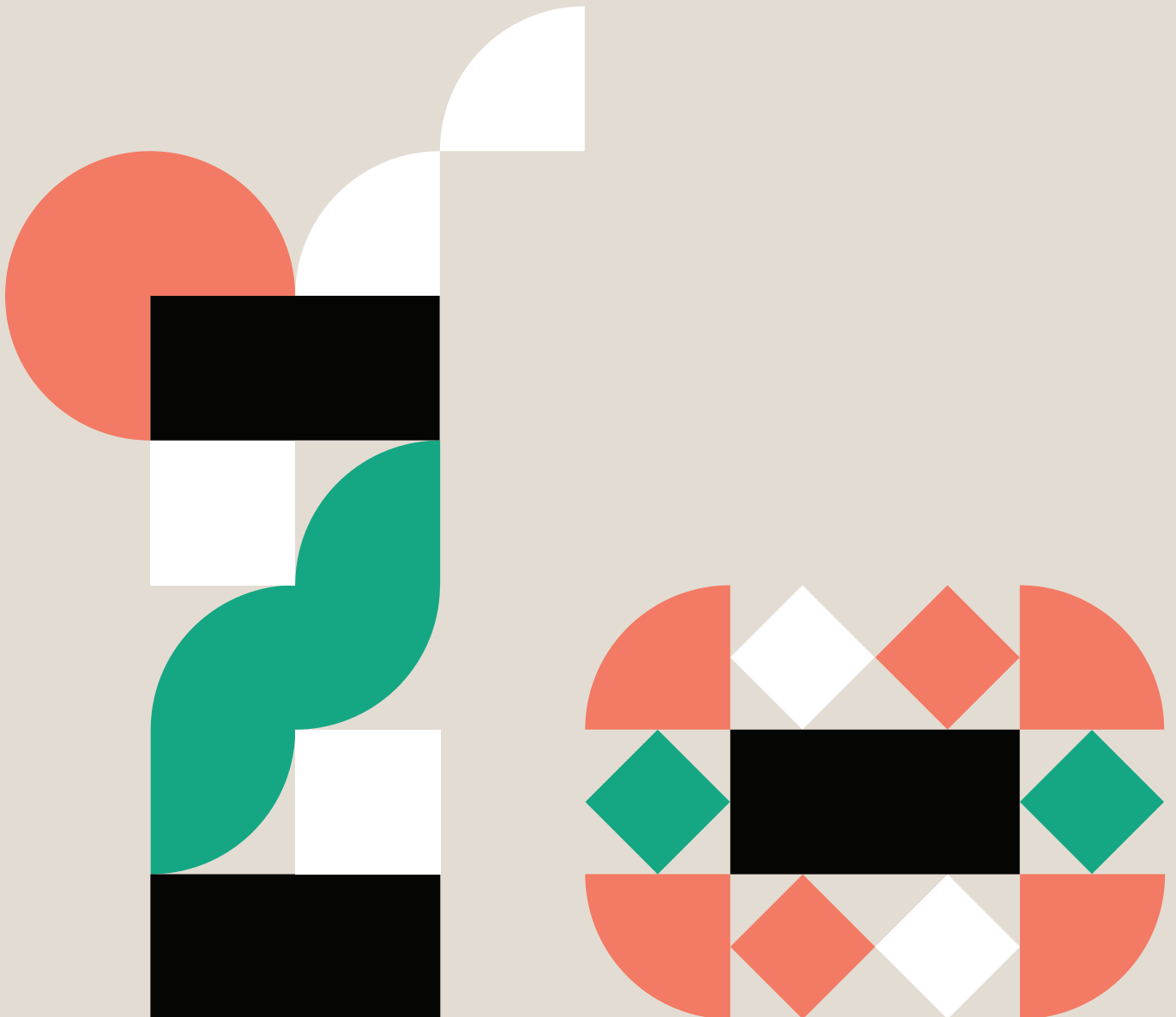




Food & Beverage

SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

Practical Guide to Implementing Sustainable Practices



FOREWORD

The guidelines have been developed to provide best practice recommendations for sustainability initiatives in key sustainability areas. These are recommendations and the industry is responsible for assessing the feasibility of adopting each initiative and making progress to develop their individual sustainability strategy and policy.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
1. Introduction	4
2. Sustainability in the Abu Dhabi Tourism Industry	6
3. Context and Objectives	8
4. How to Use This Guideline	11
5. Sustainability Categories and Key Initiatives	12
6. Estimation and Prioritisation Process	14
7. Sustainability Initiatives Prioritisation	16
A. Energy and Environment.	16
A.1 Energy Management	16
A.2. Water Management System	19
A.3. Waste Management System	21
A.4. Green and Sustainable Transportation	23
A.5. Environmental Protection	24
A.6 Carbon Management	25
B. Sustainable and Local Procurement	27
B.1 Sourcing of Local, Sustainable Goods	27
C. Social and Culture	29
C.1 Promoting Local Heritage, Culture, and Art	29
C.2 Promoting Sustainability with Visitors and Local Community	30
C.3 Engaging in Educational Programmes	31
C.4 Improving Accessibility	32
D. People	34
D.1 Staff Empowerment	34
D.2 Diversity and Inclusion	35
E. Resilience and Risk Management	37
E.1 Health and Safety	37
E.2 Risk Mitigation and Resilience	38
8. Conclusion	40



1. Introduction

The world is changing, and so are the needs of tourists, with sustainability becoming a significant concern for many travellers. According to the Booking.com Sustainable Travel Report 2022¹, 71% of global travellers want to travel more sustainably. In addition, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) Vision for 2030 Agenda strongly advocates the need for sustainable tourism. So, tourism has a major part to play in achieving the world's sustainability goals and visions..

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a leader in the drive towards sustainability. Key examples include: the UAE Strategy for Domestic Tourism, the UAE Circular Economy Policy and the UAE Net Zero 2050 initiative, as shown in Figure 1. There are many national and local sustainability strategies and initiatives focussing on the country's sustainable development.



World

UN World Tourism Organization Vision - 2030 Agenda



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



UN World Tourism Organisation aligned to 17 SDGs.

¹ Booking.com, "Sustainable Travel Report", 2022 (www.globalnews.booking.com)

Some of those are:



1.8 B

of average annual growth of international tourist arrivals is expected in Middle East until 2030

5%

of average annual growth of international tourist arrivals is expected in Middle East until 2030

2020

tourist arrivals decreased by %74 while market recovered by %120 in 2021



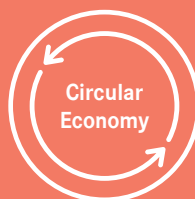
United Arab Emirates



UAE Net Zero Initiative

Launched in 2020 with an aim to unify local and federal efforts to harness the UAE's tourism resources:

- Building capabilities, developing policies, plan and programme based partnerships.



UAE Circular Economy Policy

2021: UAE framework for determining the approach to achieving sustainable governance: Promotion of environmental, adoption of clean methods and reduction of environmental stress.



UAE Strategy for Domestic Tourism

2021: UAE sector entities to update their sustainability approach: Investment AED600 Billion in clean and renewable energy sources expected by 2050.

Figure 1: World and UAE trends towards sustainability and eco-tourism

2 Sustainability in the Abu Dhabi Tourism Industry

As the UAE moves towards sustainability, it is imperative to establish and promote Abu Dhabi's leading position as a global destination in eco-tourism and sustainable tourism.

As the regulator of the tourism industry, the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) is committed to providing a sustainable and responsible tourism industry which is tailored to the regional climate, culture, and available resources. The tourism industry is instrumental in supporting the evolution of Abu Dhabi into a world-class destination.

DCT Abu Dhabi has established a comprehensive sustainability framework for the tourism industry (Figure 2) based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is a long-term and forward-looking framework aiming to manage the economic, social, and environmental impacts of the tourism industry. It is built upon six destination principles for sustainable development. These have formed the basis for the development of the Sustainable Tourism Guidelines.



Sustainability Framework & Implementation Plan Abu Dhabi Tourism Sector





















Principle	Initiative		
 Transparent Destination	 Capacity Building	 Sustainable Tourism Award	
 Sustainable Destination	 Sector Commitment	 Sustainable Guidelines	 Event Impact Management
 Unique Destination	 Eco-tourism Marketing	 Local Experience App	
 Safe, Accessible Destination	 Experience for tourists with disabilities	 Improving Site Accessibility	 Tourists Site Connectivity
 Inclusive Destination	 Stakeholder Engagement	 Marketing for residents	
 Adaptive, Diverse Destination	 Low-Season Marketing	 Climate Change Assessment	

Figure 2: DCT sustainability framework

Hence, the **Food and Beverage Establishment Sustainability Guidelines** have been developed with the aim of enhancing knowledge and encouraging the implementation of sustainability practices and procedures into the day-to-day operational activities across the value chain. The guidelines are the foundation that will shape the future of the tourism industry and establish Abu Dhabi as a leader in sustainable tourism. The guidelines are aligned to the key sustainability areas that are related to the tourism industry.

3. Context and Objectives

The guidelines have been developed to help sector establishments in defining their sustainability roadmaps, the guideline outlines recommended initiatives and best practices for the Food and Beverage sector (collectively referred to as “F&B” henceforth). The F&B sector has been further disaggregated into sector categories, which are defined in Table 1.

Table 1 Definitions

Tourism Restaurants	This type of establishment is a full-service restaurant that offers a variety of all-day dining with service at the table or buffet service, serving a variety of hot and cold beverages and alcohol, if applicable. Sometimes based on boats, this establishment may have a particular regional theme and can range from casual to more upscale. This establishment does not have age restrictions and usually has offerings available for children. Additionally, delivery or takeout may be available.
Cafes	This type of establishment offers a limited food / snack menu and focuses on serving a range of hot and cold beverage offerings (alcoholic or non-alcoholic). This establishment is informal and casual with no age restrictions. The atmosphere can be lounge-like and also include counter or outdoor seating. This establishment may have refrigerated display containers and may offer delivery or takeout.
Fine Dining Restaurants	This type of establishment is a premium restaurant that offers a formal dining experience for dinner and sometimes lunch, distinguished by high-quality service and elaborate and extensive menu offerings. The establishment will have extensive beverage lists with varied selections (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and a wine list and by-the-glass offering. There is a presence of experienced chefs de cuisine and a sommelier on staff. There may be a dress code and children may or may not be welcome. Additionally, delivery or takeout may be available.
Bars & Night-life Venues	This type of establishment offers full bar counter service and sometimes table service together with live entertainment in the form of DJ or live music. An extensive alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage list is served with either no food offerings or only a limited menu. This establishment must have bar seating but can also have lounge areas, standing tables or regular tables. It usually has adjusted opening hours, open past 12am and not always open during the day. The age requirement to enter is 18 and above and this can be enforced by security or other door staff.

The tourism industry has long supported the economic development of Abu Dhabi and its emergence as a world class tourism destination.

As per the 2022 Sustainable Travel Report², 81% of global travellers confirm that sustainable travel is important to them while 41% want to reduce their impact on the environment. In line with these global perceptions of sustainability, it is recommended that F&B establishments use these guidelines to benefit from successful business practices and contribute to Abu Dhabi’s vision of becoming a sustainable tourist destination.

The **F&B Sustainability Guideline** are a non-binding set of recommendations and initiatives aiming to improve responsible tourism development. The guidelines are aligned with the SDGs and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria, and other leading industry initiatives to provide F&B establishments of Abu Dhabi a roadmap towards achieving a more sustainable and inclusive business, while providing the tourists with an enriching and authentic Abu Dhabi experience.

To develop this document, 18 different guidelines from global leaders were assessed and benchmarked, including GSTC Criteria, Green Key, Green Globe, and UNWTO. Standards from Dubai Sustainable Tourism were also studied for more understanding on the Middle East region. These guidelines and standards were studied to understand the sustainability requirements in global tourism industry and evaluate gaps and opportunities for sustainability in the Abu Dhabi Tourism industry. A survey with different players including Food and Beverage Establishments, Cultural and Heritage Sites, Hotel Establishments, Events, Leisure and Entertainment Attractions, and Travel Agencies and Tours Operators, was conducted in January 2022 by DCT to understand the current sustainability practices implemented within their operations as a baseline. These studies helped in understanding the gaps and opportunities of how these players can facilitate sustainability practices across Abu Dhabi as tourism destination.

² Booking.com, “Sustainable Travel Report”, 2022 (www.globalnews.booking.com)

To develop the Sustainability Guidelines, the following key steps were undertaken to understand the current state of sustainability the tourism industry in Abu Dhabi. This is shown in Figure 3.

1.	Benchmarking and Research	Research was conducted on selected sustainability policies, guidelines and certifications from around the world. Key conclusions and best practices were highlighted.
2.	Sector Stakeholder Selection	Six sector stakeholder categories for selection were developed based on the targeted sectors: Food and beverage establishments, events, hotel establishments, culture and heritage sites, leisure and entertainment and travel and tour operators.
3.	Survey Development	A survey was developed to gain an understanding of the current state of sustainability in the F&B sector in the tourism industry.
4.	Workshops & Survey Launch	Selected F&B stakeholders were invited to participate in a workshop to fill in the survey.
5.	Survey Analysis	A total of 24 tourism industry stakeholders participated in the survey. Results from the survey were analysed, and the main challenges and opportunities were concluded.
6.	Guideline Development	The findings from the benchmarking, surveys and workshops were used as the foundation for the development of the 6 sector-specific guidelines.

Figure 3: Guideline development process

Key sustainability elements, challenges, and opportunities related to sustainable growth and development were identified through the process of surveying F&B establishments. The survey was structured around the key findings from the benchmarking exercise, whereby an assortment of guidelines was benchmarked against various criteria, including voluntary versus mandatory guidelines, international and national guidelines, other applicable guidelines and certification schemes and key sustainability elements (e.g., energy management, water management, carbon emissions, etc.).

The survey results show that 100% of the surveyed F&B establishments in Abu Dhabi consider sustainability to be important.

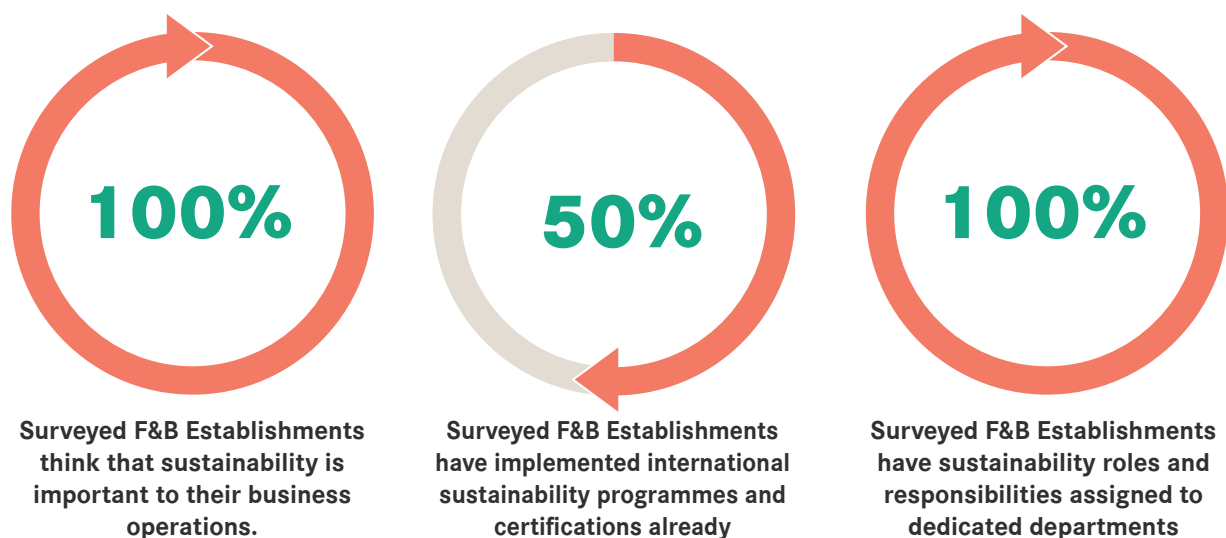


Figure 4: Key Survey Findings

Based on the data of the survey conducted for F&B establishments, the results indicate that there is a crucial need for solutions to support them in their journey towards sustainability. The most important focus areas were environmental risk management, controlling carbon emissions, protecting and preserving the biodiversity, prioritising the health and safety of guests and employees, adopting sustainable procurement, and enhancing energy, water, and waste management. The results highlight on the challenges of implementing sustainable practices that are related to sustainability awareness and expertise, lack of sustainability monitoring, high utility bills, access to sustainable goods, and guest sustainability awareness. These findings can be considered as baseline aspects and initiatives that currently exist within the sector, which emphasises the need for the sector to improve on the sustainability status of the tourism industry.

The focus areas, challenges, and opportunities (shown in Figure 5) gathered from responses aided the development of the guideline. The aim of the guideline is to encourage F&B establishments to be more self-sustainable and emerge as a pioneers in Abu Dhabi's journey to become a sustainable destination.

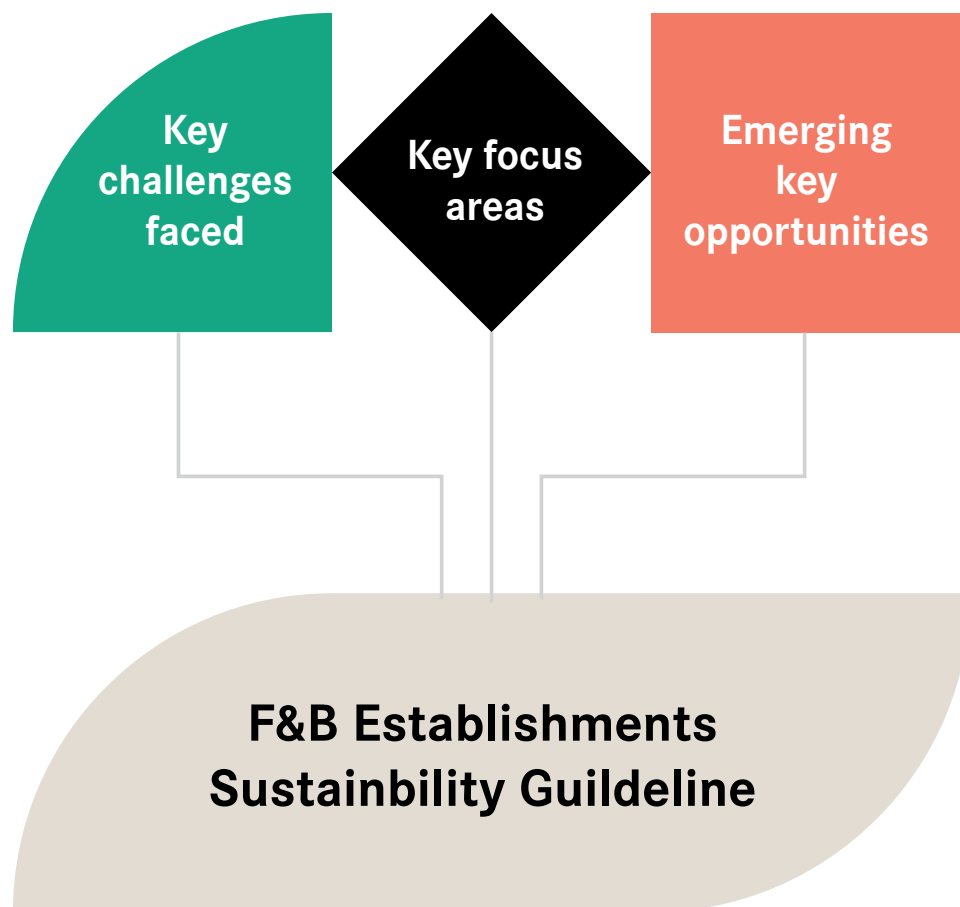


Figure 5: Survey Analysis

4. How to Use This Guideline?

This section of the guidelines will provide clear steps on how to ensure a successful implementation of the sustainability strategy through the day-to-day operations to contribute towards sustainable development. A summary of the steps is presented in Figure 6, and it is recommended to follow steps 1-5 annually to ensure that the sustainability strategy remains relevant, robust, and aligned with the establishment's current sustainability progress.

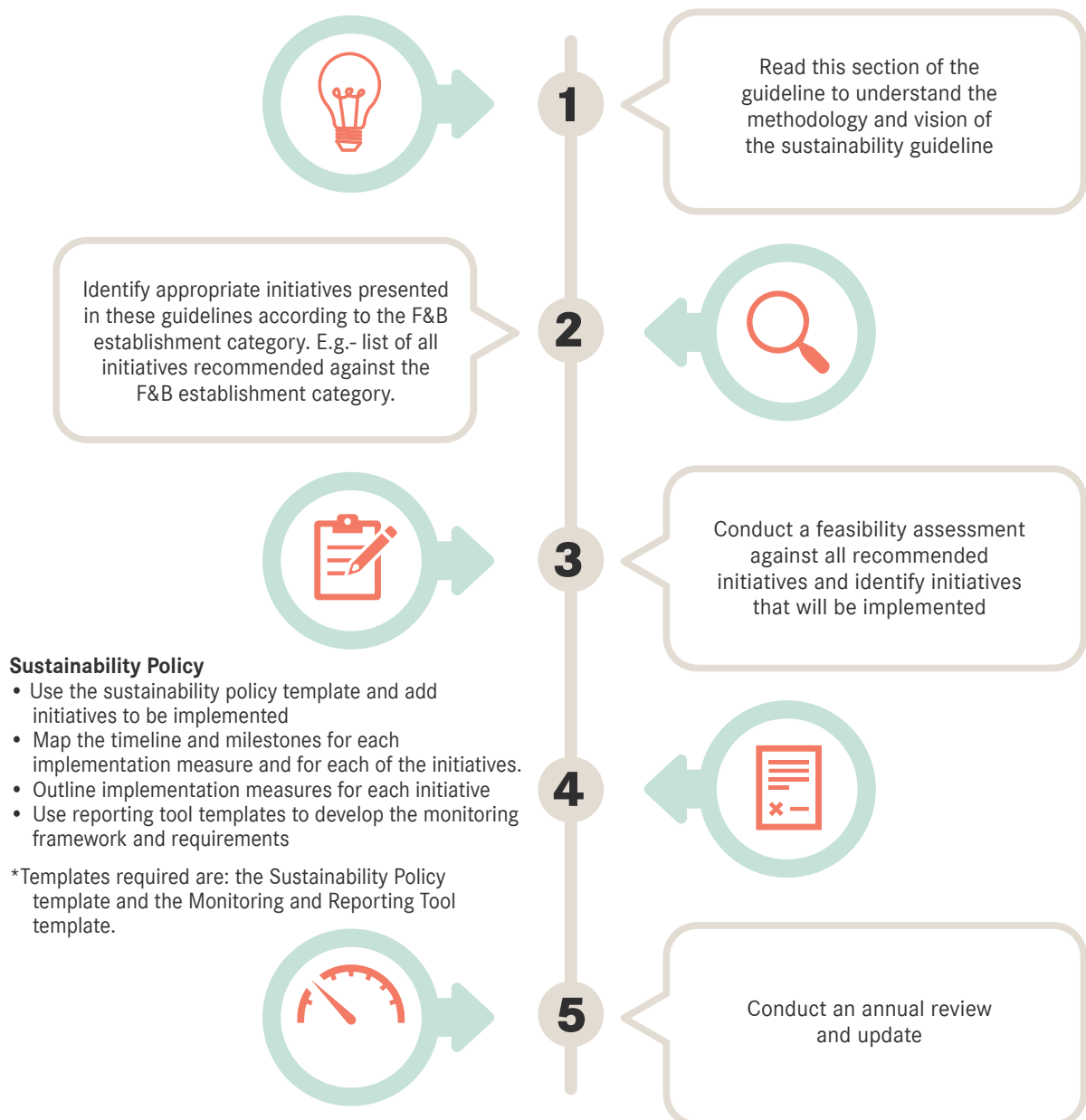


Figure 6: Steps to use the guideline

5. Sustainability Categories and Key Initiatives

There are five different sustainability categories, Energy and Environment, Sustainable and Local Procurement, Social and Culture, People, and Risk and Resilience Management, which are defined in Table 2.

Table 2: Sustainability Categories

Sustainability Category	Definition
A. Energy and Environment	Sustainable energy and environment management initiatives to provide solutions for sustainable energy, water and waste management, environment protection, and carbon management.
B. Sustainable and Local Procurement	Sustainable procurement initiatives that give preference to local and environmentally friendly goods.
C. Social and Culture	Initiatives to promote the social and cultural heritage of Abu Dhabi through the tourism industry.
D. People	Initiatives focussing on empowerment of employees in the tourism industry.
E. Resilience and Risk Management	Initiatives focussing on identifying and managing the risks associated with the F&B sector in the tourism industry.

Key initiatives under each sustainability category

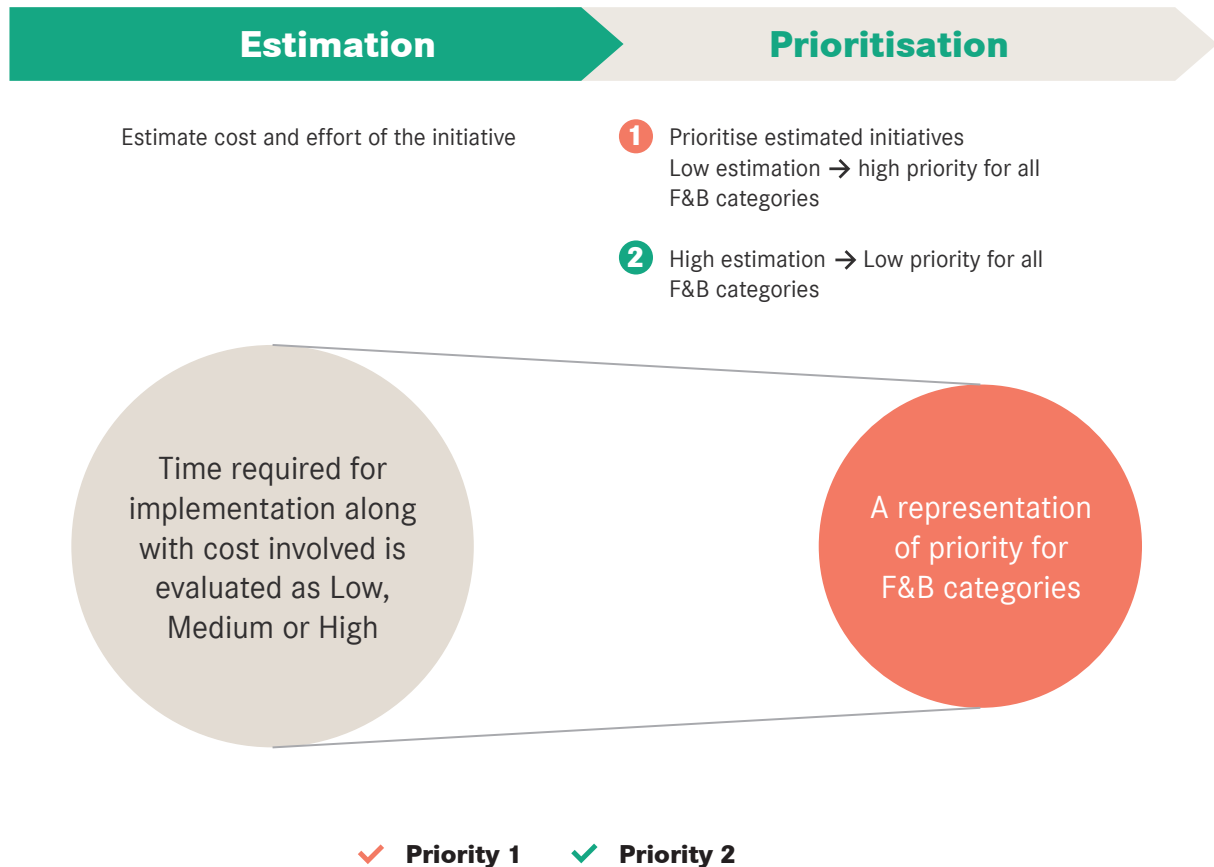
The key initiatives under each sustainability category presented in Figure 7 were comprehensively identified and developed, ensuring that they were aligned with Abu Dhabi's sustainability pillars and agenda. These guidelines covers holistic sustainability development and specific measures for environmental and social pillars, whilst considering under each applicable category the key vision for Emiratisation, financial stability, and growth and governance (including data collection, monitoring and reporting). Initiatives have been carefully tailored based on the F&B establishment classification. This document provides guidance on implementing the suggested initiatives based on the classification and is designed to provide cost-effective solutions that can help induce a positive impact on the overall sustainability performance.



Figure 7 Sustainability initiatives

The following sections will provide further detail on the above-mentioned key sustainability measures and details the opportunities and benefits that result from the implementation of these practices.

6. Estimation and Prioritisation Process



Food and Beverage

Time	Cost	Tourism Restaurants	Cafe	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
LOW	LOW	✓	✓	✓	✓
LOW	MEDIUM	✓	✓	✓	✓
MEDIUM	LOW	✓	✓	✓	✓
LOW	HIGH	✓	✓	✓	✓
HIGH	LOW	✓	✓	✓	✓
MEDIUM	MEDIUM	✓	✓	✓	✓
MEDIUM	HIGH	✓	✓	✓	✓
HIGH	MEDIUM	✓	✓	✓	✓
HIGH	HIGH	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 8: Initiative priority mapping for F&B establishments categories

To determine if an initiative is Priority 1 or Priority 2:

- **Estimation:** Cost and effort of each initiative was estimated as Low, Medium or High.
- **Prioritisation:** Priority matrix was developed based on a cumulative scoring model from Estimation stage initiatives, which were prioritised for each F&B category.

For detailed information on cost and effort estimation, please refer to ***the Annexure document for the F&B guidelines.*** provided with this guideline.

The recommended sustainability initiatives are categorised as “Priority 1” and “Priority 2”. It must be emphasised that the sustainability guidelines are not mandated and aim to present a framework on how the industries can progress on their sustainability journey. The two categories are defined below:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| ✓ Priority 1 | All establishments identified in orange should aim to target and implement the identified initiatives. |
| ✓ Priority 2 | Where the establishment has been identified in dark green, it is encouraged that the stakeholder investigates the feasibility of implementing the initiative to surpass expectations, |
| ✗ Not Applicable | |

All F&B establishments should aim to target Priority 1 initiatives marked in ✓ for implementation as per their category. Whereas the initiatives marked in ✓ are encouraged to be considered for implementation and assess their feasibility to surpass expectations.

To calculate the estimations on time and cost, some assumptions were applied considering the uniqueness of Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Dhafra areas, where the average F&B establishment size is 400 sqm indoors. Whereas to calculate the benefits, market research was conducted to establish average prices for mid-range scenarios.

7 Sustainability Initiatives Prioritisation



A. Energy and Environment.



A.1 Energy Management

How can F&B establishments achieve energy and environmental sustainability?

The role of F&B establishments is critical when considering sustainability as restaurants and buildings with commercial kitchens consume 2.5 to 10 times more energy than other commercial buildings. Research has also shown that in the commercial food service sector, there is an excessive waste of energy³. Inefficient appliances, HVAC systems, lighting and refrigeration generate excess heat and noise, which also contributes to energy waste. To achieve energy efficiency, conservation measures and energy initiatives must be considered to reduce the consumption of energy.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

1.	Install efficient lighting solutions.	F&B Categories			
		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	1.1. Install LED lights depending on the desired brightness (A 9W LED is equivalent to a 45 W incandescent bulb output).	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.2. Install motion sensor and timers for lighting. In regularly occupied spaces (e.g., back of house “BOH”) install motion and daylight sensors to automatically adjust lighting levels to reflect the daylight levels and use of the space (e.g. if no one is utilising the space the lights will switch off).	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	Conduct energy efficiency awareness campaign.	F&B Categories			
		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	2.1. Train staff annually on how to increase energy efficiency, e.g., running washers and dryers only when full, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2.2. Create training materials such as guidebook and leaflets, which can focus on such topics as how much energy can be saved by using energy efficient lighting.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2.3. Place energy usage signage throughout the establishment, especially in area such as back of house (BOH). (e.g., turn off lights by the light switch, switch off computer after use, etc.).	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2.4. Utilise digital tools (such as eTEACHER) to increase efficiency in energy management and to highlight energy consumption reduction areas.	✓	✓	✓	✓

3.	Enhance cooling efficiency.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	3.1. Install efficient chillers.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.2. Install temperature controller for central cooling and ventilation.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.3. Check thermostat temperatures regularly to ensure it is maintained at 24C. It is recommended that in guest only areas, the temperature is set within this range.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.4. Inspect ductwork and windows for leakage bi-annually.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.5. Install digital management solution that monitors energy consumptions.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.	Purchase efficient appliances and equipment, such as ESMA 5- and 4-star appliances.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	4.1. AC split units	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.2. Dishwashers	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.3. Televisions	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.	Purchase more efficient appliances in the market based on their catalogue rating and establishment design specifications.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	5.1. Large refrigerators/ freezers.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.2. Ovens	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.3. Large AC systems	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.4. Vacuum cleaners	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.5. Fryers	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.6. Water coolers	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.7. Ice machines	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.8. Steam cookers	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.9. Coffee machines	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.	Invest in renewable energy solutions.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	6.1. Install solar water heaters	✓	✓	✓	✓
	6.2. Install solar PV wherever possible on rooftops and garden areas	✓	✓	✓	✓
	6.3. Purchase renewable energy certificates from Emirates Water and Electricity Company (EWEC) by contacting the EWEC Clean Energy Certificates team.	✓	✓	✓	✓

³ South California Gas Company, "A Green restaurant Guide", 2012 (www.socalgas.com)

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

* ESMA expands its energy efficiency programme, F&B establishments are advised to keep checking the updates for inclusion of more appliances.

Benefits:

- Installing efficient lighting systems including LED bulbs, daylight harvesting systems and motion sensors can save between 2,000 and 4,000 AED per year for an average 500 sqm F&B establishments^{4 5}.
- Providing sustainability training aims to achieve energy efficiency, cost saving, improve reputation, and increase awareness.
- Installing cooling systems equipped with efficient chillers, temperature control systems coupled with regular ductwork inspection can result in savings of up to 35% on cooling.
- Using ESMA rated appliances can save a minimum of 2,000 AED and up to 7,000 AED per month for selected appliances.
- Solar heaters and Solar PV systems can have a payback period of 5 years post installation. These systems can cover a significant portion of the energy bill, depending on the size of the Solar array installation.
- Purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates can be accomplished to develop the clean energy portfolio. This should be a consideration especially when renewable energy installation is not feasible, or when there are emissions that can be difficult to decarbonise and offset⁶.

Local References:

- Estidama Pearl rating system: Estidama is a building design methodology for constructing and operating sustainable buildings. Under Estidama, energy management is a key factor to obtain the Pearl rating.
- Abu Dhabi Stock Exchange Guidance (ADX): ADX has developed guidance on the adoption of Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) among its listed companies and investors alike. F&B establishments can use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting.
- AD Environment Vision 2030: Achieving sustainable energy management will support the sustainable development of Abu Dhabi's economy.

⁴ Based on AESG's research: Considering four 25 AED %90 efficiency LED bulb combined with motion and daylight sensors with efficiencies of up to %40.

⁵ Based on AESG's research: studies made using data from several online retailers and bulk suppliers to create market average.

⁶ Based on AESG's research: it should be emphasised that scheme operates as an auction and price points cannot be disclosed in these guidelines.

Tips:**ESMA energy efficiency standards:**

Part of the UAE Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technologies, ESMA (Emirates Standardization and Metrology Authority) issues the Energy Efficiency Labels for appliances). F&B establishments should ensure that all appliances have high ESMA star rating (5 or 4 stars).

The list of the approved appliances can be found here: <https://moiat.gov.ae/en/>



Clean Energy Certificates:

Clean Energy Certificates are an innovative programme that allows Abu Dhabi consumers to certify the source of their clean energy usage and empowers them in achieving their sustainability goals. EWEC owns and sells all Clean Energy Certificates for solar and nuclear generated electricity in Abu Dhabi, supporting the UAE's climate change goals as part of the UAE Energy Strategy 2050.

How can I purchase Clean Energy Certificates?

To track and verify clean energy consumption, please contact the EWEC Clean Energy Certificates team at: CleanEnergyCertificates@ewec.ae

Further Reading:

1. OneClick LCA [information](#) and [Pricing](#)
2. [eTEACHER](#)



A.2. Water Management System

Developing a water conservation plan and purchasing water-efficient appliances reduces both operating costs and overall environmental impacts. In the UAE, where water is scarce, it is important for the sector to conserve water wherever possible.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1. Incorporate maintenance and prevention inspections.				
1.1. Inspect pipes, taps, drainage and other water fittings to ensure there is no water leakage.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Conduct water conservation awareness campaign.				
2.1. Train staff on water efficiency and management annually.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.2. Create guidebooks, leaflets, or booklets on efficient water management either in digital format or by printing eco-friendly paper.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.3. Post water conservation signs in bathroom facilities, kitchen area, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.4. Use digital tools to calculate the water consumption (e.g., Estidama Water Consumption Calculator).	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Install efficient and smart water fittings.				
3.1. Install hand basin taps with flow rate at 1.5-2 l/min or less.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2. Install toilet with flush flow rate at 2-4 l/min and bidet flush flow rate at 9.5 l/min or less.	✓	✓	✓	✓

4.	Provide sustainable water solutions	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	4.1. Provide guests filtered tap water for drinking instead of packaged water.	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.					
	4.2. Provide glass bottles or biodegradable options for drinking.	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.	Introduce smart and efficient irrigation system for lawns and gardens (If applicable)	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	5.1. Install drip irrigation system controlled by time sensors and with leak detection. This can get enhanced further by installing a smart system that reacts to real time weather detection, automatic irrigation schedule, etc. (if applicable).	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.2. Install subsurface irrigation system (if applicable).	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.3. Utilise recycled water for irrigation (if applicable).	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.4. Practice xeriscaping: use soil additives and native/adaptive trees, plants, shrubs, and artificial surfaces to conserve water (if applicable).	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

* This initiative is applicable only if the property has a pool.

Benefits:

- Regular inspections and monitoring, installation of efficient water fixtures and fittings can save up to 20% savings on water⁷.
- Smart and drip irrigation system can offer savings of around 100 AED for every 1,000 sqm of irrigable land⁸.
- Regular inspection reduces risks of scaling, corrosion, contamination and other problems to your business which could rupture pipes, inhibit your water flow, or damage equipment that requires a certain water quality.

UAE and Abu Dhabi Regulations:

- Estidama Pearl rating system: Estidama is a building design methodology for constructing and operating sustainable buildings. Under Estidama, water management is a key factor to obtain the Pearl rating.
- ADX: If F&B establishments are listed on the ADX make sure that it follows ESG guidance. They can use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting for water management.

Local References:

- AD Environment Vision 2030: Achieving sustainable water management will support the sustainable development of Abu Dhabi's economy.
- ESMA EESL programme certified products: all water fixtures and water consuming appliances must be approved by ESMA in order to operate them in the UAE.

Further Reading:

1. [Estidama Water Consumption Calculator](#) – follow this link for further information and instructions on how to calculate indoor and outdoor water consumption and how to improve on water consumption.

⁷ Based on AESG's research: Efficient/low flow appliances with efficiencies ranging from %10 to %20.

⁸ Based on AESG's research: Calculation based on industry average irrigation rate of 20 L/sqm, system cost of around 600 AED with an efficiency of up to %60 and the latest (ADDC, www.addc.ae, 2020) utility price of water.

⁹ Based on AESG's research: studies made using data from several online retailers and bulk suppliers to create market average.



A.3. Waste Management System

F&B establishments are major contributors to waste generation, which has a severe impact on the environment. To manage waste efficiently, implementing a robust waste management system is beneficial for the environment and the industry. As food waste is the least recycled material through implementing the below initiatives F&B establishments can significantly reduce waste generation, thus reducing the volume of waste being disposed in landfill.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

1.	Start by designing a waste management strategy, and establish a waste disposal hierarchy - reduce, reuse, and recycle (targeting paper, plastic, water)				
		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	1.1. Encourage reduce, reuse, and recycle practice (targeting paper, plastic, water).	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	Conduct waste management awareness campaign				
		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	2.1. Train staff annually on waste management and segregation, reducing food waste, advantages of recycling and reuse.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2.2. Develop digital and reusable training materials - e.g., guidebooks and leaflets on waste management explaining the importance of waste segregation, creative ideas of reusing waste, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	Engage in minimising food waste				
		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	3.1. Provide options of smaller plate size / half plate.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.2. Ensure cooking to order, only where feasible initially, and target to increase the practice over time.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.3. Encourage pre-measured servings dishes such as dips, salads, desserts, etc. to avoid over-use or over-consumption when serving buffet meals.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.4. Raise awareness of the implications of food waste by adding a message, key facts, or other relevant information printed on food menus packaged food, on digital or printed ads, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.5. Monitor food expiration dates of perishable items and keep a stock inventory.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.6. Anticipate demand with care and avoid over buying of stock. Store properly at the right temperature required for the food item.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.7. Use the FIFO (First In, First Out) rule when storing food and displaying food for sale. This ensures that newer stock is routinely placed behind older stock, and the older stock will always be used up first before it has chance to go to waste.	✓	✓	✗	✓
	3.8. Donate leftover food to charity or food banks.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.9. Buckets can be used to collect food scraps can later be given to a community garden to compost or a partnership with Tadweer.	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹⁰ South California Gas Company, "A Green Restaurant Guide", 2012 (www.socalgas.com)

4.	Provide sustainable water solutions	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	4.1. Place segregation bins strategically at places with higher footfall.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.2. Place a bin for organic waste in the kitchen area.	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.	Promote sustainable food packaging	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	5.1. Promote use of biodegradable straws, made with paper or bamboo, with drinks.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.2. For takeaway orders, consider eco-friendly packaging for food (e.g., biodegradable and paper-based products).	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.3. Reduce and gradually eliminate the use of single-use plastic like cups, cutlery, food containers for take away replace it with recyclable or biodegradable ones.	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.	Promote sustainable habits with customers	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	6.1. Provide plastic condiment sachets conservatively and only on request.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	6.2. Instead of providing wet wipes that come in plastic packets, use finger bowls or reusable wet towels to clean hands before / after serving food.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	6.3. Do not provide single use plates and cutlery unless they have been requested. If requested, provide biodegradable ones.	✓	✓	✓	✓
7.	Promote the use of refillable amenities	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	7.1. Replace single-use plates and cutlery with biodegradable options. Provide if requested by guest to lessen waste.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	7.2. Provide multi-use glassware (e.g., cups, mugs etc.).	✓	✓	✓	✓
	7.3. Place refillable soap and hand sanitiser dispensers.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Placing waste segregation bins will provide the option of recycling waste through the correct streams, which will lead to reductions in landfill waste. Additionally, the waste can be sold for additional revenue or reused in a waste-to-value scheme.
- Installing water filling stations can save up to 95% on water costs^{11 12 13}.
- Switching to refillable amenities such as shampoo and soap dispensers can offer savings of up to 92%.
- Ensuring proper waste removal helps improve air and water quality as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Managing the waste smartly will help conserve natural resources including minerals, water, and wood.

Local References:

- Estidama Pearl rating system: Estidama is a building design methodology for constructing and operating sustainable buildings. Under Estidama, waste management is a key factor that F&B establishments can develop to obtain the Pearl rating.
- Abu Dhabi Environmental Vision 2030: Achieving sustainable waste management will support the sustainable development of Abu Dhabi's economy.
- ADX: F&B establishments can use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting for waste management.
- AD Environment Vision 2030: Achieving sustainable waste management will support the sustainable development of Abu Dhabi's economy.

¹¹ Based on AESG research: price of the bottled soap estimated at 131/L, the price of refill soap estimated at 10.6/L

¹² Based on AESG research: wholesale bottled water prices at 0.3AED/L, latest utility prices of water by ADDC in 2020

¹³ Based on studies made using data from several online retailers and bulk suppliers to create market average.



A.4. Green and Sustainable Transportation

The transport sector remains one of the biggest emitters of carbon dioxide emissions in the UAE. For F&B establishments, managing transport emissions is crucial for accessibility. Allowing guests to reach their destination is a major operational activity, which includes city tours, sourcing of daily supplies, etc. Below are some of the key areas where the F&B establishments industry can become more sustainable.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1. Promote alternative use of transport				
1.1. Promote the use of public transport and provide guests with a map of public transport and directions on how to use them to get to the establishment.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Promote individual use of green and sustainable transport				
2.1. Provide guests with a list of ride hailing apps that provide cleaner options.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Promote employee carpooling and use of public transport				
3.1. Encourage employees and staff to use public transport.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Sustainable transport for food delivery				
4.1. Optimise delivery route and have drivers deliver multiple orders at the same time.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.2. Depending on budget, invest in electric scooters or cars for delivery.	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Install EV chargers in parking wherever applicable				
5.1. Install EV chargers in the parking area, wherever applicable.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Purchasing a six-car fleet of hybrid vehicles can save an F&B establishment up to 80% on fuel costs¹⁴.
- Promoting the use of public transport, employee carpooling and individual use of green transportation will significantly reduce the carbon footprint across Scope 1 and Scope 3 (as transportation accounts for 49% of tourism industry's emissions according to the World Travel & Tourism Council¹⁵).
- Sustainable public transportation is 10 times safer per mile than driving a personal vehicle into the city. Commuters can reduce their chances of being involved in a crash by more than 90% if they use public transit¹⁶.

Local References:

- ADX: Use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting for sustainable transportation.
- Abu Dhabi Environmental Vision 2030: Achieving sustainable transport management will support the sustainable development of Abu Dhabi's economy.
- Abu Dhabi sustainable transport mobility strategy.

¹⁴ Based on AESG research: Average fuel cost in Abu Dhabi in the last 3 months, which is 3.7AED/L – to account for volatility – As well as average miles per gallon or MPG value for cars in the industry (24.2 mpg), average energy consumption per range figures of EVs at 0.2 kWh/km, ADDC's EV tariff of 0.3AED/kWh

¹⁵ World Travel & Tourism Council, "A Net Zero Roadmap for Travel and Tourism", 2021, (www.wttc.org)

¹⁶ Environment, "8 Main Benefits of Sustainable Transportation", 2020, (www.environment.co)



A.5. Environmental Protection

Protecting the local environment and native ecosystems is critical for the tourism industry in Abu Dhabi, given the large number of vulnerable plants, animal species and habitat¹⁷. According to Environmental Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD) experts, Abu Dhabi contains 34 different types of coral and 17 different types of endangered birds. Abu Dhabi is home to 436 native plant species, including the national tree of the UAE, the ghaf¹⁸. The tourism industry should ensure the protection of the local environment across all its operations and value chains.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

1.	Ensure protection of local flora and fauna.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	1.1. Ensure that no pollution or spillage in the local environment is caused during the retrofit activities of the establishment.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.2. If the F&B has a private natural area such as beach, garden or desert, ensure that it is clear and no plastic or other waste is left behind to protect the biodiversity.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.3. If the establishment has a private beach, they can get in touch with EAD for support to protect Abu Dhabi's endangered coral reefs.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.4. Develop a kitchen garden (on the roof top or in the garden) and plant fresh herbs and vegetables that can be used as an ingredient in the dishes.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	Environmental Protection awareness campaign	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	2.1. Train staff on how to reduce environmental pollution, mobilising people for beach clean-ups, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2.2. Provide information and training materials (e.g., guidebook and leaflets on flora and fauna protection, planting native trees of UAE, etc.).	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2.3. Distribute leaflets and place signages about littering and tampering, endangered species and plants protection notice, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	Plant native trees and plants in the surrounding area or rooftops to promote biodiversity.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	3.1. Plant native trees and plants (such as Ghaf Tree and White Saxaul) in the surrounding area to promote biodiversity.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.	Develop a climate resilience action plan that outlines measures on how to adapt to climate change issues	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	4.1. Can be conducted through a third-party, or alternatively LEED has an established Climate Change Action Plan template.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

¹⁷ Earth's Endangered Creatures, Endangered Species (www.earthsendangered.com)

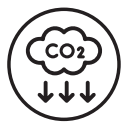
¹⁸ Environment Agency Abu Dhabi, Discover Our Biodiversity (www.ead.ae)

Benefits:

- Ensuring the protection of flora and fauna will enhance Abu Dhabi's biodiversity, as will the planting of native trees.
- This is a long-term investment into the environment to keep it resilient and attract more visitors in the future.
- Planting trees has the direct effect of reducing atmospheric CO₂ because each individual tree directly sequesters carbon from the atmosphere through photosynthesis.
- A balanced ecosystem results in rain and slows down climate change, because large mangrove forests can influence weather patterns, which creates their own microclimates and increases tourism.

Further Reading:

1. Abu Dhabi's [native plant](#) species.
2. There are several further laws relating to environmental protection that F&B establishments are expected to comply with, read [UAE legislation on environmental protection](#).



A.6 Carbon Management

The global tourism industry accounts for around 8% of global carbon emissions¹⁹ and this is predicted to increase. Tourism, like other industries, has a responsibility to manage its impact on the planet. Reducing the sector's carbon footprint contributes towards mitigating the devastating effects of climate change, which has a positive cascade effect on public health and the environment. Abu Dhabi's arid climate makes it vulnerable to extreme weather changes such as increases in temperature, which in turn could lead to a reduction in the number of visitors travelling to Abu Dhabi. Investing in carbon management will result in innovative and more environmental-friendly solutions that will protect the health of the planet.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1. Calculate footprint through monitoring operations and outlining the emissions related to each operation				
1.1. This can be done through digital tools (such as one Click LCA, IES).	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Identify carbon hotspots in the operations.				
2.1. Emissions related to visitor arrivals, departures and pickups or sourcing of materials for day-to-day operations.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Develop a pathway to net zero				
3.1. Identify carbon reduction measures.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2. Set carbon reduction targets.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2. Offset residual emissions.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

¹⁹ Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, Our Work / climate action (www.sustainablehospitalityalliance.org)

Benefits:

- Calculating a carbon footprint through a digital tool can identify GHG hotspots, thus enabling carbon emission reduction and reporting.
- With the rise of eco-tourism, carbon conscious F&B establishments could attract more guests and potentially benefit from carbon taxes.
- Benefits for the establishment of long-term partnerships with local and government bodies that are working towards a net zero economy.

Local References:

- UAE Net Zero 2050: The UAE has pledged to have net zero emissions by the year 2050. F&B establishments can align with this strategy by aiming to reduce their emissions.
- Whilst there are no laws mandating carbon reporting at the date of writing these guidelines, it is expected that there will be requirements in the future. Therefore, we recommend that F&B establishments should establish procedures to report their carbon emissions.

Further reading:

1. [GHG protocol](#) – for further information and definitions of GHG Scope emissions and classifications and methods of calculation.





B. Sustainable and Local Procurement



B.1 Sourcing of Local, Sustainable Goods

Sustainability should not be considered solely the responsibility of the company itself, but it should be implemented throughout the entire supply and value chain in which it operates and collaborates. Research has shown that customers are increasingly selective about the products they consume, considering factors such as environmental and social sustainability. The F&B sector in Abu Dhabi can respond to this by applying the key procurement initiatives outlined below.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

1.	Design a sustainable procurement plan and policy to support sustainable purchases.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.1. Create a requirements checklist for identifying sustainable suppliers (within the sustainable procurement strategy) and collaborate with contractors that meet the sustainability criteria for radical maintenance work or infrastructural changes.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.2. Request vendors/ suppliers to use materials that can be recycled or composted.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.3. If the F&B establishment is sourcing food from a vendor request them to use biodegradable packaging for food and drinks.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	Wherever possible purchase products with less disposable packaging and opt to purchase products that are packaged more sustainably (reusable/recyclable cardboard packaging or recycled packaging).	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	2.1. Avoid buying products with heavy outer plastic packaging and opt for biodegradable options.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	Purchase eco-friendly products that do not contain a high amount of hazardous chemicals.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.1. Partner with vendor to provide eco-friendly cleaning products (e.g., soaps, floor cleaners, etc.,) that does not contaminate water when it flows through sewage.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.	Partner with local suppliers (Without allowing it to affect the quality and variety of food choices and offerings at your establishment).	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.1. Purchase groceries, food items and other goods from local suppliers, wherever possible, and introduce a seasonal menu with these locally sourced items.	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.	Encourage procurement of sustainable food products wherever possible. (Without allowing it to affect the quality and variety of food choices and offerings at your establishment).	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	5.1. Do not purchase food products that harm endangered or protected marine life.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.2. Encourage purchase of food products that have a nationally recognised eco-label or green certification, if options are available.	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.	Source environmentally preferable products that contain recycled content, (pre- and post-consumer content), renewable materials or are compostable/ biodegradable.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
	6.1. Source compostable or recyclable products, such as napkins, food containers and other packaging.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Purchasing locally sourced products yield multiple benefits such as support of local businesses, reduced emissions from product transport and reduced damage during transportation.
- Purchasing environmentally preferable options would reduce carbon emissions and waste, and encourage sustainable behaviour.
- When offering a seasonal menu with locally sourced ingredients, transportation requirements, food waste and spoilage are reduced. It also creates opportunities to partner with local farmers.
- Sourcing fresher produce will ensure higher quality products.
- Growing local varieties of food preserves local genetic diversity.

UAE and Abu Dhabi Regulations:

- [Federal Law No. 10 of 2015 on Food Safety](#): The law imposes standards and regulations for maintaining the safety and quality of food and ensuring the protection of public health and consumers.

Local References:

- ADX: F&B establishments can use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting for sustainable procurement.
- Supporting suppliers who are committed to the development of UAE Nationals.
- Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority: Ensures food safety in Abu Dhabi and guarantees that the food is fit for human consumption.



C. Social and Culture



C.1 Promoting Local Heritage, Culture, and Art

Rapid urbanisation and modernisation have had considerable impacts on the environment of Middle East. This has impacted cultural sites and resulted in the need to place higher importance on preserving cultural heritage. Promoting local and regional culture, heritage and art will create an authentic experience for visitors, which will also enhance the quality of life for all stakeholders and local communities.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1.	1. Celebrate and support national events and holidays at the property.				
	1.1. Plan celebrations of UAE National Day, Ramadan, Eid etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	2. Play local music, serve local food and drinks, and put-up traditional decorations and arts, to promote local artists and artisans.				
	2.1. Put up local decorations and crafts, play local music throughout the establishment and serve local snacks to guests.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	3. Promote cultural and heritage sites as tourist destinations.				
	3.1. Provide digital leaflets and maps with information about the cultural and heritage sites in Abu Dhabi.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.	4. Support local tours and guides through partnerships.				
	4.1. Organise a tour to a local farm where establishments source their vegetables from.	✓	✓	✓	✗

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Raising awareness of the importance of the rich cultural heritage of Abu Dhabi contributes towards a sustainable future by maintaining and preserving this heritage.
- Promoting local culture and heritage strengthens the relationship between visitors and the local community.

Local References:

- UAE law on the preservation of cultural heritage.



C.2 Promoting Sustainability with Visitors and Local Community

As more and more tourists are seeking uniquely local experiences, local communities and local artists must be engaged with to provide these attractions. It is important that F&B establishments engage with the local community and guests to further knowledge of sustainability initiatives and how these measures contribute towards the well-being of people and the planet.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1. Partner with non-profit associations to organise events for raising money for local causes and charities				
1.1. Obtain the required licence from a competent authority like the Ministry of Community Development to organise a fundraising event.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Encourage participation of guests in sustainability initiatives of the establishment				
2.2. Dedicate a space in the F&B area to display the sustainability initiatives of the establishment to spread awareness and encourage guests' participation, if applicable.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Raise awareness of guests on how they can add value to the sustainable initiatives of the event				
3.1. Raise awareness among guests about the sustainable initiatives of the establishment through distributing leaflets, posting signs, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Co-develop, and co-design products inspired by local crafts in collaboration with local artisans and artists				
4.1. Collaborate with local artists and artisans to showcase their crafts or employ a local musician to play music for the guests.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.2. Hire local artists and businesses to decorate and design furniture for the establishment.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.3. Promote and sell local souvenirs by partnering with local artists and artisans.	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Align with local initiatives and NPOs to design programmes to engage guests and locals on sustainability				
5.1. Incorporate guidelines and advice from the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment.	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.2. Incorporate guidelines and advice from Emirates Environmental Group.	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Conduct a survey with guests				
6.1. Conduct a survey with guests to assess their satisfaction and expectations on sustainability initiatives and whether they would revisit and recommend the establishment to others.	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Ensure integration of international programmes and certifications to attract tourists that prefer sustainable options				
7.1. Ensure integration of international programmes like ISO 140001 Environmental Management System, Green Key, Green Globe, Earth Check, ISO 50001 Energy Management System.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

[Note: For events, please refer to the Event Sustainability Guidelines]

Benefits:

- Research from Booking.com has shown that visitors look for more sustainable options, hence by informing the visitors which sustainability initiatives have been implemented will boost the reputation of the establishment.
- Increased partnerships with local artists and artisans will result in exposure and recognition while generating additional revenue.
- Collecting guest feedback would allow F&B establishments to undergo continuous improvements and encourage recommendations and revisits to the F&B establishments.



C.3 Engaging in Educational Programmes

Today's generation places a higher significance on mitigating climate change and being aware of the environmental impacts from their choices and activities. Therefore, it is especially important for the F&B sector to engage in educational programmes on sustainable practices to influence the cultural, social, and environmental attitudes of tourists and surrounding communities.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

1. Educate students on the local heritage and cuisine.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1.1. Partner with educational institutions to plan workshops on local cuisine including activities such as cookery classes, learning about locally produced food products, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.2. Organise sustainability initiatives within the establishment's premises for students (e.g., tree plantations).	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.3. Invite school students for tours to local farms.	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.4. Organise monthly workshop on local cuisine.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Educating students and the community on the local culture reinforces the importance of preserving Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage.
- Through educational programmes, tourists, and the younger generation (including residents) will become more aware and enthusiastic about social sustainability in Abu Dhabi.
- Hosting workshops or classes on local art, crafts, and cuisine can help build a stronger relations with guests, while increasing chances of rebooking and recommendations.
- Environmental learning prepares the students for future careers and equips them with the required skills to become professionals in the sector.



C.4 Improving Accessibility

Despite the global population of People of Determination, the lack of awareness and information is one of the major obstacles visitors face whether they are a Person of Determination or a companion or family member. Universal access is a key factor in social sustainability to ensure the needs of People of Determination are addressed and fulfilled.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

1.	Ensure provision of lactation rooms for women and gender-neutral baby changing stations.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	Organise staff training on accessibility provisions for guests bi-annually.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	Improve provisions for People of Determination.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.1. Provide ramps for easier access to entrances (or wherever required).	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.2. Ensure information in raised text/ number and braille on elevators, signages, etc.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.3. Provide large print menus or menus in braille upon request.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.4. Ensure adequate room under dining tables to accommodate wheelchairs. Tables should have a knee clearance of 0.685m from the floor.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.5. Place People of Determination priority sign and ensure that one of the elevators provides priority or is designed for people of determination with wider entrance and low door closing speed.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.6. Accessible parking spaces should be marked with People of Determination priority signs and accessible parking spaces must be close to the main entrance.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.7. Ensure visible and accessible signage and directions.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.8. If buffet and self-service is the only option available, ensure that staff are available to assist People of Determination.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.9. Cater for dietary requirements upon request, such as people of determination or people with allergies and certain diseases (e.g., celiac disease).	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.10. In accessible bathrooms, provide a fixed horizontal and vertical grab rail beside the toilet to assist in standing/sitting and a pull-cord alarm should be installed.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.11. Ensure at least one pick-up and drop vehicle with wide entrance and low-rise accessible seats.	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
		✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- By providing guests with better accessibility, F&B establishments would build a distinguishable brand and encourage customer loyalty.
- Guests will choose F&B establishments with better accessibility facilities for their visit.
- Providing lactation rooms for women can build the trust of female visitors and staff, reduce absenteeism, and improve employee morale.
- Provisions for people of determination, as well as staff training on the matter would create independence for people of determination.
- Enables people with disabilities to move around independently and access day to day services through the event and hence improve their trust in the business.

Local References:

- F&B establishments must also comply with Abu Dhabi building code and the requirements set out in chapter 11 on building accessibility (and appendix E).
- UAE national policy for empowering people of determination.
- UAE people of determination protection from abuse policy.
- [Federal Law No. 10 of 2015 on Food Safety](#): The law imposes standards and regulations for maintaining the safety and quality of food and ensuring the protection of public health and consumers.





D. People



D.1 Staff Empowerment

How can F&B establishments engage with their people and generate social value?

Securing a workforce for the future has long been a challenge for the tourism industry. Research has shown that lack of career progression is one of the main reasons people leave the industry, and although training and development cannot always combat this directly, investment in employees and a robust training and development strategy can go a long way.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1. Conduct annual trainings for employees for their personal and professional development.				
1.1. Online and/ or in-person courses, management courses (e.g., time management courses).	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Provide career path and milestones for employee professional development and promotion.				
2.1. Set in place a structured review and development programme including bi-annual performance reviews where development goals and objectives are set and performance reviewed against KPIs (e.g., receiving no complaints about service, etc.).	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Conduct a human rights awareness training for employees.				
3.1. Schedule human rights training.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Develop a policy for anti-harassment and discrimination and conduct trainings to promote a healthy working environment to increase efficiency, employee well-being, and work quality.				
4.1. Schedule anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training sessions.	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Provide employee reporting channels to raise issues related to sustainability and develop a process to resolve these issues.				
5.1. Place an anonymous feedback box or a platform in the establishment's intranet.	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Incentivise employees to perform on sustainability (by setting it as a KPI for employees) via appropriate tools like staff award system.				
6.1. Provide incentives for preferring public transport commute, waste segregation, reduction in water consumption, being energy efficient like running a full dishwasher, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Employee engagement initiatives and programmes will contribute towards the improvement of staff performance, reduction of absenteeism and will increase the F&B establishments' ability to attract and retain talented employees.
- Developing an anti-harassment and anti-discriminatory policy will establish a safe working space for employees.
- Empowerment helps create a positive, open environment that leads to maximum productivity.
- Improves employee branding, so they act as brand ambassadors and present the company in the best light possible.
- Flattens the company's hierarchy, which eliminates micro-managing and the excess management layers to improve communication and increase transparency in the workforce.

Local References:

- All UAE employment [laws](#)



D.2 Diversity and Inclusion

According to research, staff composed of different regional and cultural backgrounds with overall diversity of employees can lead to better problem-solving, higher occupancy and profits²¹, which visitors respond positively towards.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

1.	Have a representative workforce of women, nationalities, and people of determination with hiring and retaining policies that encourage diversity.	F&B Categories			
		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1.1	Work towards a diverse workforce across all levels, do not discriminate in the hiring process against race or people of determination and reflect this in a policy.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	Encourage Emiratisation strategies and train local population, especially women to join the hospitality	F&B Categories			
		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
2.1	When marketing for jobs, include in the job description 'we encourage Emiratis, especially females to apply for all jobs that we have advertised for'.	✓	✓	✓	✗
3.	Put policies are in place to ensure equal pay for equal work.	F&B Categories			
		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
3.1	Through an equality policy stipulate that regardless of gender, nationality, or ability we will pay all employees equally for equal work and roles.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.	Encourage representation of women and people of determination in senior leadership and board.	F&B Categories			
		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
4.1	When hiring and promoting employees, ensure inclusion of women and people of determination in senior leadership and management.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- A diverse and gender balanced workforce enables the F&B establishments to have a wider talent pool with varied perspectives which improves productivity, company image, and overall management.
- According to survey research, 66% of organisations believe that diversity enhances innovation²².
- According to research, diverse teams made decisions 60% faster than non-diverse teams, and that teams marked by age, gender, and geographic diversity made the right decision 87% of the time, compared to 58% for all-male teams²³.

Local References:

- [Emiratisation programmes and initiatives in Abu Dhabi](#)
 - “Training for Work” initiative, launched by Human Resources Authority, aims at developing job seekers’ skills by providing training opportunities in government entities and companies.
 - The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation aimed to provide more than 15,000 suitable jobs for Emiratis in the private sector by the end of 2018.
 - “Absher”, an initiative supervised by the Ministry of Presidential Affairs and implemented by the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation to encourage Emiratis to work in the private sector.
 - “Khebraty”, a programme for Emirati students who wish to explore the tourism sector and are able to work for 20 hours per week in a tourism company.
- Federal Decree-Law No. (2) of 2015 regarding Combating Discrimination and Hatred and its amendments.
- [UAE law on equal wages for women and men](#)

²¹ McKinsey & Company, “Diversity wins: How inclusion matters”, 2020, (www.mckinsey.com)

²² EW Group, “The benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace”, (www.theewgroup.com)

²³ EW Group, “The benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace”, (www.theewgroup.com)





E. Resilience and Risk Management



E.1 Health and Safety

How can F&B establishments mitigate risks and become more resilient?

Health and safety is an important consideration for any workplace as it is crucial to keep both workers and guests safe. To run an effective F&B business, it is important to have a health and safety checklist based on below mentioned initiatives to perform checks quickly and efficiently.

The DCT health risk matrix and Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health System (OSHAD) Framework is mandatory for all F&B establishments. These suggested initiatives are additional to the mandates and surpass expectations to drive F&B establishments towards having a strong and sustainable health and safety system.

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

		Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1.	1. Employee engagement and workshop to improve physical and mental health of employees				
	1.1. Organise health and well-being events/retreats.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.2. Promote annual health check-ups for all employees.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	2. Provide medical assistance				
	2.1. Align with OSHAD COP4 and provide medical rooms, first aid kits and assistance like CPR. Train staff on providing first aid and CPR.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	3. Develop a future pandemic/epidemic action plan				
	3.1. Develop a future pandemic/epidemic action plan that can be easily tailored to the instructions from Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.	4. Apply appropriate measures (such as sensors, or a third-party) to periodically check noise, water, and air quality for guests and employee safety				
	4.1. Ensure a quarterly quality check of water and annually for noise and air.	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.	5. Enforce Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) and formaldehyde content limits				
	5.1 F&B establishments can accommodate, purchase products with low VOC content that are used for paint/coatings, adhesives/sealants, cleaners and fragrances. Products must be stored in containment areas and disposed of correctly.	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.	6. Provide mental health counselling for employees				
	6.1. To ensure a safe and healthy workspace, provide employees with channels to reach out for individual counselling services.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Providing health and safety support will reduce costs associated with accidents.
- Providing physical and mental health support to employees will improve employee well-being and business efficiency.
- Demonstrating commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility, which includes health and safety dedication, will attract investors to the company.
- Keep all staff aware of current legal requirements, which improves the company's regulatory compliance and lowers the risk of being fined

Local References:

- [UAE laws on Health and safety at the workplace](#)
- [Electronic Public Health Pest Control Services](#)- DCT and Tadweer directs all tourism and F&B establishments to use Pest Control E-contract system to ensure effective and safe public health.
- [Circular No. 5/2021 - Health and Safety for F&B Restaurants](#)



E.2 Risk Mitigation and Resilience

Risk management ensures that a business is prepared for any potential threats and events. This covers health and safety, as well as any global events (e.g., COVID19-). Resilience refers to the development, preparedness, and mitigation measures considered for scenarios such as climate change, pandemics, health and wellbeing, and sustainable growth. It is important to provide benefits and empower the employee/staff across multiple financial and non-financial dimensions to create value and manage the risks and opportunities associated with economic, environmental, and social developments

Initiatives applicable to F&B establishments

Sustainability Initiatives

F&B Categories

	Tourism Restaurants	Cafes	Fine Dining Restaurants	Bars and Nightlife Venues
1. Develop an ethics and anti-corruption policy.				
1.1. Develop a policy on ethics and anti-corruption and make sure employees are informed.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Identify risk and have management and escalation procedures, covering at least people, assets, community, and environment.				
2.1. Conduct annual risk management policies reviews, involve stakeholders and where applicable utilise a third-party to conduct an assessment".	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Develop a risk register for the four categories (people, assets, community, and environment) and a system to monitor performance on regular basis.				
3.1. Conduct an impact assessment on all four categories (hire a third-party if applicable) and develop a monitoring framework after involving all stakeholders.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Invest in artificial intelligence, financial and climate related models to better predict the future.				
4.1. Hire a third-party assessment consultant to perform software analysis to highlight any potential future impacts. Review annually.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Having an ethics and anti-corruption policy will lead to better staff engagement and enhanced reputation.
- A risk management strategy will help identify risks that are not apparent and protect the business from unforeseen liabilities.
- According to McKinsey's survey about the pandemic's impact on corporate resilience, a better risk governance model is key for efficient and effective decision making and crisis management²⁴.
- It builds early-warning system in place so actions will be promptly and confident which is an extra line of defence during a crisis.
- Having resilience reduces stress within the organisation and this in turn improves job satisfaction and productivity.

²⁴ McKinsey & Company, "From risk management to strategic resilience", 2022, (www.mckinsey.com)



8. Conclusion

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide a roadmap and approach for the industries to contribute towards making tourism in Abu Dhabi more sustainable. Abu Dhabi will maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to all visitors and tourists by becoming a sustainable tourism destination. In conjunction with raising tourist awareness about sustainability issues, tourists will also get an authentic local experience of UAE culture and heritage. Furthermore, sustainable practices create a positive impact on guests and increase their likelihood of returning. Going green leads to better loyalty, word-of-mouth marketing and higher customer satisfaction.

Sustainable tourism can be achieved through applying the recommendations and sustainability initiatives presented in these guidelines. Each industry shall use these guidelines and develop their own sustainability journey/roadmap towards the vision of making Abu Dhabi a sustainable destination. Moving forward, the sector should refer to the Monitoring and Measuring templates provided in annexure B with this guideline for supporting metrics and KPIs for suggested initiatives. The template would help monitor initiatives, analyse the gaps, and track progress towards the set targets to achieve sustainable excellence.

