

# Abu Dhabi & Etihad Airways support international COVID testing efforts

The Department of Health – Abu Dhabi (DoH), regulator of Abu Dhabi’s healthcare sector, has announced that the emirate is supporting international testing efforts by offering laboratory testing for COVID-19 samples from outside the UAE.

This first initiative of its kind in the world demonstrates Abu Dhabi’s world-class healthcare services and facilities and continues the emirate’s support for global efforts to combat COVID-19 following the success of its own ambitious testing programs.

Recent developments in the global pandemic have resulted in an increased demand for quality and timely testing from around the world. For this reason, Abu Dhabi has stepped in to support international testing efforts by providing laboratory analysis of COVID-19 samples from outside the UAE. These efforts follow the UAE’s ranking as the leading country worldwide in regards to PCR testing capacity, number of tests conducted per capita, as well as total number of daily laboratory tests for COVID-19 per capita.

This global achievement builds on cooperation between UAE public and private sector stakeholders. Since the start of the pandemic, Abu Dhabi has successfully increased daily tests rates and laboratory capacity from approximately 1,000 to 170,000 tests per day, relying on 22 designated laboratories. These labs deliver reliable results in a record time of just four hours.

In coordination with the Abu Dhabi-based Agility International Shipping Company, specializing in logistics services, and Etihad Airways, official carrier of the UAE, the emirate has started to receive thousands of testing samples from overseas, ranging between 5,000 and 10,000 samples per day.

“Unilabs” Laboratories, specializing in diagnostics and laboratory services, has operated on a large scale to accelerate the speed of the diagnosis and analysis of samples and extract the results using the Baynunah solution, which was developed and manufactured in Abu Dhabi. Results are provided within 24 hours of the moment samples are shipped to the UAE.

“[Abu Dhabi’s healthcare ecosystem continues to cement its position as one of the leading destinations globally. This initiative reflects the leadership’s belief that winning the fight against this global pandemic can only be achieved through human solidarity and international collaboration.

Today, our world-class healthcare infrastructure is being used for the service of greater humanity and to help combat the global spread of the COVID-19 virus. Our support of international COVID-19 efforts has been made possible as a result of our healthy collaborative ecosystem that resulted in partnerships between multiple stakeholders across the public and private sectors in the United Arab Emirates.

Recently, the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi was in conversation with several countries to support them with conducting laboratory tests in Abu Dhabi. Due to our efficient regulatory environment and the availability of world-class healthcare professionals and capabilities in Abu Dhabi, we were able to provide support along with the logistical know-how of our partners in the public and private sectors. In the meantime, discussions are underway globally to develop a similar framework to tackle the challenges brought on by the pandemic and investigate how Abu Dhabi may provide the necessary support in laboratory testing and other services],” comments HE Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Hamed, Chairman of DoH.

“As the UAE's national carrier, Etihad is proud to be an active partner helping to coordinate and facilitate the country's world-leading response to COVID-19. This means adapting quickly and moving with flexibility to meet evolving shipment demands and priorities, while providing workable solutions to global challenges.

Our continued partnership with local and international government authorities, working closely with the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi, is a testament to our ability to offer extended assistance to nations around the world,” says His Excellency Mohamed Mubarak Fadhel Al Mazrouei, Chairman of Etihad Aviation Group.

“We appreciate the enormous efforts of The Department of Health – Abu Dhabi in supporting international collaborative efforts to fight the pandemic and protect the health and safety of people around the world. The successful collaboration of the laboratories within our Unilabs network for COVID-19 testing to our Abu Dhabi laboratory is yet another example of the enabling environment set forth by the UAE leadership.

According to Deep Knowledge Group's statistics revealed this September, the UAE has topped the region on the list of the world's safest countries in facing COVID-19, making it an inspirational role model for being proactive and ready to handle the COVID-19 crisis.

This crisis has indeed proved the UAE's ability to deal with challenges and achieve the highest levels of self-sufficiency across the board, prompting other counties in the world to follow the Abu Dhabi example due to the credibility and reliability of results achieved.

We are very proud of the achievement that we have made in cooperation with our partners, which reflects the stakeholders' commitment to establish a unique collaborative model and set new standards of excellence in local healthcare systems,” adds Mohammed Daoud, Chief Executive Officer at Unilabs Middle East.