

# BRIDGING THE GREEN SKILLS GAP PERSPECTIVES FROM COP28 PANELS



COP28  
UAE

بنك أبوظبي الأول

FAB

First Abu Dhabi Bank

Strategic Pathway Partner

The series of COP28 outcome papers represent the key insights and discussions from FAB's hosted panels and roundtables during COP28. They are not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the topics covered.





## CONTEXT

The “green skills gap” is increasingly prominent as the world grapples with climate change. This gap represents the disconnect between the **growing demand for sustainability skills** in various industries and the shortage in supply of trained professionals and young graduates.

Educational systems need to align their curriculums with real-world requirements for raising awareness and tackling environmental challenges. With a **foundational knowledge in science and technology becoming essential**, there is an urgent need for comprehensive educational adaptations, focusing on practical applications and technological advancements. This gap not only hampers the ability to address climate complexities effectively but also stalls progress in implementing wide-ranging solutions in every sector across geographies.

Organisations will need to start reskilling and upskilling their human capital to address new sustainability roles and responsibilities.

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## KEY FACTS

- According to BCG Henderson Institute, the critical shortage of green energy workers is expected to rise to **7 million by 2030**. (BCG, 2023)
- This gap by 2030 could result in a **temperature rise of 0.1°C**. (BCG, 2023)
- In the UAE, investments in clean energy, **innovation, and renewable sectors are expected to generate 50,000 new green jobs by 2030**. (Khaleej Times, 2023)



## CHALLENGES

The rapid evolution of green technologies, frameworks and regulations presents another challenge as **educational and training frameworks struggle to keep pace**. This continuously evolving environment requires continuous ramp up across all sectors of the economy. This lag notably explains the lack of practical courses or training on top-notch technologies, such as the conversion of CO2 into usable fuel.

The issue of the **green skills gap is dual-layered**: firstly, there is a need to educate and train the **younger generation** in sustainability from an early age. Secondly, it's vital to upskill **current professionals** across all sectors and levels of seniority to ensure a cohesive transition to sustainable practices.

Additionally, a lack of standardised competencies and a fragmented approach to sustainability education hinder effective skill development. In addition to hard skills, **communication skills**, encompassing articulate speech and clear writing, have emerged as critical in this field, emphasising the need for impact and meaningful contribution.

## REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

Amid these challenges, innovative solutions are emerging.

**GEMS Education** is at the forefront of sustainable education for the next generations, having signed an MoU with the UAE Ministry of Education to integrate ESG topics across all curriculums. This provides students with an in-depth understanding of environmental issues. Furthermore, their initiative to establish the first net-zero school exemplifies their dedication to taking practical steps to enhance student awareness.

Similarly, the **International Institute for Management Development (IMD)** has set a benchmark by embedding sustainability content in every MBA course. This serves as a blueprint for businesses to weave sustainability into their core operations.

In the modern era, **technology and digitalisation are instrumental**. Tools like digital twins and virtual labs not only deepen the comprehension of sustainability concepts but also disseminate knowledge more cost-effectively.

Beyond refining current educational programmes, **forging ties between the corporate world and academia is imperative to close the green skills gap**. Such partnerships focus on equipping graduates with the necessary expertise to meet the growing demand for green skills across various sectors.

Taking a step in this direction, **First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) has launched a set of executive education programmes such as “Frontiers in Sustainability” in collaboration with the Emirates Foundation and IMD**. Aligning with the UAE's 2050 Net Zero aspirations, this programme offers a rigorous sustainability curriculum to senior leaders, with an inaugural group of about 30 leaders anticipated between March and June 2023.

FAB also places emphasis on the **holistic development of its workforce**. Through town hall gatherings, mandatory ESG trainings and dedicated sessions, the bank ensures that its employees resonate with its sustainability vision. Furthermore, on the customer front, FAB bankers are deeply committed to discerning their clients' needs, guaranteeing bespoke and impactful support.

## **PRIORITIES AND NEXT STEPS**

To effectively close the green skills gap, several priorities must be set:

- **Update and enhance curriculums:** Academic curriculums need continuous updates to stay relevant. This involves not only integrating sustainability into various subjects but also ensuring that these topics reflect current global challenges and industry practice.
- **Emphasise science and technology education:** Encouraging a stronger focus on science and technology courses is vital. This foundational knowledge is essential for understanding and solving complex environmental challenges.
- **Strengthen university-industry collaboration:** Building stronger ties between academia and industry ensures that educational curriculums are aligned with the real-world needs of the green industry.
- **Implement efficient ramp-up formats:** Introducing formats like bootcamps, internships, and fellowships can quickly bridge the knowledge and experience gap for new entrants into the green industry.

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