



استثمر في الشارقة
invest in Sharjah

AGRI-FOOD TECHNOLOGY

GUIDING YOUR SUCCESS





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Sharjah FDI Office (Invest in Sharjah)

Sharjah FDI Office (Invest in Sharjah) is Sharjah's investment promotion agency and a strategic partner for global investors looking to grow their business in the emirate.

As Sharjah investment promotion agency, we are committed to guiding foreign investors to the tremendous opportunity and potential Sharjah offers. Our vision is to inspire businesses by building on the strong foundations of Sharjah's sustainable growth and economic diversification.

We offer Investors:

—



Expert market knowledge and intelligence



Access to investment opportunities across a range of sectors and industries



Bespoke advice and step-by-step guidance



Aftercare services

Invest in Sharjah facilitates the investment process by fostering close collaboration between the public and private sector. By bringing investors and opportunities together, we fuel growth and prosperity, and we streamline an end-to-end solution to investing in the emirate.



We are a passionate and ambitious team dedicated to opening doors and guiding your success. We are here and ready to support you to achieve your plans and ambitions in Sharjah and realise your investments in the emirate.



Agri-food Technology: Creating a Secure Future Through Innovation

BUILDING AN OASIS IN THE DESERT

Feeding the **GCC's 54 million**-strong population has become one of the region's most important issues. Right now, about 90% of the food consumed in the GCC is imported - but Gulf governments are keen to increase food security and food independence. The desert climate makes for an inhospitable agricultural landscape, threatening the region's food security. One solution that is gaining rapid growth is agricultural technology (agritech).

The UAE appointed a Minister of State for Food and Water Security, H.E Mariam Al Mehairi, in November 2018. She has overseen the development of an ambitious UAE Food Security Strategy, designed to make the UAE a world-leading hub for innovation-driven food security. The strategy aims to position the UAE as the world's best in the Global Food Security Index by **2051** and among **the top 10 countries by 2021**.



Technology-enabled food production is one of the strategic components of the UAE Food Security Strategy.



90%

of the food consumed in the GCC is imported - but Gulf governments are keen to increase food security and food independence.



US\$ 1.1 bn

expected size of UAE agricultural product market by 2024

SHARJAH'S AGRITECH POTENTIAL

Sharjah is well-positioned to play a key role in contributing to the **UAE Food Security Strategy**. Technology-enabled food production is one of the strategic components of the strategy. Establishing a national R&D agenda and enhancing availability of quality human capital for food are key enablers.



Sharjah University City has ample R&D facilities, and provides businesses with highly capable graduates. The Sharjah Research Technology, and Innovation Park fosters collaboration and innovation, while Sharjah Food Park is a dedicated space designed to support agricultural businesses bringing food to market. Sharjah is in an advantageous geographic position with coasts on both sides of the country. It is the industrial hub of the UAE, and has lower operating costs than some neighbouring emirates.



For companies that are interested in creating innovative solutions in food security, Sharjah is ideally placed due to the blend of supportive government agencies and incentives available and a deep culture in research and innovation. The harsh environment in the UAE in terms of climate makes it a perfect laboratory to explore a significant addressable need not just in the UAE but in the broader Middle East, North Africa and South Asia region.



\$626M
(USD) UAE AGRICULTURE PRODCUT MARKET (2019)



\$1.1B
(USD) EXPECTED SIZE OF THE UAE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARKET BY 2024



9.8%
CAGR OF REVENUE FROM AGRICULTURE PRODUCTS IN UAE (2019)



\$24.7B
UAE FOOD TRADE VALUE (2020)

UAE TO LEAD GLOBAL DRIVE FOR INNOVATIONS IN AGRICULTURE

The UAE is set to lead the global drive for innovations in agriculture. As the world looks to address the challenges of climate change, water scarcity and food security, the country will spearhead a new global movement that will accelerate agricultural innovation and transform food systems over the next five years.



In April 2021, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE Prime Minister, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai announced the Agricultural Innovation Mission (AIM for Climate) that will allow the UAE to lead a global mission to accelerate agricultural innovation and transform food systems over the next five years to address climate change.



Sheikh Mohammed spoke of the UAE's vision for the environment and the several milestones the country has crossed to create a greener world. This includes investing in innovation and technology in the agricultural sector, and proactively adopting, investing in and promoting new technologies to tackle climate change. **By 2051**, it aspires to be a world-leading hub in innovation-driven food security, disrupting food and water scarcity through efficient, productive farming techniques.

Collaboration and growth in Sharjah's Free Zones

The Sharjah Research Technology, and Innovation Park (SRTIP) facilitates collaboration and global partnerships as it is home to several agritech companies and pilot projects including the Merlin Agrotunnel which allows farms to grow food sustainably in any climate. Vertical farming requires less water and less space for a higher yield.

Hamriyah Free Zone is home to Sharjah Food Park, the region's first and largest zone dedicated to food production, manufacturing, and packaging industries. It comprises warehouses, offices and labour accommodations on a total area of over 11 million sq.ft.

Opportunities for Investors in Sharjah

AQUACULTURE

On the UAE's journey to food security, aquaculture is likely to play a significant role. The UAE consumes 220,000 tonnes of fish per year, of which more than 75% is imported, while aquaculture provides only 2% of the fish consumed locally.

There is significant demand for locally produced fish including cobia, tuna and shrimp, as well as specialised hatcheries for species including seabream, seabass and shrimp fingerlings. Cooler water temperatures on the east coast of the UAE make it more energy-efficient and cost-effective to set up fish farms in Khorfakkan, Sharjah than in emirates on the Arabian Gulf.



There is a ready market for fresh fish: Sharjah's Souq Al Jubail, which attracts more than half a million shoppers every month, sells more than 100 species of colourful sea life. Conveniently located near Sharjah Corniche and Al Majaz Waterfront, the fish market is part of the huge Souq Al Jubail, which also includes sections for fruit and vegetables, dates and meat.

AGRITECH AND AGRICULTURAL BIOTECH

In line with UAE's National Food Security Strategy, alternative farming methods are ripe for investment; with techniques including aeroponics, aquaponics, hydroponics, and vertical farming all playing an important role. Advanced agricultural biotechnology including plant genomics and advanced plant breeding are also growth areas.

FOOD PACKAGING AND PROCESSING

Sharjah Food Park is a prime example of the opportunities in Sharjah to scale production capacity and operational capabilities at low costs to meet emerging market demands. The emirate's infrastructure is designed specifically to support the food and beverage industry, and allows businesses to scale at extremely competitive costs.

Success Stories

VEGGITECH

VeggiTech focuses on addressing the key challenges of traditional farming – soil, temperature, and water through its design of protected hydroponics and grow lights-assisted hydroponics. The company produced more than 1.6million kilograms of produce in 2020.



In the first half of 2020 despite COVID-19, VeggiTech signed contracts for 13,000 sq.ft. area of indoor vertical farms, and is building protected hydroponic farms of 80,000 sq.ft. VeggiTech's produce uses less than 10% of the water used in traditional farms and is pesticide-free.

ITALIAN DAIRY PRODUCTS

Established in 2009 by a group of investors, Italian Dairy Products has grown steadily throughout its years of operation, developing an outstanding portfolio of important customers in the food service, hospitality and retail sectors. In 2020, the company doubled its factory size to 26,000 square feet. Based in Sharjah, it produces over 420 tonnes of cheese annually and distributes to hotels, shops and homes in the UAE, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. The Italian Dairy Products factory is one of the few in the region that uses local milk in manufacturing products.

MERLIN AT THE SHARJAH RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION PARK (SRTIP):

Merlin is an example of the pioneering agritech pilot projects created within SRTIP. The company has developed innovative solutions for real problems including:



A greenhouse made with cutting-edge polymeric compounds and aerospace technology



Urban Farming systems using Merlin's own vertical, aeroponic TowerFarm and VertiFarm, a hydroponic-based stackable indoor growing system, that could use balconies & terraces to grow food at an industrial scale



A Sea Water Desalination project using Solar Power. It aims to produce 10 times the amount of pure, distilled water per square meter per day from any source of contaminated water.

Merlin Agrotunnel is an internal farm of 150 sq.m that can produce one tonne of organic vegetables and fruits per month. The water that is used to irrigate the fruits and vegetables comes from seawater that is desalinated through solar energy. Merlin Agrotunnel uses very little water – about 90% less than a conventional farm.

THEMAR AL EMARAT

Themar Al Emarat grows lettuce, tomatoes, and mushrooms at a 5 hectare hydroponic farm in Sharjah. As the largest mushroom farm in the UAE, it produces nearly six tonnes of mushrooms daily for local consumption and export. The farm relies on solar energy for 50% of its power requirements and recycles 100 percent of its irrigation water. It also reuses the soil in its hydroponic system as an agricultural conditioner in traditional cultivation.

**We Lead Your Business
To Success**





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