

DUBAI 2040 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
3. CULTURE AND EDUCATION
4. CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
5. CULTURE AND ECONOMY
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

**DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABLE, ECONOMIC,
GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY, MANAGEMENT, INCLUSION,
TRADITION, GROWTH, NATURE**



1. Dubai and culture

Dubai is a cosmopolitan and people-centric city with an estimated population of 3.4 million, comprising of 180 nationalities. The urban extent of the city has grown exponentially, transforming into a global economic powerhouse in the region. The pressure of rapid urban growth has introduced modern city planning concepts, leading to a decline in climate-sensitive and socio-culturally responsive planning approaches. This shift has also created liveability challenges, including increased dependence on private vehicles, expanded urban sprawl, and a diminished quality of life.

To tackle these urban challenges and address emerging global issues, Dubai Municipality initiated the development of the Dubai 2040 Masterplan and its implementation programme. Central to this people-centric approach is the programme's commitment to cultural sensitivity and ensuring spatial equity for cultural and heritage assets.

2. Project goals and implementation

2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

Dubai 2040 serves as the Emirate's primary spatial strategy, with the implementation programme designed to set forth bold, cross-disciplinary initiatives. The aim is to streamline existing, ongoing, and future developments, aligning them with Dubai's economic, environmental, social, and cultural priorities. Key objectives include promoting spatial equity to improve access to cultural and natural heritage assets, integrating nature-based solutions, enhancing residents' quality of life, and reducing dependency on private vehicles.



THE AIM OF THE PROGRAM IS TO LAYOUT BOLD CROSS DISCIPLINARY INITIATIVES TO HELP DUBAI RATIONALISE EXISTING, ONGOING, AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND INITIATIVES.

Specific goals and objectives:

1. Optimise land and infrastructure resources to support the economy.
2. Celebrate the cultural diversity of the city that hosts 180 nationalities.
3. Enhance residents' quality of life by fostering vibrant, healthy lifestyles.
4. Promote people-centred design that prioritises the community's socio-cultural values.
5. Offer a diverse range of housing, facilities, and recreational spaces.
6. Increase the provision of parks and open spaces.
7. Incorporate traditional wisdom and cultural dimensions into modern urban planning.
8. Improve the spatial quality and resilience of the environment.
9. Protect and integrate places of cultural significance, heritage, and archaeology into the urban landscape.

2.2. Project development

The programme aims to celebrate both the unique identity of Dubai's historic core and the modern city, preserving their intrinsic values. The implementation programme is focused on fostering sustainable growth while creating a fully integrated, people-centred city that brings together community, tourism, heritage, and nature.



The programme embeds the following key concepts into the city's structure:

1. **Establishing the historic core as a central economic hub:** This approach aims to preserve the core's significance in future growth, with international accreditation—such as UNESCO designation—under consideration for culturally significant areas like the Souq, Fahidi, and Shindaga neighbourhoods.
2. **Integrating traditional planning principles:** Concepts such as a hierarchy of centres, mixed-use spaces, and a balanced live/work/play environment are employed to foster social and cultural interaction.
3. **Protecting natural and cultural assets:** Regulations are introduced to ensure the conservation of these valuable resources.
4. **Positioning arts and culture as an economic growth pillar:** The development of a STEAM corridor supports economic development anchored in the arts and cultural sectors.
5. **Celebrating cultural diversity:** Facilities are allocated based on the specific social and cultural needs of residents, reflecting the city's diverse population.
6. **Incorporating cultural values into decision-making:** Community consultations and the use of traditional *majlis* forums ensure that cultural values are represented in urban planning decisions.

Several projects have been completed, including the *Transit Oriented Development Plan (2023)* and the *Hatta Comprehensive Plan (2023)*, among others. Additionally, ongoing projects, such as the *Dubai Greenery & Open Space Framework*, are expected to conclude by 2024. Key actions carried out to date include the development of clear roadmaps for completed projects, the formation of specialised sub-committees, and the achievement of several critical targets. The implementation programme encompasses 18 projects across four phases, with completion anticipated by 2026.

The *Majlis*, a traditional public gathering of wise community members, has long been a cornerstone of participatory decision-making in the UAE. Dubai Municipality honours these ancestral practices and builds on them to ensure inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels for all citizens. Additionally, online polling and public surveys have been conducted to engage citizens and gather their feedback, making public participation a standard practice in Dubai. Engaging other civil organisations and private companies also remains a crucial preliminary step in each project within the programme.

The programme has been prepared under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. With the involvement of over 56 public and private sector stakeholders, the programme has been developed and monitored through extensive consultations, including numerous meetings, workshops, and *charettes*.

THE PROGRAMME AIMS TO CELEBRATE BOTH THE IDENTITIES OF THE HISTORIC CORE AND THE MODERN DUBAI WITHOUT COMPROMISING THEIR INTRINSIC VALUES.

3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

The programme has actively encouraged citizen and stakeholder participation, enriching socio-cultural contributions in planning to meet citizens' needs and fostering collaboration toward clear, ambitious targets. Its impacts include: *Development of the Urban Design and Public Realm Manual, TOD Manual, and Public Beaches Manual*, which embed culturally sensitive urban planning and design practices into future city development. Securing additional public and recreational open spaces to double open space provision per capita. Protection of over 30% of the Emirate's natural terrestrial and marine conservation areas, reinforced by stringent development controls. Identification of more than 30 cultural and heritage sites for conservation and adaptive reuse.

Establishment of the *Al Quoz Creative Zone*, which attracted 3,000 creatives and artists and fostered 40 local and international partnerships. Introduction of an urban planning law and new policies/legislation, providing a robust legislative framework for sustainable development and the protection of heritage and cultural assets. Establishment of the Supreme Committee of Urban Planning.

3.2. Evaluation

Dubai 2040 has established over 30 key indicators to assess the quantitative performance of the programme, including the *percentage of historical and heritage precincts in the Emirate* and the *percentage of natural conservation areas*. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are also in place to ensure efficient and accountable implementation. Furthermore, the projects outlined in the programme are closely monitored and assessed. Various tools are employed to evaluate the programme's performance, including a KPI dashboard that regularly tracks stakeholders' progress towards achieving KPIs and project targets. Additionally, the *Annual Monitoring Report of Dubai 2040 Implementation Programme* is published each year to provide a comprehensive review of the programme's progress.



3.3. Key factors

- » Addressing existing gaps by considering stakeholder needs and setting well-defined objectives with measurable targets that align with the overall vision and specific goals of the programme.
- » Allocating sufficient financial, human, and technological resources, to support programme implementation, while exploring diverse funding sources to ensure sustainability.
- » Engaging relevant stakeholders — including government agencies, private sector entities, civil society organisations, academic institutions, and communities — in programme planning, implementation, and evaluation, harnessing complementary expertise and resources.
- » Monitoring programme progress against set targets, assessing the effectiveness of interventions, and using data and evidence to inform decision-making. This approach drives continuous improvement based on emerging social, environmental, and economic trends.
- » Ensuring inclusivity, diversity, and social equity by considering the needs and perspectives of all segments of society, including marginalized groups, and prioritizing initiatives that contribute to sustainable and inclusive development.

THE PROGRAMME HAS PROMOTED ACTIVE CITIZEN AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION, STRENGTHENING SOCIO-CULTURAL INPUTS IN PLAN MAKING TO ADDRESS CITIZENS' REQUIREMENTS.

3.4. Continuity

The planning system outlined in the implementation programme requires that all projects have a clear roadmap with clearly defined tasks, objectives, phases, estimated budgets, and designated responsible bodies/authorities. To ensure successful delivery of each project's roadmap, every project within the programme is assigned to a specialised sub-committee. These sub-committees regularly report on key findings and escalate them to the Supreme Committee of Urban Planning and relevant team members. The feedback generated by the specialised committees serves as a crucial input for Dubai Municipality and other involved stakeholders. If objectives or KPIs are not being met within the expected timeframe, this feedback triggers the need to revise the roadmap to ensure it remains actionable and relevant to the current context.

4. Further information

Dubai was a candidate for the sixth UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (November 2023 – March 2024). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June 2024 and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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