

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة الدفاع

UAE Armed Forces Climate Change Strategy

United Arab Emirates

2023



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Sustainability is an integral part of the UAE's approach and efforts to support climate action.



His Highness Sheikh
Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan,
President of the UAE.

”
The quality of the environment is the quality of life.. and its preservation is a preservation of the future of the coming generations.



His Highness Sheikh
Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum,
UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler
of Dubai.

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UAE Armed Forces Climate Change Strategy



United Arab Emirates 2023

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Defence realizes that environmental challenges at the national and global levels may increase, and therefore it must develop long-term proactive plans at all levels to achieve qualitative achievements to serve the interests of the state, which is what is being prepared to do in the environmental sector of the military field in the coming years. Environmental issues, climate change, turning the challenges associated with them into development opportunities, and relying on modern science will remain on the list of priority topics for the Armed Forces.

The main goal of developing the Armed Forces' climate change strategy is to advance the efforts of the Armed Forces to protect and preserve the environment, which is the cornerstone that will clarify the Ministry of Defence's approach to sustainable transformation, through its participation in the processes of adapting to the effects of climate change and mitigating carbon emissions. Achieving sustainable transformation can only come through the involvement of executive bodies and departments, commands, and concerted efforts at all levels, as this transformation requires governance at the highest levels of commands, and joint cooperation at the local and national levels.

The content of this document has been developed based on the best national and international practices in this field, to protect the environment, reduce carbon emissions, advance environmental thinking, increase the level of environmental awareness, and instill a sense of environmental responsibility towards all activities without compromising the readiness and security of the Armed Forces and their combat efficiency.

2- Defence Impact on Climate Change

2.1-Drivers for change

Given the global trend towards achieving net zero emissions, reducing the environmental impact of military activities will become necessary to achieve the success of defence and military operations in the future. Military activities may greatly affect the environment, as the Armed Forces operate in large areas of the state’s territory and assume responsibility for them, and they also have the largest number of human cadres, equipment, and vehicles, which have an impact on the elements of the land, sea, and air environment through the infrastructure that has been constructed, such as military bases, daily activities, exercises of various types, and military movements and rehearsals.

Therefore, the Ministry of Defence, under the guidance of the wise leadership, seeks to support the country’s efforts to achieve climate neutrality by integrating national sustainability efforts into its daily tasks and military activities, and activating environmental initiatives in a way that does not conflict with the readiness and combat efficiency of the Armed Forces, and in line with international laws and federal and local legislation.

2.2- Risks and threats of climate change

Climate changes are closely linked to defence strategies due to the seriousness of the threats associated with them, as they are considered to have an impact on security and peace, and may exacerbate a group of national security challenges, including the challenges of political, military, societal, personal, economic, food, environmental, and health security. The impacts include the following:

Based on the challenges that will result from climate change and the extent of the impact of this phenomenon on the activities of the Defence, which is an essential party in maintaining peace and security at the national and international levels, the Armed Forces are developing future plans to confront these challenges.

Social impacts

- Impact on quality of life
- Emergence and spread of epidemics.
- Loss of jobs/education opportunities
- Loss of cultural identity
- Food & Water Security
- International migration
- Damage to community infrastructure

Climatic impacts

- Extreme climate conditions
- High temperatures and humidity
- Melting ice and sea level rising
- Ocean acidification
- Rainfall pattern changes (floods or drought)
- Storms



Security implications

- Increasing tensions
- Outbreak of internal and international conflicts
- Competition for natural resources (water and food)
- Fuel and energy crisis.
- Supply chain and logistics services disruption

Environmental impacts

- Coral bleaching
- Declining fish stocks and marine life
- Coastal erosion
- Increased soil salinity
- Decline in agricultural crop production and loss of livestock.

3- UAE Strategic Ambitions

In line with the directions of the UAE and the application of best practices in the field of environmental sustainability and climate action, this clause clarifies achieving compatibility between the Armed Forces' climate change strategy with other national strategies in this field.



3.1- National Climate Change Plan 2017-2050

The National Climate Change Plan represents the comprehensive national framework for managing the causes and effects of climate change and plans the country's transition to a green economy capable of adapting to climate change and raising the quality of life. The main goals are to manage greenhouse gas emissions at the country level while maintaining sustainable economic growth, reducing risks, improving the ability to adapt to climate change, and promoting economic diversification through innovative solutions in cooperation with the private sector.

3.2- National Framework for Environmental Sustainability 2030

The National Framework for Environmental Sustainability represents a comprehensive framework for all approved national strategies, policies, and agendas on the basis of which environmental work in the country is organized, the quality of life is enhanced, a sustainable environment that supports economic growth is maintained, and the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals is supported through five main axes: nature, environmental health, climate change, living organisms and biosecurity). The Armed Forces' climate change strategy contributes to supporting the achievement of the goals of the National Framework for Environmental Sustainability 2030.

3.3- National Green Agenda 2030

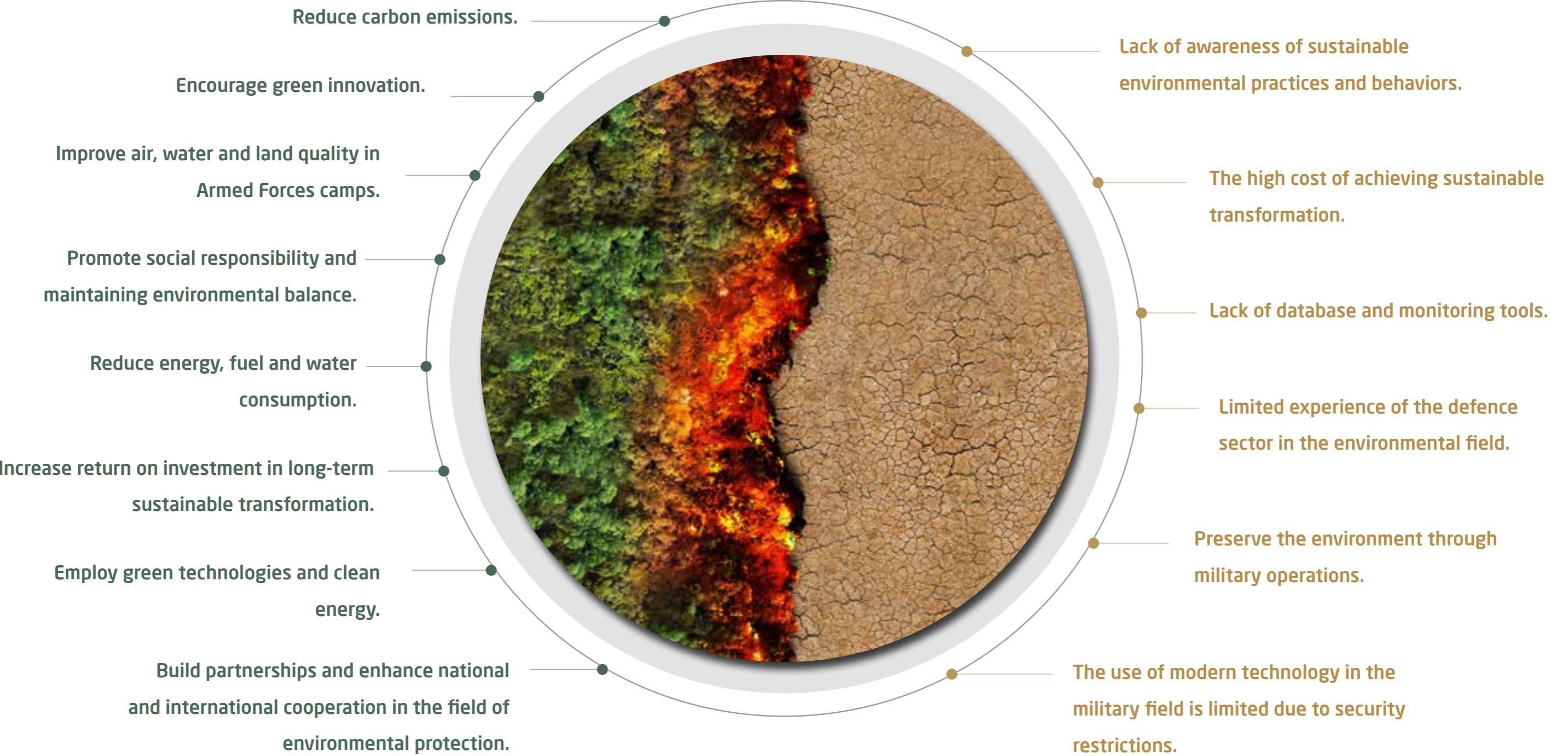
The National Green Agenda constitutes a long-term plan to achieve the goals of sustainable development in the UAE and make its economy environmentally friendly. By 2030, the Green Agenda will work to implement and follow up on initiatives and projects to achieve the most prominent benefits expected when transitioning to a green economy. The objectives of the Armed Forces Climate Change Strategy are linked to the objectives of the National Green Agenda 2030 in sustainable environment and value of natural resources, clean energy and climate change adaptation, green living and sustainable use of resources.

3.4- UAE Net Zero by 2050 Strategic Initiative

The UAE has set its strategy to reach climate neutrality by 2050, where this initiative represents a national drive aimed at reducing carbon emissions. This initiative is consistent with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement to motivate countries to develop and adopt long-term strategies to limit the rise in global temperatures below one and a half degrees Celsius to two degrees compared to pre-industrial levels, which in turn is in line with the Armed Forces' climate change strategy in adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change.

4.1- Opportunities

4.2- Challenges



5- Strategic framework

5.1- Strategic vision

Achieve a balance between defending national interests and protecting the environment for a sustainable Armed Forces.



5.2- Axes and objectives of the strategy

The strategy is based on 5 main axes, built on global and national best practices and the aspirations of relevant standards. It aims to strengthen the Armed Forces’ commitment to reducing carbon emissions and encourage active participation at all levels in moving towards sustainable transformation. Based on the main objectives, targets have been identified and initiatives have been developed that will contribute to implementing and achieving the strategy.

- 1 **Sustainable acquisition and green equipment**
Promote sustainable acquisition in supply chains and invest in green equipment.
- 2 **Infrastructure and sustainable energy**
Develop and design infrastructure to be more flexible and sustainable and employ sustainable energy sources.
- 3 **Waste Management**
Activate the integrated management mechanism for non-hazardous waste to achieve a circular economy.
- 4 **Culture, Communication and Participation**
Raise awareness and enhance communication and participation in the field of environmental protection.
- 5 **Adaptability**
Develop forces capable of resilience and adaptation under climate change.

1

The First Axis

Sustainable acquisition and green equipment

The Tawazun Council is considered the strategic partner of the Ministry of Defence with regard to purchasing and providing all goods and services needed by the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates in terms of administrative, technical, contractual, legal and financial matters and following up and supervising their implementation.

It is able to exert a significant influence on the behavior of suppliers by including approved sustainability standards when submitting proposals in compliance with all relevant legislations and regulatory requirements, allowing future development of standards of sustainability practices used in the Ministry of Defence.



Objective:

To promote sustainable acquisition in supply chains and invest in green equipment.

Initiative to apply standards for sustainable acquisition and green equipment to companies

Through this initiative, the performance of companies (suppliers and contractors) with regard to environmentally friendly practices will be evaluated through the Tawazun Council's keenness to conclude contracts with companies that have environmental management certificates approved in the country within the acceptance and accreditation conditions set by the Council, and then evaluate their performance and the extent of their commitment to the sustainable acquisition procedures and conditions in service provision. Priority to obtaining tenders and future projects will be given to committed companies, while a deadline will be given via approved standards for non-compliant companies.

Target:

26% of the acquisition of applicable materials and equipment will be compliant with sustainability standards by 2028.



2

The Second Axis

Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy

Energy and infrastructure are of great importance in the Armed Forces. They constitute one of the fundamental pillars for the effective execution of military tasks. However, they are also among the largest sources of carbon emissions in the defence sector. Therefore, the Armed Forces takes all necessary measures and actions when designing, developing, or implementing any infrastructure or construction project to ensure the reduction of energy consumption and environmental impacts of carbon emissions. Additionally, implementing environmental initiatives for military buildings and facilities contributes to the development of sustainable infrastructure and energy, which enhances resilience against climate change, supports sustainable growth and development, and promotes the military workforce, activities, and operations

Infrastructure:

Infrastructure is one of the Ministry of Defence enabling functions. It focuses on maintaining and ensuring the provision of safe and suitable facility services and infrastructure to support human resources during military activities and operations. Therefore, the Ministry of Defence is keen on enhancing and developing more resilient and sustainable infrastructure capable of withstanding and adapting to climate change and natural disasters to maintain efficiency as well as combat and operational capability. This can be achieved through adopting the best national and international practices in this field, as well as utilizing innovation, technology, and industries necessary for its development and improvement.

Buildings complying with sustainability standards (green architecture) are one crucial aspect of sustainable infrastructure. They represent a vital step towards a more sustainable future, as they can help reduce carbon emissions from military facilities, rationalize water and electricity consumption, and minimize waste generated during construction.

Sustainable Energy:

Sustainable energy is one of the most critical challenges facing the world today. It is a fundamental component of sustainable development. Therefore, the Armed Forces, in line with the UAE trends towards supporting the future path of sustainable energy. This is done through coordination and collaboration with strategic partners to implement initiatives and projects aimed at reducing energy consumption. Future projects include the employment of energy-saving technologies, diversification of renewable energy, use of low-carbon transportation, and keeping pace with modern technology.

Objective

To develop and design the infrastructure to be more resilient and sustainable while utilizing sustainable energy sources.

1- Employing Latest Technologies of Lighting Systems in State Camps Initiative

The Ministry of Defence Infrastructure Executive Directorate aims at using the latest technologies and employ energy-efficient lighting systems in the Armed Forces camps through developing a plan to upgrade all traditional lighting systems (both indoor and outdoor lighting) in existing camps into sustainable lighting systems and studying the economic feasibility of using solar-powered lighting systems by 2028. This initiative aligns with the Ministry of Defence efforts to promote sustainability values and standards in line with the Ministry of Defence requirements of energy sustainability and conservation, consumption rationalization as well as operation and maintenance costs reduction.

First Target:

Achieving a 30% energy savings in Armed Forces camps by 2028.

2- Implementation of the Pearl Rating System (PRS) for Buildings Initiative

The Ministry of Defence Infrastructure Executive Directorate has adopted an initiative to apply the Abu Dhabi "Pearl Rating System for Buildings" in its projects. This initiative aligns with the State's aspirations in the sustainable buildings program under a unified and clear system, with the aim of developing more sustainable infrastructure and utilizing sustainable energy sources. The Infrastructure Executive Directorate aims at implementing the Pearl Rating System (2) on main buildings and studying the application of the Pearl Rating System (3) in Ministry of Defence strategic buildings, such as the Military Colleges Complex and the ZMU Building.

Second Target:

Implementing infrastructure projects in accordance with Pearl Rating System (2) on main buildings at least 70% of the rating requirements by 2028.

2

The Second Axis

Efforts in the Field of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy

The Armed Forces have taken significant steps towards promoting the sustainability of infrastructure and energy. The Armed Forces have invested in several solar energy projects and sustainable building design to reduce energy consumption as well as material and resource usage, demonstrating the Armed Forces commitment to reduce carbon emission. These projects apply the following standards:

- 1 Utilizing LED lighting systems in the roads and buildings of new projects, incorporating sensor-based systems in some building areas, and replacing 40% of the external lighting systems in Armed Forces camps to save approximately 22,000 kw/hour.
- 2 Using solar-powered water heaters in buildings and using sunlight for illumination through the installation of transparent roofs (Sky Lights) in warehouses and workshops and utilizing wind-powered ventilation fans.
- 3 Using thermal insulation materials such as polystyrene panels and thermal bricks and installing heat-insulating windows on the facades of buildings.
- 4 Using energy-efficient cooling services in large areas with a total cooling capacity exceeding 200,000 tons. Additionally, using thermal energy storage tanks in some stations to enhance consumption efficiency.
- 5 Utilizing environmentally friendly and locally produced building materials whenever possible.



3

The Third Axis

Waste Management

Over the past decades, the Ministry of Defence has witnessed significant advancements in the field of technology and defence industry. This led to a diversification and expansion of various military activities carried out by the Armed Forces units, both during peacetime and operations, and consequently a continuous increase in the number of Ministry of Defence personnel and a growth of land areas under its responsibility and management. This posed several challenges in the field of logistic support during integrated logistics support operation. One of the challenges the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces units may encounter is waste management. The Ministry of Defence is considered one of the largest government entities that produce waste in the State.

While military work varies significantly in terms of nature and scale of operations compared to other entities, there is a significant similarity in many daily activities. Waste in military facilities is more defined, and its types are more predictable and controllable. Thus, it has become necessary to enhance the concept of Integrated Waste Management, including collection, sorting, transportation, and processing in a way that ensures public health protection, reduces environmental pollution, and conserves natural resources in the State wherever possible. In line with the laws, regulations, and standards applicable in the State, the Ministry of Defence will develop a clear approach that includes waste reduction and reuse, increased recycling, and adoption of advanced environmentally friendly waste disposal techniques.



Objective:

To activate the Integrated Non-hazardous Waste Management mechanism to achieve a circular economy.

Initiative to Activate the Integrated Non-Hazardous Waste Management Mechanism in the Armed Forces

The Armed Forces aim to contribute to realizing the UAE Vision in sustainable development by adopting the concept of Integrated Waste Management and establishing a comprehensive non-hazardous waste management system in line with the best environmental practices of the UAE. The system will encompass monitoring, recording, and controlling waste collection, sorting, transportation, and processing. The initiative commences with issuing clear instructions for the proper management and disposal of non-hazardous waste to all units of the Armed Forces. Additionally, efforts will be made to include a non-hazardous waste sorting clause in existing cleaning contracts or establish contracts with strategic partners to implement effective waste separation methods. Subsequently, a plan will be developed to treat this waste, aiming to promote the concept of the circular economy within the Armed Forces.

Target:

To establish an Integrated Non-hazardous Waste Management mechanism and achieve a 50% sorting rate, with a future processing plan in place by 2028.

Activities in Waste Management

Cleaning and Waste Transportation Contracts

The Ministry of Defence is committed to the general cleanliness of its facilities and surrounding environment. Ministry of Defence has entered into various contracts with many partners to find the best solutions for various external and internal medical or administrative environments and facilities, so as to ensure the best quality and standards suitable for various facilities. The Logistics Executive Directorate manages various contracts for cleaning services, medical and hazardous waste transportation, and general waste transportation for the Armed Forces units and the Ministry of Defence. The value of these contracts varies based on the scope of services provided and the obligations of the service provider. The overall value of these contracts reflects the Ministry of Defence investment in facility cleanliness and environmental preservation in line with international quality standards provided by partners to ensure the best environment for its personnel and staff. Through the Logistics Executive Directorate, the Ministry of Defence aims at improving and developing current and future services by finding waste recycling solutions for various types of waste to reduce toxic emissions and make the best use of waste as it may fit.

4

The Fourth Axis

Culture, Communication, and Participation

Culture and communication are fundamental pillars for achieving the Armed Forces Climate Change Strategy, which contributes to enhancing individual positive behavior towards the environment. Therefore, the Ministry of Defence seeks to raise environmental awareness among all its personnel and promote sustainable work practices. The Ministry of Defence directs its personnel to the importance of implementing proper measures that support environmental culture through the application of educational, awareness-raising, capacity building programs, aiming at making informed decisions and fulfill responsibilities related to reducing carbon emissions in military activities and adapting to climate change. That is, creating early awareness about and understanding of environmental issues (such as, climate change and associated risks) and initiating initiatives and activities to reduce carbon emissions are of vital importance in this context.

Culture:

Creating an environmental culture, understanding laws and regulations, and applying best environmental practices represent a top priority in the efforts aimed at achieving Armed Forces environmental sustainability. This is done through environmental awareness raising programs (lectures, publications, workshops, and environmental events), environmental training (enrollment in domestic and international courses) and environmental postgraduate studies support (scholarships). These programs are aimed at enhancing the concept of environmental culture and realizing positive change by adopting sustainable environmental practices in military exercises and daily activities and better understanding the impact of climate change on the defence sector in the future.

Communication and Participation:

Effective national and international cooperation and coordination promote Armed Forces environmental culture and unify efforts exerted in the field of environmental protection and preservation. This is achieved through establishing channels of communication with strategic partners concerned with the environment for knowledge and experience exchange and resource sharing. Effective communication can be achieved through research and development programs, innovation, attending relevant seminars, lectures, and conferences, as well as utilizing social media and media materials that play an important role in effectively reaching various segments of the Armed Forces personnel and highlighting environmental topics with the aim of involving the community in creating an environmental culture.

Objective:

To raise awareness about and enhance communication and participation in environmental protection.

1- Environmental Awareness Program Initiative

This initiative is an awareness program aimed at disseminating knowledge and raising environmental awareness across the Armed Forces with the aim of supporting sustainable behaviors in the workplace and at all levels. It also aims to enhance the role of Armed Forces personnel in protecting the environment, reducing pollution, and rationalizing the use of natural resources.

First Target:

To enhance the level of awareness and environmental culture of the Armed Forces personnel to reach 90% by 2028.

2- Annual Environmental Participation Plan Initiative

This initiative supports the interaction of the Armed Forces with environmental strategic partners through developing an annual action plan for participation in national and international environmental events.

Second Target:

To increase the level of interaction between the Armed Forces and environmental partners to reach 90% by 2028.



5

The Fifth Axis

Adaptability

The ramifications of climate change affect all countries around the world with no exception. For example, the United Arab Emirates experiences a rapid increase in temperatures and humidity for longer periods than usual. It is more vulnerable to the risks of rising sea levels and extreme climate conditions. Climate change can increase the likelihood and severity of natural disasters, such as heavy rainfall and floods, droughts and wildfires, sharp weather changes, changes in the migration and reproduction seasons of living organisms (such as birds and marine life), and periods of strong north winds that could threaten future security. For instance, extreme temperatures could damage equipment, disrupt electronic devices, affect aircraft carrying capacity, or pose a risk to ammunition storage.

Therefore, the Ministry of Defence realizes that climate change will have its implications at the strategic to tactical levels, which the Armed Forces shall consider across all their domains, operational environments, and components of capabilities, in terms of operations, military and organizational doctrine, human resources, equipment, and logistical support.

Given the expected changes and their consequences, flexible plans, measures, and processes are to be developed to achieve the highest level of readiness for climate change, where the Armed Forces will need to maintain their ability to respond to emergencies, including engagement in rapid response to crises and disasters, and contribute to relief, search, and rescue operations when necessary.

In this manner, the Armed Forces will identify climate risks and assess their impact on current and future capability components to ensure the performance and reliability of equipment and technological programs and develop capabilities and their components. Additionally, the Ministry of Defence will forecast and better understand the effects of climate change through planning for potential scenarios and making assumptions about the impact of climate change on the Armed Forces and their response measures. These scenarios will help predict future climate crisis events and make strategic decisions to enhance resilience to climate change.

Objective:

To develop resilient forces capable of adaptation in the face of climate changes.

Initiative to Enhance Adaptation of Capabilities and their Components to Climate Change

This initiative involves assessing and studying the adaptability of current capabilities and their components (DOTMILBIE) to climate change and developing a plan to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in implementing military operations considering climate changes.

Target:

To develop 80% of military capabilities that require increased adaptability to climate change by 2028 to be able to execute military operations effectively.

Actions in Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Impacts Study:

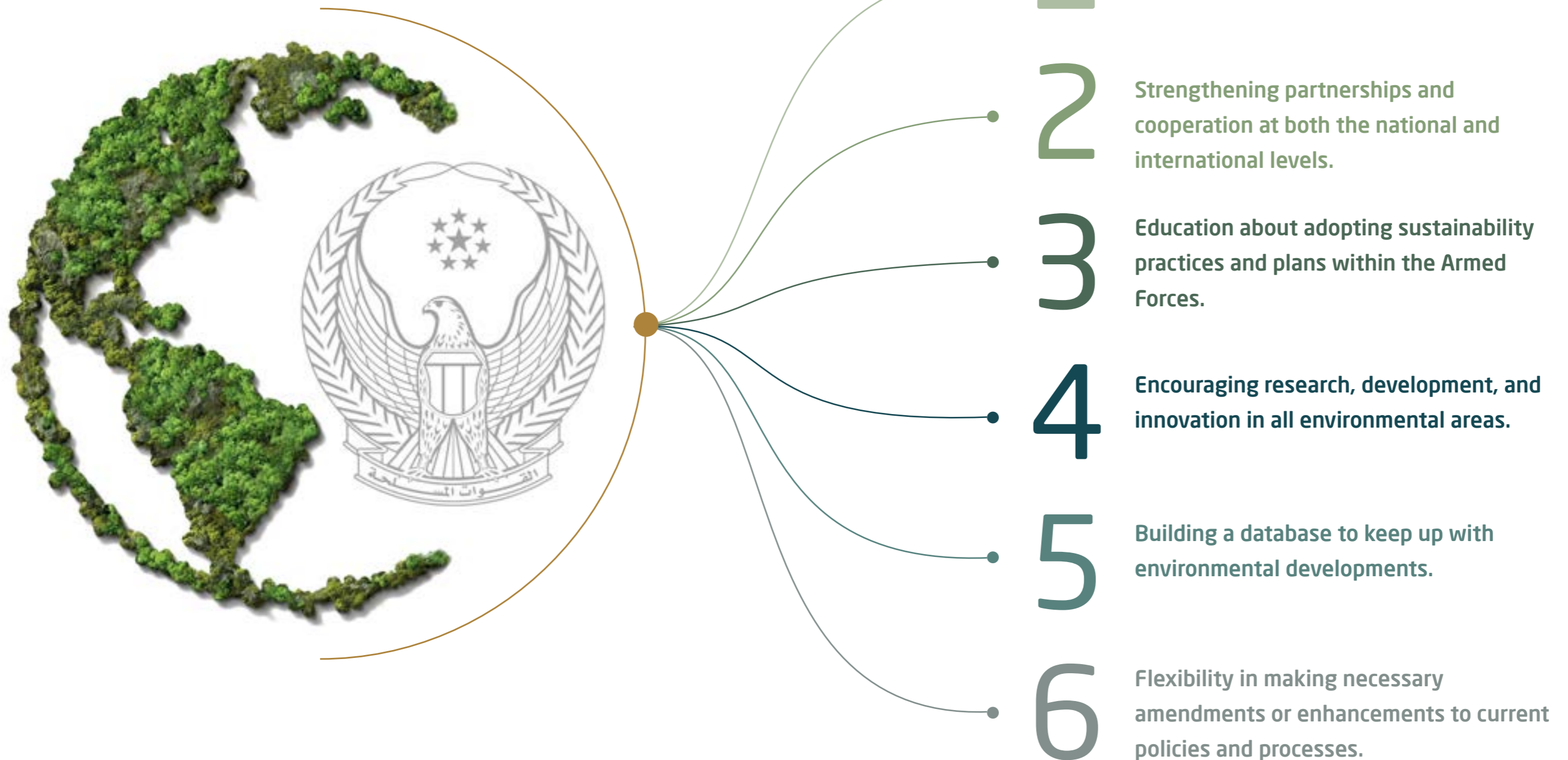
The Ministry of Defence identifies the impact of climate change through feasibility studies and conducts a comprehensive analysis to ensure the ability to perform tasks without being affected by climate change. This includes the impact of temperature rise on equipment and personnel performance by improving systems and equipment specifications, training in extreme climate conditions, and developing situational estimates.

Environmental Planning for Operations and Military Exercises:

Natural reserves have been included in military maps to be considered in the planning of exercises and operations. The Armed Forces coordinate with UAE relevant stakeholders to study the environmental situation in training areas that fall within natural reserves or affect them. This ensures minimizing the environmental impact of exercises and military operations as much as possible and restores the environment to its natural state after exercises. For example, this includes clearing all remnants of target fragments in all forms and ensuring that the accumulation of ammunition residues does not affect the soil.

6- Success Factors

The success of the Armed Forces Climate Change Strategy in achieving its core outcomes depends on several key factors:



7- Efforts of the Armed Forces in Climate Action

1 Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Guidelines

Environmental protection guidelines were developed in the Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Guidelines in 2023. These guidelines serve as general directives for creating a safe and sustainable working environment.

2 Mangroves

The vast areas of land and sea used by the Armed Forces for training offer opportunities for carbon capture. Therefore, the Armed Forces, in collaboration with their strategic partners, have identified lands within their scope for planting Mangroves as part of the State's initiative to plant 100 million mangroves by 2030.

3 Irrigation of Plants

Sewage water is treated and reused in agricultural irrigation operations in the military camps, without government sewage services. Sewage water treatment not only conserves natural water resources but also reduces consumption and produces dry organic material (for fertilizer production), which contributes to reducing carbon emissions and financial costs.

4 Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Clauses in Armed Forces Military Supply Contracts

Since 2015, clauses on occupational health, safety and environment have been included in all contracts concluded or renewed for the Armed Forces. All companies are required to comply with laws, regulations, and decisions issued by relevant stakeholders in the State to protect military properties, ensure the health of Armed Forces personnel, and safeguard the environment from the harmful practices of these companies. This clause also addresses the need for suppliers to comply with UAE environmental regulations for materials disposal mechanisms, with responsibility resting on these suppliers in coordination with relevant stakeholders in the State.

5 Single-Use Plastic-Free Government

To support the government's aspirations for becoming single-use plastic-free, the Armed Forces seek to reduce the use of single-use plastic in purchases of plastic products or plastic-coated materials in 2023. An initial inventory was conducted for some of the suppliers of such materials, ensuring that the plastic materials used in these products is locally and internationally manufactured for future recycling in coordination with recycling relevant stakeholders.



7- Efforts of the Armed Forces in Climate Action

6 Center for Meteorology and Marine Science

A numerical modeling system employed to produce detailed data on the state's regional and international waters and the Armed Forces operations areas. This system provides detailed data on the physical, chemical, and biological aspects of water and atmosphere, from the highest point in the atmosphere to the seabed, contributing to supporting various military and civilian operations and monitoring climate changes and following their development.

7 Ammunition Recycling Factory

The project involves establishing a factory for recycling ammunition and missiles by converting them into raw materials. The project aims at disposing of ammunition and missiles without harming the environment, reuse raw materials in the local market, and ensure the sustainability of ammunition disposal process, in addition to recycling all types of (recyclable) equipment in a later stage.

8 Participation in Environmental Initiatives and Campaigns

The Armed Forces participates in environmental initiatives in coordination and cooperation with relevant stakeholders at the local and national levels, with the goal of spreading environmental protection culture among Armed Forces personnel and contributing to community volunteer work. For example, they participate in cleaning campaigns on the shores of Abu Dhabi.

9 Use of Environmentally Friendly Administrative Vehicles

Electric vehicles are considered a strategic option to reduce carbon emissions in the transportation sector, which undergoes significant technological changes. Electric cars contribute to the sustainable future of the transportation sector, which is of increasing importance given the UAE's commitment to investing in sustainable solutions in line with the UAE Net Zero by 2050 Strategic Initiative. The Armed Forces is studying the current situation and exploring the possibility of converting administrative vehicles to electric ones to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.

10 Employment of Simulation Systems in Military Exercises

The environment is significantly affected by military activities, both in field training and operations within military bases. Therefore, the Armed Forces apply simulation systems in training and military exercises in land, sea, and air domains, employing modern technologies to reduce carbon footprint and minimize the environmental impact of military activities.



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