

ADFD and ICBA Partner to Launch Region's First Soil Museum Guide, Advancing Environmental Education and Sustainability

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates – 21 May 2025: In a landmark move to advance sustainability and scientific education across the region, Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) and the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) have signed a sponsorship agreement to develop the Middle East and North Africa's first comprehensive guide for establishing and operating soil museums.

The announcement was made during the fourth edition of "Make it in the Emirates," reinforcing the UAE's role as a global hub for innovation, sustainability, and science-based policy.

Designed to promote soil conservation and responsible resource management in arid environments, the guide will serve as a blueprint for institutions across the region. Backed by ADFD funding, the guide will be transformed into a practical training and capacity-building programme featuring technical workshops and scientific mentoring. ICBA will lead the technical delivery, drawing on its expertise in sustainable agriculture and its success in launching and operating the Emirates Soil Museum.

Speaking on the occasion, His Excellency Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of ADFD, said: "This initiative reflects our unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability and knowledge partnerships. We believe science-backed solutions like this museum guide can shape regional resilience and inform effective policies for generations to come."

Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of ICBA, added: "We are proud to continue our partnership with ADFD to take the Emirates Soil Museum's impact even further. This guide will be a scalable tool for institutions across the region—advancing environmental awareness, building scientific capacity, and supporting the Sustainable Development Goals. The Emirates Soil Museum was made in the UAE, and today it begins its journey to the world."

The agreement also outlines the organization of an international scientific symposium on 5 December 2025 to coincide with World Soil Day, with the participation of over 200 experts, researchers, and decision-makers from around the world to discuss soil, salinity, and climate change issues in arid regions.

Established in December 2016 with support from ADFD, Emirates Soil Museum is the first specialized soil museum in the region. Located at ICBA's headquarters in Dubai, the museum aims to raise awareness about the role of soil in the environment, agriculture, and food security, while showcasing the diversity of soil types in the UAE. Since its launch, the museum has welcomed more than 13,500 visitors from various sectors of society and has become a reference center for environmental awareness and non-traditional education.

This partnership between ADFD and ICBA reflects a shared commitment to supporting the Sustainable Development Goals and positioning the UAE as a regional hub for environmental knowledge and scientific innovation, in line with “UAE Vision 2030” and the “UAE Net Zero 2050 Strategy.”

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