

Abu Dhabi electricity policy

The DoE's regulatory framework is the first legally binding clean and renewable energy target in the Middle East for the electricity sector

The Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD), in partnership with the Abu Dhabi Department of Energy (DoE), will aim to generate a large proportion of Abu Dhabi's electricity from clean and renewable sources by 2035.

New regulations, drafted by the DoE, will see 60 per cent of the emirate's electricity being generated from clean and renewable sources by 2035, and up to 75 per cent reduction in carbon emissions per MWh produced by the electricity sector, according to the Abu Dhabi Media Office.

The DoE's "Clean Energy Strategic Target 2035 for Electricity Production in Abu Dhabi" regulatory framework is the first legally binding clean and renewable energy target in the Middle East for the electricity sector.

The new regulations were unveiled at the United Nation's annual climate summit, COP27, in Egypt, and are part of an ongoing energy transition to accelerate the UAE's decarbonisation and green growth efforts.

Dr Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri, Secretary General of EAD, said: "The target to produce 60 per cent of all electricity using clean sources by 2035 is an important step towards meeting UAE's Net Zero aspirations by 2050. Planned investment of billions of dirhams in clean energy infrastructure will be transformative in helping us transition to a low-carbon economy with positive environmental and social outcomes. We, at EAD, are working closely with 26 Abu Dhabi entities, including the Department of Energy, as members of "The Abu Dhabi Climate Change Taskforce", to develop climate change policy and related strategic plans to achieve this transformation."

Al Dhaheri indicated that the new regulations would contribute to enhancing the efforts made by EAD within the framework of its commitment to the UAE government's sustainability vision. She added that the EAD is leading a set of framework initiatives to reduce the impact of climate change, including the preparation of the climate change policy for Abu Dhabi and a comprehensive strategy for the years 2023-2027.

EAD is also developing a 'Nexus' decision support system to help Abu Dhabi utilise its natural resources sustainably, improve water, energy, and food security, and introduce more cost-effective projects.

The body is also developing a scheme in which the emissions and trading ceilings would be determined. The feasibility of implementing the system at the state level is being studied to ensure competitiveness and

sustainability. To complement this scheme, there would be existing voluntary programmes, such as the electronic platform for trading carbon credits on the Abu Dhabi Global Market. "We hope the emirate will be the first in the region to implement this initiative, which will further strengthen the UAE's climate leadership role, and support its hosting COP28 next year," said Al Dhaheri.

DoE chairman Awaidha Murshed Al Marar said the clean energy targets 2035 framework would have a deep impact on the Abu Dhabi energy structure, allowing the broader economy and industrial sector to quickly move in the sustainability direction. "This will open the door to improved added value and increased productivity for local businesses. These decarbonisation policies will help operationalise the UAE net zero 2050 pathways from today. They represent real, live commitments for our people, planet."

The DoE expects the new regulatory framework to drive a 75 per cent reduction in carbon emissions per MWh produced in Abu Dhabi by 2035, compared to 2016 levels. Abu Dhabi, therefore, will be a leading contributor to the UAE's updated climate targets to achieve a 31 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, relative to business as usual, in 2030 and net zero by 2050.

The UAE's new targets were published in its "Second Nationally Determined Contribution" in September ahead of COP27 and as part of the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact commitments.

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Web: <https://kary.com.pl/contact-us/>

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

