



Environmental Report

Protecting Biodiversity and Natural Habitats in RAK

Between the Challenges of Urban Expansion and the Opportunities of Sustainable Tourism



Leading Environmental Projects

Razan Al Mubarak:

Al Rams: A Model for Sustainable Development



Inspiring Stories

Art, Nature, and Sustainability

An Interview with Artist and Environmental Advocate Engineer Tariq Ibrahim Al Salman



Interview

Sustainability at the Heart of Manufacturing industry

RAK Ceramics: An Integrated Vision for a Low-Carbon Future and a Sustainable Circular Economy



Environmental Landmarks

Emerald of the Hajar Mountains: Wadi Shawka

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on environment and sustainability

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هيئة حماية البيئة والتنمية
Environment Protection & Development Authority

Vision

Leadership in environmental protection and
the sustainability of its resources

Mission

To enhance quality of life by protecting the
environment and sustaining its resources
through proactive capabilities, effective policies,
innovative strategies, and leading services
that ensure environmental compliance.

Strategic Objectives

- Strengthen environmental compliance
- Protect natural resources
- Improve services for customers, partners,
and the community
- Enhance institutional & financial efficiency
- Promote environmental awareness

Values

- Belonging
- Sustainability
- Engagement
- Social responsibility
- Good governance
- Foresight
- Team spirit

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We believe that environmental protection is no longer a choice, but a developmental necessity.



**Dr. Abdulrahman
Alshayeb Al Naqbi**

Acting Director General
RAK Environment Protection &
Development Authority

Sustainable Vision... Towards a More Prosperous Future

The environment is the cornerstone of sustainable development and quality of life. Protecting it is not the responsibility of a single entity, but a shared responsibility that requires the collective efforts of institutions and individuals to foster a culture that safeguards natural resources for future generations. Guided by this principle, the Environment Protection and Development Authority – Ras Al Khaimah continues to pursue a comprehensive vision that balances the demands of economic development with environmental protection, in alignment with the aspirations of the United Arab Emirates and the Emirate's vision for a more sustainable future.

As Ras Al Khaimah continues its remarkable development journey, it remains firmly committed to implementing environmental best practices through the protection of biodiversity, the conservation of natural habitats, the efficient use of resources, and the advancement of initiatives that mitigate the impacts of climate change while supporting the transition towards a green economy.

The second edition of Ras Al Khaimah Environment Magazine continues its mission of documenting environmental initiatives and achievements, while highlighting inspiring success stories and effective partnerships that demonstrate how sustainability has become a practical approach guiding policies, projects, and collaboration between government entities, the private sector, and the wider community.

At the Environment Protection and Development Authority, we believe that raising environmental awareness is the foundation of sustainable development, and that investing in both people and the environment is an investment in the Emirate's future. We will continue working with all our partners to strengthen Ras Al Khaimah's position as a leading model in environmental protection and sustainable development, building a future that harmonises economic prosperity with the conservation of natural resources, in line with the vision of our wise leadership and for the benefit of present and future generations.



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Sheikh Mohammed bin Saud Attends Biodiversity Conservation Volunteer Campaign

Mangroves... The Roots of Sustainability in RAK



As part of ongoing efforts to protect the environment and promote the sustainable management of natural resources, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Crown Prince of Ras Al Khaimah and Chairman of the Executive Council, attended a volunteer mangrove planting campaign organized by the Environment Protection and Development Authority (EPDA) in cooperation with the Emirates Environmental Group (EEG) at Khor Al Muzahmi Nature Reserve, marking the International Day for Biological Diversity. The event was attended by directors general from the Government of Ras Al Khaimah, government officials, volunteers, and environmental advocates. His Highness's participation reflects the leadership's

strong commitment to environmental protection and support for initiatives that preserve ecosystems, safeguard natural resources, and promote sustainable development in line with the UAE's vision for a prosperous and sustainable future.

Biodiversity Protection as a Development Priority

The campaign forms part of a series of environmental initiatives led by the Environment Protection and Development Authority to conserve biodiversity and natural habitats across Ras Al Khaimah while reinforcing sustainability as a key pillar of the emirate's long-term development. Organizing the campaign to coincide with the International Day for Biological Diversity highlights the importance

of protecting ecosystems that sustain life and raising public awareness of environmental practices that help conserve natural resources and address climate change.

Mangroves: A Pillar of Coastal Ecosystems

Mangrove trees are among the UAE's most valuable coastal ecosystems. They protect shorelines, reduce erosion, and provide essential habitats for fish, marine life, and birds, making them vital to biodiversity conservation. Mangroves also capture and store significant amounts of carbon, playing an important role in climate change mitigation and supporting global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Khor Al Muzahmi: A Model Nature Reserve

Khor Al Muzahmi Nature Reserve is one of Ras Al Khaimah's most important coastal protected areas, home to extensive mangrove forests that provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. The Environment Protection and Development Authority continues to implement programmes to protect the reserve through environmental monitoring, habitat restoration, and volunteer initiatives that expand green cover and enhance the sustainability of coastal ecosystems.

Volunteering for Environmental Protection

The campaign demonstrates the importance of community participation in environmental conservation, with volunteerism serving as a powerful tool for transforming environmental awareness into meaningful action. Such initiatives enable participants to better understand the ecological value of mangroves and the importance of protecting them, while fostering a stronger sense of environmental responsibility. The initiative also reinforces that protecting the environment is a shared responsibility requiring collaboration among government entities, the private sector, civil society organizations, and indi-

viduals to achieve lasting environmental benefits.

Partnership for a Sustainable Future

The collaboration between the Environment Protection and Development Authority and the Emirates Environmental Group reflects a strong partnership in delivering long-term environmental initiatives that support sustainability goals.

Through initiatives like this, Ras Al Khaimah continues to strengthen its position as a model for sustainable natural resource management, balancing development with environmental conservation in line with the UAE's priorities for biodiversity protection and expanding green cover.

The mangrove planting campaign at Khor Al Muzahmi underscores that protecting natural ecosystems is a shared responsibility and an investment in future generations, ensuring sustainable natural resources and a better quality of life.





Sheikh Ahmed bin Saud Attends EPDA's Release of Shaari Fish Fingerlings

Initiative Promotes Sustainable Fisheries and Protects RAK's Marine Environment

As part of Ras Al Khaimah's commitment to environmental sustainability and marine conservation, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Public Services Department, attended the release of Shaari fish fingerlings into the waters of Qawasim Corniche. The initiative was organized by the Environment Protection and Development Authority (EPDA) in partnership with Gulf Aquaculture, marking World Environment Day. The initiative forms part of EPDA's ongoing programmes to enhance fish stocks, conserve marine biodiversity, and ensure the sustainable management of natural

resources, supporting the emirate's vision of balancing economic development with environmental protection.

A Vision for Sustainable Natural Resources

Sheikh Ahmed bin Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi stated that the release of Shaari fish fingerlings reflects Ras Al Khaimah's continued commitment to protecting fisheries and strengthening marine resources through initiatives that safeguard natural assets for future generations. He noted that the initiative aligns with the vision of H.H. Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, to preserve the

environment and promote sustainability as a cornerstone of the emirate's comprehensive development. He also emphasized that protecting the marine environment is a shared responsibility that supports food security, sustainable fisheries, and ecological balance.

Strengthening Fish Stocks

Releasing fish fingerlings is one of the most effective scientific methods for enhancing fish stocks, helping restore marine populations by allowing species to grow, reproduce naturally, and replenish their numbers. This approach supports the long-term sustainability of marine resources while contributing to healthier and more resilient coastal ecosystems. Shaari was selected for this initiative because it is a valuable native species with significant economic and nutritional importance. It also plays a key role in maintaining the ecological balance of marine ecosystems. Increasing its population supports sustainable fisheries, benefits local fishing communities, and helps preserve the rich marine biodiversity that characterizes Ras Al Khaimah's coastal waters.

Partnership for Marine Conservation

The initiative highlights the successful collaboration between the Environment Protection and Development Authority and Gulf Aquaculture, bringing together public and private sector expertise to implement science-based solutions that support the sustainable management of marine resources and strengthen fish stock enhancement programmes. Such partnerships demonstrate the value of collaboration and modern aquaculture technologies in improving marine resource management, protecting biodiversity, and delivering long-term environmental and economic benefits for future generations.

Marking World Environment Day

Held in conjunction with World Environment Day, the initiative reinforces that protecting the environment



requires practical action as well as public awareness. It also encourages community participation in safeguarding the marine environment as a valuable national resource.

Towards a More Sustainable Marine Future

The Environment Protection and Development Authority continues to implement specialized programmes to protect Ras Al Khaimah's marine environment through fish stock enhancement, habitat conservation, scientific research, and environmental awareness initiatives.

The release of Shaari fish fingerlings reflects the emirate's commitment to conserving marine biodiversity, sustaining fisheries, and strengthening Ras Al Khaimah's position as a leader in the sustainable management of marine resources.



New Climate Partnership Advances Sustainability in RA K

Environment Protection and Development Authority in RAK Signs Climate Action MoU with GORD and the Global Carbon Council

The Environment Protection and Development Authority (EPDA) in Ras Al Khaimah has signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Gulf Organisation for Research & Development (GORD) and the Global Carbon Council (GCC), marking a significant step in the emirate's commitment to advancing climate action and strengthening its position as a regional hub for sustainable environmental initiatives. The partnership aims to develop integrated solutions for reducing carbon emissions, supporting carbon neutrality, protecting biodiversity, and promoting sustainable urban development. The MoU was signed by Dr. Yousef Alhorr, Founding Chairman of the Gulf Organisation for Research & Development and the Global Carbon Council, and H.E. Dr. Mohammed bin Yusuf Al Madfaei,

Director General of the Environment Protection and Development Authority in Ras Al Khaimah.

A Partnership Combining Expertise and Governance

The Memorandum of Understanding brings together three organizations with expertise in scientific research, carbon markets, and environmental management to develop climate initiatives aligned with international standards and deliver measurable environmental



This partnership aligns with the Environment Protection and Development Authority's vision of protecting the environment and sustaining natural resources for future generations.

—H.E. Dr. Mohammed bin Yusuf Al Madfaei

and economic benefits. The partnership supports regional efforts to accelerate climate action and advance the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Advancing Climate Action Initiatives

Under the agreement, the three parties will collaborate on advanced climate initiatives, including greenhouse gas emissions inventories, carbon neutrality frameworks, independent verification protocols, and carbon offset programmes. The partnership will also support carbon asset development, strengthen verification mechanisms, and promote sustainable environmental and urban solutions that contribute to a circular, low-carbon economy and enhance long-term climate resilience efforts

Complementary Roles for Sustainability

GORD will provide expertise in scientific research, technical consultancy, and sustainable building standards, while the Global Carbon Council will support the development of credible carbon markets and high-integrity carbon credits. The Environment Protection and Development Authority will align these initiatives with Ras Al Khaimah's environmental priorities through policy development, natural resource protection, and the promotion of sustainability across



Through this partnership, we are connecting local environmental governance with global carbon frameworks, enabling the development of measurable and certifiable climate projects.

— H.E. Dr. Yousef bin Mohammed Alhorr

the emirate for long-term environmental resilience and sustainability.

B. Building Capacity and Expanding Knowledge

Beyond implementing environmental projects, the partnership will also focus on strengthening national and regional capacities through specialized training programmes and workshops, the exchange of expertise and data, and the conduct of joint research and studies. These efforts will support informed environmental decision-making and foster innovation in climate action. The collaboration will further assist institutions in understanding the mechanisms of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, carbon credit transfer systems, and the requirements of international carbon markets, thereby enhancing their readiness to access climate finance opportunities.

Towards a Low-Carbon Future

Dr. Yousef Alhorr said the partnership will connect local environmental governance with global carbon frameworks, supporting the development of measurable and internationally credible climate projects. H.E. Dr. Mohammed bin Yusuf Al Madfaei noted that the agreement aligns with the Environment Protection and Development Authority's vision of protecting the environment and sustaining natural resources while advancing climate initiatives based on international best practices. The partnership represents a significant step toward supporting Ras Al Khaimah's Sustainability Strategy 2050 and strengthening its leadership in the transition to a green economy.





Planting 1,000 Mangrove Trees in Khor Al Mazahmi

An Environmental Initiative Bringing Together Institutions and Volunteers in RAK

Khor Al Mazahmi Reserve in RAK recently hosted a distinguished environmental initiative organized by the Environment Protection and Development Authority in cooperation with the Emirates Environmental Group (EEG), coinciding with Earth Day celebrations. The event involved the planting of 1,000 mangrove trees and attracted broad participation from institutions, community organizations, and volunteers, reflecting the growing commitment to protecting coastal ecosystems and promoting sustainability in the emirate. The initiative forms part of ongoing efforts to support environmental programs that contribute to conserving

natural resources, strengthening volunteerism, and encouraging community participation in activities aimed at protecting biodiversity and environmentally significant natural areas across RAK.

Official and Institutional Participation

The partnership signing and environmental activity were attended by Eng. Moza Al Mehairi, representing the Environment Protection and Development Authority, and Dr. Habiba Al Marashi, representing the Emirates Environmental Group, along with representatives from government and private sector

entities, volunteers, and environmental enthusiasts. Their participation reflected the importance of the initiative in strengthening collaboration to support sustainable environmental projects and protect natural resources and the emirate's coastal environment.

220 Volunteers Participate in Mangrove Planting

The event featured a mangrove planting campaign within Khor Al Mazahmi Reserve, involving around 220 volunteers who were organized into teams and assigned to different coastal areas for planting activities. The strong participation reflected a spirit of teamwork and provided volunteers with valuable insights into the importance of mangrove ecosystems, their role in coastal protection, and the need to conserve the coastal environment, giving the initiative both educational and community-focused value.

Enhancing Environmental Awareness

The event included awareness sessions highlighting the role of mangrove trees in shoreline protection, carbon sequestration, and supporting marine biodiversity. Participants also learned about the ecological importance of Khor Al Mazahmi Reserve and its rich natural habitats. These activities helped raise environmental awareness and emphasized the value of volunteer initiatives in advancing conservation and sustainability goals.

Organization Reflecting a Spirit of Cooperation

The organizing entities ensured the success of the event by preparing planting locations, coordinating participants, and providing guidance on planting techniques to guarantee efficient and well-organized implementation.

Necessary logistical support was provided throughout the activity, enabling smooth operations and fostering strong cooperation between organizers and volunteers. The event showcased a high level of coordination among participating entities, con-

tributing positively to achieving its environmental and educational objectives.

An Earth Day Message

Held in conjunction with Earth Day, the initiative conveyed an important environmental message emphasizing the need for collective action between institutions and communities to protect the environment and encourage projects that preserve natural resources and support sustainability.

The event also reflected the commitment of the Environment Protection and Development Authority to marking international environmental occasions through practical initiatives that create a direct and lasting impact on both the environment and society.

Mangroves: A Symbol of Sustainability

Mangrove trees were selected for this initiative because of their exceptional environmental value. They play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance in coastal areas, providing habitats for marine life and birds, and helping mitigate climate change impacts effectively. Such initiatives demonstrate the importance of continuing environmental programs that combine field action, awareness, and community participation to strengthen efforts aimed at protecting natural resources and advancing sustainability in RAK. The event witnessed remarkable engagement from participants, many of whom documented their experience and took part in accompanying activities. This reflected the community's growing interest in environmental volunteerism and strengthened cooperation between institutions and volunteers while promoting sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and quality of life.

These initiatives underscore RAK's commitment to expanding collaborative environmental action and enhancing volunteer-driven activities that support environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources for future generations.

An Environmental Initiative Reflecting Community Responsibility

Environment Protection and Development Authority Organizes Earth Hour Initiative to Promote Environmental Awareness and Sustainability



As part of its commitment to promoting environmental awareness and sustainability, the Environment Protection and Development Authority organized the Earth Hour initiative with broad participation from government entities, private organizations, and community members. The initiative aimed to strengthen environmental responsibility, encourage sustainable practices, and support the UAE's sustainability and climate action objectives through greater community engagement and environmental awareness.

A Global Event with a Local Vision

The initiative was held in conjunction with the global Earth Hour event, which promotes awareness of energy conservation and carbon emission reduction. Lights were switched off in several government buildings

and landmarks across RAK, reflecting the emirate's commitment to sustainability and global environmental efforts. The broad participation of institutions underscored the importance of collective action in supporting environmental initiatives, strengthening environmental responsibility, and advancing sustainable development goals across the community and future generations.

Strong Institutional Participation

The event brought together government entities, private organizations, educational institutions, and volunteers, alongside awareness campaigns and workshops on energy conservation.

This broad participation reflected growing environmental awareness, reinforced institutional commit-



ment to sustainability and environmental protection, and encouraged more responsible daily practices.

Promoting a Culture of Sustainability

The Authority stated that the initiative forms part of its strategy to promote sustainability, encourage responsible resource use, and reduce waste. It also aims to strengthen environmental responsibility among students and youth through environmental programs and partnerships with educational institutions, fostering greater awareness of environmental challenges and climate change.

Awareness Activities and Educational Programs

The event included a range of awareness activities focused on conserving natural resources and reducing

carbon footprints, alongside educational messages encouraging the use of energy-efficient technologies. Participants showed strong engagement and interest in initiatives that support environmental awareness and sustainability.

Messages That Extend Beyond One Hour

The Authority emphasized that Earth Hour is a reminder to make sustainability part of daily life through responsible behaviors that protect the environment and conserve natural resources. It also stressed that addressing environmental challenges requires co-operation between institutions and individuals and the adoption of sustainable practices that reduce environmental impacts.

A Continued Commitment to a Sustainable Future

The Authority reaffirmed its commitment to initiatives that support sustainability goals and strengthen RAK's environmental efforts. It also encouraged community participation and responsible practices, emphasizing that sustainability is a shared responsibility requiring collective cooperation.

Community Engagement Reflecting Growing Environmental Awareness

The initiative demonstrated the growing culture of environmental volunteerism within the community by promoting messages that emphasized cooperation in protecting the environment and supporting sustainability. It also highlighted the efforts of educational institutions to involve students in environmental activities and reinforce the importance of conserving natural resources and reducing energy consumption. Participants noted that Earth Hour serves as a symbolic yet powerful message encouraging sustainable lifestyles and inspiring individuals and organizations to make sustainability a lasting part of everyday life.

Media as a Driver of Sustainability Culture

Environment Protection and Development Authority Promotes Sustainability Awareness Through “Economic Week” Program

As part of its efforts to advance sustainability and strengthen environmental awareness, the Environment Protection and Development Authority continues to utilize media platforms to promote a culture that supports sustainable development goals. This commitment was reflected in an episode of the Economic Week program titled “Sustainability and the Future of Entrepreneurship,” which explored the role of sustainable practices in shaping modern business environments and highlighted the importance of environmental media in raising awareness and encouraging dialogue on key environmental challenges.

An Integrated Environmental Vision

Produced by the Authority, the episode highlighted the strong connection between sustainability and economic development, emphasizing that sustainability has become a fundamental pillar of modern economies. It stressed the importance of adopting environmentally responsible policies and integrating sustainability principles across economic sectors to support innovation, protect natural resources, and enhance quality of life for future generations.

A Distinguished Contribution to the Discussion

The episode featured Dr. Ikrami Abdel Rahim Khalil,



who highlighted the importance of integrating sustainability into entrepreneurship and business practices. He noted that the global shift toward a green economy requires innovative and sustainable solutions, while organizations that adopt sustainability standards are better positioned to achieve long-term growth, competitiveness, and a strong reputation among communities and investors.

Community Participation as a Fundamental Pillar

Dr. Ikrami stressed that achieving sustainability requires the active participation of individuals, institutions, and stakeholders through responsible behaviors and community engagement. He also highlighted the vital role of awareness campaigns and media programs in strengthening environmental understanding and encouraging greater involvement in sustainability efforts.

Individual Behavior as the Foundation of Change

Dr. Ikrami emphasized that personal behavior is the foundation of a sustainable society, highlighting the importance of conserving resources, reducing waste, and adopting environmentally responsible daily practices. He noted that these behaviors help strengthen environmental responsibility, improve quality of life, and support the sustainable use of resources.

Investing in Future Generations

Dr. Ikrami also highlighted the importance of introducing sustainability concepts to children and young people from an early age through educational programs and awareness initiatives that strengthen their connection to environmental issues.

He explained that building a generation that is environmentally aware represents a long-term investment in a more sustainable future. Future generations will be better equipped to develop innovative solutions to environmental challenges and transform them into opportunities that benefit both society and the economy.

He further noted that environmental education has become an essential component in building communities capable of achieving sustainable development and adapting to global transitions associated with the green economy.

Renewable Energy and the Future of Business

Concluding his remarks, Dr. Ikrami emphasized the need to expand the use of renewable energy sources and adopt innovative solutions that reduce waste and improve resource efficiency. He explained that such approaches not only benefit the environment but also create significant opportunities for entrepreneurs to develop innovative and sustainable business ventures.

He added that the transition toward clean energy has become an important economic opportunity that supports the growth of emerging industries and opens new avenues for investment and development, particularly in environmental technologies and sustainable solutions.

A Continuing Message for a More Sustainable Future

This episode once again demonstrates the Environment Protection and Development Authority's commitment to its educational and awareness-building role through media and community initiatives that help embed sustainability principles and build an informed society capable of addressing environmental challenges and transforming them into opportunities for development.

The program also reflects the Authority's dedication to using media as an effective platform for promoting environmental culture and encouraging community dialogue on sustainability and entrepreneurship, supporting national efforts to achieve sustainable development and create a more balanced future for both the economy and the environment.

The Authority reaffirmed its commitment to launching further programs and initiatives that raise environmental awareness and encourage institutions and individuals to adopt responsible practices that support sustainability and preserve natural resources.

A Patriotic Atmosphere Reflecting a Spirit of Belonging

Environment Protection and Development Authority in RAK Celebrates the National Campaign “Proud of the UAE”



The Environment Protection and Development Authority (EPDA) – RAK participated in the national campaign “Proud of the UAE,” reflecting pride in the nation’s achievements and its progress in sustainable development, innovation, and quality of life. The event brought together employees, partners, and stakeholders, reinforcing national identity, social cohesion, and the values of unity, cooperation, and belonging.

UAE’s emergence as a global model for sustainable development through its balanced approach to economic growth, environmental protection, and natural resource conservation. It also emphasized that the country’s achievements in sustainability, clean energy, innovation, and environmental policy are a source of national pride and support quality of life while ensuring resource sustainability for future generations.

The UAE: A Global Model for Development and Sustainability

During the event, the Authority highlighted the

The Role of National Institutions in Raising Awareness

The Authority explained that its participation in the

“Proud of the UAE” campaign reflects its support for national initiatives that promote national identity and strengthen community cohesion.

It further noted that raising environmental awareness and embedding sustainability principles form an essential part of the responsibilities of national institutions. The UAE community has consistently demonstrated a high level of awareness and responsibility toward both national and environmental issues.

Diverse Activities and National Messages

The celebration included a variety of activities and programs that reflected pride in the nation and its achievements. Participants enthusiastically expressed their loyalty and appreciation for the UAE and its wise leadership.

The event also conveyed important messages about preserving the country’s achievements and continuing efforts to support its development journey. It emphasized the role every individual can play in protecting the environment and advancing sustainability.

The occasion provided an opportunity to highlight the UAE’s accomplishments across multiple sectors, particularly in environmental protection, sustainability, and clean energy, areas in which the country has become a leading global example through its strategic vision and future-focused initiatives.

Sustainability as Part of National Identity

The Authority stressed that sustainability has become an integral part of the UAE’s national identity, supported by initiatives and policies that promote sustainable development, environmental protection, and quality of life. It emphasized that environmental responsibility is a shared duty requiring cooperation among individuals and institutions, helping build a more aware and resilient society capable of addressing future environmental and climate challenges. The Authority also highlighted the importance of fos-



tering environmental awareness and encouraging sustainable practices across all sectors of society.

Continuing Support for National Initiatives

At the conclusion of its participation, the Authority reaffirmed its commitment to supporting national and community initiatives that strengthen the values of belonging, social responsibility, and sustainability while promoting environmental awareness.

The Authority emphasized that the “Proud of the UAE” campaign reflects the nation’s progressive image and the spirit of unity that characterizes Emirati society. Such initiatives serve as positive messages that reinforce social cohesion and showcase the achievements the UAE has accomplished across various fields.

The Authority also underscored that cooperation between institutions and individuals remains a fundamental pillar for achieving sustainable development and building a more prosperous and sustainable future for coming generations, in line with the vision and aspirations of the United Arab Emirates.



RAK Green Cover Project

Investing in Nature, Shaping the Future

Amid growing environmental challenges, the Green Cover Project launched by the Environment Protection and Development Authority (EPDA) in RAK represents a significant initiative to expand green spaces, protect biodiversity, and enhance environmental quality.

Beyond tree planting, the project focuses on restoring local ecosystems through native species, applying advanced technologies, and encouraging community participation to support long-term sustainability.

Expanding Green Cover and Restoring Natural Ecosystems

The project aims to expand green cover across RAK through the cultivation of native species such as Ghaf, Sidr, Samar, and mangrove trees. These species help improve air quality, combat desertification, enhance carbon sequestration, and provide habitats for wildlife, supporting biodiversity and ecological balance.

The project also adopts a science-based approach using remote sensing and GIS technologies to mon-

itor vegetation, assess planting success, and guide future restoration and greening efforts.

Tangible Achievements on the Ground

The Green Cover Project has achieved significant results, including the planting of approximately 90,183 native and fruit-bearing trees and the expansion of green cover to more than 281,000 square meters. The project has also registered 28,297 Ghaf trees and cultivated around 76,000 mangrove seedlings to support future restoration efforts.

Mangrove ecosystems play a vital role in storing blue carbon, protecting coastlines, and supporting marine biodiversity by providing habitats for fish, birds, and other marine species.

A Broad Community Partnership

One of the defining characteristics of the Green Cover Project is its strong community-driven approach. The initiative has attracted extensive participation from government entities, private organizations, educational institutions, and community members, reflecting growing environmental awareness and the impor-



tance of collective action in advancing sustainability. Participating organizations include the Public Works Department, RAK Municipality, the RAK Tourism Development Authority, the RAK Quran Foundation, as well as numerous public and private sector institutions.

Universities, schools, volunteers, and residents of all ages have also participated in tree-planting campaigns and environmental awareness activities, helping transform sustainability from a governmental objective into a shared societal responsibility.

This collaborative approach strengthens environmental awareness among younger generations and reinforces the importance of protecting local natural resources and ecosystems.

Technology in Service of the Environment

A key feature of the Green Cover Project is the integration of modern technology into environmental management. Advanced digital tools are used to analyze environmental data, monitor plant growth, and detect changes in vegetation cover with a high degree of accuracy.

This reflects a broader shift toward smart environmental management based on scientific analysis and data-driven decision-making, enhancing planning efficiency and supporting more sustainable environmental policies.



These technologies also enable continuous assessment of the project's environmental impact, including carbon storage rates, soil quality improvement, and enhanced air quality.

Future Ambitions for 2026

The Environment Protection and Development Authority continues to implement expansion plans for the project throughout 2026. The Authority aims to distribute and plant an additional 10,000 native trees, including Ghaf, Sidr, and Samar species, across various locations in the emirate.

The project also targets the planting of between 5,000 and 10,000 mangrove trees during the coming year as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen coastal ecosystems and support climate adaptation initiatives. In terms of climate sustainability, the project has already contributed to the storage of more than 277,946 tonnes of carbon since its launch. Projections indicate the potential sequestration of an additional 42,500 tonnes of carbon by the end of 2026, highlighting the project's important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting climate neutrality objectives.

Toward a Greener Future

The Green Cover Project in RAK represents a leading model of sustainable environmental action that combines nature conservation, technological innovation, and community engagement. It reflects the emirate's commitment to building a more sustainable future while maintaining a balance between economic development and environmental protection.

As afforestation efforts continue and natural habitats are restored, the project further strengthens RAK's position as one of the UAE's leading emirates in environmental stewardship and climate action. It demonstrates that investing in nature is no longer an option, but a strategic necessity for safeguarding quality of life and protecting the environment for future generations.



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Razan Al Mubarak:

Al Rams: A Model for Sustainable Development

Nestled between majestic mountains and the shores of the Arabian Gulf, Al Rams stands out as one of Ras Al Khaimah's most distinctive natural and heritage destinations. Rich in coastal lagoons, farms, and diverse ecosystems, the area is now undergoing a transformative development aimed at harnessing its natural and cultural assets to create a sustainable model for ecotourism and community development.

In this interview, H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Managing Director of Emirates Nature-WWF, discusses the work taking place in Al Rams as part of the Building Resilient Rural Communities initiative, including its key phases and its role in promoting sustainability, conserving biodiversity, and positioning Al Rams as a leading ecotourism destination in the UAE.

Can you give us a brief idea about the development project of the Rams area in terms of the idea, origin, implementation and its main components?

At COP28, the Emirates Council for Balanced Development (ECBD) and Emirates Nature-WWF launched the Building Resilient Rural Communities initiative to strengthen climate resilience and sustainability in Al Rams – one of Ras Al Khaimah's oldest and most culturally rich coastal communities.

The Al Rams project is transforming this historic community into a replicable model for sustainable living and ecotourism - one that can be scaled across the UAE. It reflects a shared vision to create a model for rural development that protects nature and heritage



while generating meaningful social and economic opportunities for local communities. The initiative forms part of the wider Emirates Villages programme, which seeks to enhance quality of life and sustainable development across Emirati villages.

At the heart of the project is delivering science-led ecological assessments, developing a long term ecotourism masterplan that safeguards natural and cultural assets, design and construction of an ecotrail that connects the mountains, farms and coastal lagoon, all while supporting local entrepreneurs in developing nature-based and cultural tourism experiences, while actively engaging the community in conservation efforts.

What are the completed phases of the project, the remaining stages of it, and when is it expected to be completed?

The project is progressing strongly, thanks to the active support of the local community and close collaboration with partners and government authorities.

The ecotourism masterplan for Al Rams has been completed, setting out a clear direction for nature-based tourism and community-led development, while generating sustainable economic value for Al Rams. Development of the full ecotrail is well underway. Starting at the historic Dhayah Fort, the trail connects the mountains, farms and coastal lagoons. The rural part of the trail is complete.

What makes the trail especially meaningful is that it is being built with the community and for the community. Local stones sourced from Ras Al Khaimah have been used to help the trail blend naturally into the landscape while minimizing environmental disturbance.

In parallel, scientific studies and fieldwork conducted by Emirates Nature-WWF and the Ras Al Khaimah Environment Protection and Development Authority (RAK EPDA) have strengthened understanding of the Al Rams coastal lagoon and generated important baseline data for future conservation and restoration that will inform future decision-making.

The next stages will focus on completing the coastal section of the ecotrail and creating a rest area. The project will also initiate SME pilots that connect nature-based livelihoods with ecotourism and community engagement, alongside continued biodiversity research and conservation activities.

In what context does the project come within the vision of the emirate's leadership to develop Ras Al Khaimah in general and the Al Rams region in particular?

The project falls within Ras Al Khaimah's broader vision for sustainable tourism, resilience and quality of life. What makes Al Rams especially inspiring is that it demonstrates how development can be rooted in identity and nature, with natural ecosystems supporting long-term environmental, socioeconomic benefits.



that protects natural and cultural heritage for future generations. Emirates Nature-WWF brings expertise in science-driven conservation, community engagement, ecotourism and nature-based solutions.

With RAK EPDA, Emirates Nature-WWF is strengthening scientific understanding of the Al Rams coastal lagoon through innovative fieldwork – including underwater footage, environmental DNA analysis, marine surveys and biodiversity assessments – confirming the lagoon’s ecological value as a habitat for juvenile fish, rays, crustaceans and sea turtles.

The initiative also works closely with the local community. Through majlises, interviews, surveys and local events, more than 400 residents – including farmers, women, entrepreneurs and youth – have helped shape the future vision for Al Rams. Through Emirates Nature-WWF’s Leaders of Change programme, residents, youth and volunteers have taken part in hands-on conservation, helping raise awareness and build a strong culture of environmental stewardship.

How does the Al Rams development project utilize nature-based solutions to enhance environmental sustainability in Ras Al Khaimah?

Nature-based solutions are at the core of the Building Resilient Rural Communities initiative. In Al Rams, ecotourism is a clear example of this approach. When developed responsibly, ecotourism respects, restores and sustains the environment while creating economic opportunities for local communities.

The Al Rams ecotrail brings this idea to life by offering visitors an immersive experience of the area’s environment and traditions, while promoting responsible tourism, environmental awareness and opportunities for local businesses.

What role does Emirates Nature-WWF play in supporting and developing Al Rams as a nature-based solutions initiative?

Together with ECBD, Emirates Nature-WWF is laying the groundwork for a thriving, inclusive rural economy

How does the Al Rams project serve as a practical model of nature-based solutions in collaboration with partners?

Al Rams translates global sustainability principles into practical action on the ground. Through collaboration between government entities, conservation organizations, local communities and civil society volunteers, the project combines ecosystem conservation, sustainable tourism and community participation into one integrated model.

Importantly, it also shows that local heritage and traditional knowledge are not separate from sustainability solutions – they are central to them.

How does the project support environmental development through a nature-based approach?

Located along Ras Al Khaimah’s northern coastline, the Rams coastal lagoon is part of a diverse landscape that includes seagrass meadows, mangroves, tidal flats and shallow marine habitats. These ecosystems

support marine life and contribute to water quality, sediment stability, and blue carbon storage.

To better understand and protect these ecosystems, scientific surveys and fieldwork are being conducted with RAK EPDA – including marine surveys, scientific dives, drone mapping, underwater footage and environmental DNA analysis. These efforts are generating critical baseline ecological data and habitat maps that support evidence-based conservation planning and sustainable coastal management.

What are the key initiatives through which the project enhances biodiversity in Al Rams?

The rich biodiversity of Al Rams – both on land and at sea – is being studied and protected through biodiversity assessments and hands-on conservation efforts carried out in collaboration with the local community and volunteers from Emirates Nature-WWF's Leaders of Change programme. To date, surveys have recorded 171 bird species, including the endangered Steppe Eagle and vulnerable Socotra Cormorant, as well as 10 species of bats, endangered green turtles and the Arabian red fox.

Building on the marine surveys conducted with RAK EPDA and fieldwork, ongoing research and pilot restoration activities are testing practical methods to support seagrass recovery and improve habitat conditions – generating valuable scientific knowledge that can help guide future protection and management of the lagoon.

How does the project transform natural assets into sustainable development opportunities?

Al Rams demonstrates how natural ecosystems can support long-term environmental, social and economic benefits. By combining scientific research with action on the ground, the project transforms natural and cultural assets into opportunities for ecotourism, local entrepreneurship and community-led enterprise.

A key strength of this project lies in its collective approach. In addition to our partner ECBD, we work closely

with key stakeholders including Ras Al Khaimah Municipality, the Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA), the Department of Antiquities & Museums, EPDA and Marjan to ensure the project is aligned with the emirate's strategic objectives and wider vision.

What sustainable investment opportunities does the project offer?

A key next step is the initiation of an SME Lab to catalyze rural, nature-positive opportunities such as ecotourism-focused enterprise in Al Rams – supporting pilots such as agritourism, farm tours and local guide experiences. This responds to the wider need to diversify the UAE economy by unlocking the potential of SMEs to create nature-based livelihoods that benefit local communities.

The development of the ecotrail and future rest area will also help activate Al Rams as an ecotourism destination, attracting visitors while supporting local livelihoods. Importantly, these opportunities are being developed within a framework that prioritises long-term environmental sustainability and social value creation, ensuring that growth strengthens the natural and cultural character of Al Rams.



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Emerald of the Hajar Mountains: Wadi Shawka

A Captivating Natural Destination Where Mountains, History, and Adventure Converge



Nestled within the towering Hajar Mountains of southern Ras Al Khaimah, Wadi Shawka is one of the UAE's most captivating natural destinations. Its rugged peaks, seasonal waterways, and green open spaces create a unique landscape that attracts nature lovers, adventurers, and visitors throughout the year. Surrounded by dramatic rock formations and soaring mountains, the wadi showcases a different side of the UAE's natural heritage, combining raw beauty, tranquility, and historical significance. As part of the Hajar Mountain range—one of the region's oldest geological formations—it offers a striking contrast to the country's desert scenery, especially after rainfall when flowing water, lush vegetation, and natural pools bring the landscape to life. Visitors are welcomed by winding roads, ancient rock formations, and ever-changing mountain colors

that create breathtaking views throughout the day, making Wadi Shawka a remarkable destination for exploration and nature appreciation.

Shawka Dam: A Development Project that Revitalized the Wadi

At the heart of Wadi Shawka stands Shawka Dam, one of the area's most prominent landmarks and a key contributor to its development as an environmental and tourism destination. Built in 2001 under the directives of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the dam was extensively upgraded in 2020 to improve its efficiency and visitor facilities. With a storage capacity of approximately 275,000 cubic meters, the dam plays an important role in capturing rainfall and seasonal floodwaters. The reservoir it created has become a popular destination for fam-

ilies, campers, and outdoor enthusiasts, particularly during the cooler winter months.

Over time, the area has been enhanced with walking paths, seating areas, playgrounds, and family recreation facilities, strengthening its appeal as an ecotourism destination. The dam also serves as a gateway to several hiking and mountain biking trails popular among adventure seekers.

Nature Comes Alive After the Rain

Wadi Shawka reveals its greatest beauty after rainfall, when dry rocky terrain is transformed into flowing waterways and natural pools between the mountain slopes. During these periods, seasonal plants flourish, turning the area into a vibrant green landscape. Rainfall also revitalizes local vegetation and attracts a variety of wildlife and bird species that find suitable habitats within the wadi. This seasonal transformation highlights the richness of the mountain ecosystem. The flowing water and renewed greenery create a refreshing atmosphere that enhances the area's natural appeal and ecological value.

The stunning scenery makes Wadi Shawka a popular destination for photographers and nature enthusiasts. Its reflective pools and dramatic mountain views create spectacular scenes at sunrise and sunset,

while its clear night skies attract astrophotographers seeking views free from urban light pollution. The combination of rugged mountains, seasonal water features, and open landscapes offers visitors a unique opportunity to experience the changing beauty of the UAE's mountain environment.

A Historical Legacy Carved in Stone

Beyond its natural beauty, Wadi Shawka holds significant historical value, with ancient stone and mud settlements, rock carvings, and archaeological remains, some dating back to the Bronze Age.

These discoveries indicate that the area was inhabited for thousands of years, benefiting from the water and resources provided by the mountain environment. The rock carvings offer insights into the lives of past communities, including their hunting, travel, and settlement activities.

By combining nature and heritage in one destination, Wadi Shawka stands as a living testament to the history and cultural development of the UAE's mountain regions.

A Destination for Adventure Enthusiasts

In recent years, Wadi Shawka has become one of the UAE's most popular destinations for outdoor recreation and adventure tourism. Its varied terrain, including rocky elevations, narrow mountain passages, and gravel plains, provides ideal conditions for hiking, mountain biking, and climbing.

Among the area's best-known routes is the "Dam Loop" trail, which extends for approximately 12 kilometers and takes visitors through a challenging journey across valleys, rocky pathways, and mountain slopes. The trail attracts outdoor enthusiasts from both within the UAE and abroad, particularly during the cooler winter months.

Visitors can also enjoy camping in open areas near the dam, where the peaceful surroundings and clear night skies offer a refreshing escape from city life.



As darkness falls, the stars illuminate the mountain peaks, creating a serene atmosphere that makes the wadi an ideal destination for relaxation and nature appreciation.

Biodiversity and Wildlife

Despite its rugged terrain, Wadi Shawka supports remarkable biodiversity. The area is home to various bird and wildlife species that have adapted to desert and mountain environments. Visitors may occasionally spot mountain gazelles or birds of prey soaring above the peaks and valleys, alongside reptiles and smaller creatures that form an essential part of the local ecosystem.

The region also supports numerous native plant species that help stabilize the soil and reduce erosion during periods of rainfall. This biodiversity highlights the importance of preserving mountain ecosystems as a valuable component of the UAE's natural heritage.

Authorities continue to promote environmental awareness among visitors, encouraging responsible tourism practices and the protection of natural habitats. These efforts are increasingly important as visitor numbers grow, supporting broader initiatives aimed at sustainable ecotourism and environmental conservation in Ras Al Khaimah.

Wadi Shawka: Where Tranquility Meets Adventure

Wadi Shawka is one of the UAE's most remarkable natural destinations, offering a blend of mountains, water, history, and adventure. It provides visitors an opportunity to reconnect with nature and experience the beauty of Ras Al Khaimah's mountain environment. As ecotourism continues to grow, the wadi remains a leading environmental attraction, reflecting the emirate's biodiversity and geographical diversity, and standing as an emerald jewel among Hajar Mountains.





Exemption of Emirati Fishermen in RAK

Decision Strengthens Stability and Preserves Maritime Heritage

In a directive that reflects the leadership's commitment to supporting citizens and enhancing their stability, H.H. Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, has ordered the exemption of Emirati fishermen in the emirate from all outstanding financial obligations until the end of 2026. The directive reflects His Highness's commitment to supporting fishermen, preserving fishing as one of the UAE's traditional national professions, and strengthening the stability of Emirati families that

rely on the sector as a primary source of income. The decision also reinforces Ras Al Khaimah's continued approach to empowering citizens and providing an enabling environment for them to continue contributing to society, in line with the emirate's vision of achieving sustainable development that places people at the heart of its priorities. It further recognizes that supporting traditional sectors is an essential part of building a balanced economy that preserves national identity and strengthens social stability.

“Year of the Family” – A Social Dimension to the Decision

The importance of the decision is further enhanced as it coincides with the UAE’s declaration of 2026 as the “Year of the Family,” giving it a social dimension that extends beyond financial relief to emphasize the importance of supporting Emirati families and strengthening their economic and social stability. A fisherman is not simply an individual working in an economic sector, but the provider for a family whose livelihood depends on the continuity of this profession. Reducing financial obligations therefore contributes to greater stability, provides fishermen with an opportunity to develop their businesses and improve their living conditions, enhances quality of life, strengthens family cohesion, and enables families to continue contributing to society while preserving this important profession.

An Economic Sector with Cultural Heritage Value

The fishing sector is one of Ras Al Khaimah’s oldest economic activities and has long been closely associated with the emirate’s maritime heritage. For decades, it played a vital role in providing food and supporting the local economy before the era of modern development. Today, the sector continues to contribute to food security and the supply of seafood to local markets, while preserving traditional knowledge related to navigation, fishing methods, and seasonal marine practices that form an integral part of the emirate’s cultural identity. From this perspective, supporting fishermen extends beyond economic assistance; it represents an investment in preserving maritime heritage and ensuring its transfer to future generations, while safeguarding one of the UAE’s oldest national professions and its enduring values.

Supporting Sustainability

The exemption decision reduces the financial burden on fishermen, allowing them to direct more of

their resources toward boat maintenance, upgrading fishing equipment, and improving operational efficiency. It also encourages them to continue their activities despite changing economic conditions and rising operating costs, thereby supporting the long-term sustainability and resilience of the sector. The decision complements Ras Al Khaimah’s ongoing efforts to protect the marine environment and enhance fish stocks by encouraging fishing practices that balance the sustainable use of natural resources with their conservation, in line with the objectives of sustainable development and biodiversity protection.

Expected Impact of the Decision

The exemption of Emirati fishermen from outstanding financial obligations is expected to deliver positive economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Economically, the decision eases financial pressures on fishermen, enabling them to invest in boat maintenance, fishing equipment, and operational improvements, while supporting food security and the long-term sustainability of the fishing sector.

Socially, it strengthens the stability of Emirati families and encourages younger generations to continue one of the UAE’s oldest traditional professions, preserving an important part of the nation’s heritage.

Environmentally, the decision promotes responsible fishing practices and supports ongoing efforts to protect fish stocks and conserve marine biodiversity, helping balance economic development with environmental conservation.

The decision reflects the vision of H.H. Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi to advance a balanced model of sustainable development that combines economic prosperity, social stability, and the preservation of national identity, while placing citizens at the heart of the emirate’s progress.

Regulating Hunting Devices and Equipment in RAK

Environmental Legislation Strengthening Wildlife Protection and Sustainability

In a step that reflects RAK's commitment to strengthening environmental protection and conserving biodiversity, the Executive Council issued Decision No. (18) of 2025 concerning devices and equipment used for hunting birds and wild or marine animals. The decision aims to regulate the use of technologies and tools associated with hunting activities and curb illegal practices that threaten wildlife and natural habitats across the emirate.

The decision forms part of ongoing efforts to develop local environmental legislation in line with federal laws on environmental protection and development, reaffirming RAK's commitment to applying stricter standards for the conservation of terrestrial and marine wildlife.

Comprehensive Ban on Wildlife Attraction Devices

The decision prohibits the manufacture, import, sale, possession, or use of devices designed to attract birds, wild animals, or marine species protected under federal environmental legislation. This includes modern technologies used to lure wildlife or alter their natural behavior for hunting purposes.

The measure reflects growing concern over the environmental risks of advanced hunting methods, which can facilitate illegal hunting and threaten biodiversity across coastal, mountain, and desert ecosystems.

By restricting these devices before violations occur, the legislation adopts a preventive approach that



strengthens environmental protection, enhances monitoring efforts, and helps safeguard wildlife populations.

Carefully Regulated Exceptions for Scientific and Environmental Purposes

While imposing strict controls, the decision allows limited exemptions for scientific, research, and environmental purposes, as well as for preventing or treating diseases affecting animals and birds, subject to authorization from the Environment Protection and Development Authority (EPDA) in Ras Al Khaimah. The Authority is responsible for setting licensing

requirements and regulating the use of approved equipment. This balanced approach helps protect wildlife while supporting scientific research that relies on specialized tools to monitor species, track movements, and study animal behavior within controlled and legitimate environmental frameworks.

A Regulatory and Licensing Framework Supporting Environmental Governance

The decision establishes clear licensing procedures, requiring environmental assessments, equipment inspections, and registration of approved devices in a database maintained by the Authority. Licenses are valid for up to one year and may be renewed under approved procedures.

License holders must submit periodic reports on equipment use and environmental outcomes, promoting transparency and supporting compliance monitoring. The decision also sets out procedures for handling equipment after license expiration, including transfer, return, or surrender to the Authority for appropriate management or disposal.

Strengthening Field Monitoring and Enforcement

The decision authorizes EPDA enforcement officers to inspect sites, ensure compliance, and confiscate unauthorized equipment. It also emphasizes cooperation among government entities to support implementation and enforcement.

This strengthens environmental protection efforts and helps combat illegal hunting practices involving advanced technologies.

Deterrent Penalties to Protect Wildlife

The legislation introduces administrative penalties that include fines of up to AED 20,000 and the confiscation of equipment used in violations involving prohibited devices. Additional penalties apply for failing to submit required reports, providing inaccurate information, or improperly disposing of regulated

equipment.

These measures reinforce legal deterrence against environmental violations and reflect the emirate's commitment to protecting wildlife, biodiversity, and environmental sustainability.

A More Sustainable Environmental Vision

The decision strengthens environmental governance in Ras Al Khaimah and supports the sustainable protection of wildlife and natural resources through a clear regulatory framework and effective enforcement measures.

It contributes to conserving biodiversity, protecting natural habitats, and reducing activities that threaten ecological balance. The decision also aligns with the UAE's vision of achieving sustainable development while ensuring the long-term preservation of environmental resources for future generations.



Expected Impacts of the Decision

1. Protecting Biodiversity

The decision is expected to reduce illegal hunting activities and ease pressure on bird, wildlife, and marine populations, helping preserve native species and maintain ecological balance across natural ecosystems.

2. Reducing Wildlife Depletion

By restricting the use of advanced attraction and luring devices, the legislation will help reduce over-hunting, particularly of migratory and environmentally sensitive species, allowing populations to recover and reproduce naturally.

3. Enhancing Environmental Monitoring

The regulatory framework provides authorities with clearer mechanisms for overseeing hunting-related activities and improving enforcement through licensing systems and equipment registration.

4. Supporting Scientific Research

The licensing framework enables researchers and environmental specialists to utilize certain tools for scientific studies, wildlife monitoring, migration tracking, and biodiversity conservation programs under controlled conditions.

5. Strengthening Environmental Compliance and Governance

The decision promotes higher levels of compliance with environmental regulations by ensuring that modern technologies are subject to oversight, evaluation, and accountability.

6. Protecting Natural Habitats

Reducing pressure from unregulated hunting is expected to improve the condition of mountain, coastal, and desert habitats, preserving their ability to support diverse plant and animal species.

7. Enhancing RAK's Environmental Reputation

The legislation demonstrates the emirate's commitment to international best practices in wildlife conservation, reinforcing its reputation as a leader in environmental sustainability and sustainable development.

8. Delivering Long-Term Environmental Security

Protecting biodiversity and wildlife populations strengthens ecosystem resilience and their ability to adapt to climate change and natural disturbances, ultimately contributing to improved quality of life and sustainable natural resource management for future generations.





Sustainability at the Heart of Manufacturing industry

RAK Ceramics: An Integrated Vision for a Low-Carbon Future and a Sustainable Circular Economy

Amid the accelerating global shift toward sustainability and the green economy, RAK Ceramics continues to strengthen its position as one of the leading industrial companies that combines innovation with environmental responsibility. This journey is led by Abdallah Massaad, Chief Executive Officer of the Group since 2012, who brings more than 25 years of experience in manufacturing and ceramics, along with a deep understanding of regional and global markets.

Throughout his career, he has received numerous international awards and recognitions for his distinguished leadership, including the “Visionary

CEO in Manufacturing Leadership” award and the “Game-Changing CEO” award. He has also been ranked among the top executives in the industrial and logistics sectors across the region. Mr. Massaad holds an MBA in Marketing from Saint Esprit de Kaslik University.

In this interview, Mr. Massaad discusses the Group’s sustainability vision, its key environmental initiatives, efforts to reduce emissions and improve resource efficiency, and its role in supporting the future of sustainable Manufacturing industry in the UAE and around the world.



We believe that sustainability is no longer an option for Manufacturing industry; it has become a fundamental requirement for ensuring future growth and competitiveness.

What are the company's most significant environmental and sustainability initiatives within its industrial operations?

RAK Ceramics adopts a comprehensive sustainability strategy through its 2024–2030 roadmap, focused on resource efficiency, emissions reduction, and sustainable innovation. The company established the UAE's first industrial carbon capture and reuse facility in partnership with Gulf Cryo. It operates a circular manufacturing system that promotes water reuse, waste treatment, and Manufacturing Waste, which is recycled and reintegrated into production processes whenever possible. RAK Ceramics has also introduced sustainable product lines, including the RE-USE Collection made from recycled materials. The company continues to invest in advanced technologies that improve energy and resource efficiency. These initiatives help reduce environmental impacts and support national and global sustainability goals.

How does the company integrate environmental sustainability into its long-term strategy?

Sustainability is a core element of RAK Ceramics' long-term business strategy and future growth plans.

The company has developed a sustainability framework based on four pillars: environmental responsibility, people and communities, governance, and responsible operations. This framework supports improved energy and water efficiency across its facilities.

It also focuses on reducing carbon emissions and expanding circular economy practices. RAK Ceramics continues to develop sustainable products that meet evolving market demands. Sustainability considerations are integrated into decision-making processes throughout the organization. The company aligns its efforts with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UAE Net Zero 2050.

What are the company's goals for reducing its carbon footprint in the coming years?

RAK Ceramics is committed to reducing its carbon footprint through a range of sustainability initiatives across its operations.

The company invests in carbon capture and utilization projects to help lower industrial emissions.

It continuously improves energy efficiency across its production processes and facilities. Advanced systems are used to measure, monitor, and report emissions in line with international standards. RAK Ceramics is also working to reduce emissions from logistics and supply chain activities. The company supports environmental initiatives such as mangrove planting projects that contribute to carbon sequestration.

These efforts support the UAE Net Zero 2050 initiative and the company's long-term climate goals.

What measures are being implemented to reduce energy and water consumption in ceramic manufacturing facilities?

RAK Ceramics considers responsible resource management a key pillar of sustainable manufacturing. The company implements measures to improve energy and water efficiency across its operations. It continuously invests in advanced technologies and equipment that deliver higher performance with lower resource consumption. RAK Ceramics operates under the ISO 50001 En

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ergy Management System to optimize energy use. The company reuses treated water in production and operates specialized water recycling systems. These initiatives help reduce freshwater consumption and support more efficient resource utilization. Regular monitoring of energy and water performance supports continuous improvement and sustainability goals.

Does the company rely on renewable energy sources or alternative solutions to reduce dependence on fossil fuels?

RAK Ceramics is focused on improving energy efficiency and reducing emissions across its operations and manufacturing activities. The company continues to adopt energy-efficient

technologies to enhance sustainable production. Industrial processes are regularly optimized to reduce environmental impact and improve performance.

A key initiative is the implementation of carbon capture and utilization projects.

These projects help lower emissions associated with energy use and manufacturing operations. RAK Ceramics also evaluates emerging technologies and innovative solutions that support its environmental goals. Through these efforts, the company is building a more sustainable and resilient manufacturing future.

How does the company manage industrial waste and recycle raw materials or non-conforming products?

RAK Ceramics adopts a circular economy approach to maximize resource efficiency and minimize waste. The company reuses non-conforming raw materials and recycles production waste whenever possible. Suitable materials are reintroduced into the manufacturing process to reduce material losses. This approach helps lower the consumption of virgin resources and improve production efficiency. RAK Ceramics also converts certain waste streams into new production inputs.

These initiatives reduce landfill waste and support responsible resource management.

The company has developed products made entirely from recycled materials, reinforcing its commitment to circular manufacturing.

What role does technological innovation play in improving production efficiency and reducing environmental impacts?

Technological innovation is a key driver of RAK Ceramics' sustainability strategy.

The company invests in advanced technologies and equipment to improve manufacturing efficiency. These innovations help reduce the consumption of energy, water, and raw materials.

They also minimize waste, improve product quality, and enhance operational performance. Modern technologies enable better resource



utilization and lower environmental impacts. Innovation supports the development of more durable, longer-lasting products.

Through continuous investment in research and development, RAK Ceramics advances sustainable and low-impact manufacturing.

Are there investments in research and development to create environmentally friendly products or materials that require less energy?

Research and development is a key pillar of RAK Ceramics' innovation and sustainability strategy. Through its InnoTech Lab, the company develops products with improved performance and lower environmental impact.

RAK Ceramics also invests in initiatives such as Continua Plus to enhance manufacturing efficiency. These technologies help reduce energy and resource consumption while improving product quality. The company develops resource-efficient solutions, including KLUDI water-saving products.

It continues to invest in advanced production facilities and modern manufacturing systems. The RE-USE Collection, made from recycled materials, reflects the company's commitment to innovation and circular economy principles.

How does the company balance market demands with its commitment to global environmental standards?

RAK Ceramics strives to balance customer needs with the highest international environmental standards. The company continuously invests in technology, innovation, and research to enhance product quality and efficiency.

Its products are designed to meet market expectations in quality, design, and performance. At the same time, sustainability is integrated into product development and manufacturing processes. The company focuses on reducing environmental impacts and improving resource efficiency. This approach enables RAK Ceramics to adapt to changing market trends while maintaining sustainability commitments.

As a result, the company strengthens its global competitiveness and reputation for sustainable innovation.

What are the company's key corporate social responsibility programs that support the local community?

RAK Ceramics believes its role extends beyond manufacturing to supporting sustainable community development. The company implements CSR initiatives that create positive social and environmental impact. These include volunteer programs, tree-planting campaigns, community clean-ups, and environmental awareness activities. RAK Ceramics also participates in mangrove planting and other sustainability-focused initiatives.

The company invests in Emiratization, training, and professional development programs to support workforce growth.

It actively supports the cultural and creative sectors by sponsoring Emirati artists and local talent. Through these efforts, RAK Ceramics contributes to sustainable, inclusive, and long-term community development.

How does the company contribute to raising environmental awareness among its employees and the wider community?

RAK Ceramics is committed to promoting a strong culture of sustainability within the workplace and the wider community. The company organizes workshops, training pro



grams, and awareness campaigns on sustainability and environmental responsibility.

These initiatives help employees better understand sustainability principles and best practices. RAK Ceramics also encourages staff participation in environmental and community activities.

The company supports tree-planting programs, community clean-up campaigns, and volunteer initiatives. These efforts promote environmental awareness and social responsibility across the community. Through these programs, RAK Ceramics strengthens community engagement and supports sustainable development goals.

Are there partnerships with educational or environmental institutions to promote a culture of sustainability?

RAK Ceramics considers strategic partnerships essential to advancing its sustainability goals. The company collaborates with national and international organizations to expand the impact of its environmental initiatives.

Key partners include the United Nations Global Compact, Emirates Environmental Group, Majra, and the Environment Protection and Development Authority. These partnerships support sustainability, environmental, and community-focused programs.

RAK Ceramics also works with academic and educational institutions to promote sustainability awareness. Such collaborations encourage research, knowledge exchange, and environmental education.

The company further supports talent development through programs that empower graduates and future professionals.

What are the main challenges the company faces in implementing sustainability standards within an energy-intensive industrial sector?

One of RAK Ceramics' main challenges is balancing operational efficiency and market competitiveness with ambitious sustainability goals. Growing expectations from customers, stakeholders, and regulators require continuous investment in in-

novation and environmental management systems. RAK Ceramics views these challenges as opportunities to improve performance, efficiency, and long-term sustainability. Through innovation and resource-efficient solutions, the company continues to reduce its environmental footprint and strengthen sustainable growth.

How does the company respond to increasingly stringent local and international environmental regulations?

RAK Ceramics adopts a proactive approach to environmental compliance through strong governance, continuous monitoring of regulations, and regular updates to its policies and practices. The company enhances transparency through sustainability reporting and invests in advanced technologies and environmental management systems to meet evolving regulatory requirements and support responsible manufacturing.

What opportunities does the company see in the transition toward a green economy, both locally and globally?

RAK Ceramics views the green economy as a major opportunity to drive growth, innovation, and expand into new global markets while strengthening the competitiveness of its sustainable products. The transition also improves operational efficiency, attracts ESG-focused investors, and supports long-term sustainable economic development in the UAE and internationally.



Science and Technology Committee Leads the Green Medicine Generation

RAK Medical and Health Sciences University Student Council Promotes Medical Innovation and Environmental Sustainability



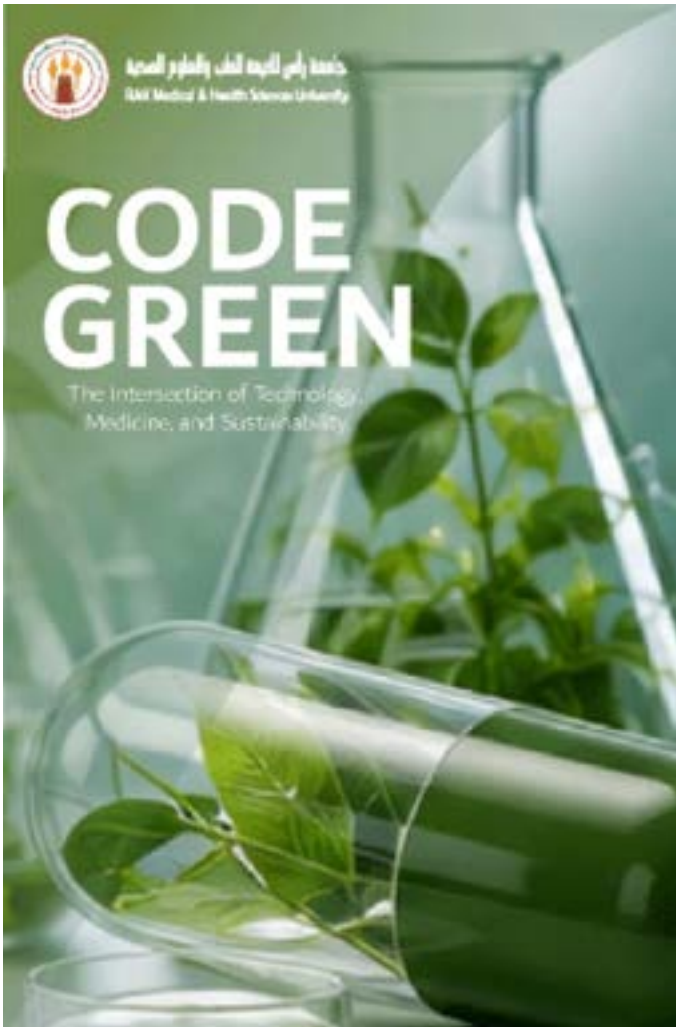
As the world increasingly embraces sustainability across all sectors, healthcare has emerged as one of the fields undergoing significant transformation in education, practice, and innovation. Growing awareness of the environmental impact of healthcare activities and pharmaceutical industries has highlighted the need for more sustainable approaches to medical education and healthcare delivery.

Within this context, the Science and Technology Committee of the Student Council at RAK Medical and Health Sciences University has established itself as a leading example of youth-driven innovation. Through a series of research, educational, and community initiatives, the committee has successfully connected medical sciences with environmental responsibility, promoting the concept of “Green Medicine” both within and beyond the academic environment.

These initiatives demonstrate that modern medical education extends beyond preparing healthcare professionals. It also involves equipping future generations with the knowledge and skills needed to address environmental and health challenges through sustainable and innovative solutions.

“Code Green”: Digital Transformation as a Gateway to Sustainability

Under the leadership of Committee Chairwoman Farah Emad Al Din, the Science and Technology Committee launched several initiatives focused on sustainability in healthcare. Among its most notable achievements was the publication of Code Green, which documented a specialized sustainability workshop conducted with healthcare and environmental experts. The publication highlighted the university’s successful



based on the Benign-by-Design concept. The publication explored how pharmaceutical compounds can be developed to remain effective while reducing environmental impacts throughout their lifecycle. It also examined the growing role of artificial intelligence in drug development, showcasing its potential to create more efficient and sustainable medicines while reducing energy use and harmful chemicals. In addition, the issue presented innovative healthcare solutions such as dissolvable Pure-Nil™ smart packaging designed to reduce plastic waste and improve safety in healthcare facilities. These initiatives reflect students' growing awareness that healthcare innovation must balance clinical effectiveness with environmental sustainability, reinforcing the idea that protecting human health and the environment are closely interconnected goals.

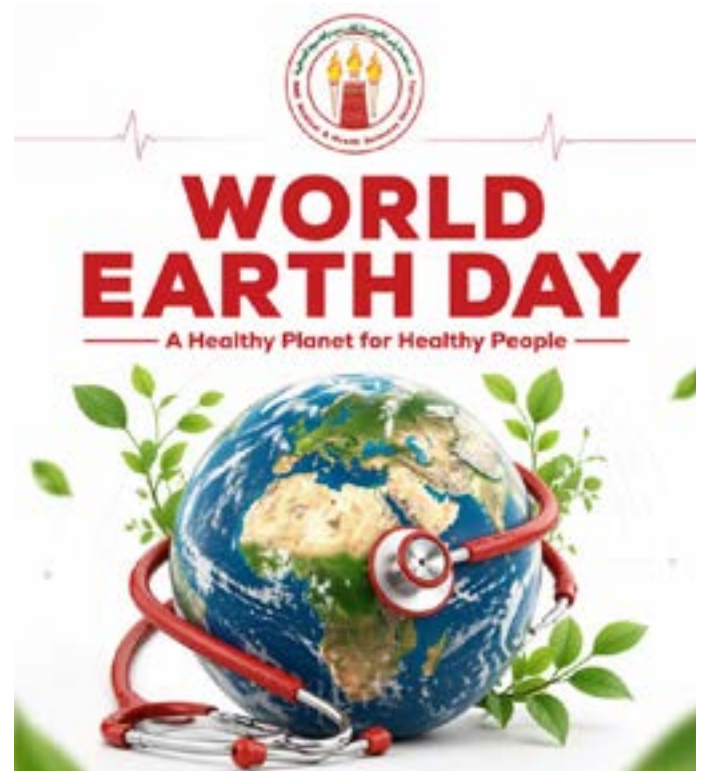
Medicine and Sustainability on the Environmental Public Speaking Platform

The university's students extended their sustainability efforts beyond campus by participating in an environ

transition to a fully digital clinical training and practical examination system (OSCE/OSPE), creating a paperless educational environment that reduces resource consumption and environmental impact. Beyond enhancing efficiency and educational quality, the initiative demonstrated how technology can support sustainability in healthcare education while encouraging students to view digital innovation and environmental responsibility as interconnected priorities for the future.

Green Chemistry: Making Pharmaceutical Development More Environmentally Conscious

Continuing its sustainability-focused efforts, the committee published a special Earth Day edition titled The Chloro-Fill, highlighting advances in green chemistry and environmentally friendly pharmaceutical design





mental public speaking competition organized by the Emirates Environmental Group. Their project explored the relationship between textile production and skin health, highlighting how environmentally friendly fabrics can reduce dermatological issues while lowering the environmental impact of the fashion industry. To support their research, the team consulted a dermatology specialist and presented innovative ideas, including a proposed UAE Green Label system using QR-code technology to provide transparent sustainability information to consumers. The project offered valuable practical experience, enhancing students' communication, teamwork, and presentation skills while demonstrating the strong connection between medicine, sustainability, and community engagement.

Indoor Air Quality: Research Revealing an Environmental Awareness Gap

In the field of scientific research, a group of medical students conducted a study entitled "Knowledge, Awareness, and Practices Related to Indoor Air Quality Among University Students in RAK."

The study aimed to assess students' understanding of indoor air quality and its direct impact on health and academic performance.

A total of 386 students from medical and non-medical disciplines participated in the research. The findings revealed that overall awareness of indoor air quality was moderate, while scientific knowledge remained limited. Only 26.9% of participants achieved an acceptable level of understanding.

The study also identified a strong relationship between higher knowledge levels and greater adherence to preventive behaviors, including improved ventilation practices and avoiding smoking in enclosed spaces. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening environmental and health education within universities and integrating indoor air quality concepts into student initiatives and academic programs to create healthier and more sustainable learning environments.

Toward a More Sustainable and Environmentally Aware Medical Generation

These initiatives and research contributions illustrate the evolving nature of modern medical education. Today's medical students are no longer limited to acquiring clinical knowledge; they are becoming active participants in building a healthier and more sustainable future.

Through its diverse activities, the Science and Technology Committee of the Student Council at RAK Medical and Health Sciences University demonstrates that investment in medical education should be measured not only by academic achievement but also by students' ability to develop innovative solutions that address both health and environmental challenges. By combining scientific excellence, environmental responsibility, and community engagement, these young innovators are helping shape a future where healthcare and sustainability work hand in hand to support global sustainable development goals.



Art, Nature, and Sustainability

An Interview with Artist and Environmental Advocate Engineer Tariq Ibrahim Al Salman

In a world facing increasing environmental and sustainability challenges, there is a growing need for initiatives that strengthen the connection between people and nature. Among the inspiring figures contributing to this vision is Engineer Tariq Ibrahim Al Salman, who has

successfully combined art, nature, and heritage through projects that promote environmental awareness and community engagement.

Through Design Gallery, he established a platform that supports artists and emerging talents while using art as a tool for cultural dialogue and awareness. His Nature's Treasures Farm further reflects his passion for nature and heritage by offering educational experi-

ences that connect visitors with agriculture, environmental learning, and natural history. Despite his academic background in electronic engineering, Al Salman chose a path that places creativity in the service of society and the environment. In this interview, he shares his views on sustainability, environmental awareness, and the role of art in inspiring positive change and strengthening people's connection with nature and heritage.

How did your relationship with nature begin, and when did it evolve from a personal passion into a broader mission?

Since childhood, I have been fascinated by nature and its beauty, finding in it a source of inspiration and reflection. Over time, my passion grew through travel and exploration, where I saw how nature could become a powerful educational and cultural asset. This inspired me to create initiatives that showcase the UAE's rich environmental heritage, particularly in Ras Al Khaimah, and promote environmental awareness through meaningful artistic and community experiences.

How can art contribute to environmental awareness and sustainability within society?

Art has the power to inspire emotions and shape perspectives, making it an effective tool for environmental awareness. By highlighting the beauty of nature and local landscapes, art helps people develop a deeper connection with their environment. Through exhibitions and workshops, it creates engaging opportunities to promote sustainability and conservation, strengthening the relationship between people and nature. By encouraging creativity and reflection, environmental art inspires individuals to value natural resources and take a



more active role in protecting them for future generations.

Tell us about the idea behind establishing “Design Gallery.” What did you hope to achieve through this artistic space?

The idea behind Design Gallery emerged from my belief in the importance of creating a space that supports artists, photographers, and young creative talents by giving them opportunities to express their ideas and experiences.

I felt that RAK possesses significant creative potential, but that talent needed a platform through which it could flourish and reach wider audiences. From the beginning, I wanted the gallery to be more than a venue for displaying artwork. It was envisioned as a space where art, culture, and community dialogue could intersect.

Through exhibitions, workshops, and cultural events, we have created opportunities that connect contemporary art with local identity, heritage, and nature, encouraging young people to engage with creativity in meaningful ways. The gallery also serves as a platform for raising awareness of environmental and cultural values through creative experiences that inspire learning, reflection, and

community



in environmental awareness and sustainability over the past years, both at institutional and community levels.

Today, there is clear interest in topics such as renewable energy, protected areas, afforestation, recycling, and biodiversity conservation. Environmental initiatives are no longer limited to government institutions; schools, universities, entrepreneurs, artists, and community groups all play increasingly important roles.

This collective participation is essential because true sustainability depends on a shared culture of responsibility and long-term commitment from society as a whole.



Nature is an essential part of our identity and heritage, and protecting it means safeguarding our future and the generations to come.

How did the idea of “Nature’s Treasures Farm” come about, and what philosophy drives the project?

For me, Nature’s Treasures Farm is more than a farm—it is an educational and cultural experience that celebrates nature and heritage. Inspired by my passion for collecting gemstones, shells, fossils, and natural specimens, the project was created to help visitors discover the beauty and diversity of the natural world. Through a blend of traditional and modern agricultural practices, the farm offers opportunities for learning, reflection, and exploration, while encouraging a deeper appreciation of nature and the importance of protecting it.

How do you view the development of environmental awareness within Emirati society in recent years?

I believe the UAE has made remarkable progress

What environmental challenges do you believe require greater attention today?

Despite significant progress, there are still challenges that require greater focus. One of the most important is strengthening environmental awareness in everyday life because environmental protection begins with individual behavior, not only with policies and large-scale initiatives.

Another challenge is maintaining a balance between urban development and natural resource conservation. As cities continue to grow, it is important that development projects preserve environmental identity and ecological sustainability.

In addition, we need to reconnect younger generations with nature, particularly at a time when technology and digital lifestyles increasingly dominate daily life.

To what extent can small environmental projects create meaningful change in society?

I strongly believe that small projects can sometimes have a greater impact than large initiatives because they are often closer to people and create

direct engagement.

When a child visits an educational farm or participates in a nature-inspired art workshop, the experience can leave a lasting impression that shapes future attitudes and behaviors.

Small initiatives are often more flexible and effective at building genuine community relationships, allowing sustainability values to spread gradually and become part of everyday culture. Real change often begins with simple ideas that grow over time.

How can younger generations reconnect with nature in an era dominated by technology?

Many young people spend increasing amounts of time in front of screens, creating a disconnect from nature. Environmental excursions, educational farms, and hands-on activities help reconnect them with the natural world, fostering a deeper appreciation that goes beyond classroom learning. These experiences help cultivate a sense of responsibility toward the environment and encourage young people to become active participants in its protection and preservation.

What message are you trying to communicate through your artistic and environmental projects?

My message is simple: nature is an essential part of our identity and heritage, and protecting it means safeguarding our future. I believe art is a powerful force for positive change, capable of communicating environmental messages in a meaningful and lasting way. Through my projects, I strive to connect art, nature, and heritage while inspiring greater environmental awareness.

What future projects or ambitions do you hope to achieve?

I aspire to further develop initiatives that combine

environmental education, culture, and the arts on a broader scale and transform them into community platforms that foster long-term environmental awareness among future generations. I also hope to expand projects related to nature and local heritage through exhibitions, educational programs, and community events that strengthen people's connection with their environment and cultural identity and encourage meaningful community engagement. I believe the future requires initiatives that create harmony between development, people, and nature—and that is precisely the vision I seek to pursue through my current and future projects.



The Business Case for Sustainability: Creating Value Through Responsibility



Dr. Habiba Al Mar'ashi

Co-founder and Chairperson of Emirates Environmental Group

In today's rapidly changing world, sustainability is no longer a peripheral concern. It has become a fundamental pillar of modern business strategy. What was once viewed primarily as an ethical commitment or a reputational advantage is now widely recognized as a key driver of long-term value creation, resilience, and sustainable competitive advantage.

The Global Shift Toward a More Sustainable Economy

At the global level, this transformation is becoming increasingly evident. The World Economic Forum

continues to rank climate-related risks among the most significant threats facing the global economy. At the same time, environmental, social, and governance (ESG)-related investment assets are projected to exceed USD 40 trillion by 2030, reflecting a profound shift in capital allocation and investment priorities. Investors, regulators, and consumers are increasingly demanding transparency, accountability, and measurable impact. Corporate performance is no longer assessed solely through financial returns but also through the responsibility and sustainability with which those returns are generated.

Sustainability as a Driver of Profitability and Efficiency

Beyond regulatory compliance, sustainability has proven to be a powerful economic enabler. Research by McKinsey indicates that companies integrating sustainability into their operations can reduce costs by as much as 60 percent through improved resource efficiency, optimized energy consumption, and waste reduction.

At the same time, sustainability-driven innovation opens access to new markets, strengthens brand loyalty, and enhances long-term profitability. Organizations that embrace sustainability are often better positioned to identify emerging opportunities and adapt to changing market expectations.

The Gulf Region and the Accelerating Green Transition

Across the Arab world—and particularly within the Gulf region—the sustainability transition is gathering momentum. Governments are embedding sustainability into national development strategies, recognizing its role in economic diversification and resilience.

The UAE's Net Zero by 2050 Strategic Initiative, the first of its kind in the Middle East, reflects a clear national commitment to reducing emissions while maintaining sustainable economic growth. This initiative

demonstrates how environmental responsibility and economic progress can advance hand in hand.

The UAE as a Regional Sustainability Leader

The United Arab Emirates continues to strengthen its position as a regional and global sustainability leader through tangible action and long-term investment.

The country has committed more than AED 600 billion toward clean and renewable energy projects by 2050. Meanwhile, the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050 aims to generate 100 percent of Dubai's energy requirements from clean sources by mid-century.

In parallel, the UAE Circular Economy Policy promotes resource efficiency across key sectors including manufacturing, infrastructure, transportation, and food systems, reflecting an integrated approach to sustainable development and economic transformation.

Green Finance Reshaping the Financial Sector

Sustainability is also transforming the financial landscape. The UAE has witnessed significant growth in green and sustainable finance, with financial institutions increasingly incorporating ESG criteria into lending and investment decisions.

This shift reinforces the direct relationship between sustainable performance and access to capital. Responsible business practices are becoming a decisive factor in determining long-term corporate success and investment attractiveness.

The Private Sector as a Key Sustainability Partner

At the corporate level, many organizations across the UAE are aligning their operations with sustainability priorities by improving energy efficiency, reducing waste, and adopting responsible sourcing practices.

The private sector continues to play a critical role in supporting the national sustainability agenda, aided by a regulatory environment that encourages innovation while strengthening transparency, accountability,

and responsible business conduct.

RAK and Sustainable Business Models

In RAK, this transformation is increasingly visible across strategic sectors such as manufacturing, construction, and tourism.

From energy-efficient industrial operations to sustainable hospitality practices, businesses throughout the emirate are demonstrating that environmental responsibility can be successfully integrated into core business models.

This growing trend reflects a deeper understanding that sustainability is not a burden or constraint but a strategic tool for enhancing competitiveness, attracting investment, and ensuring long-term resilience.

Sustainability and Long-Term Competitive Advantage

In today's evolving business environment, the message is clear: sustainability is no longer optional—it is essential.

Organizations that proactively integrate sustainability into their strategies are better equipped to manage risk, adapt to regulatory changes, and meet the expectations of investors, customers, and stakeholders. They are also more resilient in the face of global challenges, including climate-related risks and supply chain disruptions.

From Reporting to Real Impact

However, the true value of sustainability lies not merely in adopting sustainability practices but in embedding them meaningfully and effectively within organizational systems and decision-making processes, creating long-term value and resilience.

This requires moving beyond reporting and compliance toward achieving measurable outcomes, linking sustainability objectives to business strategy, and integrating them into operations at every level of the organization.

Partnerships as a Catalyst for Progress

Collaboration is equally essential. A sustainable future cannot be achieved in isolation.

Drawing on more than three decades of experience in sustainability, I firmly believe that meaningful progress requires strong partnerships between government entities, the private sector, academic institutions, and civil society organizations.

Such collaboration enables the scaling of solutions, the sharing of knowledge, and the acceleration of positive change. The UAE's collaborative approach continues to serve as a model for achieving cross-sector impact and collective progress.

Sustainability: Responsibility and Opportunity

At its core, sustainability is rooted in responsibility. Yet it is also a tremendous opportunity.

It challenges organizations to rethink how they operate, innovate, and grow while creating long-term value for both the economy and society. By embracing sustainability, businesses can contribute to broader societal goals while strengthening their own future prospects.

Building Resilience for the Future

Looking ahead, the organizations that will lead tomorrow are those that understand this dual reality. They will move beyond short-term gains and invest in long-term resilience. They will align purpose with performance and recognize that sustainability is not an external obligation but an internal driver of growth, innovation, and success.

Responsible Leadership Shapes Tomorrow's Economy

In the modern economy, competitiveness is measured not only by growth, but also by its responsibility and sustainability. Organizations and leaders who act responsibly today will shape the economies of tomorrow.



Sustainable Concrete from Agricultural and Plastic Waste

A New Environmental Innovation Reducing Resource Depletion and Carbon Emissions

A research team has developed a new type of sustainable concrete made from recycled agricultural and plastic waste, marking a promising step toward reducing reliance on natural resources and lowering the environmental impact of the construction sector, one of the world's largest consumers of raw materials and energy. The innovation comes amid growing global efforts to promote sustainable construction and support carbon neutrality goals.

The study used recycled materials as partial substitutes for natural sand, including rice husk ash, PET plastic powder from discarded bottles, and rubber

particles from used tires. These materials were incorporated in carefully tested proportions to maintain the strength and durability of concrete while providing environmental benefits, highlighting their potential for future construction applications.

Construction Sector Under Growing Environmental Pressure

The construction industry faces growing environmental pressures due to increasing demand for building materials, particularly natural sand, whose extraction can damage ecosystems and natural habitats. At the

same time, plastic waste and used tires continue to present major environmental challenges because of their slow decomposition.

In response, researchers are developing innovative construction materials that reuse waste and convert it into valuable resources. This approach reduces landfill waste, lowers demand for raw materials, and supports the principles of a circular economy while improving overall resource efficiency.



Rice Husk Ash Delivers the Best Results

The study's findings showed that rice husk ash was the most effective material among those tested. When 2.5% of natural sand was replaced with rice husk ash, the reduction in concrete compressive strength did not exceed 1.6%. This performance is attributed to the high concentration of reactive silica in rice husk ash, which enhances the internal structure of concrete, improving its cohesion and strength.

This approach also offers an additional environmental benefit by creating a productive use for agricultural waste that is often disposed of through open burning, a practice that releases significant amounts of pollutants and fine particulate matter into the atmosphere. Researchers believe that incorporating such waste

into building materials provides a dual benefit by reducing pollution and improving resource efficiency.

Plastic and Tire Waste Offer Promising Alternatives

The tests also demonstrated that recycled plastic powder and waste tire rubber can produce favorable results when used at low replacement levels, with only minor reductions in some mechanical properties compared to conventional concrete. Researchers view these materials as an important opportunity to address the growing accumulation of long-lasting waste by integrating it into practical and economically valuable construction products.

The use of these materials can also reduce the need for incineration or landfilling, helping to lower pollutant emissions and maximize the value of available resources within a circular economy framework. Experts suggest that wider adoption of such applications could create new markets for recycled materials and stimulate investment in advanced recycling technologies.

A Step Toward Greener Construction

The study found that replacement levels of up to 5% offer a suitable balance between maintaining concrete durability and achieving environmental benefits. Researchers noted that further improvements in processing and mixing techniques could enhance performance, making such innovations an important part of the global shift toward green construction.

Wider adoption of these materials could help reduce the carbon footprint of construction projects, decrease pressure on natural resources, and support sustainability goals. By transforming agricultural and plastic waste into valuable building materials, sustainable concrete offers a promising solution that combines environmental protection with the needs of future urban development.

Protecting Biodiversity and Natural Habitats in RAK

Between the Challenges of Urban Expansion and the Opportunities of Sustainable Tourism



Biodiversity in the Emirate of RAK is one of its most valuable natural assets, providing the emirate with unique environmental and tourism significance. Its diverse landscapes—including mountains, coastlines, wadis, mangrove forests, and desert areas—support a rich variety of ecosystems and wildlife. With the rapid pace of urban development and tourism growth in recent years, the protection of natural habitats and wildlife has become a critical issue closely linked to the future of sustainable development in the emirate. Today, RAK faces increasing challenges in balancing economic growth with the conservation of sensitive ecosystems, particularly in coastal zones and natural sites that serve as habitats for numerous plant

and animal species. At the same time, government entities and environmental organizations continue to implement initiatives and programs aimed at protecting natural resources, strengthening environmental oversight, and rehabilitating areas affected by human activities to ensure the long-term sustainability of these valuable natural assets.

In this feature, we explore the key challenges and opportunities associated with biodiversity conservation in RAK through the perspectives of officials and specialists who discuss the emirate's efforts to promote environmental sustainability and transform wildlife and natural habitats into drivers of eco-tourism and sustainable development.



Yousif Ali Mohammed
Former Director General of
the Department of Finance,
RAK

Yousif Ali Mohammed Al Baloushi is an Emirati financial executive and former Director General of the Finance Department in Ras Al Khaimah. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from the United Arab Emirates University and has extensive experience in financial management, governance, and institutional development.



The Government of Ras Al Khaimah continues its efforts to preserve natural resources and promote their sustainability in line with the emirate's comprehensive development plans.

Biodiversity: A Natural and Tourism Asset

Biodiversity in RAK is one of the emirate's most important natural assets, providing significant environmental and tourism value. The emirate's diverse geography, including mountains, coastlines, valleys, and deserts, has created habitats that support a wide range of wildlife and native plant species. In light of this diversity, the Government of RAK continues its efforts to protect natural resources and ensure their sustainability in line with the emirate's development plans.

Balancing Development and Environmental Protection

Government authorities are committed to maintaining a balance between urban expansion and environmental conservation through policies that protect wildlife and natural habitats while supporting eco-tourism and quality of life. Relevant entities also promote environmental awareness through educational initiatives and community programs targeting all segments of society.

Monitoring and Legislation for Natural Resource Protection

The emirate benefits from continuous oversight by several authorities, including the Municipality, the Environment Protection and Development Authority, the Public Works Department, and other regulatory bodies. These institutions ensure the protection of natural environments

and prevent activities that could harm ecological systems through the enforcement of environmental regulations designed to reduce violations and safeguard natural resources for future generations.

Sustainable Urban Development Projects

The Government of RAK has adopted various measures to ensure that urban and tourism growth does not negatively affect the environment. These efforts include expanding green spaces and protecting coastal areas, while integrating environmental considerations into major development projects.

This approach has enhanced the emirate's reputation as a destination that balances modern development with environmental preservation, reflecting its commitment to sustainable

A Future Vision for Sustainable Development

These efforts reinforce RAK's position as a model for balancing economic development with environmental conservation. They also support sustainable tourism by protecting nature and wildlife, ensuring that biodiversity remains a valuable asset for future generations.

This vision encourages community participation in environmental initiatives and strengthens awareness of the importance of conserving natural habitats, helping the emirate achieve long-term sustainable development in harmony with nature.



Mohammed Al Mahmoud
Assistant General Director,
Department of Economic
Development

Mohammed Al Mahmoud is Assistant Director General at the Ras Al Khaimah Department of Economic Development. He has experience in economic development, investment promotion, and business environment enhancement, and has contributed to initiatives that support sustainability and economic competitiveness in the emirate.



The main challenge lies in achieving a balance between development needs and the preservation of natural resources and sensitive environmental habitats.

Balancing Development and Environmental Protection

RAK faces growing biodiversity conservation challenges alongside rapid urban growth and expanding tourism and economic projects.

From the perspective of the Department of Economic Development, the key challenge is balancing development needs with the protection of natural resources and sensitive habitats, particularly in coastal and mountainous areas where development can place pressure on natural ecosystems.

Environmental Challenges Associated with Economic Growth

The fragmentation of ecosystems caused by roads and development projects can affect wildlife movement and biodiversity. In addition, some economic activities may place pressure on natural resources if not properly regulated and monitored. Environmental compliance among certain businesses also remains a challenge, requiring continued awareness efforts and effective oversight to ensure adherence to environmental standards.

The Role of Environmental Authorities

In this context, the Environment Protection and Development Authority plays a key role in protecting natural habitats through environmental permitting, monitoring, and rehabilitation programs. Its efforts

include planting native vegetation, protecting wildlife, establishing protected areas, and promoting environmental awareness across the community and business sector.

Government Collaboration and Integrated Action

These efforts are supported by other government entities that implement waste management and environmental protection measures. RAK Municipality also regulates urban expansion and economic activities through planning requirements that help protect sensitive areas and maintain a balance between development and sustainability.

Eco-Tourism as an Economic Opportunity

Wildlife conservation creates valuable opportunities for eco-tourism through protected areas, mountain trails, and nature-based experiences that support sustainable investment. This approach attracts nature-focused visitors, promotes environmental awareness, and contributes to local economic growth.

Biodiversity as a Strategic Opportunity

The Department of Economic Development emphasizes that biodiversity conservation has become a strategic opportunity that enhances RAK's competitiveness while supporting a balanced relationship between economic development and environmental protection.



Tariq Rashid Al Suwaidi
Director of the New Economy
Department

Tariq Rashid Al Suwaidi is Director of the New Economy Department at the Ministry of Economy and Tourism. He specializes in economic and sustainable development policies, with a focus on the green economy, circular economy, and sustainable growth. He works on initiatives that support economic diversification, enhance future-sector competitiveness, and promote the sustainable use of natural resources.



Protecting wildlife provides important opportunities to support eco-tourism and promote sustainable development, particularly as interest in nature-based experiences continues to grow among visitors.

The Challenge of Balancing Development and Nature

RAK faces growing biodiversity conservation challenges amid urban expansion and tourism growth, requiring a careful balance between development and the protection of natural habitats. Sensitive ecosystems such as coastal areas, mangroves, and wetlands require effective management to ensure their long-term sustainability and ecological value.

Climate Change and Environmental Pressures

Climate change, rising temperatures, and increasing pressure on natural resources present growing environmental challenges that require effective planning and long-term management. In response, environmental authorities in RAK, particularly the Environment Protection and Development Authority, play a key role in protecting natural habitats and conserving biodiversity through sustainable environmental initiatives.

Protecting and Restoring Natural Habitats

Relevant authorities adopt an integrated approach that combines conservation, restoration, and environmental monitoring to protect natural resources for future generations. These efforts include protected areas, habitat restoration programs, mangrove planting

initiatives, and the monitoring of wildlife using modern technologies and environmental data systems.

Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Development

Wildlife conservation creates valuable opportunities for eco-tourism and sustainable development as interest in nature-based experiences continues to grow. Natural sites can support activities such as birdwatching, eco-tours, kayaking, and nature photography, helping raise environmental awareness and support local economies. These activities also create opportunities for tourism-related small businesses and environmental services. Together, they strengthen RAK's position as a destination that combines tourism growth with environmental conservation.

A Future Vision for Biodiversity Conservation

These efforts demonstrate that biodiversity conservation is an integral part of RAK's development vision. The emirate continues to balance investment, tourism, and natural resource protection to support environmental sustainability and enhance quality of life.

This approach reflects RAK's commitment to maintaining harmony between development and nature while promoting long-term sustainability.

Wildlife in Ras Al Khaimah

A Visual Journey into the Heart of Nature and Biodiversity



BY: Bashar Bouka

www.360photographynature.com

RAK is home to a rich natural diversity that combines mountains, valleys, coastlines, and deserts, creating ideal habitats for a wide range of wildlife and bird species that reflect the beauty of nature and the balance of local ecosystems. Through these pages, readers

are invited on a visual journey to discover part of the emirate's wildlife heritage through photographs captured by wildlife photographer Bashar Bouka, whose lens highlights the remarkable biodiversity and natural beauty of RAK.

01

Telescopus dhara

Mildly venomous snake, harmless to humans.

-  Colubridae.
-  60–90 cm.
-  Slender camouflaged snake with large eyes
-  Rocky deserts, wadis, mountain habitats.
-  Small reptiles and rodents.
-  Crepuscular, nocturnal, excellent climber.
-  Found in the Hajar Mountains of the UAE.
-  Globally listed as Least Concern.

The Arabian Cat Snake reveals the hidden side of life in arid rocky environments.



02

Paraechinus aethiopicus

Fast nocturnal desert mammal with defenses.

-  Erinaceidae.
-  14–28 cm.
-  Small Spiny Mammal With Large Ears.
-  Arid deserts and sparsely vegetated plains.
-  Insects and small invertebrates.
-  Nocturnal, agile, curls when threatened.
-  Widespread throughout the UAE.
-  Globally listed as Least Concern.

The Desert Hedgehog is a small nocturnal mammal adapted to arid environments and feeds mainly on insects.



03

Otus brucei

Camouflaged nocturnal owl maintaining balance.

-  Strigidae.
-  19–21 cm **Wingspan:** about 50–55 cm
-  Small pale owl with distinctive yellow eyes.
-  Dry environments with scattered trees.
-  Insects and other small invertebrates.
-  Nocturnal bird relying on camouflage.
-  Resident breeder in northern UAE.
-  Globally listed as Least Concern.

The Pallid Scops Owl is one of the smallest tree-dwelling owls found in arid environments.



04

Ceryle rudis

Rare Migrant bird with exceptional hunting skills.

-  Alcedinidae.
-  25–30 cm **Wingspan:** about 35–41 cm
-  Black-and-white kingfisher with breast bands.
-  Freshwater and coastal habitats supporting fish
-  Mainly small fish.
-  Hovers above water before catching prey.
-  Rarely observed in the UAE.
-  Globally listed as Least Concern.

The Pied Kingfisher is a rare bird distinguished by its striking black-and-white plumage.



05

Vanellus gregarius

Rare migratory bird facing conservation risks.

-  Charadriidae.
-  27–30 cm **Wingspan:** about 65–72 cm
-  Black-bellied bird with sandy-brown back.
-  Open grasslands, dry plains, farmland habitats.
-  Insects and small invertebrates.
-  Walks slowly, often seen in groups.
-  Rare winter visitor to the UAE
-  Critically endangered.

The Sociable Lapwing is a rare migratory bird associated with open grassland and plain habitats.



Earth Hour

60 Minutes for Our Planet

