

## **ICBA, Abu Dhabi City Municipality complete first phase of sustainable garden for halophytic plants in Abu Dhabi**

**Abu Dhabi, UAE, 26 December 2022** – The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) and the [Abu Dhabi City Municipality](#) have completed the first phase of a project to create a new sustainable garden for halophytic, or salt-loving, and salt-tolerant plants at Al Shahama, the emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The garden is a result of year-long collaboration between specialists from the Abu Dhabi City Municipality and scientists from ICBA.

H.E. Eng. Salem Sultan Almemari, Acting Director General of the Abu Dhabi City Municipality, said: “We are pleased to announce the success of the first phase of the botanical garden for halophytic plants in Al-Sader Area of Al Shahama. The results of this phase are promising and there is potential for adopting this approach and experience to increase the number of pioneering environmental projects.”

He extended his thanks to ICBA represented by Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General, for support and technical assistance to successfully complete the first phase of the project. He also noted that the Abu Dhabi City Municipality is proud to be one of the leading national institutions with decades of experience in developing landscaping projects, planting millions of trees and creating green spaces.

He added: “The garden established by the municipality is the first of its kind in the region. The results inspire us to replicate this experience in many coastal areas.”

Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of ICBA, said: “Fresh water is a scarce resource not only in the UAE but in many other countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. Part of the center’s mandate is to look for alternative sources of water like saline water and treated wastewater for agriculture and landscaping. We are pleased to work with the Abu Dhabi City Municipality to create such model which takes into consideration the use of halophytic and salt-tolerant plants for landscaping irrigated by saline water. This garden can serve as a blueprint for other landscaping projects in arid and coastal environments.”

Under this collaboration, ICBA provided technical assistance and recommendations on best practices in irrigation, drainage, and cropping. The center also shared a list of halophytic and salt-tolerant plants and supplied seed of some from its genebank for cultivation.

Currently, a number of halophytic and salt-tolerant plants, including Salicornia, Atriplex, tamarind, mangrove, are grown at the garden. The garden was built using recycled and upcycled materials. The Abu Dhabi City Municipality and ICBA have worked on the project since 2021.

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### **About ICBA**

The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is a unique applied agricultural research center in the world with a focus on marginal areas where an estimated 1.7 billion people live. It identifies, tests, and introduces resource-efficient, climate-smart crops and technologies that are best suited to different regions affected by salinity, water scarcity, and drought. Through its work, ICBA helps to improve food security and livelihoods for some of the poorest rural communities around the world.

[www.biosaline.org](http://www.biosaline.org)

### **About Abu Dhabi City Municipality**

The Abu Dhabi City Municipality began its work in 1962 in an old building located near Abu Dhabi Port, which is the area known as the Clock Roundabout, with only six employees. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan issued the law establishing the Department of Municipal Affairs to include in its new structure three municipalities that are administratively independent, namely the Municipality of Abu Dhabi City, the Municipality of Al Ain City, and the Municipality of Al Dhafra.

In 2016 a law was issued to form the Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport after the merger of the two departments, the Department of Transport and the Department of Municipal Affairs. Then, in 2017, a decree was issued to merge the Abu Dhabi Council of Urban Planning and Municipalities to create a new department named Department of Urban Planning and Municipalities.

In November 2019, the late Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan issued a new law establishing the Department of Municipalities and Transport as a result of the merger of municipalities and the Department of Transport to become the Department of Municipalities and Transport.

There are six sub-municipal centers operating under the umbrella of the municipality, namely City Center Municipality, Mussafah Municipality Center, Al Wathba Municipality Center, Shahama Municipality Center, Madinat Zayed Municipality Center, and Municipal Presence Center in Khalifa City and Bani Yas.

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