

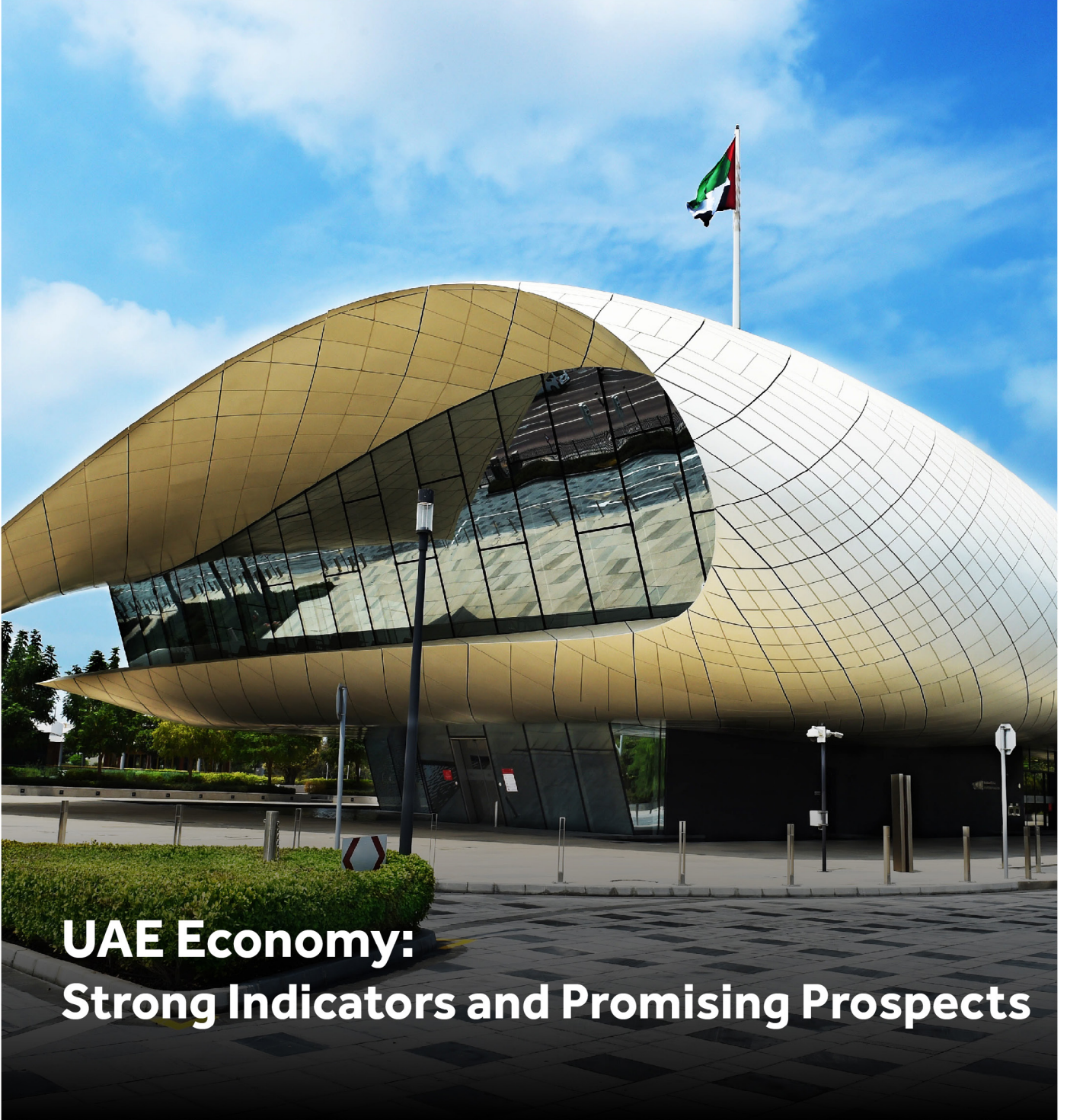


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**UAE Economy:
Strong Indicators and Promising Prospects**



UAE's GDP witnesses 7.6% growth in 2022

The UAE aims to double the size of its economy by 2031 and diversify away from hydrocarbons

The UAE's economy expanded %7.6 last year, a senior official said on Thursday, about double the rise in gross domestic product (GDP) recorded in 2021 as the Gulf state rebounded sharply from the Covid19- pandemic.

While higher energy prices supported economic growth across the Gulf region's oil exporters last year, a slowdown is forecast this year with a more uncertain oil price outlook and a challenging global macroeconomic environment.

The UAE aims to double the size of its economy by 2031 and diversify away from hydrocarbons.

«In order to do that, we need %7 GDP growth every year,» H.E. Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri, UAE Minister of Economy, told Reuters in an interview on the sidelines of the Investopia conference in Abu Dhabi.

«This will come in with all the strategies we have put in place: the impact of the trade agreements, the openness to trade...the aspects of investments seen recently, into the energy transition, for instance, into green hydrogen,» he said.

The UAE's foreign trade hit 2.2 trillion dirhams (599\$ billion) in 2022, up %17 year on year, and it has signed bilateral trade agreements with global partners spanning India, Israel and Indonesia. Talks with Turkey, and others are underway.

The UAE will also host the UN's flagship COP28 climate conference at the end of the year.

«The UAE's strategy is an agile strategy. We are going to see challenges come in to the economy quicker and faster,» H.E. Bin Touq said.

«And we need to find solutions not in government but with the private sector, they have a lot of solutions to these kinds of challenges.»

He added that the re-opening of the Chinese economy could play a «big role» in reducing inflation around the globe, especially on goods and products coming from China, one of the UAE's biggest trade partners.





UAE non-oil foreign trade totals AED 2.233 trillion in 2022 setting new growth record



- **H.E. Bin Touq:** The UAE's non-oil trade growth is a reflection of our wise leadership's forward-looking vision & its approach to openness and expansion of global partnerships
- **H.E. Al Zeyoudi:** The record levels of foreign trade in 2022 will support our efforts to further expand the country's network of strategic trading partners

The UAE's non-oil foreign trade continues to set unprecedented records as it crossed the AED 2 trillion mark for the first time in history and totaled AED 2.233 trillion in 2022, with a 17 per cent growth from that of 2021.

The UAE's non-oil trade performance shifted to a trajectory of unprecedented growth since its recovery from the pandemic's impact, which had adversely affected global trade flows. After dropping to AED 1.496 trillion in 2020 with a 12 per cent decline, the country's non-oil trade jumped 28 per cent in 2021 to touch AED 1.911 trillion, and the rapid growth continued through the year 2022 as well.

According to the latest non-oil foreign trade report issued by the Ministry of Economy, the unprecedented growth figures for the year 2022 are supported by a record growth in non-oil exports. The results underline the success of the national economic diversification agendas as well as the strategy to expand the network of trading partners. Moreover, the national non-oil exports set a new record in 2022 as their value touched AED 366 billion for the first time in history, with a six per cent year-over-year growth, 38 per cent compared to that of 2020, and 52 per cent compared to that of 2019. The country's non-oil exports along with its top 10 largest trade partners registered a seven per cent growth. Gold, aluminum, oils, and cigarettes also maintained their position at the forefront of the country's most prominent exports. Iron exports registered the highest growth in 2022, followed by jewelry.

The contribution of non-oil national exports to the UAE's total foreign trade was 16.4 per cent. In addition, imports and re-exports also recorded significant growth.

H.E. Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy, emphasized that the UAE's outstanding non-oil foreign trade performance is a translation of the forward-looking vision of the wise leadership and its approach to openness and cooperation with the rest of the world to drive sustainable economic growth.



H.E. Bin Touq said: "The UAE continues to achieve unprecedented growth in the field of non-oil trade despite global predictions of a slowdown. This confirms the effectiveness of the country's development vision, particularly the expansion of strategic partner network, which has clearly had a tremendous impact on the growth of national non-oil exports."

H. E. added: "The significant growth in the UAE's foreign trade confirms that we are on the right track towards doubling the GDP to reach AED 3 trillion by 2030. Trade remains at the heart of this strategy."

H.E. Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, said: "The UAE's foreign trade figures for 2022 add significant momentum to our efforts to move forward with the efforts to expand our network of strategic trade partners. These follow the vision and directives of our wise leadership that consider the expansion of the UAE's global economic partnership network as a top priority for 2023. It will also boost our efforts to establish more comprehensive economic partnership agreements (CEPA), building on the UAE's success in establishing three of them - India, Israel and Indonesia - in 2022. Negotiations are ongoing with a more target markets of strategic importance, regionally and globally."

H. E. added: "The UAE looks forward to concluding CEPAs with nations and blocs that together account for 95 per cent of global trade today. This approach will create more growth opportunities for the non-oil trade, in line with the objectives of the 'Projects of the 50' and the 'We The UAE 2031' vision, which target increasing national exports to AED 800 billion. Simultaneously, efforts to strengthen the UAE's position as a global business and investment hub and a destination of choice for talented and innovative individuals will continue."

The total value of the UAE's re-exports exceeded AED 600 billion in 2022 for the first time ever to reach AED 614.6 billion, with a 14 per cent growth. Ten main re-export markets of the country witnessed a sizeable annual growth as they recorded a combined growth of 13 per cent compared to that of 2021, while the rest of the markets accounted for 15 per cent growth. These ten markets include KSA, Iraq, India, Oman, Kuwait, China, USA, Hong Kong and Belgium. Telephones and diamonds were the top re-export items, while aircraft parts, petroleum oils, headphones, and car parts also saw significant growth.

Furthermore, the UAE's imports also set a new record in 2022, surpassing AED 1250 billion for the first time to reach AED 1252.4 with a 22 per cent growth. The country's imports from most of key markets increased in 2022, as the top ten importers to the UAE collectively witnessed a 24 per cent growth. These are China, India, USA, Japan, Turkey, KSA, Italy, Germany, Vietnam, and UK.

The list of UAE's top global trade partners remained the same in 2022, with growth recorded in UAE's total foreign trade with all top partners except Hong Kong. Together, these nations account for 46.8 per cent of the UAE's non-oil trade. China tops the list, followed by India, KSA, USA, Iraq, Switzerland, Japan, Oman, Turkey, and Hong Kong.



FUTURE100 signs new partnerships to support growth of future economy sectors



FUTURE100, the joint initiative between the Ministry of Economy and the Government Development and the Future Office, has attracted new strategic partnerships to support the top 100 emerging companies that contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of future economy sectors, including partnerships with CSR UAE, Microsoft, Careem and FTI Consulting.

H.E. Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy, and H.E. Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi, Minister of State for Government Development and the Future, witnessed the signing of the strategic partnership agreements during the Investopia 2023 Summit, which was held Abu Dhabi.

Competitive incentives

The new partnerships will help achieve the initiative's objectives aimed at enhancing the readiness for the future, strengthening the UAE's position as a destination for new economy companies, encouraging investment in future economy, accelerating business growth in promising new sectors, as well as providing a conducive business environment for the future of the economic sectors.

The first set of partnerships provides competitive advantages, incentives, and facilities to enable entrepreneurs and emerging companies to establish future economy companies, expand their business reaching global markets, and develop their network of relationships for greater opportunities.

The Minister of Economy stated that the Investopia summit supports innovative startups based on modern technology across various sectors, with the aim to solidify the UAE's global position as an attractive destination for future projects and a permanent hub for creativity and innovation. This reflects the directives of the UAE leadership to establish an economic model based on knowledge and innovation, in line with the principles of the 50 and the UAE Centennial 2071 goals.

He added: "The 'Future100' initiative, which was recently launched in collaboration with the Government Development and the Future Office, seeks to support 100 companies that have the potential to shape the UAE's future economy in the coming years. It will achieve this goal by highlighting top 100 emerging companies, annually. Investopia will play a key role in supporting the UAE government's efforts in order to enhance the competitiveness of national future economy sectors. The summit will also contribute to the mobilisation of local and foreign investments, especially in space industries, AI, renewable energy, and others, thus driving the national economy's sustainable development and promoting its global competitiveness."



Readiness for the future

Meanwhile, H.E Al Roumi remarked that FUTURE100 initiative is a proactive step that enhances the future readiness of companies in new sectors, keeping pace with future trends and rapid global transformations.

She affirmed that the UAE has achieved economic excellence for more than half a century thanks to its wise leadership's directives, and today the country is working on designing the future of the new economy to take advantage of promising opportunities and respond to challenges efficiently and quickly leveraging flexible business models, to support creative entrepreneurs, and to accelerate the growth of new sectors.

The Minister further explained that the first list of 100 future companies will be announced on the World Futures Day, which falls on the second of December 2023, coinciding the UAE's National Day. She added that the "FUTURE100 initiative strengthens the UAE's position as a global hub in future economy, to attract leading entrepreneurial projects and global competencies, in line with the directives of the UAE leadership and the 'We the UAE 2031' vision to create success stories in the future economy and export the new economy companies to global markets."

H.E. Al Roumi highlighted the Government Development and the Future Office's role in working with its strategic partners to achieve the initiative's vision to create an incubating environment for the future economy and provide promising future opportunities for companies in new sectors.

Nuha Safar, Director of CSR UAE, said, "The CSR vision is to make the UAE a global driver of Sustainable Impact. The heart of a sustainable country and economy predominantly comes from the sustainability of its businesses. Building on the announcement of the Year of Sustainability, we are committed to advancing the agenda of supporting SMEs towards a sustainable future, designing frameworks to recognise and accelerate these businesses through Future 100."

Naim Yazbeck, General Manager of Microsoft UAE, stated, "we are honoured to become part of this initiative. Start-ups are vital for the professional development of the UAE: they foster innovation, create jobs, and contribute to the diversification of the economy. At Microsoft, we have been supporting budding enterprises through a variety of tools as well as tailored skilling and learning programs for decades and initiatives such as the FUTURE100 Partnership help bring a real sense of scale to these efforts. We look forward to the great innovation that will come out of this programme."

Mudassir Sheikha, CEO and Co-Founder at Careem, commented, "The Future 100 initiative is creating opportunities for entrepreneurs to solve big problems and drive impact in important economic sectors such as emerging technology. These efforts will make the UAE an even more competitive destination for entrepreneurship and help unlock potential and nurture innovation in support of building a secure future for the region. Careem is proud to support the initiative by providing mentorship and access to the Careem platform."

Vikas Papiwal Senior Managing Director, Leader of FTI Consulting Middle East and Africa, said, "As an inaugural partner of the "Future 100" initiative we are proud to continue our commitment to the UAE. The UAE is leading the way in shaping the future economy and we are happy to play our part in this journey. At FTI Consulting, we pride ourselves on being experts with impact. As a partner of Future100 we look forward to using our expertise as a catalyst for the growth of 'Future economy' SMEs in the UAE."

FUTURE100 initiative aims to support the new economic sectors that will shape the national future economy, including the start-ups sector due to its contribution to the national economy and being one of the main goals on the UAE government's main agenda. The initiative also celebrates the successes of the private sector in the UAE being a pivotal partner in the development process.

The 'FUTURE100' initiative is open to companies and entrepreneurs who wish to benefit from it. Applications can be submitted by visiting the website

<http://future100.ae/> before June 30, 2023. The evaluation process will begin at a later stage.



Reflecting the success of UAE's efforts to support future industries & accelerating the development of an economy based on knowledge and innovation

NextGenFDI initiative attracts nine new global tech companies to the UAE

H.E. Al Zeyoudi: The move confirms the confidence of global companies in the UAE economy and reflects the progress made by the initiative, confirming its role in strengthening the country's technology ecosystem.

The Ministry of Economy announced that nine new global companies have joined the NextGenFDI initiative, which was launched by the UAE government in July 2022 with an aim to attract 300 digitally enabled companies that focus on advanced technology applications in various sectors. The initiative supports these companies' expansion in the country and is set to boost the national economy with nearly USD 500 million.

H.E. Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, said: "The move confirms the confidence of global companies in the UAE economy and reflects the progress made by the initiative, confirming its key role in strengthening the UAE's advanced technology ecosystem, which is one of the main pillars of the country's new economic model based on knowledge and innovation, in light of the determinants of the UAE Centennial 2071.

H.E. added: "Since launching NextGenFDI, we have received unprecedented interest from businesses across the world that recognize the dynamism of our ecosystem, from rapid set-up options and light-touch regulation to high-quality workforce and supportive, compatible business networks. We welcome these exciting new companies and look forward to supporting the next stage of their growth journeys."

The latest cohort, which includes Tickets Marche Company, Kasta, The Datafirm, Flyby, Mazarine Group, Polygon, BHAG, HPS, and YuanLi Group, will benefit from an array of incentives and benefits offered by the NextGenFDI initiative. These include support in establishing their new headquarters; support for the smooth and rapid transition of management and employees, in addition to support in obtaining the necessary financing; and rental and housing incentives - all of which contribute to their expansion in the UAE market. The nine new companies also reflect the broad scope and ambition of the initiative, and underline the success of the UAE's efforts to foster future industries in a sustainable manner. For instance, the Mazarine Group, which was established in Paris 40 years ago, is a global independent creative and technology company that develops digital solutions for luxury brands in Europe, US, Japan and China.

HPS is an international cards and payments technology company with more than 450 clients in 90 countries. Their proprietary PowerCARD software is increasingly seen as the future for the payments industry, while their PowerCARD suite is fully integrated with all international payment networks, and supports all major back-office payments functions. TicketsMarche, meanwhile, is an e-commerce platform for the entertainment sector that enables users to buy and sell event tickets, while also generating data to enhance venue operation through predictive analysis.

In blockchain, Polygon is a world leading blockchain platform that creates a multichain blockchain ecosystem compatible with Ethereum, using a proof-of-stake consensus mechanism for processing transactions on-chain while deriving its security from Ethereum. Kasta, founded in 2022, is a platform that works with digital banks across Europe to enable cryptocurrencies to become an accessible, easy-to-use payment method for daily transactions. The DATAfirm have created a proprietary system to make sense of multiple databases and information sources in the public domain to provide a holistic understanding of an environment or ecosystem, including individuals, consumption traits, cultural aspects, social behaviour, attitudinal triggers and so on. Their process allows researchers, businesses, analysts, students and policymakers to discern real trends, habits and patterns from a 100-percent GDPR-compliant 'real-virtual' people database.



UAE-based FlyBy, which has just closed a US\$1 million seed round led by Silicon Valley's FHS Capital and London's VN2 Capital, is scaling a novel business model that unlocks new out-of-home advertising revenue streams via networks of delivery drivers.

Beijing-based Yuanli Group is a leading education technology company whose solutions are designed to create inclusive, equitable education. The Group has the world's largest ed-tech R&D team and has developed a number of AI-based educational technologies. The Group not only provides technological solutions for schools and districts to achieve digital upgrade and large-scale personalized teaching and learning, but also equips individual customers with digital tools and resources to enjoy an intelligent learning experience.

Meanwhile, BHAG provides solutions for Industry 4.0 by optimizing the manufacturing process and are also planning to manufacture hardware in the UAE. They have approximately 50 strong software engineers that they are aiming to bring to the UAE.

Vitalii Haleliuka, Co-founder of BHAG Digital, said the NextGenFDI program was instrumental in helping BHAG Digital establish and grow the company's operations in the UAE. "By streamlining the company formation process and providing access to a wide range of resources and partners, this national program has enabled us to speed up our innovation processes and bring our vision for sustainable digital industrialization using Industry 4.0 technologies to life. We are committed to supporting the UAE's vision for sustainability, and we believe that our solutions will help build a more sustainable industry. We are grateful for the support of the Ministry of Economy and the NextGenFDI program, and we look forward to continuing to collaborate and innovate with the government and our partners in the UAE."

Jean-Laurent Vilon, Mazarine's Managing Director for Middle East, China & APAC, believes the UAE was the obvious destination for its next global step. "Mazarine Group has been a leader in luxury communication for the past 35 years in Europe, US and Asia Pacific. It was natural that our next expansion hub will be in Middle East and NexGenFDI was the perfect platform for us to consider Dubai. With a focus on fashion and arts, we will offer in our new Dubai office a fresh 360 luxury perspective in digital, social, strategy, content, events and smart retail."

Habeeb Nizamudin, CEO of TheDATAFirm, commented: "The #NextGenFDI team has been an incredible asset in our journey to establish our global headquarters in UAE. From their welcoming and accommodating nature to their proactive efforts in connecting us with potential partners and identifying government departments that can benefit from our revolutionary Zero PII Micro-Universe Dataset in achieving Vision 2030 objectives, the team has provided unparalleled support. Their guidance on various matters has been invaluable, making our experience truly amazing."

Mohamed Sirag, CCO and Managing Director of Ticketsmarche, stated; "We are proud to be part of the Next-Gen FDI initiative launched by the Ministry of Economy. The transparent and seamless incorporation procedure has made our journey smooth and quick. The world-class infrastructure, the expanding economy and political stability made our decision to start a new chapter in the Emirates an easy one."

Mr. Xin LI, President of Yuanli Group, said, "The NextGenFDI Initiative is an innovative attempt to explore new models for the digital economy, and will attract and foster leading players in every aspect of the digital sector. It is our honor to join NextGenFDI Initiative as a key member. With digitalization becoming a strong driving force in education development globally, we will dedicate our expertise to promoting the digitalization of education in the UAE. This strategic cooperation between Yuanli Group and the UAE will not only strengthen global education collaboration, but also set an example of sharing technological achievements for empowering education."

Saher Khattab, Head of Marketing and Business Development at Flyby said: "Flyby's smart delivery box and cloud platform adds value to last-mile delivery by turning bikes into digital billboards. Our partnership with NextGenFDI is crucial for Flyby to reach key partners and scale our digital product in a leading digital economy. We're thrilled to be among the vanguard of companies in the NextGenFDI program and aim to build the future of last-mile delivery in the UAE, with plans for global expansion."

Carl Roegind, CEO of Kasta, said, "Kasta is excited to embrace the opportunity provided by the Ministry of Economy to us to be part of the NextGenFDI initiative. The UAE has created an environment and infrastructure that nurtures innovation and provides many economic benefits for technology companies. Kasta leverages the latest digital technologies to deliver a fast and easy-to-use virtual asset payments platform. We look forward to extending our operations and services in the UAE which is in line with our goal of becoming a global leader in Virtual Asset payments."



Ministry of Economy launches six new initiatives during UAE Innovation Month 2023

H.E. Bin Touq: The Ministry's initiatives this year are designed to promote innovation culture within the government sector

The Ministry of Economy announced the launch of six new and diverse initiatives in connection with the UAE Innovation Month 2023. The initiatives are designed to support the national efforts to establish a culture of innovation across all segments of society and motivate them to come up with innovations in priority sectors. These efforts align with the objectives of the national strategies for innovation and advanced innovation and the UAE's transition to a knowledge-based, competitive economy.

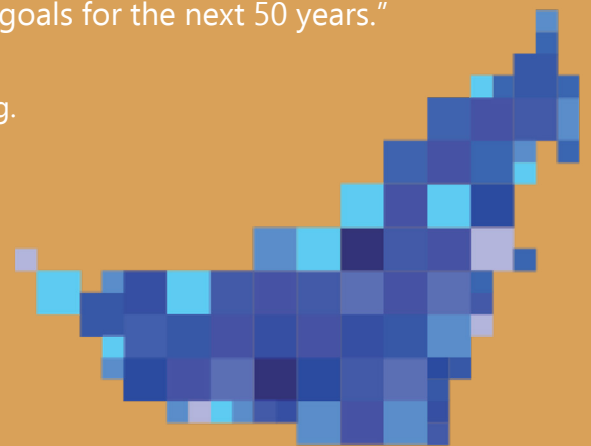
H.E. Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy, said: "Thanks to the vision and directives of our wise leadership, the UAE today has an advanced innovation and creativity environment, characterized by integrated policies, institutions and pioneering digital infrastructure. The UAE sees innovation as one of the key pillars for achieving sustainable development and transitioning to new economy sectors."

H.E. added: "The innovative initiatives launched by the Ministry in connection with this year's Innovation Month will contribute to strengthening the UAE's government innovation ecosystem; empowering national talent in the fields of innovation and creativity; encouraging individuals and institutions to think out of the box; and increasing the number of new business ventures. They will help solidify the UAE's position as a regional and global destination for development based on knowledge and innovation, and will nurture and attract talent in line with the goals for the next 50 years."

The innovative initiatives launched by the Ministry are the following.

1. The Minister of Economy Award for Innovation

The 'Minister of Economy Award for Innovation' raises awareness on the importance of innovation and promotes competitiveness among the Ministry's employees and customers. The award is set to attract extensive participation and will serve the Ministry's fields of work by proposing innovative projects that have the potential to address challenges. It encourages employees to develop online and smart services for the public, thus catalyzing innovation within the work environment and taking advantage of in-house talent. The Ministry further revealed that a new category, namely 'Innovative Leader,' has been added to the award.



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2. Strategic retreat for innovative transformational projects

The Ministry's Strategy and Future Department has launched a strategic retreat aimed at attracting ideas for transformational projects for the World Futures Day. It is set to increase the number of innovative projects in the country's priority sectors, promoting the culture of innovation, and transferring skills and innovative knowledge to the community.

3. Digital platform for startups and business incubators in the country

The digital platform launched by the Ministry for startups and business incubators in the country targets several sectors including artificial intelligence and advanced technology. It is designed to facilitate access for investors and businessmen to an integrated database that can help them identify investment opportunities in startups.

4. Participation in the sixth edition of UAE Hackathon

As part of its activities during the UAE Innovation Month 2023, the Ministry of Economy participated in the sixth edition of the 'UAE Hackathon' in cooperation with the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA). The hackathon featured the participation of school and university students, in addition to entrepreneurs and researchers. Besides, it saw unique and practical solutions and innovative projects being presented in digital and technological sectors. The Ministry began accepting applications for participation in the 'UAE Hackathon 2023' from the beginning of the Innovation Month.

5. New partnerships under NextGenFDI initiative

The fifth initiative is aimed at expanding the network of partnerships under NextGenFDI initiative by forging new partnerships with targeted international companies in fields related to innovation, technology, and the new economy.

6. Dialogue session with owners of innovative projects

The sixth initiative is a dialogue session with the owners of innovative projects to support them and help them overcome the obstacles and challenges they face. The initiative will enable them to share their success stories, experiences and expertise in the fields of entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity with the Ministry employees. It comes on the heels of the one-year sabbatical initiative that was introduced to encourage the UAE's federal government employees to pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

In addition, the Ministry will organize a series of visits for its employees to the Museum of the Future in order to motivate them to innovate and create; think outside the box; and develop their sense of innovation and creativity; apart from awarding cash prizes to innovative employees.





Ministry of Economy highlights new commercial agency law and its role in propelling business environment in UAE

H.E. Al Saleh: The law gives UAE nationals the opportunity to take part in a wide range of agency operations. It further strengthens the UAE's position as a favored destination for leading regional and international investment



H.E. Abdulla Al Saleh, Under Secretary of the Foreign Trade and Industry at the UAE Ministry of Economy, emphasized that the UAE is determined to foster the attractiveness and competitiveness of the business environment in order to keep pace with the future economic trends.

The UAE further aims to offer a legislative framework that will enable companies that promote the new economic model, particularly the commercial agencies sector. With innovative projects and crucial commercial activities, this sector significantly contributed to the country's development during the past several years. This allowed for the availability of a variety of services and goods for local markets, which improved the reputation of the national economy.

This was stated by H.E. during a press conference to introduce the Federal Law No. 3 of 2022 on regulating commercial agencies. "The new Law, which replaces the previous 40-year-long legislation, aims to accelerate the growth of commercial agencies in the nation by diversifying their activities, improving their economic performance, and increasing their contribution to the growth of the national GDP in accordance with the principles of the 50 and the UAE Centennial 2071," he said.

He added: "The Ministry of Economy has collaborated with all of its federal and local partners, the corporate sector, and other pertinent organizations over the recent time. Following the constitutional processes established after the enactment of the nation's federal legislation, they further discussed the revised law in the UAE Federal National Council. These initiatives attempt to ensure an optimum legislation that would best benefit the nation's economy, satisfy the goals of the current commercial agencies, encourage the nation's economy's flexibility, and support its openness to foreign markets."



H.E. Al Saleh emphasized that the significance of the Federal Decree Law on regulating commercial agencies stems from its provisions, which are based on the principle of autonomy/will and that the contract is indeed a *pacta sunt servanda*. "This creates an environment that is favorable for investment and safeguards the rights of parties per their agreement," he said, adding that the law would contribute to increasing national investments and DFI to the country. "The law will further allow the businesses of commercial agencies to grow and prosper, by diversifying their activities, thereby ensuring the best products and services for consumers, and fulfilling their ambitions for competitive prices and high-level services. The law will further offer guarantees and after-sale services as well as creating new job opportunities in the country," His Excellency added.

Moreover, the new law allows the broad participation of UAE nationals as commercial agents, offering them an encouraging environment to establish new and innovative commercial and investment projects. The law will accordingly promote the flexibility of the national economy and enhance its international competitiveness, as well as consolidating the UAE's position as a favored destination for top regional and international companies and trademarks.

H.E Al Saleh further highlighted key provisions of the new law, ensuring the proactive approach of the country as follows:

- The new law allows public joint-stock companies with at least 51% of national capital contribution to act as commercial agents, with the business of commercial agencies being exclusive to only UAE nationals in all kinds of agencies. This will contribute to creating new opportunities and fields for family companies owning commercial agencies, supporting their transformation to public joint-stock companies.
- The new law stipulates a clause to specify the length of the agency contract in the event that the agent is asked to develop exhibition structures, retail establishments for goods, or maintenance or repair facilities. The duration of the contract will be for five years, unless the parties agree otherwise.



- The law provides the UAE Cabinet with the authority to allow any international companies to act as agents for their own products, as long as the products do not have/had an agent within the country.
- The law prohibits practicing agency in the country, unless registered in the commercial agencies' records in the Ministry of Economy. Any non-registered agency is not counted.
- The new law determines specific termination clauses. This benefits the national economy and ensures that consumers receive the best products and services at fair prices from current and prospective agents, such as national companies, who are anticipated to enter the market. The law also pushes representatives to improve their work in order to maintain the relationship.
- The law develops a set of controls and provisions for expiry of commercial agency and the duration of notification (a year or half of the remaining contract period, whichever is less, unless otherwise is agreed upon). The law further organizes the devolution of the commercial agency's assets, with recognition of the right to claim just compensation, per specific and clear terms.
- The new law addresses the disruption of goods and services in the case of dispute between the agent and the client, ensuring uninterrupted access of products and services to the country during the dispute. It also grants the Ministry of Economy the authority to assign specific resources for to enter products and services for interim period, with indemnities extended to the commercial agent for any compensation constructed with irrevocable court verdicts to his favor holding as well the principle accountable to collect the remedies..
- The formation of commercial agency committee by the decision of the UAE Cabinet. The committee will be specialized in resolving the dispute between the registered agency parties. Before presenting the matter to the Committee, it cannot be admitted in court.
- The law introduces a new mechanism to resolve disputes between parties by agreeing to go to arbitration, whenever agreed by the two parties.
- Per the recommendation of the Minister of Economy and in coordination with the specialized entities, the law allows the Cabinet to release any activities or materials from the agencies in accordance with the specific regulations, under the condition that the Cabinet will set a date to edit these activities or materials.

Moreover, His Excellency emphasized that the Federal Law on the regulation of commercial agencies targets various categories that will benefit from its provisions and outcomes, including national business owners, companies, and entrepreneurs, as well as local and international commercial agencies wishing to relocate their activities to the UAE, and local and foreign investors.

He also noted that the law comes into force six months after its proclamation in the official gazette, which kicks in June 16th, 2023. However, reiterating the termination provisions regarding the current agency contract in the instances respectively of non renewal, or termination for convenience will not imminently apply. However, it applies as the following:

- o After two years for existing agency contracts.
- o After ten years for contracts been already existing with the same agent for the past 10 years since they were registered or where the size of the agent's investment exceeded AED 100 million, thereby protecting stability and national investments in this vital sector.

Al Saleh concluded his statement by emphasizing that the law is a new landmark in the future legislative structure initiated by the country to increase national and foreign investments. The law further guarantees the best services for consumers, hence ensuring the sustainable development of the national economy and enhancing the country's position as an attractive hub for future economic models.



H.E. Al Zeyoudi highlights UAE's leadership in trade as key to nation's rise in Global Soft Power Index

Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, highlighted the UAE's leading role in facilitating global trade and advocating multilateralism in a post-Covid world.

H.E. Al Zeyoudi affirmed that these two main factors among others, contributed to the UAE's leading position as a key player in international trade, adding that the increasing influence of the country in the world, comes as a consequence of the swift rebound of the travel and tourism sector, and its ongoing efforts to support energy transition across the developing world.

During a one-on-one panel session at the Global Soft Power Summit 2023, H.E. Al Zeyoudi underlined that the UAE's positive reputation over the last 50 years is a clear reflection of its ambitious and outward-looking development, engagement with the world through trade and investment and its leading position as a preferred destination for talents, businesses, institutions and companies around the world.

At the Brand Finance's annual event held in London, H.E. Al Zeyoudi affirmed that the UAE is a global gateway that believes in collaboration, cooperation and knowledge exchange as the main factors for economic and social growth.

H.E. Al Zeyoudi said, "Trade has had an indelible impact on our soft power. Located at a strategic global crossroads, the UAE is one of the world's most connected countries and act as a vital bridge for many nation's products on key East-West, North-South trade routes. This role is reflected in the value of re-exports, which hit a record US\$167 billion in 2022. Importantly, we continue to advocate for open, rules-based trade as a means of catalysing inclusive, broad-based growth, especially in developing countries."

"Whether through our Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements, our new Trade Tech Initiative launched in partnership with the World Economic Forum, or by hosting the World Trade Organisation's MC13 in February next year, we are now an active player in the development of a modern, digitally enabled trading system that can secure supply chains and stimulate the flow of goods and services around the world," he added.

Dr. Al Zeyoudi also highlighted how the UAE's energy transition agenda reflects the countries commitment in developing pioneering solutions in solar power and carbon capture, in addition to helping other countries in terms of adopting sustainable and renewable energy.

He noted that the UAE's track record in energy transition is unrivalled in the region, pointing out the markable increase in its renewable energy capacity over the last 10 years, and the production of the cheapest commercial-scale solar power on the planet.

H.E. Al Zeyoudi said that the country is supporting renewable energy projects around the world, investing US\$50 billion in 70 nations across six continents – from onshore wind farms in Egypt to floating solar plants in Indonesia.

"As the host of COP28 in November 2023, the UAE now has the platform and the credibility to lead this essential mission at a global level," he concluded.





Ministry of Economy reviews new Commercial Transactions Law and its role in supporting & developing UAE's business environment

H.E. Al Saleh: The new law forms the basis of commercial legislation, through which we aim to further enhance the competitiveness of the economy and stimulate investment

The Ministry of Economy (MoE) held a media briefing, to introduce the Federal Decree Law No. 50 of 2022 on Commercial Transactions in the UAE. The session was led by H.E. Abdullah Al Saleh, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy, and witnessed the participation of H.E. Ibrahim Al Zaabi, Assistant Governor of the UAE Central Bank for Monetary Policy and Financial Stability; and H.E. Dr. Maryam Al Suwaidi, CEO of the Securities and Commodities Authority (SCA).

Addressing the media, H.E. Al Saleh said that the development of the business sector is a strategic goal for the UAE government and therefore, ensuring a legislative environment that stimulates the sector's growth is on top of its priorities.

H.E. Al Saleh explained: "The issuance of this new law, developed by the Ministry in cooperation with its partners, replaces the previous legislation that remained in effect for nearly 30 years, and forms part of the comprehensive legislative reform undertaken by the UAE government. The law aims to advance the transition to the new economic model and impart increased levels of flexibility and competitiveness to the UAE's business climate. These developments will help us address the demands of the future in a way that contributes to achieving the objectives of the 50 and the determinants of the UAE Centennial 2071."

In addition, H.E. Al Saleh confirmed that the Federal Decree-Law on Commercial Transactions is a new milestone in the development of the legislative system to protect and develop the business environment in the country. He then pointed out that the law will facilitate the conduct of business in the country, facilitate commercial transactions and contracts, enhance their efficiency, reduce the cost of doing business, and enhance commercial stability. Besides, it establishes a dynamic and fertile investment environment that encourages domestic and foreign investment flows, boosts investor confidence in the UAE's business climate, and attracts investments. This in turn will contribute to increasing the number of companies, business establishments, traders, investors and entrepreneurs in the country's markets.

Furthermore, the Undersecretary pointed out that the law supports the UAE's commercial interests and enhances compliance with the demands of global trade, thus reinforcing the UAE's position on the global trade landscape. It helps keep up with international best practices followed in the field of commercial transactions while also ensuring the transparency of these practices.





Saleh added that the law is capable of contributing to raising the UAE's rankings on relevant economic competitiveness indices such as the Global Competitiveness Report and the Ease of Doing Business Report, as well as accelerating digital transformation of the UAE's business sector. Moreover, it strengthens the UAE's position as a hub for business activities in the fields of technology, innovation, and new economy.

During the briefing session, H.E. Al Saleh highlighted the most prominent provisions and outputs of the new law that confirm the proactive approach of the UAE. These are as follows:

- With regard to the part related to commercial transactions:
 - o Defines the general axes of commercial business as opposed to the specialized commercial federal laws that establish the detailed provisions that apply in this regard, in accordance with the nature of the activities and the businesses regulating them.
 - o Allows new age groups to practice business as it reduces the age of legal capacity from 21 to 18 (Gregorian years) to practice business. This will encourage youth participation in the business sector.
 - o Enhances opportunities for women to participate in economic and commercial activities, thus enabling them to be major partners in the sustainable economic and social development of the UAE.

The Undersecretary explained that the Decree-Law targets a large segment of society, traders, investors, owners of foreign companies, owners of commercial projects and companies, banks and financial institutions, and dealers in commercial papers such as checks within the UAE, and contractors who take up commercial contracts such as transportation and storage activities. He underlined that the law establishes a legal reference that is the first of its kind in the region, pointing out that the UAE is one of the first countries to develop legislation to govern commercial activities that use modern technology, which is a move that supports the country's aspirations to transition to the new economy. The law:

- o Introduces the virtual business system, the commercial store, and commercial transactions through modern technology and those conducted via virtual means, in addition to those presented in traditional ways.
- o Considers the delivery of services and practice of business activities related to virtual assets as virtual businesses, and the Cabinet shall issue legislation regulating virtual assets and their providers.
- o Gives authenticity to virtual businesses so that the same provisions apply to similar ones presented in a real manner.
- o Legitimizes and authenticates real and virtual commercial books.
- o Allows sale of movables instead of used movables by public auction and makes bids available through a licensed online platform or through various modern technology means.

H.E. Al Saleh indicated that the law also features the addition of an article on some global sales. The article allows the parties to agree on the validity of the rules regulating international commercial sales issued by the International Chamber of Commerce, instead of the texts contained in the law.

He indicated that the provisions of the law are in line with the UAE Digital Government Strategy, the National Policy for Quality of Digital Life, and the UAE's Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Strategy, thus strengthening the position of the UAE as a global hub for 4IR tools. It also aligns with the export development policy as it provides a fertile environment for the growth and expansion of national goods and commodities in global markets. Moreover, it is also in alignment with the National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031, and the National Food Security Strategy 2051.

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy concluded the speech by adding that the law marks an accelerated shift towards establishing a legislative structure capable of attracting more domestic and foreign investments; driving economic diversification; providing the best services to consumers; and increasing job opportunities in the country. which contributes to raising the classification of the UAE on competitiveness economic indicators such as the Global Competitiveness Report and the Ease of Doing Business Report, as well as accelerating digital transformation in the economy and strengthening the UAE's position as a center for business activities in the areas of technology, innovation, and the digital and new economy.



H.E. Ibrahim Al Zaabi, Assistant Governor of the UAE Central Bank for Monetary Policy and Financial Stability, indicated that the law has created a legal reference for commercial transactions for banking institutions. This could help stimulate investment flows and give businesses a broader margin for growth and competition, which will enhance the flexibility of the national economy and support its competitiveness.

The law has the potential to achieve these goals as it:

- Reduces the maximum interest rate on a commercial loan, if not stipulated in the contract, to 9 per cent instead of 12 per cent, and prohibits compound interest. This will enhance the investment environment in the country.
- Obligates banks to obtain sufficient insurance or guarantees in return for the loans they provide in a first-of-its-kind precedent, contrary to the abolished law's permissibility of obtaining appropriate guarantees in exchange for loans. Thus this provision of the new law is integrated and consistent with the updated text by Central Bank Act (No. 121 bis).
- Reduces the decline of entrepreneurs and individual institutions as it prevents overburdening them with installments that are disproportionate to their income levels and increases their ability to pay back. This enhances the effectiveness of the Central Bank's actions regarding the regulation of facilities granted to persons and the reduction of the decline rate among clients.
- Approves the UCP issued by the International Chamber of Commerce and considers them as part of the special system for documentary credits in the country.

Furthermore, H.E. Al Zaabi emphasized that the law supports Islamic banking in the country, thus making it one of the key drivers of growth and enhancing the leadership of the UAE on the Islamic economy map, by:

- Introducing a chapter on commercial transactions for Islamic banking institutions as the first commercial codification of Islamic financial transactions to regulate contractual relations between their parties, enhance the stability of their transactions, protect their clients, and regulate Islamic business transactions through legislative means and not within an agreement governed by fatwas and provisions issued by specialized agencies.
- Commercial transactions, in addition to any transaction under which any applicable legislation is subject to Islamic Sharia, shall be subject to Islamic Sharia as long as they are conducted through an Islamic financial institution.
- Introducing special provisions for certain types of contracts and obligations to which Islamic financial institutions are a party, such as the contracts as a promise, Murabaha, and Istisnaa financing.





Ministry of Economy imposes fines worth AED 22.6 million on 29 DNFBP companies

Punitive measures aimed at creating a safe business environment and enhancing the competitiveness of national economy

The Ministry of Economy imposed fines worth AED 22.6 million on 29 companies operating in the UAE's designated non-financial business or professions (DNFBP) sector for failure to comply with the anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) legislation. The initiative falls in line with the Ministry's efforts to ensure the sector's full compliance with the provisions stipulated by Federal Decree-Law No. 20 of 2018 on anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism and illegal organizations and its executive regulations and related laws. Adherence to the law is necessary to ensure the country's full compliance with the international standards issued by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

The Ministry revealed that a total of 225 violations committed by the violators were found, including failure to adopt necessary measures and procedures to identify the risks of crime in their field of work. These companies failed to establish internal policies and procedures to check customer databases and transactions against names mentioned on the terrorism list, which was issued under the provisions of Cabinet Resolution No. 74 for 2020 on the UAE's list of terrorists. It was issued in implementation of the UN Security Council decisions on the prevention and combating of terrorism financing, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the relevant resolutions. The Ministry revealed that violators include 17 companies engaged in precious metals and gems-related activities, four corporate service providers and two auditing service companies.

H.E. Abdullah Sultan Al Fan Al Shamsi, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy for the Control and Follow-up Sector and chairman of the committee for the imposition of fines on violators, said: "The imposition of fines on violators is in line with the Ministry of Economy's strategies and efforts as the authority responsible for the supervision of the DNFBP sector and ensuring its full compliance with the legislation."

He added: "The Ministry of Economy is intensifying field inspections on high-risk companies in all emirates of the country. Simultaneously, our work teams are providing intensive awareness and training support to the sector's companies."

He emphasized that adherence and compliance to the legislation are non-negotiables in the Ministry of Economy's policies and plans for the sector. Full compliance to the AML/CFT legislation is imperative to establish a safe business environment in the country that is free of money laundering and terrorism financing risks. It is a national priority that will contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of the UAE economy at regional and global levels, he added.

Furthermore, Safeya Al Safi, Director of the Anti-Money Laundering Department at the Ministry of Economy, said: "The Ministry is absolutely determined to implement our annual inspection targets for the DNFBP sector. To achieve this goal in a timely manner, we have doubled the number of field inspectors needed to prepare technical inspection reports and submit them to the Investigation and Enforcement Department, to take necessary measures regarding the imposition of deterrent measures including fines."



She added that the department's work teams continue to effectively carry out intensive desk and substantive inspections in line with the inspection plan for 2023.

Meanwhile, Counselor Salem Al Tunaiji, Head of the Investigation and Enforcement Department and member of the Administrative Penalties Committee at the Ministry of Economy, explained that the Committee imposes fines in accordance with the legislation in force and according to a specific work methodology.

He added that there are more reports that are currently being studied by the Investigation and Enforcement Department, and that such punitive measures will continue to be implemented in order to establish a safe economic environment in the country, which is free of money laundering and terrorism financing crimes.

Al Tunaiji further pointed out the need for DNFBP companies to visit the Anti-Money Laundering Department's website in order to learn more the legislation, circulars and guidelines. These will help them better understand their obligations to ensure compliance in accordance with local and international requirements.

The Ministry added that adherence and compliance are necessary for its policies and plans to reach a compatible and safe business environment from money laundering and terrorist financing crimes, which is a national priority.





Arab League Economic Council welcomes the UAE's 'Arab Food Market' initiative

H.E. Al Kait: The UAE supports the efforts of other Arab economies to transition to future economy

The Economic and Social Council of the Arab League welcomed the UAE's 'Arab Food Market' initiative, recognizing its key role in promoting Arab cooperation in the field of digital economy. This took place at the Council's 111th session, which was held at the headquarters of the League's General Secretariat in Cairo.

The UAE delegation that attended the session was led by H.E. Juma Muhammad Al Kait, Assistant Undersecretary for International Trade Affairs at the Ministry of Economy. The meeting discussed new mechanisms to enhance economic and social development frameworks in Arab nations.

H.E. Al Kait said: "The UAE continues to support joint action and cooperation among Arab countries in various fields. These efforts fall in line with our wise leadership's directives that highlight the need to achieve sustainable economic and social development goals in all Arab countries. We believe it is key to ensuring the prosperity and development of our people."

He explained that the 'Arab Food Market' initiative forms part of the UAE's efforts to achieve the shared Arab vision for digital economy, launched by H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE. Furthermore, H.E. underlined that the initiative is one of the main drivers for the Arab world's transition to future economy, especially as it establishes a broad alliance between the public and private sectors and the technology sector to establish a digital virtual market for foodstuff. Administrative and technological solutions can be found on this platform for transactions related to export activities of food commodities.

Pointing out that the initiative was announced in Abu Dhabi in January 2023 in partnership with the Arab Federation for Digital Economy, H.E. said it will contribute to creating digital interdependence between Arab markets. The initiative will also help them develop their competitive capabilities. The UAE remains committed to strengthening cooperation among Arab countries to set clear mechanisms for the initiative's implementation, he noted.

Moreover, H.E. Al Kait highlighted the need to create more flexible paths to enhance cooperation and economic integration in the Arab world, which is necessary to drive intraregional trade flows. He elaborated on the importance of continuing efforts to establish the Arab customs union within the framework of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area to help drive the sustainable growth of Arabic economies.

The meeting also saw the Assistant Undersecretary affirms the UAE's commitment to supporting the transition of Arab economies to future economic models, focusing on the sectors of entrepreneurship, innovative start-ups, and new economy. The transition is key to driving economic diversification, he said, emphasizing the UAE's readiness to share its pioneering experience in various fields.

In addition, H.E. Al Kait emphasized the importance of Arab League's Economic and Social Council as an important platform for discussing developments in the region, developing solutions to the challenges it faces, and preparing future strategies. He pointed out the need to work on joint projects and initiatives that support Arab economies and enhance their growth. He also affirmed the UAE's support for the session's outcomes.

Apart from the discussion on the UAE's 'Arab Food Market,' the agenda of the session included a review of developments in Arab cooperation, developments in the establishment of Arab customs union; joint plans in the social and development fields, and mechanisms to stimulate investment in Arab countries. The preparations for holding the fifth session of the Arab Development Summit in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in November 2023 were also discussed.



H.E. Bin Touq explores collaboration with World Economic Forum in new economy fields & sustainable development at World Government Summit

UAE's new economic model and its future vision highlighted during the meeting



H.E. Abdulla Bin Touq, Minister of Economy, held a bilateral meeting with Saadia Zahidi, Managing Director at the World Economic Forum (WEF), with an aim to strengthen collaboration between the UAE government and WEF in the fields of new economy and sustainable development. The achievement of this goal will support the UAE ambitions to transition into a more flexible and diversified new economic model and achieve the SDGs.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the World Government Summit (WGS) 2023, which kicked off in Dubai on February 13 under the theme 'Shaping Future Governments.'

H.E. Bin Touq said: "The World Government Summit emphasizes the UAE's key role on a global level, its effective contributions to realizing global visions and finding innovative solutions to help governments around the world achieve sustainable development and face various challenges." He pointed out that the UAE has adopted bold steps to establish a competitive, sustainable, and flexible national economy, and has a highly favorable business environment that offers opportunities for investment and innovative business models. These developments stem from the country's vision for the future and an integrated national strategy to cement the UAE's position as a thriving global hub for trade and investments and the capital of future economy.

The Minister of Economy further highlighted the fundamentals of the UAE's new economic model, and its agenda for the next stage. These objectives are evident in the Projects of the 50, ambitious national strategies, and an array of national programs and initiatives, as well as the priority sectors identified by the trade and investment agenda.

The meeting further addressed development opportunities through the implementation of sustainable policies, most notably that of the circular economy. Furthermore, the UAE's efforts in expediting the decarbonization of the energy sector to achieve net-zero by 2050, and the launch of 22 policies by the Circular Economy Policy Committee were also highlighted.

In addition, the meeting discussed various economic shifts at the regional and global levels; opportunities and challenges, and the means to develop more regional and international partnerships that can help achieve the SDGs.



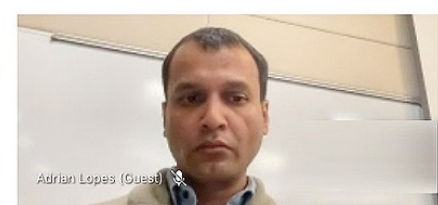
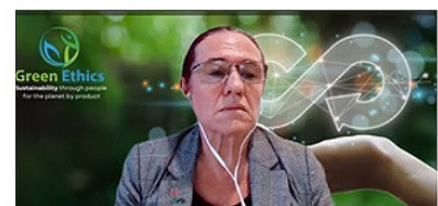
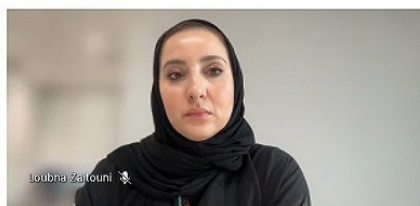
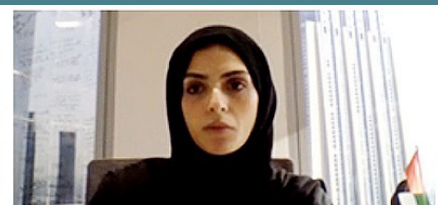
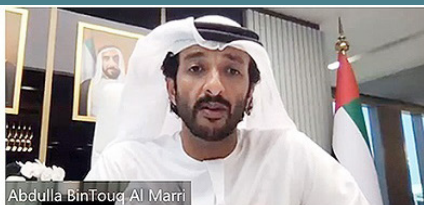
Circular Economy Policy Committee discusses implementation of circular economy initiatives & projects for the year 2023

H.E. Bin Touq: "The UAE has made rapid progress towards the circular economy model. Additionally, the declaration of the 'Year of Sustainability' represents a significant boost to the implementation of the Circular Economy Policy 2031."

H.E. Abdullah Bin Touq Al Marri, UAE Minister of Economy and Head of the Council's Circular Economy Policies Committee, affirmed that the UAE has achieved rapid progress in its transition towards a circular economy model, which is one of the main pillars of the country's vision for the next 50 years, in accordance with the directives and vision of its wise leadership.

This came during the first meeting of the Circular Economy Policy Committee of the UAE Circular Economy Council, chaired by H.E. Bin Touq. The committee discussed strategies for implementing circular economy policies in the country for 2023, as well as ways to improve collaboration between the relevant federal, local, and private sectors, which support the country's efforts to achieve sustainability.

The Minister of Economy said: "The Committee continues to intensify its efforts to implement circular economy policies, initiatives, and projects, especially by strengthening collaboration between the government and private sectors." H.E. noted that the wise leadership's declaration of 2023 as the 'Year of Sustainability' further serves as a strong and encouraging motive to advance national action in the successful integration of the UAE's circular economy policy 2021 - 2031. Additionally, it provides opportunities and prospects to support the growth of the nation's new economic model, contributing to the UAE's position as a global hub for circular economy over the next decade, especially with the country hosting the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28).





The committee also followed up on government efforts to fortify its international partnerships in relation to a circular economy, the most notable one being the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Economy and the Italian Confederation of Environmental Sciences. The memorandum supports the country's vision for making progress in the development of circular economy policies, creating models for these policies, promoting the empowerment of SMEs, enabling green development tools, and adopting innovative methods that would support the UAE's undertakings to drive circular economy applications and stimulate investments through its projects.

The meeting also allowed the committee to assess the implementation of the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure's National Electric Vehicle Policy, which is part of the Circular Economy Committee's policies. The goal of this policy is to create a national network of electric vehicle chargers to support electric vehicle owners, regulate the country's electric vehicle market, establish a set of community-beneficial incentives, support electric vehicle manufacturers, and promote the use of electric vehicles. The policy is being carried out in collaboration with all federal, local, and private sectors.

This policy is also based on a range of objectives, such as mitigating the effects of climate change by reducing carbon emissions in the transport sector, developing the country's EV market, promoting the purchase of EVs and hybrids, and setting up the infrastructure for EV chargers in a way that supports the circular economy policy.

Furthermore, the committee reviewed the 'Aluminum Recycling Coalition' project of the Emirates Global Aluminum Company, and its role in advancing the country's efforts towards green development. The project encourages residents to adopt a lifestyle that promotes sustainability by pushing consumers to recycle aluminum and other beverage packaging, thereby increasing collection rates.

Representatives of the committee's member organisations, which include federal, state, and local entities, as well as prominent national and international businesses specializing in sustainability and circular economy initiatives, had attended the meeting. They include H.E. Eng. Aisha Al-Abdooli, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Green Development and Climate Change Sector at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, H.E. Abdulaziz Al-Nuaimi, Assistant Undersecretary for the Commercial Affairs Regulation Sector at the Ministry of Economy, Mohamed Hassan Jawi, Director of Environment and Waste Department at Emirates Global Aluminum Company, and Samah Al-Hajri, Director of the Department of Cooperatives and Strategic Reserves at the Ministry of Economy, along with representatives of the Office of Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications, Emirates Global Aluminum, UPS, BEEAH Group, Multinational Companies Business Group (MCBG), the Circular Coalition, and the American University of Sharjah.

Over the past year, the committee has consistently worked on implementing the set objectives of the 22 policies adopted by the UAE Circular Economy Council. These policies were developed to accelerate the adoption of the UAE Circular Economy model in four crucial industries, which are manufacturing, food, infrastructure, and transportation.



الإحاطة الإعلامية لوزارة الاقتصاد حول حماية المستهلك



Ministry of Economy: UAE boasts a strong customer protection ecosystem that regulates & monitors markets, enhancing stability

H.E. Abdullah Al Fan Al Shamsi leads the media briefing on consumer protection efforts

The Ministry of Economy held a media briefing session to highlight its sustained efforts in the field of customer protection all-round the year, and especially during the holy month of Ramadan. The session was led by H.E. Abdullah Sultan Al Fan Al Shamsi, Assistant Undersecretary for the Monitoring and Follow Up Sector at the Ministry of Economy.

H.E. Al Shamsi emphasized that the UAE has a strong customer protection framework that upholds and ensures consumer rights and regulates markets to contribute to their stability and prosperity. It ensures the right balance between the rights of merchants and consumers in the country's markets.

The media briefing shed light on the key initiatives undertaken by the Ministry in collaboration with its partners in the field of consumer protection.

H.E. Al Shamsi said: "The Ministry of Economy works alongside our federal and local government partners, especially the Supreme Committee for Consumer Protection, and communicates and coordinates with the cooperatives, the private sector and stakeholders in order to continuously develop the UAE's consumer protection policies. Through these collective efforts, we set the necessary mechanisms and implement initiatives that guarantee their rights in accordance with the highest global standards and in line with the UAE's Federal Law No. 15 of 2020 on Consumer Protection."



H.E. explained that the Ministry of Economy, represented by the Department of Consumer Protection, held 26 meetings with basic commodity suppliers in the UAE in 2023. These commodities include rice, flour, sugar, meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, juices, and others. The meetings were aimed at ensuring that there are sufficient stocks of these commodities to meet the needs of consumers during Ramadan.

Meetings were also held with the fruit and vegetables committees in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, in order to ensure that sufficient stocks of these products are available in the country's markets. The daily consumption volume of fruits and vegetables in Dubai market is 19,000 tons, while the volume of fruit and vegetable imports in Abu Dhabi is nearly 6,000 tons. The currently available stock of fruits and vegetables in the country's markets is 143,000 tons.

H.E. Al Shamsi explained that the Ministry of Economy will follow up on and monitor the initiatives announced by cooperative societies and sales outlets in the country, which include discounts on various commodity prices during Ramadan. Customers can avail discounts of up to 50% at coop branches and outlets. Discounts apply to nearly 6,000 commodities selected by these outlets and coops.

With regard to the monitoring of the market and sales outlets to assess the degree to which the merchants are adhering to the decisions issued by the Ministry of Economy regarding prices, H.E. Al Shamsi said that the relevant teams from the Ministry and the Departments of Economic Development conducted 94,123 inspections in the UAE's markets in 2022, which found 4,227 violations.

He added that the Ministry and its partners conducted 8,170 inspections in the first few months of 2023, which detected 1,030 violations. Through these inspections, the relevant departments made sure that price tags are being displayed and quality products are offered to consumers, thus preventing instances of fraud and trade-mark infringements.

The Assistant Undersecretary emphasized that the UAE has adopted some of the best and most efficient policies to ensure the availability of strategic stocks of all basic commodities to effectively meet the needs of citizens, residents and visitors for longer periods. He attributed this achievement to the clear directives and unlimited support from the UAE's wise leadership, which place the availability of essential food and medicine on top of the government's priorities.

H.E. said: "Despite the challenges faced by the global supply chains due to today's political and economic developments, the Ministry of Economy made sure that no unjustified price hikes were implemented by suppliers. In addition, the methods for combating monopoly practices and supporting sound trade practices have also been strengthened."

Moreover, H.E. stated that through these proactive resolutions, the UAE aims to establish a fair and balanced relationship between the supplier and the consumer that would maintain the rights of all parties. These efforts will help enhance market stability and business continuity, and ensure the availability of essential commodities to consumers at all times.

H.E. Al Shamsi further highlighted that the Ministry of Economy remains keen to promote a sound consumption culture in the country; prevent the sale of anything that could harm the health, safety or finances of consumers; raise consumers' awareness regarding their rights; and provide them with correct product information.

One of the top priorities of the Ministry of Economy is to guarantee the rights of consumers by establishing a conducive and safe environment for the consumer when purchasing a commodity or a service. They have the right to correct information about the goods and services they buy, in addition to the privacy and security of their data and not using them for promotional and marketing purposes. Besides, consumers have the right to fair and prompt settlement of disputes, and obtaining fair compensation for damages incurred by the purchase or use of a faulty commodity.

In this context, the Ministry of Economy is keen to raise awareness among consumers in the UAE about their rights through its official channels and various media channels. At the forefront of these rights is the choice between alternatives. To this end, the Ministry ensures the abundance of such alternatives in the country's markets, in a manner that adequately meets the requirements and needs of consumers in all emirates.



The Assistant Undersecretary continued: "I would also like to emphasize that the availability of choices allows consumers to choose a product that suits their needs and budget, and enable them to switch from a specific brand to another when the price of one brand goes up or when its quality declines. This is important since purchasing decisions of consumers are a critical factor that influences price fluctuations, market direction, and the supply and demand dynamics."

"Purchasing what is needed is the conscious consumer's choice, while buying more than what is necessary is an irresponsible act, because it directly leads to misplaced expenses, higher prices, and waste of resources," H.E. noted.

Besides, H.E. emphasized consumers' key role as partners in enhancing consumer protection in the UAE. They can contribute to this goal by providing their feedback or suggestions to the Ministry of Economy and other relevant authorities through their communication channels, which are always open. Consumers can use these channels to file a complaint, report commercial malpractices or submit suggestions and ideas that contribute to developing the UAE's consumer protection ecosystem. They can also reach out via the phone number 8001222.

H.E. further urged consumers to adhere to conscious purchasing practices such as saving the invoice, which is the first step towards guaranteeing their rights and matching them with the item or service purchased. It is their guarantee that can be submitted to the concerned government authorities in case of any grievances that violate their rights as consumers.

As part of its continuing efforts in the field of consumer protection, the Ministry is set to announce a new set of initiatives in the next stage. This includes the issuance of the executive regulations of Federal Law No. 15 of 2020 on consumer protection, which will contribute significantly to supporting the legal reference to preserving consumers and ensuring the right balance between the rights of merchants, suppliers and sales outlets.

H.E. Al Shamsi concluded his speech by expressing his confidence that the ongoing efforts will significantly elevate consumer protection standards in the country and promote the UAE's markets as a safe consumer environment for all consumers in a sustainable manner.





World's Coolest Winter campaign concludes its 3rd edition successfully recording an AED 1.8 billion growth in hotel revenues



The UAE Government Media Office announced the success of the third edition of the “World’s Coolest Winter” campaign, launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, on December 2022, in Al Zorah Natural Reserve in Ajman. The campaign promoted tourism, natural sites and entertaining destinations and experiences across the UAE, achieving an increase in the domestic tourism.

The campaign raised the revenues of hotel establishments to AED1.8 billion, compared to AED1.5 billion in its second edition, marking an increase of 20 percent.

The current edition of the World’s Coolest Winter campaign, raised the number of domestic tourists to 1.4 million, an increase of 8 percent over the previous edition.

The campaign recorded a remarkable turnout on social media, achieving more than 5.8 million interactions on different platforms. The #WorldsCoolestWinter hashtag was used in more than 18,000 photos and videos on social media.

The campaign was accompanied by more than 161 promotional videos, produced by the UAE Government Media Office and content creators in the country, achieving more than 158.2 million views from all over the world.

The positive interaction reached 100 percent globally. The local, regional and global media coverage reached more than 190 million people.



H.E. Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy, affirmed the success of the campaign in enhancing the national economy and supporting the domestic tourism, providing a unique experience for visitors based on the UAE tourism diversity, heritage and culture legacy.

He noted that the "World's Coolest Winter" translates the objectives of the UAE Tourism Strategy 2031, which seeks to attract AED100 billion as additional investments for the tourism sector, and raise its contribution to the GDP to AED450 billion in 2031.

Bin Touq added: "The Campaign succeeded in shedding light on our identity and heritage, and introducing the rich culture of the Emirates, taking advantage of the great success achieved in the past editions."

Saeed Mohammad Al Eter, Chair of the UAE Government Media Office, said: "The third edition of the campaign under the slogan "Our Heritage", has succeeded in achieving its goals, through coordination and joint work between the government entities and the private sector."

He thanked all World's Coolest Winter partners for their efforts in making the campaign's activities a success, and featuring the country's natural landmarks and beautiful destinations in a unique way.

This year's campaign celebrated the human element, heritage, national identity, and authentic Emirati values.

Entities, facilities and tourist attractions, concerned with culture and heritage in the UAE, participated actively in the campaign, through distinctive programmes that celebrates the local heritage, Emirati values and embodies the most prominent features of the national identity.

This campaign reflects the UAE's keenness to introduce the world to the country's culture and heritage, enhance its soft power and consolidate its position as a major tourist destination in the world.

In its third edition, the campaign has launched its new website, providing an interactive experience that highlights the most important landmarks and tourist attractions in all emirates.





CBUAE launches the Central Bank Digital Currency Strategy 'Digital Dirham'



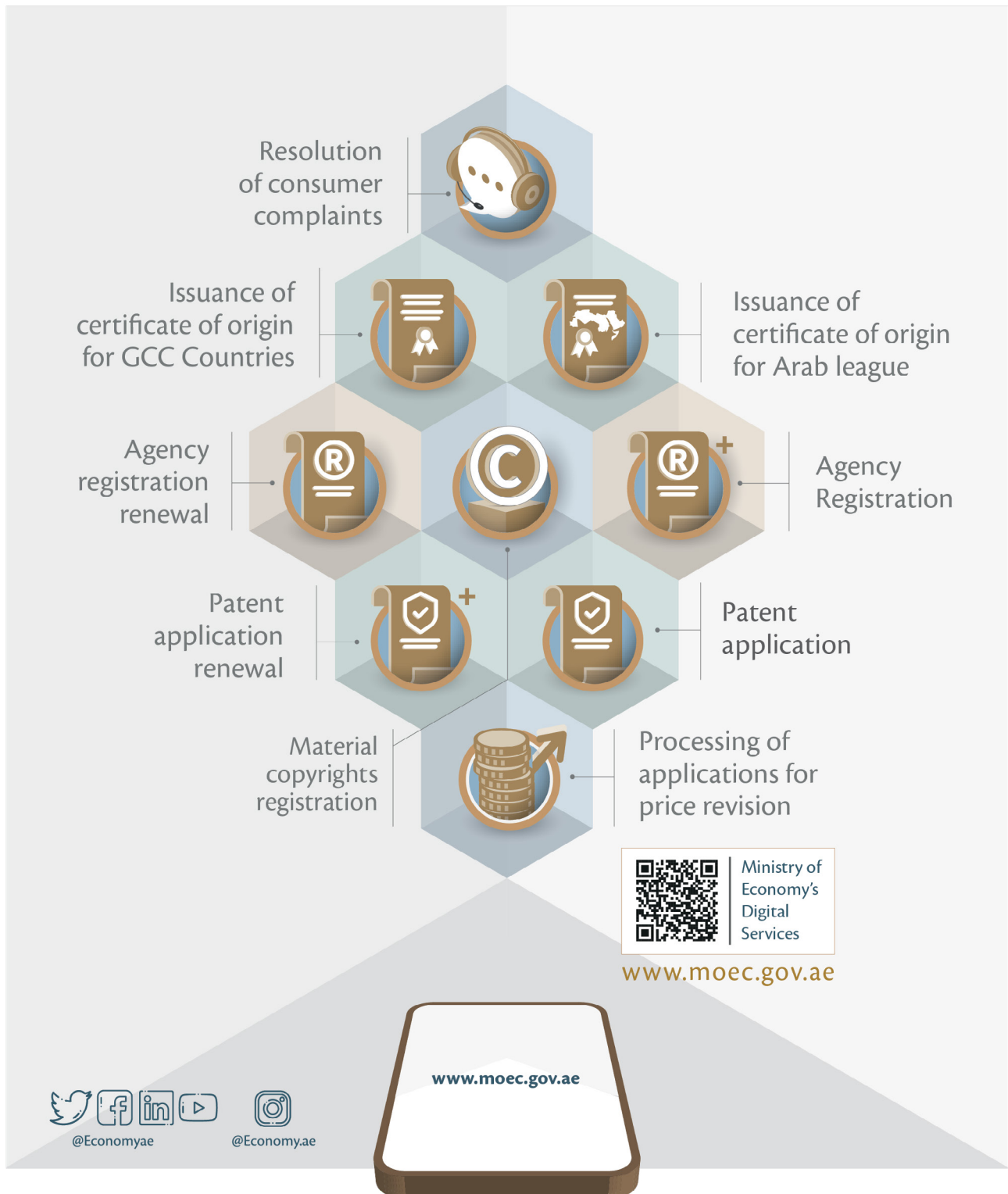
The Central Bank of UAE (CBUAE) jointly held a signing ceremony with G42 Cloud and R3 to mark the commencement of the implementation of the CBUAE Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) Strategy, one of the nine initiatives of the CBUAE's Financial Infrastructure Transformation (FIT) Programme. CBUAE has partnered with G42 Cloud and R3 as the infrastructure and technology providers respectively for its CBDC implementation.

Following several successful CBDC initiatives including Project "Aber" with the Saudi Central Bank in 2020, which confirmed the possibility of using a digital currency issued by two central banks to settle cross borders payments and was awarded the Global Impact Award by Central Banking Magazine, in addition to the significant accomplishment of the first real-value cross-border CBDC pilot under the "mBridge" Project with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Bank of Thailand, the Digital Currency Institute of the People's Bank of China and the Bank for International Settlements in 2022, the CBUAE is now ready for entering into the next major milestone of the CBDC journey and implementing its CBDC Strategy.

The first phase of CBUAE's CBDC Strategy, which is expected to complete over the next 12 to 15 months; comprises three major pillars, the soft launch of mBridge to facilitate real-value cross-border CBDC transactions for international trade settlement, proof-of-concept work for bilateral CBDC bridges with India, one of the UAE's top trading partners and finally, proof-of-concept work for domestic CBDC issuance covering wholesale and retail usage.

CBDC is a risk-free form of digital money issued and guaranteed by the central bank and serves as a secure, cost-effective and efficient form of payment and a store of value. As part of the UAE's digital transformation, CBDC will help address the pain points of domestic and cross-border payments, enhance financial inclusion and the move towards a cashless society. It will further strengthen the UAE's payment infrastructure, providing additional robust payment channels, ensuring a resilient and reliable financial system. More importantly, the CBUAE aims to ensure the readiness of the UAE to integrate the payment infrastructures with the future potential tokenization world, the tokenization of the financial and non-financial activities.

H.E. Khaled Mohamed Balama, the Governor of the CBUAE, said: "CBDC is one of the initiatives as part of the CBUAE's FIT programme, which will further position and solidify the UAE as a leading global financial hub. The launch of our CBDC strategy marks a key step in the evolution of money and payments in the country. CBDC will accelerate our digitalisation journey and promote financial inclusion. We look forward to exploring the opportunities that CBDC will bring to the wider economy and society."



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