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#### Note by the President & CEO Arabia CSR Network



#### **Greetings from Arabia CSR network!**

The month of February has proven to be an excellent start for the year 2014 for the Arabia CSR Network in terms of advancing towards our goals and seizing opportunities that have come our way. The preparations made in the month of January paved way for an extremely engaging month.

We have been working towards the launching of the Arabia CSR Awards 2014. With immense pleasure I would like to share that the 7th Cycle of the Awards was launched online on 20th February and is now ready for applications. A lot of companies have already started registering for this year's cycle. Thank you for your interest and we invite all the other companies in the Arab region to showcase their CSR work and apply for these prestigious Awards.

In today's rapidly changing environment building a sustainable business is not just an advantage but a necessity and the organizations in the region are recognizing the need to respond to this. This month we

conducted two GRI Sustainability Reporting training sessions. One in-house training was conducted in BAPCO Bahrain, where the senior management and employees from different departments participated in the very interactive training. The second training was organised in Dubai where 18 participants from different countries of the region attended the training that focused on the international best practices of assessing and reporting an organization's sustainability performance.

A key challenge facing business is the need for more reliable indicators of progress in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), along with the dissemination of CSR strategies. ACSRN is organizing training on CSR Fundamentals in the month of March which is now a critical need in the region. It is imperative for the organizations to understand the integration of CSR into the organizational strategies not only for giving back to the community but also for successful business performance.

The Arab region has a diverse business culture and its sustainable practices are slowly becoming the norm. The region has now joined its global peers in raising awareness for the need of sustainability. The region already boasts off several examples of organizations displaying sustainability leadership and more such cases are emerging rapidly. The need of the hour now is to allow organizations to freely interact and learn from each other. I urge the organizations to join the Arabia CSR Network and participate in the sustainability dialogue and initiatives organised by the network. Stay connected with us through our *LinkedIn*, *Facebook* or *Twitter* pages to share your sustainability ideas with us.



#### <u>Arabia CSR Awards 2014:</u> Online Launch for Applications

The Arabia CSR Network announced the launch of the Arabia CSR Awards 2014 on 20th February 2014.

The Arabia CSR Award is the most prestigious and highly coveted CSR Award in the Arab world.

The six categories of the 7th Cycle of Arabia CSR Awards 2014:

- 1. Small-sized enterprises
- 2. Medium-sized enterprises
- 3. Large-sized enterprises
- 4. Government authorities / departments
- 5. Partnership Projects
- 6. New Business

To learn more about these categories, the application process and the benefits of the Awards, please visit http://www.arabiacsrnetwork.com/home/entry-information. We encourage you to read the guidelines (on the same link) before you register. The deadline for submission is 30th June 2014. The winners will be announced at a high-profile Forum & Ceremony on 26th October 2014.



#### **Meetings & Events**

#### Two GRI Framework Sustainability Reporting Trainings

The Arabia CSR Network opened its training calendar in 2014 with two separate training sessions on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) in the month of February. Sustainability reporting is increasingly gaining momentum globally and in this Region with GRI being a favoured framework. So far close to fifteen thousand GRI reports are available on the GRI database for public viewing, having been submitted by business and non-business reporters. Arabia CSR Network is a certified training partner of GRI and offers training in Arabic speaking countries in the Middle East.

### GRI Framework Sustainability Reporting Training in BAPCO, Bahrain

The first GRI certified training was held for Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) from February 4-6th in Bahrain. The in-house training was delivered to employees of the company belonging to different departments.

The training comprised of a two-day course on the G3.1 version of the GRI reporting framework, and a one-day bridging module for G4, the new version launched in May of 2013. A special segment for the top management of BAPCO was organized on the second day to explain sustainability issues. All delegates undertook the two sets of trainings.



### GRI Framework Sustainability Reporting Training in Dubai

A second and open training session was held from February 25-27th in Dubai. Taking part in the training were eighteen delegates from various organizations from the public and private sectors of the MENA region such as Bahrain, Qatar, UAE and Sudan. The session included the two-day G3.1 course and a one-day G4 transition course. The G4 training was undertaken by 15 delegates.

The course for both trainings consisted of an overview of sustainability issues, a background of GRI – the organization and the framework, fundamentals of the G3.1 version and an overview of the similarities and differences between G3.1 and G4. Delegates were walked through the five phases of the GRI reporting process termed 'Prepare, Connect, Define, Monitor and Communicate' whereby they learned about key GRI concepts like Sustainability Context, Stakeholder Engagement, Materiality, Boundary, Accuracy, and so on. A brief segment was included on the United Nations Global Compact, together with its mandatory annual reporting known as the Communication on Progress.

Delegates were provided with a range of materials such as the reporting guidelines, a pathways document, technical protocols, an implementation manual, presentation slides, and some ancillary materials as well. The training style combined lectures, discussions and exercises to deliver high impact training on sustainability reporting broadly, and GRI in particular. Delegates were required to work on a report review exercise whereby they got to assess two actual reports against the GRI principles and essential requirements. Delegates returned a very positive feedback on the training, emphasizing the value it added to their understanding of sustainability and the GRI reporting framework.







#### The Ismaili Centre Knowledge Forum, 15th February 2014, Dubai

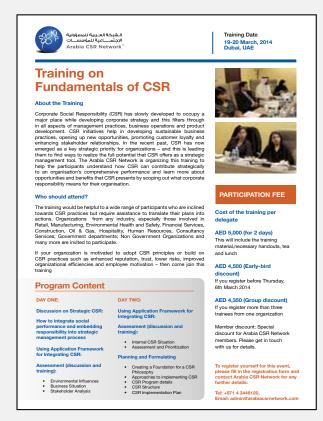
ACSRN participated at The Ismaili Centre Knowledge Forum event titled Opportunity throughon Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Ethics on 15th February 2014 in Dubai. The event provided a platform for a dialogue between leading professionals, aspiring entrepreneurs and business leaders discussing the growing significance of integrating responsible ethical business practices and strategies that positively achieve stakeholder goals and objectives. The session focused on understanding the underpinnings of ethical business in the short and long run and its impact on key stakeholders. Mrs Habiba Al Mar'ashi , President / CEO, Arabia CSR Network attended the session. The event included a tour of the Centre.

#### Sustainability Summit 2014, 24-25 February 2014, Abu Dhabi

The Sustainability Summit is a thought leadership symposium devoted to fostering technology-driven innovation and promoting public-private collaboration for more sustainable development across the world's societies and economies. The President / CEO of Arabia CSR Network delivered a presentation at the Session on Sustainable development in the Region. She shared the overall status of sustainability within the Arab region and highlighted some pioneering examples from organizations that are setting the trend for imbibing sustainability strategies. She stressed that in today's rapidly changing environment, building a sustainable business is not just an advantage but a necessity and the need of the hour is that organizations freely interact and learn from each other. She further shared that the organizations and government should follow a process of defining sustainability for the region, study current sustainability activities, identify best practices and create an environment conducive for sustainable development.

#### **Upcoming Trainings & Events**

#### <u>Training on CSR Fundamentals</u> <u>19-20 March 2014, Dubai</u>



For more details and enquiries, contact us at admin@ arabiacsrnetwork.com / +971-4-3448120

#### GRI Sustainability Reporting Training 8-10 April, 2014 - Dubai, UAE

ACSRN is organizing another GRI sustainability reporting training from 8th to 10th April in Dubai, UAE. This is an opportunity for CSR, communication and sustainability practitioners to receive two trainings together. Participants will receive separate certificates for each of the training components. As always, the GRI headquarters in Netherlands will issue the certificates.

The Arabia CSR Network urges you to utilize this opportunity to stay up-to-date with the latest in sustainability reporting. This GRI-certified training will be divided into 2 components:

- 1. The first will focus on the GRI G3.1 reporting framework. This session is for individuals interested to obtain a detailed understanding of GRI. The GRI G3.1 Reporting Framework is accepted till the end of December 2015.
- 2. The second component will cover the Bridging Module between G3.1 and the recently launched G4. To attend this component, participants should have undertaken and passed a previous G3.1 training session. This module will help smooth transition from G3.1 to G4 Framework.

Register by 20th March 2014 to avail early bird discounts. Joint (for two components) and Group Discounts available. For more details contact us at admin@arabiacsrnetwork.com / +971-4-3448120



### Feature Article

# Corporate sustainability takes root but work to be done



The increasing number of sustainability initiatives in the UAE in particular is a positive sign that there is a growing awareness of the impact that we have.

But, given the rising recognition of corporate sustainability and its importance, it's ironic that in the 2013 Sustainability Leaders Survey conducted by GlobeScan/SustainAbility, no-one could name a sustainability leader in the Middle East. This is proof that while the concept of corporate sustainability is growing in prevalence across the region, there is still not enough being done to earn recognition by the rest of the world.

What is corporate sustainability? One of the most common misconceptions is that corporate sustainability is about charity. It isn't. Neither is it a single act. Instead, it is more of a journey. It is a business approach that involves managing opportunities and risks from economic, environmental and social developments, while creating long-term shareholder value. It is an awareness of the company's impact on its surrounding environment and community, and a mitigation of any negative consequences of business by employing initiatives that satisfy the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit.

There are companies in the UAE that are increasingly becoming aware of what corporate sustainability is, and how important it is for the growth and development our community and country – as well as for the future of their own organisation. However, since 2008, only 35 UAE companies have been registered with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), an international body that sets reporting precedence and standards.

Considering the vast number of companies in the UAE this is a relatively small number, and, to have more of a positive impact on the world around us, more companies must take the corporate sustainability leap. The questions that we must ask ourselves here is, why are there so few companies that have adopted official sustainability measures, and how can we encourage more to embrace corporate sustainability?

Despite the relatively low number of GRI-registered UAE companies, there are some encouraging signs for the potential of growth in the number of organisations that are adopting more sustainable practices.

According to Dubai Chamber of Commerce, 53.7 per cent of Dubai companies want to develop a corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy, and 23.8 per cent want to communicate their CSR initiatives externally. The problems arise, however, in the fact that there are an overwhelming number of companies claiming a lack of knowledge about CSR. Even more – 65.1 per cent in the region, according to a Bayt.com survey – are not aware of it at all.

These statistics present an opportunity for those institutions that are aware of and understand corporate sustainability. Three out of 10 companies claim to have a lack of CSR know-how and limited institution assistance, therefore it is our responsibility, as practitioners of successful corporate sustainability, to promote this concept.

As a starting point, more ways in which to raise corporate sustainability awareness must be considered. This will get the message out to the two thirds of companies across the region, including those here in the UAE, that claim not to know what it is. They will be able to see and understand how vital it is for the future of their own community, environment and company, through the use of tangible examples and case studies of close to home sustainable initiatives.

Raising awareness in this way will be beneficial for the UAE's corporations; 29 per cent of people say that CSR enhances corporate reputation, while 10 percent claim it strengthens employee commitment, and improves relationships with the community and stakeholders. Not only will it prove advantageous for corporations, but, perhaps more importantly, it will benefit our community, our environment and, in the bigger picture and the long run, our nation itself.

Corporate sustainability is an achievable concept – and one that must be achieved, if we are to meet the UAE leadership's vision of a greener economy. It encourages corporations to contribute to the development of the community, through initiatives that drive Emiratisation, support entrepreneurs, and preserve the environment. By fostering more sustainable initiatives and spreading awareness of the value that comes from embracing a more sustainable approach to business, we can raise the UAE's profile as a sustainability leader. And maybe, in the next Sustainability Leaders Survey, one of our local companies will be named as a global example.

**Ms Hala Badri** is the Executive Vice President, Brand and Communications, du. The article was first published in the National newspaper on 19 February 2014,



#### **Members Update**



#### DEWA (Dubai Electricity & Water Authority)

Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) organised its Annual Strategy Launch Workshop 2014-2018 as part of its commitment to fulfill the UAE Vision 2021 and the Green Economy for Sustainable Development' initiative announced by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, as well as to support long-term economic growth. DEWA's Annual Strategy Launch Workshop of 2014-2018 was based on five basic themes: Competent Capabilities and Effective Emiratisation, Operational and Service Excellence, Stakeholder Engagement, Strategic Innovation and Sustainable Growth.

The Workshop focused on three themes: demand side management, smart services and sustainability. Work teams were formed to discuss opportunities for improvement and develop new creative solutions . The workshop adopted and approved ideas and suggestions for improvement that are aligned to the Dubai Integrated Energy Strategy 2030, the Green Economy For Sustainable Development initiative, and the National Agenda launched recently by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

Source: https://eservices.dewa.gov.ae/newshist/details.aspx?id=023585340000000000000000002358534

## Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (du)

du selected for Excellence Awards Academy and the Arab Organisation for Social Responsibility by Tatweej

du has been chosen by the Board of Trustees at Tatweej -Excellence Awards Academy and the Arab Organisation for Social Responsibility as one of the pioneering institutions in the Arab World, in terms of social responsibility. Last year, du released its second Sustainable Development Report, for which it earned a B+ rating from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).



The Sustainable Development Report, which covers du's initiatives in 2012, conforms to the GRI G3.1 guidelines of the United Nations Global Compact, of which du has been a member since 2008. The company is one of only nine corporate entities in the UAE to have received their GRI certification during the 2012 reporting cycle.

The report was validated by a third party, Arabia CSR Network, prior to being sent to GRI for certification. Thanks to its B+ rating achievement, du has emerged as the highest-rated telecommunications company in the UAE, the Middle East and Africa for the 2012 reporting cycle.

Source: http://www.du.ae/en/about/media-centre/newsdetails/ Tatweej-chooses-du-as-Arab-World-social-responsibilitypioneer

#### Etisalat

### Etisalat Offered 100 Career Opportunities for UAE Nationals at Tawdheef 2014

Etisalat, the UAE's leading telecom provider, offered 100 career opportunities in Engineering, Sales and Enterprise at Tawdheef Abu Dhabi 2014, a career fair tailored exclusively for UAE National job-seekers from 2-5 February 2014.

Etisalat's local recruitment strategy is modelled on a pyramid structure whereby UAE nationals are recruited in every department, thus providing local talent to all sectors of the industry. Etisalat is also committed to the Abshar initiative, which aims to boost the number of Emiratis entering the workforce.

Etisalat's Future Leaders programme, meanwhile, is designed to sharpen leadership skills and 158 Emirati students recently graduated from the scheme. In line with its Emiratisation objectives, the company has set a target to increase the percentage of its UAE National workforce to 45 per cent by 2015.

Source: http://www.etisalat.ae/en/aboutus/media/press/press-releases/2013/press-release-career-opportunities-for-uae-nationals-at-tawdheef%202014-3Feb2014.jsp





#### Dubai Aluminium (Dubal)

#### <u>Dubal's focus on minimizing environmental impact</u> showcased at International Conference

Experts from the UAE's aluminium sector addressed thousands of business leaders, engineers and scientists from around the world at the TMS Annual Meeting and Exhibition ("TMS 2014") - one of the industry's premier events, which took place in the United States starting in February 2014.

The UAE ranks among the leaders in technical developments in the aluminium industry. The focus on minimising environmental impact that underscores DUBAL's technology developments was highlighted at TMS 2014 in a lecture entitled 'Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions during Aluminium Smelting through Development and Implementation of Improved Control Strategies and Operational Practices'.

Source: https://www.dubal.ae/press-room/media-desk/news/2013/16022014.aspx

#### Wasl Asset Management

A CSR Committee delegation from wasl Asset Management paid a visit to four special needs centres in Dubai on 21 February 2014 to present them with donations and certificates of appreciation for participating in the company's National Day celebrations that took place last December.

This was part of wasl Asset Management's corporate social responsibility strategy and its philosophy of giving back to the community. The select organizations were the Rashid Paediatric Therapy Centre, Dubai Centre for Special Needs, Al Noor Centre for Children with Special Needs and Sheikha Maitha Bint Rashid Centre for Special Needs in Hatta.

wasl management has played an important role in motivating its employees to participate in community work on the most important national occasion.

Source: http://gulftoday.ae/portal/da447308-7b30-4a67-803b-17aaaa55b46d.aspx

#### **General News**

#### <u>UAE Green Festival:</u> 16 March – 16 April 2014

UAE Green Festival is a countrywide celebration that is specifically designed to educate people across the seven emirates about a new way of life that's achievable in an enjoyable way. The aim of this festival is to unveil UAE's sustainable identity as a leading green destination that provides its residents and visitors a better quality of life.

It will also provide government bodies and private entities with a platform for knowledge exchange and discussion of issues related to sustainable development. UAE Green Festival highlights a wide range of awareness activities across the seven Emirates.

Participants will get a first-hand experience of all the aspects of a green life including Green Shopping, Green Art, Green Fitness, Eco-Breakfast, Eco-Fashion, and Green Auto Show. Green Knowledge will be shared by Green experts via conferences and exhibitions. More details at: http://uaegreenfestival.com/

#### Global Reporting Initiative

#### A New g4 Content Index Tool

The inclusion of a Content Index in a GRI-based report is a key requirement for both Core and Comprehensive 'in accordance' options of the G4 Guidelines – enabling stakeholders and report readers to get a quick overview of the report – and ensuring easy navigation across all GRI reports.

GRI has created a new Content Index Tool that can be used in conjunction with the G4 Guidelines. The new G4 Content Index Tool enables reporters to generate a customized Content Index template based on their preferred 'in accordance' option, together with their selected material Aspects. This ready-made format will enable consistency across reports. Read more at:

https://www.globalreporting.org/information/news-and-press-center/Pages/default.aspx



#### **Best practices from the archive**

An overview of Arab African International Bank, Egypt



The Arab African International Bank (AAIB) is a well-recognized financial institution in the Middle East as well as the North Africa region. With a wide range of wealth management services, AAIB has seen immense growth in the recent years despite the region's political and economic turmoil. AAIB has a structured and strategic focus on health, education and the environment that has helped it implement a number of internal and external initiatives to improve Egypt's development indices. This has also encouraged the Bank to establish the We Owe it to Egypt Foundation, an institution that has executed a number of projects to improve public health service facilities.

#### AAIB - A CSR leader in Egypt's banking sector

Arab African International Bank (AAIB) started its CSR as an early adopter since 2003, positioning itself as a CSR Leader and the first financial institution in Egypt to have a CSR Unit. For AAIB investment in sustainability and CSR was a part of the bank's growth strategy and has thus worked towards Sustainable Finance with Value Creation - a concept that helps it to integrate sustainability and corporate responsibility in the way it functions as a financial institution. To showcase its commitment towards corporate citizenship – it became a signatory to the UN Global Compact in 2004 and published the first sustainability report for Egypt's financial sector in 2010. AAIB is also a member of the London Benchmarking Group (LBG) and measures its Corporate Community Investment (CCI) in terms of community and business impact of its activities on annual basis.

Within its sustainability strategy, AAIB has set specific goals towards the environment and society. For the former (environment), AAIB advocates the financial sector to adopt the nontraditional credit risk assessment to social and environmental dimensions. Socially, AAIB aims to increase the number of volunteering staff in the community development projects. To encourage transparency, AAIB has a zero tolerance for any corruption cases internally or involving any relation to its stakeholders. In 2009, AAIB adopted the Equator Principles becoming the first bank in Egypt to do so. In 2007, AAIB established an independent foundation for social development in health and

education through which it allocates millions for the nation's advancement in these thematic areas. The foundation targets public sector hospitals where public universities student practice medicine.

#### We Owe It To Egypt

AAIB believes that Egypt's development heavily depends on the capacity and capabilities of its youth. Therefore, a focus on addressing health and education would be imperative for contributing nation development. On these lines, AAIB initiated two major pilot projects: In 2003, AAIB launched the annual banking competition for university undergraduates for academic excellence in banking and finance, to promote financial literacy. For its health project, AAIB adopted the renovation of one of Egypt's most specialized pediatrics hospitals in Egypt, Cairo University Specialized Pediatrics Hospital (CUSPH) in 2004. In 2007, the hospital renovation initiative institutionalized into an independent foundation for social development in health and education, namely 'We Owe it To Egypt' Foundation.

Through the We Owe it to Egypt Foundation, AAIB aims to promote better quality of life through the creation of centers of excellence in health and education and establish a credible system for mobilizing and channeling resources towards these sectors. Currently, the Foundation is working on three different projects: the Cairo University Special Pediatric Hospital (CUSPH), the National Cancer Institute - Cairo University (NCI), the Urology and Nephrology Center- Mansoura University (UNC). We Owe it to Egypt Foundation has recently collaborated with the Japanese government and purchased land to construct an extension for the CUSPH as well as a day-care center. The Foundation has drawn an exit strategy for the projects by the year 2015. The exit strategy is conditioned with the success of CUSPH to maintain funds to cross collateralize the public department for those who are incapable to finance their medical requirements.

#### Conclusion

AAIB is driven by a conscious belief and commitment towards corporate citizenship. As a member of the UNGC since 2005, AAIB is keen to address, both internally and externally, its pledge to the four principles. The bank is driven by its mission to 'create value' in all its projects. This encourages it to be a fully involved and thorough project partner that assesses long-term impact rather than being a bystander providing financial assistance. Being a signatory to the UNGC as well as the London Benchmark Group also obliges the bank to actively monitor its implementation and evaluate the impact of its project. AAIB's CSR vision and mission are strongly driven by interests and concerns at a national scale. The banks management team has also been professionally trained to meaningfully engage its stakeholders and assist them in "value creation".



#### Arabia CSR Best Practices: 2012

This abstract has been taken from the ACSRN publication titled 'Arabia CSR Best Practices: 2012'. For more details on Arab African International Bank, Egypt and other companies that have been recognized for their innovative and effective CSR strategies write to us at admin@arabiacsrnetwork.com and book your copy now! Please mention "Arabia CSR Best Practices" in the subject.

The Arabia CSR Network welcomes new members to be a part of its CSR journey. To learn how you can be a member, and how your organization will benefit from it, call us at +971-4-3448622 or write to us at admin@arabiacsrnetwork.com For more information on the Arabia CSR Network visit www.arabiacsrnetwork.com