

A special feature on the UAE Government: future-oriented and human-centric

How has the UAE Government approached planning for its future?

Preparing for the future is a key function of the UAE Government, which has created a comprehensive action plan for the development of government work, with an integrated, future-centric, vision that engages community members in its design. The plan aims to make the UAE the best country in the world by 2071.

Since it was founded, the UAE has focused on investing in and enabling citizens, securing their future, building cohesive communities, developing a national knowledge-based economy, and enhancing global competitiveness, through strategies and initiatives aimed at promoting achievement and encouraging all sectors to participate in the sustainable development of the country, to help pave the way for achieving the objectives of the “UAE Centennial 2071” vision and preparing a roadmap for the next 50 years.

Who has been involved in designing the UAE’s future for the next five decades?

With the aim of involving community members in shaping the future of the UAE and developing themes and components of the UAE Centennial Plan, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, launched, in September 2020, the UAE next 50-years Design Project which includes a number of joint interactive initiatives between both the government and private sector and community members to collaborate in creating ideas and charting a course for the future in all sectors and fields through various activities and events organized by the 50-year Development Plan Committee, such as seminars and design sessions.

The UAE “Designing the Next 50” Project included a number of initiatives launched by the 50-year Development Plan Committee with the aim of involving individuals from all segments of society in shaping the UAE’s future, including students, youth, and non-profit organisations, in addition to government leadership dialogues.

H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, along with H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, had announced in December 2019 that 2020 would be “Towards the Next 50 years.” Their Highnesses issued a directive for the formation of two committees affiliated to the UAE Cabinet, the 50-Year Development Plan Committee, chaired by H.H. Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE and Minister of Presidential Affairs, and a committee to oversee the UAE’s Golden Jubilee celebrations, chaired by H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The announcement marks the formulation of the largest national strategy of its kind to fortify the country’s reputation and enhance rankings across global competitiveness indices.

What is included in the “UAE Centennial 2071” and what does this mean for future generations?

H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE Centennial 2071 as a long-term government work program, based on the historic lecture of H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, addressed to future generations, in which he charted a path and laid the foundation for the future of the UAE.

The “UAE Centennial 2071” is a five-decade vision for future generations that includes: the development of a national strategy to enhance the country’s reputation and soft power; ensuring diverse sources of government revenue other than oil; investing in advanced technology based education; instilling ethics and values in future generations; increasing productivity of the national economy; and enhancing community cohesion.

The “UAE Centennial 2071” is dedicated to preparing a generation that carries the flag of the future and boasts the highest scientific and professional standards, and ethical and positive values to ensure continuity, secure a happy future and a better life for future generations, which will elevate the UAE to become the best country in the world. The UAE Centennial is based on four pillars: best education in the world, best economy in the world, happiest society in the world, and best government in the world. It strives to invest in the UAE’s youth and to position the UAE as the best and most advanced country in the world, through a comprehensive strategy whose outcomes and objectives will be achieved by the UAE’s centenary celebrations in 2071.

How is the UAE Government preparing for the future, and in which focus areas?

The objectives of the government Pillar, under “UAE Centennial 2071”, include establishing the UAE Government to be the best government in the world, with a long-term vision and inspirational leadership that anticipates, and prepares for the future. Other objectives include adopting best experiences and practices, developing a national strategy to enhance the UAE’s reputation and soft power, and ensuring that there are new, diverse, and sustainable sources of government revenue other than oil, with a view to enhancing the financial and investment capabilities of the Nation.

What importance does education play in the “UAE Centennial 2071”?

Regarding education, “UAE Centennial 2071” re-affirms the UAE’s commitment to provide the best education system in the world for future generations by allocating and channelling resources towards investment in an education system that will enable the country to develop the talents of future generations and build their capabilities to serve the nation. The education system will reinforce the national identity, instil ethical values and positivity, and plant skills needed for the 22nd century in future generations, equipping them with all disciplines of knowledge, while using the best artificial intelligence systems and technology in order to develop globally open-minded, qualified Emirati scientists and

researchers to lead future growth.

The economy is always evolving but what are the long-term plans for economic development until 2071?

On the economy Pillar, the “UAE Centennial 2071” reiterates the UAE Government’s vision to become a global economic player within the major economic groups. Developing the best economy in the world, by employing a professional national workforce and the best global talent, while relying on advanced sciences and technology, innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability as essential drivers for economic prosperity. The plan also seeks to promote the best competitive environmental, digital and physical infrastructure in the world, establishing the UAE as a hub for innovation, a platform for entrepreneurship, and a global economic centre.

How are societal facts addressed in the “UAE Centennial 2071” Strategy?

“Society” is a vital pillar in “UAE Centennial 2071” with several target areas, notably: establishing a secure, tolerant, cohesive and ethical society that embraces happiness and a positive lifestyle, and provides higher levels of wellbeing, made up of families who are aware of the requirements of the next phase. Investing in people is also important, including solidifying future generations’ adherence to their national identity and Emirati ethics, and reinforcing values of modesty and service to the nation.

How did the UAE Government develop the “UAE Centennial 2071” Strategy?

H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan launched the “UAE Centennial 2071” Strategy at the conclusion of the first edition of Annual Meetings of the UAE Government in September 2017.

The meetings witnessed the launch of many long-term initiatives, programs, policies and strategies focused on the challenges facing the country’s development process, discussing government priorities in various sectors, and introducing appropriate plans and programs. The meetings also seek to align and coordinate between Federal and local government strategies and mark the start of planning for the “UAE Centennial 2071”. Moreover, the meetings shed light on the outcomes related to the national indicators and national agenda, and follow up on efforts to achieve goals and results within “UAE Vision 2021”.

The meetings focused on highlighting key challenges and scenarios expected during the next five decades and the development of appropriate plans in partnership with the UAE community, while paying attention to their ideas, proposals and visions for the future.

The second Annual Meetings, held in November 2018, reviewed the efforts and programs undertaken to meet the “UAE Vision 2021” and set targets for the next decade, in addition to developing plans and strategies that lay the foundation for the “UAE Centennial 2071”.

The second annual meetings discussed the first phase of the “UAE Centennial 2071” with 30 councils, aiming to create a unified vision of the country’s future infrastructure and generating main ideas and directions for the first phase.

In November 2019, co-design sessions for the future of the UAE were held as part of the third annual meetings of the UAE Government. The sessions witnessed participation from Emirati representatives of the various segments of the community, notably youth, senior Emiratis, parents, people of determination, retirees, and business leaders. The meetings were aimed at developing the annual meetings’ agenda and proposing focus topics and challenges to direct and plan the creation of the future in line with the goals of the “UAE Centennial 2071”.

How has the UAE Government brought in its full force to prepare for a 5-year plan?

Within the framework of government initiatives aimed at enhancing government integration and cooperation country-wide, and laying down the main plans and visions for the next 50 years, the UAE Government held consultative meetings in preparation for the next 50-year plan. The meetings, which were attended by a number of ministers, government officials, secretaries-general of executive councils, heads of departments, directors general, leaders, experts, officials and employees from Federal and local government entities, focused on laying down future trends and visions along six main areas.

The consultative meetings were part of initiatives of the 50-Year Development Plan Committee, led by H.H. Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs, to strengthen government integration at the federal and local levels and intensify efforts in setting the pillars and components of the UAE Centennial Plan 2071.

The consultative meetings on “The Future of Government Work” focused on three main topics: the future of governments, the sustainability of financial resources and a long-term fiscal strategy, in addition to media and government communication. The UAE Government also discussed, on “The Future of Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability,” ways of developing future plans to upgrade the infrastructure, housing, environment, food and water security, as well as digital infrastructure sectors.

In the area of “Security, Justice and Safety,” the UAE Government focused on enhancing readiness in this vital sector. Under “The Future of Education and Human Capital” area, in support of efforts to advance the education sector and enhance investment in national skills and talents, within five main areas for the development of the sector including, early education, general education, higher education, extended axes, research and development, and strengthening the capabilities and participation of the national workforce in the labor market.

On the economic sector, the UAE Government held consultative meetings to discuss the future of economy in the UAE at the “Economic Environment” and “Economic Model and Sectors” levels, in support of the advancement of this sector through development plans and the design of trends for the next 50 years.

The meetings discussed developing the future of the community sector, by focusing on family and youth issues, sports, culture, and the values of Emirati society. In addition, special meetings were held to discuss the future of the country’s healthcare and medical services and ways of developing an advanced healthcare system based on providing smart medical services and adopting national frameworks for health prevention and community education, in order to enhance the UAE’s leadership and competitiveness globally.

What measures has the UAE Government used to track its progress in key areas?

The UAE emerged among the top countries worldwide in key indicators of global competitiveness for 2020. It ranked first globally in 110 indicators and first in the Arab region in 473 indicators. In addition, the UAE ranked among the top 5 countries globally in 202 indicators and in the top 10 globally in 327 indicators. In government sector indicators, the UAE ranked first for public-private sector partnership according to the IMD report, first globally for finance skills in the government sector according to the IMD report, first globally for the country's capacity to attract the best talent according to the Legatum Prosperity Index report, second globally and first regionally for adaptability of government policy according to the IMD report, and second globally for mobile phone subscription penetration according to the ITU report. In addition, the UAE Government received an "Aa2" rating in creditworthiness, which is the strongest sovereign rating in the region by the international rating agency "Moody's for 2020.

The UAE ranked first regionally on the Government Ensuring Political Stability index according to the World Economic Forum report, first regionally on the Burden of Government Regulation index according to the World Economic Forum report, first regionally on the Transparency of Government Policymaking index according to the Legatum Institute report, and first regionally on the e-Government and e-Participation Index according to the Global Competitiveness Report and the Global Innovation Index.

What were some of the initial steps taken by the UAE Government to lay the foundation for "UAE Centennial 2071"?

In 2016, the UAE Government began laying the foundation for the future government, through a ministerial reshuffle, which was announced by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The adjustment included a new vision for government directions that are primarily future-oriented and forward-looking in all areas of government work, youth engagement, the happiness portfolio, and tolerance portfolio. Ministries have been renamed and new portfolios were added for the UAE to ensure that national priorities and goals are achieved including a community prevention portfolio for the Ministry of Health and a climate change portfolio to consolidate the UAE's position as a key player on climate issues. Furthermore, the Ministry of Public Work has been renamed as the Ministry of Infrastructure Development.

H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, also approved another ministerial reshuffle adding new portfolios that deal with artificial intelligence, well-being, advanced science, advanced skills, and food security, to form an agile government to transition the country towards the Centennial.