



## The exemplary journey of Dubai Expo 2020: From winning the bid to braving the pandemic

In 2013, when Dubai won the bid to host the world's largest event, the World Expo, it was a moment of celebration across the emirate and the UAE. And why not? In the end, it was a testament to the UAE's success over the years and its image as a reliable, capable spot to host an event of global magnitude. Also, because the bid was won in competition with noted nations like Russia, Brazil, and Turkey.

The UAE has ever since been planning for the big occasion – putting in years of hard work, billions in investment, and converting acres of land into a world class expo site, to host the Middle East's first World Expo. For eight years, the plans were on track – and then the pandemic hit. The travel came to a halt, the preparations had to be put on hold, the strategies needed to change, and the fate of Expo 2020 was not clear. But that didn't last for long.

The UAE is not a country that is taken aback by challenges – it is our foundational value to go against all odds and make the impossible possible. So, when the entire world was grappling with challenges to stem the spread of Covid, Dubai was already preparing for the Expo. Yes, the pandemic managed to push the dates forward, but it could not dampen the spirit of the Expo and the people of Dubai.

Today, in the UAE, life has largely returned to normal with a considerable decrease in COVID cases and strict rules in place, making it a safe and ideal destination for hosting the event. How did that become possible? Due to the leadership decisions, governmental interventions, long-term strategies, digital readiness, and contribution of everyone who calls this city and the country their home. The fact that the UAE is one of the most vaccinated nations in the world is a big factor that led to the successful hosting of the Expo and will continue to make the visits safer.

Millions are expected to visit the Expo till March 31st and the city is well equipped to welcome them. This number speaks volumes about the readiness of the emirate and is a lesson in itself.

It also makes sense for Dubai to have themed the event 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future' in the era of the pandemic, which has further laid emphasis on the importance of bringing together people and ideas from across the world and the immediate need to inspire innovations for a better world. With 190 plus countries showcasing their prowess in improving lives, there could not have been a better time or better place for the Expo.

The UAE, today, stands as an example for the entire world to learn from. Braving the challenges posed by the pandemic was not easy, but the UAE managed to win the race and finally host Expo 2020 in its dazzling city of Dubai. Expo 2020 is proof enough of the resilience that the UAE has shown in braving the pandemic. It exemplifies the UAE's core values of leadership, innovation, and inclusivity.