

Abu Dhabi energy storage for electric vehicles

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The UAE and KSA are committed to achieving net zero, by 2050 and 2060, respectively. With the transport sector in both countries contributing towards carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions, e-mobility will be key to achieving their net zero targets.

There has been a rapid development of electric vehicle (“EV”) infrastructure and EVs in the UAE facilitated through the legal framework and government policies at both a federal and emirate level. Transport is one of the UAE’s six key decarbonisation industries at the heart of its net zero 2050 strategy. The UAE is ranked seventh in the Global Electric Mobility Readiness Index 2023 (“GEMRIX 2023″) and has one of the largest charging-station-to-vehicle ratios in the world.

Public and private sector collaboration is key to the UAE’s EV strategy. The National Electric Vehicles Policy (“NEVP”) aims to promote collaboration between federal and emirate stakeholders and the private sector to establish a national network of EV chargers. The NEVP has several goals, including reducing energy consumption in the transport sector by 20%, creating a centralised database of EV charging stations to streamline the charging process and enhance convenience for EV users throughout the UAE.

At emirate level, in addition to numerous laws and regulations, Abu Dhabi and Dubai both have EV strategies. In Abu Dhabi, the Low-Emission Vehicle Strategy, issued by the Department of Municipalities and Transport in 2016, aims to support the uptake of low-emission vehicles.

Notwithstanding the reservation of electricity services to the Union under article 120 of the UAE Constitution, the regulation of EVs and EV charging infrastructure in the UAE is primarily set at emirate level.

There is a specified tariff for EV charging within Abu Dhabi and EV charging stations must be registered with ADDC or AADC. Pursuant to Abu Dhabi Law No. 20 of 2018, EWEC is the sole provider of water and electricity within an area to be determined by Abu Dhabi’s Executive Council and is responsible for ensuring the supply of water and electricity meet demands (except where a “Side Sales System” applies). Consequently, other stakeholders (including private developers) cannot sell power.

The Parking Competent Authority (the governmental department or authority that regulates public and private parking areas in Abu Dhabi) may opt to grant exclusive concessions for installation and operation of EVSEs, including provision of EV charging services in public parking areas to a charge point operator. There is an express obligation on both EVSE owners and charge point operators to adopt fair, reasonable, transparent and non-discriminatory pricing for EV charging services.

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The Abu Dhabi Regulatory Policy defines an EV as: “any vehicle propelled by an electric motor drawing current from a rechargeable storage battery or from other portable electricity storage devices (portable batteries rechargeable using energy from a source off the vehicle, such as a residential or public electricity service), which is manufactured primarily for use on public streets, roads or highways, such as battery electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles.” Under the policy, EVs do not include electric bikes, scooters, golf buggies, and similar vehicles.

In addition to the Abu Dhabi Regulatory Policy, ADQCC has issued specific requirements for EVSE, enabling manufacturers, suppliers and distributors of EVSE to obtain either product certification or product registration, in accordance with specified safety, quality and performance standards.

The Dubai Building Code sets out the requirements for EV charging points regarding design and installation, the requirements for circuits, sockets and connectors, insulation, switching and protection, labelling and operation of EVSEs.

Further, in accordance with the Dubai Green Building Regulations and Specifications, all new buildings, other than villas, with over 20 parking spaces, must provide designated preferred parking for a combination of low-emitting, fuel-efficient and carpool vehicles for at least 5% of the total vehicle parking spaces required for the building by Dubai Municipality Building Regulations, Administrative Resolution No. 125-2001.

KSA is an emerging EV market and one of the biggest car markets in the region, accounting for more than 50% of car sales in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries. The government is investing heavily in building EV charging infrastructure across the country, all in accordance with KSA’s Vision 2030 of economic, social and cultural diversification. KSA is currently ranked 23rd in the GEMRIX 2023.

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