

Dubai Can initiative cuts single-use plastic bottle usage by 3.5 million as the sustainability movement celebrates six-month milestone

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Dubai Can, the citywide sustainability movement launched on 15 February 2022 by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, has seen a reduction in the usage of an equivalent of more than 3.5 million 500 ml single-use plastic water bottles.

The movement has achieved this extraordinary success as measured by water consumed from Dubai Can water fountains installed throughout the city. During the last six months, 46 fountains have been installed in various locations across the city, including public parks, beaches and tourist attractions, with the help of the initiative's stakeholders, sponsors and partners. The fountains are now in various Dubai neighbourhoods, including Kite Beach, Dubai Marina, JLT, Downtown Dubai, Dubai Harbour, Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai Festival City, Khawaneej, and others.

Yousuf Lootah, Executive Director – Tourism Development & Investments Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), said: "In line with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to make Dubai a sustainability champion, the Dubai Can movement has made remarkable progress during the last six months. We could not be prouder of this achievement. While encouraging residents and visitors to commit to a paradigm shift in their lifestyles, this initiative has a larger goal: creating a city that is the world's most visited and the best place to live and work in, as envisaged by the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan.

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"The strength of the city's public-private partnership is essential to realising the Dubai Sustainability Strategy. As we look forward to the campaign's continued success, this excellent collaboration model will propel Dubai Can to greater heights as we strive to achieve every single sustainability goal of Dubai," said Lootah.

Transforming mindsets

Since the campaign's launch, the movement has extended far beyond the fountains themselves, with people across the city encouraged to purchase refillable bottles for use at the fountains and in their homes and hotels. Many private companies have invested in water fountains for their offices to discourage employees from using single-use plastics in their workspaces. Moreover, the initiative has encouraged UAE residents to make behavioural changes and inspired conscious consumerism to achieve a more sustainable planet.

The Dubai Can initiative aims to bring about a mindset change in how the city's residents and visitors view sustainability, starting the transformation at the individual level and then progressing to the level of community, city, nation, and beyond. The movement encourages creative ways of altering our consumption behaviour, one single-use plastic bottle at a time. It advocates the optimum use of natural resources to preserve them for future generations and boost sustainability.

Refill for life

The Dubai Can initiative aims to continue generating positive environmental change and inspiring the city's residents, tourists and corporations to make mindful and environmentally friendly choices. Many valued partners and stakeholders from the business and tourism sectors have pledged to install a fountain. Dubai Can is well on track to meet the pledge of installing more than 50 fountains across the city by December 2022. The initiative's efforts feed into Dubai's commitment to meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals, enhancing the city's reputation as a global liveability hub, and ensuring that people across the city have the opportunity to 'refill for life'.

The campaign aligns with the city's sustainable strategy. The focus on reducing the usage of single-use plastic bottles is the first phase of an enduring citywide sustainability initiative. As the momentum for sustainability measures accelerated, a ban on all single-use plastic bags came into effect on 1 June as part of a more comprehensive UAE initiative to protect the environment and reduce waste.

Strong stakeholder support

Over the last six months, the Dubai Can initiative has been supported by over 750 stakeholders, sponsors and partners from both the government and private sector, including Accor, Adventure HQ, Al Serkal, Dell Technologies, Atlantis, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), Dubai International Financial Centre, Dollar Car Rental, Dubai Islamic Bank, DMCC, Dubai Holding, Dubai Festival City, Dubai Municipality, Dubai World Trade Centre, Electrolux, Emirates NBD, Emaar, Etisalat, Goumbook, Gulf Marketing Group, Grundfos, Huawei, Majid Al Futtaim, Merex Investment, Nakheel, Pepsico, PWC, Radisson, Roads & Transport Authority, Shamal, Talabat; and media partner Arabian Radio Network.

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Key stakeholders, sponsors and partners demonstrating support for the Dubai Can initiative during the six months:

Tatiana Rahal, Managing Director at talabat UAE: "We are proud to be Dubai Can's founding partner and mark its six months milestone with solid results. When we first learned about the initiative, we realized its potential to make a positive impact in the community as well as enhance our riders' wellbeing. It has been particularly rewarding to see that not only our riders but all delivery riders are benefiting from having access to free water refill machines, especially during the summer months." She added: "As local industry leaders, we feel a strong sense of responsibility to drive change with sustainability being an important pillar of our vision. Our 20 water stations across key locations in Dubai provide people with an alternative to single-use plastic bottles, encouraging them to adopt new behavior and enabling them to hydrate sustainably."

Abdulla Binhabtoor, Chief Portfolio Management Officer, Shamal Holding commented, "Dubai Can has been a major success since its launch, and we have seen its popularity grow exponentially amongst Dubai residents. We are proud to play a continuing role in this initiative having installed free, refillable water stations across our Dubai Harbour, Kite Beach, and Skydive Dubai destinations. These fountains have encouraged residents and visitors to reduce their reliance on single-use plastic water bottles and support sustainable solutions to make our communities healthier and our oceans safer and cleaner. It is paramount to respect and preserve our connection with the sea and encourage the protection of our environment. As we work to raise awareness around environmental issues and promote positive change, we look forward to continuing our collaboration with the government and other key stakeholders."

Ibrahim Al Zu'bi, Chief Sustainability Officer at Majid Al Futtaim, said: "Dubai Can is another great initiative that showcases Dubai's efforts to be at the forefront of sustainability best practices and innovation. At Majid Al Futtaim, we are extremely proud to continue to play a vital role in the UAE's journey to Net Zero 2050, leading by example in reducing our footprint as well as influencing the behaviour of our customers and communities to reach Net Positive by 2040."

Mohammad A Baker, Deputy Chairman and CEO of GMG, said, "As a well-being company and responsible citizens, we are committed to supporting causes that make our communities healthier. We are, therefore, proud to be associated with Dubai Can, an initiative that will go a long way to protecting our environment by minimizing the impact of plastic waste. We look forward to continuing to work with the government and other key stakeholders to promote positive change and raise awareness of environmental issues."

Hasan Avci, Country Lead, Grundfos Gulf Distribution FZE, said: "As a water and climate company, at Grundfos we strive to create a positive impact by pioneering solutions to the world's water and climate challenges and improving the quality of life for people. Grundfos has been contributing to the Dubai's sustainability agenda for over 30 years and are proud to collaborate with the admirable Dubai Can initiative."

Mohammed Amin, Sr. Vice President – META, Dell Technologies, said: "Over the last six months, we have been proud to substantially reduce the consumption of single-use plastics in collaboration with the Dubai Can initiative. We're honoured to support Dubai's commitment to sustainability and the steps it is taking to positively impact the lives of its residents. This is something that truly resonates with us at Dell Technologies as it aligns with our environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals around advancing sustainability. We look forward to continuing these efforts, and thank His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, for his vision to implement initiatives that aim to develop a smart and sustainable city."

Mr. Ahmad Al Matrooshi of Emaar Properties PJSC, said: "Creating a culture of conscious living without action is an ideology and we are thrilled that the Dubai Can initiative is a tangible measure that physically reduces the use of single use plastics. We have installed water dispensers in our offices and communities and the response has been very positive. It's great to see that our employees and the residents are also deeply committed to this worthwhile and hugely beneficial initiative. We all must continue to do our bit to drive the sustainability conversation."

Sherin Tawana, 360 Marketing Specialist, Electrolux, said: "Electrolux is a Swedish home appliances brand, with a true passion for empowering our customers to live sustainably by reinventing great taste, care and wellbeing experiences. We are extremely proud of our partnership with Dubai Can, as it truly aligns with our

ongoing efforts of sustainable living by reducing single-use plastic through our water fountain. So far, 8,234 litres of filtered water have been consumed, and 16,468 plastic bottles have been saved. We look forward to seeing the impact number rise in the upcoming months and strengthening our partnership with Dubai Can”.

Aamer Sheikh, Chief Executive Officer PepsiCo Middle East Business Unit said: “The Dubai Can initiative has laid the groundwork for a more conscious, responsible future, and encouraged many of us to think more carefully about the choices we make. We are incredibly proud to partner with Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) to contribute to this culture of reuse and refill by scaling our Aquafina Water Stations and offering consumers more sustainable alternatives to choose from. Since the commencement of the initiative, 21 Aquafina Water Stations have helped save over 100,000 plastic bottles and we are committed to working with our partners to continue installing Aquafina Water Stations across the city. Through pep+, our global sustainability framework, we’re inspiring people through our brands to make choices that create more smiles for them and the planet. As the UAE continues its mission towards a more sustainable future, playing host to critical global gatherings like the upcoming COP28, we want to ensure that we offer our ongoing support to initiatives like Dubai Can that help drive positive change for people and the planet.

Mr. Marwan Al Mulla , General Manager of Dollar, said: “Dollar Car Rental is proud to be associated with Dubai Can as part of its sustainability drive. Everyday, hundreds of tourists and residents choose Dollar for their mobility needs. By simply making them aware of Dubai Can water fountain locations in the city, we are able to influence their choice of refillable water bottles over single-use plastic bottles. We have also ensured this by first adopting it as part of our own company culture. All of our counters across the UAE, now partakes in this collective mission as set by the country’s visionary leadership. We look forward to launching further more contributions in line with Dubai’s continuous efforts towards sustainability.”

Dr. Adnan Chilwan, Dubai Islamic Bank’s Group Chief Executive Officer, said: “As one of the most progressive Islamic financial institutions in the world, we are very proud to be taking part in this forward-thinking initiative that promotes sustainability and protects the environment in the city. The successful implementation and execution of the Dubai Can initiative clearly highlights the importance that the leadership has placed in positioning Dubai as one of the world’s most leading sustainable cities. It is vital that communities understand the effects of plastic on the environment, and we, as one of the leading players in the UAE banking sector, have a responsibility to proactively tackle the most pressing issues of our ever-changing world and shift our focus towards building a sustainable environment for future generations”.

Abdulla Salem Al Mana, General Manager, Etisalat UAE – Dubai, said: “We are proud to be part of the innovative Dubai Can initiative, launched by HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. Our sustainability principles have always been in line with the leadership’s vision that has guided us throughout our journey of digital transformation, diversification and growth. We believe that we are responsible for making the change within the communities where we operate by supporting the country’s sustainability-focused initiative that aims to raise awareness about reducing the use of single-use plastic. Promoting more sustainable ways of water usage as well as encouraging the use of refillable water bottles are part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the UAE Net Zero by 2050 initiative and aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.”

Tolga Lacin, Area General Manager, Marriott International, said: “We are eight weeks into the first phase of rolling out the BE WTR program across our three Mina Seyahi hotels. The filters have now been fitted across all food & beverage outlets and so we’ve already seen an incredible reduction in single use plastic. We’re now working towards phase two and the implementation of BE WTR within each guest room. As a complex, we are extremely conscious of our environmental footprint and we are always looking to improve our services and operations to make them more sustainable. We will continue to support the Dubai Can initiative as we aim to go single-use plastic bottle free by 2023.”

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Kelly Timmins, Director of Conservation, Education & Corporate Social Responsibility at Atlantis Dubai, said: “Atlantis, The Palm has invested AED 1.2 million (\$300,000) in the design, build and implementation of a customised on-site water purification and bottling plant which will be launched next month. As one of the largest hotels in Dubai and in the region, the action of removing 2.7 million plastic bottles from our operation every year is an impactful one. Atlantis, The Palm will eliminate all single-use plastic bottles by

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Dubai Can continues to make a positive environmental impact on the city and has further ensured that residents and tourists remain healthy and hydrated. All water stations across the city follow the highest hygiene standards and strictly adhere to municipal, healthcare and federal regulations. This includes providing clean and safe drinking water, which is tested in accordance with DEWA, GCC and World Health Organization standards.