



Pandemics and the Environment

Policy Insight

Has the environment recovered because of Covid-19?

POLICY MESSAGE

- Despite its negative impacts on human health and the global economies, COVID-19 provided an opportunity to rebuild economies in a more environmentally sustainable manner.
- In Abu Dhabi, there were positive signs on air quality, greenhouse gas emission levels, biodiversity and waste generation during the few months' lockdown.
- Worldwide, statistics proved an 8% reduction in the global GHG releases and better air quality levels.
- Immediate interventions are required to guarantee a green rebuild of the economy and a more permanent positive state of the environment, as well as appropriate responses to the negative impacts of the pandemic on the environment.



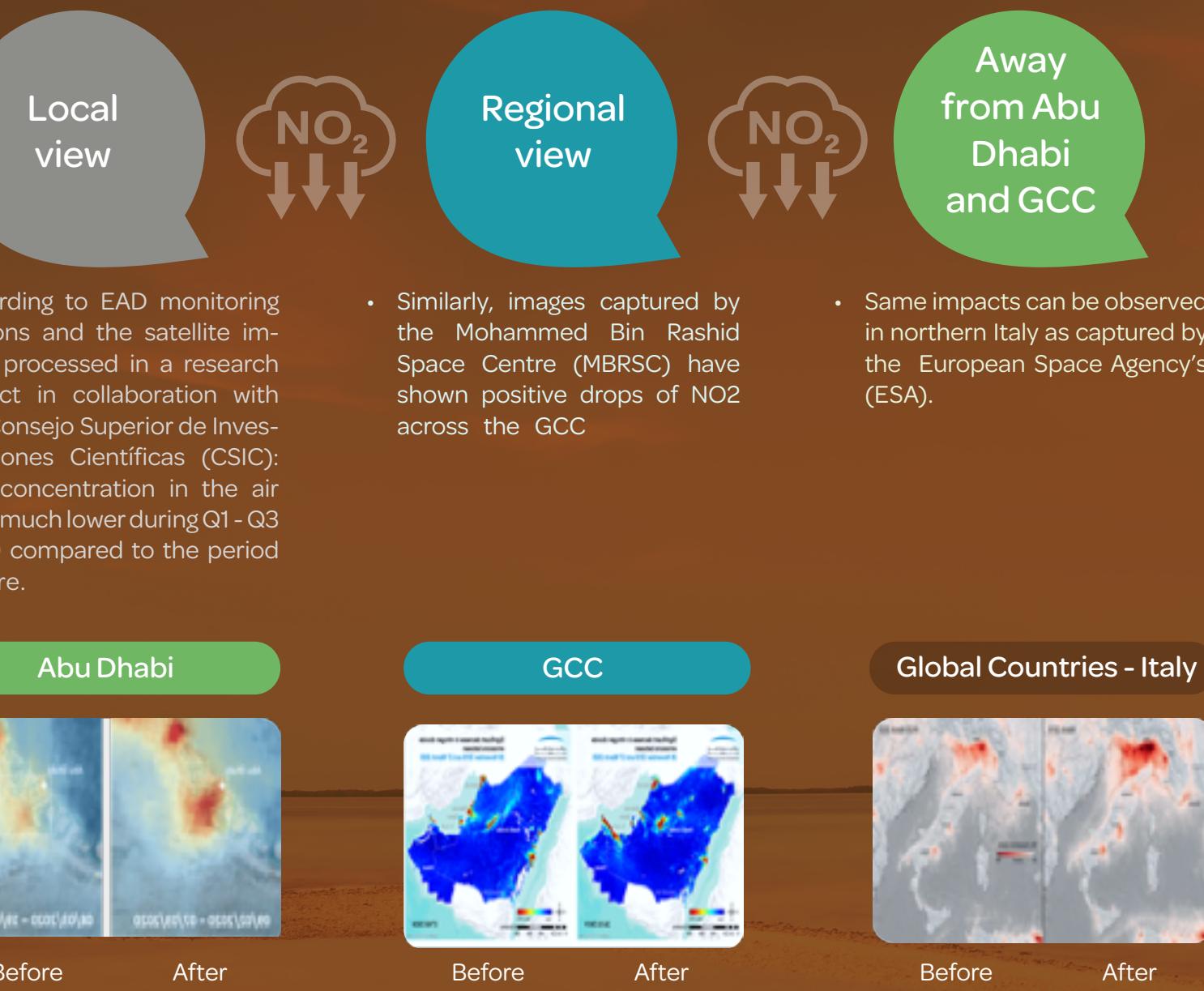
POSITIVE SIGNS ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

AREAS AROUND THE WORLD ARE WITNESSING A SIGNIFICANT DROP IN NO₂ WHICH IS A KEY INDICATION OF A BETTER AIR QUALITY

Abu Dhabi data and information are based on the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi concerned sectors



NO₂ is an air pollutant that is mostly emitted from road transport, oil and gas activities, and powerplants operations. Worldwide and in different areas, monitoring satellites detected significant decreases in NO₂ levels in the atmosphere.



MOST IMPACTED SECTORS

THE VARIOUS SECTORS AFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC, WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO A POSITIVE REDUCTION IN GREENHOUSE GASES RELEASES ARE:

- TOURISM
- TRANSPORT
- HEALTH
- EDUCATION
- ENERGY
- OIL AND GAS
- WASTE
- INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES

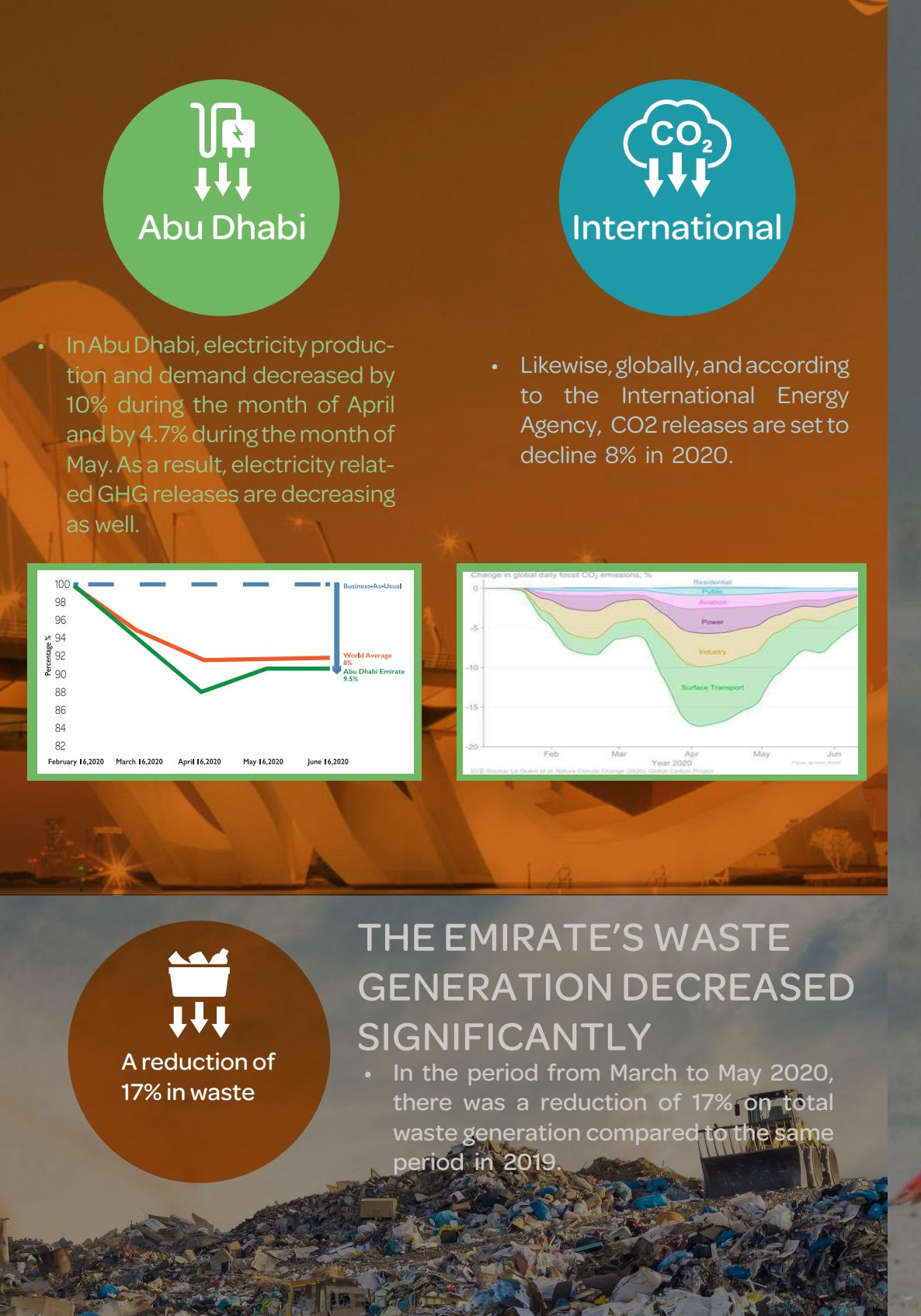
EAD'S POSITION ON THE MATTER

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY – ABU DHABI (EAD)'S POSITION IS TO SUSTAIN THE ENVIRONMENTAL GAINS RESULTED FROM THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD, THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

- TO STRENGTHEN POLICY AND REGULATION FRAMEWORK THAT HELP TO PRESERVE THE GAINS MADE DURING THE CLOSING PERIOD
- TO ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONS' AND GENERAL PUBLIC'S OWNERSHIP OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS
- TO ACCELERATE THE TRANSITION TO RESILIENT, LOW CARBON ECONOMIES, AND NATURAL RICH SOCIETIES

POSITIVE SIGNS ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19



POSITIVE SIGNS ARE SHOWING ON THE NATURAL BIODIVERSITY

Abu Dhabi emirate observed few positive trends in its natural biodiversity, which could be associated with the lockdown measures:



More turtles coming to nest along the mainland shore



12% annual increase in the rate of breeding flamingoes

855 pairs of which 714 chicks were born

1264 pairs for which 876 chicks were born

THE WAY FORWARD: HOW TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE PANDEMIC?

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS



Environmental Fund



Economic stimulus packages



Climate Change
Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs)

- Develop an Environmental Fund for the purpose of encouraging investments in the environmental fields and providing financial support to environmental projects; in addition to encouraging participation between financial institution, non-government, private/public sector toward green investment.

- Direct economic stimulus packages to promote green recovery initiatives. UAE injected 126.5 billion AED in stimulus measures to keep the economy afloat, which can be utilized to address climate change and enhance green growth, by including "green growth" as part of the requirements for these stimulus packages.
- Provide more ambitious measures in UAE's planned Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs).

AREAS FOR FURTHER INTERVENTIONS

POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Required environmental policies that aim to:

- Reduce environmental impact of surface transport.
- Enhance environmental health management.
- Improve medical waste management.
- Promote waste segregation at source.
- Protect land and soil and combat land desertification and degradation.
- Required enhancement of sustainable practices and Integrate sustainable practices into all sector policies and plans.

Required enhancement of sustainable practices

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Monitoring and Inspection

- Enhance the current data analysis schemes by applying artificial intelligence and automation of environmental monitoring and support smart inspection and real-time analysis of all environmental data.
- Introduce smart and real-time data collection schemes with the factories and businesses.
- Establish a program for the COVID19- single use masks and gloves entering the environment.

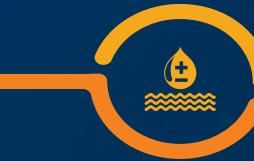
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, RESEARCHES, AND INNOVATIONS



Air Quality



Biodiversity



Marine Water Quality



Waste



Climate Change



Studies on green goods and services



New innovative ideas

- The influence of COVID19- preventive measures on air quality.
- Impact of air quality on the COVID19- death rate in the UAE.

- Changes to natural habitats and species during COVID19-.
- Impact of COVID19- on Marine Water Quality.

- Studies on the rise of single use plastic and littering rates.
- Research on single use plastics against multiple use materials for hygiene purposes.

- Support building a pathway to carbon neutrality (mainly energy and industrial sectors).

- Promote green products and industries.

- Support new ideas/ projects that would sustain positive impacts of COVID19-.
- Relation between psychological behavior and environmental wellbeing.
- Relation between human health and the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTREACH

- Mobilize leadership outreach channels on topics like over-consumption, food security, etc
- Develop interactive sustainable practice campaigns for different age groups.
- Promote environmental messages through champions or influencers.
- Invest in social media and present sustainable or green alternatives..
- Develop awareness campaigns to support reducing waste generation at source.
- Launch award schemes for innovative solutions to environmental challenges and sustainability.
- Convene partner stakeholders to enhance collaboration within current and future capabilities.
- Conduct virtual outreach campaigns to encourage participation in Public Hearing "Majales"
- Enhance engagement with governmental entities, the private sector, and the general public
- Develop public engagement schemes related to environmental issues.

THE WAY FORWARD: HOW TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE PANDEMIC?

