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Dubai Real Estate Institute

Transforming Dubai into a 'smart' city

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Transforming Dubai into a 'smart' city

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As Dubai in the United Arab Emirates prepares to host the World Expo in 2020, the city is implementing a number of projects in pursuit of its goal of becoming one of the world's leading smart and sustainable cities.

Dubai has undergone significant development over the past decade and has transformed from a small desert trading hub to an urbanized metropolis. Under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai has grown into the largest city, principal port and commercial hub of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In November 2013, the UAE won the right to host the World Expo in Dubai in 2020. This will be the first time that the World Expo will be staged in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. The theme for Dubai's World Expo will be *Connecting Minds, Creating the Future*, which reflects the spirit of partnership and cooperation that underpin the UAE's success in pioneering new paths of development and innovation. Through this theme, Dubai Expo 2020 aims to provide a space for connecting minds from across the globe and inspire participants to mobilize around shared challenges under the sub-themes of Mobility, Sustainability and Opportunity. Dubai Expo 2020 is expected to attract 25 million visitors, of which 70 per cent will be from overseas.

In 2014, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, launched a strategy to transform Dubai into a 'Smart City'. The strategy features six key pillars and 100 initiatives around transport, communications, infrastructure, electricity, economic services and urban planning. Under the strategy, 1,000 government services will 'go smart' in the next three years.

Sheik Mohammed's overarching goal in the roll out of Dubai's Smart City Strategy is for this project to touch the lives of every citizen of the UAE in the immediate future. Having recently announced the strategy, the Government of Dubai plans to implement a number of related projects, including:

- The development of a 5D Control Room, the world's largest of its kind, which will be used in the process of transforming Dubai into a Smart City.

Dubai's 5D Control Room will play a critical role in overseeing government projects, service indicators and monitoring roads, weather conditions and emergency situations.

- The My Window to Dubai Program, which will allow city institutions, facilities and residents easy, shared access to data and information about schools, hospitals, roads, transport systems, sensors, buildings, energy and more. This program reflects the three basic ideas upon which Dubai's strategic plan was founded: communication, integration and cooperation.
- A comprehensive plan to ensure the provision of the smartest transportation system in the world through the creation of a unified control centre to improve traffic and transportation systems.
- The development of a smart electrical grid to encourage homeowners and buildings in Dubai to use solar energy and sell surplus reserves back to the government through the network itself. In addition, smart meters will be developed with the aim of rationing the consumption of electricity and water in Dubai.
- The implementation of the Smart Parks and Smart Beaches projects, which will provide detailed information about weather conditions, temperatures and safety guidelines.
- In line with Dubai's commitment to become a world leading Green City, and to make Dubai Expo 2020 an environmentally sustainable event, the Municipality of Dubai recently implemented mandatory green building regulations for the private sector and all private development projects initiated since 1 March 2014.

The City of Dubai committed to the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in 2013.



Dubai's transformation into a major urban metropolis has brought challenges and opportunities. The 2014 Dubai Smart City Strategy aims to touch the lives of every citizen and will allow for easy shared access to data about schools, hospitals, transport systems, buildings, energy and more. It also supports the uptake of solar energy and green building regulations. Image: Mohammad Sabbouh.