



Making sustainability a vision

The Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) recognises that the SDGs are key to establishing Dubai as a world leader in clean, efficient cities



Interview with HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, MD & CEO, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA)

What is DEWA's philosophy on sustainability?

Sustainability is the core of DEWA's strategy, vision and mission. DEWA is the first government organisation in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to adopt sustainability in its vision and strategic plan to achieve specific long-term sustainability goals. Our vision is to become a sustainable, innovative, world-class utility.

DEWA is realising its vision by adopting sustainability as the main priority for its strategic direction, plans and initiatives.

This is in line with UAE federal and local strategies, as stipulated in *UAE Vision 2021*, *Dubai Plan 2021* and *The Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050* launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to transform Dubai into a global hub for clean energy and green economy by providing 75% of Dubai's total power output from clean energy sources by 2050.

In addition, DEWA works to achieve and support Dubai's Demand Side Management Strategy, to reduce energy and water demand by 30 per cent by 2030. Security of supply, energy efficiency, reliability, green economy and sustainability are top priorities for us. This is why the UAE, represented by DEWA, ranks first in the world in getting electricity, as per the World Bank's *Doing Business 2018* report.

How does DEWA integrate the SDGs into its corporate mindset?

The energy sector urgently needs sustainability and innovation to deal with the global challenges associated with growing demand for power, scarcity of natural resources and the effects of climate change.

The UN has played a substantial role in encouraging sustainable progress. The UAE also seeks to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and is committed to making every effort over the next 15 years

to end poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change.

At DEWA, we believe in taking the long-term view, and going beyond mitigating harm to driving real sustainable progress. We took part in the Sustainable Development Summit in New York in September 2015, where the 2030 Development Agenda was adopted.

Our support for the SDGs includes incorporating them internally and communicating them to our primary stakeholders. Our top management held in-depth internal discussions, including workshops and awareness campaigns, where all DEWA employees learned about the SDGs and their importance to our business.

For DEWA to successfully implement the SDGs, we have had to prioritise the goals that are aligned with our core business, without neglecting the rest. Through our internal platform Afkari ('My Ideas'), we invited our employees to post their ideas on the SDGs and how DEWA can make the greatest contribution. We are using their different opinions, perceptions and ideas to find new ways to be sustainable.

We have also communicated our sustainability progress and SDG contribution in our 2016 sustainability report. We are currently aligning our corporate strategy with the Global Goals.

Which goals are your priority and why?

Many of DEWA's main projects and initiatives already comply with the SDGs. After assessing these and keeping in mind our main impact areas, we have identified that DEWA's contribution is predominantly focused on six SDGs: 6, 7, 9, 12, 13 and 14.

As an electricity and water utility committed to empowering our customers and accelerating sustainability – both within our company as well as for our stakeholders – we consider the fundamental role of these six SDGs, while also paying attention to the rest.

In particular, DEWA is aligned primarily to SDGs 6, 7 and 13 on energy, water and climate change. These SDGs are central to nearly every major challenge the world faces today: be it jobs, security, food production, education or increasing incomes.

We have announced a number of major innovative electricity and water generation projects to improve efficiency that will also contribute to reducing carbon emissions. By working to generate 75% of Dubai's total power output from clean energy by 2050, we

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will ensure that Dubai will have the lowest carbon footprint of any city in the world.

DEWA's clean-energy projects include the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, the largest single-site solar energy project in the world. It will produce 5,000 megawatts by 2030, at a total investment of AED 50 billion. When completed, the solar park will lead to 6.5 million fewer tonnes of carbon emissions annually.

We should also mention our efforts to achieve the Smart Dubai initiative of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum – for Dubai to become the smartest and happiest city in the world. Shams Dubai will connect photovoltaic solar power to buildings; Green Charger will build the infrastructure and electric vehicle charging stations; and the smart meters and applications initiative will build smart grids that maximise the efficient use of electricity and water.

As well as innovation, equally important are sustainable consumption and conservation of our marine resources. We are looking to incorporate conservation into consumption using all available tools: from implementing regulations and standards, to incentives and integrated smart systems. We encourage the citizens and residents of Dubai to avoid wasting electricity and water, as well as the natural resources used to generate them. We share the global response to climate change by reducing or avoiding greenhouse gas emissions, wherever possible.

DEWA is currently working to establish a Research and Development centre at the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, with a total investment of AED 500 million up to 2020. The work of the centre revolves around four main areas of operation: the production of electricity from solar power, smart grid integration, energy efficiency and water.

What are your aspirations? What will determine success?

Our ambitious visionary leadership and our

strategies, at both federal and local level, are the main reasons behind our success.

DEWA is committed to supporting action to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. We will focus our efforts in the coming years to help overcome the negative effects of climate change and mitigate global warming.

Our main aspiration is to continuously upgrade our electricity and water infrastructure to be as efficient and reliable as possible. We want to achieve sustainable development in Dubai, enhance the leading position of the UAE, and ensure happiness for generations to come. DEWA plays an essential role in achieving all of these by reinforcing the renewable energy sector and fuel diversification to meet the objectives of the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050.

In addition, we are working to achieve the Demand Side Management Strategy, to reduce energy and water demand by 30 per cent by 2030. We are also committed to the Dubai Carbon Abatement Strategy to reduce carbon emissions by 16 per cent by 2021.

We know that to achieve all of these objectives, we need to establish proper alliances with our partners to share knowledge and experiences – bringing into practice Goal 17.

All of these goals provide focus, underpinned by wise leadership for a brighter sustainable future for the UAE, and Dubai especially. DEWA has a motto that defines the importance of sustainability: "For generations to come".

This shows our commitment to provide a better place – not just for our children but for theirs as well. ■

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Dubai Electricity & Water Authority



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