



Dubai Urban Development Framework, Dubai, UAE

The Client's Challenge:

Dubai has quickly emerged as a super-modern, vibrant and dynamic city but growing this quickly is not always easy. Road congestion is a daily challenge and, contrary to popular belief, energy is becoming problematically expensive. Yet 70% of the city is still to be built and so The Executive Council needed a new and sophisticated development model to effectively guide Dubai through its teenage years. This resulted in a flexible and fully integrated development planning and management framework for Dubai to the year 2020 which helped to translate the vision of Dubai, the Dubai Strategic Plan 2015 (DSP), into a government framework and a bespoke and unique set of strategies, policies and spatial plans.

Our Work:

We worked in collaboration with international planning consultancy Urbis to prepare the Dubai Urban Development Framework (DUDF) which determines how the city functions and performs in terms of the transport network, their utilities infrastructure, and both their built and natural environment.

The project was divided into 3 core elements.

Illustrating a new vision for the city

As part of the visioning process we collectively identified key issues, opportunities and constraints before agreeing the themes, objectives and benchmarks that would facilitate the realisation of the vision.

Developing a physical city framework

The framework brought together issues of citywide infrastructure, transport, land-use planning, and the provision of open spaces and urban boundaries. Our focus was on the sustainability of the built and natural environment.

We provided a concept design theme for Dubai which maximises the cool and intimate spaces of the city using interconnected urban greenways, shaded walkways and microclimate design to utilise shade, wind, water and parks. Also, within and beyond the city we focussed on protecting Dubai's natural assets, including the air, land, water, special habitats and species.

With the aim of implementing principles of sustainable cities into Dubai's framework we looked at Dubai's resources balance, including flows of energy, water and carbon through the city and we considered methods for minimizing the Emirate's ecological and carbon footprints. Dubai's relatively early stages of development and its aspirations for the city provide the Emirate with many opportunities for striving towards a resource balance.

Governance and regulatory structures

A critical component to the project was the identification of a suite of regulatory and policy requirements that would facilitate the change. Policies and regulations that lead to desirable behaviours and conditions and have a low regulator burden were developed.

The Outcome:

Our work with Urbis provided The Executive Council of Dubai with an innovative Urban Development Framework that will guide their development through to the year 2020 and beyond. The framework is unique to Dubai's environments and political system and is ultimately aimed at delivering a leading Arab city.

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