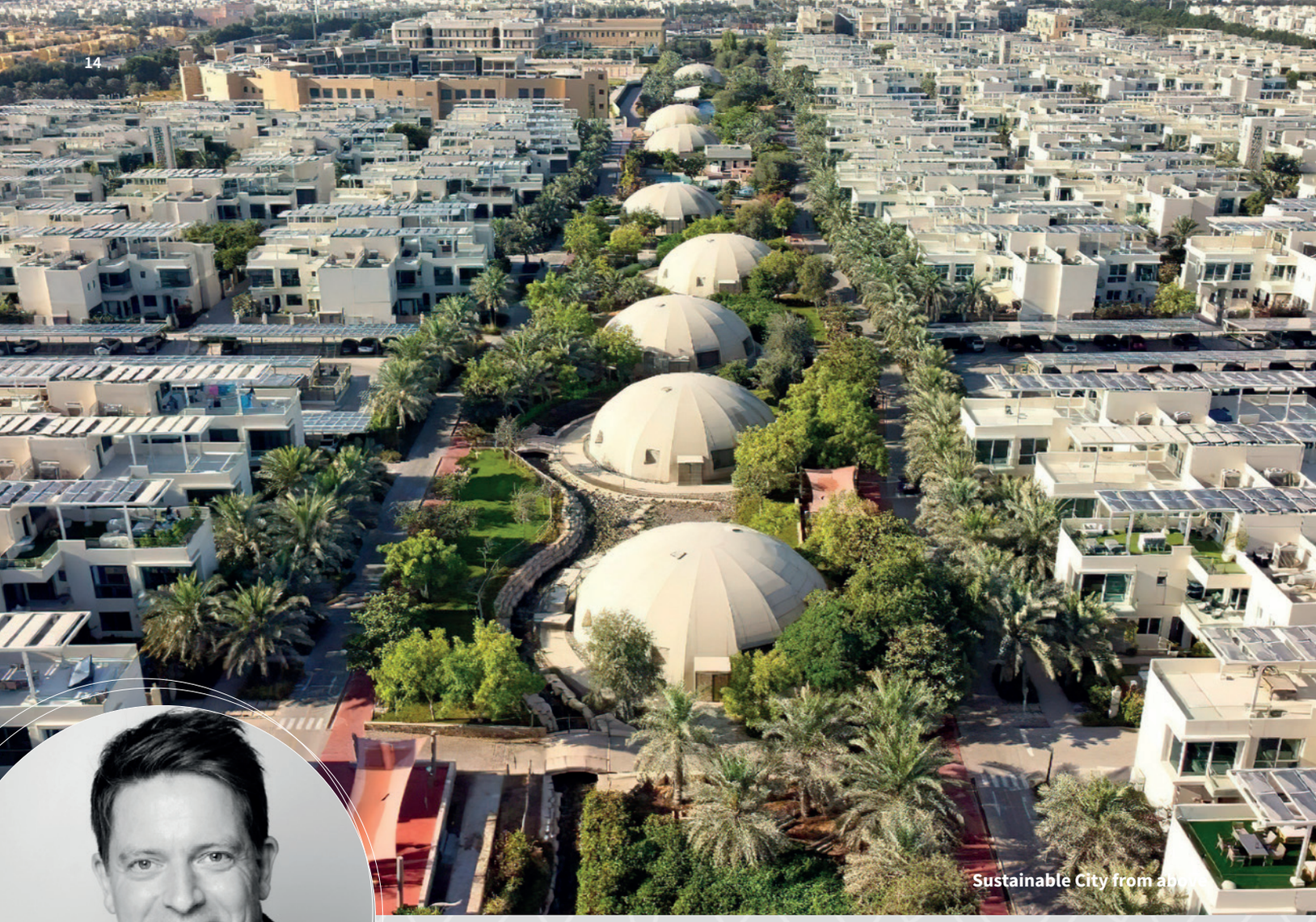
URBAN MOBILITY

ENERGY

DECARBONIZATION IN INDUSTRY

It is essential that governments, the private sector as well as all relevant stakeholders work closely together, refine their strategies and agree on concrete actions and frameworks to tackle the climate crisis.

The moment is now to ensure the well-being of our planet for generations to come.

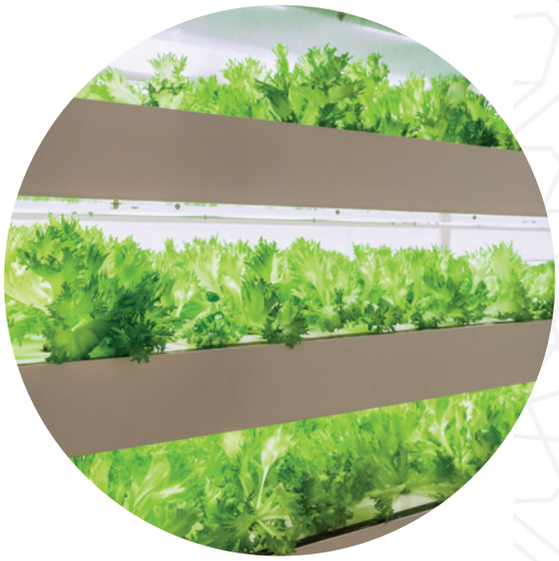


Sustainable City from above

Markus Brandt
Senior Consultant DEinternational

Dubai's Vision to become the most sustainable City in the World

During summer, temperatures in Dubai easily reach up to 45 degrees Celsius. But the 3.6 million inhabitants can easily escape the heat. Almost all indoor spaces are air-conditioned. The majority of the electricity used to cool the buildings still comes from gas-fired power stations. The same is true for electricity used to power the multiple desalination plants that provide the city with its water supply. Dubai and the United Arab Emirates are still among the world's biggest consumers of water and CO_2. But that is gradually changing. The city aims to become one of the most sustainable cities in the world.



Solar panels as far as your eyes can see

Just 30 minutes out of town, people get a first impression of the city's serious ambitions. The futuristic roof of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park visitor center is already visible from a distance. The photovoltaic panels stretch as far as the horizon. The entire plant covers 77 square kilometers, an area equivalent to 10,000 football pitches. With optimal weather conditions, the facility can produce 2.3 GW of electricity. By 2030 it should be a total of 5 GW.

The solar park aims to transform Dubai into a global center for clean energy. On top of the photovoltaic technology, there are also two solar thermal power plants to generate additional electricity. The mirrors reflect natural sunlight to heat a high-temperature fluid. The heat – also known as thermal energy – is then used to create steam, which drives a turbine to generate electrical power. One big advantage of the so-called Concentrated Solar Power technology (CSP) is that the heat can be stored and used later to produce electricity on days when the sun is not shining.

The solar park is also home to the Middle East's first solar-driven hydrogen electrolysis facility where water is split into hydrogen and oxygen. Especially green hydrogen is expected to play a key role in the energy transition and the decarbonization of the global economy.

A 500-unit community and its impact on tackling global warming

It is estimated that the construction sector accounts for about 17 percent of greenhouse gas emissions across the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC). In order to make a significant change and reduce this impact in line with global climate action, it is crucial for the private sector to step in.

In the UAE, The Sustainable City is spearheading the movement towards the UN 2050 net zero emissions targets, reimagining the way that urban communities are designed, built and operated. Pioneered by SEE Holding, a sustainably focused holding group, the Sustainable City in Dubai is a love-work-thrive and future-ready city that showcases the company's abilities to bring forward net zero targets and deliver significant impact across the three pillars of sustainability: social, environmental and economic.

It is a place where people and nature live in harmony. Residents walk or cycle around the community or use shared electric buggies to traverse up and down the central green spine. The development is car-free, with cars restricted to peripheral parking areas, creating a safe and social environment for all. An animal sanctuary, equestrian center and community farming bring people closer to nature and residents are also able to consume leafy green vegetables being grown in the 11 biodomes that run through the city.

Solar panels atop every building and car park generate enough energy to meet most of the community's needs and household energy consumption is lowered by clever design that minimizes direct sunlight and reflects heat. Highly insulated UV-reflective walls, roofs and windows further reduce the need for air-conditioning and all villas are equipped with energy-efficient appliances and LED lighting. Recycling of vital resources is a crucial part of the sustainable infrastructure. Wastewater from washbasins and showers is treated and used to irrigate the landscape and all household waste is recycled and segregated at the source resulting in a 90% diversion to landfill.

It is no surprise that The Sustainable City in Dubai has reached occupancy, with over 3000 residents calling it home. This community has maintained its title as the happiest community in the GCC for the past five years. The masterplan was revealed in 2013 and the first residents moved in in 2015. Currently, there are three more sustainable city developments underway in Sharjah, Abu Dhabi's Yas Island and Oman.

Delicious vegetables from the desert

Not every community is fortunate enough to cultivate their own vegetables. Most of the food is still imported. Conventional crops aren't suited to grow in the sandy soil of Dubai. But even here the city is breaking new ground. On the outskirts of Dubai, you can find the world's largest vertical farm "Bustanica".

The 31,000 square meter facility is equivalent to farmland that is two times the area of the Dubai International Airport. The factory produces salads, greens and other herbs for the local market. Strawberries are currently being tested. Up to three tons of leafy greens are expected to leave the factory each day at full capacity. "Since visiting Bustanica's impressive hydroponic farm, I've come to appreciate the concept of precision farming and its important role in guaranteeing food security for the United Arab Emirates" , said Miriam Müller from the German Consulate General in Dubai who recently visited the impressive facility. According to the company, industrial vegetable production uses 95 percent less water than conventional farming. This equals 250 million liters of water every year.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan declared 2023 the year of sustainability. End of November he is inviting the world leaders to the United Nations Climate Change Conference. A solar park, a sustainable neighborhood and a vertical farm are just the beginning of Dubai's journey to become the world's most sustainable city.

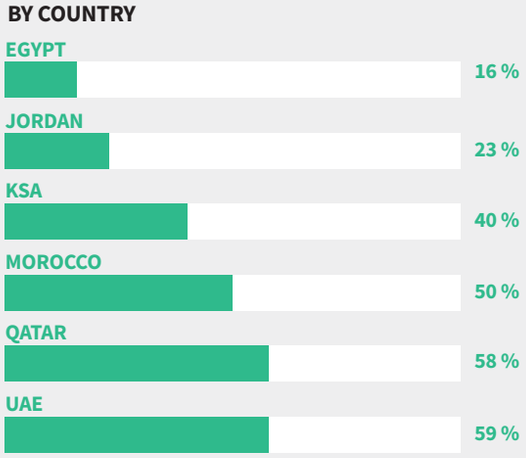
ESG Reporting in the UAE

A GROWING IMPERATIVE FOR BUSINESSES

Esther Dahmen
Managing Partner of
ESG consulting firm Kadira

In recent years, the UAE has recognized the importance of ESG (environmental, social, and governance) reporting as a means to promote sustainable business practices and align with international standards. The UAE hosting COP28* in December this year represents a huge opportunity for the ESG momentum in the region. This article delves into the current status of ESG reporting in the UAE and the way forward.

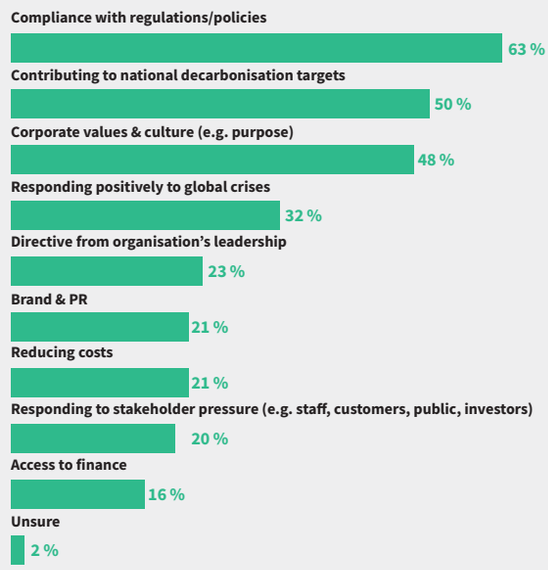
Globally and in the UAE, organisations increasingly focus on their ESG efforts in response to the growing attention from governments and the public. In a recent study the UAE is the country in the MENA region with the highest percentage of population concerned about environmental issues (see graph).



HOW CONCERNED ARE PEOPLE ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?
In the UAE 3 in 5 Individuals Recognize Environmental Issues As A Primary Global Concern.
Source: Ipsos, Views on Sustainability in MENA, August 2023, https://www.ipsos.com/en-ae/views-sustainability-mena

There has been a notable shift in ESG adoption in GCC over the past year and while the UAE has been a trailblazer , other countries are catching up. One recent example is the Muscat stock exchange in Oman which has issued ESG reporting guidelines for listed companies in September 2023.
According to a 2023 PwC report 70% of the surveyed companies in the region are reporting on ESG and one quarter have a dedicated Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO). The main driver for ESG reporting continues to be compliance reasons (see graph) and in line with this companies and their stakeholders such as shareholders and customers are asking for increased government action to further ESG activity.

Compliance with regulations remains the most important driver for adopting an ESG strategy, indicating that organisations remain motivated for reactive reasons.
Question: Which of the following factors do you believe are the most important reason(s) for adopting or progressing an ESG strategy within your orgainsation?



Note: In some questions respondents were able to select more than one answer, so figures may not add up to 100%.
Source: PwC, Moving from start-up to scale-up on ESG, The 2023 Middle East report
https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/esg/survey.html

The view from a global perspective is similar. Largely in response to stakeholder demands for more clarity and guidance, there are three main initiatives coming from the US and the EU as part of their regions' Green Deal plans:

- In June 2023 the ISSB released two standards, the IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards:
  - General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainability-related Financial Information
  - Climate-related Disclosures
- In December 2022, the European Commission published the final Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). The CSRD requires companies to report the impact of corporate activities on the environment and society. The goal is to provide transparency for stakeholders on non-financial but vital ESG information.
- In March 2022, the SEC issued a proposed rule 'The Enhancement and Standardisation of Climate-Related Disclosures for Investors' which is expected to be finalized later this year. This rule would be standardizing the way US publicly traded companies make climate-related disclosures and reporting on climate-related risks like greenhouse gas emissions.

As for the UAE efforts, in 2020 the UAE Securities and Commodities Authority (SCA) issued a "Guidance Note on ESG Reporting" for publicly listed companies. This note provides a structured framework for companies to disclose ESG-related information, encouraging transparency and consistency in reporting.

The SCA's guidance emphasizes the importance of ESG factors in decision-making, recognizing their impact on risk assessment and long-term financial performance. By doing so, the UAE aligns with global trends where investors increasingly consider ESG criteria when making investment decisions.

The UAE's stock exchanges, such as the Dubai Financial Market (DFM) and the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), have also played a vital role in promoting ESG reporting. They have introduced sustainability reporting requirements for listed companies, further driving ESG adoption.

Despite significant progress, ESG reporting in the UAE faces several challenges

- First, there is a request from stakeholders for greater government action creating incentives for transformative change, similar to the Green Deal in the US and related efforts in Europe. Achieving the commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 ("The UAE Net Zero by 2050 strategic initiative") and 40% reduction by 2030 will require respective supporting initiatives.
- Second, there is a lack of awareness and understanding among businesses regarding the potential benefits of ESG reporting. With many companies viewing it as a compliance requirement rather than a strategic tool for value creation they are missing out on opportunities. According to new research examining the performance of publicly listed companies in the US, companies with a more responsible supply chain (i.e. the suppliers had fewer negative ESG incidents) generated measurably higher stock returns.* Therefore raising awareness about the long-term advantages of ESG integration remains a priority.

These challenges present opportunities for growth. The UAE's strategic positioning as a global business and financial hub means that ESG reporting can attract international investments into the region. As foreign investors increasingly prioritize ESG criteria, companies in the UAE can tap into this growing pool of capital by aligning their practices with global sustainability standards.

Call to action: How can organisations prepare for ESG reporting and align with the UAE's net-zero strategy?

ESG reporting in the UAE is an opportunity for companies to showcase sustainable business practices and align with the UAE's net-zero strategy. The following process can serve as a guide for organisations getting started on their ESG journey.

1. Identify the organisation's material ESG issues and priority areas. For this, looking at peers and the industry provides useful insights. Engaging with internal and external stakeholders is critical to understand their expectations.
2. Set measurable ESG goals and KPIs in alignment with the company's business strategy. Establish internal processes for gathering ESG data.
3. Select an ESG reporting framework. Several frameworks exist, so it's worth comparing to see which one works best considering the industry and organisational requirements. ESG software can make the entire data collection and reporting process more efficient.
4. Consider third party verification to substantiate the ESG report claims and avoid accusations of greenwashing. There are several ESG assessments available, B Corp being one example with more than 7500 companies certified globally.
5. Design and publish the ESG report. Creating an ESG report is an excellent opportunity for organisations to engage with their stakeholders who should also be considered in the PR and communication strategy.

As businesses in the UAE increasingly recognize the value of ESG integration, they not only contribute to a more sustainable future but also enhance their competitive advantage in the global marketplace. With continued efforts in capacity building, collaboration, and public engagement, the UAE is paving the way for a prosperous and sustainable business ecosystem that aligns with international standards and expectations.

*the 28th session of the United Nations Conference of the Parties

* "Supply chain sustainability benefits investors, study finds", Walls Street Journal by Aaron Yoon 17 August 2023:
https://www.wsj.com/finance/investing/supply-chain-sustainability-investor-benefits-afc1a84d

Urban Mobility in the Gulf Region

Daniela Calligaro
Director Dubai Office and
Regional Membership

URBAN MOBILTY IN THE GULF REGION IS RAPIDLY EVOLVING TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF ITS GROWING CITIES AND TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS.

By 2050, an estimated 80 percent of the world's population will be living in urban areas and the Middle East countries are no exception. In fact, today 80% of the population in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates lives in urban areas, a figure that rises to 98% in the case of Kuwait and 99% in the case of Qatar. When we then consider that the transportation industry contributes to 30 to 50 percent of global particulate emissions, it becomes evident that addressing urban mobility is a pressing challenge, and a highly complex one.

Providing efficient, affordable and sustainable (both economically and environmentally) transportation networks in urban areas involves multiple transport modes – including road infrastructure and public transport networks – and relies on a diverse set of stakeholders such as governments, municipalities, and service providers.

Unlike Europe, the Gulf countries lack a strong tradition of public transportation, but they are making efforts to improve urban mobility. The main focus often lies on addressing congestion, road traffic fatalities, and air quality concerns while accommodating the high private car ownership rates. The specifics vary from city to city and are influenced by local conditions and priorities.

The Gulf may have been late to urbanization, but over the last 20 years most cities in the region have raced through the stages of urban development in record time. Since then the region has provided a unique opportunity to shape urban mobility strategies, also supported by favorable conditions such as the availability of funding and the possibility of designing urban space almost "from scratch", all accompanied by a forward-thinking leadership as well as the readiness for implementation through fast regulatory changes.

The predominant approach of several countries has been the massive expansion of infrastructure and public transportation networks. Cities like Dubai, Riyadh, and Doha have invested heavily in road networks and modern metro systems, making it easier for residents and visitors to navigate the urban landscape efficiently. However, given the continuous growth rates on the demand side, expansion of infrastructure capacity, will not be sufficient.

After setting solid foundations on the supply side, a few advanced cities have taken a different path, trying to go above and beyond the bare capacity expansion and have adopted an ecosystem model based on the integration of all available mobility modes. This innovative approach to commuting – which promises the citizens affordable, multiple modes of transportation, including rapid mass transit systems, on-demand mobility solutions, ride-sharing, vehicle-sharing, electric vehicles, biking, walking, and even more – has become a defining feature of a Smart City.

Dubai in particular, through its Road and Transport Authority (RTA), has been the front-runner in developing an innovative mobility ecosystem which represents one of the main pillars

of its Smart Dubai initiative kicked off in 2014. Ever since, RTA has been consequently implementing a strategy based on a precise model consisting of investment in infrastructure, expansion of public transport, promotion of integrated services, and pioneering the future of mobility.
The results are tangible and Dubai can now record a 20.6 percent share of public transport and shared mobility in people's journeys from 6 percent in 2006. Today, we can see that the clear dominance of the private car as the main means of transportation is no longer taken for granted. Further ambitious goals are defined by the RTA's roadmap towards shifting to zero-emission public transport by 2050 as well as by the Dubai Autonomous Transportation Strategy which aims to transform 25 percent of the total transportation in Dubai to autonomous mode by 2030.

Dubai is also among the first cities worldwide to test cutting-edge mobility modes such as hyperloop and taxi-drones to assess their viability for future deployment.

Despite having their distinct priorities and paces, other fast-growing centers in the Gulf are following Dubai's role model and are developing new mobility strategies, based on integrated systems and innovative technologies. In Saudi Arabia, the NEOM smart megacity project has announced plans to develop the world's most user-centric, environmentally friendly and technologically advanced land mobility ecosystem. In addition to introducing a new model for urban sustainability powered by 100 percent renewable energy, NEOM aims to prioritize active, autonomous, electric, shared and smart mobility options.

In the smart mobility market, an increasing demand for technology-driven and green solutions is creating numerous business opportunities for the private sector. Those companies capable of integrating smart mobility platforms into comprehensive ecosystems, rather than relying on isolated solutions, stand to gain from the ongoing transformation. This encompasses services such as Mobility as a Service (MaaS), parking management solutions that expand to include infotainment and connected car services, as well as electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

The EV segment, in particular, plays a significant role for the overall effort towards smart mobility and is among the major topics driving the transformation in the automotive industry. Beside the necessary government support to accelerate a swift development of an extensive and efficient charging infrastructure as well as the electrification of public transport fleets, further specific technologies are in demand in order to reach the crucial goal of an environmentally friendly mix of public transportation, private cars and shared mobility options.

Several German companies have been prominent players in the global and regional urban mobility sector, contributing to various aspects of transportation and mobility solutions. Siemens Mobility acts as a driver towards sustainability standards enabling decarbonization and dematerialization of the mobility value chain through innovative technologies. Its ultra-fast chargers, smart grids and further technologies are huge contributors to a seamless user charging experience. Also the BMW Group is known as innovator in the industry and has been researching and developing electrified models over the past 10 years. The company's goal is to provide eco-friendly vehicles beyond carbon-free driving from material sourcing to recycling. The future depicted by BMW's vision could include hydrogen-powered electric vehicles as a complement to electric mobility with batteries, paving the way to a continuous reduction of carbon emission.

On the public transport side, the company INIT – a worldwide leading supplier of integrated systems for buses and trains – supports transport companies by offering a wide variety of services that cover all operational processes within a fully integrated ITS system. Their focus is on digitization and AI applications to prioritize passengers needs and user-friendliness.

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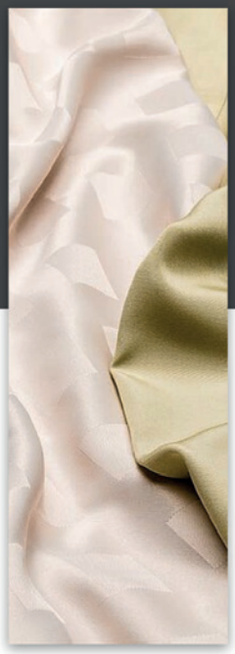

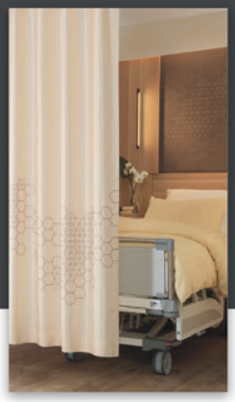

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Circular Economy

OUR GLOBAL ECONOMY IS BUILT ON A "LINEAR ECONOMY" MODEL WHERE NATURAL RESOURCES ARE EXTRACTED, USED, AND THEN END UP AS WASTE. AS WE ALL KNOW, THIS CURRENT MODEL IS PUSHING OUR PLANET TO THE BRINK, INCREASING THE RISKS OF CLIMATE CRISIS, AND DEPLETING THE RESOURCES WE WOULD NEED FOR OUR FUTURE.

Zita Primarini
Consultant DEinternational

Reduce, reuse, recycle. We are all familiar with these three words, but we often tend to focus only on recycle. While recycling is a more sustainable alternative than throwing everything away, we need to step up our game and emphasize reducing and reusing. Why? Recycling follows the linear path. As recycling only truly begins at this final stage, products are never made to increase value or be preserved. Why? Recycling follows the linear path. As recycling only truly begins at this final stage, products are never made to increase value or be preserved. This is where Circular Economy (CE) comes in.

What is a Circular Economy?

The concept of the CE can be traced back to 1988, but since 2010 the concept of circularity has become popular internationally after the publication of several reports. In general, a CE entails a change in our economic model. It rather embraces innovative concepts such as designing out the wastes and pursuing eco-effectiveness instead of eco-efficiency. It could contribute to mitigation by reducing emissions and resource consumption and support adaptation by creating resilient systems and reducing vulnerability to disruptions. The CE addresses loss and damage by minimizing waste and preserving resources.

The understanding of the Circular Economy based on the studies of The Ellen MacArthur Foundation is centered on the protection of nature and focuses on the fact that the Circular Economy must be restorative and regenerative by design, by limiting the production of waste and/or recycling it to make a new product.

The EU has an economic vision and is interested in maintaining the market value of products throughout their life, especially through the market value of recycled materials that are integrated into new products. The EU seeks to accelerate the transition towards regenerative growth model and to maintain its resource consumption within planetary boundaries. Its objective is to double its circular material use rate by 2023.
One of the key elements of the EU's economic transformation is based on mobilizing the industry for a clean and closed-loop manufacturing system, through the New Circular Economy Action Plan, adopted in March 2020. This new strategy marks a turning point in the definition of Circular Economy. Indeed, it is no longer only about waste treatment or recycling but is defined as a whole new model in which every step of the production process needs to be rethought. Eco-design, repair, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, product sharing, waste prevention, and waste recycling are all important in a circular economy. At the same time, material losses through landfills and incineration will be reduced, although these may continue to play a much-reduced role in safely removing hazardous substances from the biosphere and recovering energy from non-recyclable waste (Anbumozhi,2016).

Understanding why we must shift from a linear to a CE model is the key to our future. Hard law is being introduced in many countries, especially in the European Union. Adopting circular economy principles, particularly through product life extension, eliminating waste, reusing products and components, and recirculating materials can contribute to limiting global warming to 1.5 ^{0}C by 2100 by the Paris Agreement.

What are the challenges?

Although evidence currently suggests that circular development produces many economic, social, and ecological benefits, adopting this approach will require a radical transformation in the way cities are governed, designed, and planned. It will also require significant changes in lifestyles,

social practices of urban inhabitants, and systems of provision. This definitely heightens investment costs. It is easier and cheaper to implement a new product as it doesn't impact much on the revenue streams. Industries are failing to conduct a market analysis for new & emerging trends and opportunities. Looping, regenerative and adaptive actions also produce long-term, societal benefits (under-valued by the market) and require long-term investment. These are often difficult to finance because investors and infrastructure providers are looking for short-term returns, driven by short investment cycles.
The absence of incentives from the government slows down the motivation to implement CE projects, especially among SMEs. The UAE has approved 22 policies to accelerate the transition to circularity in July 2022. However, besides the acknowledgment awards for the business community, fiscal incentives (i.e.: reduction on the cost of business license, or removal of VAT on refurbishment projects) and regulations on sustainable procurement process have not yet trickled down. There is a need for more targeted regulations focusing on specific waste streams or value chains so that the country can ‚leapfrog' its way from environmentally damaging development to a more sustainable path.

Awareness in the UAE is rising at the individual level, many people recognize that recycling and reuse need to be further developed especially in the household recycling system. However, awareness and knowledge of CE need to be improved at the organizational management level, particularly in the procurement process. A change in procurement strategy to facilitate the adoption of sustainability thinking is being increasingly called for. As an example, construction projects in the UAE. Procurement criteria can be used as a tool to set CE requirements for suppliers right from the procurement strategy stage.

CE policy in the UAE region remains largely limited within the scope of waste management despite recent advancements in technologies, facilities, market regulatory solutions, and infrastructure. Eco-friendly waste management is at the center of the CE where it starts with the bottom vertical of an economy – local governance. Local municipality and governance play a vital role in accelerating the circular economy, as it manages local infrastructure and services.

What the UAE has been doing?

Despite being a relatively young nation, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has taken no time to claim its stance as one of the most impressive emerging economies in the world. In 2021, the UAE unveiled its Net Zero 2050 Charter by investing AED 600 billion in clean and renewable energy sources over the next three decades. It was the first Gulf country to commit to net-zero emissions by 2050. Next in 2022, The Environmental Agency of Abu Dhabi launched

Environmental Centennial 2071, which consists of a comprehensive environmental vision for the Emirate for the next 50 years and is aligned with the UAE government's dedication to be the best country in the world by the 100th anniversary of the union in 2071.

To support those long-term aims, several policies have been launched, namely:

- UAE National Sustainable Consumption and Production Plan (2019 – 2030) with objectives to achieve sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, support the private sector in shifting to cleaner production methods and techniques, also to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns. The areas that have been given priority are green infrastructure; sustainable food production and consumption; sustainable public procurement; and sustainable manufacturing.
- UAE Circular Economy Policy (2021 – 2031) launched a nationwide CE policy and established a CE council consisting of federal, local, and private sector representatives. The council aims to implement the CE policy through national plans and legislation that encompass and monitor sustainability criteria using the following steps as a guide. Developing strategies,

policies, and initiatives that integrate CE principles into national plans; facilitating the development of immature markets; and increasing the ability of international players to reach the market.

- Commemorating the UAE as the host of COP28, the government launched the Year 2023 the Year of Sustainability, under the theme “Today for Tomorrow” with different key initiatives in different sectors such as energy, transportation, waste management, water conservation, sustainable development.

The UAE has decided to focus on accelerating the implementation of the circular economy policy in the UAE in four main sectors: manufacturing, food, infrastructure, and transport. It is also reviewing the plans and experiences of related industries and the latest developments in this regard. Various investments and industry initiatives of recovery and recycling facilities (i.e.: Sharjah to become the first zero-waste-to-landfill city in the region with a 76% waste diversion rate) focus on 4IR technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to accelerate the CE transition for plastics and electronics.

Some opportunities giving Germany and UAE the potential for collaboration:

- The German private sector could explore some collaborations with the UAE in technical assistance and share the learning experiences to support activities such as the training of engineers or technicians. Particularly in procurement and product development departments.
- Collaboration and knowledge exchange on targeted regulations focusing on specific waste streams or value chains, standardization in the market and extent of the producer responsibilities, green public procurement, and life-cycle costing.
- Germany and the UAE could build on the existing CE frameworks with initiatives for regional collaboration and gradually expand interaction.
- Germany could assist and organize inter-government focus group discussions with the UAE local municipalities to understand more about the on-the-ground challenges and collective input to accelerate CE in the UAE. This initiative could be jointly organized with the business community such as AHK.

What are the benefits and challenges of collaborating with other stakeholders on circular economy projects?

Collaboration is vital for lasting and transformative change. Continued and accelerated action from leading businesses, public bodies, and investors will see a snowball effect with an increasing number of stakeholders joining forces to grow the circular economy and secure a sustainable future for our region.

Through responsible sourcing, extended product lifespans, and collaboration, we can deliver significant economic and environmental benefits. By 2030, circularity could contribute up to $4.5 trillion to the global economy. The transition to a circular and sustainable future is not an option, but a necessity. By embracing circularity, businesses in the UAE have the opportunity to help position the nation as a global leader in sustainability, fostering innovation, and ensuring a thriving future for generations to come.

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Grand Millennium Business Bay is a prestigious hotel located in Business Bay, near Downtown Dubai and The Dubai Water Canal. With 251 rooms offering captivating views of the canal or city skyline, the hotel provides luxurious accommodations ranging from standard rooms to the lavish Royal Suite.

Each room, spanning from the 6th to 19th floor, features Italian marble floors, stylish bathrooms, and breathtaking vistas. The hotel offers an array of amenities, including Wi-Fi, LED Samsung TVs, work desks, espresso machines, fine teas, minibars, 24-hour in-room dining, daily housekeeping, valet service, and a free shuttle to main attractions.

Dining options at Grand Millennium Business Bay cater to diverse tastes, with establishments like The Podium, an international all-day dining venue, and Beau Rivage, a bistro with mesmerizing canal views. The hotel also features The Lobby Lounge, The Pool Bar, Asia Asia (a Pan-Asian restaurant), Bella Restaurant & Lounge (a rooftop signature restaurant with a creative twist on Italian cuisine), and Lock, Stock & Barrel (a social hangout). Club Room and Suite guests enjoy exclusive privileges, including access to the elegant Executive Lounge.

The hotel's third floor offers a tranquil retreat with recreational facilities such as the Wellbeings Holistic Center, Health Club, and Outdoor Swimming Pool. Additionally, Grand Millennium Business Bay provides state-of-the-art meeting facilities, including a well-equipped business center, 11 meeting rooms with advanced technology, and a grand ballroom accommodating up to 600 guests. It serves as an advantageous destination for business endeavors in this world-class city.

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Senior Advisor Innovation,
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The UAE Start-up Ecosystem

DRIVES A GREENER FUTURE

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), with its dazzling skyline, vibrant culture, and thriving economy, has emerged as a prominent global hub for start-ups. Over the past decade, the UAE has invested heavily in nurturing a conducive ecosystem for entrepreneurs, attracting innovators and businesses from all around the world. The UAE government has been a strong advocate for innovation and entrepreneurship and initiatives such as the Dubai Future Accelerators and the UAE Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, are designed to support start-ups and encourage the development of groundbreaking technologies, with a special focus on sustainability. Its favorable geographic location acts as a bridge between East and West, broader Middle East, Asia, and Africa, making it an ideal launchpad for international expansion. The nation‘s worldclass infrastructure, modern logistics, and global connectivity are essential assets for start-ups looking to scaleup.

UAE based start-ups have access to a wide range of funding sources, including venture capital firms, angel investors, and government grants. High networth individuals and family offices are also increasingly interested in supporting and partaking in the local start - up scene.

Being home to numerous innovation hubs and coworking spaces, such as HUB71, Dubai Internet City, Dubai Science Park, Dubai Future Foundation and the Sharjah Research Technology and Innovation Park (SRTIP), start-ups can get influential access to resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities. The UAE attracts a multicultural workforce, making it easier for start-ups to access a wide talent pool with diverse skills and backgrounds and the country‘s competitive wages, combined with its quality of life, draw skilled professionals from various parts of the world. This diversity can be a significant asset for start-ups seeking to address global challenges with sustainability at the forefront.

Fostering a thriving start-up culture, the local government has implemented businessfriendly regulations that simplify the start-up registration process. Initiatives like the "100% foreign ownership" law and the introduction of longterm visas for investors and skilled professionals have removed many entry barriers. Many free zones offer attractive tax benefits, including zero corporate and personal income tax, 100% repatriation of profits, and full ownership rights. These incentives contribute to the appeal in destination for start-ups looking to optimize their finances. Various government entities, such as the UAE Ministry of Economy and the Emirates Development Bank, offer funding and support to local start-ups. Additionally, private venture capital firms and angel investors actively seek investment opportunities in the UAE‘s burgeoning tech ecosystem. The UAE is committed to ensuring intellectual property protection, providing a secure environment for start-ups to innovate without fear of idea theft or counterfeiting.

Worldclass infrastructure is guaranteed with well connected transport networks, state-of-the-art communication facilities, and reliable utilities – all essential for the growth of start-ups. Through initiatives that promote sustainable energy, waste reduction, and resource efficiency, the start-ups are not only contributing to a more eco-friendly environment but also fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. The UAE‘s start-up ecosystem is a key catalyst in the transition towards a more environmentally conscious and sustainable future.

Additionally, UAE introduced the Expand North Star at the iconic Dubai Harbour, where some of the world’s best start-ups from over 100 countries were presented, welcomed 1000 VCs, and delivered an unprecedented content program debating the big stories of 2023 including a flash storm of generative AI start-ups, and 70+ unicorns. The UAE is well positioned to become a leading hub for innovation and entrepreneurship with focus on sustainability and beyond.

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Sustainable Supply Chain in a Changing World: Make globalization fair

Muhammad Usman
Country Representative for Pakistan
at AHK

In a globalized world, every day we consume products from all parts of the planet. At the same time, we are constantly being informed about the negative consequences of our lifestyle, as the production of many products goes hand in hand with the destruction of natural or semi-natural habitats, water and air pollution, the emission of greenhouse gases and inhumane working conditions.

A sustainable supply chain is one that fully integrates ethically and environmentally responsible practices into a competitive and successful model. Transparency throughout the supply chain is critical: sustainability initiatives must span from raw material sourcing to last-mile logistics, product returns and recycling processes.

The globalization of economic cycles has led to companies relocating many production steps to distant countries. Today, an outfit travels around twenty thousand kilometers before it reaches the retail stores. Around 80 percent of world trade is now based on global value chains. They form the livelihood of more than 450 million people.

However, globalization also has its downsides. Many of the products and raw materials that make our lives easier are manufactured or mined under intolerable working and environmental conditions, for starvation wages or even with exploitative child labor.

Our prosperity and the economic opportunities of developing and emerging countries are closely linked through supply chains. This means that we bear responsibility – because at the beginning of every supply chain there is a person.

German commitment:
TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Germany's sustainable development policy aims to promote economic growth and at the same time enforce and protect humane working and living conditions along the global supply chains and, for example, to prevent child and forced labor and to ban substances that are hazardous to people and the environment.

At the beginning of 2023, the Supply Chain Due Diligence Act came into force in Germany. It promotes compliance with human rights and social and environmental standards in global supply chains. The law formulates clear and implementable due diligence obligations for the companies involved and also includes the supply chains in the requirements.

Fair and sustainable supply chains in Europe and worldwide

The goal remains a uniform European regulation for sustainable supply chains. This creates a level playing field and sets international standards. A binding legal framework in Europe will strengthen the responsibility of companies to respect human rights and environmental standards and improve the living conditions of those affected.

Improving environmental and social standards in the textile industry

More than 60 million people work in the textile and clothing industry worldwide, most of them in developing and emerging countries. The industry is strongly intertwined internationally, and the supply chains are complex. The contribution of the textile industry to economic growth and development is great.

In many production countries, however, the production and working conditions do not meet the internationally defined environmental and social standards. From 16-hour working days to wages that are barely enough to live on. In the event of pregnancy or illness, employees must expect to be dismissed. The safety measures to protect workers are often insufficient and there is usually no social security in the event of accidents at work. Many production sites in the textile and clothing industry also contribute to air and water pollution.

The Federal Republic of Germany is committed to environmental and social standards also in the textile industry at various levels and with various measures. Due diligence has emerged as a crucial concept in ensuring responsible business practices across all supply chain tiers in the textile and leather industry. The German and European textile industry takes the issue of "fair supply chain" very seriously. Digitalization and blockchain will help make supply chains even more transparent in the future. Today, more than ever, customers have the opportunity to consciously choose products that have been manufactured under fair conditions and with high environmental standards: While purchasing, certification systems and product seals that have been built up over many years plays a vital role in the decision-making. These products may be a little more expensive. However, they make a significant contribution to further improving environmental protection and the situation of workers along the entire supply chain.

The German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHK) advise businesses in 93 countries on all questions relating to bilateral trade with Germany. That includes, for example, the implementation of corporate due diligence obligations. The German government also has 35 Business Scouts for Development (BS4D), most of whom work within the Chambers of Commerce Abroad. They can provide information and training for local suppliers.

As one of the five largest cotton producers in the world, Pakistani textiles are known worldwide. Pakistani producers already produce high quality fashion for the domestic and international market, from Asia to Europe, North America and Africa. We the German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce (AHK) offer services to the Pakistani market including extended awareness though interaction with market experts and other stake-holders regarding the due diligence compliances. Together with the German Diplomatic Mission in Pakistan the AHK has been very keen and active with various events in the textile sector, with the most recent one being the AHK Sustainable Textile Roundtable held at a German Company in Karachi.

In recent years, the sustainability aspect has become increasingly important. Recently textile factories in Pakistan are becoming more conscious of sustainability issues as well. Lately they have been investing in laser machines and new, more water-efficient washing machines. AHK is looking forward to continuing the business ventures in Pakistan and hopes that Pakistan, along with German businesses operating in the country, will continue to benefit from Pakistan's participation in the GSP+ scheme with extended responsibility.

Empowering Youth in Climate Action:

INTEGRATION AND STRENGTHENING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Caroline Schlüter
Senior Manager Marketing & Membership

The upcoming COP28 in Dubai goes beyond being merely an international conference on climate change. It serves as a compelling call to recognize the influential role of the younger generation in shaping global climate policy. Young people are not only the future of our world but also those who will bear the brunt of climate change's impacts most profoundly in the coming decades. Their voices and involvement are essential in devising effective solutions and addressing the pressing challenges posed by climate change.

In the forthcoming decades, the consequences of climate change will become increasingly conspicuous. Extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and unpredictable environmental disruptions will affect living conditions across the globe. These changes will not only have ecological repercussions but also profound social and economic implications. Young people will have to navigate and contribute to this new reality, and they have the right to participate in the decision-making processes that will shape their future.

The Role of Youth in Global Climate Policy

The question now is how to ensure that the perspectives and proposals of young people are integrated into global climate policy. A pivotal step involves actively encouraging the participation of young people in political decision-making processes. This can be achieved by establishing youth advisory councils at both national and international levels. These councils could bring together young representatives from diverse regions and backgrounds to exchange ideas, innovate solutions, and formulate policy recommendations. This would enable young people to directly engage in discussions and decisions that will mold their future.

Furthermore, education and raising awareness among young people are of paramount importance. Schools and educational institutions should incorporate climate education into their curricula, educating youth about the repercussions of climate change and the significance of sustainable solutions. Creating educational campaigns that raise awareness among young people about the urgency of climate protection can sharpen their awareness of environmental issues and motivate them to become active participants in climate action.

Promoting freedom of expression is another critical aspect. Young people should have the right to express their views and demands. Peaceful protests and participation in environmental movements serve as means to draw attention to climate issues and demand change. The international community must ensure that freedom of expression is safeguarded for young activists, and they should have the opportunity to make their voices heard.

Moreover, access to research and data is of paramount importance. Young people require access to scientific findings and comprehensive environmental data to develop well-informed proposals for addressing climate change. Promoting open data and research endeavors should be encouraged to provide young researchers and activists with the necessary resources. Financial support also plays a pivotal role. Funding projects and initiatives led by young people enables them to develop and implement sustainable solutions. This can be achieved through scholarships, grants, and support from NGOs and government programs.

Empowering Youth in Affected Countries

However, it is not only crucial to strengthen the role of youth in global climate policy but also to enhance the skills, capacities, knowledge, and networks of young people, particularly in countries most affected by climate change. In many of these nations, young people face unique challenges, including limited resources, restricted access to education and technology, and political instability.

To address these challenges, education and training should take precedence in affected countries. Programs focusing on environmental education and the development of sustainable skills should be offered in schools and communities. This would not only provide young people with the knowledge to better understand environmental impacts but also equip them with the skills to implement sustainable solutions.
The provision of technology and training on its use is equally significant. Access to technology and online resources allows young people to stay informed about climate change issues and develop innovative solutions. Technology can also facilitate the networking of young activists worldwide and encourage the exchange of best practices.

International exchange programs and participation in global networks can provide young people with opportunities to learn from others and broaden their perspectives. These programs can promote cultural exchange and enable young activists to learn from each other and collaborate on solutions.
Supporting local projects initiated by young people is crucial as well. These projects can address local challenges related to climate change, whether it's adapting to rising sea levels, managing water resources, or promoting renewable energy. Not only would this offer concrete solutions at the local level, but it would also strengthen the sense of ownership and activism among the younger generation.

Finally, community empowerment is of great significance. Young people should be encouraged to actively engage with their communities and develop solutions at the local level. This can be achieved through training in community organization and project implementation. Fostering self-efficacy in affected communities is essential to effecting sustainable change.

The Role of COP28 in Promoting Young Activists and Environmentalists

In conclusion, COP28 in Dubai provides a unique opportunity to amplify the voices of youth in global climate policy and simultaneously build the skills and capacities of young people in countries most affected by climate change. It is time to acknowledge the ideas and energy of the younger generation and involve them in the fight against climate change. Only when young people are actively engaged in decision-making processes and have the opportunity to develop sustainable solutions can we hope to address the pressing environmental issues of our time. The future of the planet rests in the hands of the youth, and it is our duty to support and encourage them to bring about changes that hold significance for future generations.

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Influence from within

HOW ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE DRIVES POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Nataliya Wiedemeyer
Founder and Managing Director
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SUSTAINABILITY IS AT THE TOP OF ORGANIZATIONAL AGENDAS.

In a world with growing demand and the necessity for sustainability, businesses are more than ever being held accountable. Sustainability disclosure has gone mainstream with basically every large company reporting on its environmental activities. Moreover, around 60% of multinationals have a formal sustainability strategy and there are good reasons to have it. It adds to a positive brand image and reputation, attracts talent, especially that of the younger generations who recognize the urgency of addressing global challenges and seek personal value alignment in their jobs. And as the regulation around sustainability has evolved significantly in recent years, sustainability goals also help organizations to stay within the rules.

However, these trends in organizational goal setting and reporting are yet to have measurable positive impact on the pressing challenges of resource depletion, biodiversity loss, deforestation, land degradation, food security, water scarcity, waste management, air and ocean pollution … the list goes on. Amounts of CO_2 emissions and single-use plastic are still increasing, and we lose about 10 million hectares of trees every year to make space for growing crops and livestock.

Something is still going wrong. Businesses don't seem to be doing enough and their reasons are deeply rooted in the social and economic world order. There are short-term goals to impress shareholders and the media, as well as pressures to keep year-on-year profits growing. On the other hand, we have limited resources and costs constraints; there is lack of incentives and accountability for the green targets and truly limited ways to influence the system, for example to change consumer preferences or improve the ecological balance of own supply chains. High degree of complexity, short-term focus and the gap between the noble goals and the real action cause negative headlines, even if we truly believe in the good intentions.

It starts with leadership.

Positive contribution starts not with the regulation, or profitability goals, but with the organizational culture. And culture starts with leadership. Leaders set the tone, values, and behaviours that influence how employees throughout the organization interact, work, and make decisions.

If you want to build a sustainable culture, make sure, sustainability is a top priority, an integral part of the company's identity. Having that in place, allocating resources, including budget and personnel to sustainability initiatives becomes a natural next step. Leaders' dedication and support ensure that these initiatives receive the necessary attention, funds, and incentives.

Setting priority is the first step, but understanding complexity within the leadership level is just as crucial. Sustainability encompasses a wide range of interconnected issues, that can be sophisticated technically, but also in terms of organization's ability to control the outcome. For example, no organization can eliminate its carbon footprint because it travels along the supply and distribution chains within the entire ecosystem. Any company however can positively impact not only own carbon footprint, but the quality of the ecosystem by environmentally responsible sourcing, distribution, and waste disposal.

Understanding complexity also implies accepting that we don't have all the answers. Openness to seeking advice within the company, listening to the subject matter experts, facilitating working groups and engaging with the relevant innovations and trends outside of the company is key to a successful sustainability culture.

On the personal level a leader must be driven by a high sense of personal integrity. Integrity in here has two distinct but interconnected manifestations:

- It is a quality of honesty, ethical behaviour, and values, a deep understanding of what you and your company stand for. These leaders are guided by high personal moral principles of right and wrong, fair and unfair.
- It is the willingness and ability to stay true to one's own moral compass, especially in challenging situations or when in need to make tough calls. Leaders with integrity earn trust and respect by being transparent and taking responsibility for their actions. They prioritize the greater good over personal gain and act in ways that inspire confidence, credibility, and a positive organizational culture.

If setting the culture starts with leadership, it does not end there: mid-level managers, ambassadors of change, key employees and every individual contributor are all part of the culture. The markup of any organizational culture follows its values, beliefs, and behaviors. Usually, this part is easy and values of appreciation, equality, solidarity, tolerance, and respect for nature, shared responsibility are non-controversial and easily adopted for websites and marketing materials. The work starts with bringing these values to the office and to life. If no work is done, these values are quicky forgotten in the best case, and provoke sarcasm and mockery in the worst.

Elevating through education.

Education is the first step to building a strong cultural backbone around sustainability. Again, sustainability is complex, it can be overwhelming, and individuals go about their daily lives developing different coping mechanisms to deal with complexity. They might react to sustainability matters in different ways:

- All bad news. The sea level rises, pollution spirals, extreme weather conditions cause millions of climate refugees to seek better places to live. The news is so big, so daunting and I as a person cannot do anything about it. The best way is to ignore.
- There are so many different initiatives – recycling, cleaning up the ocean, there are great technologies for green energy, electric vehicles, smart grid systems. They will take care of climate change; I can just relax and indulge in consumption and entertainment.
- I do my part; I don't use plastic bags when shopping. That must be enough.

Education helps to have a more realistic and comprehensive understanding of the challenges and our roles in the system. We are part of it – humans depend on nature for food and resources, and with all the current technological advancements we have not elevated ourselves out of it, and we never will. By offering sustainability education, organizations can empower individuals to achieve a range of positive outcomes for themselves and for the organization while helping them to adopt differentiated approaches, more critical thinking, and make informed choices in their daily lives as to selecting eco-friendly products, conserving resources, and supporting sustainable practices.

Education helps a great deal in cultivating a sustainability mindset, and that translates in people having a sense of how to help their companies to make a positive contribution to the better world, far beyond the buzzwords and marketing taglines.

There are different ways, how organizations can educate their employees in sustainability:

- Hosting guest speakers, who can share stories, insights, ideas, and concepts to spark engagement, imagination, and creativity in the employees.
- Offering online courses or unlocking online libraries, such as udemy, coursera or other online programs.
- Hosting customized training programs, that fit organizational needs, for example in sustainability mindset, circular economy, carbon literacy, etc. Many of these programs can be customized to reflect the goals, industry, regional differences, and other unique aspects.

- Sponsoring graduate education in sustainability for their key employees in leading universities. Frequent reservation here is, that those graduating might leave the company. But as legendary Richard Branson says, train people well enough so that they can leave, treat them well enough so that they don't want to. If they stay, they will be your best ambassadors.
- Encourage experimentation and learning by doing in a safe environment.

Teamwork

Even when differentiated and tailored, education by itself is unlikely to yield transformational results, if people don't have a chance to speak about it, exchange perspectives discuss applications, debate ideas, and celebrate successes together. Specially designed and facilitated workshops will give the employees opportunities to engage with the learned content, question their knowledge and assumptions, put their perspective against that of the others and – most importantly – will help them to engage in a productive dialogue around all aspects of sustainability. That is why incorporating team coaching into sustainability culture-building initiatives helps organizations tap into the collective intelligence of their teams, foster a sense of ownership, and create lasting change that aligns with their sustainability objectives.

Here are tangible benefits, that can be expected from a collaborative team-coaching engagement:

Knowledge expansion: workshops provide a platform for participants to share their individual learnings from training, courses, and personal experiences. Knowledge will be remembered better when enhanced by engaging questions and discussions as to its relevance within the organization. Sharing personal stories can inspire participants to take ownership in creating positive change.

Problem-solving skills: collaborative sessions encourage participants to think critically and creatively about sustainability challenges from different angles. Sharing diverse perspectives and encouraging all team members to contribute their viewpoints can help in identifying potential blind spots and developing a wider range of potential solutions.

Accountability – collective and individual: facilitated teamwork can create a sense of accountability as participants define goals and KPIs, take individual responsibilities and hold each other accountable. A team can create "contracts" by discussing and allocating requests and contributions. Ideally, the team arrangement is such, that all requests are satisfied by corresponding contributions on the way to achieving team's goals.

Interactive engagement is a journey, and culture formation happens not in a single workshop or team offsite, but in continuous and consistent work. Facilitated by a professional team coach, you would regularly engage different groups of stakeholders see a variety of valuable outcomes and deepened personal connections among the employees.

Clear strategy

Organizational culture is like the soil on which you can grow your garden. Depending on the type of soil, some plants will thrive, while others won't. For example, barren land can support some drought-resistant plants, but it is not suitable for moisture-loving rice. Same with strategy, a conservative culture will not nurture an innovative strategy, when important stakeholders are reluctant to change, believing that innovative solutions would disrupt established production processes. Strategy is not the same thing as culture, just as fruitful soil is not the same thing, an intentionally designed garden. Even if you have the best black soil, but don't use it with intention, it will start growing weeds, rather than beautiful flowers.

If there is no direction, no matter what a great, cooperative, ambitious and supportive culture you have, you will not achieve any goals, as you have not set any. A strong strategy is a coordinated course of action that fits the company's culture and takes advantage of the external opportunities. Studies estimate that 50–90% of all strategies fail, many sustainability initiatives and strategies fail as well. Here are some of the reasons why good intentions may not translate into successful and impactful deliveries:

Goals vs. strategy. If goals only are top-down communicated, but there is no direction on how to achieve them, the endeavor is unlikely to be a success. Like on a football pitch, the coach would tell the team the goal is to win. If there is no strategy on how to go about against the opponent, there is no strategy on how to organize effort in the pursuit of this goal. Goals and visions are great starting points, but what is then needed is a set of coordinated actions, which would reflect the culture and the external opportunities, qualification and composition of the team and dedicated effort.

For example, transition to 50% renewable energy use in the next 5 years is not an actionable strategy. But if it is defined in terms of well communicated achievable milestones, SMART objectives and clear execution plan, that leverages employee engagement and company's values of responsible environmental stewardship, demonstrating its dedication to sustainability, it will have much greater chances to succeed.

Intention- action gap. Many companies nowadays, in pursuit of good reputation and green branding, publish strong intentions with regards to sustainability on their marketing materials and websites: "Conscious collection" by H&M, "Sustainable beef" by McDonalds, "Clean diesel" by Volkswagen. But if action does not follow, the noble intention turns to nothing other than greenwashing, damaging the environment and the brand image.

At the end, only robust organizational cultures led by determined leadership, with engaged employees and clear intentions will be able to solve environmental challenges and create a fairer world for everyone.

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Head of Trade Fairs

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Trade Shows for Tomorrow:

NAVIGATING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE INDUSTRY

Trade shows and exhibitions are strongholds for industries and impact the economic prosperity of cities and countries. When the trade fairs and events industry reached a standstill during the pandemic, organisers rallied to keep their shows running by moving to virtual and later hybrid formats. However, it soon became evident that the personal and physical touch and feel of products and the immersive experience of being on an exhibition floor buzzing with activity cannot be replaced. The UAE and in particular Dubai gave impetus to the comeback of the industry by continuing to run their shows such as GITEX Global without a break, also in 2020. Leading German trade fair organisers also weathered the storm by taking adequate measures and are now back in full force with their world-leading shows in the fields of construction, industrial and heavy machinery, waste and water management, laboratory and analysis, Industry 4.0 and much more.

UFI's recently published Global Exhibition Barometer Survey indicates that exhibition industry revenues are expected to reach 97% of 2019 levels on average globally.

The level of operations has clearly picked up since 2022: the percentage of companies reporting "normal activity" increased from 72% in December 2022 to 79% on average for the first half of 2023 and almost 90% for most months of the second half of 2023 (December being as usual a month with less activity in most places). In the UAE, current predictions for the 2nd half of 2023 are at 100% and expected revenues compared to 2019 are expected to reach 134%! Trade shows are here to stay for the foreseeable future and thereby have an equal role to play on the path to climate neutrality. The impacts of climate change are being felt across the world and by businesses in all industries either directly or indirectly. Businesses such as stand contractors, site operators, catering, waste management and the exhibitors and visitors are the key stakeholders of trade show organisers. They are jointly responsible for working towards a greener and future-oriented economy.

Trade fairs offer a platform for exchange, showcasing innovations and facilitate new cross-border cooperation. They bring together global industry leaders, visionaries and problem solvers and can act as think tanks to develop solutions and standards together with policymakers.

AUMA (The Association of the German Trade Fair Industry) stated that the German industry fully supports the goals of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Based on the many existing climate neutrality measures of numerous stakeholders within the trade fair business, they aim to act according to the principle of "avoid before reducing before compensating".

Messe Muenchen, the organiser of shows such as bauma, IFAT, IAA Mobility, and transport logistic to name a few have made the "Green footprint" a central pillar of their 2026 corporate strategy.

Its primary goal is to achieve carbon neutrality at Messe München by 2030—20 years earlier than the Paris Agreement. At the beginning of 2020, Messe München converted entirely to regeneratively produced electrical power. The solar panels on the roofs of the trade fair halls are among the world's largest photovoltaic roof systems and help them avoid about 1,600 tons of carbon emissions every year that would be produced if energy from fossil fuels were used. In addition, the new halls C5 and C6 and the Conference Centre North Messe München will be heated exclusively via district heating powered by geothermal energy. Other tangible measures include clever rainwater storage, replacing lights with LED bulbs, large green outdoor spaces and excellent accessibility by public transport.

NürnbergMesse was recently nominated for the 2023 German Sustainability Award, in recognition of its years of dedication to sustainability. Two other organisers, Messe Frankfurt and Landesmesse Stuttgart were among the nominees which is a great indication of the industry's commitment to this global challenge.

NürnbergMesse aims to make its energy supply climate-neutral by 2028 and is on the right track. 100% green electricity is being used at NürnbergMesse and the next steps include establishing 75% regional procurement, a 15% decrease in water consumption and a 20% waste reduction by 2025. Trade fairs generate a lot of waste. In Germany alone, around 8 million square metres of single-use carpets are laid at trade fairs every year!

To combat this, Spielwarenmesse eG is focusing on the sustainable use of raw materials and recycles its trade fair carpets – made of 100% polypropylene – after use. After being taken up, the carpets are pressed into bales and taken to a special recycling plant where they are checked, shredded and made into polypropylene granulate. These granules are mainly used in the plastics industry, including in the manufacture of toys. And so last year's used trade fair carpets may even find their way back to Spielwarenmesse® – in the display cases of some of the exhibitors!

For many years, sustainability has played an important role in Messe Berlin's strategy, whether it concerns projects that involve social responsibility or measures concerning environmental and climate protection. One of the most prominent climate action projects is the installation of one of the largest solar plants on the rooftop of more than 20 trade fair halls. 15,000 photovoltaic modules on a surface of 50,000 sqm will generate around 5 GWh of power per year, out of which more than 80% will be used at the fairgrounds, whereas the remaining 20% can be fed into the grid. Using solar energy will reduce the CO_2 output of Messe Berlin by 1.900 tons per year. The PV plant is scheduled to be fully operable by 2025.

Deutsche Messe, the organiser of the industrial giant Hannover Messe underlines the importance of a sustainable approach to achieving their carbon-neutral goals of zero emissions by 2035. It cannot happen overnight as the industry in itself has a large carbon footprint due to the various stakeholders being involved.

The Fair2Future project was launched in the 1st quarter of 2022 to coordinate all sustainability measures in various areas of activity across the company. Fair2Future is a counterpart for membership in the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative of the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC). This project highlights certain preconditions to demonstrate how Deutsche Messe will operate in a climate-friendly, environmentally friendly and socially responsible manner from the 2025 financial year onwards.

Areas of activity comprise various initiatives under the main topics of Energy, Mobility, Disposal and Products in conjunction

with Human Resources, CSR and compliance.
In 2018, Deutsche Messe achieved 100% conversion of the power supply in the exhibition grounds to 100%-certified green electricity from hydroelectric power.

Other tangible measures include waste separation/disposal/calculation for wet waste prevention; and separate collection of used fats and food waste for material recycling in biogas plants. Cleaning across the fairgrounds is managed using cleaning agents without artificial fragrances and dyes, chlorine, phosphates, etc.

A notable measure is the steady expansion of the range of trade fair systems stands with a very high recycling rate and offering sustainable components to customers with their trade fair stand rentals.

A good example of the carbon footprint of such large-scale events is the catering industry. Deutsche Messe has made significant advances in the proportion of plant-based dishes on the menu and a reduction in meat content of the total food used by 15% by 2025, and 30% by 2030 (reference year: 2019) is on the cards.

The Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company (ADNEC) was among the first UAE entities to make a Net Zero Carbon Events pledge. ADNEC is committed to ensuring the sustainable development of the MICE industry in the UAE, region and world, and is leading the industry as it actively promotes and advocates for environmentally-friendly industry efforts throughout the value chain.

To reach the sustainability promise, ADNEC has developed a sustainability team supported by the CSR and ADNEC Green Teams. ADNEC is also a member of three external 'green' initiatives; UFI Sustainability Development Committee, Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week and the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group. In-house sustainability initiatives include investments in solar panels and water saving technology. In addition to working towards becoming a sustainable venue, ADNEC runs an annual "Think Green" campaign which incorporates a community initiative named "Stop and Donate" – this program collected over 2500kg of items for donation to the Red Crescent or recycling in its last cycle. Other initiatives include: Composting food waste: over 75 tons of food waste was diverted from landfill last year as well as recycling exhibition material and recycling used cooking oil onsite to create biofuel to power all onsite diesel-powered engines i.e. buses, cherry pickers and forklifts.

While it may be challenging to make a trade show or exhibition completely carbon neutral due to factors like travel emissions and energy use, the goal should be to continually reduce the event's carbon footprint and strive for sustainability. Over time, advancements in technology and changes in attendee behaviour will contribute to making the events more environmentally friendly.

Sustainability is no longer a buzzword; it's a fundamental commitment, an imperative for the industry's future. The collective efforts of the organisers demonstrate that the trade fair industry is evolving, and it's doing so with a clear conscience.

As Dubai prepares to host COP28 at the Dubai Exhibition Centre, Dubai World Trade Centre's (DWTC) legacy as a growth enabler for the city and the UAE's trade and tourism sector remains steadfast. Its commitment to the UAE's national 2023 Year of Sustainability and key initiatives, such as the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan, the Smart Dubai Initiative, the Dubai Integrated Energy Strategy 2030, and the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050, underscores its active contribution to various government sustainability initiatives. DWTC not only exemplifies its dedication to integrating sustainability into large-scale events but also serves as an instrumental partner in shaping a greener, more sustainable future for Dubai and beyond. Its dedication has earned international recognition through Green Globe certification, reaffirming its commitment to reducing energy consumption, conserving valuable resources, and minimising waste. Beyond internal efforts, DWTC actively engages with its stakeholder community, driving awareness and inspiring sustainable behaviours.

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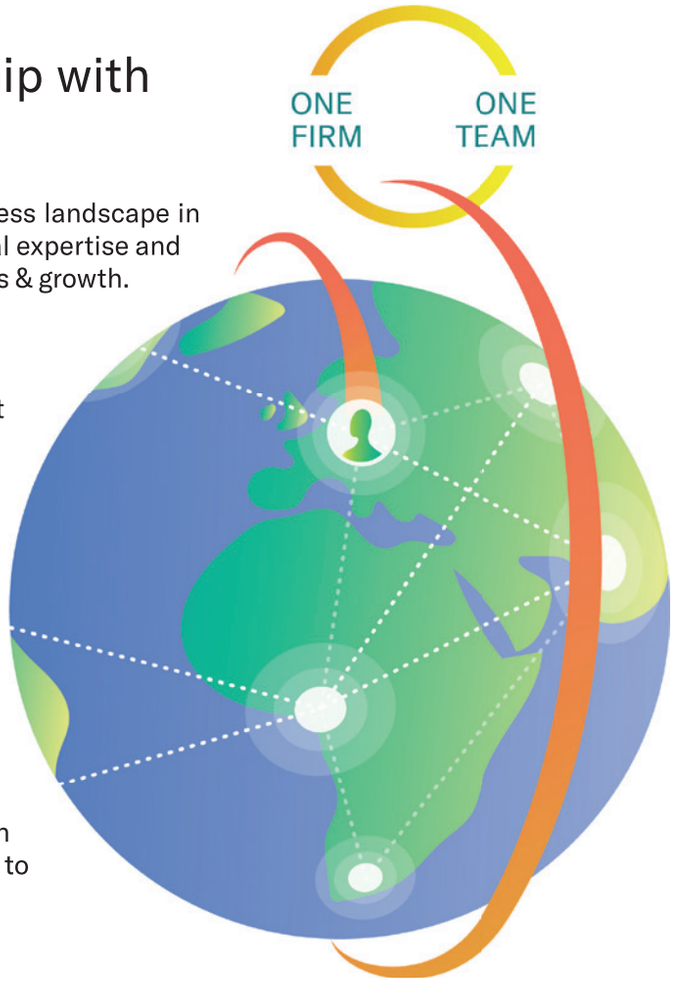

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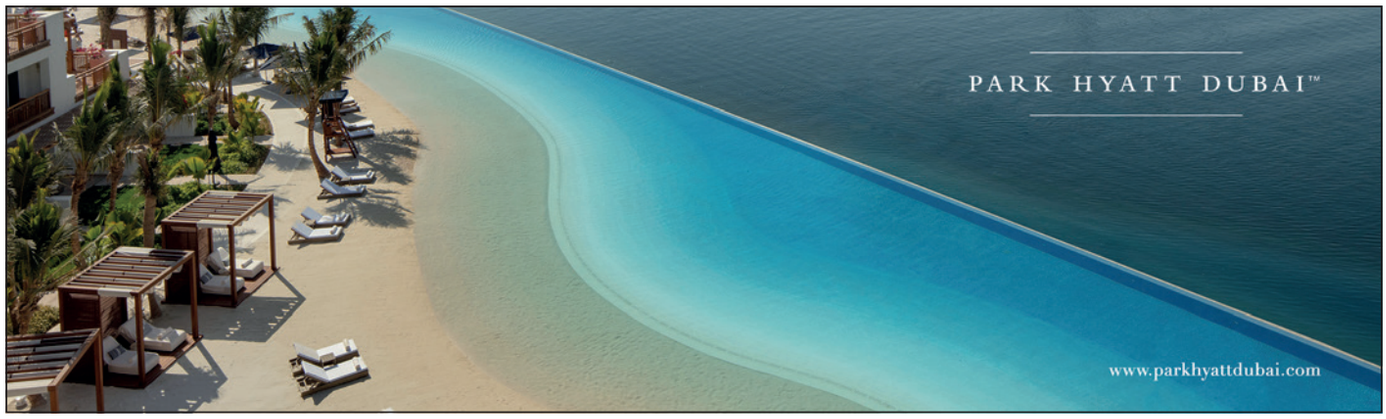

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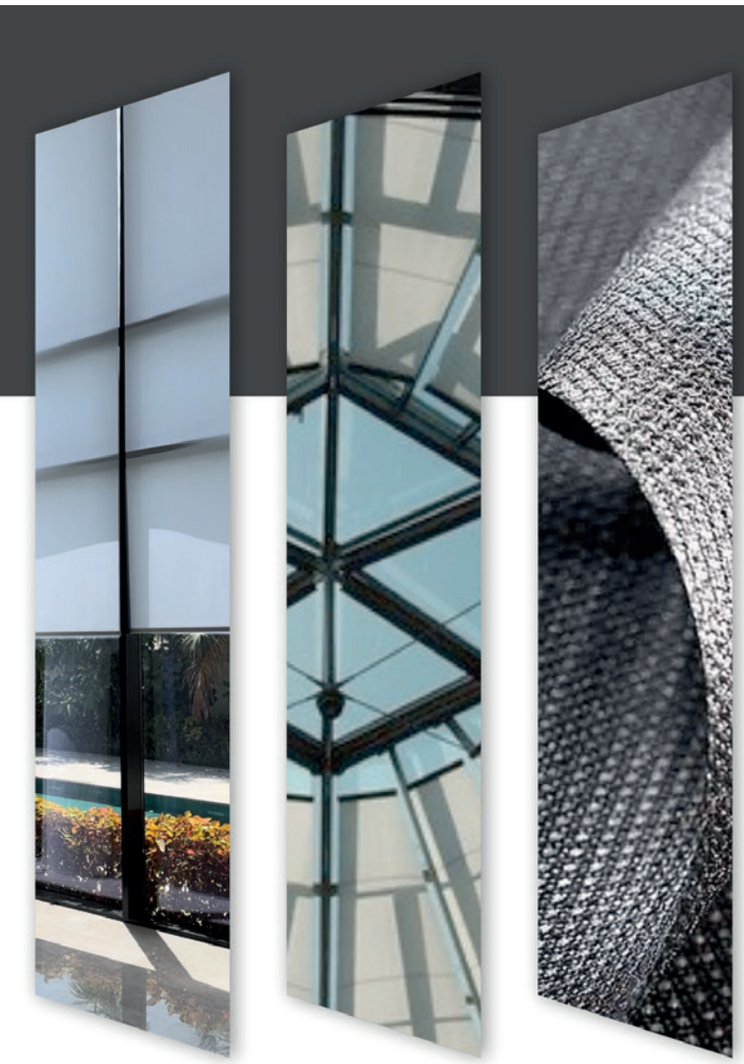

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