

Social and Human Resources

Social and Human Resources policy encompasses a wide array of goals and initiatives. Both government and private sector entities must understand that social and human development represent the final objective and driving motivation behind all policies and initiatives pursued by the Government of the Emirate Abu Dhabi. It is only in the achievement of such development that the Emirate's other objectives, including economic growth, infrastructure development, and providing a safe and secure environment have any meaning. Key elements of the Emirate's vision for the development of social and human resources describe a society characterized by the provision of world-class healthcare, education and other services, where individuals (both National and expatriate) are valued and their unique skills and contributions are ethically leveraged toward achieving a better quality of life for all.

Health Services

Expanding Access to a World-Class System

Objectives

Healthcare delivery in Abu Dhabi is undergoing a significant transition that will affect the entire spectrum of stakeholders: patients (Nationals and Non-Nationals), providers and those responsible for planning, assuring the quality of services and financing the health system. Key objectives for the Health Authority in Abu Dhabi are to:

1. Improve quality of care, always the primary consideration, to be promoted through application of rigorous service standards and performance targets for all.
2. Expand access to services, giving all residents access to the same standard of care with the power to choose healthcare services thus promoting excellence through free-market competition.
3. Shift from public to private providers safely and efficiently so that private providers, rather than government, services healthcare needs, with the role of government restricted to the development and enforcement of new, world-class healthcare standards.
4. Implement a new financing model through a new system of mandatory health insurance.

Contribution to Abu Dhabi Vision

Under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, the Executive Council has set a goal to deliver a standard of healthcare equal to the best systems across the world. The new approach seeks to provide more choice and greater access to higher quality healthcare services, facilities and professionals in the Emirate.

By implementing the new policy, the Health Authority is also contributing to the delivery of key components of the Executive Council's broader vision for the Emirate. Specifically, mobilizing a large and empowered private sector to fulfil roles once provided by the Government, diversifying the economy, and building greater capacities and job opportunities for the Emirate's people.

Policy Drivers

A range of factors drives the need for reform in healthcare delivery. Specifically, there are five key challenges that policymakers seek to address:

1. The cost of healthcare is not sustainable

Current funding arrangements have developed in a time of rapid social and economic change. They have served Abu Dhabi well. However, as the population of Abu Dhabi and the UAE continues to grow and age, the funding forecasts are unsustainable. For example, historically the Government has generously funded overseas treatment for

patients with severe medical conditions. By 2004, this practice was consuming a quarter of total healthcare expenditure.

In addition, the aging of the population and changed lifestyles have led to an increase in incidence of a range of diseases requiring extensive treatment and care, including cancer, afflictions of the respiratory system and cardiovascular disease. For example, according to international statistics, the UAE now has one of the world's highest prevalence levels of type II diabetes in adults. Equally alarming is the high prevalence of asthma and obesity in children. Treating these diseases is expensive, and if future incidence of disease is not reduced through preventative measures, the cost of treatment and the loss of human capital through disease will continue to adversely impact economic growth.

2. Facilities and institutions need upgrading to meet expected demand

As the healthcare needs of the population change, facilities and institutions must change as well. Aging facilities need updating. New, world-class institutions are required. The professional workforce, in particular, needs to grow.

In 2005, Abu Dhabi had an estimated 4.7 oncology specialists for every million residents. This is significantly lower than the UK (8.1), Germany (8.7) and the similarly sized US state of Oregon (26). Depending on the average age of a population, between 6 and 12 oncology specialists per million residents are needed to deliver appropriate services without waiting times that could negatively affect outcomes. The number of acute hospital beds available for every thousand residents in Abu Dhabi is equal to Singapore, but well below international benchmarks across Europe, the USA and Australia.

An analysis of current demand for speciality treatment centres has identified need for:

- One cancer centre
- One cardiovascular centre
- One paediatrics and high risk pregnancy centre
- One plastic surgery and burns unit
- One forensic psychiatric hospital
- Two elective orthopaedic centres
- Two poly-trauma centres
- Two molecular imaging departments or centres
- Two long-term nursing homes
- Four dialysis centres
- Four cataract centres
- Five rehabilitation centres

3. Access and standards are inconsistent

Every resident of Abu Dhabi should be able to rely on consistent, high quality care within the Emirate. The Abu Dhabi Health Authority will address both access and quality standards to increase choice and address any inequities that currently exist. Recent estimates suggested up to 25 percent of healthcare facilities may not meet all of the Government's healthcare regulations and this situation is being remedied as a matter of urgency.

A more holistic approach is required to produce consistent outcomes across all institutions in the healthcare system, and deliver certainty to patients and their caregivers. Specifically, this requires genuine accreditation standards and a rigorous system of inspection and quality control across all institutions, to lift the overall standard of healthcare in the Emirate. Moreover, these measures need to be accompanied by programmes to upgrade the qualifications of doctors, nurses and paramedics, as well as intensified and mandated continuous medical education.

4. Focussing on primary care and prevention will make a tangible difference

There is evidence that many patients rely on hospital facilities when a health problem becomes acute, rather than seeing a GP in the first instance or during early stages. For example, according to recent studies 85 percent of all breast cancer cases are diagnosed and first treated at a very late stage, when the chance for a cure is low, compared to only 20 percent in the USA and 30 percent in Europe. Steps need to be taken to expand health awareness and preventative programmes as well as to improve the accessibility and delivery of primary health centres to overcome residents' impressions that hospitals provide the best care.

5. Public institutions have dominated healthcare service delivery

Public institutions have traditionally dominated the delivery of healthcare facilities and services. Currently fewer than 800 of the 3,900 hospital beds in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi are in private hospitals.

Despite the already significant government investment and subsidies, Abu Dhabi faces significant shortages in qualified health professionals to provide for the Emirate's primary health care needs. In addition, only 10 percent of doctors in the Emirate are actually UAE Nationals.

By shifting health delivery responsibilities to private hands and partnering with the private sector to upgrade existing public facilities, the Government can focus on critical public health matters such as prevention, public education and awareness. Going forward, the Health Authority has prioritized and set ambitious improvement targets in 12 key areas including, diabetes, breast cancer, infectious disease and road death prevention. The Emirate will continue to form new partnerships with international organizations to develop and implement these campaigns.

6. International experience will be leveraged more effectively

Abu Dhabi possesses strong economic and diplomatic relationships with many countries around the world. While these relationships have been leveraged successfully to draw on international expertise and access cutting edge technology in areas such as energy and business, the same opportunities are now emerging in the healthcare sector.

Historically, Abu Dhabi has primarily drawn on international expertise in healthcare by funding overseas treatment for Emirati Nationals. While international treatment is an appropriate interim solution for patients, continuing this initiative over the longer term would represent a missed opportunity to attract the world's best institutions and healthcare professionals to Abu Dhabi. The Government believes it is simply not practical to rely on international institutions that are based overseas when many of the world's best institutions are keen to establish a presence in the region.

Strategy

As of March 1st 2007 the Health Authority - Abu Dhabi became the sole policy and regulatory authority for health management in the Emirate. The Authority will adopt, monitor and enforce internationally recognized quality and service standards. To ensure independence within this new framework, the Authority will cease its dominant role in both provision and financing of health services, with exceptions for healthcare in remote areas and preventive medicine.

Policy initiatives to reform the delivery and administration of healthcare in Abu Dhabi based on systematically identified trends, challenges and opportunities will create a well-regulated health system in which Residents will have access to world-class services and the providers of these services will be adequately rewarded. Key initiatives are as follows:

Health Insurance Reform for Nationals and Expatriates

A new, mandatory health insurance scheme was introduced in 2006 for foreign residents and their families. In the second half of 2007, a comprehensive health insurance scheme for Nationals is due to be established. Hallmarks of the new system include a clear and transparent reimbursement process, affordable access for foreign and national residents, and reliable funding for quality healthcare in Abu Dhabi. Importantly, the new insurance scheme is an investment in sustainability for the future of healthcare in the Emirate.

Under the law, employers must enrol and fund insurance for all eligible Non-National employees in the scheme, covering spouses and up to three children under 18 for each employee. To standardize access, authorised public and private healthcare facilities are required to provide the following medical treatments to individuals with insurance:

- Check up and primary care by general practitioners and specialist doctors at clinics and health centres
- Laboratory tests and X-rays
- Medicines
- Emergency care and treatment
- In-patient treatment
- Expenses of an escort in critical cases
- Dental and gum treatment, excluding orthodontics and dentures

The Health Authority - Abu Dhabi will conduct the licensing and monitoring of all health insurance activities. An independent not-for-profit body (the Third Party Administrator) will manage all billing and claims. Employers will meet the insurance costs of expatriates and their families.

In the case of Abu Dhabi Nationals, the Emirate will meet insurance costs. A capitalisation fund has been established to allow for the future health costs in the Emirate, predicted for Nationals to be five times higher than today in 2025. A charitable fund will continue to operate for underinsured expatriates and also cover more serious medical conditions such as cancer, dialysis, poly trauma and disability.

A new Government owned entity, known as the Abu Dhabi Health Services Company will be established, independent of the Health Authority, to partner in public-private-partnerships and oversee public sector healthcare provision assets, as well as to manage preventive programs and health services in remote regions (e.g., the Western Region of the Emirate).

Upgrading Facilities to Meet Current and Projected Demand

The Abu Dhabi Government has announced the following major investment projects to improve healthcare provision in the Emirate:

Project	Budget
New Hospital at Al Mafraq	AED 300,000,000
New Hospital at Al Ain	AED 300,000,000
Oncology Centre of Excellence	AED 300,000,000
Western Region Infrastructure	AED 230,000,000
Grant to Oasis Hospital	AED 150,000,000
Health Information System (HIS)	AED 140,000,000
Renovation of Al Jazirah Facility	AED 100,000,000
New wards Al Ain Hospital	AED 25,000,000
The SKMC Cardiac Program	AED 25,000,000

As part of the effort to enforce higher standards, the Authority recently closed 25 primary health care (PHC) clinics and will establish new facilities to include additional services, including dentistry. The redefinition of PHCs will include a strengthened role for General Practitioners to serve as more effective gatekeepers for hospital care and will make PHCs more attractive to consumers who have resisted these institutions in the past.

Groundbreaking International Partnerships

A key component of the Government's healthcare strategy is to develop beneficial partnerships with select international healthcare institutions. In line with this strategy, a number of significant partnerships have already been announced between Abu Dhabi and leading international healthcare institutions, resulting in new world-class healthcare facilities, top-level training and improved quality standards across the sector as a whole.

In March 2006, a ten-year agreement came into force between the Health Authority and Johns Hopkins Medicine of the United States. Under this agreement, Johns Hopkins Medicine will assume managerial and operational oversight of the 469-bed Tawam Hospital, one of the UAE's largest and most prestigious.

The agreement encompasses:

- A nine-month assessment of the hospital's needs.
- Implementation of management systems.
- Establishment of Centres of Excellence in a range of specialist clinical areas, e.g., an oncology Centre of Excellence to treat the most prevalent types of cancer in the Emirate and the region (lung, prostate and breast cancer).
- Access by healthcare professionals and patients to the latest information from The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, consistently voted 'best hospital' in the USA by US News and World Report.
- Training of local medical staff.

Also in 2006, the Imperial College London Diabetes Centre opened in Abu Dhabi. The first initiative of a partnership between Mubadala Development Company and Imperial College London, this state-of-the-art centre is expected to become the leading diabetes resource in the region.

- Treatment will include the highest level of specialized patient care from first diagnosis to management of diabetes and its associated complications. Comprehensive diagnostic facilities include digital retinal photography and retinal laser machines, as well as state-of-the-art echocardiograph imaging and stress testing to detect the earliest signs of heart disease.
- Research is expected to encompass epidemiological, basic, clinical and genetic research focused on diabetes in the UAE.
- The Centre will also have a responsibility to provide continuing education to healthcare professionals and the community.

Furthermore, an agreement was reached in September 2006 with the Cleveland Clinic-one of the top three hospitals in the United States-to establish, manage and operate a brand new hospital in Abu Dhabi. The Cleveland Clinic partnership will deliver unrivalled service provision, unprecedented medical and administrative training opportunities and world-class research, as well as important impulses for the overall improvement of the health system of the Emirate.

In June 2007, Cleveland Clinic signed a further agreement with the Health Authority - Abu Dhabi which will see Cleveland Clinic take over the management of the 550-bed Sheikh Khalifa Hospital, the 120-bed Abu Dhabi Behaviour Sciences Pavilion, and the 100-bed Abu Dhabi Rehabilitation Centre, as well as more than 12 specialized out-patient clinics and 9 primary healthcare centres in various parts of Abu Dhabi city.

Delivering Consistency: A Rigorous Licensing and Inspection Regime

The Government is revising existing laws relating to healthcare quality and standards, creating new laws to maintain and improve standards in the future, and will provide a more reliable system of accreditation.

Key initiatives include:

- A comprehensive audit of the privileges, qualifications and credentials of all healthcare professionals in Abu Dhabi.
- Requesting appropriate continuing education credits for each healthcare professional based on credentials and years of experience.
- Creating qualified inspection teams to rigorously monitor facilities and healthcare professionals.
- Enforcing strict licensing standards for all healthcare facilities, based on minimum standards, quality reform and certified accreditation.
- Ranking and accrediting all healthcare facilities in Abu Dhabi through a partnership with the Joint Commission on International Accreditation (JCIA).
- Working with an international partner to standardize healthcare examinations in Abu Dhabi.
- Working with a technical partner to create a world-class, integrated Health Information System.

Coordination

The Authority coordinates its activities with the Federal Ministry of Health and its advisory council. In addition, within Abu Dhabi, the Authority must coordinate with:

- The department which will be responsible for financing Nationals' healthcare insurance and services.
- The Department of Municipal Affairs.
- The departments and authorities conducting health-related public education campaigns, such as the Food Authority.
- The various education entities on health and physical education in schools, and on the attraction and retention of new healthcare professionals.

Education

Creating a Foundation for Global Leadership

Objectives

The development goals of the United Arab Emirates and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi will be achieved only with the support of a sophisticated and entrepreneurial workforce. His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, has defined education as a pillar that will enable Abu Dhabi to meet standards of excellence achieved in the most highly educated countries of the world.

A primary goal of education reform in Abu Dhabi is to create the highest quality, comprehensive system of education that applies world-class standards and expertise. To achieve this, the Government of the Emirate has given national priority to improving educational outcomes alongside its significant commitment to healthcare.

The reform effort begins with administrative restructuring so that:

- Government has a reduced role in the direct provision of educational services.
- A strengthened private sector delivers more educational services on behalf of government.
- The focus of government becomes that of regulator and supervisor of an education system with newly created standards matching world's best educational practice.
- The participation of Emirati Nationals in education administration and teaching is increased.
- Cost efficiencies are achieved through new practices in the management of individual schools and new administrative structures for learning institutions across the Emirate.

These reforms should allow Abu Dhabi to evolve as an education hub for the Emirates and the region.

A number of public entities contribute to the management and delivery of education in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The Federal Ministry for Education and Youth sets the overarching educational strategy to be implemented across the UAE.

At an Emirate level, the Abu Dhabi Education Council guides the delivery of education on the ground within the Emirate's three education zones - Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and the Western Region. Together, these independent entities manage public school and tertiary education in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, while overseeing the delivery of education by a number of private sector partners.

The Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) was formed in September 2005 and is chaired by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.

The Council is an independent body. Its primary responsibility is to develop and improve educational institutions and enhance the delivery of education in the Emirate. With a dedicated mandate to improve educational performance and outcomes in Abu Dhabi, the Council has embarked on a strategy to develop tailored education plans and deliver on the general education policy of the UAE. Its role at present is advisory.

Early in 2007 the Government of Abu Dhabi announced the planned formation of a Department of Education to manage the delivery of education within the Emirate. A key component of Government education policy is to streamline processes and ensure all public and private entities in the education sector are working in a coordinated way to achieve consistent outcomes across the Emirate.

Contribution to Abu Dhabi Vision

The Abu Dhabi Executive Council has set an ambitious vision for the Emirate, as a secure society and a dynamic, open economy based on the following pillars:

- Premium education, healthcare and infrastructure assets.
- A large empowered private sector.
- The creation of a sustainable knowledge based economy.
- An optimal transparent regulatory environment.
- Complete international and domestic security.
- A continuation of strong and diverse international relationships.
- Emirate resource optimization.
- The maintenance of Abu Dhabi's values, culture and heritage.
- A significant and ongoing contribution to the federation of the United Arab Emirates.

A world-class education system, from early childhood to university and adult education, is central to achieving that vision.

Policy Drivers

International benchmarking studies commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Youth in 2001 and 2005 identified the following opportunities for improvement in the education system of the UAE:

- Only 44 percent of teachers in the UAE were certified with a university degree in education. This compared unfavourably with 80 percent of teachers in Singapore and 97 percent in Japan.
- New teachers in the UAE trained for an average of two weeks before commencing. This compared unfavourably with an average of one to two years training in benchmarked countries.
- The UAE school year was only 130 days long, noticeably shorter than Japan and Singapore at over 200 days.
- The fact that education was mandatory only until year nine - combined with the length of, the then current, school day and year, - reduced students school learning time by up to 50% or more, when compared with international standards.

- Teachers in the UAE were paid between 10 percent and 50 percent less than their international counterparts, without performance bonuses.
- Non-teaching staff wages accounted for approximately 40 percent of the education budget, significantly more than Japan at 25 percent.
- In Abu Dhabi, the Ministry of Education was operating and regulating educational institutions, while also setting strategic directions for the sector. The international benchmarking study found that equivalent bodies to the Ministry in many other countries focused on policy and setting strategic directions, rather than day-to-day operations.
- There was room for improvement in the UAE education system in terms of failure rates, dropout rates and performance against international benchmarks.

There are also ongoing opportunities to improve the delivery of technical education in Abu Dhabi. Particular challenges include enhancing English language skills to facilitate further study, improving accountability, introducing innovative teaching methods tailored to the needs of students and involving industry. Of greatest significance, it is essential that job opportunities be expanded for the graduates of technical education in Abu Dhabi.

Strategy

The strategy to evolve the delivery and administration of education in Abu Dhabi is based on the following components:

Incorporate key platforms for all education initiatives

The achievement of new standards in quality is based on three key platforms that will suffuse all education-related reforms and activities:

1. Improving the curriculum taught to students in all learning institutions.
2. Enhancing the professionalism of the teacher workforce.
3. Establishing a performance-based learning culture based on outputs and outcomes rather than inputs.

The hallmark of an internationally benchmarked education system is the provision of quality learning opportunities at each point of an individual's lifecycle. Providing for each of these distinct phases requires:

- A robust early childhood education strategy.
- Quality school infrastructure and curricula.
- Accessible pathways to university and technical learning.
- Ongoing opportunities for adult education to enable retraining and access to new skills.

The Government of Abu Dhabi is constantly improving and adding to its education system to ensure its citizens are possessed with the facilities, technology,

qualifications and skills required to manage the continued expansion of the Emirate's economy.

Launch early childhood education programs

Compared to international benchmarks, the Emirate's education system was established only recently. As such, not all components of educational support are in place, as they are in other developed nations. One area set for improvement in the Emirate is that of early childhood education.

Research has proven the importance of early childhood education for children aged 0 to 3 on later learning and social outcomes. In response to this growing awareness of the importance of exposing infants to learning through interaction and literacy before their third birthday, the Emirate will develop and implement an early childhood education strategy.

Improve school operations and education

The system of school education within Abu Dhabi has emerged during a time of rapid growth and expansion of the Emirate. It is time to review its effectiveness and efficiency to ensure it continues to meet the needs of families into the future.

The current operation of schools is managed through the three Educational Zones of Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and the Western Zone. The ongoing efficiency of this structure is being reviewed, together with a review of the operation of individual schools themselves. To enhance the effectiveness of this structure and identify new approaches, a range of innovative initiatives are underway:

Model schools program

The Model schools pilot program seeks to trial increased per student expenditure and therefore investment in 23 schools throughout the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The program is predicated on matching per student expenditure with best practice global standards. Ten schools in Abu Dhabi; nine in Al Ain and four in the Western Region are participating.

Public-private partnerships

Consistent with the whole of government restructure that seeks to decrease the role of government as a service provider in favour of a strengthened private sector, the Abu Dhabi Education Council has commenced a 'Public-Private Partnership for Public School Management' pilot project, with four international private school providers now operating 30 schools in the Emirate. Under this three-year pilot project, the four local and regional private educational providers are managing public schools in collaboration with the Council. The pilot is being assessed for student, teacher, and school performance improvements. The success of the pilot will inform future policy decisions on the expanded participation of private providers in the delivery of public schooling on behalf of the Government of Abu Dhabi. It will also assess the value of various initiatives being trialled in individual schools. Early indications of improved educational outcomes mean that the pilot program will be expanded to another 30 schools from September 2007. Whereas the first 30 pilot schools cover grades K to five, the second wave of PPP schools will cater for grades six to nine.

Other forms of private sector contribution

In September 2007 a model for independent public schools will be introduced in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Through this program a combination of local and international based private sector education providers will have full responsibility for

the day-to-day delivery of education to pupils in government schools. This initiative further builds on the government's effort to more effectively leverage the expertise of the private sector in the delivery of education services.

New curriculum development

To achieve comparative quality with international standards, a formal review of the schools curriculum has been undertaken, aided by a qualified international advisor. Following this review new curriculum standards have been adopted by the Abu Dhabi Education Council. Already these standards have been rolled out into PPP and model schools for grades K to five. In September 2007 the new standards will be applied to grades six to nine in all PPP and model schools. An additional component of the new school curriculum is a greater focus on health and physical education, an immediate preventative health priority in Abu Dhabi and the UAE.

Strengthening teacher professionalism

Recent reforms require newly entering teachers to hold a Bachelors degree and have an acceptable standard of English language skills. In addition, existing teachers are required to attend skills development and training during regular school holidays. A new initiative is a university-level teacher training certification course, which will be compulsory for all new teachers in Abu Dhabi government schools. In addition, a new, dedicated teacher training institute has been developed.

From September 2007 the Emirates College for Educational Development will provide professional development programs and associated teaching qualifications. Within the 2007/08 academic year the Emirates College of Educational Development will also provide teacher certification programs and associated qualifications. The Abu Dhabi Government's partner in the creation of the Emirates College of Educational Development, Singapore's National Institute of Education, has provided professional development for teachers in the Emirate since 2005.

Review of school governance arrangements

A common government school has seven sections; a kindergarten from age three (KG1-2) and separate boys' and girls' streams for early years, for middle years, for secondary years and for final year classes ending at grade 12. Additionally, schools tend to operate with an average student population of about 400, instead of larger school populations that have been found more efficient in other nations. The educational and social benefits of segregation of boys and girls for learning purposes is well founded and not under review. However, small school populations divided into seven different sections results in duplication and ineffective resource allocation. The Abu Dhabi Education Council has conducted a review of the management structure of individual schools. As a result a pilot program has been developed that will see five pairs of smaller schools merged to create five larger K to 12 grade institutions. The aim of the pilot scheme is to review how consolidation through mergers can deliver better governance arrangements and therefore better outcomes for students.

Coordinated school planning

Different federal and local government departments which build, maintain, and plan schools need to be more effectively coordinated. School planners need better access to demographic data. School operators need stronger control over school construction, and examples exist of operators taking possession of new school buildings only to find a need to immediately renovate in order for a school to accommodate student needs.

The Abu Dhabi Education Council is completing a demographic study, to inform planning and civil works decisions on the future needs for new or upgraded school facilities. And greater coordination will be required with the Department of Municipal Affairs and private property developers in order to coordinate public planning for schools in new residential developments, and with transport authorities to facilitate adequate public access to schools.

Integration of technology learning platforms

Students in Abu Dhabi should have access to the best available technological tools and teachers should be fully trained in the appropriate use of technology in a learning environment. This means equally when not to use technology, as much as it means when and how to use technology appropriately. To fulfil this vision, the Abu Dhabi Education Zone has in place one of the world's best information technology education infrastructures. With private sector support, this infrastructure could be replicated to all schools of the United Arab Emirates. It has four key aspects:

- Administration: The system allows for central administrative and data management of all schools within the Abu Dhabi Education Zone. The management includes human resource, school governance, academic information, student transfers and data mining for assessment of educational outcomes.
- Learning Management System: All aspects of curriculum delivery and student learning can be managed centrally or locally. In time, the system will house newly sourced teaching tools to assist student learning.
- Stakeholder Communication System: All who interact with the education system can be assigned access to the new network, enabling communication through phone, faxes, short messages services, email, and voice mail. The system is used to allow teacher-to-student communication, and also direct teacher-to-parent communication on student-related issues.
- Internet Portal System: Each school is able to create and manage its own website and external electronic communication.

The system is accessed through computer laboratories in each of the schools within the Abu Dhabi Education Zone. In time it will be possible, and the Government intends, to replicate this model across each of the education zones of the Emirate. Additionally, teacher training in use of technology is underway, with an aspiration of giving all teachers an International Computer Driving License close to fulfilment.

A new focus on health and wellbeing

Studies reveal that the prevalence of overweight children in the UAE aged 5-17 is in the region of 21%, indicating a significant underlying trend linked to the prevalence of type II diabetes. Despite this, diabetes prevention is not taught in schools. While schools do have physical education courses, there is an insufficient focus on healthy living and disease prevention. In recognition of the national priority to improve health outcomes for all in the Emirate, the Abu Dhabi Educational Council will work with relevant public health entities to establish within schools a specific awareness of the importance of good diet and active exercise in order to prevent diabetes and other chronic diseases.

Delivering world-class higher education in Abu Dhabi

The Government's key priority in higher education is to provide a quality of higher education in Abu Dhabi that was previously only available for students overseas. Key components include partnering with leading international institutions to create new facilities in Abu Dhabi, and ensuring the Emirate's existing institutions are strengthened and improved to meet the increasing demand for local education.

New higher education initiatives are enhancing the quality of educational facilities in Abu Dhabi and creating some of the world's rarest educational and cultural opportunities.

In May 2006 His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan issued Law No. (14) of 2006 establishing the Paris Sorbonne University - Abu Dhabi. Wholly owned by the Abu Dhabi Education Council, the Paris Sorbonne University of Abu Dhabi will enhance educational opportunities in Abu Dhabi in partnership with one of the world's leading academic institutions.

The University will offer degrees in social sciences, humanities and fine arts. It will also offer Licentiate, Masters and PhD qualifications in history, art history, music, geography, planning, arts, civilisation studies, philosophy, sociology, information and communication. All subjects will be taught in French, by tutors from the Paris Sorbonne University.

Successful international partnerships have also been developed with INSEAD-one of the world's largest graduate business schools-and between the Petroleum Institute and the Colorado School of Mines. The INSEAD partnership will bring a dedicated research function into Abu Dhabi and provide unprecedented intellectual capital in the area of business education.

Significant upgrades and developments are taking place that will improve and expand higher education facilities in Abu Dhabi. The UAE University has entered into a 28-year concession agreement with Al Hikma Development Company to deliver a new, upgraded campus for its growing population of students. The University currently comprises five separate campuses, seven residential areas and a population of 15,000 students. However, ongoing demand and ageing facilities have necessitated an urgent upgrade to ensure the University can continue to meet its educational and social objectives into the future, and fulfil the objectives of the Government's education policy.

The UAE University upgrade demonstrates a further component of higher education policy, which is to mobilize the private sector in the delivery of educational services and facilities. Through the Al Hikma concession agreement, institutional investors will have an opportunity to become core shareholders in the new campus by funding its construction, fit-out, operations and landscaping. As such, the University will be free to specialize in and concentrate on its significant academic and educational responsibilities. Other significant projects include the relocation of Zayed University and the large-scale construction of a new University City. Both constitute significant expansions in Abu Dhabi's capacity to provide world-class higher education - with modern facilities and technology - to achieve educational hub status.

A further component of higher education in Abu Dhabi are the Higher Colleges of Technology that provide technologically sophisticated education through a wide range of programs covering Certificate, Diploma, Higher Diploma or Bachelor Degrees. HCT is a system of community-based colleges reaching out to all of the Emirates.

Quality vocational and technical education

Quality technical education is also critical for Abu Dhabi and the UAE to meet the demand for skills, both now and in the future. A new Institute of Applied Technology (IAT) was established in 2005 to deliver on the Government's ambitious strategy for technical education. Wholly owned

by the Government of Abu Dhabi, the IAT is a body corporate with financial and

administrative independence, and the full legal capacity to implement all activities to fulfil its responsibilities.

Under the IAT, four campuses for technical secondary school have been placed under new management with an updated educational program. In 2006 five high school campuses, with a total student population of 2,330, were made available for technical education.

Importantly, the IAT seeks to provide vocational and technical education guided by the needs of major industry sectors such as aviation, automotive, health and defence. A strong link between industry and technical education is critical to ensuring the development of skills matches the current and future needs of industrial employers.

The National University of Science, Technology and Research was also created to serve particularly high-level graduates. The University seeks to improve and expand pathways for further technical and vocational education in Abu Dhabi.

Finally, from September 2007 the Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute (ADVETI) will provide international vocation based training and qualifications in targeted industry sectors. These sectors include areas such as health, legal and tourism. The management board of ADVETI will consist of representatives of key industries from within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, so as to ensure that the development of skills will be matched to the current and emerging needs of industry.

The Institute is being established in cooperation with TAFE NSW, of Australia, which will create a turnkey operation that will become the responsibility of the Abu Dhabi Education Council after five years.

ADVETI will cater for a wide range of student age and educational experience profiles. In its first year ADVETI will operate with enrolment of 400 students. That number will rise to up to 5,000 students in later years.

The Government's intent is to create - through the ADVETI and IAT initiatives - seamless pathways from grade nine to technical degree level for those wishing to engage in vocational and/or technical education.

Coordination

The provision of early childhood, school, tertiary, and ongoing education involves several current government departments and authorities, mainly the UAE Ministry for Education and Youth, the three education zones of Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and the Western Zone, the UAE Ministry for Higher Education, and the newly established Abu Dhabi Education Council. In time, it is the intention of the Executive Council to adopt a new streamlined process to ensure a more centralized, outcomes-focused funding body for education, a single regulator of

educational standards, and a more comprehensive use of Public-Private-Partnerships in service delivery.

More broadly, the Abu Dhabi Education Council is currently completing a demographic study to inform future planning for educational institutions. Future planning coordination with the planned Department of Municipal Affairs will be required to properly coordinate planning and the construction of new schools and existing school upgrades.

The success of the deployment of IT in schools also warrants strengthened links with the e-Government strategy being pursued across government. Similarly, educationalists will benefit from closer engagement with health professionals. The establishment of a health and wellbeing initiative for school children and their families would be aided by formal links with the Health Authority.

Labour

Working together in a fair and ethical environment

Objectives

From its sparsely populated beginnings, Abu Dhabi has rapidly developed into a sophisticated economy mobilising significant labour resources. Under the guidance of His Highness, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, the Emirate is expected to continue its rapid economic growth and development. As this occurs, the local economy will require greater amounts of human resources, combined with more diverse skills and capabilities from the workforce.

Effective management of labour resources constitutes a critical element in attracting and developing a skilled and flexible workforce capable of delivering upon the Emirate's social and economic vision. Mismanagement of labour resources would not only threaten the achievement of that vision, but could tarnish the country's international image.

Most importantly, it would be inconsistent with the values of Abu Dhabi and the UAE.

In carrying out the ethical, safe and efficient management of labour resources within the Emirate, both Government and private sector entities will support the following objectives:

- Achieving full employment for UAE Nationals in viable career tracks.
- Adhering strictly to the Federal Law for the Regulation of Labour Relations, as well as to all international labour obligations entered into by the UAE.
- Eliminating completely any and all kinds of exploitative or coercive labour practices, with particular focus on the protection of women and minors, as well as the complete eradication of any form of trafficking in persons.
- Providing a safe and healthy working environment for all members of the labour force.
- Eliminating all forms of negative discrimination from the workplace.
- Ensuring an adequate and stable supply of labour to support the continued economic and social development of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- Bolstering the international reputation and image of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates.

While overall labour regulation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour at the Federal level, several other Federal and local entities play an important part in supporting the Ministry and in achieving the objectives described above. These include the:

- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Justice and Federal System of Courts
- Abu Dhabi Department of Justice
- The General Directorate for Residency and Immigration
- The Department of Municipal Affairs
- Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Abu Dhabi Police
- Government and private sector entities that employ large numbers of workers within the Emirate
- Small and medium sized enterprises

In addition, the Government of Abu Dhabi is currently implementing plans to establish a Department of Labour and Social Services for the Emirate.

Policy Drivers

- Population growth in the UAE is estimated at 5.6% per annum, with more than 45% of the UAE National population being under the age of 15.
- Based on statistics reported in the 2005 UNDP Human Development Report, the contribution of UAE National females to the economy more than tripled from 1995 to 2004, and the trajectory continues to gain momentum, due in large part to advances achieved in UAE women's education. The number of UAE National women enrolled in higher education is actually 124% of the number of UAE National men enrolled in higher education and reflects a staggering statistic: i.e., that 77% of UAE females continue on to higher education from high school.
- Rapid job creation, combined with continued Emiratization, will be required to eliminate existing unemployment and to generate job opportunities for future generations of UAE Nationals.
- It is the intention of the government to create a sustainable knowledge economy.
- The government's healthcare policy calls for the creation of a sustainable accessible private sector driven healthcare system. This will create an ongoing demand for all associated professions.
- Economic diversification and the outsourcing of government services are expected to precipitate an increase in small to medium sized enterprises. This sector will require a diverse range of skilled and unskilled human resources that will necessarily draw upon a mixture of expatriate and national labour.
- In order to keep pace with its rapid economic growth, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi will also continue to require large numbers of expatriate workers, particularly as economic diversification drives expansion into labour-intensive sectors such as tourism, real estate and medium and heavy industries. In the short- to medium-term, the number of skilled and unskilled international guest workers in Abu Dhabi is expected to increase.
- Economic expansion in Asia, particularly in India and China will create greater competition for the UAE's traditional sources of international labour.

The above points demonstrate the need for a two-pronged approach toward labour resource management in Abu Dhabi:

1. The Emirate must create a greater number of meaningful employment opportunities for UAE Nationals in order to meet future demand. As noted in the previous section, continued educational reform will represent an important parallel strategy for achieving this goal.
2. The Emirate must ensure a steady flow of needed skilled and unskilled expatriate labour to satisfy the requirements of Abu Dhabi's growing economy. This approach must be underpinned by a continuing focus on affording adequate protection to, and ethical treatment of, all expatriate guest workers.

Strategy

Improving UAE National Employment Opportunities

Despite somewhat mixed results, the imposition of sector-wide Emiratization targets remains the most promising means of creating new employment opportunities for UAE National youth in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Since 1999, and as a result of Government-imposed targets, national participation in the banking sector rose by 300% from roughly 1,200 UAE National employees to over 4,700, with UAE Nationals accounting for roughly 26.4% of the banking sector workforce in 2005.

A similar strategy in the insurance sector was less successful, yielding only a 5.3% rate of UAE National participation. Surveys of potential job seekers found that a combination of factors, including perceptions of the sector, remuneration and work practices made the latter sector less attractive to national job seekers.

The Government of Abu Dhabi will support the further evolution and extension of such strategies to generate suitable employment opportunities for UAE Nationals. Government entities will also make Emiratization goals a standard requirement in the awarding of major contracts (e.g. oil and gas contracts, power-generation contracts and major defence procurements).

Supporting the employment of UAE National women also holds significant potential for improving the national/expatriate labour mix, both as a result of high unemployment among national women and in recognition of the tremendous strides achieved in women's education over recent years. Although participation in the labour force by UAE National women more than tripled from 1995 to 2004, more can and should be done to harness this important source of human resource.

The Emirate of Abu Dhabi also supports enhanced coordination between major employers and tertiary educational institutions (e.g. United Arab Emirates University, Zayed University, Higher Colleges of Technology) aimed at ensuring a closer link between academic programs offered by those institutions and the needs of the Abu Dhabi and UAE economies. Major employers and educational institutions should proactively seek opportunities to cooperate in ensuring that UAE National students are being trained in disciplines that are in demand within the local economy and, where appropriate, that new academic programs are designed and implemented in anticipation of future skill requirements of the economy.

Ethically Employing Foreign Skilled and Unskilled Labour

While expatriate workers choose to come to Abu Dhabi and benefit financially from that decision, such workers make an important contribution to the growth and development of the Emirate that merits both recognition and the promise of an ethical standard of treatment. The Emirate of Abu Dhabi aims to address labour management issues in a manner that ensures adequate protection for UAE National and foreign members of its working population.

The Emirate of Abu Dhabi believes that labour policies that are just, transparent and effectively enforced will support an efficient and stable labour market and will contribute to the Emirate's further economic development while also enhancing Abu Dhabi's international reputation and credibility.

The Government has recently taken proactive steps in respect of two areas important to workers: health and accommodation.

A new, mandatory health insurance scheme was introduced in 2006 for foreign residents and their families. Under the law, employers must enrol and fund insurance for all eligible employees in the scheme, covering spouses and up to three children under 18 for each employee.

Hallmarks of the new system include a clear and transparent reimbursement process, affordable access for foreign and national residents, and reliable funding for quality healthcare in Abu Dhabi. Importantly, the new insurance scheme is an investment in sustainability for the future of healthcare in the Emirate.

The Government of the Emirate has also taken proactive steps to counter problems faced by some expatriate workers in relation to accommodation, such as overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of individual privacy, lack of communal space, and lack of access to recreational facilities. Recognizing that these issues substantially impact the quality of life, health and sense of dignity of those affected, the Government has supported the development of dedicated, low cost worker residences that meet or exceed international benchmarks for worker accommodation, including minimum living and communal space, leisure facilities, hygiene and safety. Current plans for worker residences would accommodate 140,000 - 180,000 workers in high-quality housing units, at a projected cost of 2.5 billion dirhams.

The Government of Abu Dhabi will continue to proactively contribute to the legislative and policy framework at the Federal level for all matters relating to labour strategy. Specific areas that the Government of Abu Dhabi plans to address in the near future include:

Enforcement: Many of the weaknesses in the current labour regime stem from incomplete enforcement of the existing law, which affords workers significant protections, including acceptable standards for health and safety, limits on working hours and due process in the resolution of labour disputes. Given the important role of enforcement in ensuring compliance with individual labour contracts, as well as the implementation of court rulings against employers found to have broken the law, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and its institutions will work with the Federal Ministry of Labour to strengthen enforcement capabilities at both the Federal and Emirate level.

Recruitment: In many instances, and particularly with regard to unskilled labour, some recruitment agencies operating outside of the UAE extort funds from workers in

return for assisting them in getting employment and residency in the UAE. Additionally, such agencies have been known to recruit workers on the basis of salary and benefit terms that do not correspond to those actually on offer by the domestic employer in the UAE. At the same time, such agencies have also provided inaccurate information to domestic employers regarding the skill level of workers recruited for employment in the UAE. The Emirate of Abu Dhabi is studying mechanisms to combat these forms of exploitation by recruitment agencies, with the aim of working with the Ministry of Labour to regulate such agencies (possibly via a system of licensing and inspection) and forcing them to abide by a strict code of conduct.

Most recently, the UAE Ministry of Interior unveiled details of a new contract to govern relationships between agencies hiring domestic workers and potential employers. The contract forms part of a federal government initiative to enhance legislation regulating domestic workers' services across the UAE.

This contract follows an earlier announcement of a revised unified domestic worker contract. Both aim to improve the working environment for domestic workers and specify their rights and duties. The contracts also underline the UAE government's commitment to improving the quality of life for all expatriates living in the country.

Labour Contracting and Payment: Although the vast majority of foreign labourers working in Abu Dhabi provide their services and receive their agreed compensation and benefits without incident, cases of non-payment or failure of employers to completely fulfil the terms of individual labour contracts continue to be a concern. In response, the Emirate is also studying methods of working with the Ministry of Labour to centralize critical aspects of labour management at the Emirate level, including payment of salaries and provision of accommodation and subsistence benefits. The aim of these efforts will be to reduce the occurrence of such failures, while also shielding workers from the negative effects of such incidents should they occur.

Worker Education: The Emirate is also investigating mechanisms for ensuring that foreign workers are fully educated with regard to their rights under existing laws and regulations, as well as means for seeking redress should an employer infringe upon those rights. Working in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Labour, the vision of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi for this program includes mandatory participation by all workers prior to the first day of work, as well as instruction in languages accessible to the majority of workers.

Coordination

Labour is a cross-cutting resource that plays a role in every sector of the economy and society. While its management is the primary responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Labour, ethically maximizing the contribution of the labour force to the economy and society of Abu Dhabi will require the cooperation and input of virtually all institutions and entities operating within the Emirate.

Enforcement agencies, including elements of the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Interior, the court system and the local police force will be afforded the Emirate's full support in the implementation of the labour law.

Commercial entities of the Government of Abu Dhabi will be required to comply fully with existing laws and regulations, and senior managers within these entities will

be held to account for any failures to fulfil their responsibilities in these areas. In this regard, those administering major contracts on behalf of the Government will be encouraged to make the employment of UAE Nationals and the ethical treatment of foreign labour both a standard clause within contractual agreements, as well as criteria upon which competing bids will be evaluated.

Civil Service

Delivering a Skilled and Efficient Public Sector

Objectives

Under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, the Emirate is embarking on an ambitious restructuring of the government of Abu Dhabi.

With the overall responsibility for the human resources and professionalism of all employees throughout the Abu Dhabi Government, the Department of Civil Service plays a critical role in the success of this effort.

The priority of the Department of Civil Service is to define a master plan for each Department, Agency, Authority or other entity, in order to empower it with a clear mandate for the planning and management of its human resources.

These master plans, combined with rationalizing manpower across each Department and Authority, will result in a dramatically changed Government workforce in 2007. The rationalization will see the workforce of Government re-shaped to a more efficient and streamlined body, with a new focus on the role of the private sector in the provision of non-core government services that are currently provided by the Government.

Previously, the Department of Civil Service managed human resource functions on behalf of Departments and Authorities. In the future, the Department will manage the regulatory, educational, monitoring, and assessment tools for human resources, enabling Government bodies to perform human resources roles directly.

Contribution to Abu Dhabi Vision

The Abu Dhabi Executive Council is currently refining the structures and functions of government to deliver greater efficiency and accountability. To achieve its mission, the Executive Council coordinates the design and implementation of policy across all government portfolios. The success of the vision depends on a well-managed government human resource capability, drawn from both the public and private sectors. Facilitating this outcome is the task of the Department of Civil Service.

In working towards these specific outcomes, the Executive Council is refining the structures and functions of government with the following key objectives:

- Increasing efficiency and reducing the cost of services.
- Reducing hidden unemployment and improving Government performance.
- Increasing the number of productively-employed Emiratis in the workforce.
- Outsourcing non-core services to the private sector and increasing private sector involvement.

- Increasing the use of technology as a key enabler in all departments and Government entities.
- Developing performance measurement and evaluation systems in all Government departments and entities.

Responding to these directions, the Department of Civil Service is reforming its practices and leading all government Departments and Authorities in a change program to rationalize and improve the management and realization of whole of government manpower.

Policy Drivers

Abu Dhabi is growing, as is its population. The Executive Council seeks to maintain and improve the quality of life and availability of resources enjoyed by the population of Abu Dhabi today. A key component of this is the efficient delivery of high quality services to the public, and the maintenance of a liveable environment. To provide for the future, the Department of Civil Service has identified the need for a human resource master plan to ensure all government objectives are best achieved through access to the world's best human resource capabilities in a new framework of efficiency.

The challenges facing the government workforce are the same as those facing Abu Dhabi as a whole. Access to world-class healthcare and education facilities make a significant contribution to the skills and productivity of the available public sector workforce. To improve the strengths of the workforce, the Emirate must continue to improve standards in health and education, for which coordination is essential.

Strategy

The Department of Civil Service is developing a Government Human Resource Master Plan to equip the Emirate for the evolution of its structures, functions and processes. The Master Plan will comprise all components necessary to build partnerships with the private sector to achieve a more efficient, accountable, and inclusive government for the benefit of the people of Abu Dhabi.

The Master Plan, once developed, will address:

- The regulatory and advisory tools guiding the Departments and Authorities in the re-engineering of their human resource functions to become more efficient and transparent.
- The identification and implementation of Key Performance Indicators for the management of internal and outsourced human resources across all Departments and Authorities.
- The implementation of new individual employment contracts for government employees, which will be linked to achievements of Departmental objectives.
- A pay scale review, to ensure salaries are appropriate to attract the best talent and skills sets to the service of the public through direct employment by the Emirate.

- Professional training, which will be aligned to meet the policy objectives of individual Departments and Authorities.
- Succession planning, with a replicable model to be established for use by each individual Department and Authority.
- Emiratization, to give more Nationals an opportunity to be employed directly or indirectly in the delivery of government service, contributing to the future of the Emirate.
- Identification of a desired culture for public and private entities involved in the delivery of Government services, and development of a process to instil that culture across the relevant organizations.
- Technology integration, through the identification and implementation of appropriate technology tools to empower human resource coordination on behalf of Departments and Authorities.
- Outsourcing of non-core administrative functions of Departments and Authorities previously performed by employees of government to the private sector, including payroll, data collection, program assessment, recruitment and training.
- Outsourcing of government services that could be provided more efficiently to the public by the private sector, while maintaining the knowledge, skills and experience that is held by the present public sector workforce.
- Data collection and reporting capabilities, underpinned by whole of government effectiveness assessment, to be conducted by the Executive Council on a quarterly basis.
- Demonstration of outcomes to the UAE to empower others through example in establishing a new standard of government service delivery via innovative partnerships with the private sector.

Coordination

A key component of the Department of Civil Services' role is to facilitate cross-government coordination. Its success will depend on the ability to work throughout government to implement these improvements. Yet the success of the restructuring is also dependent on improvements in health, education, and the implementation of the e-Gov initiative, which has a particular focus on ensuring the customer focus of government services is improved.

Culture and Heritage

Conserving Abu Dhabi's Most Valuable Assets

Objectives

The Emirate of Abu Dhabi is endowed with important archaeological and natural sites, special oases and landscapes, traditional architecture, oral traditions and expressions, its own performing arts, social practices, rituals and traditional handicrafts. These resources represent a unique and valuable contribution to the richness of global culture and heritage, and like all such unique contributions, merit special measures to ensure their preservation. However, without intervention, these resources are threatened with dilution by rapid urban, demographic and economic development.

The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage has been created as the single cultural heritage management body to address the immediate and long-term culture and heritage needs in Abu Dhabi. It will rely on appropriate legislative backing and work constructively with a range of public and private entities in the Emirate.

The development of an effective culture and heritage policy for Abu Dhabi is based on the following objectives:

1. Creation of a sound legal framework defining the components of heritage and the responsibilities and competencies of different institutions and stakeholders, given that cultural heritage applies across portfolios and can not be handled by one body exclusively.
2. Legal establishment of an effective decision-making and coordinating body, mandated to guide and coordinate with other public and private entities involved in the conservation and management of cultural heritage.
3. Adequate staffing of all entities and services responsible for the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage. This would include conservation specialists, heritage management experts, urban planners, archaeologists, historians, inspectors, technicians and other professionals.
4. Close collaboration between the Federal and local authorities involved in the implementation of culture and heritage policy.

Contribution to Abu Dhabi Vision

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, has charged the Executive Council of Abu Dhabi with a growth and restructuring program that not only achieves goals of modernization and an improved quality of life, but also maintains connections with and promotes respect for traditional Abu Dhabi values, culture and heritage.

An effective policy for the conservation and enhancement

of culture and heritage in Abu Dhabi will contribute to:

1. The education of current and future generations.
2. The creation of a unique tourist offering.
3. Ensuring that economic growth and diversification results in the wider dissemination rather than the diminishment of the Emirate's rich cultural heritage.

Policy Drivers

A range of trends, challenges and opportunities in this area are driving the development of an effective culture and heritage policy for Abu Dhabi:

- Opportunities in education, to enable both National and expatriate residents to explore and shape national identity and to develop a greater appreciation for the history and culture of Abu Dhabi and the UAE.
- Fragile heritage assets, such as historic buildings, archaeological sites, collections and cultural landscapes.
- Urban sprawl and infrastructure development, which threaten cultural and heritage resources, particularly without effective mechanisms for coordination between relevant public and private stakeholders.
- Desire for a regulatory process to formalize conservation efforts and create greater awareness and certainty of responsibilities in the area of culture and heritage management.
- Critical condition of intangible cultural heritage assets, such as traditional handicrafts at risk of becoming extinct. Research to identify and document them is essential.
- Demand for reliable data, which is essential to inform decisions in planning, conservation and management and provide evidence-based reasons for these decisions.
- Opportunity to establish updated legislation and guidelines at the Federal and local levels, to protect and preserve cultural heritage assets in a coordinated way.
- Clarifying responsibilities among the range of public and private entities that rely upon, and have an impact on, cultural and heritage assets in the Emirate.
- Rich National pride and the deep affection for the wise leadership that has transformed the Emirate into what it is today. In addition, the Emirate's burgeoning tourism sector and ambitious tourism strategy represent further opportunities to gain support and recruit champions for effective culture and heritage management.

Strategy

In the short- to medium-term, the Abu Dhabi culture and heritage management policy consists of the following components:

1. Establishment of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage

The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage has been created as a single body empowered to decisively meet the Emirate's immediate and long-term needs in culture and heritage conservation. It will conduct a range of educational, social, research and legal activities on local, regional and pan-Arab scales.

Educational Programs

- Deepen people's understanding of culture and heritage and strengthen cultural communication and connection with civil society in Abu Dhabi.
- Support and encourage education in culture and the arts.
- Involve youth in the determination of cultural and artistic priorities.
- Organize exhibitions, conferences and activities related to Abu Dhabi's culture and heritage.
- Support intellectual and artistic activities through events-lectures, conferences, exhibitions and workshops-and publications.
- Expand opportunities and resources for expatriate residents and visitors to familiarize themselves with Abu Dhabi's rich culture, history, and heritage.

Conservation and Institutional Development

- Conserve and protect historic, archaeological and culture sites and buildings while making them available for people's enjoyment.
- Develop plans for cultural exhibitions and museums in Abu Dhabi and supervise their implementation in coordination with relevant authorities.
- Audit and prepare inventories of movable and immovable cultural properties.
- Undertake excavation and conservation projects and issue necessary permits for foreign missions wishing to conduct relevant research in Abu Dhabi.
- Create, develop and manage museums while monitoring and conserving cultural artefacts in museums and stores.
- Supervise and monitor the state of cultural property in public and private ownership.
- Manage the National Library to provide those involved in intellectual, literary and scientific activity with the necessary books and references to represent various fields of human knowledge in Arabic and other languages - accessible to all researchers and users of the material of all age groups and levels.

- Undertake all necessary efforts to record national history and heritage through the collection of documents and the recording of events, ensuring all records are validated, studied and published as appropriate.

Legal

- Propose draft laws and regulations for the protection, conservation, management and promotion of cultural heritage.
- Pursue infringements and activities negatively affecting the cultural heritage of Abu Dhabi in collaboration with relevant authorities.

Professional Support and Training

- Support education and training in fields relevant to the Authority and develop the necessary human and cultural capital for the documentation, inventorying, conservation and management of cultural heritage.
- Provide support for institutions working for the protection, management and promotion of cultural heritage.

2. Conserve endangered archaeological and historical remains in Abu Dhabi

The Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority and more recently and the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage have partnered with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to identify and develop plans to conserve endangered archaeological and historical sites in the Emirate.

UNESCO conducted its first mission to identify significant sites in Abu Dhabi in April 2002. It has conducted four subsequent expert missions in January, May and September 2004, and in October 2005.

Identifying and taking the necessary steps to conserve endangered archaeological and historical sites is the most pressing of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage's immediate responsibilities, and it will continue to work with appropriate organizations to achieve this.

3. Slow the rate of disappearance of traditional handicrafts and knowledge

According to the Abu Dhabi Cultural Heritage Management Strategy, the protection of intangible heritage, such as traditional handicrafts and knowledge, will be achieved in three phases.

First, a general framework for intangible heritage conservation, promotion and sustainability will be developed and established. This is expected to involve a general convention consisting of a set of seminars to define the necessary policy, framework or strategy for intangible heritage, with input from interested stakeholders. This will lead to several plans of action involving clusters of specialized bodies in the Emirate.

Second, an inventory of intangible heritage in Abu Dhabi will be created and launched. This will identify the current conditions of intangible heritage to recognize threats and inform decisions to achieve sustainability. The inventory will illuminate issues such as the rate of disappearance of traditions and customs and threats facing traditional handicrafts. It is anticipated that this process will involve local academic, historical and heritage-based organizations and institutions, such as universities.

Finally, a special body will be required to coordinate among the various stakeholders with an interest in intangible heritage preservation and promotion. This body would be responsible for implementing the recommendations of the intangible heritage convention outlined above, and would involve representatives from key institutions with knowledge and an interest in the field.

4. Continue international partnerships to develop best practices

The UAE is a signatory to the 1972 General Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, to which it acceded in 2001. This convention states that the responsibility for identifying, conserving and transferring cultural and natural heritage to the next generation is primarily the responsibility of states themselves. Each party has committed to ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of cultural and natural heritage situated on its own territory.

Aware of the fragility of cultural and natural heritage, the Abu Dhabi Government requested the assistance of UNESCO to assess and evaluate the conditions of cultural sites and to develop an effective cultural heritage management strategy. This has contributed to the development of a comprehensive culture and heritage policy for Abu Dhabi.

The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage will continue to work with international organizations such as UNESCO and relevant individuals to ensure best practice is applied to the identification, conservation and presentation of the Emirate's cultural and natural heritage.

Coordination

To fulfil its mandate, the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage will coordinate with a range of public and private entities, including the:

- Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, as cultural and natural heritage is central to the Government's ambitious tourism strategy and the positioning of the Emirate as a unique Arabian destination.
- Department of Transport, as efforts to promote culture and heritage sites will rely on the ability of the transport system to get people to and from the sites conveniently.
- Ministry of Education, Abu Dhabi Education Council and individual Education Zones to ensure local culture and heritage is taught appropriately in schools and higher education institutions, through a formal curriculum or other resources.
- Private property developers to ensure new real estate and property developments consider the impact on natural and cultural heritage, ensure cultural and heritage assets are protected and also enable the promotion of these assets as resident and tourist attractions.
- International organizations such as UNESCO with responsibility for the protection and conservation of global natural and cultural heritage.

Food Control

Assuring Public Health and Safety

Objectives

Abu Dhabi citizens and residents look to the government to ensure access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food for themselves and their families. Whether buying food at a local grocer or going to a restaurant for a special dinner, people need to feel confident that the food they eat has been safely handled and prepared.

Abu Dhabi's record in food safety is excellent. Its Food and Environment Control Centre operated for 50 years and in 1988 was the first government institution in the Middle East and Africa to obtain the ISO 9002 international quality certificate. However, in March 2005 His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, issued Law No. (2) for 2005 establishing The Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority. This Authority has been granted a broader mandate that will increase its effectiveness and bring the highest international standards to the delivery of its mission.

The new Authority is dedicated to protecting consumers in the area of food safety, hygiene and quality and is working to be recognized internationally as a world-class authority on food safety.

Contribution to Abu Dhabi Vision

The Executive Council believes that effective work by the Food Control Authority is essential to maintaining trust between a government and its people. When achieving its objectives, the Food Control Authority must also address the Executive Council's other mandates by:

- Applying international standards and best practices.
- Privatizing non-core tasks to create a large, empowered private sector and achieve resource efficiencies.
- Increasing career and professional development opportunities for Emirati Nationals.

Policy Drivers

The priority of the Abu Dhabi Government in food safety and inspection is to maintain the high standards that the Emirate has achieved in the past, while leveraging international insights and experience to maintain world-class standards of food safety. Food inspection and control is critical to ensuring the health and welfare of those living, working and visiting Abu Dhabi, and is therefore central to achieving the Government's broader objectives in a number of different portfolios.

Policy Implementation

The Food Control Authority maintains food safety and quality in Abu Dhabi in four key ways:

1. Inspection

The authority inspects locally manufactured, imported and exported food, as well as restaurants, hotels and shops.

This includes:

- Packaging, storage and exchange of all foods for sale or presented for human consumption.
- Regular inspection of food production, preparation, sale and outlet sites, including hotels, restaurants, cafes and shops.
- Inspection and certification of food exports.
- Participation in the development of plant and animal production programs and monitoring of the food production preparation process.
- Implementing international procedures for food safety at border check points.

The Government also intends to apply the most appropriate technology to enhance the efficiency and reliability of its food safety measures. New initiatives include an electronic inspection system, to allow more efficient and consistent data collection and quicker, more reliable analysis.

In addition, the Government is embarking on a concerted recruitment effort to ensure that appropriately skilled human capital is developed, harnessed and rewarded to maximize the capabilities of the Authority. A central component of this involves working with higher education institutions in Abu Dhabi to create specialized academic programs to educate and attract UAE Nationals into the inspection field.

2. Standards

The authority is responsible for developing and adopting international quality standards for the food industry. The Abu Dhabi Food Authority works with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Codex Alimentarius, created by the FAO and World Health Organization to develop food standards, guidelines and codes of practice. The authority has also assessed approaches in Australia and its states.

3. Research

The authority runs food industry laboratories for research and testing, which:

- Support research for the development of food specifications and standards for food analysis.
- Establish diagnostic methods and facilities for detection of veterinary drugs and hormones.
- Test food and beverage products.
- Introduce advanced methodologies for residual detection.
- Share experiences and information with other laboratories and concerned parties.

4. Education and Training

The Authority conducts training in the food industry as well as public education programs.

- Training is conducted for Food Control Authority employees and the food industry workforce. A key challenge in this area is educating staff of food outlets in order to raise health standards across the sector.
- The Authority raises public awareness of food safety-related issues and promotes a healthy lifestyle for citizens and residents of Abu Dhabi.
- Finally, the Authority develops crisis plans for food-related crises.

The Authority also has strategies to improve management systems and practices, based on standards set by the International Standards Organization.

Coordination

Success requires extensive coordination with other government agencies, both within Abu Dhabi, with other Emirates, and with the Federal Government. Among the key bodies:

- Food safety organizations in other emirates, to ensure consistency and encourage communication on common issues.
- Federal customs authority.
- Ministry for the Environment and Water.
- Municipal Authorities, which are responsible for veterinary services.
- Health Authority - Abu Dhabi, which should help guide public awareness and education programs.