

AZRAQ ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2022

For the oceans





Table of Contents

3	Message from the Director	11	Activation
4	About Azraq	14	Education
5	Our Impact	15	Marketing & Communications
6	The Azraq Team	16	Financial Highlights
9	Our Achievements	19	Our Partners

Message from the President

This year marked the five year anniversary of Azraq. Since its creation in 2017, Azraq has evolved significantly as an organisation. While we still have a long way to go on our journey, we recognise and are proud of the progress that we have made.

The Azraq we see today has a new look, new mission and new people. Its vibrant blue and coral colours stand true to Azraq's name and the beauty of the ocean that it strives to protect. Its mission to 'safeguard the biodiversity of the ocean for future generations speaks to the inclusive, community-focused organisation that Azraq is dedicated to creating.

This is an exciting opportunity to be an NGO in the UAE. Corporations are dedicating a huge amount of time and attention to CSR and ESG efforts. Meanwhile, many members of the public are seeking out a community that offers them a sense of purpose, as well as a platform to promote climate action. With COP28 being hosted in Dubai next year, we believe there is a fantastic opportunity to tap into the energy that surrounds this event and build a community of ocean advocates, ambassadors and

Hala Dahmane
President & Managing Director

warriors committed to doing more. In order to tap into this opportunity, we need to establish Azraq's brand in the market. We will do this by:

1. Increasing the impact that we deliver for the ocean
2. Creating more opportunities for our members to get involved
3. Becoming a financially self-sustainable organisation through stable sources of income

I would like to extend a huge thank you to our volunteers for the work they have done to support Azraq this year. It is often easy to underestimate the time and effort that goes into running an organisation like Azraq. We are incredibly grateful to have such a dedicated team and look forward to seeing what the next five years hold for us!

“ Now is an incredibly important time for our oceans. We are proud to be leading efforts to remove marine debris, restore our corals and educate the UAE on the importance of marine conservation.”



About Azraq

Azraq is a non-profit marine conservation organisation registered with the Community Development Authority in the UAE on a mission to achieve cleaner, healthier and better protected oceans.

Our purpose is to gather communities from across the UAE and inspire them to make positive changes to help our ocean. We are a volunteer-led organisation, whose mandate includes running activities, workshops and educational events that are focused on awareness and improving biodiversity. Our goal is to encourage corporates, schools and individual ocean ambassadors to make a big change and spread the importance of keeping our ocean alive.



Vision

A world in which oceans are healthy and flourishing

Mission

To safeguard the biodiversity of delicately balanced oceanic ecosystems for future generations



Azraq in numbers



16

Number of
volunteers



6

Number of
board
members



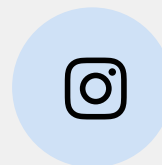
5

Emirates
covered



45

Number of
members



5,788

Number of
instagram
followers

Our impact

The Azraq team has worked extremely hard this year to maximise the impact that it generates for our oceans. We have made great progress on a number of our campaigns, including magic mangroves, coral restoration and marine debris free oceans. This work has translated into greater

protection for our oceans and substantial efforts to restore biodiversity and marine life. For 2023, we will be working with our partners to deepen the impact that we deliver for our oceans through conservation and preservation activities.

IMPACT AREA	CLIMATE CHANGE	OCEAN POLLUTION	ENDANGERED MARINE LIFE
Objective	Build resilience and draw down CO2	Tackle marine debris and toxins pollution	Expand scientific knowledge
Campaign	Magic mangroves	Marine debris free oceans	Marine life survey
Impact	1,116 mangrove trees planted	271kg marine debris removed	2 certified in coral reef surveying
	320kg carbon sequestration by mangrove trees annually	8,260 cigarette butts collected	2 coral reef surveys conducted
Campaign	Coral restoration	Shop sustainable fashion	Education presentations
Impact	18 corals sunk	427 eco-friendly items sold	9 school presentations delivered
	80 species of marine life found around corals	10 Retail partners	12 volunteers educated on marine conservation

The Azraq Team

Operations Team



Hala Dahmane
Managing Director



Kelvin Kurian
Operations Director



Shweta Mayekar
Executive Manager



Christele Dissler
Sponsorships Manager



Maz Fletcher
Content Marketing
Specialist



Benjamin Effer
Head of Activation



Valentina Barzakova
Activation Assistant



Ashleigh Tarmey
Community
Coordinator



Deema Saidi
Digital Marketing
Specialist

The Azraq Team

Operations Team



Burcu Guney
Events Manager



Marion Gueneau
Marketing Manager



Michelia Wibowo
Project Manager



Marine Plissoneau
Activation Manager



Sappho Rodriguez
Graphic Designer

The Azraq Team

Azraq Board



Hala Dahmane
Board President



Colette Barr
Vice President



Rochelle Botes
General Secretary



Amanda Rushforth
Board Director



Fatma Al Bastaki
Board Director



Wafa Alkatheeri
Board Director

Azraq Advisors



Dr Ada Natoli
Molecular Ecologist



James Khoury
Senior Strategy
Advisor

A hand with fingers raised, glowing with blue light, set against a dark background. The hand is the central focus, with the fingers spread out. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the skin and the joints. The background is dark and slightly blurred, suggesting a large group of people or a crowd, all bathed in the same blue glow.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Our Achievements This Year

Despite the setbacks caused by Covid-19, Azraq has a strong year with a new team of dedicated volunteers helping the organisation to build its revenue sources and refocus its strategy. This year, we have partnered with more private sector organisations to deliver corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. These partnerships enable us to bring in a stable source of income for Azraq, which in turn allows us to expand our operations and achieve our objectives around education, awareness and impact.

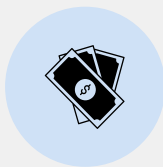
Over the year, we have been able to grow our team from 8 to 16 volunteers. While we are still looking to recruit for a number of key positions, this has allowed us to maintain business as usual and improve in a number of key areas, such as marketing, revenue

generation, events and education (more detail on these areas can be found in the following pages).

This year, we focused on transitioning our following to a membership model. This change required careful communication of Azraq's value proposition. While we were not able to convert all of our members to this model, we have since been able to attract new members. As we further refine our offering, we hope to convert more followers to paid members.

Finally, many of our volunteers this year have completed an online course on marine conservation. This has enabled them to deepen their knowledge of the environmental threats to the ocean and share this expertise with members.

Our achievements



40%

Growth in revenue



100%

Growth in volunteer team



150%

Growth in members



12

Number of volunteers trained in marine conservation

Activation (1 of 3)

This year, Azraq has grown its sponsorship and partnership base by 64%, including big name brands such as Mubadala, King's College and ReLoop.

Key Statistics		
	2022 Partnerships	2022 Sponsorships
New #	6	11
Renewals #	3	17
Total #	9	28

Azraq has expanded its impact in the UAE through collaboration with organisations seeking to enhance their corporate responsibility and allocate resources towards protecting the ocean. Our high retention rate of existing contracts demonstrates that brands are seeing the benefit of partnering with an organisation like Azraq.

This year, we partnered with organisations Mubadala Petroleum and Mandarin Orientale to coordinate the creation of artificial reefs and coral nursery tables. The projects were

executed with support from our partners Freestyle Divers and Project REEFrAmE.

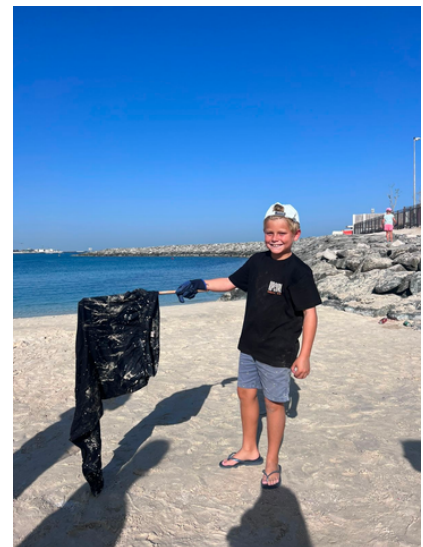
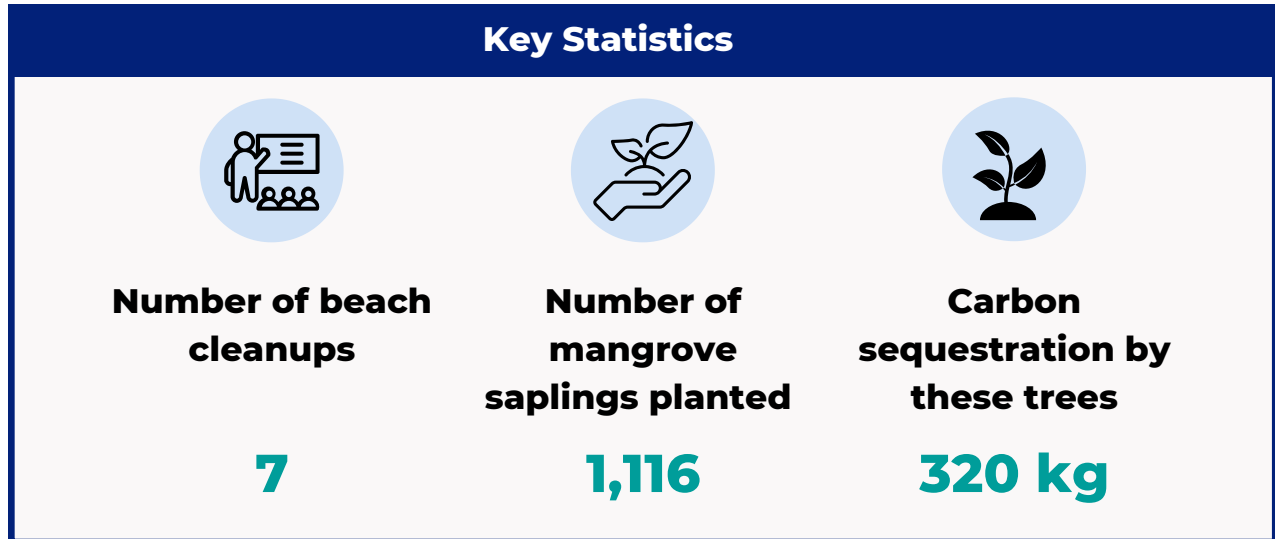
For Mandarin Orientale, a major 12-foot fan-shaped artificial reef was sunk off the coast of Fujairah in Dibba Bay in April 2022. The structure will create a whole new underwater ecosystem attracting a diverse array of marine life. Over the course of 12 months, the growth of new coral will be monitored and will help to increase the size of the marine ecosystems on the UAE coastline.

New/ Renewed Collaborations



Activation (2 of 3)

This year we have sought to build consistency in our events, as well as diversify the types of events that we offer to our partners and members.



This year we have worked hard to increase the number of events that we provide as an organisation. This has not always been easy, since regulatory barriers can prevent us from obtaining the permits necessary to host large groups and corporate events. Despite these challenges, our events team is working collaboratively with the authorities to plan events for the upcoming year. Soon we will be hosting weekly beach clean up events for our members.

We have also sought to diversify our events offering. In recent months, we

have held a jellyfish art workshop as well as boat trips & Ramadan cleanups. We have also held several mangrove planting events with corporates, helping to regenerate local areas and sequester more carbon.

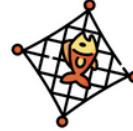
Our objective in the new year is to host at least one other members group a month. Next year, we will also be hosting a fundraising event for our corporate partners. This event will help to raise awareness about Azraq and the vital work that we do.

Activation (3 of 3)

Azraq is working on an exciting new project to remove abandoned fishing nets from the ocean in partnership with local fishermen and a local recycling company



GHOST NET IN UAE AND HOW DOES IT WORK?



1. WORK WITH FISHING COOPERATIVES

in defined emirates to recuperate trapped underwater fishing nests or disposed of onshore unrepairable nets.

2. STORE THE NETS

in designated containers placed in ports/harbours.

3. TRANSPORT THE NETS

to a recycling facility for cleaning and recycling into plastic sheets, granules or pellets



4. SELL THE RESULTING RECYCLED PELLETS

as raw materials or as repurposed plastic products

5. PROFITS ARE FAIRLY DIVIDED

between Azraq and the fishing cooperatives to encourage further collaboration.



Abandoned fishing nets lost in the ocean cause entanglement to larger marine mammals, smother reefs and can damage other boats. Azraq's GhostNet campaign will raise awareness on this issue, collaborate with local fishermen on net removal and assist in the removal and recycling of nets throughout the UAE.

The objective of our ghost net campaign is to recuperate and collect unserviceable undersea and onshore fishing nets and fishing materials that are damaging our oceans. We will work with recycling facilities and fishing cooperatives to recycle and transform viable raw materials into productive materials creating economic benefits for all involved.



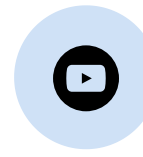
Leading sustainability restaurant, BOCA, will be supporting us to launch this campaign to the public and drive its awareness amongst corporates.

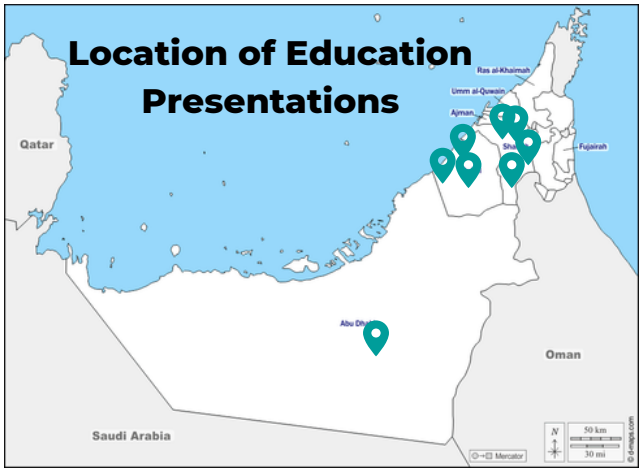


Education

Through our partnership with Beetle & Goliath, we were able to deliver 9 presentations as part of the Lacnor & Oasis school programme.

Key Statistics

		
Number of presentations delivered	Children educated	Audience reached via YouTube
9	1,877	790



Through our Beetle and Goliath, Azraq has participated in the Lacnor and Oasis Words of the World programme which brought us to nine schools across the UAE. It was a pleasure to educate so many young children about the threats that our ocean faces.

Next year, we will be partnering with ADNOC to reach 20 schools across Abu Dhabi. We strongly believe in the importance of educating the next generation about the need to protect our ocean and see strong potential in education as a pillar of growth for Azraq.



Marketing & Communications

This year, Azraq underwent a rebrand. Its new look and feel is more modern, vibrant and aims to bring positivity to a complex issue

Azraq's dark logo and outdated branding was replaced with a new, vibrant brand that it designed to bring positivity to a complex issue. The colours (blues, greens and turquoise) reflect the water, seaweed and corals that we seek to protect. Our imagery is authentic, real and reflective of the activities that Azraq and its volunteers are involved with.

We have developed a comprehensive marketing strategy for 2023. Primarily, we are working to systematise our social media posting in order to be more consistent and timely. We are also working on developing better tracking of our engagement by logging metrics such as followership, traffic and campaign success.

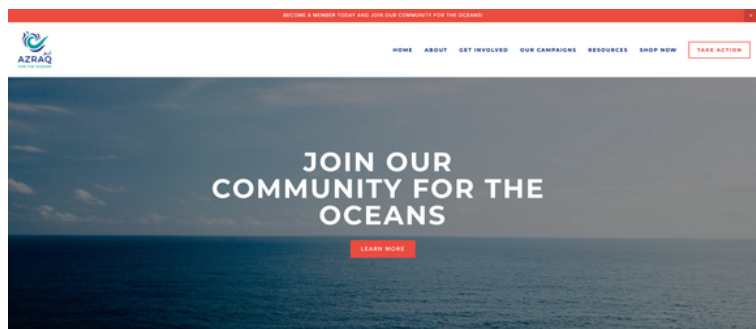
Although our website has been greatly improved, we are also working with a third party to enhance our SEO and website usability. We are prioritising the introduction of an automated events calendar, with an online booking and payment system so that members can more easily join our events.

We are also working on developing a better lead generation approach which will involve more calls to action from our followers and better promotion of our events. Finally, following the great success of our webinar in 2022, we will be planning to host another webinar this year on LinkedIn.

New logo and branding guidelines



Updated website design



Webinar: CSR for the ocean

WEBINAR: GAIN INSIGHTS ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND HOW IT CAN SOLVE ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS ON WORLD OCEANS DAY

[WATCH WEBINAR](#)

LISTEN TO OUR EXPERT SPEAKER PANEL:

 Jordan Origer Managing Director DITH MENA DMCC	 Marian Faltich CSR Strategy Consultant at Shared Planet / Volunteer at Azraq	 John A Burt Associate Professor, Biology New York University - Abu Dhabi	 Paul Singer Head of Communications Mubadala
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Date: Wednesday, 8th June, 2022
Time: 10:00am - 11:00am GST/ UAE

The ocean is at a tipping point with its delicate ecosystems polluted by single-use plastic waste, hazardous chemical discharges, and rising temperatures. Moreover, large scale and illegal fishing practices result in wasteful bycatch and discarded ghost nets which are causing potentially catastrophic depletion of marine wildlife.

For World Oceans Day (Wednesday, June 8, 2022), Azraq will be hosting a webinar to discuss how communities and companies can come together and drive substantial changes for improving ocean protection. Attendees can expect actionable insight on why and how you should invest in the ocean and the positive impacts for stakeholders, ROI, and the marine environment.

[WATCH WEBINAR](#)



**FINANCIAL
HIGHLIGHTS**

Financial Highlights Overview (1 of 2)

Our revenue generation team has worked hard to develop strategic corporate sponsorships that enable us to sustain our activities and grow our impact.

REVENUE STREAM	2021	2022	% CHANGE
Merchandise Sales	11%	0.6%	-93%
Events	-	0.2%	725%
Memberships	1%	0.9%	215%
Sponsorships	88%	98.3%	56%
Total revenue growth	-	-	+40%

While 2021 was a good year for merchandise sales, 2022 has allowed us to refocus our efforts on corporate services post-covid 19. In particular, a few important partnerships with major corporations such as Mubadala, Mandarin Oriental, FedEx, and Beetle & Goliath have helped us to build our corporate services offering and expand our impact via coral restoration, mangrove planting and education presentations.

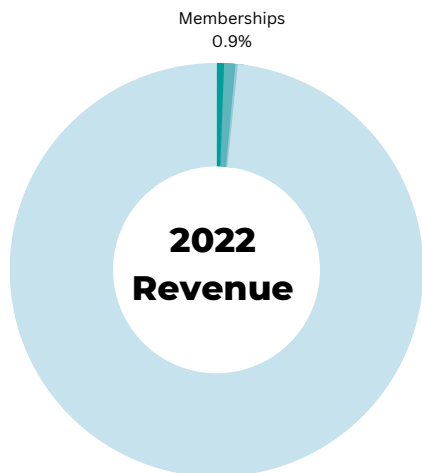
In 2023, we will focus on further expanding our corporate service offering while also enhancing our marketing efforts to grow our membership and sponsorship base. Greater effort will also go into promoting our merchandise sales and member events to diversify our revenue sources and ensure financial sustainability for the upcoming years.



Financial Highlights Overview

(2 of 2)

Over the past four years our revenue has grown three-fold and we are moving closer to becoming a self-sustaining organisation

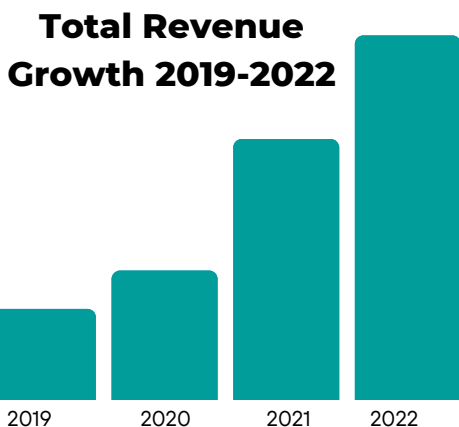
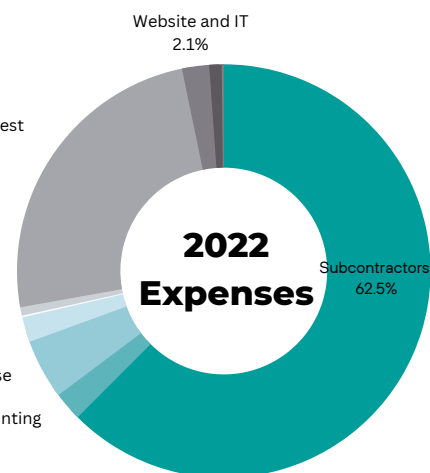


A large portion of our expenses goes towards the costs associated with conducting many of the high-impact activities that we offer. For example, activities such as mangrove planting and coral restoration require a large amount of manpower and resources. We are able to continue funding these thanks to generous sponsors and partners.

Since 2019 our revenue has grown by over three-folded. This is reflective of our efforts to diversify our revenue sources and grow our paid membership base. We hope to be able to continue this trend over the next four years.

Our goal over the next year is to become a sustainable organisation with the funding to pay our staff on a full or part-time basis. To do this, we must look at new ways to grow our revenue. We will be focusing our efforts on activities that balance impact with income and prioritising those that deliver the most value for our clients.

We are thankful to all of our partners who have provided services on a pro bono basis. This generosity allows us to become more efficient and effective in our work.





OUR PARTNERS

Azraq Partners

We would like to say a huge thank you to our partners who supported Azraq through the delivery of services this year.

Sponsors



Partners





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www.azraqme.org