

Chapter 1

The Sustainable Falcon: Dubai's Path to Becoming a Green Economic Leader

Heather Webb

Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE

Shubo Liu

Central University of Finance and Economics, China

ABSTRACT

It has become vital to understand the economic, environmental, and social impact “going green” has on the region as well as on the interlinked relationship between sustainable consumption and production. This chapter focuses on Dubai’s green growth strategy and the process for anticipating success while comparing its policy and initiatives to other major cities. In addition, the chapter reviews current regulations along with low carbon initiatives as part of Dubai’s green, sustainable development. As Dubai prepares for Expo 2020, the city is focusing on generating sustainable, green innovations. Indeed, climate change has shaped the need for cities and countries to be more aware of their surroundings, and Dubai is no exception in developing a fully, sustainable city to become a green, economic leader.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9377-5.ch001

INTRODUCTION

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Emirate of Dubai has transformed from a 40-mile long coast of fishing and trading ports to a city of skyscrapers, tourism and global, logistics. The weather in Dubai ranges from a low of 65-degrees Fahrenheit in the winter months to a high of 105-degrees Fahrenheit in the summer. In order to keep residents cool, Dubai burns fossil fuel to air-condition buildings, and boils hundreds of gallons of seawater daily. The emirate has asserted itself as becoming a global hub for innovation and start-ups. However, when one thinks of innovative cities, Dubai is not front-of-mind as a nucleus for business start-ups and innovation.

Innovation is a core element of growth, and Dubai is a young, energetic and ambitious city. To catapult itself to a position of global preeminence with respect to innovation, it has employed a strategy focused on economic development. In the past few years, the emirate has seen a new phase in her socio-economic transformation towards becoming one of the first “smart” cities, embracing the vision of a green economy balanced between economic, social and environmental considerations. However, it is not without its struggles. Indeed, Dubai did not get her first paved road until 1961 (Kunzig, 2017). Since then, however, the city has grown exponentially to where it can be a global example.

In the last decade, the idea of global environmental change has taken more notice and there is more comprehensive coverage of policy development. Compared to Dubai’s sister cities, Dubai is in a unique geographical location. For that reason, the emirate deals with more heat related issues and development has to take the hot temperature and sand storms into consideration. However, weather is not a new problem, rather, it is how one reacts to it via policy development that can change the path of sustainability and development.

This chapter focuses on Dubai’s narrative role of becoming a green economy leader. On a global scale, economic development policies in every city should have a sustainability strategy. Much of the discussion in this chapter is conceptual and does not address the uncertainties or possible failures of sustainable initiatives. Instead, this chapter concentrates on how the concepts of sustainability and the drive for a green economy have been applied. In addition, by benchmarking policies with other major cities,

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