

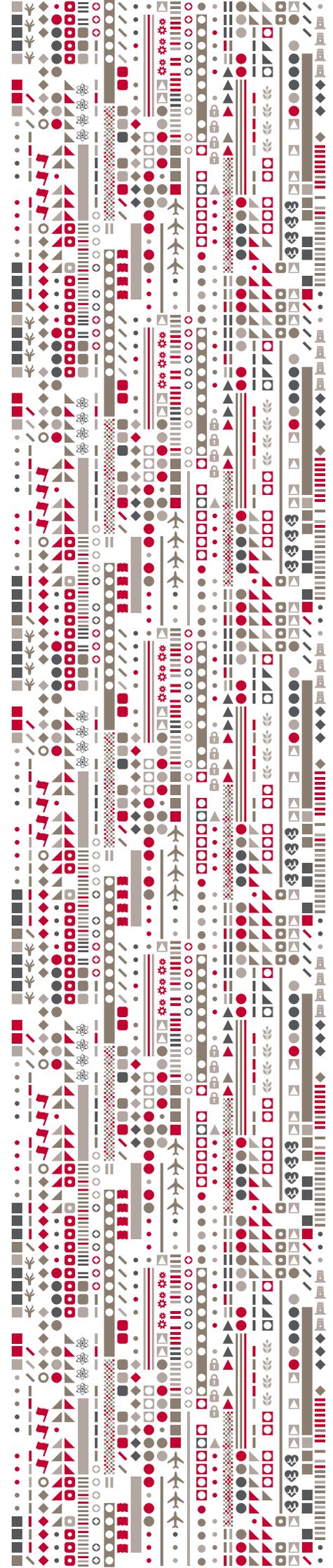


Designing Abu Dhabi's Plan

The Journey of Refining and
implementing

Abu Dhabi's Vision

January 2016



About this research

Designing Abu Dhabi's Plan is intended to introduce the Abu Dhabi Plan to key stakeholders in Abu Dhabi. The report clarifies the detailed process by which the plan has been developed, explains the areas of recalibration and continuity and indicates the impact that the plan is expected to have, followed by its launch in 2016.

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Executive council: Abu Dhabi Executive Council is the local executive authority of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It assists the Ruler to carry out his duties and powers, through regular meetings to set the Emirate's general policy, set development plans and supervise its execution, authorize projects laws and decrees before submitting them to the Ruler, supervise work flow in departments, local entities, and coordinate among them, to achieve general well-being of the country.

In 1971, a Council of Ministers was formed in the Abu Dhabi Emirate by virtue of the provisions of Law No. (1) to reorganize the government apparatus. But in 1974, the said law was superseded and substituted with Law No. (1), which organized the government apparatus, renaming the "Council of Ministers" as the "Abu Dhabi Executive Council."

General secretariat to the executive council: The General Secretariat of the Executive Council is the administrative authority entrusted with proposing the Emirate's general policies and strategies, present them on the Executive Council to take proper decisions on the regard. General Secretariat of the Executive Council also represent the administrative authority providing supporting services to the Executive Council which include preparing and scheduling decision projects, preparing minutes of meetings and submit the Council's decisions and follow-up its implementation. Secretary General represents the higher authority and specialize in the facilitating work flow within the General Secretariat of the Executive Council.

Government entities or entities: government departments, authorities, councils, and other bodies established and entrusted to complete a mandate within one of the following sectors: government affairs, infrastructure and environment, economic development, social development and safety, security and justice

Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda: Policy Agenda 2007-08 outlined the key goals and Government initiatives in development and underway across a range of authority and departmental portfolios in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It identified the role many public and private entities will play in the further social and economic development of Abu Dhabi and identified opportunities for the private sector to engage with the public sector.

Abu Dhabi Vision: identified in the Policy agenda, Abu Dhabi's vision is "To create a confident, secure society and to build a sustainable, open and globally competitive economy."

Abu Dhabi Plan: Abu Dhabi Plan is a new, updated strategic plan for the government of Abu Dhabi. It has been developed through massive governmental coordination to ensure stakeholder engagement and continuous alignment by all parties involved. The plan was developed to ensure specific and organized goals are set for the government of Abu Dhabi. Each of these goals is subdivided into long term programs that have specific outcomes. These programs have a coordinating entity and supporting entities who would design initiatives and projects within a set timeline to achieve the outcomes, thus contributing to the overall goals.

Introduction: why design Abu Dhabi's Plan?

When Abu Dhabi's policy planning team started to evaluate the first five years of implementing Vision 2030, which was launched in 2007, they faced a massive task. The overall policy objectives were still relevant and, it was clear that progress had been made in achieving them in some areas, despite the upheavals of the global financial crisis. The implementation of this Vision was the responsibility of more than 70 government entities, however, and each entity had its own strategic plan designed to translate the Vision into actionable projects.

The General Secretariat of the Executive Council (GSEC) produced its baseline report in March 2013, summarising progress and defining gaps in each of the main areas of government activity. To further develop and enhance the strategic planning, the government aimed to design a simpler, yet more comprehensive and more collaborative approach to implementing the Vision.

That insight was the motor for the development of the Abu Dhabi Plan, due to be launched in 2016. It took almost three years, over 200 workshops and meetings with government entities and several rounds of substantial feedback from the leadership of the Executive Council and the government entities to produce the new plan. However, that effort resulted in a framework for implementation that embodies three principles – alignment, collaboration and responsibility – enabling the government of Abu Dhabi to reach a new level of government effectiveness whilst maintaining its continuous progress towards an established and clarified vision.

Envisioning Abu Dhabi: the history of emirate planning

In August 1966, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan issued his very first instructions as the ruler of Abu Dhabi, instantly highlighting his priorities, and clarifying the direction of his leadership. The spirit of his first two instructions live on today as guidelines for governmental work in Abu Dhabi, becoming part of a proud culture that is adopted by governmental organizations in all sectors.

The first of his instructions stated that all governmental projects would not be undertaken for the sake of enhancing reputation or glorifying the state, but because they are aligned with the actual needs of the country and the people. The second instruction ensured that wellbeing, comfort, and progress would not be limited to residents of Abu Dhabi Island, but would envelop all areas of the vast emirate.

The tone, message and direction of the new leadership was further set upon issuing the first of His Highness's decrees in September of 1966. Establishing the framework of the modern, organized government in Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed tasked the new government with establishing the first five-year plan for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi exactly fifty years ago.

It was not until 1968 that the first Planning Council was established by the Presidential Decree No. 14, yet the importance of organization, planning, and establishing objectives that would secure the well-being of all residents was clear from the first moments of conceiving the modern government of Abu Dhabi.

The Planning Committee established in 1968 did not simply assign the task of drafting Abu Dhabi's first development plan, but it also ensured that 12 representatives of the public would join the committee in designing Abu Dhabi future. By assigning representatives from the community to work along with government entity leadership, His Highness illustrated the grassroots democratic leadership that embodies Abu Dhabi's unique sense of government. It was also an active gesture of encouragement for the society to bear the responsibility of achieving the plan's objectives alongside the government bodies that were born to complete the plan's tasks and programs.

The first five-year plan echo's much of the current plan's objectives and programs, demonstrating the seamless evolution of planning and progress that makes up the government of Abu Dhabi. For instance, healthcare, agriculture, industries, transportation, municipalities, housing, employment, tourism, and investment were all different aspects of Abu Dhabi's first five-year plan. Today, they are all programs within the Abu Dhabi Plan structure, designed to enhance and develop areas that saw great achievements in the last fifty years, thus paving the path for greater projects, bigger goals, and a modern vision of progress built upon the milestones realized by the original plan.

For fifty years, Abu Dhabi's strategic projects and objectives have clearly reflected the early priorities that were defined by that plan. In 1971, and upon establishing the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi joined the union homogeneously reflected the ambition and hard work upon the planning and development of the United Arab Emirates. This can still be seen today through the alignment of Abu Dhabi Plan and its goals and programs with the United Arab Emirates Vision 2021.

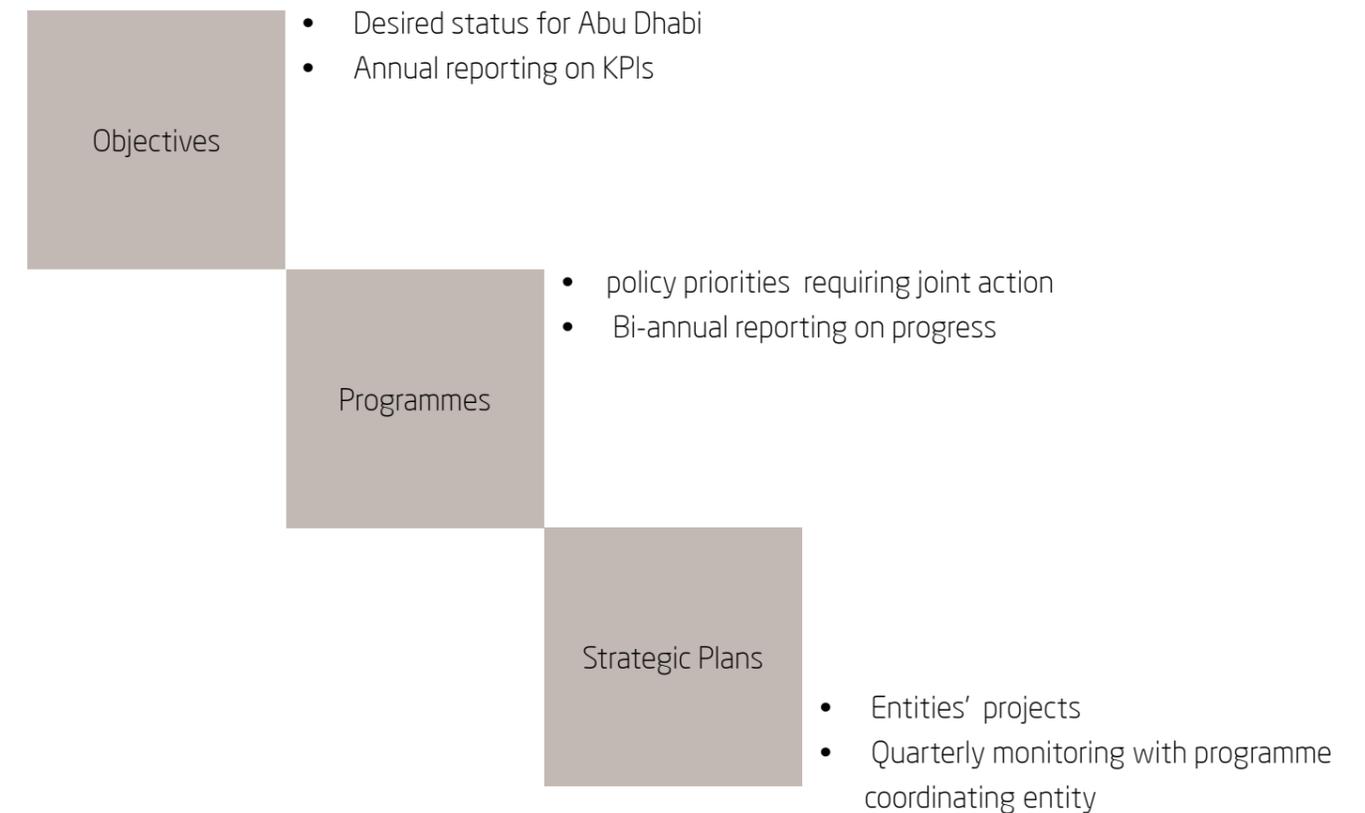
By 2006, and after forty years of progress and development, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed set a new task that involved coordination and planning to achieve a new vision for Abu Dhabi. This was done through the Policy Agenda, which launched the planning process for Abu Dhabi Vision and marked a significant milestone in the evolution of a new structure for the Government, with clearly defined entities responsible for specific areas of policy implementation.

The next step for government entities was to create a detailed implementation plan that was aligned with Abu Dhabi Vision. This plan would require the linkage between long-term goals and immediate initiatives, enabling the Executive Council to monitor whether the Vision was being effectively executed.

Alignment: streamlining plans and actions

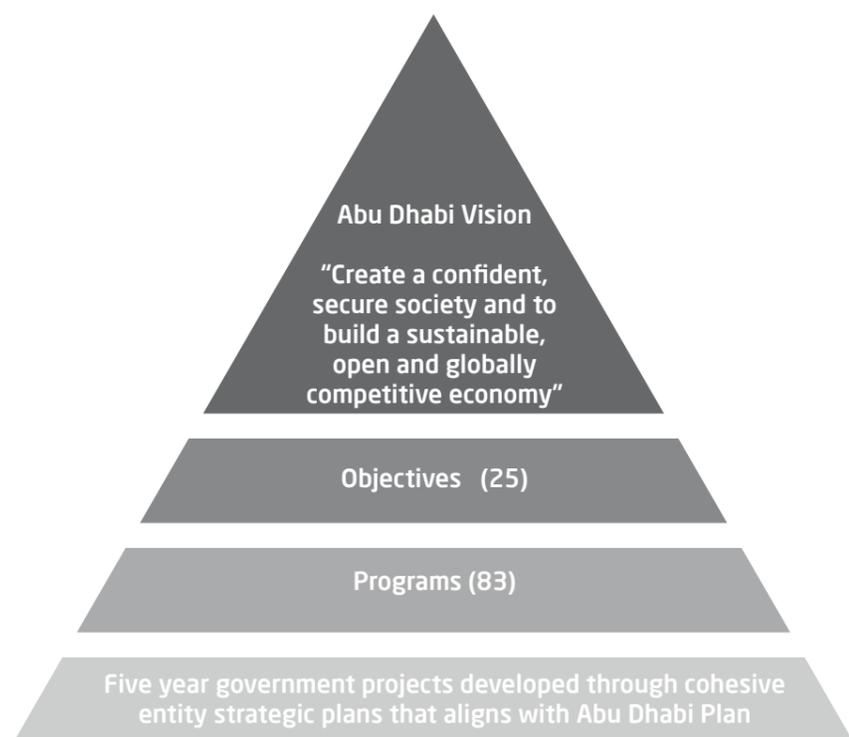
The Abu Dhabi Plan focused on aligning Abu Dhabi Vision and its execution by creating clear linkages between long-term objectives, medium-term government programmes and the detailed strategic plans developed by government entities. The objectives are divided into five policy sectors – Social Development, Economic Development, Infrastructure and Environment, Security Justice and Safety, and Government Affairs. The 25 objectives in total are translated into clear and actionable government policy priorities, known as programmes, for the next five years. That provides a bridge between government policy and the entities' own strategic plans.

The Structure



Abu Dhabi's vision has remained, though defined with a little more detail as "creating a confident and secure society and building a sustainable and open economy that is globally competitive". The objectives define the future status that is desired, using a higher level of detail than in the Policy Agenda.

The Policy Agenda's goal of "premium education, healthcare and infrastructure assets", for example, has been broken down in the Abu Dhabi Plan into five specific objectives, defining exactly what the Executive Council wants to achieve in these areas. The new education and health objectives are now two of the six objectives included in the Social Development sector: "a promising educated generation contributing to the service of the country and society" and "a healthy lifestyle that includes preventative services and world-class healthcare treatments". Infrastructure now makes up three of the four objectives included under the Infrastructure and Environment sector, broken down into transportation, water and electricity and urban development, and stressing their relationship to the environment, the economy and to society (see table and chart).



THE OBJECTIVES

Social Development
A promising educated generation contributing to the service of the country and the society
Active participation of citizens in the labor market
Decent life for individuals in the community
A healthy lifestyle, and preventive and curative services of international caliber
Islamic affairs services of high caliber
Cultured and physically active community maintaining its heritage and authentic values
Security, justice and safety
Safe society
Fair and accomplished judicial system
Full prevention and readiness system to ensure safe and secured community
Food security and a sustainable agricultural sector
Economic Development
A competitive and flexible business environment
An effective private sector and leading investment opportunities
A unique and attractive tourist destination
A unique and attractive tourist destination
Vital sectors contributing to economic diversity
Sustainable utilities and sanitation sector ensuring the optimal usage of natural resources
A sustainable environment and the optimal use of resources to preserve natural heritage
Effective transportation system that serves the community and the economy
Integrated urban areas that meet the community's needs and ensures an excellent quality of life
Government Affairs
A financial system that supports the development process in the emirate
Legislations that support the development process
Distinguished services and experiences for clients
A remarkable reputation across all media platforms
Integrated management of human resources
An integrated human resource management
Strengthening of federation ties

Each objective is “translated” into a number of more detailed programs defining the government’s priorities for the next five years. While the objectives are high-level, the programmes – developed by a team of Emiratis who are acutely aware of local challenges as well as international benchmarks – are practical and relevant to everyday needs. Under the social objective, for example, policy programmes include increasing the number of children in early childhood education and making it easier to open private schools. Under the objective to ensure that Abu Dhabi becomes “an original and attractive tourism destination”, there is one programme focusing on developing tourism relevant to local people, such as recreational desert activities, alongside those focusing more on attracting international tourists.

Clarifying the language and structure of the Plan has been one way to ensure alignment. Another crucial one has been intensive engagement throughout the entire planning process between the various government entities. Rather than merely explaining government policies and objectives top-down, the aim was to have bottom-up involvement and to get buy-in from the entities, so they would be able to internalise the objectives and programmes in their own strategic plans.

That consensus-building process has taken a lot of time and effort. The many meetings, workshops, training sessions and feedback opportunities involved both the leadership and many of the staff of the entities – with 350 employees participating in the process at some point.

The time has not been lost. Aside from the planning skills and networks built up through the process, many entities have started to adjust their current projects to ensure better alignment with the Abu Dhabi Plan, as a result of being involved in defining and specifying the objectives and programmes. This will help them to complete the last stage of the planning process, finalising their own strategic plans for the next five years, especially after GSEC issued the Strategic Planning and Government Entity Performance Management Guide for the Abu Dhabi Plan. This guide clarifies the frameworks and standards set for the development of strategic plans at government entities for the next five years.

Various models to develop each entity’s strategy were identified by 791 representatives from strategic planning and performance management departments in 55 entities within the Abu Dhabi Government. Comments provided by the entities were also discussed during the drafting of the Guide, which allows them to set strategic plans according to identified needs and continuously improve and develop these plans so as to unify efforts and accomplish future projects with the highest level of comprehensiveness.

Collaboration: improving implementation through

One of the most significant innovations in the Abu Dhabi Plan –and potentially one of its greatest legacies for effective government functioning– is the framework of collaboration it creates between entities.

The decision to embed collaboration in the Plan stemmed from the insights gained during the baseline review process. It was evident during the review phase that implementation needed further coordination, which would ensure a broader exchange of experiences.

Solving that dilemma would require a structure that would make collaboration a necessity– with the ultimate goal of enhancing cooperation as a natural way of operating. The first step was to hold joint workshops between entities to discuss the findings of the baseline reports. The participants gained insights about challenges and initiatives in areas other than their own, saw different ways of working and began to view themselves as part of the larger government framework rather than being limited to viewing themselves through the lens of a single entity.

As the Abu Dhabi Plan was drawn up and fine-tuned, coordination was built into its core. Programmes were defined as specific government policies that required the cooperation of several different government entities to implement them. Under the health objective, for example, one of the programs is to improve the general health of the population. This involves a variety of different priorities from raising health awareness at schools, to creating workplace health programmes and getting people to exercise more. Achieving these goals requires initiatives from the Health Authority – Abu Dhabi (HAAD), Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC), Abu Dhabi Sports Council (ADSC), Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHAD), Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA), Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA), Abu Dhabi Media Company (ADMC) and the healthcare provider, Abu Dhabi Health Service Company (SEHA).

To bring those initiatives together coherently, coordinating entities were identified for each program, where entities with the most involvement in a specific area, as well as the experience and capacity to manage a diverse team of organisations, were nominated to be coordinating entities for the program in question. HAAD, for example, will coordinate the general health program, ensuring that the necessary projects are included in the HAAD’s strategic plan and fully complement the projects of other entities who support the same program. It will be responsible for monitoring progress, solving issues that arise and reporting back to the Executive Council. Some 37 entities will play this coordinating role, with some organisations responsible for several different programs.

Coordinating entities played a major role in ensuring that the strategic plans of the different entities complement each other, so that programs are implemented jointly and achieve the overall objective as per the plan’s outcomes and key performance indicators. To help entities with this task, GSEC has produced a manual, developed in consultation with the entities’ planning teams, outlining how to ensure that strategic plans are not only aligned with the Plan but also facilitate coordination with other entities.

Introduction: why design Abu Dhabi's Plan?

1966

Development Plan

With the wise vision of the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan the modern government of Abu Dhabi was established and a council was created with the task of designing a development plan.

After establishing the strategic priorities of the emirate and creating the first development plan we started updating the plan periodically.

2007

Priorities

We published our "Policy Agenda", which set Abu Dhabi Vision and priorities for government entities, stating their future roles and responsibilities.

We published the "Abu Dhabi 2030 Urban Structure Framework".

2009

Economic Vision

We launched the "Economic Vision 2030" stating our desire to transform the economy and start economic diversification.

2011

Analysis

We did a baseline analysis on the five government sectors: economic development, social development, infrastructure and environment, safety security and justice, and government affairs, to identify challenges and areas of improvements.

2012

State of Emirate

Through the baseline analysis of the sectors, we developed the "State of Emirate" report and quarter and bi-annual government performance reports that assessed the performance of projects and key performance indicators, and used the outcomes as the main source for the development of the Abu Dhabi Plan.

2013

Development

We updated the framework for strategic planning where we integrated cross-entity collaboration on joint programs as well as defined the priority areas for improvement.

Based on the input from our stakeholders, we started drawing up the first version of the current Abu Dhabi Plan.

2014

Feedback

We started a series of revisions to enhance the quality of the Abu Dhabi Plan and raise the efficiency of project execution within the government entities. We discussed the plan's details through workshops, attended by members of the Executive Council and the leadership of the entities, resulting in producing the final version of the Abu Dhabi Plan.

We published a strategic planning guide, which provided the entities with methodologies for creating their strategic plans, and criteria for filling out unified templates for Key Performance Indicators.

2015

Coordination

Through coordination, the government entities started developing detailed strategic and project operational plans that aim to achieve the goals of the Abu Dhabi Plan.

2016

Implementation

Government entities finalized their strategic and project plans, and presented them to the Executive Council subcommittees.

After receiving approval, they began executing the plans to achieve the targets set by the key performance indicators.

We also finalized our tenth government performance report since 2012, aligning the report template and content with the priorities and KPIs in the Abu Dhabi Plan.

Our journey continues as we start executing the plan, realizing Abu Dhabi's goals and vision.

Responsibility: focusing on outcomes

The Abu Dhabi Plan has not fundamentally changed the direction of planning in Abu Dhabi, but it has transformed the approach to execution. For every objective and policy, the planners have thought through how best to implement, measure and report on it – and clarified who is responsible for achieving what by a certain time, and who will monitor the progress and make sure it happens.

The coordinating entities will play a key role in this process, keeping the momentum going through the five years with a detailed monitoring and reporting process. The coordinators will hold quarterly meetings with all the participating entities involved in its program, to discuss progress in specific projects and handle any problems that have arisen. The aim is to solve most issues in this forum, ensuring that accountability is exercised at the entity level.

The coordinating entity will then report twice a year to the Executive Council, through GSEC. Here they will report on the status of the programs, raising red flags where problems could not be solved among the entities themselves. Alongside these regular channels and standard fiscal controls, the Executive Council will decide on a number of key projects to monitor directly and will introduce a “mystery shopper” system, by which government services are tested anonymously.

Once a year, GSEC will check and report on a set of key performance indicators (KPIs), designed to measure progress on achieving the broader objectives. These outcome-oriented KPIs (around 200) have been developed in cooperation with the entities. Having agreed on a shortlist, GSEC has set ambitious and clearly communicated targets for 2020, broken down into annual instalments to track whether progress is being made.

10 features of the Abu Dhabi Plan
1. Comprehensive: covers all sectors of government in one document
2. Engagement: all stakeholders involved in drawing up the plan and executing it
3. Collaboration: entities required to coordinate and cooperate with each other
4. Big picture: a consistent focus on broader policy and objectives
5. Outcome-focused: The focus on detail and execution throughout the project
6. Relevant: practical and focuses on the everyday needs of citizens and residents
7. Accountable: clear responsibilities and regular monitoring and reporting
8. Flexible: includes tools and mechanisms to adapt to changes
9. Transparent: outcome-based indicators and clear targets provide a simple overview
10. Local: devised based on local expertise and needs

For some areas – such as health, education and the environment – the indicators are obvious and are already being collected, following a big push over the last four years to develop new measures. In other areas, the very process of thinking through what is currently measured in Abu Dhabi and benchmarking it with what is tracked nationally and internationally has helped improve the Plan. In the “Secure Society” objective, for example, some of the indicators are already being monitored: emergency readiness targets are set at the federal level and road accident statistics are already monitored in a way that allows Abu Dhabi to benchmark itself against road safety standards elsewhere. Furthermore, Abu Dhabi will introduce an annual survey to gauge people’s sense of security, a common practice in many countries.

In some cases, the infrastructure to enable measurement of progress had to be built into the plan as a priority project. To measure progress towards the objective of having “a sustainable water and electricity sector ensuring optimal utilisation of resources”, for example, the Water and Electricity Authority will install meters to measure how much ground water farmers draw from wells, rather than estimating the amount as now – an important step towards sustainability in a desert region, and also of importance to the Food Security objective.

Conclusion: what to expect in 2020

All government planning is about achieving social or economic benefits. The impact of the plan depends on how well concrete measures are targeted at solving specific problems and how well they are executed. The Vision successfully focused everyone's minds on tackling major challenges –from diversification and health, to sustainability. The Abu Dhabi Plan will focus minds on taking the steps needed to maintain progress towards achieving the goals set.

The Abu Dhabi Plan will bring concrete improvements to the daily lives of residents of Abu Dhabi. It will also mobilize them to become part of the solution in bigger policy challenges. Parents, for example, will be encouraged to enrol their children in early development programs, which international studies have shown to be a major factor in educational outcomes. Farmers will be encouraged to embrace high-tech solutions to guarantee food security without wasting scarce resources. Private sector businesses will be encouraged to invest in key areas by streamlined regulations to make it easier to start up and operate in Abu Dhabi, as well as clearer mapping of the investment opportunities in government sectors.

When the time will come to evaluate progress in the second planning cycle of the Vision, the strategic and policy teams will know what percentage of young children are in programs. They will know whether projects to encourage farmers to use high-tech are working –and will have adapted them several years before if they weren't. They will already be starting to enjoy the results of Abu Dhabi's more competitive business environment – or will at least have a clearer understanding of what went wrong and what needs to be prioritised in the next planning cycle.

Thanks to the Abu Dhabi Plan, the path to achieving Abu Dhabi's vision became much clearer. The entities are mobilized, the targets are set and the structures and processes are in place to integrate many small steps into a giant leap forward over the next five years.