



أبوظبي البحرية  
ABU DHABI MARITIME



أبوظبي  
للتنقل  
Abu Dhabi  
Mobility

Your Gateway to  
Global Opportunity:

# Abu Dhabi's Compass for Maritime Businesses

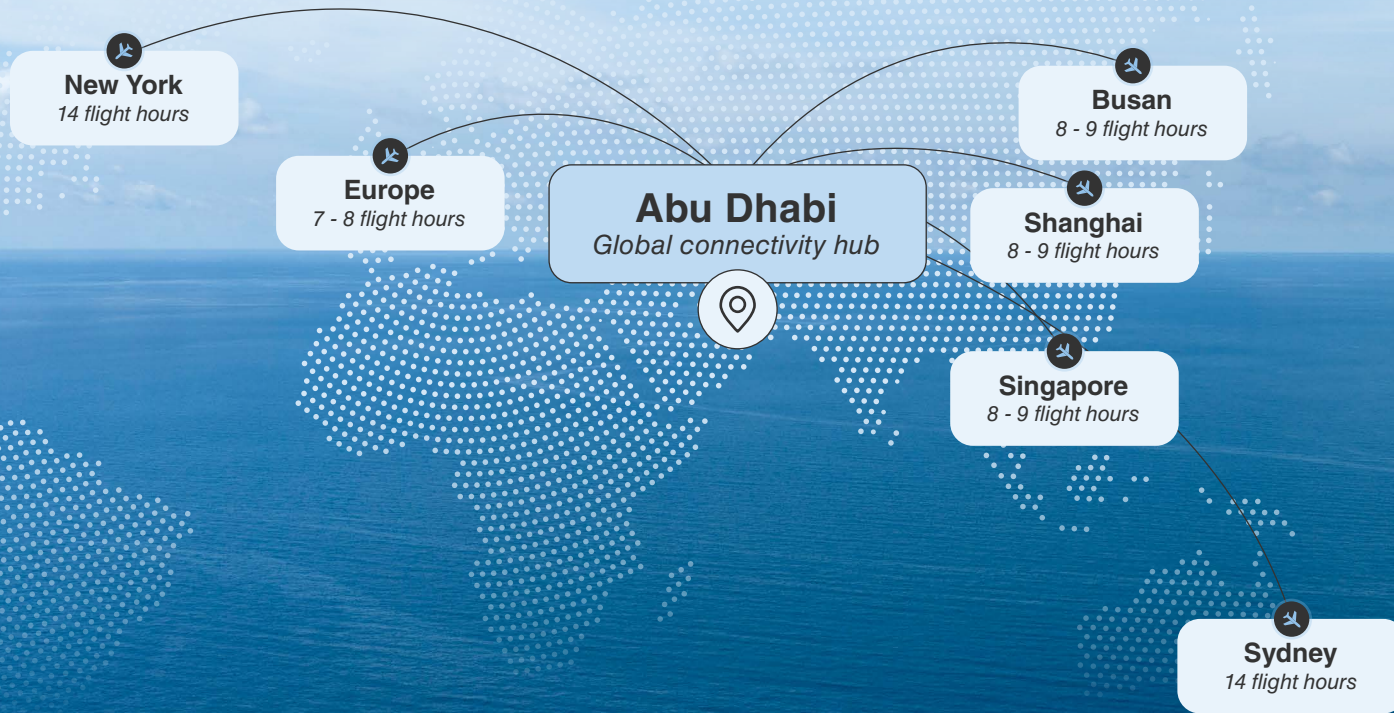
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# A city built on excellence and passion

In just three decades, Abu Dhabi has transformed from a small coastal settlement into a global destination for trade, investment and innovation guided by the UAE's long-term economic vision



Connect to the world's leading business and trade centres with ease

1960s

Oil discovery

1971

UAE established

1970 – 1980s

Infrastructure and institutional development

1990s

Economic diversification begins

2000s

Global connectivity and knowledge economy

2012

Khalifa Port inauguration

2024

World's fastest rising maritime city



# Abu Dhabi provides a holistic maritime ecosystem

We bring together all value chain stakeholders to shape Abu Dhabi into a leading maritime centre

مركز البحري  
الوطني  
MARITIME HUB  
ABU DHABI

Supported by a dedicated maritime cluster organisation

**\$8.1B** Maritime sector contribution to Abu Dhabi's economy in 2023<sup>1</sup>



## Shipping



**74%**

Increase in ship ownership from 2022 to 2024<sup>2</sup>



**#11**

Most attractive choice for relocating shipping operation<sup>3</sup>

## Ports and logistic



**+35%**

Increase in TEU volume from 2022 to 2024<sup>4</sup>



**#3**

Container port operations efficiency globally, 2023<sup>5</sup>

## Professional services



**#10**

Location for maritime IPO and bond market values<sup>6</sup>



**Top 15**

Choice as world's leading centres of maritime finance<sup>7</sup>

## Maritime technology



**#9**

Most attractive choice for relocating R&D<sup>8</sup>



**#10**

Most attractive choice for digital transformation<sup>9</sup>

## Domestic and leisure



**#1**

World's best cruise terminal Zayed Port, Abu Dhabi, 2023<sup>10</sup>



**230+**

Islands for leisure and tourism<sup>11</sup>



**45,000 sqkm**

Of waterbody<sup>12</sup>



# Join Abu Dhabi's next maritime **growth phase**

Abu Dhabi is one of the world's fastest-rising maritime hubs, climbing 10 places since 2022 to rank 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Leading Maritime Cities (LMC) global benchmarking report

Ranked in 2024

# 22<sup>nd</sup>

Highest global jump, Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> regionally and 22<sup>nd</sup> globally

## Abu Dhabi Emirate on the move



### Maritime vision

A future-ready maritime sector positioning Abu Dhabi as a leading global maritime hub



### Maritime mission

To deliver a safer, inclusive, more sustainable, and globally competitive maritime future

Abu Dhabi



In 2014, Abu Dhabi was not placed in the ranking

In 2022, Abu Dhabi was ranked 32<sup>nd</sup>

LMC 2024 download:





Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Capitalise on Abu Dhabi's business environment

Core forces driving Abu Dhabi's competitiveness and attractiveness

## Business-friendly framework

- 0% Personal income tax
- 100% Repatriation of funds
- #2 World's leading destination for foreign investment<sup>13</sup>

## Quality of life

- World's class education and healthcare
- #2 World's most cultural city<sup>14</sup>
- #4 World's best country for expats to live/work<sup>15</sup>



## Global connectivity and infrastructure

- World-class deep-water port and globally partnered
- #1 AI data centre infrastructure, outside USA<sup>16</sup>
- 3 International airports within 120 km radius

## Skilled talent and training

- #9 Globally for talent ranking<sup>17</sup>
- 200+ Nationalities<sup>18</sup>
- Diverse white and blue-collar workforce



Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Leverage from our flexible visas, favourable tax regime and easy business set up



## Flexible long-term residency visas



Investors/yachts owners/  
specialised talents

**5-10 years**



Property owner

**Up to 2 years**



Remote work  
*Live in Abu Dhabi, work remotely for a company outside the UAE*

**Up to 2 years**



## Favourable tax regime and foreign ownership



0% Personal income tax



0% Withholding tax



0% Capital gains tax



0% Customs duty on industrial raw materials and machinery



9% Corporate tax only on profits >\$100K



100% Foreign ownership possibility



100% Repatriation of funds



## Robust ecosystem



\$3B Startup investment funding in 2026<sup>19</sup>



**Business friendly framework:**  
Codes of practice aligned with global standards<sup>20</sup>



VAT relief programme  
No minimum capital



1700+ Maritime companies<sup>21</sup>



100+ Freelancer licence categories, no office required<sup>22</sup>



## Easy business setup



Mainland setup:

**2-4 weeks**



Free-zone set up:

**1-2 weeks**



Fast-track options, business setup within

**5 days**



Business-friendly framework

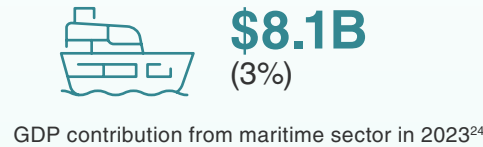
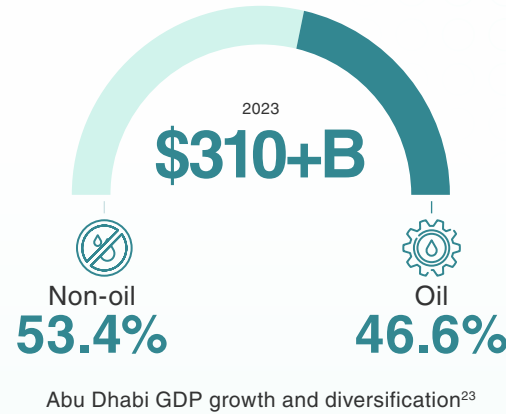
Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Grow in a resilient, wealth-backed economy that is **accelerating diversification beyond oil**

Strong global investor confidence and a high-growth investment environment



## 1 Domestic wealth

**#1**

World's richest city by capital managed by sovereign wealth funds, according to global SWF, 2024

**3**

Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) in Abu Dhabi

**\$1.7T**

Under SWF's management, 2024

## 2

### Focus area for foreign direct investment



Renewable energy



Business services



IT and software



Real estate

**#2**

World's destination for foreign investment, *Brand Finance Global City Index 2025*

**#10**

Global rank in FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) inflow UNCTAD's *World Investment Report 2025*

**\$45.6B**

FDI in 2024, reached and outperformed the global average of \$8B per country



Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Connect through our established industry network



Abu Dhabi's collaborative maritime ecosystem, spanning ports, regulators, technology providers, and sustainability initiatives creates an environment where innovation and operational excellence thrive."

— Global Logistic Company, Member of MHAD



## Maritime Hub Abu Dhabi (MHAD)

Maritime cluster organisation bringing together public and private stakeholders



## Emirates Shipping Association

Membership-based association representing the UAE shipping sector, supporting collaboration



## Maritime Sustainability Research Centre, Abu Dhabi (MSRCAD)

Knowledge lab driving the development of new ideas and solutions for a sustainable maritime sector



## Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi (SUAD) Ocean Institute

Interdisciplinary research institute focusing on holistic protection of the UAE's coastal marine life



## Industry Network



## Emirates Maritime Law Association (EMLA)

Unified platform for legal practitioners advancing legal standards and expertise



## Leisure Marine Association (LMA)

Membership-based association bringing together leisure marine and recreational boating sector



## Hub71

Government-backed incubator and funding platform supporting start-ups and scale-ups

**410+** Startups in ecosystem **\$3B** Funds secured to date



Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Strengthen partnerships and expand your network through year-round events



WORLD FUTURE ENERGY SUMMIT



القمة العالمية للحكومات WORLD GOVERNMENT SUMMIT



COP28 UAE



IUCN World Conservation Congress Abu Dhabi 2025

## Awards and recognitions



LOGISTICS MIDDLE EAST

## Trade shows and expos



ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW معرض أبوظبي الدولي للقوارب



ADIS مؤتمر أبوظبي للبنية التحتية ABU DHABI INFRASTRUCTURE SUMMIT

## Conferences and summits



Maritime Standard AITECH 24th November 2024 | DUBAI

TRANSPORT MIDDLE EAST 2026



Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Stay strategically connected from Abu Dhabi, through integrated multimodal mobility



## 4 Continents

Operate in real time out of Abu Dhabi across Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America



## \$2.5T

Trade Agreements

Leverage UAE's expanding network of trade agreements, including Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPAs) and the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA)



### Sea



### Air



### Land



Ranked among the world's 20 largest container port operators<sup>25</sup>



UAE's national carrier airline



UAE's national railway network and operator




**50+**  
Countries



**3**  
International airports within 120 km radius




**27,000+ km**  
Of high-quality roads linking air, sea, and land transport



**38**  
Ports and terminals



**125+**  
International destinations accessible from Abu Dhabi



**1,200+ km**  
Of Etihad rail network connecting 11 cities across UAE and regions



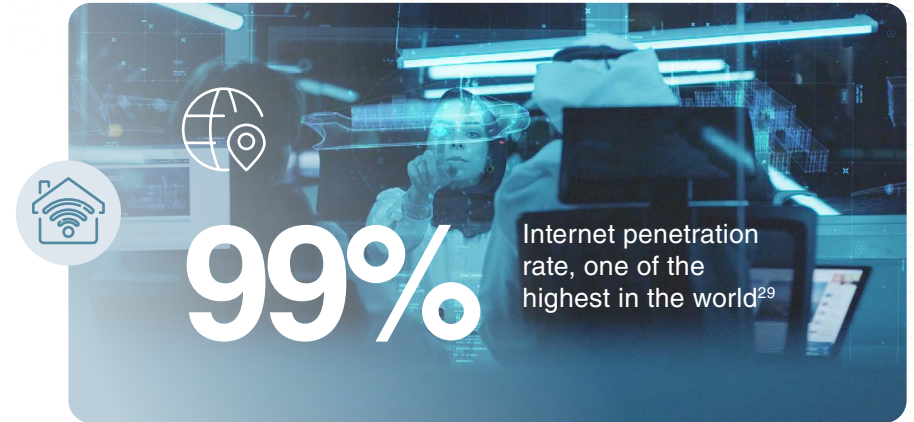
Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Leverage Abu Dhabi's AI and cybersecurity excellence through advanced infrastructure



**#1**

AI data centre infrastructure, outside USA<sup>26</sup>



**\$46B**

AI market by 2030<sup>27</sup>, 13 times growth from 2024



**#5**

In digital infrastructure, smart technology adoption<sup>28</sup>



**Global Cyber Security Centre of Excellence in Abu Dhabi, in collaboration with Google Cloud**

Secure and advanced digital ecosystem for businesses and institutions across all sectors



**\$3.54B**

Investment approved to foster digital infrastructure under the Digital Strategy 2025-2027



**20,000+**

New cybersecurity jobs by 2030 by the Centre



A key enabler of Abu Dhabi's cyber and digital security



مجلس الأمن السيبراني  
**CYBER SECURITY COUNCIL**





Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Gain ready access to a diverse professional workforce that blends local and global expertise



## #1

Globally in labour market efficiency<sup>30</sup>

## #9

Globally for talents readiness and skills availability<sup>31</sup>

## #10

Most attractive choice for headquarters relocation<sup>32</sup>



### Scale workforce



#### 2.7M

Workforce in Abu Dhabi<sup>33</sup>



### Workforce growth



#### 13%

Workforce growth<sup>35</sup>



### Talent pipeline



#### 54%

Youth workforce in the labour market<sup>37</sup>



### Female leadership



#### 30%

Women in leading roles<sup>39</sup>



#### 200+

Nationalities living in Abu Dhabi<sup>34</sup>



#### 6.3%

Skilled labour growth<sup>36</sup>



#### 500

Maritime officers and engineers trained annually<sup>38</sup>



#### 15%

Women in technical and academic roles<sup>40</sup>



Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Benefit from Abu Dhabi's world-class academic and research institutions to develop future business leaders and specialists



**500+** Programmes<sup>41</sup>



**30%** Programmes with international accreditation<sup>42</sup>



Abu Dhabi is a home to world-class international campuses



+ Multiples other institutions

Local institutions



+ Multiples other institutions

Maritime-aligned education tracks via



أكاديمية أبوظبي البحرية  
**ABU DHABI MARITIME ACADEMY**



Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Experience the comfort of home in one of the world's safest cities, surrounded by vibrant green communities and year-round sunshine



Parks



Playgrounds



Golf clubs



Cycling tracks



Community centres



Beaches, marina living and waterfront lifestyle



#1

**Safest City**  
Numbeo's Safety Index 2025



\$11.4B

Expansion of "Abu Dhabi liveability strategy" to deliver further projects that enhance the quality of life in Abu Dhabi<sup>44</sup>



8%

Of federal budget allocated in 2025 to healthcare and preventative services<sup>43</sup>



#5

**Smartest City Index 2025**  
Recognised for Abu Dhabi's abundant green spaces and excellent public transportation

## Facts about education



72+

Top ranked international schools<sup>45</sup>



17+

Country and language-specific curriculum<sup>46</sup>

## Facts about healthcare

#1

World's best hospital 2025<sup>47</sup>



200+

Accredited healthcare facilities<sup>48</sup>

1

Doctor per 250 residents<sup>49</sup>



Business-friendly framework

Global connectivity and infrastructure

Skilled talent and training

Quality of life

# Create **unforgettable experiences** through a fast-growing calendar of iconic live performances



**#2** World's most cultural city<sup>50</sup>

**#4** Best country for expats to live/work<sup>51</sup>

**15** Entertainment resorts<sup>52</sup>

**17** Nature parks<sup>53</sup>

[Learn more about experiences in Abu Dhabi](#)

[Learn more about events in Abu Dhabi](#)



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Global superstars, world-class festivals, NBA, Formula 1 and UFC



© Department of Culture & Tourism

Theme parks, water parks and water sports



© Department of Culture & Tourism

Iconic cultural attractions like the Louvre Abu Dhabi



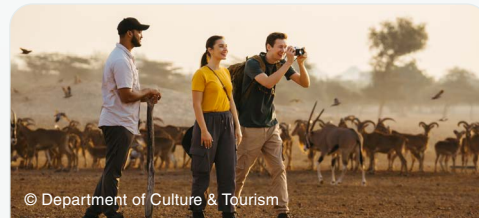
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Water sports festivals, sailing events, and coastal leisure experiences



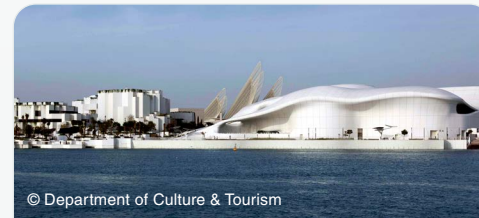
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Maritime heritage festival and cultural programmes



© Department of Culture & Tourism

Wildlife reserves, mangroves, desert parks



© Department of Culture & Tourism

Cultural District on Saadiyat Island - home to Zayed National Museum and Natural History Museum



© Department of Culture & Tourism

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque - 82 white marble domes and gold-plated Swarovski chandeliers



# Benefit from Abu Dhabi's long-term stability and **future-ready ecosystem** as global conditions reshape investment and supply-chain decisions

Proof backed by multinationals and world-class entertainment brands



\$15.2B commitment to accelerate the UAE's AI future<sup>54</sup>



Opened Abu Dhabi's first fulfilment centre in partnership with Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO)<sup>55</sup>



Launched a Hub71-backed accelerator to scale AI startups<sup>56</sup>



Launched a \$1B+ AI-native reinsurance platform<sup>57</sup>

## Entertainment investments

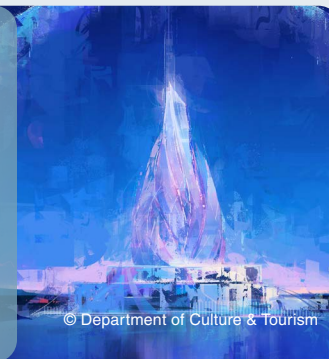
### Sphere Abu Dhabi

Construction commence for \$1.7B immersive entertainment venue with 360° experiences



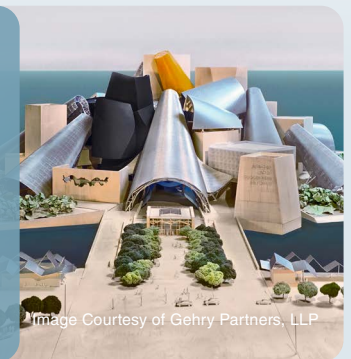
### Disney Resort Abu Dhabi (Yas Island)

Bringing iconic stories to life in a uniquely emirati setting



### Guggenheim Abu Dhabi

\$1B landmark museum showcasing global and regional narratives from the 1960s to today





# Proof of Global Maritime Trust

International maritime businesses of every scale are expanding their presence and activities in Abu Dhabi

Entities with an active presence and operations in Abu Dhabi (non-exhaustive list)

## Shipping

noatumCSM



## Ports and logistics

aramex



WÄRTSILÄ



مخطة دبي دبي أبوظبي  
CSP Abu Dhabi Terminal  
The Port for ALL



noatum logistics

## Advanced maritime services



LOCKTON



STEPHENSON  
HARWOOD

CLYDE&CO

ClassNK

MARSH

## Marine leisure

Leading international cruise operators regularly include Abu Dhabi in their itineraries, such as



AIDA





A tech startup restoring marine ecosystems to build climate resilience and adaptation



Leveraging Hub71's tech ecosystem to accelerate international expansion from Hong Kong to Abu Dhabi



Supports startups to scale through access to capital, markets and strategic partnerships

### Meet Archireef

Founded in Hong Kong  
2020

Established presence in Abu Dhabi  
2022

Now

Built a team of 20 experts, with 90% of global team based in Abu Dhabi

Launched an eco-engineering facility in KEZAD, Abu Dhabi

Secured strategic partnerships with AD Ports Group, FAB, ADQ, and Modon

Expanded into international and regional markets including Singapore and Saudi Arabia

### How Hub71 helped?



Free office space to establish a base in Abu Dhabi immediately



Market-entry cost support for the first year in Abu Dhabi



Scale faster with founder-friendly terms that protect long-term ownership

“Since our establishment in Hong Kong, Abu Dhabi has been the ideal launchpad for our next chapter - where government-backed ambition meets real-world execution. With a clear ecosystem, fast support, and deep partnerships, it's one of the best places globally to build and scale a mission-driven company.”

— Vriko Yu, Co-founder and CEO at Archireef

# How to start your journey with us



# Understand **institutional support** before your move to Abu Dhabi



## Strategic market access and insights

### Question

Is Abu Dhabi the right move for my business?

### Answer

Access data-driven insights on Abu Dhabi's economy and key sectors to support your market entry and relocation decisions



## Registration and licensing support

### Question

How lengthy is business registration and licensing?

### Answer

Register your business in 15 minutes through "Basher", the UAE's federal e-government platform, and use Abu Dhabi's "TAMM" local registration and licensing



## Network access

### Question

How to build a network in a new location?

### Answer

Connect with the local maritime community through MHAD, and expand cross sector networks via Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce



## Real estate and infrastructure

### Question

Where to set up my business in Abu Dhabi?

### Answer

Access turnkey solutions for offices, warehouses, and manufacturing facilities through KEZAD (Khalifa Economic Zones Abu Dhabi) and Abu Dhabi Real Estate Centre



## Financing and banking

### Question

What financial support can I avail?

### Answer

Access funding programmes through the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO), Hub71, and Central Bank of the UAE initiatives to accelerate your business growth



## Arbitration and legal support

### Question

What legal frameworks exist?

### Answer

Operate with confidence under the globally recognised legal framework of ADGM Courts, based on English Common Law, and access ADGM Dispute Resolution Hearing Centre



Reach out to **Maritime Hub Abu Dhabi (MHAD)** for more information and guidance



# Transform your maritime operations with our smart digital solutions

## Maritime Bundle

Integrated digital solutions unifying maritime transport procedures into a single platform, simplifying operations for vessels in UAE waters

[Find out more](#)

## AL NALIA

Mobile application providing real-time access to maritime safety maps to support safe, efficient navigation across local waterways

*App is available for download through Google Play and the Apple App Store*

[Find out more](#)

## ESG Handbook

Practical guide supporting maritime stakeholders to understand, assess and improve Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance

[Find out more](#)

## MARSDNA مرصدنا

Digital self-assessment tool that benchmarks ESG performance and accelerates maritime sustainability through tailored recommendations

[Find out more](#)

## atlp ADVANCED TRADE LOGISTICS PLATFORM

Digital single window to that centralised trade, logistics, and customs processes in Abu Dhabi for greater efficiency and transparency

[Find out more](#)

# Arrange a personal meeting or video call **with our team**



Provide seamless business setup and account opening



Support you through key regulatory and administrative processes



Facilitate links between the maritime sector and government

For more information, visit:



[admobility.gov.ae](http://admobility.gov.ae)



Abu Dhabi Mobility



[admaritime.ae](http://admaritime.ae)



Abu Dhabi Maritime



[maritimehub-ad.com](http://maritimehub-ad.com)



Maritime Hub Abu Dhabi

# Join us Where the next chapter takes shape

## Authors of the guidebook

### Integrated Transport Centre (Abu Dhabi Mobility)

As a government authority, we plan, regulate, and enable Abu Dhabi's integrated transport ecosystem across land, air, and sea.

Through strategic initiatives, we support the emirate's vision to become a leading global maritime hub by enhancing marine transport infrastructure, improving waterway connectivity, and integrating maritime mobility into the wider transport network.

#### Keep in touch with us.



### Abu Dhabi Maritime

As the custodian of Abu Dhabi's waterways, we work in close partnership with government entities, industry stakeholders, and the wider maritime community to deliver a resilient, world-class operating environment that enables maritime businesses to operate, invest, expand, and thrive in one of the world's most strategically positioned maritime hubs.

#### Keep in touch with us.



### Maritime Hub Abu Dhabi (MHAD)

Uniting government and private stakeholders through a robust network, dedicated working groups, and collaborative initiatives, we drive sustainable growth across our emirate's maritime sector. A platform for connection, creation, and collaboration, we are strengthening the maritime community, unlocking opportunities, and positioning Abu Dhabi as a leading global maritime centre.

#### Keep in touch with us.



# Disclaimer

## Scope and Reliance

This independent peer review has been undertaken by the authors in an advisory capacity only. The review includes information, data and documentation prepared by third parties that has not been independently verified, audited or validated for completeness, accuracy or correctness of the underlying data, calculations or cited source information (excluding any major or fundamental data and information that may affect the result of this Guidebook).

## Nature of Opinion

The comments and observations expressed in the review represent the authors' professional opinions, formed on the basis of public information available prior to publication. The review aims to reinforce Abu Dhabi's position as a globally competitive, investor-ready maritime hub.

## Limitations of Use

This independent peer review does not constitute assurance, certification, verification, audit, or expert determination. The review should not be relied upon for financial or investment decisions, claims, disputes, arbitration, litigation, or as the sole basis for commercial or contractual decisions, without further independent analysis, advice and guidance.

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