



الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
الاجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network®

July 2020

Volume 9 Issue 107

Arabia CSR Network

newsletter

TRANSITIONING TO VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENTS



Upcoming Trainings & Events

Online Training 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 the Netherlands.

Date: 25th - 27th August 2020

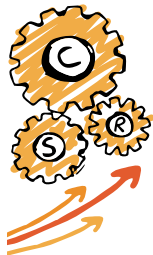
دورة تدريبية عن الإبلاغ حسب المعايير الجديدة للمبادرة العالمية للإبلاغ عبر الاتصال المرئي عن بعد



تقدم آلاف المؤسسات، في جميع أنحاء العالم، تقارير سنوية عن أدائها في المجالات البيئية والاجتماعية والحوكمة. والإطار الأكثر استخدامًا للإبلاغ عن الاستدامة هو المبادئ التوجيهية للمبادرة العالمية للإبلاغ.

سيتمنى المشاركون شهادة تدريب صادرة عن المؤسسة الأم - المبادرة العالمية للإبلاغ في هولندا.

30 أغسطس - 1 سبتمبر 2020



تدريب معتمد عن أساسيات المسؤولية الاجتماعية للمؤسسات عبر الاتصال المرئي عن بعد

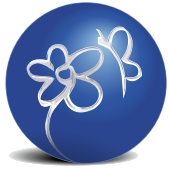
15 - 17 سبتمبر 2020

ONLINE TRAINING ON "CSR STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP"



20th-22nd September, 2020

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Note from the President & CEO Arabia CSR Network

According to the semi-annual Global Economic Prospects Report published by the World Bank in June, the global economy is forecasted to contract the most this year since World War II as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This will cause the income of people to reduce, thereby sending millions of people into poverty in emerging and developing nations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Vice President Equitable growth, Finance and Institutions of the World Bank said that the global gross domestic product will probably shrink by 5.2% in 2020, which would be the fourth-deepest recession of the past 150 years after 1914, 1930 - 32 and 1945 - 46. She further elaborated that the per capita output was expected to contract in majority of the countries, making it the biggest share since the Smallpox pandemic in 1870.

The World Bank official further added that given the nature of the situation, the outlook is very likely to downgrade and the decline in per capita income may push 70 million to 100 million people into extreme poverty. However, she did provide a ray of hope when she said that according to the projections based on the current global scenario, the economy would rebound in 2021, growing at 4.2%.

These are trying times for everyone and it is only due to the visionary and concerted efforts of governments and leaders that some countries are leading in this war against an unknown and invisible assailant. The UAE has once again managed to outshine other nations as it has been able to thwart the spread of the pandemic through extensive protocols and testing procedures.

Furthermore, all of this has been achieved whilst making sure that businesses are provided an environment that is conducive to growth. This has been verified by the progress reported by the Dubai Chamber, which has revealed the processing of a total of 152,059 electronic transactions between March and May of 2020.

This translates to a rate of 50,000 transactions per month and it is a positive development that points to a healthy state of business development amidst movement restrictions brought forth in response to the coronavirus pandemic. It is solely due to

the far-sighted and pro-active policies that were put in place to deal with the pandemic that resulted in a 7.5% uptick in e-transactions recorded in May, compared to the previous month.

Let us not forget the fact that last month included, Eid Al-Fitr holidays, and the positive trend signals an increased awareness in the private sector of the importance of e-services and smart transformation in driving business activity. Currently, Dubai Chamber is providing 50 e-services to the business community through its website and smart applications.

According to its President and CEO, the latest figures reflected the efficiency of the Chamber's wide range of e-services and its strong commitment to support the changing needs of the private sector. He added that in 2020, the Chamber had launched a new electronic attestation service and the authentication of signatures on documents.

These additions had helped in raising the percentage of smart transformation of core services to 98%. The President and CEO is of the strong opinion that it was exclusively due to these positive policies and initiatives that business continuity was being encouraged in the UAE with the rest of the world looking on for inspiration.


VIRTUAL PLATFORM

3rd Panel Discussion

TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY WITH CLIMATE FINANCE




Date: 28th July, 2020

Organised by



EMIRATES ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

In Association with



ACSRN News & Events

Townhall on Transformational Change for Nature and Business

On **8th June**, ACSRN attended a townhall session titled – “Adapt to Thrive: Transformational Change for Nature and Business”. This was part of a series of townhalls organised during the Act #ForNature Forum, which is the first global consultation in support of the 5th session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA).

Against the grim backdrop of COVID-19, the eminent panel explored how the crisis exposes the fragility of humanity and ecosystems and also highlighted the importance of a recovery that takes us closer to a nature-positive economy. The townhall was graced by eminent speakers from various sectors and businesses including business, academia, government, and civil society. From the get-go, it was established that if sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda has to be achieved, it cannot be done without the business sector.

Therefore, the purpose of this townhall was to discuss some of the actions that businesses can take to make better business and environmental decisions – a business that not only produces profits, but also one that supports its customers, that manages responsible supply chains, and protects and preserves the natural base for economic and social development.

Some of the recommendations on what businesses must do to ‘thrive’ included:

- Using low carbon energy
- Engage in regenerative agriculture
- Using less hazardous chemicals & more efficiently
- Increased resource efficiency to achieve decoupling of economic activity from environmental impacts and resource use
- Develop substantial space for innovation, experimentation, diverse, proactive thinking

- Refreshing social and environmental purpose
- Context-based strategy and goals as pole stars for investment
- Integration of financial and non-financial thinking and reporting
- Mobilising consumer behaviour & choice

Women for Impact

On **15th June**, ACSRN President & CEO was invited to a webinar on ‘Giving a Voice to all Women in the International Economic Environment’, which was a joint initiative of Elite Business Women in partnership with a London-based entrepreneur and award-winning communicator.

It discussed how women around the world are changing the way business is being done - from building bridges between countries to innovating industries and international relationships. With women redefining their ecosystems and pushing boundaries, changes on an individual, societal, economic, political, and international level are being observed. The speakers were Founder & CEO of Elite Business Women, B20 Member Future of Work & Education Task Force and Vice Chair, International Chamber of Commerce



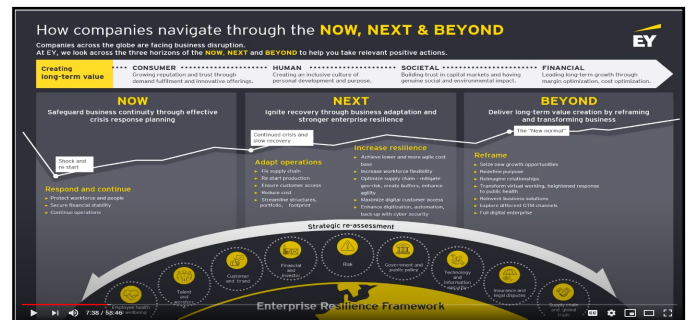
ACSRN News & Events

Public Private Connect Virtual Webinar on Business Incentives During COVID-19

On the 17th June, ACSRN President & CEO joined the Public Private Connect Virtual Webinar organised by Dubai FDI that shed light on business incentives during COVID-19. The Public Private Connect, which has been ongoing for several years, connects businesses to bring knowledge, and share regulatory updates and vital changes in the investment environment.

Moderated by the Head of Debt Advisory and Restructuring of EY, the webinar received participation from over 180 nationalities to discuss the needs of the business community. The CEO of Dubai FDI gave the opening remarks, which were followed by presentations from the Assistant Undersecretary of Foreign Trade Affairs – Ministry of Economy, CEO of Corporate Strategic Affairs – DED, and Senior Director of Sales – DAFZA. The expert speakers led the webinar on initiatives and incentives offered by the Federal and Local Government, and also incentives coming from great efforts done in free zones to ensure we get through this crisis united and stronger. They also highlighted that COVID-19 already has tremendous effects on the macroeconomic state of the world with greater impacts to come.

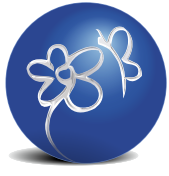
Follow the link for full recording of the webinar, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rly7tc6XII&app=desktop>



National Job Standards for CSR Directors in Non-Profit Sector

On 20th June, ACSRN President and CEO was invited by the Al Fozan Academy & the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development of Saudi Arabia to join a workshop and share views in developing standards for the positions of the CSR directors in non-profit sector. This was organised as a partnership between Al Fozan Academy and King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals. The discussions focused on building standards and technical capabilities for the leadership development in non-profit institutions, wherein innovations and strategies were identified as key tools for sustainability.

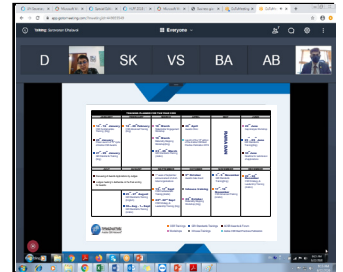
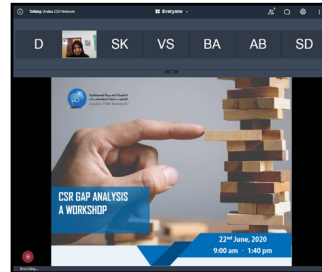




ACSRN News & Events

Online Gap Analysis Workshop

On 22nd June, Arabia CSR Network organised online Gap Analysis Workshop that helped the participants from private sectors understand successful sustainability practices. It also linked business strategy to the sustainability context by reviewing and analysing the ESG management related issues of the business. Gap Analysis is a commonly used tool to uncover the deficiencies and lapses in policies, processes and systems within a business. Increasingly, businesses are applying sustainability gap analysis and assessments as the most effective mechanism to distinguish areas of improvement and opportunities. The overall objective of the workshop was to equip participants with requisite knowledge and process know-how that would lead to objectives, targets and performance indicators applicable throughout the value chain. This was the first ever online Gap Analysis Workshop that was tailored by the ACSRN as per the current and trending business.



Testimonial



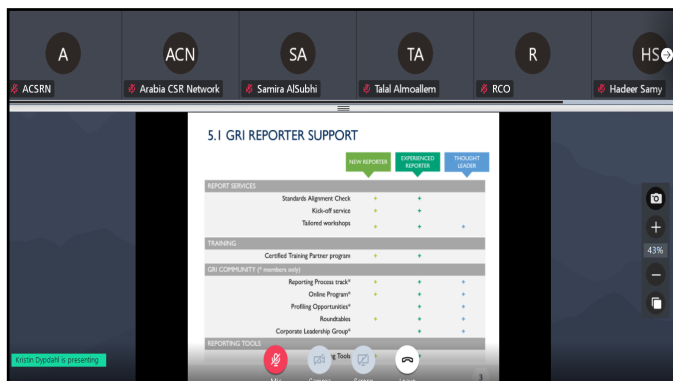
This workshop gives us an opportunity to conduct fast reality check on current status and what is required to improve further.

Brijesh Dhruve
Chief Environment Officer - ENOC

Online GRI Standards Training

Arabia CSR Network conducted the 3 days training on GRI Standards from 23rd – 25th June, which was the first ever online training on GRI by the Network. It received active participation from sustainability professionals report writing teams and individuals from Oman, Bahrain and UAE. Moving forward with new normal, ACSRN aims to conduct these trainings virtually to enable more companies and organisations to partake these essential courses to enhance their sustainability reporting. The GRI Support team also joined the training on the last day to interact with the participants and address some of the additional queries.

The extensive 3 days training is accredited by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), GRI's dedicated standard-setting body is of immense value to organisations currently using the GRI guidelines to report non-financial performance or those that are preparing their sustainability reports. For regular updates on GRI Standards, you can visit www.globalreporting.org and subscribe to their newsletter

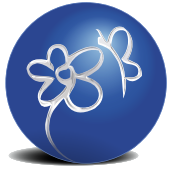


Testimonial



The GRI 3 day sustainability course was well structured even though it was conducted via online video conference

Raymond Colvin
HSEQ - Stevin Rock



International News

The Role of Businesses in Building a Resilient Future

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has published an article that delved into how businesses have become increasingly active in rebuilding the community during the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has united the global community and enabled them to realise that our actions exert dynamic consequences on the planet as a whole, making it important for us to evaluate our actions and adopt a more sustainable lifestyle. Our thought paradigms have now shifted from a self-centered perspective, to a more globalised one, thus, giving rise to a new global normal.

While some of us are fortunate enough to stay protected during the pandemic, 55% of the world's population does not have access to at least one social protection cash benefit, and over 3 billion people lack basic hand-washing facilities. Fortunately, businesses have followed suit, becoming more proactive in supporting several individuals that require assistance. Multinational companies have been actively engaged in producing soaps, hand sanitisers, urgently needed face masks and PPE, and some have even been working towards producing much-needed ventilators.

Some business organisations have partnered with international organisations and government agencies to protect their workers, customers and local communities by producing and distributing essential supplies. What is interesting is the fact that people place more faith in the system when the private sector is also involved alongside government. This shift in norms is certainly reassuring, and proves that by building stronger linkages within the society, we are able to create more resilient and reliable systems for the benefit of all. Once the pandemic has passed, businesses can either return to their profit-driven agenda, or continue to work towards making a difference. The choice is for us to make.

Refer: <https://wevaluenature.eu/article/business-collaboration-key-building-healthier-future>

Local News

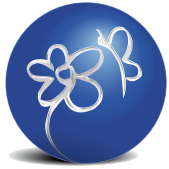
FAB issues MENA's 1st Green Bonds in HKD

First Abu Dhabi Bank has issued a five-year "Green Bond" worth 750 million Hong Kong dollar (HKD) through a private placement. It is the first green bond offer by a Middle East based entity denominated in Hong Kong dollars and also the first green bond issued in Hong Kong dollars by an offshore financial institution. FAB made its debut green bond issue in 2017 by issuing the first green bonds at a total value of \$587 million in the MENA region, followed by a series of private placements in 2019.



"Green finance promotes and supports sustainable business models, investments and policies, something that very much adheres to the FAB ethos," said Head of Group Funding while stating that FAB has a clear track record when it comes to green finance. The Abu Dhabi bank also has a "Green Bond Framework".

Read the featured news in the link, <http://gulffnews.newspaperdirect.com/epaper/viewer.aspx>



UAE grows its own rice in game-changing sustainability project



In a stunning move that could reshape the way sustainability is discussed in the world, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCA) in the UAE revealed that a successful initiative that had been undergoing at a farm in Sharjah had resulted in rice being grown in an arid soil. The project, which is the first of its kind, was carried out at the Ministry's research centre in Al Dhaid, Sharjah. The sowing of the seeds was started in November and the harvesting was done in three phases in order to complete the required growth cycle of 180 days.

In order to observe the results, the rice plots were further broken up into three blocks and harvested on different dates. According to preliminary results, the pilot phase of the project has shown promise. The recorded yield were 763-kg of rice per 1,000 square metres. During the project, the types of rice grown were according to the global demand and were thus the short-grained Asemi (Japonica) and the long-grained FL478 (Indica), more commonly known as basmati.

Another reason for selecting the two types specifically was due to their ability to grow in hot, saline conditions with poor soil quality. In order to address the issue of water scarcity, the research team installed a drip irrigation system that flowed underground in order to limit water loss and rising cost of production. Although the result has been positive, the Ministry will start promoting rice commercially once it has received the green signal with respect to international compliance standards and specifications.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister for MoCCA said that the success of the pilot phase of the research programme, which was conducted in partnership with the Rural Development Administration (RDA) of the Republic of Korea and the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), could prove to be gamechanger in how sustainability was viewed in the world. He added that this was the first endeavour of its kind in the Middle East which if successful on a large scale, could be ground breaking and open the door to shaping the future of agriculture.



Best Practices From The Archives Duqm Refinery

Arabia CSR Awards 2018 - 2nd Runner Up - Partnership & Collaboration Category

Profile

Duqm Refinery is a limited liabilities company that deals in petrochemicals. The company is located in the Al Wusta region in the south eastern governorate of the Sultanate of Oman. It is a joint venture between the Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) and Oman Oil Company (OIC). Duqm refinery enjoys a competitive advantage due to its strategic location along the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Its position gives it easy access to international shipping lines while proximity to the port reduces transportation costs.

Duqm Refinery has been built from scratch on the location, thus making it a grassroots refinery. Its primary focus is on the production of light and middle distillates in an efficient manner. The primary products at Duqm Refinery are jet fuel, LPG, naphtha and diesel. The refinery consists of units specialising in hydrogen generation, hydrocracking, sulphur recovery, mercaptan oxidation (merox treating), delayed coking and hydro-treating.



Summary

The Science of Refinery programme has been a success with the local community. However it is but a small step with only short-term benefits. In order to take advantage of the massive buy-in from the direct and in-direct beneficiaries, necessary steps need to be taken to put in place a more long term initiative. The following recommendations add on to that:

Competitions: Local competitions that generate interest in STEM-related topics should be held in schools. This exercise should go on throughout the year so that students are able to learn new things that are not present in the curriculum. The competition will have the added benefit of helping students gain other soft skills such as leadership, teamwork, presentation, and communication.

Additional sessions: Total of 24 interactive workshops are delivered in six schools in Wilayat of Duqm. In order for the impact on the minds of the students to be sustainable, the duration of the sessions need to be increased. Also the frequency needs to be increased to throughout the year.

Capacity Building for teachers: The sessions have been beneficial for the students. Teachers have also gained expertise in new training methods and knowledge about the subjects they teach. It helped to increase their capacities by partnering with organisations such as Engineering with Kids LLC to ensure that such programmes continue throughout the year and that the teaching level of school faculty is constantly being improved.