

World Investment Forum 2023

Invest in Tomorrow: Abu Dhabi's Economic Transition

18th Oct - 2023

Concept Note

Abu Dhabi, the thriving capital of the United Arab Emirates, presents a compelling opportunity for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) due to its strategic location, strong infrastructure, and proactive economic policies.

FDI plays a pivotal role in shaping the industrial landscape, propelling Abu Dhabi towards diversification, innovation, and sustainable economic development. As a prominent player in the global economy, Abu Dhabi has strategically leveraged FDI to attract key industries, such as energy, manufacturing, technology, tourism, and financial services. These investments not only enhance the local economy but also create a ripple effect, stimulating job creation, and fostering the transfer of advanced technologies.

By attracting FDI, UAE fosters the establishment of cutting-edge industries, drives technological advancements, and strengthens human capital. Abu Dhabi's investment-friendly policies, robust legal framework, and transparent regulatory environment create a conducive atmosphere for businesses to thrive and flourish. Furthermore, UAE's commitment to research and development initiatives ensures that industrialization is intertwined with innovation, cultivating a culture of continuous progress and creativity.

Abu Dhabi strategically positions itself as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, creating an ecosystem that nurtures startups, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), and multinational corporations alike. Collaborative efforts between public and private sectors encourage innovation-driven businesses to flourish, further enhancing the Emirate's appeal as a preferred destination for FDI.

In summary, the event serves as a crucial platform driving Abu Dhabi's economic development towards a sustainable and prosperous future. By embracing startups, SMEs, innovation, and industrialization, UAE aims to foster a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem, spur innovation, and secure its position as a global leader in the 21st century economy. Collaborative efforts between public and private sectors, policymakers, and investors are set to propel Abu Dhabi's growth, ensuring enduring prosperity for the nation and its people.

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Conference Agenda

10:00 – 10:05

MC: Opening Remarks

- **Imad Eddine Oubiri**, International Business Advisor, UAE.

10:05 – 10:20

Keynote Address:

- **H.E. Rashed Al Blooshi**, Undersecretary of Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (ADDED)

10:25 – 11:25

Panel Discussion: Attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Era of Industry 4.0: Opportunities and Challenges

This session aims to illuminate the opportunities and challenges that arise when attracting FDIs amidst the rapid advancements of Industry 4.0. Discussing the key factors that make Abu Dhabi an enticing destination for foreign investors and how these factors align with the transformative potential of Industry 4.0 technologies.

Furthermore, the panel will engage in discussions regarding how FDI inflows can catalyze technological advancements and foster industrialization. Exploring the significance of proactive government policies, investment incentives, and regulatory frameworks in attracting FDIs and driving the growth of cutting-edge industries.

Additionally, the session will emphasize the role of international trade and efforts to facilitate trade, sustainable practices, social responsibility, and inclusive development in shaping an environment that appeals to both investors and stakeholders, ensuring a holistic and equitable approach to economic progress.

Moderator:

- **Salim A. Essaid**, Middle East and Business Correspondent

Panellists:

- **Haitham Al Subaihi**, Acting Executive Director of FDI – Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO)
- **Dr. Hachim Hussien**, Head of UNIDO ITPO – Bahrain

- Amer Kakish, CEO of Ittihad International Investment LLC, Board member of Abu Dhabi Chamber
- Dr. Miray Zaki, Managing Director, Head of Sustainability & Head of Africa – Gulf Capital
- Glenn Barklie, Principal Economist – Investment Monitor, Head of FDI Services – GlobalData

11:30 – 12:30

Panel Discussion: Fostering Startups & SMEs: Building a Stronger Economic Foundation

This session will delve into the vital role that startups and SMEs play in bolstering economies by fostering job creation, driving innovation, and contributing to economic diversification. Also, it will uncover the unique challenges and opportunities that arise in nurturing these dynamic ventures and how they can become key drivers of economic growth.

Furthermore, the panel will spotlight the measures taken by the Abu Dhabi government to attract and develop talent, empower its vibrant startup ecosystem. Delve into initiatives focused on easing business standards and attracting global investors, fostering an environment conducive to entrepreneurial success.

The significance of startups as foundational pillars of economic progress will also take centre stage, illuminating their role in bolstering economic development and contributing to long-term sustainable growth. Learn how these enterprising ventures become vital components of a thriving economic infrastructure.

Additionally, discover the pivotal role of SMEs in strengthening local and national economies. The panel will explore how locally crafted and produced offerings serve as catalysts, shaping the future of UAE's economy and enhancing the nation's global competitiveness. Unearth the unique advantages and opportunities arising from promoting local products and services, building a robust and inclusive economic ecosystem.

Moderator:

- Paula Tavangar, Partner and Chief Investment Officer at Injaz Capital

Panellists:

- Prof. Giovanni Zizzerini, Secretary General, International Network for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (INSME)
- Sir. Malachi Halliday, CEO of Halliday Growth
- Pegah Gol, Executive Board Member & Investor - ReDev GmbH
- Hasan Haider, Founder and Managing Partner at Plus Venture Capital (+VC)