

Support Functions continued

Our People

Behind every financing milestone, sectoral breakthrough, or strategic partnership at EDB, there is a team of people making it happen. The Support Functions – led by the Human Resources team – play a critical role in building and sustaining the organisational strength that enables the Bank to deliver on its mandate.

In 2024, this role became even more pronounced as EDB expanded its workforce, deepened its culture, and launched programs that reflect where the Bank is going and what it stands for. This was a year of growth, engagement, and investment in future talent.

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A growing team for a growing mission

As EDB scaled its operations, so too did its workforce. The HR team managed a 39.11% headcount increase, growing from 248 to 345 employees — a significant expansion that reflects the Bank's growing role across priority sectors and its need for specialist expertise across functions.

This internal growth was matched by external recognition. EDB became the first local bank in the UAE to be certified as a Great Place to Work®, achieving an 80% score — a reflection of the Bank's people-first culture rooted in innovation, inclusion, and shared purpose.



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Talent acquisition

EDB continued its commitment to nurturing national talent and attracting high-calibre professionals across disciplines. Recruitment activities spanned career fairs at HCT Dubai, Al Ain University, and Abu Dhabi University, as well as participation in Ru'ya Careers UAE — helping the Bank connect directly with the next generation of Emirati professionals.



20 internal engagement events



39% headcount increase



94% employees feel heard



135+ new hires

Employee engagement and culture

Culture remained a top priority. The HR team organised 20 internal engagement events, including a women's outdoor retreat, Ramadan Suhoor, Pink October, Emirati Women's Day, and UAE National Day celebrations, creating space for employees to connect, reflect, and celebrate.

The Engagement Champions program, which now includes 21 representatives from across the Bank, continued to strengthen internal communications using personal storytelling, social media, and peer-to-peer advocacy to connect teams and amplify culture.

Two core platforms helped maintain that sense of openness and transparency:

- 1** Townhall Meetings, which offered employees a regular space to share feedback and ask questions.
- 2** The CEO New Joiner Initiative, which brought fresh talent into conversation with Bank leadership from day one.

The Viva Engagement platform remained the digital home for internal storytelling, celebrating milestones, welcoming new hires, and showcasing cross-functional success.

These collective efforts – from surveys and events to platforms and champions – have helped build a workplace that feels dynamic, human, and genuinely connected. And they're working.

According to the 2024 Talent Acquisition Survey, 94% of employees said they feel their voices are heard and their feedback is valued — a strong affirmation of EDB's people-first approach.

Embracing Emiratization

EDB sees Emiratization as a long-term investment in national capability and leadership. In 2024, the Bank achieved 37% Emiratization — meeting both internal benchmarks and national expectations to attract, develop, and empower UAE nationals at every level.

Over the course of the year, EDB welcomed more than 135+ new hires, including 41 UAE nationals, three of whom joined in C-suite positions. By year-end, the Bank had reached 105 UAE national employees, representing 36% of the total workforce — a strong foundation for long-term national leadership within the organisation.

Each graduate completed 168 hours of foundational business training with a clear path toward specialisation...

The Bank's Emirati Graduate Programme continued to be a key pathway for early-career development. Graduates were given the opportunity to engage directly with senior leaders – including the CEO, the Chief Human Resources Officer, and the Director of Learning & Development – helping build confidence and visibility from day one. Regular check-ins with the L&D team ensured personalised support and career tracking.

Each graduate completed 168 hours of foundational business training over the course of the programme, with a clear path toward

specialisation within 18 months. Training was complemented by access to global platforms such as Coursera, Harvard ManageMentor, ADGM, and EIFS, allowing graduates to explore topics from business fundamentals to sector-specific strategy.

2024 marked the conclusion of the first cohort of the Graduate Programme, with participants transitioning into full-time roles. A new second batch of 10 Emirati graduates was onboarded – two of whom had previously interned at EDB – underscoring the Bank's commitment to continuity and career growth.

Beyond the graduate stream, the High Potentials (HIPO) Programme continued to identify and support top-performing UAE nationals across the Bank. In 2024, 19 Emiratis participated in the programme. The first batch successfully completed a rigorous assessment phase, and planning began for future cohorts, along with the rollout of additional training modules.

41 UAE nationals
hired
3 in C-Suite positions

36%
Emiratization



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Our People continued

Diversity and inclusion (D&I)

The Bank continued to shape a workplace where people from different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives can thrive.

Through inclusive hiring and a commitment to equal opportunity, EDB attracted talent from 22 nationalities. Women continued to play a strong and visible role in the organisation, making up over 40% of the total workforce, with fair and meaningful presence in senior roles and on strategic committees.

Celebrating success

Over the course of the year, HR introduced new programs to recognise achievement that represented EDB's values in action, reinforcing the behaviours that move the Bank forward. 50 employees were formally recognised for their outstanding contributions:

10 for delivering **innovative excellence**

7 for driving **economic impact** over profit

9 for **inspiring others** with ambition

14 for excelling through **partnerships**

13 for living a **culture of respect**

Wellbeing

A thriving organisation starts with healthy, motivated people. In 2024, the HR team curated a series of wellness initiatives focused on nutritional awareness, mobility and yoga, mental health, and women's health. These programs were designed to build long-term habits, encourage movement, and support overall wellbeing in and beyond the workplace.

As part of the 30X30 Dubai Fitness Challenge, EDB employees took part in the LVL Wellbeing app challenge — a month-long wellness journey filled with personal goals, movement milestones, and friendly competition across teams and departments. The initiative encouraged colleagues to motivate one another and build momentum together.

Whether through group activities or digital challenges, the focus was the same: to empower employees to take care of their health — and to support each other in doing so. Going forward, wellbeing will continue to be a key pillar of EDB's people-first culture, helping ensure that as the Bank grows, its people grow too.



40% female employees



22 nationalities

Learning and development

During the year, the Learning & Development team focused on upskilling the workforce, fostering innovation, and building future-ready capabilities across the organisation.

A standout initiative was the launch of AI Wave — a program designed to build awareness, understanding, and confidence around the use of artificial intelligence across banking functions. Through interactive workshops, hands-on sessions, and a headline panel led by IBM AI experts, employees explored the real-world application of AI in financial services. The results were tangible: by year-end, 67% of full-time employees had completed AI awareness training, laying the groundwork for a more digitally enabled workplace.

In parallel, employees continued to engage with Coursera, the Bank's online learning platform offering hundreds of business-focused courses and professional certifications. Introduced in 2022, the platform has become a key part of EDB's learning journey — with staff logging an average of 43 training hours per person in 2024.

EDB also evolved how learning happens — adopting the '70-20-10' model, a more outcomes-driven approach that blends 70% classroom learning, 20% on-the-job training, and 10% mentorship. The model was paired with personal development plans and progress tracking, ensuring that learning translated into real performance gains and career progression.

Going forward, learning and development will remain central to building the agile, skilled workforce required to power the UAE's next wave of industrial and economic transformation.



67%

employees completed AI awareness training



43hrs

average training per person



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Total reward function

In 2024, the Bank took meaningful steps to ensure its reward structure remained competitive, fair, and aligned with both market benchmarks and internal aspirations. A new pay scale was introduced, benchmarking salaries against industry standards to retain top talent and reduce turnover. This was accompanied by a refreshed promotion and salary increment policy, clearly linking career progression to performance.

Through quarterly performance reviews, employees were given structured feedback and the opportunity to discuss career goals and development pathways — turning performance into progress.

The Bank successfully completed its annual merit increment cycle, with salary increases and promotions based on transparent performance criteria and detailed job evaluations. This cycle reinforced EDB's performance-based culture and rewarded those delivering impact across the organisation.

In closing the year, the HR team oversaw the distribution of year-end compensation, guided by strategic planning and a clear commitment to fairness — ensuring that the Bank's people felt recognised for how they contributed to EDB's broader mission.

Talent onboarding and integration

Starting a new role is about feeling welcomed, supported, and part of something bigger. At EDB, the Buddy Program plays a central role in creating that experience. Every new employee is paired with a more experienced colleague who acts as a guide, sounding board, and friendly face from day one.

Buddies offer practical support, cultural insight, and personal connection — helping new joiners navigate their first weeks and feel part of the team from the very start. More than a welcome, the programme fosters a culture of cooperation, knowledge-sharing, and inclusion — ensuring that every employee, regardless of where they come from or what role they take on, feels seen, supported, and set up to succeed.



Looking ahead

As EDB looks to 2025, the focus for the HR team is to build the workforce that will power the Bank's next phase of strategic growth. Attracting and retaining the right talent — with the right skills and mindset — will remain a top priority, ensuring the organisation is equipped to deliver on its national mission. Alongside this, the department will introduce formal succession planning across all divisions, creating clear pathways for leadership development and long-term career progression.

Engagement champions

EDB's Engagement Champions will take on an even more active role in shaping the Bank's culture from the inside out. HR will work closely with this dynamic group of representatives to broaden their reach, support the creation of cross-functional communities, and plan more locally relevant events across teams and regions.

70-20-10 training

The 70-20-10 model remains a cornerstone of EDB's learning and development philosophy, combining structured learning with real-world experience and meaningful mentorship to drive professional growth. This approach will be further strengthened with tailored development plans that help employees set clear personal growth goals and track their progress over time.

Automation

The HR team will continue to leverage the Bank's expanding digital infrastructure to make everyday processes faster, smarter, and more intuitive for employees. From fully automating the induction process to developing personalised training plans, the goal is to simplify the employee experience while increasing access to meaningful development tools. The team will also explore emerging technologies to enhance performance management, recognition, and engagement.

Total Rewards

EDB's Total Rewards strategy will continue to evolve, with a focus on boosting employee satisfaction, ensuring fairness, and aligning recognition with performance and purpose. The HR team will prioritise the timely distribution of incentives and year-end compensation, while conducting regular salary and promotion reviews to support transparency, equity, and career progression.

As the performance cycle closes and budgets are set for the year ahead, HR will ensure that all reward practices continue to support both individual growth and organisational success.

The HR team will continue to implement these initiatives, along with wellness programs focused on mental health and work-life balance, as they play a key role in shaping the future of the talented team at the Bank, while also supporting its growth and long-term objectives for the year ahead.