

## United Arab Emirates



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### General Information & Overview

**NDC UNFCCC Submission:** The United Arab Emirates' Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0)

**Date of NDC submission/update:** November 2024

#### Summary of quantified targets:

- **Headline target (if present):** The UAE's updated NDC sets a target of reducing emissions by 47% by 2035 compared to a 2019 baseline, (p.4), which translates to an absolute reduction of approximately 93 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (p.19)
- **Long-Term Goals (if present):** The UAE commits to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, reinforcing its long-term climate strategy. (p.5)
- **Quantified target(s) concerning NbS:**
  - The UAE's NDC includes a commitment to enhance natural carbon sinks through initiatives such as the restoration of 1 million hectares of degraded land by 2030. (p.62)
  - By 2030, the UAE aims to plant an additional 160 million mangroves (p.40)

#### NDC Scope:

- **Sectors:** The UAE's NDC covers the following sectors: Energy, Agriculture, Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF), Waste, and Industrial Processes. (p.5)
- **Thematic areas:** Adaptation, Mitigation, Loss and Damage (L&D). (p.5)
- **NbS Ecosystems included:** The NDC prioritizes Desert Ecosystems, Coastal Resources, and Marine Ecosystems. It emphasizes the role of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and recognizes the importance of afforestation, particularly with date palms, in carbon sequestration efforts. (p.53)
- **Indication to use Article 6:** Yes, the NDC indicates a commitment to utilize Article 6 mechanisms to enhance its climate ambitions, facilitating international cooperation and market-based approaches to achieve its targets. (p.41)

## Key updates from previous NDC

- The UAE's Third NDC (NDC 3.0) sets an absolute emissions reduction target of 47% by 2035 compared to a 2019 baseline, significantly increasing ambition from previous targets which were based on a business-as-usual scenario.<sup>3</sup> The previous target for 2030 was set at 208 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e, which has now been revised to 182 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e, representing a 19% reduction relative to 2019.<sup>7</sup>
- The new NDC incorporates a whole-of-economy approach, expanding beyond sector-specific targets to include comprehensive plans for all domestic sectors, such as power and water generation, heavy industry, transport, waste, buildings, and agriculture.<sup>7</sup> This shift reflects a more integrated strategy for emissions reductions.<sup>7</sup>
- The UAE has introduced new policy frameworks and initiatives to support its climate goals, including the Federal Decree-Law No. (11) of 2024, which provides a legal framework for climate action. (p.18) This law underpins the NDC targets and emphasizes the importance of accountability and transparency in emissions reporting. (p.18)
- The NDC 3.0 also emphasizes the role of nature-based solutions in carbon dioxide removal (p.39), indicating a commitment to enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of its climate strategy. (p.54) This includes the establishment of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and initiatives for afforestation, particularly with date palms, to sequester carbon. (p.54)
- The UAE has launched the National Dialogue for Climate Ambition (NDCA) to engage non-government stakeholders, including private sector entities and local NGOs, in the NDC development process.<sup>5</sup> This platform facilitates collaboration across various sectors and aims to enhance climate action through shared commitments.<sup>5</sup>
- The NDC outlines specific adaptation plans for vulnerable groups, including youth, women, and people of determination, ensuring that climate strategies are inclusive and equitable.<sup>14</sup> This focus on inclusivity is a new theme in the updated NDC, reflecting a broader understanding of the social dimensions of climate action.<sup>14</sup>
- The UAE's commitment to innovation and technology is highlighted through its national technology and R&D strategy, which aims to support the deployment of low-carbon technologies, including hydrogen and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS).<sup>13</sup> The UAE's Net Zero Strategy is expected to create approximately 160,000 jobs annually between 2025 and 2050, further linking climate action to economic growth. (p.66)

## Key conclusions

- The UAE's updated NDC (NDC 3.0) sets an ambitious target of reducing emissions by 47% by 2035 compared to a 2019 baseline, marking a significant increase in commitment from previous submissions. This shift from business-as-usual targets to absolute emissions reductions enhances clarity and transparency in tracking progress. (p.4)
- The NDC emphasizes a whole-of-economy approach, integrating various sectors and ensuring comprehensive government ownership and stakeholder engagement. This participatory process reflects a commitment to inclusivity and the alignment of climate action with socio-economic growth. (p.4)

## LEAD WITH NATURE | United Arab Emirates NDC ANALYSIS

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- Critical gaps remain, particularly in reliance on conditional financing and the need for advanced technologies to meet ambitious targets. The NDC highlights the importance of scaling adaptation finance and reforming global financial architecture to support vulnerable communities. ([p.5](#))
- The UAE has made significant strides in international cooperation, exemplified by the UAE Consensus and commitments made during COP28, which emphasize the need for ambitious emission reduction targets and adaptation strategies. The establishment of the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at COP28 further illustrates the UAE's commitment to integrating cultural heritage into climate strategies. ([p.60](#))
- The NDC also identifies the necessity for enhanced capacity building and technological innovation, particularly in the private sector, to achieve its net-zero goals by 2050. The UAE's focus on developing a robust MRV Transparency System will support effective monitoring and reporting of emissions, ensuring accountability in climate action. ([p.87](#))



Detailed Assessment

Topic	Assessment
<p><b>Does the NDC indicate that a whole-of-government approach was utilized?</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p>• <b>Frameworks for Mainstreaming NbS:</b> The UAE's NDC integrates nature-based solutions (NbS) through the 'Nature-based Solutions for Climate, Biodiversity and People' project, which involves multiple stakeholders including the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA), Ministry of Economy, and local communities. This project focuses on managing and restoring Blue Carbon Ecosystems and ensuring NbS integration in policy and management. (p.40)</p> <p>• <b>Engagement of Relevant Ministries and Institutions:</b> The development of the UAE Net Zero Strategy and the NDC involved extensive collaboration across various government levels—federal, emirate, and municipal. Key ministries engaged include: (p.94)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA):</b> Led the whole-of-government approach. (p.17)</li> <li>• <b>Ministry of Economy:</b> Involved in economic aspects of climate action. (p.9)</li> <li>• <b>Environmental Authorities:</b> Collaborated on urban and environmental priorities. (p.17)</li> <li>• <b>Local Governments:</b> Engaged through the National Dialogue for Climate Ambition (NDCA) platform, which includes representatives from diverse sectors such as manufacturing, waste, finance, transport, and energy. (p.18)</li> </ul> <p>• <b>Institutional Responsibilities for NbS Implementation:</b> The Federal Decree-Law No. (11) of 2024 establishes a legal framework for climate action, assigning responsibilities across federal and local entities to set annual emissions reduction targets and implement NbS measures. This law mandates the adoption of advanced technologies and encourages private sector participation. (p.81)</p> <p>• <b>Mechanisms for Multi-Level Government Engagement:</b> The UAE's NDC implementation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bilateral Meetings and Workshops:</b> Over 50 bilateral meetings and more than 110 workshops were conducted to gather input from stakeholders, ensuring a participatory approach. (p.17)</li> <li>• <b>National Committee on SDGs:</b> Established to align government policies with the Sustainable Development Goals, involving over 15 federal entities. (p.10)</li> <li>• <b>Monthly Assemblies:</b> The NDCA platform facilitates monthly discussions among federal and local government entities, private sector representatives, and NGOs to address sectoral requirements and priorities. (p.18)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Does the NDC indicate that a whole-of-society approach was utilized?</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p>• Description of the local communities, Indigenous Peoples groups, and vulnerable populations consulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UAE's NDC development process included extensive outreach to key social groups and</li> </ul>	

vulnerable segments of society, such as youth and women organizations, including the Youth Councils and Gender Balance Council. This approach ensured diverse perspectives were incorporated into the NDC. (p.18)

- Description of engagement with civil society organizations:
  - The UAE government actively engaged local NGOs and key private sector entities through the National Dialogue for Climate Ambition (NDCA), which serves as a platform for collaboration across all sectors of the economy. Monthly assemblies were held to discuss sectoral requirements and priorities, facilitating civil society's involvement in climate action planning. (p.17)
- Consideration of gender equality and social inclusion in the NDC process:
  - The NDC emphasizes protecting and enabling vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and people of determination. The UAE has committed to integrating gender considerations into its climate action plans, focusing on equitable access to resources and opportunities for these groups. (p.83)<sup>83</sup>
- Explicit mention of Indigenous Peoples in the NDC:
  - The UAE's NDC development process included collaboration with Indigenous Peoples organizations, particularly in the context of funding initiatives aimed at strengthening the evidence base for Indigenous Peoples-led climate action projects. (p.76)
- Acknowledgment of Indigenous Peoples' rights, particularly the right to be consulted (Free Prior and Informed Consent - FPIC):
  - The UAE has recognized the importance of consulting Indigenous Peoples and has worked with Indigenous Peoples organizations to ensure their rights and perspectives are integrated into climate action strategies. (p.96)
- Engagement with the private sector on NbS and nature (especially private sector with land ownership):
  - The UAE's NDC development involved significant collaboration with the private sector, including over 50 bilateral meetings and more than 110 workshops with public and private stakeholders. (p.17)  
The UAE Climate-Responsible Companies Pledge aims to increase private sector involvement in decarbonization efforts, aligning with the broader climate goals of the nation. (p.94)

**Do the NDC targets include nature/ecosystems?**

**Yes**

- The UAE's NDC includes commitments related to nature and ecosystems, particularly focusing on coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, salt marshes, and seagrass meadows. (p.57)
- The UAE National Blue Carbon Project emphasizes the role of blue carbon ecosystems in carbon sequestration and climate adaptation, highlighting their importance in mitigating climate change impacts. (p.57)
- The UAE aims to protect 30% of its terrestrial and marine areas by 2030 under its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, indicating a commitment to ecosystem preservation. (p.53)<sup>3</sup>
- The Mangrove Breakthrough initiative, endorsed by the UAE, aims to restore and protect 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030, showcasing a specific target for a priority ecosystem. (p.40)
- The UAE's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Roadmap integrates nature-based solutions, indicating a recognition of the role of ecosystems in climate adaptation strategies. (p.42)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NDC targets are primarily focused on economy-wide emissions reductions, with specific attention to the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use) sector, as evidenced by the target to reduce emissions from this sector from -4.3 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019 to -5.6 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2035. (p.92)</li> <li>• The UAE has designated ten sites as Wetlands of International Importance, which include critical habitats for biodiversity and carbon storage, further emphasizing the integration of ecosystem targets within its climate commitments. (p.53)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Does the NDC include information about the methods and data used to develop nature-related targets?</b></p>	<p><b>Partial</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data sources used to define NbS targets:</b> The UAE's NDC references the National GHG Inventory for quantifying emissions and establishing baselines, which is essential for defining nature-based solutions (NbS) targets. (p.91) Additionally, the National Blue Carbon Project highlights the carbon storage capacity of coastal ecosystems, contributing to the data used for NbS targets. (p.57)</li> <li>• <b>References to best-available science and traditional knowledge:</b> The NDC integrates findings from international analyses, including those from UN-Habitat and the IPCC, ensuring that the strategies are informed by the latest global research and best practices.<sup>15</sup> The inclusion of traditional knowledge is implied through stakeholder engagement with local communities and NGOs, although specific references are not detailed. (p.42)</li> <li>• <b>Measurability, time-bound nature of NbS targets:</b> The NDC outlines specific targets, such as the commitment to plant an additional 160 million mangroves by 2030 as the UAE's contribution to protect and restore 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030. (p.40)</li> <li>• <b>Inclusion of area-based targets that conserve biodiversity values and ecosystem services:</b> The UAE's NDC includes area-based targets, such as the commitment to protect 30% of its terrestrial and marine areas by 2030 and to contribute to the global target of restoring 15 million hectares of mangroves. (p.57)</li> <li>• <b>Any mentions of use of GIS or spatial planning tools:</b> The NDC references the use of geospatial technologies, including Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), particularly in assessing carbon stocks and planning for afforestation projects, such as those involving date palms. (p.54)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Are NbS included in the economy-wide target?</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UAE's economy-wide GHG reduction target includes nature-based solutions (NbS) as part of its overall strategy. (p.91)</li> <li>• The target aims for a 47% reduction in net GHG emissions by 2035 compared to the 2019 baseline of 196.3 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e, which encompasses all national GHG emissions, including those from land use, land use changes, and forestry (LULUCF). (p.19)</li> <li>• The fixed-level target for 2035 is set at 103.5 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e, which includes emissions from LULUCF. (p.90)</li> <li>• The UAE is committed to enhancing its negative emissions capacity through NbS, specifically by planting mangroves and other initiatives, with a goal to achieve -9.3 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in negative emissions by 2035. (p.39)</li> <li>• The UAE's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2031) and the National Desertification Strategy 2030 guide the integration of NbS into climate action, aligning with global biodiversity frameworks.</li> </ul>	



(p.39)

- The UAE has committed to planting an additional 160 million mangroves by 2030, significantly contributing to carbon sequestration efforts. (p.40)
- The UAE's Third NDC explicitly states that the economy-wide targets cover all domestic sectors, including LULUCF, ensuring comprehensive accounting of emissions sources. (p.91)
- UAE is developing a Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system to include emissions from LULUCF, ensuring thorough monitoring and reporting of these emissions. (p.91)
- The UAE's climate policy is informed by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, emphasizing the interlinkage between climate action and biodiversity goals. (p.39)

**Are mitigation targets defined for the AFOLU sector, including in wetlands and coastal areas?**

**Partial**

**• Summary of ecosystems and/or working lands/waters included in targets:**

- The UAE has designated ten sites as Wetlands of International Importance, including the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary and Wadi Wurayah National Park. (p.53)
- Coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, salt marshes, and seagrass meadows are highlighted for their carbon storage capacity and role in climate adaptation. (p.57)
- The National Blue Carbon Project emphasizes the importance of managing coastal ecosystems for climate mitigation and adaptation. (p.57)
- Agricultural areas are included in the AFOLU sector, with a target to reduce emissions by 39% by 2035, focusing on energy-related emissions and livestock management. (p.36)

**• Description/summary of nature-related targets:**

- The UAE's Third NDC sets a target of reducing emissions by 47% by 2035 from a 2019 baseline, which includes emissions from the AFOLU sector. (p.4)
- The National Biodiversity Strategy aims to protect 30% of terrestrial and marine areas by 2030, contributing to climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation. (p.57)
- The Mangrove Breakthrough initiative aims to restore and protect 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030, with the UAE endorsing this goal and committing to a 100 million mangrove plantation project. (p.57)
- The UAE's agricultural emissions are projected to decrease to 2.6 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2035, indicating a commitment to sustainable agricultural practices. (p.36)

**Do adaptation measures include NbS and/or EbA approaches?**

**Partial**

**• Coverage of targets:**

- The UAE's adaptation measures target critical sectors including energy, water resources, coastal resources, human settlements, and urban planning. (p.42) The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Roadmap emphasizes the need for inclusive stakeholder engagement, particularly focusing on vulnerable groups and gender-responsive approaches. (p.42)

**• Description/summary of nature-related targets:**

- The UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience highlights the importance of preserving and regenerating nature, linking adaptation efforts to the protection of livelihoods and economies. (p.42)
- Specific initiatives in the agricultural sector aim to enhance sustainability and resilience against climate change impacts. (p.58)

**• Alignment with Adaptation Cycle (4 stages):**

- The UAE's adaptation strategy follows the Adaptation Cycle, which includes assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring. (p.42) The NAP Roadmap outlines modalities for tracking adaptation progress, ensuring that adaptation actions are evidence-based and responsive to climate risks. (p.42)

**• Alignment with national adaptation plans (NAPs) and/or the UAE Framework (GGA):**

- The NAP Roadmap is aligned with the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience and the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA). The NAP is designed to integrate national climate targets with adaptation planning activities at both federal and emirate levels. (p.42)

**• Indication of whether locally-led approaches have been included:**

- The NAP Roadmap emphasizes participatory approaches, encouraging local community engagement and stakeholder mapping to guide the development of the NAP engagement plan. (p.43) The focus on gender-responsive and socially inclusive strategies indicates a commitment to locally-led initiatives. (p.43)

**• Indication of whether trade-offs and other issues have been considered:**

- The UAE's adaptation efforts recognize the co-benefits of mitigation and adaptation, particularly in sectors like energy and waste management, which address both climate resilience and emissions reduction. (p.42)
- The NAP Roadmap includes considerations for climate risks and vulnerabilities, ensuring that trade-offs are evaluated in the context of broader governance and sustainable development goals. (p.42)

**Does the NDC integrate NbS into mitigation and adaptation targets for non-AFOLU sectors?**

**Partial**

**• Relevant sectors/ ecosystems with targets**

- The National Water and Energy Demand Side Management Programme aims for a 42%-45% reduction in energy use and a 51% reduction in water use by 2050. (p.22)
- The UAE Water Security Strategy 2036 targets a 21% reduction in total water demand. (p.22)

**• Summary of nature-positive approaches included in non-AFOLU sectors**

- The UAE's adaptation efforts in the energy sector include the expansion of renewable energy projects, which contribute to both mitigation and adaptation goals. (p.43)
- Initiatives in waste management, such as improving waste recycling and increasing waste-to-energy projects, reduce methane emissions while providing alternative energy sources. (p.43)
- Urban planning strategies incorporate green building standards and energy-efficient



infrastructure, enhancing resilience to climate impacts while reducing carbon footprints. (p.43)

**• Indication of whether impacts to nature, including water sources, are minimized in other sectors**

- The UAE emphasizes sustainability in water management, with initiatives to reduce water loss to 11% and increase treated wastewater reuse to 77%, targeting 95% by 2036. (p.49) The National DSM Programme has already reduced water usage by 513 million cubic meters, indicating a proactive approach to minimizing impacts on water sources. The integration of climate-resilient technologies in water desalination processes aims to mitigate the effects of climate change on water supply. (p.49)

**Is nature integrated as an essential component in addressing loss and damage?**

**Yes**

**• Recognition of nature as vulnerable to climate impacts:**

- The UAE's climate projections indicate significant temperature increases, higher humidity, and alterations in seawater salinity, which threaten ecosystems such as coral reefs and wetlands. (p.11)
- The 2019 Climate Risk Assessment identified the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems as a high-risk impact of climate change, emphasizing the vulnerability of natural resources. (p.53)

**• Inclusion of ecosystems in national loss & damage policies:**

- The UAE's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) is set to elaborate on adaptation ambitions and evaluate loss and damage caused by climate change, integrating insights from international frameworks like the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage. (p.90)

**• Presence of loss & damage policies in relation to wetlands, peatlands, coastal ecosystems, and forests:**

- The UAE has designated ten sites as Wetlands of International Importance, promoting sustainable tourism and conservation efforts. (p.53)
- The National Biodiversity Strategy aims to protect 30% of terrestrial and marine areas by 2030, which includes critical coastal ecosystems like mangroves and coral reefs. (p.57)

**• NbS proposed as solutions to minimize climate-induced damage:**

- The UAE is committed to nature-based solutions (NbS) such as extensive mangrove afforestation, which enhances carbon sequestration and provides coastal protection. (p.39)
- The UAE's 'Nature-based Solutions for Climate, Biodiversity and People' project aims to integrate NbS into policy and management, focusing on coastal ecosystems and enhancing resilience against climate impacts. (p.57)
- The Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC) and the Seagrass Breakthrough initiative are examples of NbS aimed at restoring and protecting vital ecosystems to mitigate climate impacts. (p.83)

**Does the NDC align with other national and international agendas?**

**Partial**

**• Alignment with National Policies:** The UAE's NDC aligns with the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2031) and the National Desertification Strategy 2030, which guide biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management. (p.39)



- **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:** The UAE has met the Aichi target of protecting at least 18.4% of terrestrial and inland water and 12.1% of coastal and marine areas by 2020, with a goal of 30% by 2030. (p.39) The NDC emphasizes nature-based solutions (NbS) such as mangrove afforestation, which contributes to carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement. (p.40) The UAE aims to plant an additional 160 million mangroves by 2030, enhancing biocapacity. (p.40)
- **Co-benefits:** The NDC outlines co-benefits for climate, biodiversity, and ecosystem services, including:
  - Enhanced carbon sequestration through mangrove restoration and conservation. (p.83)
  - Improved water quality and soil stabilization from protected areas. (p.55)
  - Economic diversification and job creation through sustainable practices and green growth initiatives. (p.83)
- **Trade-offs:** The NDC acknowledges potential trade-offs, particularly in balancing economic development with environmental conservation. (p.53) The UAE's commitment to sustainable tourism in wetland areas aims to generate revenue while promoting conservation, indicating an effort to mitigate negative impacts on ecosystems. (p.53)
- **Health Policies:** The NDC incorporates health considerations by addressing climate-related health risks and promoting integrated surveillance and climate-informed health systems, reflecting alignment with national health policies. (p.52)
- **International Commitments:** The NDC is designed to support global climate goals, including the Paris Agreement's target of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C, and aligns with international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the UAE Consensus from COP28. (p.10)

**Are adaptation and mitigation targets Complementary to each other?**

**Partial**

- The UAE's adaptation efforts and economic diversification plans are designed to yield significant mitigation co-benefits, indicating some level of complementarity between adaptation and mitigation targets. Specific projects in the energy sector, such as renewable energy expansion and energy-efficient technologies, address both adaptation and mitigation goals. (p.43)
- The NAP Roadmap prioritizes sectors like energy and water resources, identifying measures that enhance water efficiency and management, which reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, showcasing coherence between adaptation and mitigation targets. (p.42)
- The NAP Roadmap prioritizes sectors like energy and water resources, identifying measures that enhance water efficiency and management, which reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, showcasing coherence between adaptation and mitigation targets. (p.34, p.65)
- However, potential trade-offs exist, such as the risk of supporting coastal infrastructure for renewable energy that may conflict with protecting sensitive coastal ecosystems or community livelihoods, indicating that while there are synergies, contradictions can arise. (p.57) The document emphasizes the need for integrated strategies and stakeholder engagement to identify and mitigate trade-offs, suggesting that while adaptation and mitigation can be complementary, careful planning is required to avoid negative impacts. (p.43)

**Are climate justice and equitable approaches applied across**

**Partial**



