

November 2019 Volume 8 Issue 99

# Arabia CSR Network newsletter



# **Upcoming Trainings**

#### **GRI Standards for** Sustainability Reporting



Around the world, thousands of organisations report annually to disclose their performance in environmental, social and governance areas. The most commonly used framework for sustainability reporting has been the GRI guidelines.

Participants will be issued a certificate from GRI Headquarters in Netherlands.



The GRI Standards include all the main concepts and discissures from the GR Guidelines, but feature a new modular structure and revised format with clear reporting requirements. The Standards were developed and released by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), which is GRI's dedicated standard-setting body.

Arabia CSR Network, a Certified Training Partner of GRI, since 2011 is conducting a 3 Day Training Course on the new GRI Standards. The accredited course content will be delivered through lectures, discussions, exercises and case studies It will be include the following segments:

- Introduction and background
- Overview of the GRI Standards
- GRI Standards in detail
- Start your reporting process using the GRI Standards
- Additional resources

The training is of immense value to organisations currently using the GRI guidelines to report non-financial performance or those that are preparing their sustainability reports. It is particularly beneficial to report writing teams, sustainability professionals, consultants, researchers and so on.

- 51 » GRI Trainings conducted till date
- 400+ » Professionals Trained from the Arab Region
- 150+ » Sustainability Reports Issued



US\$ 2,275 Including the 10% GRI Certification fee + 5% VAT



رسوم التسجيل

# رسوم التسجيل للشخص الواحد

<mark>2,050 دولار أمريكي</mark> (على مدار<sup>٣</sup> أيام) تتضمن هذه الرسوم المواد المستخدمة في التدريب، والمنشورات والغداء

1,750 دولار أمريكي (للتسجيل المكبر) في حالة التسجيل المبكر بفترة تسبق التدريب بثلاثة اسابيع

**خصم خاص للمجموعات** في حال تسجيل اكثر من ٣ أشخاص من نفس المؤسسة

خصم خاص لأعضاء الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية الاجتماعية.



# تدريب معتمد عن أساسيات المسؤولية الاحتماعية للمؤسسات

#### لمحة عن التدريب

ظهر ممهوم المسؤولية الدېتماعية والاستدامة كأولوية استراتيجية للمؤسسات، مما دفع بها للبحث عن سبل التحقيق الإمكانات الكاملة التي تقدمها المسؤولية الترخاعية كاداة للإدارة الاستراتيجية بهذا الصحد، تنظم الشركة العربية للمسؤولية الدرغاعية المؤسسات هذا الدريب لمساعدة المشاركين على فهم كيفية مساهمة مفاهيم المسؤولية الدېتماعية في الداد الشامل للمؤسسة بشكل استراتيجي كما تعطي هذه الدورة الفرصة لدكتشاف المزيد من المؤاولة الدېتماعية من خلال تحديد الدهمية الجوهرية لمؤسساتهم.

صمم هذا التدريب بشكل خاص ليحتوي على مضمون غني بالأمثلة الحية من خلال الاستعانة بمزيج متوازن من المواضيع المختلفة والنقاش والتمارين.

#### من الذي ينبغي أن يشارك؟

إن التدريب دو مالدة كبيرة لمجموعة واسعة من المشاركين الذين برغبون في فهم المسؤولية الدجتماعية والسندامة، واستخدام هذا المفهوم في تعزيز مامراهيم بأفضل السبل لتطوير ممارسات فعالة للمسؤولية الاجتماعية والمتاملة، وسيكون التدريب مناسباً للعرق والقسام المعنية بالمسؤولية الاجتماعية الدجتماعية أو أي قسم آخر مسؤول عن النشاطات البينية، والدجتماعية والحوكمية بالمضافة الى العامليين في مجال الصحة و السلامة و الجودة,يعنبر هذا التدريب مفيد للاستشاريين والباحثين أو الأشخاص الذين يعملون لحسابهم الخاص.

يأتي هذا التدريب بقيمة اضافية- إذ يتسنى للمشاركين الحصول على شهادة تحصيل عقب نجاحهم في الدخنبار في نهاية التدريب. تثبت هذه الشهادة حصول المشارك على المعلومات الكافية حسب نموذج تثبت هذه الشهادة حصول المشارك على المعلومات الكافية حسب نموذج

ستتضمن جلسات التدريب مواضيع مختلفة منها تعريف المسؤولية الاجتماعية للمؤسسات ومناهجها، وأمثلة عن تنفيذها واعداد تقارير الاستدامة.

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#### **Note from the President & CEO Arabia CSR Network**

As we are entering autumn comfortably, the temperature is coming down and the weather is getting cooler, it is important to remember what the Amazon is undergoing. According to reports,

(National Institute of Space Research, Brazil) 19,925 fires broke out in September. Environmental watchdog, Amazon Watch, says that despite the slowing down of the fires, deforestation is still largely rampant in the area and requires our immediate concern and aid.

However, all is not bleak. According to Yale's Environmental Performance Index, the United Arab Emirates is part of the top 10 most sustainable countries in the Middle East and Africa. It is a matter of pride for us that the UN recognises that the UAE focuses on sustainability as the core of its vision for the future. This is most evident in the establishment of a Sustainable Development Goal Committee formed in 2017.

We would like to congratulate the national government and pledge our commitment in this wonderful ongoing journey of sustainability.

In an interesting paper published by Environment Research, climate experts are looking to use nature-based solutions (NBS) to fight the rising impacts of climate-related natural hazards. For example, floods (which are one of the most frequent types of natural hazards) are countered using 'hybrid' methods including rain gardens, green roofs as well as 'blue' constructions including small ponds for river floods.

As a member of the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance (GISD), I was honoured to attend its launch in New York on 16th October. The Alliance has been established by the UN Secretary General with an aim to fast track the progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the

next two years, influential members of the financial world have been tasked to finance the Sustainable Development Goals by freeing up trillions of dollars from the private sector.

I was invited to speak at the Global Bottled Water Congress on the 9th of October where I was part of an all women a panel discussing Middle East trends and developments. I took this opportunity to provide emerging statistics as well as talk about the importance of plastic recycling. lastly, I described our Clean Up UAE Initiative in detail and how it is linked to the SDGs.

On the 24th of October, we organised the Materiality Mapping Workshop. In today's dynamic and ever-changing world, it is important for businesses to recognise what to invest in. Thus, the Materiality Matrix helps the organisation to identify its more valuable CSR/sustainability initiatives to invest in. Our attendees, consisting of CSR and sustainability professionals, highly appreciated this event.

Our interesting panel discussion on the theme – "Sustainable Tourism in the UAE" – Challenges and Opportunities" received a packed house. The session was able to provide an insight into all aspects of tourism from hospitality, eco/ wildlife-tourism, clean energy, sustainability mobility to green tourism awards.

We have several upcoming trainings and workshops for our members and stakeholders. These include a GRI Standards Training in English (5-7th November); CSR Advanced Training in Arabic (19-21st November); GRI Standards Training in Arabic (17-19th December); and a CSR Strategy & Leadership training in Arabic (23-25th December).

We invite you to join us in our trainings to learn, share, exchange and spread the word about the role of corporate responsibility in promoting sustainable development in our region and beyond.



#### **ACSRN News & Events**

#### ACSRN PRESIDENT PRESENTS AT THE GLOBAL BOTTLED WATER CONGRESS



On the 9th of October, ACSRN attended the 16th Global Bottled Water Congress where our President, Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi was invited to give a presentation 'Middle East

Trends and Developments.' Organised by Zenith Global, the Global Bottled Water Congress provided delegates with the latest trends in the market, innovations and issues along with networking opportunities. Mrs. Al Mar'ashi began her presentation with an overview about EEG and its objectives. She spoke about the waste situation in the UAE including statistics

on the amount of waste generated in the UAE, which stood at 6.5 million tonnes of waste every year; the government commitments to recycle 75% of municipal solid waste generated in the country. She also explained the process of plastic recycling and how EEG's recycling programmes (especially plastic) tackle the issue of waste. For example: Till date in 2019, EEG has collected 64,290 Kg of plastic and is currently 80.3 % completion to reach its target for year 2019.

An important EEG initiative, the Clean-up UAE was also described in great detail. She told the audience that a total amount of 1,475,633 kg of waste has been removed and disposed of properly since the inception of the campaign in 2002. Similarly, the number of people who have participated stands at a staggering 754, 697! She went on to elucidate how EEG's campaigns and programmes can be linked to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We would like to congratulate Zenith Global on thisoutstanding event!

#### ACSRN PRESIDENT ATTENDS LAUNCH OF GISD IN NEW YORK

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2019, President of the ACSRN, Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, was invited to join the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance, which aims to produce solutions for long-term investments by the private sector in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Held in New York, the GISD was officially launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres.

Mrs. Al Mar'ashi received a personal invite from the Secretary-General due to her commendable work in the UAE and the Arab world in the field of sustainability and CSR. The ACSRN and its sister organisation, the Emirates Environmental Group (EEG), have been successful in significantly increasing the level of UAE private sector involvement and investment in the SDGs. According to Mrs. Al Mar'ashi, "The core objective of the CEO-led GISD Alliance is to unblock impediments and implement solutions for scaling long-term investment for sustainable development.

"The GISD Alliance will identify and shape opportunities for the private sector to move towards long-term investments. In doing so, it will serve as a channel to influence decision makers across national governments, international organisations and business."

The GISD Alliance format commits 30 leaders from the private sector to draw money from the private sector to finance the Sustainable Development Goals in the next two years.

Over a span of the next two years, the GISD Alliance aims to:



- Find solutions that unlock long-term finance and investment in sustainable development;
- · Rally additional resources for countries in need; and
- Align business practices with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth that benefits all stakeholders;
- Integrate long-term performance outlooks into investment decision-making;
- Foster the harmonisation of standards for sustainability reporting;
- Promote the use of innovative financing facilities and tools



#### **ACSRN News & Events**

#### ACSRN ORGANISES WORKSHOP ON MATERIALITY MAPPING



On the 24th of October 2019, the ACSRN organised a one-day workshop on Materiality Mapping for CSR and sustainability professionals in the country. It was attended by 13 delegates from the UAE and Bahrain. Consisting of Government, Private sector and NGO'S

What is Materiality Mapping? Materiality is essential when developing an organisation's CSR and sustainability strategy. It prioritises material issues that are most important to stakeholders specifically those that affect business decision.

ACSRN's Materiality Mapping Workshop The morning session was kickstarted with the segment titled – "Materiality as a Material Issue" which focused mainly on its importance, benefits, criteria for prioritisation and the materiality framework. Next, the segment – "Mapping Social Impacts" – emphasised on the different types of impacts originating from standard business activities including primary activities and support activities. It identified the associated social and environmental impacts related to organisation structure, human resources management, technology development and procurement. The "Stakeholder Engagement" session targeted substantial issues including stakeholder mapping, levels of organisational engagement, strategic scanning and the like.

Apart from these sessions, important themes such as prioritisation of issues and materiality standards were also thoroughly discussed. For the practical benefit of those attended, ACSRN also conducted an interactive exercise where delegates were asked to:

- Map stakeholders of their own organisation;
- Identify issues that matter to each stakeholder constituency;
- Prioritise issues based on importance and plot them on a graph;
- Ascertain how each issue is relevant to the organisation through a scoring system

On the 30th of October, ACSRN in cooperation with our sister organisation, the Emirates Environmental Group (EEG), Clean Energy Business Council (CEBC), Emirates Green Building Council (EGBC) and the Swiss Business Council (SBC) organised the final panel discussion of 2019. Focusing on the theme – "Sustainable Tourism in the UAE: Challenges and Opportunities" – this event was attended by more than 60 delegates from 55 organisations.

The esteemed speakers of the panel discussion were, Mr. Norberto Cibien, Managing Director, Products Lead Middle East & Turkey at Accenture; Mr. Greg Simkins, Conservation Manager, Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve; Dr. Ana Stranjančević, Assistant Professor, Program director for BBA in Tourism and Hospitality Management, MODUL University Dubai; Mr. Omar Souab, General Manager, Sofitel Dubai.

The speakers focused on all aspects of tourism from hospitality, eco/wildlife-tourism, clean energy, sustainable mobility and green tourism awards. (here, I would like to add what each speaker (or at least a few of them) said specifically. Also, I would like CP's speech so I can add it here.)



# **ACSRN News & Events**

#### ACSRN AND EEG HOST PANEL DISCUSSION ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

On the 30th of October, ACSRN in cooperation with our sister organisation, the Emirates Environmental Group (EEG), Clean Energy Business Council (CEBC), Emirates Green Building Council (EGBC) and the Swiss Business Council (SBC) organised the final panel discussion of 2019. Focusing on the theme – "Sustainable Tourism: Challenges and Opportunities in the UAE" – this event was attended by 65 delegates from various organisations. \

The esteemed speakers of the panel discussion were: Mr. Yousef Lootah (Executive Director, Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, Dubai), Mr. Norberto Cibien (Managing Director, Accenture Middle East), Dr. Ana Stranjancevic (BBA Program Director, Modul University), Mr. Omar Souab (General Manager, Sofitel Hotel) and Mr. Greg Simkins (Conservation Manager, Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve).

The panel discussion aimed to foster an open conversation about all aspects of tourism from hospitality, eco/wildlife-tourism, clean energy, sustainable mobility, wastage in the hospitality sector and green tourism awards.

ACSRN President, Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi kickstarted the event by mentioning that, "the UAE has always played a leading role in the region in the tourism industry by investing and developing the country to become a world attraction. Therefore, it is now time for UAE to also step in as pioneer to lead the way once again in the industry by embracing sustainability at the core of the tourism sector."

In 2018, the UAE was visited by 16.66 million international visitors. In 2019, up until June, the country has already received 8.36 million visitors. According to the UAE government, the travel and tourism sector contributes AED 159.1 billion (USD 43.3 billion) to the GDP. The sector also provides 317,500 jobs, which is equivalent to 5.4% of the total employment in the country.

Thus, with such large contributions to the country, it is important that all levels of the industry embrace sustainability. There must be a continuous and conscious attempt to find a balance between tourist satisfaction, resource consumption and local communities and culture.

The ACSRN would like to thank all our partners, sponsors and stakeholders for the culmination of our wonderful panel discussion series for the year!







# **Member News**

#### MCDONALD'S UAE PARTNERS WITH EEG ON 'PLANTING A GREENER FUTURE' INITIATIVE



On the occasion of Arab Environment Day the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, our sister organisation, the Emirates Environmental Group, in association with ACSRN member, McDonald's UAE, launched phase three of the 'Planting a Greener Future' joint Initiative.

This innovative educational-urban-afforestation initiative will bring governmental schools across the seven Emirates together for a dynamic educational programme. The 'Planting a Greener Future' initiative aligns with several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as our government's UAE Vision 2021, especially the Sustainable Environment and Infrastructure section.

As part of this new phase a total of 350 indigenous trees will be planted over the next year in seven government schools all over the country.

This, in turn, has several benefits including: increasing green spaces in the country, raising awareness amongst school children, countering the negative effects of pollution and desertification and more.

As part of this phase, EEG will roll out interesting interactive educational workshops under the theme of "Elements Define Us" inspired by Fire, Air, Water and Land. This workshop will help raise the necessary awareness on the importance of afforestation in the UAE.

### DEWA: ALWAYS WORKING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY OF WATER AND ENERGY



In an effort to strengthen its digital services, DEWA, our Platinum member, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Alibaba Cloud. As per the MoU, the two organisations will work closely to present challenges in the field of algorithms, Quantum Computing, Blockchain and the like.

DEWA will be looking to enhance their efforts in ensuring the sustainability of water and energy, while focusing on motivating investors as well as utilising Alibaba Cloud's Tianchi platform (global big data crowd intelligence platform).

The MoU was signed by the Executive Vice President of Innovation and the Future at DEWA, and the International Chief Solution Director of Alibaba Cloud Intelligence.

DEWA also organised guided tours of major projects for the attending delegates of Wetex 2019. Guests were given a unique opportunity to visit the Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park and DEWA's Sustainable Building in Al Quoz.

Source: <a href="https://www.quantaneo.com/%E2%80%8BDEWA-signs-MoU-with-Alibaba-Cloud-to-support-innovation-through-Tianchi-platform\_a270.html">https://www.quantaneo.com/%E2%80%8BDEWA-signs-MoU-with-Alibaba-Cloud-to-support-innovation-through-Tianchi-platform\_a270.html</a>

https://gulfnews.com/uae/science/wetex-exhibitors-to-get-dewa-project-tours-in-dubai-1.67223835



#### **Member News**

#### MA'ADEN SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH PHOSAGRO ON ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY FERTILISERS

# MA'ADEN Uعلدت العربية السعودية السعودي

Ma'aden, ACSRN corporate member and one of the fastest growing mining and fertiliser companies in the world, has signed a cooperation agreement with Russian fertiliser-producers, Phos Agro and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).

The agreement focuses on the use of environmentally friendly phosphate-based fertilisers, hereby contributing to global food security. The companies are also looking to educate farmers on more advanced and sound fertilisation techniques to improve quality and yield of crops.

Finally, the agreement ensures the sharing of best practices between the two entities, especially in terms of minimising negative impacts on the environment as well as increasing agricultural productivity.

Ma'aden President and CEO said: "Our companies have enormous potential for cooperation, which includes the exchange of advanced production practices, support for promising scientific developments and investment cooperation.

A particularly important goal – one that the sustainable development of the planet depends on – is to inform the public about the risks of using fertilisers with high levels of toxic impurities, so that farmers can make more informed decisions when choosing crop nutrients to grow food."

Source: <a href="https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/">https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/</a>
<a href="phosagro-maaden-and-rdif-agree-to-work-together-to-ensure-global-food-security-through-the-use-of-eco-friendly-fertilisers-300937899.html">https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/</a>
<a href="phosagro-maaden-and-rdif-agree-to-work-to-ensure-global-food-security-through-the-use-of-eco-friendly-fertilisers-global-food-security-through-thro

#### EMIRATES TRANSPORT TO JOIN DUBAI MUNICIPALITY'S GEO-DUBAI PROJECT



This month, Dubai Municipality and Emirates Transport, ACSRN members, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during Gitex Technology Week 2019. The agreement was signed between the Director of Dubai Municipality's GIS centre, and Director of Information Systems at Emirates Transport.

This MoU aims at strengthening geotechnical technologies for the construction of Geo-Dubai, one of Dubai Municipality's flagship projects.

In order to enhance the geospatial infrastructure of Geo-Dubai, the MoU will aid the development of an updated baseline map of the Emirates of Dubai. This, in turn, will be used in the planning, management and design of several development projects.

Source: <a href="https://www.constructionweekonline.com/events/">https://www.constructionweekonline.com/events/</a> industry-events/259579-dubai-municipality-emirates-transport-ink-mou-for-geo-dubai

Arabia CSR Network | Newsletter



# **Educating Girls is the Key to achieving the SDGs**



The Global Partnership for Education is a multi-stakeholder and finance platform that focuses on strengthening education systems in developing nations. According to the organisation, better and continued education among girl children reduces the occurrence of HIV, sexual abuse, illiteracy and early marriage.

On the same lines, Camfed (Campaign for Female Education) said, "the cycle of poverty and ill health is perpetuated when girls don't have access to quality education."

Statistics from the UN Report titled, "Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Action", are baffling:

- 15 million girls in the primary-school age group do not learn to read or write in school;
- 15 million girls in the age group 15-19 years have been sexually abused;
- 750 million girls are married before they turn 18

And the solution is clear: Girls must go to school.

Issues like child marriage, sexual abuse, lack of healthcare products, and responsibility for household chores create a greater disparity between boys and girls when it comes to education. This is an urgent issue for political leaders as there are more than 2.4 million girls between the ages of 15 and 24 living with HIV. According to UNICEF, just one year of education can change a girl's life drastically.

Another year of secondary education can increase her income by 15% in the future.

Providing access for this extra year of education is the barrier for young girls. According to UNICEF, "Secondary schools are few and far between in rural areas, and the long and tiring walk to school can also be dangerous for girls (sexual exploitation, dangerous rivers to cross, wild animals). In addition, most schools in rural sub-Saharan Africa are ill-equipped to support girls while they are menstruating."

These young educated girls are less likely to marry early and are better equipped to protect themselves from contracting HIV and AIDS. Educated girls are also far less likely to die in childbirth and instead have healthier babies who can thrive.

http://www.ipsnews.net/2018/07/educating-girls-road-achieve-sdgs/



# Best Practices from the archives AESG Project Development Consultant WINNER - ARABIA CSR AWARDS 2018 - SMALL BUSINESS CATEGORY

AESG originated as a Sustainability Consultancy and the core philosophy has remained the same in spite of its development into a multidisciplinary specialist consultancy. Sustainability is considered the core pillar of the company which is reflected across the company's vision, mission and values. AESG is considered a thought leader in the region with regards to sustainable development and innovation through continuous participation in industry events and publication of research papers and articles.

Abstract

The company has one of the largest dedicated team with a cumulative experience in sustainable building design, fire and life safety, façade engineering, commissioning, waste management, environmental consultancy and energy management. This has turned AESG into the uncontested industry leader in the services that it offers.

The company has vast experience from working on several iconic developments from all over the world through its world class multi-disciplinary team of Architects, Engineers, Scientists, Modelers and Commissioning Managers. AESG has time and again delivered effective solutions that have passed the test of time. The company has a strong connection to the needs of the local community. In order to support the growth of local capacity, members from AESG regularly sit on advisory boards of a number of regional universities. In addition, they also participate in government stakeholder groups and conferences.

#### **Conclusion:**

Since coming into being in 2010, AESG has been focused on the delivery of sustainable solutions and finding best management practices of its stakeholders. The company does not take its position as a leading multi-disciplinary consultancy for granted. Rather, it is constantly striving to improve on its standards and to lead and to innovate with regards to sustainable development through all of its service offerings and project delivery. The company sees its responsibility of caring for the needs of the planet as an extension of its commitment and loyalty to its internal and external stakeholders. This has enabled the AESG to join a plethora of regional and global like-minded organisations in their drive for protecting and preserving the world for the coming generations.

AESG's commitment to CSR and its exemplary performance is reflected in its achievements across three corepillars: Environment & Sustainability; Community & Stakeholders; and Employee Health & Well-Being. By continuously making an effort to raise awareness within the company, AESG has helped trigger a Sustainability Awareness Campaign which includes multiple engaging events such as the company's "Environment Day Photography Competition" and a trip to the Sustainable City. Other educational events initiated by the company included a training session on waste management and recycling.

As a consultancy firm, the company feels its people are the greatest asset and it prides itself on the attention given to the health and well-being of the employees. By maintaining the energy and spirit AESG has carefully cultivated within its workforce a lively and engaging environment. This is reflected in the project delivery and subsequent care given to the company's clients. Employee health and wellbeing has been enhanced through social and fitness activities, including participation in the 'Tough Mudder' which is an annual endurance exercise stretched over 10-12 miles involving hurdles and obstacles, and a bi-annual employee feedback survey. Results from a feedback survey conducted in May 2018, demonstrated that the company is on the right track as employee happiness has gone from 70% in September 2017 to 78% in May 2018.

