



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY



UAE Talent Attraction & Retention Strategy 2031





Introduction

Skilled human capital lies at the heart of economic growth and competitiveness, and this is especially true in the era of the knowledge economy. Talented individuals, with their capacity to acquire, create, apply and capitalize knowledge, will increasingly become the key contributor to the innovative, technological and economic edge of nations. The competition for global talent will increasingly outstrip the traditional competition between countries for financial capital in importance for driving national economies.

Talent migration brings with it economic benefits to destination countries as a whole, not just to those who directly employ them. Increased income per person, higher living standards, and increased workforce productivity are widely acknowledged benefits of economic migration that extend to the broader economies of host nations. Foreign talents also bring in new ideas and different perspectives and skill-sets that spur increased creativity and innovation when infused with existing local knowledge and capabilities. They also support the development of new activities in knowledge-intensive industries, which in turn creates job opportunities for the wider population

The Global Competition for Talent

Competition between countries for greater access to the global talent pool has existed for decades. Global demographic change, namely increased longevity and declining fertility rates, together with skills shortages brought on by Fourth Industrial Revolution disruptive technologies, and the rise of knowledge-based economies will only serve to intensify this competition going forward. With governments keen on retaining their talent and attracting others', the search for foreign talent is becoming a policy priority for increasing numbers of them.

The UAE has long recognized the importance of foreign talent to its economic growth, and has long been an appealing destination for aspiring and experienced foreign talented individuals alike. Since their inception, world talent ranking reports and indices have rated the UAE's appeal to global talent highly. Attracting and retaining targeted categories of foreign talent to augment our national human-capital pool and enable the knowledge economy transformation will continue to be a policy priority for the UAE going forward.



The Adopted Definition of Talent

Defining Talent

In spite of it being the focus of increasing popularity and years of debate, the subject of talent suffers from lack of a unified definition and scope, with widely differing implicit meanings of talent being adopted.

Talent is often used as an expression for “people”, referring to a general population of human resources. Talent is also often utilized in a more exclusive manner that refers to a high performing group of individuals in relation to their peers. Moreover, talent could also be used to refer to a specific characteristic found within people, such as an individual’s natural-born abilities or learned skills.

As it appears in this strategy, the below definition and scope of talent has been adopted to fit in with the UAE’s future socio-economic plans, needs, and overall direction in of its national goals and aspirations.

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- Talented individuals are those that possess either innate abilities, acquired skills, competencies, knowledge, experience, personal drive, behaviors, or a combination of the aforementioned characteristics, that enables them to achieve outstanding results when placed in a particular environment.
 - Talented individuals include specialist talents, innovative, research & creative talents, entrepreneurial talents and all other segments of skilled professionals.
 - Talented individuals are those with the ability to contribute to and compete in their profession of choice; thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of the UAE and to the advancement of its national goals and aspirations.
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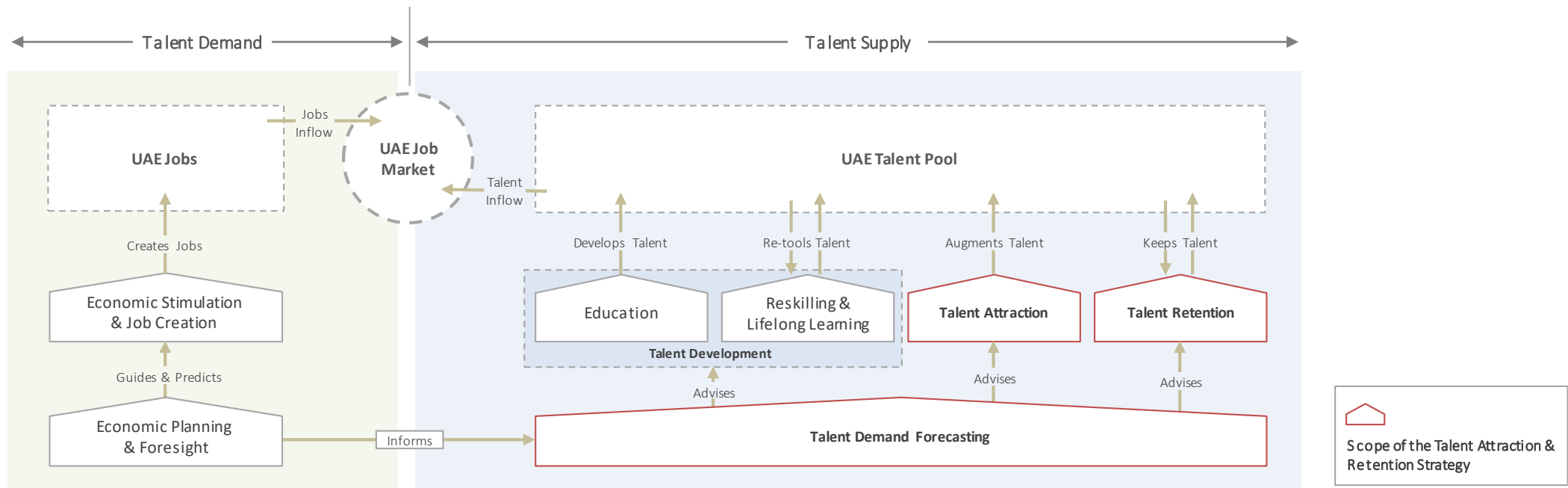
Judging talent solely by educational or professional qualifications can be overly restrictive when assessing an individual’s real value proposition to the national economy. As such, this strategy refrains from including these elements as criteria in its overarching definition of talent, while noting that educational and professional qualifications along with other ‘talent profile’ elements will be taken into consideration when determining targeted talent categories that are in demand at an economic sector level.

Scope of the Strategy

The core ‘talent value chain’, as deployed in this strategy, is comprised of talent development (education, reskilling & lifelong learning), talent attraction, and talent retention.

The country’s education system is at the heart of **talent development**, which typically targets the nation’s local human resources, or prospective talent. Life-long learning, reskilling, and upskilling policies and programs are also integral talent development functions that apply to UAE talent pool as a whole. Talent development, in all of its forms, is not included within the scope of this strategy.

The primary purpose of **talent attraction** policies and programs is to augment the national talent pool with international highly-skilled human capital to meet the demand for talent in the country’s economic sectors and support the knowledge economy transformation. **Talent retention** specifically aims to counteract the loss of experienced and well-integrated foreign talent to other job markets.



Efforts to ensure the availability, or supply, of talent to the UAE job market is first and foremost to satisfy the demand generated by the creation of jobs in growing and strategic economic sectors.

The ability to predict the characteristics of future jobs and the associated future demand for talent (**talent demand forecasting**), informed by long term economic planning and foresight activities designed to guide and predict the UAE’s future growth engines, is therefore integral to designing effective talent development, attraction and retention policies and programs on a national level.

The areas of talent attraction, talent retention, and talent demand forecasting are addressed within the scope of this strategy.



Vision, Mission and Strategic Themes

The Vision

Establish the UAE as the top destination for global talent to drive the national knowledge economy

The Mission

Establish the UAE as a leader in talent competitiveness by developing policies and programs that attract global talent and create an enabling environment to enhance talent retention

Strategic Themes

The strategy is developed in two inter-connected strategic themes

Talent Attraction

Enhance the UAE's ability to attract talent

Talent Retention

Enhance the UAE's ability to retain talent

Strategic Goals and KPIs for 2031

Three Strategic Goals and associated targets have been identified to assess the impact of the strategy over the next 10 years

1

Establish the UAE as one of the top 10 leaders of global talent competitiveness



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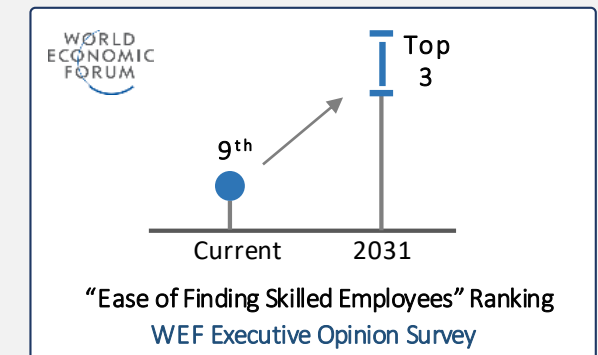
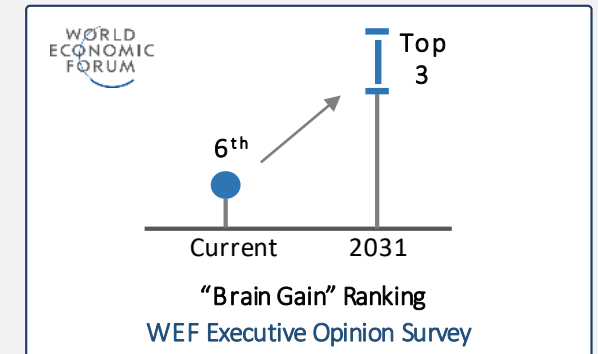
Ensure the availability of talent in the UAE's strategic sectors to enable the knowledge economy



*New indicator to be developed

3

Establish the UAE's profile as the top destination of choice for global talent





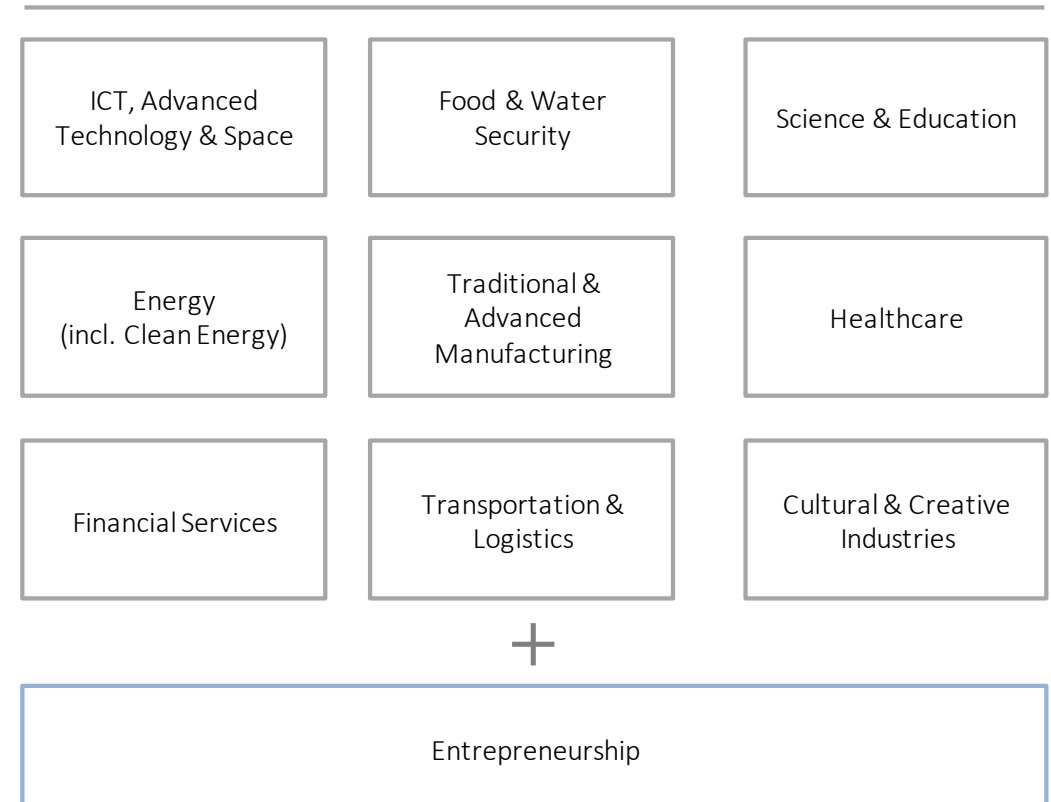
Strategic Sectors

A range of national and local strategies, plans and programs were reviewed to identify sectors that are predicted to shape the UAE's future economy.

Nine overarching groups of economic sectors have been identified as central to the UAE's economic growth plans and future sustainable development model. Together with entrepreneurial activity, which is considered a crosscutting field integral to the national economy, they form the ten strategic economic sector groups of the strategy.

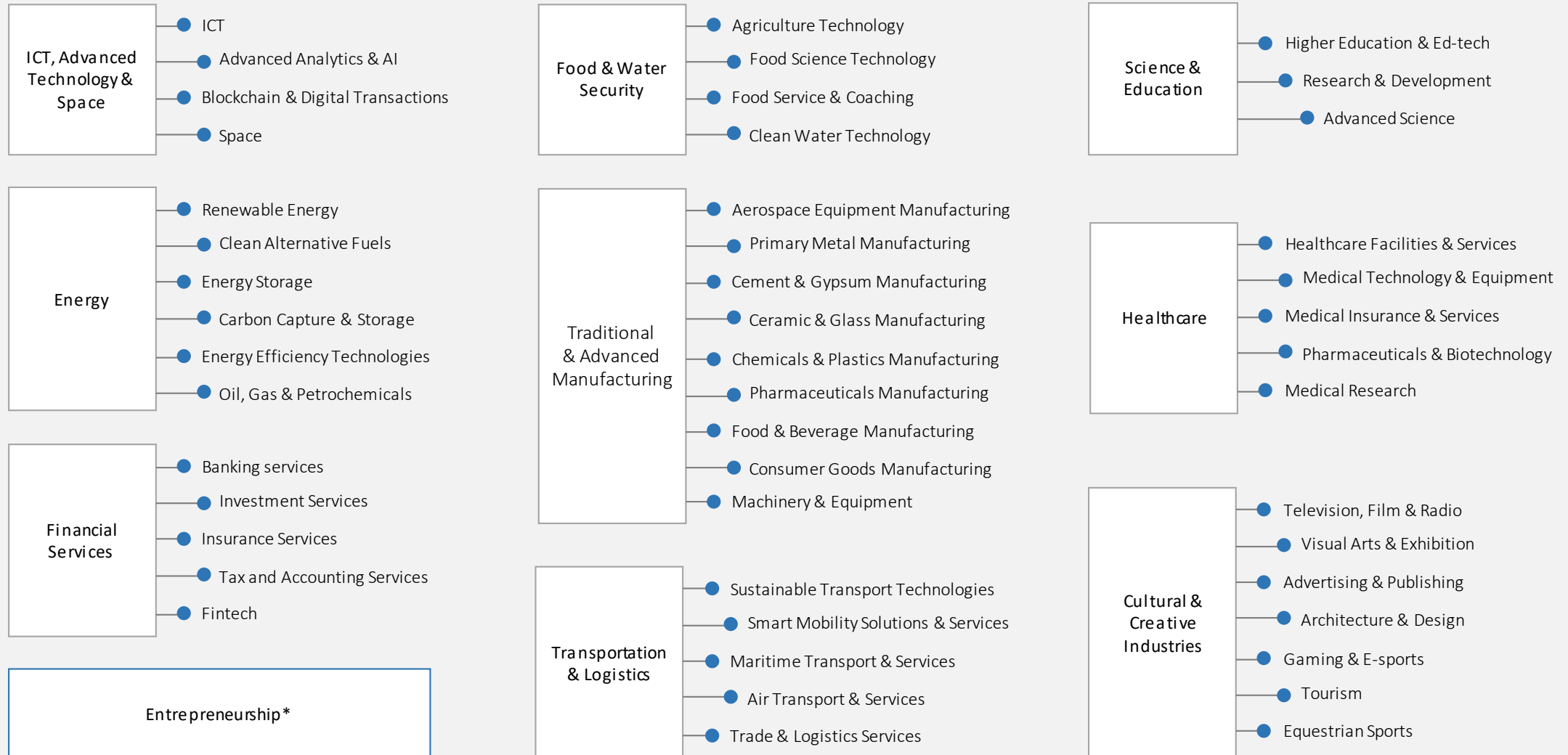


Strategic Sector Groups





A set of priority sectors within each economic sector grouping has been identified



*Applicable to all sectors

The priority sectors and fields will be reviewed and updated periodically to remain flexible, adaptable and up-to-date with fast moving sectoral dynamics.

Pillars of the Strategy



1 Intelligence & Foresight

Informed decision making relies on accurate data being made available to decision makers. A holistic, centralized dataset of all metrics that relate to talent and talent competitiveness in the UAE is key to the success of the strategy. Furthermore, this pillar will focus efforts on forecasting the UAE's job sector demand for talent by assessing global talent trends, emerging economic sectors, sector disruptions and associated jobs and skills requirements for the future, that will in turn advise effective talent attraction and retention policies.

2 Stakeholder Engagement

Employers and executives from public sector entities, academia, and private sector organizations are typically the most robust source of on-the-ground knowledge of real-time availability of skilled talent. These stakeholder groups will form the consultative basis for developing a clear and granular understanding of the talent segments needed to supplement the UAE's economic growth in strategic sectors. Moreover, this pillar will focus efforts on periodic surveys of the stakeholders and talented individuals in the UAE to uncover sector challenges within the talent market, and will inform the development of policies and programs to overcome them.

3 Talent Attraction & Retention

Well-designed talent attraction and retention policies, especially those related to immigration, social security and employment have a major impact on the level of a host country's attractiveness to foreign talent. To that end, a system of clear, fair, transparently and consistently applied rules that removes uncertainty from a foreigner's relationship to a host country is fundamental. Other elements such as infrastructure development, education quality and affordability, healthcare quality and accessibility, environmental health, as well as factors that relate to the enabling regulatory, labor, business, market and social environment of the country influence its level of talent competitiveness. This pillar will focus efforts on bringing all of these elements together to develop effective talent attraction and retention policies and programs.

4 Promotion & Outreach

Outreach and promotion activities form an integral part of any strategy targeting a global audience. Efforts under this pillar will focus on promoting the UAE as a destination for prospective skilled professionals, academics, entrepreneurs and other segments of talented human capital.

5 Governance & Coordination

Efforts under this pillar will focus on establishing a Bureau that will act as the primary point of contact and source of information for global talent affairs, liaising with public and private sector organizations, academia the global talent pool. The Bureau will also directly oversee the implementation of the Strategy, and establish efficient working mechanisms with the relevant authorities involved in implementing policies and programs in areas of talent attraction and retention.



Enablers of the Strategy

The availability of appropriate regulatory, labor, business, market and social environments in addition to sufficient levels of technology adoption is critical to the country's ability to attract and retain talent. These elements are considered to be overlapping and interlinked in many cases, and together provide an enabling platform for talent and economic growth.

Factors such as **rule of law, regulatory quality, corruption perception, political stability**, transparent administration of **justice**, among others.

Governance & Regulatory
Environment

Factors such as **competition intensity, ease of doing business, infrastructure availability**, level of **cluster development**, R&D density, ICT access, etc.

Market
Landscape

Social factors such as **quality of life, tolerance, social mobility, personal safety, environmental health**, among others

Social
Ecosystem

Business &
Employment System

Technology
Adoption

The policies and regulations that characterize **labor-employer relations**, including **active labor market policies**, level of **professional management practices**, **relationship of pay to productivity**, among others

The level of technological competence can be measured by factors such as **investment in emerging technologies, technology utilization, entrepreneurial activity, level of e-services provision**, among others



Summary of the Strategy

The Vision

Establish the UAE as the top destination for global talent to drive the UAE’s knowledge economy

The Mission

Establish the UAE as a leader in talent competitiveness by developing policies and programs that attract global talent and create an enabling environment to enhance talent retention.

Strategic Goals

- 1 Establish the UAE as one of the top 10 leaders of global talent competitiveness
- 2 Ensure the availability of talent in the UAE’s strategic sectors to enable the knowledge economy
- 3 Establish the UAE’s profile as the top destination of choice for global talent

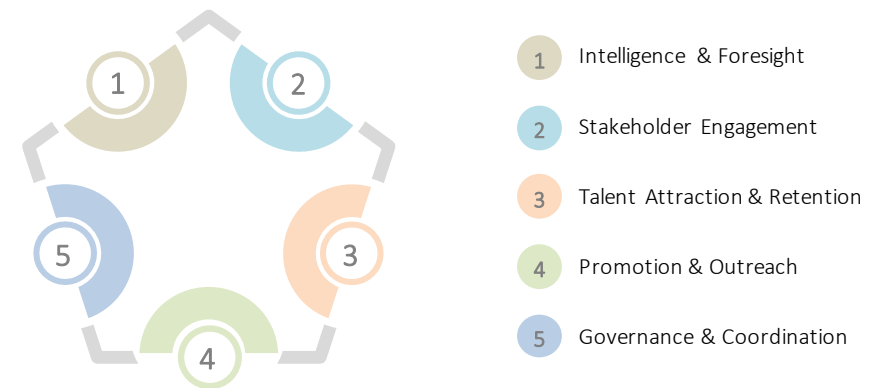
Strategic Sector Groups

ICT, Advanced Technology & Space	Food & Water Security	Science & Education
Energy	Traditional & Advanced Manufacturing	Healthcare
Financial Services	Transportation & Logistics	Cultural & Creative Industries
Entrepreneurship		

Strategic Themes



Strategic Pillars



Strategic Enablers

