

Innovation Zone Program

Tuesday, April 16 to
Thursday, April 18, 2024
ADNEC, Abu Dhabi

Hosted by



Innovation Zone

The Innovation Zone will host a series of industry panels with innovators and experts showcasing critical climate solutions, as the global community builds on the progress from COP28. The program will feature:

Day 1: Scaling Climate Tech Innovation in the Global South with Masdar City (April 16)

Day 2: The UAE – A Global Climate Tech Hub with Masdar City (April 17)

Day 3: Empowering SMEs for a Sustainable Future (April 18)

The Innovation Zone will also feature the Net Zero Navigator, an AI-powered tool developed by Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week to support stakeholders with personalized insights and guidance in identifying the most effective pathways to net zero.

Day 1: Scaling Climate Tech Innovation in the Global South



Building on COP28's momentum, Day 1 of the Innovation Zone will focus on **advancing climate-tech adoption in the Global South towards COP29**. This event unites the global climate tech community to address key challenges:

Collaboration: The conference promotes South-South collaboration, crucial for developing countries facing similar climate challenges and funding limitations.

Climate Tech Financing: Addressing the limited access to climate finance faced by the Global South, the event explores challenges and opportunities for increased investment.

Capacity Building: Recognizing the need to cultivate both innovation and supportive environments, the conference tackles bottlenecks and proposes solutions to empower existing and emerging climate-tech ecosystems.



Tuesday, April 16



10:30 – 16:00



Hall 2, ADNEC

Day 2: The UAE – A Global Climate Tech Hub

The United Arab Emirates is rapidly establishing itself as a **leading global hub for climate technology development and innovation**, in line with the nation's steadfast commitment to climate leadership and its vision to spearhead the global energy transition.

To amplify this commitment, Day 2 of the Innovation Zone will **spotlight UAE-based technologies and strategies shaping the future of climate tech**. The Zone will feature cutting-edge advancements in AI, clean energy and more through engaging talks, panels and case studies. The sessions will explore crucial themes like **green finance, policy and capacity building – key ingredients for a thriving global climate-tech ecosystem**.



Wednesday, April 17



10:30 – 16:30



Hall 2, ADNEC

Day 3: Empowering SMEs for a Sustainable Future

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a pivotal role in the global business landscape, comprising 90 percent of businesses worldwide. Impacting over 2 billion lives, these businesses are crucial catalysts for innovation and economic prosperity.

Despite their significant potential, **SMEs face challenges in accessing the information, tools and resources essential for a smooth transition to net-zero emissions**. As part of the Innovation Zone's SME day, Masdar will host this full-day event **exploring the tools, resources and success stories** that can inform and support these dynamic businesses to actively participate in and benefit from the movement toward a net-zero future.

Join us at the Innovation Zone for this critical conversation, as we pave the way for SMEs to embrace sustainability and contribute to a greener, more resilient future.



Thursday, April 18



10:30 – 17:00



Hall 2, ADNEC



Day 1: Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Scaling Climate Tech Innovation

10:30 - 10:35

Welcome Remarks from Masdar City

SPEAKER:

Ahmed Baghoum, Chief Executive Officer, Masdar City

10:35 - 11:20

Panel | Building Supportive Ecosystems to Catalyze South-South Cooperation for Climate Innovation

Creating supportive ecosystems for South-South cooperation on climate technology is vital for developing countries facing climate challenges. It is the pathway to cost-effective and tailored solutions, knowledge transfer, and capacity building. It will also help address both mitigation and adaptation needs, contribute to global climate goals, foster diplomacy, and open trade opportunities among nations. In this panel discussion, diverse organizations focused on South-South collaboration will share their experience with scaling green technology. Panelists will explore strategies for South-South cooperation in deploying and scaling innovative climate technologies for just transitions.

MODERATOR:

Suleiman Amin, Managing Director, The Catalyst

SPEAKERS:

Nalin Agarwal, Founding Partner, Climate Collective

Andrew Chang, Program Director, New Energy Nexus



Day 1: Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Scaling Climate Tech Innovation

11:20 - 11:45

In Conversation | Building Resilient Financial Ecosystems for Climate Innovation

This session delves into the imperative task of constructing resilient financial ecosystems that effectively support climate innovation initiatives. How can financial ecosystems be structured to bolster climate innovation? What strategies can be employed to enhance collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders within the financial ecosystem?

MODERATOR:

Gabrielle Inzirillo, Head of Ecosystem Development; Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA), Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM)

SPEAKER:

Jared Haddon, Senior Director of Middle East and Eastern Europe, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change

11:45 - 12:20

Panel | Demystifying the Climate Capital Stack

One of the biggest challenges facing climate-tech startups in the Global South is access to financing. This session will explore the climate finance ecosystem, the spectrum of funding instruments, and the progress made in achieving inclusivity in climate funding.

MODERATOR:

Danny Touma, Partner, PwC

SPEAKERS:

James Socas, Managing Director & Head of the Climate Solutions, Investcorp

Sonia Weymuller, Co-Founder and General Partner, VentureSouq

Christina Borsum, Chief Financial Officer, New Energy Nexus

Mohamed Al Binali, Value Creation – Capital Ecosystem, HUB71



Day 1: Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Scaling Climate Tech Innovation

12:20 - 13:30

Women leaders shaping Climate Tech Innovation in the Global South

Join us for an engaging panel discussion featuring trailblazing women startup founders and venture capitalists (VCs) who are driving significant change in the climate tech landscape across the Global South. Explore their journeys and insights, and the transformative impact of their initiatives, from pioneering renewable energy solutions to implementing nature-based approaches. Get inspired as they share their experiences, challenges and strategies for driving sustainable innovation in their communities.

MODERATOR:

Elena Siegel, Partner, Kearney Middle East & Africa, UAE

SPEAKERS:

Caroline Sloomweg, Co-Founder and CCO/CMO, Kelp Blue

Lola Fernandez Flores, Principal, VentureSouq

Storm Van Zyl, Chief Financial Officer, Iyris

13:30 - 14:00

Masterclass | Investing in Clean Tech

This in-person masterclass is for investors interested in early-stage climate tech startups and will cover topics such as fundamentals of the climate-tech investment landscape, current trends and the outlook for specific sub-domains. Whether you're an investor, an entrepreneur or simply curious about the future of clean technologies, this session will equip investors with actionable insights to navigate this dynamic landscape.

SPEAKER:

Nalin Agarwal, Founding Partner, Climate Collective



Day 1: Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Scaling Climate Tech Innovation

14:00 - 14:30

Masterclass | Navigating to Net Zero

The Net Zero Navigator is an interactive, AI-driven digital platform developed by Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week to support organizations in identifying the most effective pathways to reach net zero. ADSW will host a working session to engage participants with the newly launched Net Zero Navigator tool.

SPEAKER:

Valerie Peyre, Director – Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, Masdar
Dr. Thomas Philbeck, Managing Director, SWIFT Partners

14:30 - 16:00

Solution Talks | Local Solutions for Global Climate Challenges

Join us for a session where thought leaders and innovators share concepts and cutting-edge technologies tackling critical climate challenges. These innovations have been tested and refined in diverse contexts across emerging economies. In a series of rapid-fire lightning talks, these innovators will share their unique approaches to addressing global climate issues at the local level.

SPEAKERS:

Angela Homsy, Founder, Ignite Power
Hanh Do Hong, CEO and Co-Founder, BUYO Bioplastics
Dr. Susan Graham, CEO, Dendra Systems
Mansoor Hamayun, CEO and Co-founder, Bboxx
Neha Jain, Founder & Director, Zerocircle



Day 2: Wednesday, April 17, 2024

The UAE – A Global Climate Tech Hub

10:30 - 10:33

Welcome by MC

Amal Larhlid, Partner, PwC

10:33 - 11:20

Panel | The UAE's Climate Tech Ecosystem – Incentives, Innovation, and Impact

The UAE is well on its way to establishing itself as one of the leading global climate tech hubs. What unique incentives and support mechanisms does the UAE provide that make it a favorable base for climate tech startups? How is the UAE leveraging its global partnerships to drive growth in the climate tech sector?

MODERATOR:

Serena Sebastiani, Financial Services Advisory – Virtual Assets Consulting Lead, PwC Middle East

SPEAKERS:

Ahmad Ali Alwan, Chief Executive Officer, Hub71

Alexei Levene, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer, Desolenator

Helmut von Struve, Chief Executive Officer, Siemens Middle East

Massimo Falcioni, Chief Competitiveness Officer, Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO)



Day 2: Wednesday, April 17, 2024

The UAE – A Global Climate Tech Hub

11:20 - 12:00

Panel | The Corporate-Startup Nexus: Accelerating Climate Tech in the UAE

While securing initial funding may be straightforward, achieving commercial success poses a more formidable challenge for most startups in the UAE. What potential partnerships, policies and incentives could pave the way for more business opportunities, enabling climate tech startups to scale effectively and sustainably? How can corporates in the UAE be better supported to leverage the innovation from the region's climate tech startups?

MODERATOR:

Jon Blackburn, Partner - Energy, Utilities & Resources, PwC Middle East

SPEAKERS:

Aniruddha Sharma, CEO, Carbon Clean

David Torres, Senior Vice President - Downstream Technology, ADNOC

Róisín Barrett, Managing Director, Clean Energy Business Council MENA

12:00 - 12:20

Fireside Chat | The Role of Sport in Driving Climate Action

This engaging interview will explore how sports can serve as a powerful catalyst for positive environmental change. Our guest from SailGP will share valuable insights on leveraging passion for the game to drive meaningful climate action. SailGP has taken a unique approach by introducing the Sail GP Impact League, a groundbreaking initiative combining sporting excellence with environmental stewardship.

MODERATOR:

Jon Blackburn, Partner - Energy, Utilities & Resources, PwC Middle East

SPEAKER:

Charlie Dewhurst, Chief Commercial Officer, SailGP



Day 2: Wednesday, April 17, 2024

The UAE – A Global Climate Tech Hub

12:20 - 12:40

Presentation | The Rise of Smart Mobility in the UAE

Join us as we explore the role of master planning and smart technologies in the future of transportation.

PRESENTER:

Lukas Sokol, Head of Master Planning, Masdar City

12:40 - 13:00

Masterclass | Navigating to Net Zero with AI

The Net Zero Navigator is an interactive, AI-driven digital platform developed by ADSW to support organizations in identifying the most effective pathways to reach net zero. ADSW will host a working session to engage participants with the newly launched Net Zero Navigator tool.

SPEAKERS:

Valerie Peyre, Director – Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, Masdar

Dr. Thomas Philbeck, Managing Director, SWIFT Partners

13:00 - 13:30

Panel | AI for Net-Zero Cities: Innovations, Strategies and Impact

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the path to net-zero emissions in cities worldwide. In this panel, we will explore how AI can contribute to achieving net-zero emissions. What strategies and innovations are cities adopting to harness AI's potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

MODERATOR:

Sascha Treppte, Partner, Kearney

SPEAKERS:

Leena Al Olaimy, Founder & CEO, SymbAlosys

Dr. Hosni Ghedira, Director of Engagement Services, Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI)



Day 2: Wednesday, April 17, 2024

The UAE – A Global Climate Tech Hub

13:30 - 14:00

Debate | Carbon Capture: Path to Net Zero or License to Pollute?

Despite the promise of carbon capture and storage technology (CCS), the amount of CO₂ captured by these facilities currently accounts for just 0.12 percent of annual global emissions. Is carbon capture a viable strategy for mitigating climate change, or does it merely provide industries with a smokescreen for continued pollution?

MODERATOR:

Stella Beck, Senior Advisor – Energy Transition, Danish Trade Council

SPEAKERS:

Tom Buchanan, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Climeworks

Gagan Porwal, Chief Commercial & Strategy Leader, GE Vernova

Salim Al Huthaili, Chief Growth Officer, 44.01

Karim Badawi, Director – New Energy, SLB

14:00 - 14:30

Panel | From Desert to Dinner Plate: Soonicorns Building Food Security in Arid Regions

As arid regions continue working to enhance their food security, startups play a pivotal role in bridging gaps in the agriculture value chain. Who are the agtech soonicorns that are transforming barren landscapes into productive farmlands? What innovative strategies are they employing to conserve precious water resources, enrich soil fertility and boost crop yields?

MODERATOR:

Sebastien Miller, Manager of Public Realm, Masdar City

SPEAKERS:

Khuloud Al Nuwais, Chief Sustainability Officer, Emirates Foundation;
Secretary General for Ne'ma

Sky Kurtz, CEO, Pure Harvest

Ghita Bahmad, CEO, The Food Engineer

Ahmed Hammoud, Head of Operations, Alesca Technologies

Shirley Shahar, Cofounder and CEO, DANA Venture Builder

A photograph of an industrial facility, possibly a refinery or power plant, with a prominent tall chimney stack. The scene is set against a sunset sky with warm orange and red tones. The facility is silhouetted against the bright light of the setting sun.

Day 2: Wednesday, April 17, 2024

The UAE – A Global Climate Tech Hub

14:30 - 15:00

Panel | Advancing Circularity for a Sustainable Future in the MENA Region

The Middle East, despite its high levels of waste, lacks efficient systems to separate and address waste streams. What are the emerging technologies in the waste value chain for waste segregation, landfill management and waste-to-energy conversion? What policies and incentives can support the scaling of circularity in the region?

MODERATOR:

Keerthana R, Editor, Waste & Recycling

SPEAKERS:

Arafat Al Yafei, Executive Director - Industrial Development Bureau, Abu Dhabi
Department of Economic Development

Cameron Cairns, Partner, Terrax

Fatima Al Banna, Project Manager, BEEAH

Dr. Sivapalan Kathiravale, Head of Research & Development, Tadweer Group

Manali Desai, Chief Sustainability Officer – AMESA, PepsiCo

15:00 - 15:30

Panel | Bio-inspired Solutions for Climate Resilience

This panel will highlight success stories from biotech startups in the MENA region. It will explore how life sciences can provide innovative solutions for climate challenges and discuss innovations in biomimicry, bioengineering and nature-based approaches.

MODERATOR:

Nermeen Negm, Head of Marketing and Communications, Masdar City

SPEAKERS:

Dr. Albarah El-Khani, Senior Director of Operations, M42

Alex Zhavoronkov, CEO, Insilico Medicine

Alia Abdel-Razeq, COO, CellSave Arabia

Dr. Kambiz Shekdar, CEO, SecondCell Bio



Day 2: Wednesday, April 17, 2024

The UAE – A Global Climate Tech Hub

15:30 - 16:30

Lightning Talks | Climate Tech Founders Unplugged: Stories of Resilience

Join us for an inspiring and candid closing session where startup founders share their climate tech journeys, complete with twists, turns and lessons learned. From initial setbacks to breakthrough moments, these entrepreneurs will reveal the behind-the-scenes stories of building their ventures in the UAE. Discover how they navigated challenges, pivoted strategies and stayed committed to their mission of driving positive climate impact. Whether you're an aspiring founder or an industry veteran, this session promises valuable insights, relatable experience and a renewed sense of purpose.

SPEAKERS:

Alexei Levene, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer, Desolenator

Jane Glavan, CEO, Distant Imagery

Vivek Tripathu, CEO, Olive Gaea

Vikram Krishna, CEO, The Sacred Groves



Day 3: Thursday, April 18, 2024

Empowering SMEs for a Sustainable Future

10:30 - 10:35

Welcome Remarks | Building a Sustainable Future for MENA SMEs

SPEAKER:

Adrienne Doolan, Founder Sustain Global

10:35 - 11:00

Workshop | Setting the Context: The MENA SME Landscape

This interactive session will present the insights from the 'SMEs on the Road to Net Zero' survey launched by COP28 SME Climate Hub for MENA.

SPEAKER:

Tanzeed Alam, Managing Director, Earth Matters Consulting

11:00 - 11:40

Panel | Empowering Women, Investing in Change: Strategies to Close the Funding Gender Gap

The persistent gender funding gap remains a critical concern for women in the business landscape. Despite advancements, disparities in venture capital funding and underrepresentation of women in leadership roles persist. In this panel, we delve into the multifaceted issue of the gender funding gap and explore strategies for investors to bridge this divide.

MODERATOR:

Roberta Calarese, Founder & CEO, Ghaya

SPEAKERS:

Suresh Lalwani, Managing Director & Head of Coverage for Commercial Banking, First Abu Dhabi Bank

Chada El Islam Benmahcene, Founder & CEO, Entrogx Ventures

José Francisco Fernández Serna, Managing Director – Middle East, Blendhub



Day 3: Thursday, April 18, 2024

Empowering SMEs for a Sustainable Future

11:40 - 12:10

Panel | Charting the Course: The Future of the COP28 SME Climate Hub for MENA

Launched at COP28, the SME Climate Hub for MENA is the platform where many SMEs in the MENA region have started their net zero journeys. Find out how this platform will evolve and grow in the UAE to build on the COP28 legacy.

MODERATOR:

Aruna Narayanan, Founder & Chief Impact Enabler, Real Impact Solutions

SPEAKERS:

Oisin Commene, Head of Thought Leadership and Programming - ADSW, Masdar

Nasser Salem Al Ali, Head of Commercial Banking, First Abu Dhabi Bank

Hanan Bakr, Former Head of Private Sector Engagement, COP28

Mariam Kvlivdze, Co-Founder @Wat

12:15 - 12:45

Interview | Beyond Perception: Unlocking Banking Solutions for SMEs in the Transition

The conversation will explore innovative banking solutions that can help SMEs navigate on their net zero journey. It aims to shed light on how financial institutions are evolving their strategies and services to better support SMEs as they transition towards sustainable growth.

SPEAKERS:

Jonathan Ashton, Head of Marketing & Comms, Krohne Group

Shargiil Bashir, Chief Sustainability Officer, First Abu Dhabi Bank



Day 3: Thursday, April 18, 2024

Empowering SMEs for a Sustainable Future

12:50 - 13:20

Panel | The Corporate SME Nexus: Enhancing Collaborations

What partnerships and strategies can strengthen collaborations between corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in their journey towards net zero? Discover how these partnerships can drive innovation, foster growth and create sustainable business opportunities.

MODERATOR:

Matthias Gelber, Net Zero Ambassador, Desert Boards

SPEAKERS:

Tala Alem, Corporate Affairs & Sustainability Lead, GCC, PepsiCo

Jeffrey Beyers, Managing Director, Zest Associates

Victor Kiriakos, CEO, Dunes Ventures

13:25 - 14:00

Panel | SMEs & Industry Leaders Tackling Scope 3 Challenges

This panel will look at case studies of SMEs partnering with large corporations to tackle scope-3 challenges in the supply chain.

MODERATOR:

Oliver Baillie, Co-Founder & CEO, Plain Tiger

SPEAKERS:

Capucine Jeunet Dourdin, Head of Energy & Sustainability Services, Schneider Electric

Kamel Farah, CEO, Desert Board

Rana Hajirasouli, Founder & CEO, The Surpluss



Day 3: Thursday, April 18, 2024

Empowering SMEs for a Sustainable Future

14:05 - 14:30

Interview | UAE SMEs Working on Biodiversity for Impact

Join us for this fireside chat as we discuss the potential for nature-based solutions to address 30% of climate change mitigation challenges and the importance of why and how SMEs in the UAE are working on biodiversity.

MODERATOR:

Tanzeed Alam, Managing Director, Earth Matters Consulting

SPEAKER:

Jane Glavan, Co-Owner, Distant Imagery Solutions

14:35 - 15:10

Panel | Peer Power: How are SMEs Collaborating Toward the Net Zero Journey?

Discover how peer-to-peer SME collaborations are enabling SMEs to accelerate their transition toward net zero.

MODERATOR:

Jeffrey Beyer, Managing Director, Zest Associates

SPEAKERS:

Chandresh Dhanki, CEO, Resource Alliance

Emma Barber, Director, DGrade

Hem Lakhani, Co-Founder, Acuflex Global

Tim Morris, Business Development Manager, The Plastic Road Company



Day 3: Thursday, April 18, 2024

Empowering SMEs for a Sustainable Future

15:15 - 16:00

Workshop | SMEs Scaling Up for the Future

Building on a workshop at the Sustainable Cities Forum, this session will expand on the insights and discuss the recommendations for how SME solutions from the UAE can overcome obstacles towards urban sustainability.

SPEAKERS:

Aoife O'Loughlin, Chief of Staff, Luminus Education Group

Rukhsana Kausar, Partner, Liquid of Life

Kaoutar Makrache, CEO, WinSustainably

Richard Pate, Founder & CEO, HydroART

Dima Al Srouri, Founder & Director, Biospheric City Lab

16:05 - 16:30

Workshop | Air We Breathe: Solutions Improving Indoor Air Quality

In this engaging session, experts will delve into cutting-edge technological solutions and their practical applications for enhancing indoor air quality.

SPEAKERS:

Oriol Teixidó, Associate Director, Air Quality & Climate Change, Ricardo Gulf Technical Consultancy

Tom Day, Founder, Air Zones

16:35 - 17:00

Workshop | Women in Tech Driving Sustainable Transformation

Discover how climate tech empowers women to measure, monitor, manage, reduce and report carbon footprints, ultimately achieving net-zero emissions.

SPEAKERS:

Karen Storey, Founder, The Storey Group

Jessica Scopacasa, Co-Founder & CMO, Olive Gaea

Marion Désormeaux, Facilitator & Instructor, 2Tonnes

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