



الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
الاجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network®

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ARABIA CSR NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

The 13th Cycle of Arabia CSR Awards

2020
THIRTEENTH CYCLE

6th October, 2020

Upcoming Trainings & Events



تدريب معتمد عن أساسيات
المسؤولية الاجتماعية للمؤسسات
عبر الاتصال المرئي عن بعد
15 - 17 سبتمبر 2020
دبي، الامارات العربية المتحدة

ONLINE TRAINING ON
"CSR STRATEGY
AND LEADERSHIP"
20th-22nd September, 2020



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Note from the President & CEO Habiba Al Mar'ashi

Now that the clouds of despair have finally parted and the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic seems to be behind us, it is time to look forward to the future. It is a proud moment for us as a Nation that has weathered this storm better than most countries. It is indeed a time to hold our heads up high as the forward thinking and timely decisions of our leaders has helped UAE in setting its priorities right and led the country to score high marks on all fronts.

But now is not the time to rest on our laurels. We need to make sure that we as a nation are always one step ahead of any disaster and calamity. These sentiments were echoed by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai as he made it clear that food and water security are among the priorities of the UAE Government for the post COVID-19. He also reiterated that the objective is to launch specialist initiatives that will ensure the country's readiness to confront all types of crises. Furthermore, he directed the Minister of State for Food Security to follow up the UAE national food reserve, invest in food technology, and develop international partnerships that will help to provide practical solutions for the country in the field of food and water security.

H.H. Sheikh Mohammed said that the UAE's food and water security is an integral part of the national security and the sustainability of our food and water resources is a guarantee for our sustainable development. Earlier the Cabinet had given its approval for the 'UAE Sustainable Agriculture System', which promises to be a hugely welcome step that would undoubtedly help increase self-sufficiency in crops, increase returns and investments in the sector. The system would be the first of its kind and is projected to increase the agriculture sector workforce and also give a boost to the production in the sector. Another overarching benefit of the system was outlined by the Minister of State for Food Security, who said that as per the futuristic vision of the leadership, these measures were being put in place in order to ensure that the UAE is able to find practical solutions for global challenges, both now and in the future.

It is noteworthy to mention here that the UAE has always been at the forefront of embracing novel ideas and projects that promise to further enhance food production. In order to instil confidence in the local produce and to encourage the traders and consumers, the Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority, ADAFSA, recently also issued 36 post-harvest practice guides covering 41 crops, including 21 guides for vegetables and 15 guides for fruits. It is policies and initiatives such as these that ensured that the country was able to guarantee flow of food supplies during the exceptional situation created by the COVID-19 outbreak.

In international sustainability news, GRI has announced that it will be organising a series of virtual roundtables covering the following five essential sustainability reporting topics: Reporting on the SDGs, Waste, Climate Change, Occupational Health & Safety and Water. The series of events are geared towards helping practitioners to connect, co-create, and engage with peers to think about the most current issues in sustainability reporting.

August was a very busy month for us at Arabia CSR Network as we finalised the winning submissions for the 13th cycle of the Arabia CSR Awards. Additionally, I attended engagements connected with the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance. From **25th to 27th August**, Arabia CSR Network conducted a three-day virtual training of the GRI Standards.

September promises to be another engaging month, we have upcoming trainings including CSR Fundamentals Training in Arabic from **15th – 17th** and CSR Strategy and Leadership in English from **20th – 22nd September**. We look forward to you joining us in trainings and to learn, share, exchange and spread the word about the role of corporate responsibility in promoting sustainable development. Preparations are also underway for the Awards Gala, which is scheduled to be held on **6th October**.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of our newsletter, as we bring our strong engagements to inspire your commitments in CSR and Sustainability.





ACSRN News & Events

Engaging with GISD Alliance

The Arabia CSR Network has been engaged in the extensive deliberations on sustainable financing and COVID-issue bonds on various platforms of GISD Alliance. The noteworthy outcomes of these engagements are truly relevant for the world to collaborate for an inclusive recovery and development.

1. On 5th August, the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance conducted the meeting of its working group 3 on global liquidity and financial stability. A team from Arabia CSR Network attended the meeting, under the leadership of President & CEO of ACSRN. The working group deliberated on the policy options related to sustainable financing with long term and short term approach. A special presentation was delivered by the Senior Economist of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), who focused on using radar charts to compare policy options regarding global liquidity and financial stability.

Special Drawing Rights (SDR) allocation was also discussed in light of being the most promising short term option used with redistribution mechanism. Capital-account management and regional monetary arrangements were introduced as the most promising longer-term options. The group also talked about the need to extend more debt-related issues and resilience funds.

2. A follow-up meeting was organised by the group on **25th August**. The deliberations of these meeting were in follow-up to the High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and beyond, which was co-convened by the United Nations, Canada and Jamaica earlier this year. The group also discussed specific policy options to encourage the implementation of activities on sustainable financing and resilience to future challenges.

3. As a member of Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD Alliance), President & CEO of Arabia CSR Network has been participating and contributing her inputs for 'GISD Call to Action for COVID-19 Bond Issuance', which was finalised on **5th August**. Through this, the Alliance seeks to motivate issuers to take meaningful steps towards addressing COVID-related challenges, supported by the issuance of innovative Social Bonds and support them in financing a holistic recovery in-line with the SDGs. The Call to Action for COVID-19 Bond Issuance has defined the five pillars of UN Development System (UNDS) Response, which are:

Health
First

Protecting
People

Economic Response &
Recovery

Macroeconomic Response &
Multilateral Collaboration

Social Cohesion &
Community Resilience

GISD Alliance has also developed the Sustainable Development Investing (SDI) definition to help the issuers align the response and recovery plan with the widely accepted Social Bond Principles or Sustainability Bond Guidelines administered by the International Capital Markets Association (ICMA). Issuers are therefore, encouraged to provide transparency on the use of proceeds for direct and indirect challenges presented by the pandemic. To further ensure positive contribution to sustainable development, clear distinction between COVID-related and other purposes must be highlighted at the issuance.

4. Members of the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance (GISD) have released a report in July 2020 which identifies more than 60 concrete measures that can help to accelerate and scale up funding for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report, titled **'Renewed, Recharged and Reinforced: Urgent actions to harmonise and scale sustainable finance'** sheds light on six crucial areas that can affect the global sustainability agenda. These areas are: (1) addressing systemic sustainability risks, (2) improving ESG data and scoring, (3) globally conforming disclosure requirements, (4) strengthening corporate governance, (5) enhancing public-private sector partnerships and (6) developing sustainable finance products and infrastructure.

In the backdrop of the catastrophic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for sustainable development, the GISD enhanced its focus and commitment that include urging the broader business sector to step up its efforts to integrate the SDGs into core business models; scaling up sustainable investments to countries and areas hardest hit by the crisis; re-aligning investment of both private and public sectors with sustainable development objectives; advocating for a coordinated international approach to financial regulation and policies; encouraging rating agencies to better incorporate sustainable development considerations into their decision making; and advancing internalisation of key externalities. The report provides recommendations and strategic considerations that, if followed, will enable leaders from the public and private sectors to harmonise objectives, coordinate global standards and align efforts to facilitate, promote and scale up investment towards the Goals. Although the main focus of the report is meant to be the European Commission's Renewed Sustainable Finance Strategy consultation, it is recommended to be implemented by public authorities worldwide.

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ACSRN News & Events

Virtual GRI Standards Training

Arabia CSR Network organised the 54th GRI Standards Training virtually from **25th – 27th August**. The training registered 10 participants from the UAE and the other GCC countries. The 3-day training was delivered through a series of lectures, discussions, exercises and case studies. A transparent and open discussion also helped the participants to share and learn some effective practices on CSR and Sustainability among themselves.

Extensive discussions took place on several sustainability reports that have been issued by entities from the region. The training helped the participants to explore the scope of

improvements and new opportunities for the implementation of sustainability related strategies and activities.

The President and CEO of ACSRN gave a detailed presentation on the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and reiterated, "Every business and every organisation needs to engrave its commitment towards Sustainable Development. The world is living unprecedented times with the impact of COVID-19 crisis and has gone through critical challenges in the year 2020. Let us all put our efforts together and amend our actions to build strategies for an inclusive recovery."

On the completion of the training, all the participants were also issued certificates from GRI Headquarters in Netherlands.



Testimonial

When it comes to CSR and sustainability reporting there are loads of Courses that will give you what you need, but Arabia CSR Network has managed to make it happen. They have enabled me, coached me and given me the confidence to start my journey as GRI specialist. It's engaging and it does fulfill your main objectives.

Raed Toubeh

Sr. CSR Officer | Hikma Pharmaceuticals

Member News

EGA launches Women's Network on Emirati Women's Day

In celebration of Emirati Women's Day 2020 on the **26th August**, Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA) announced the launch of the EGA Women's Network to signal the company's commitment to improving gender diversity both within and in the heavy industry sector in the UAE.

The aim of EGA Women's Network will be to promote a form of community for women where they can share knowledge and experiences.

The network will give a voice and a platform to women, enabling them to promote and inspire an ecosystem that fosters awareness, harmony and hope.

The network is launching with a series of virtual panel discussions titled, "How Does She Do It?!", where female employees will be invited to connect with inspiring women both inside and outside of the EGA to hear their stories and share best practices.

Speaking on the occasion, EGA Chief Executive Officer said that improving gender diversity and maximising the contribution of all should be an important aspiration for all businesses.

She further added that gender diversity is recognised as an important contributor to business success, but it is also challenging to achieve in heavy industry and requires us to be proactive to achieve our goals.

Mirroring her thought, the chairwoman of the EGA Women's Network and General Counsel of EGA also added that UAE is one of a few countries in the world where more women graduate in science and engineering than men, which presents the EGA with a great opportunity to grow its female talent pipeline.

She said that we have some incredible women at the EGA across all departments and geographies.

The network is being created to provide a forum to assist those women to develop the contacts and skillsets that they need to progress and achieve their personal goals.

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Member News

DEWA Achieves Outstanding Results in Study on Strategic Planning and Execution by Palladium Group

According to a Strategic Planning and Execution Practice Positioning Study conducted by the internationally renowned authority for Balanced Scorecard framework, Palladium Group, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, DEWA, achieved outstanding results. The results further boost the soaring heights of DEWA's reputation which was evaluated on the basis of its implementation of the Execution Premium Assessment, XPA. Furthermore, the organisation's strategy and practices were compared with 200 global best in class 'Hall of Fame' organisations. In strategic planning, DEWA was able to score 4.3 while the Hall of Fame Average Score is 3.8.

Speaking on the occasion, the MD and CEO of DEWA said, "Our strategy is inspired by the directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, who transformed the government work to compete with the private sector in many areas. We believe that the right planning is key for proper management to achieve desirable results and pave the way for the future. This is according to long-term strategies that are approved after several brainstorming sessions among our teams, who

research and identify the requirements and responsibilities of each team member. This ensures keeping pace with rapid change and maintaining excellence. We are committed to raising awareness and strategic thinking among the society to include all stakeholders, to provide the highest levels of performance and enhance competitiveness. Besides, each phase of this plan is evaluated to identify the gaps, if any, and outline proactive solutions for the upcoming phases to achieve quality results that serve our customers and develop our organisation. This achieves the UAE Centennial 2071, to make the UAE the best country in the world and our vision to become a globally leading sustainable innovative corporation". He further added that DEWA has always adopted ambitious strategies ensuring the water and energy sectors reach advanced positions globally. In 2000, DEWA began applying the Balanced Scorecard framework and continued to develop its strategic planning mechanism to become the first government organisation in the Middle East and North Africa to win the Hall of Fame – the highest international award in strategic planning.

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National News

Working Towards a Smart and Sustainable Sharjah

Since being given the title of the Cultural Capital of the Arab World by UNESCO in 1998, Sharjah has been undergoing a trendy yet sustainable makeover that hints at bringing new, game-changing projects such as the upcoming Sharjah Sustainable City and Aljada community, whilst staying true to the heritage and culture of UAE.

In this regard there is a \$544.5m (AED2bn) mixed-use development that is currently being developed on a 668,901m² plot, featuring 1,120 villas.

The project is being undertaken by the Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) and Diamond Developers with an aim to accelerate Sharjah Sustainable City's environmental sustainability and low carbon footprint through solar energy generation.

There are other environmentally sustainable practices in the offering as well including indoor and outdoor farming and recycling of water and waste.

The city aims to reduce the cost of living through offering economic sustainability such as 50% reduced utility bills as compared to similar homes in Sharjah. Furthermore, Sharjah Sustainable City promises to use high-quality building materials, equipment and construction systems, including well-insulated precast concrete in a smart and environmentally friendly manner. Additionally, the city will offer health care facilities and active lifestyle elements including a utility park for knowledge sharing with the schools, universities and the community at large.

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National News

Emirati Women's Day

On **28th August**, "The Emirati Women's Day", was celebrated under the slogan "Woman is a model for tolerance" in honour of the triumphant march of women led by Her Highness Sheikhha Fatima bint Mubarak, President of the Women's Union and Chair of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, Supreme Chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation, the "Mother of Emirates", who played a major role in portraying Emirati women as a proven active and essential partner in the society and bearers of distinguished positions among the wise leadership and major contributors in building And elevating the state through their participation in all sectors and efficient decision-making and most importantly, Her Highness' role in empowering Emirati women to enter the battlefield of life in all social, educational, environmental, economic and political fields and to make decisions, not just participate in it.

Several facts emphasised the effective role of women in the Emirati society:

Her effectiveness in decision - making and her leadership positions according to the report for the year 2019 issued by the Center for Arab Women Participation, stated that her presence

reached half the membership of the National Council. As of now Emirati women occupy 66% of public sector jobs.

Her contribution to the national economy as the number of Emirati businesswomen reached more than 23,000 who are running various projects that contribute to the development of the economic sector.

On the academic level, half of the students from all colleges and majors are Emirati female students, where the astronomy sector is the most prominent field in which the "The Daughters of the Emirates" have dominated and achieved an active presence.

Emirati women have transitionally moved from the stage of participation to the stage of decision-making in leadership and administrative positions. Today, Emirati Women are a source of pride for her country and an emblem of success in every creative field.

ArabiaCSRNetworkwouldlike to extend the highest congratulations and blessings to the "Mother of the Emirates", Her Highness Sheikhha Fatima bint Mubarak, for her great efforts to empower and enhance the pivotal role of woman in the blessed development process and instilling the values of tolerance, coexistence and peace in the UAE society and the world.

International News

1st Survey in Latin America & the Caribbean on "How Banks Incorporate Climate Change in their Risk Management"

The UN Environment Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) and CAF - Development Bank of Latin America in collaboration with the Latin American Federation of Banks (FELABAN) published a report titled "How banks incorporate climate change into their risk management - 1st survey in Latin America and the Caribbean".

The report was based on the study of almost 80 banks from 11 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that actively participated in the region's first comprehensive survey on how the banks are incorporating climate change into their risk management.

The sample used in the study represents 54% of the total assets of the Latin America and Caribbean market. In doing so, the study throws a light on the existing knowledge levels, current commitments and future goals with regards to climate risk management of the banking sector in the region.

The survey characterised participating banks by the nature of their social-environmental commitment, focusing on the Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) factors. This allowed for an initial understanding of each bank's level of maturity and capacity in matters of sustainability and their degree of knowledge on the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) of the Financial Stability Board (FSB).

The consequent results indicated that there is an increasing interest in these matters and that the number of banks that have developed internal ESG systems has increased and also adhered to external codes.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

The Path Towards Sustainable Sustainability



By | Girish Ramachandran, Ilan Oshri and Julia Kotlarsky

At a time when COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on businesses and industries globally, it is important to keep in mind that there are other dangers and hurdles that are less apparent but equally devastating. Although the world has come together in the face of the danger posed by the pandemic, business leaders are still slow in realising that we live in a global scenario that is highly complex, inter-connected and multi-faceted. As a result, there is a need for businesses to be prepared for a situations dealing with social, environmental and market related with regards to the pandemic.

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Although businesses can no longer deny the importance of sustainability, they are still reluctant when it comes to placing it at the core of their business strategy on the misplaced belief that the costs outweighs the benefits at this time. Even those businesses that have embraced sustainability are still only focusing on the most basic interpretation of organisational sustainability, such as green practices and maintaining carbon neutrality.

What is infact required is for organisations to acknowledge the fact the real impact of an entity that is competitive encompasses more than internal practices and lies in the creation and sustenance of a "sustainability ecosystem", that promotes and fosters sustainability on multiple fronts. In building such an ecosystem, there are three building blocks that are crucial in ensuring that the construction of the entity is long lasting and self-sustaining. These are:



**Islands of
Sustainability Initiatives**



**Shaping Partner
Sustainability Practices**



**Transforming
Communities**





Best Practices 2019 From The Archives Municipality and Planning Department of Ajman Arabia CSR Awards 2019 - 2nd Runner Up - Public Sector Category

Profile

At the Municipality and Planning Department of Ajman (MUPD), sustainability is part and parcel of the organisations DNA as it continues towards its mission and goal of enhancing its activities to ensure the well-being and happiness of the citizens in line with the vision of the leadership of Ajman. MUPD was established in 1968 under an Act issued by His Highness Sheikh Rashid bin Humaid Al Nuaimi, Supreme Council Member of the UAE and Ruler of Ajman. The vision of the MUPD is to create a happy society that contributes to building a green economy, stimulated by a distinguished government in harmony with the spirit of the union.



Summary

The Emirate of Ajman looks with pride to Municipality and Planning Department of Ajman, which spares no effort to promote the Emirate in various fields in an effort to provide a dignified life to every citizen and resident. The Department has developed a long-term plan and adopted a clear strategy for the development of infrastructure according to an integrated system that takes into account the requirements of the environment, health and safety. The MUPD continues to ensure that the sustainable development of Ajman leads to a constant push for investments in sustainable infrastructure and roads.

The MUPD has designed a set of strategic and operational indicators, aligned with national and competitive agenda and sectoral indicators of Ajman Vision 2021, which are in cooperation with federal entities, such as Ministry of Climate Change and Environment; Ministry of Infrastructure Development and local councils such as Ajman Government Executive Council, Department of Economic Development and Ajman Police. The Estidama Programme in collaboration with the Urban Planning and Municipalities Department, Abu Dhabi further seeks to apply sustainability standards to all developmental projects. The organisation was able to achieve 90% of its strategic objectives in 2018 as it exceeded the targets of National Agenda indicators such as Air Quality and Food Safety Index.

The training and motivational programmes developed by the Municipality catalyse the sustainability awareness and develop the technical and behavioural skills of the front and back staff at customer centres. Through such committed initiatives, MUPD has been achieving sustainable excellence in Environmental, Social, Economic and Cultural areas. It is due to these achievements that the Department has won 17 awards during 2018 - 2019. Some of these include the Green Era Award for Sustainability and Dubai Human Development Award 2018, Eco-friendly Park Award for Zayed Oasis Initiative amongst others.

