

UAE spends Dh11.8 billion on desalination

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Desalinated water output in the Gulf accounts for nearly 41 per cent of the world's total

The UAE spends nearly Dh11.8 billion per year on the production of desalinated water to ensure its fast growing needs of drinking water and offset its dwindling reserves, the semi official Arabic language daily Alittihad reported on Sunday.

The investments cover nearly 70 sea desalination plants, accounting for around 14 per cent of the world's total output of desalinated water, it quoted Mariam Al Shannas, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of Water and Environment, as saying. "The costs of production of desalinated water in the UAE are estimated at Dh11.8 billion annually, an average Dh7.16 per cubic metres," she said. Her figures showed Abu Dhabi, the main oil producer in the UAE, accounts for nearly 67 per cent of the country's desalination capacity. Around 18 per cent is produced by Dubai, 10 per cent by Sharjah and the rest by other emirates.

Shannas said desalination production in the UAE and other Gulf oil producers accounts for nearly 41 per cent of the world's total desalinated water output. Water consumption in the UAE and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is the highest in the world because of the hot desert climate. Given their scarce natural water resources and rapid population growth, GCC nations rely heavily on sea water desalination facilities, which require massive funds for production and maintenance.