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The [Energia Foundation](#) and [Tabula Rasa Ventures](#), notable for introducing [psychedelic education at Davos](#) in 2022, have been at the forefront of bringing understanding of psychedelic-assisted therapy to the Arabian Gulf. Their efforts over the past 14 months have focused on educating policymakers, sovereign wealth funds, and clinicians in the UAE about the benefits of psychedelic therapies.

“Our work here has shown us that the UAE is one of the most forward-thinking, scientifically rigorous, and ambitious countries on the planet. We’re grateful to the Department of Health, SEHA, and many of the other incredible institutions that are supportive of the psychedelic education we’re bringing to the region,” stated Marik Hazan, Executive Director of the Energia Foundation.

MDMA-assisted therapy is anticipated to receive FDA approval in the United States by September of this year. The UAE, known for its progressive health policies, could be the second country to embrace this innovative treatment, thanks to the collaborative efforts of US-based psychedelic groups and the forward-looking stance of the UAE’s health policy.

The Dialogues in Mental Health conference, held in June 2023, marked a historic moment for the Arabian Gulf, being the first in the region to include psychedelic programming. This initiative underscores the UAE’s commitment to pioneering health treatments and technological innovation. Notably, the Abu Dhabi Integrated Mental Health conference co-hosted by the Energia Foundation in January 2024, which included discussions led by experts such as Rick Doblin, Sherry Rais, and Maria Velkova alongside Dr. Rasheed Al Hammadi, the Director of the Department of Health in Abu Dhabi, further highlighted the ongoing research and potential regulatory changes for these therapies in the UAE.

Nahida Nayaz Ahmed, Chief Medical Officer at SEHA Mental Health and Well-Being Services, expressed optimism about the future of these treatments: “We were excited to host so many experts from the emerging field of psychedelic-assisted therapy. There’s still a lot of important research that needs to be done, but I’m hopeful that these medicines can expand the arsenal of tools we have to treat our most pressing mental health challenges.”

The [growing interest](#) from financial institutions such as Mubadala, the Abu Dhabi Sovereign Wealth Fund, in investing in biotech companies developing psychedelic medicines, underscores the growing excitement and support for these therapies globally.

However, challenges remain in ensuring broad patient access, as highlighted by Maria

Velkova, Managing Partner at Tabula Rasa Ventures. “Broad patient access hinges on training thousands of therapists for this multifaceted intervention, adapting clinics for 5-6 hour dosing sessions and REMS implementation, requiring funding and systemic shifts in mental healthcare. Payers need to also establish new reimbursement models for these therapies.”

As the world awaits the FDA’s approval, the efforts of the UAE to embrace and support the development of psychedelic-assisted therapy stand as a testament to its role as a leader in innovative health solutions.

About [Energia Foundation Inc.](#)

Energia Foundation is focused on solving the “coordination challenge”, the ability of humans to coordinate to solve the world’s largest existential threats. Through a combination of scientific research, finance, and government consultancy, the organization has built an ecosystem capable of studying important questions concerning human flourishing and group coordination, implementing those findings in both private and public sectors. Visit <https://www.energiafoundation.org/> for more information.



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