

Upcoming Trainings & Events

Online Training
GRI Standards for
Sustainability Reporting

Date: 3rd - 5th November, 2020

Certified Training Partner
GRI
Arabia CSR Network
United Arab Emirates

**دورة تدريبية عن إستراتيجية و قيادة
المسؤولية الإجتماعية للمؤسسات
عبر الاتصال المرئي عن بعد**

العمل الضميري
الإستراتيجي
السمعة
الصورة
الإدارة
الشفافة
الاستدامة
CSR
الارتباط
نمو على المدى الطويل

24-22 ديسمبر ، 2020 ، دبي

**دورة تدريبية متقدمة في
المسؤولية الاجتماعية
للمؤسسات
عبر الاتصال المرئي عن بعد**

**29-27 ديسمبر 2020
دبي ، دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة**

Note from President and CEO	2
ACSRN News & Events	3
Member News	5
National & International News	6
Feature, Blogs, White Papers, Articles...	7
Best Practice	8

We are Social! Follow us on [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Instagram](#) [arabiaccsr](#)



Note from the President & CEO Habiba Al Mar'ashi

It is indeed a proud moment for the UAE to have secured the number 1 rank in the Arab World in the indicator of economic recovery from COVID-19.

The world needs to start thinking differently and build robust strategies for the post COVID-19 recovery plan and for any future crisis (Please read more on page no. 6).

Furthermore, in 'The Future Possibilities Report 2020' published on the occasion of 75th anniversary of United Nations, the Government of UAE has embedded the six transformational trends for countries to leverage from the possibilities and opportunities for economic growth and societal welfare. Such achievements and contributions speak volumes about the proactive leadership and cooperation in the UAE.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey my deepest congratulations to all the winners and the participants for their steady and invincible commitment towards CSR and sustainability as witnessed in the 13th cycle of the Arabia CSR Awards that we concluded in a grand ceremony on the **6th October**. The platform that we built in 2008 as Arabia CSR Awards has truly stood on its foundation and mission to Share, Celebrate and Inspire. The Awards Gala, with all safety measures against COVID-19 was organised on **6th October** and became the first physical public event in the UAE since the outburst of the pandemic. I am thankful to our sponsors and supporters for their valuable time and contribution to make this year's cycle a unique success.

Apart from the Awards Gala, ACSRN also conducted an online training on the GRI Standards for sustainability reporting and workshops on stakeholder engagement and materiality mapping. We appreciate the participation received from key entities representing different sectors such as health, telecommunications, industry and food. Moving ahead to the end of the year, we have the last GRI Standards training in English, in addition to the CSR Advanced and CSR Strategy and Leadership trainings in Arabic. I would like to motivate the businesses and organisations in the Region to take these trainings and build strong sustainability foundations in their networks.

I was delighted to participate in several meetings of the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance in October that brought together members and representatives of member states under the direction of UN Secretary-General.

We have put a brief summary of the two engagements in this issue to provide a gist of the achievements we have made in the 1st year of the Alliance and plan to materialise them into further progress in the coming year. I was privileged to present my suggestions on establishing core industry-specific SDG - related reporting metrics, effective collaboration between investors and businesses, and recommendations to scale up SDG investments.

I would like to end my note by welcoming Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA) and thanking them for renewing their effective collaboration with us as a Platinum Member. We look forward to achieve greater heights and invite our readers to join us too as we believe in 'Building Partnerships for a Sustainable Future'.





ACSRN News & Events

Engaging with GISD Alliance

1. The President & CEO of Arabia CSR Network joined an interesting meeting organised by the GISD on **8th October** that discussed the key updates on two recent sustainable financing tools. A presentation on 'BLOC Smart Africa Fund' was delivered by the Bamboo Capital Partners. The Fund is an Africa-led initiative that is working actively in collaboration with governments and African entrepreneurs to support the digitisation of Africa.

The second presentation by the Bank of America featured the 'Equality Progress Sustainability Bond'. The Bond is the 1st Corporate Sustainability Bond dedicated to the financial empowerment of African-American and Hispanic communities in the United States, specifically to support racial equality, healthcare and access to finance. ACSRN is honoured to join such rich engagements and be a part of strong initiatives that contribute to sustainable development.

2. ACSRN President & CEO participated in the virtual 2nd annual meeting of GISD Alliance on **14th October**. The Alliance, which was convened in October of 2019, interacted with H.E Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General to scale up investment in sustainable development with 3 main objectives:

1. Identify deliverables for the GISD Alliance and ensure commitment from GISD Members to their implementation
2. Engage with Member States on the realisation of the GISD Alliance deliverables
3. Raise global awareness for the work of the GISD Alliance through media outreach

The UN-Secretary General called 2021 a year of 'make it' or 'break it', and urged the members to be bold in what they do and on putting pressures on the governments to make tangible decisions towards a net zero carbon footprint. He said that the private sector leadership will be more important than ever and added, "The timely achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is at serious risk. To reverse our course, a fundamental change of financing and investment is needed to place sustainability at the core of the global economic and financial system".

The session particularly focused on the GISD Alliance's deliverables and value proposition identified by the Alliance Members. The ACSRN President & CEO put forth her recommendations for advancing a set of core industry-specific SDG-related reporting metrics, wherein she explained the importance of industry-specific impact performance indicators for better decision-making in terms of financial value and preparedness in times of future crisis. She said that the Alliance needs to work with investors and businesses to adopt industry-specific standards, while sharpening the existing reporting systems by aligning their disclosures with relevant goals. "There is immense potential for the GISD to promote these industry-specific reporting metrics that business can adopt to set quantitative targets that will result in better disclosure" she added. The members also shared their insights on developing solutions to scale up SDG investments, shifting incentives along the investment chain towards a longer term, sustainable perspective, and coordinating GISD actions with financial system and policy making bodies.

3. ACSRN President & CEO on **14th October**, also interacted with her co-members of the Alliance and Member State representatives on the future deliverables. The meeting focused on the possibilities for effective collaboration between the Alliance, Governments and the multilateral system solutions to scale up investments for the SDGs in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Renewed, Recharged and Reinforced report, Sustainable Development Investing (SDI) and Call to Action for COVID-19 bonds are impactful tools that the Alliance has successfully launched in its 1st year of inception to enable the world to contribute in an inclusive and sustainable recovery. The participants in this session emphasised on the possibilities of collaboration between the Alliance, Governments and the multilateral system on solutions to scale up investments for the SDGs in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The course of action to better align business activities with the SDGs include,

- Develop platforms to catalyse finance and investment flows to developing countries in support of the SDGs.
- Create a clear and unified set of information for investors on how companies are performing on sustainability criteria.
- Incentivise financial institutions and corporations to take a longer term, sustainable approach to their investments
- Coordinate GISD actions with major policy making groups (like the G20) and financial system bodies to ensure that its recommendations are included in their priorities.

ACSRN President & CEO spoke about the SDG reporting standards and stated, "The entities within governments, private businesses, regional organisations, and civil society groups need to be empowered with the tools and best practices related to SDG reporting". She further shared her strong views on the health systems as an important component of the macro economy and a driver of economic growth to improve people's opportunities in jobs and productive labour force.





ACSRN News & Events

4. The ACSRN President & CEO attended on **20th October**, the online session organised by the GISD working group-2 to discuss a potential and a dynamic web platform that will be a clear pipeline for linking SDG-needs to actionable investment opportunities. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) SDG Impact initiative has developed tools to accelerate investment towards achieving the SDGs. This Global SDG Investment Platform would assist GISD members in developing and scaling up their own investment strategies and activities, while benefitting the global financial system. It will help in bridging the gap between UN Member States' national SDG strategies and needs, on the one hand, and global private-sector financing and capital, on the other.

13th Cycle of Arabia CSR Awards

"The decade of action makes our work increasingly important and relevant. Our efforts to activate CSR and Sustainability in this part of the world through networking, engaging, skills and capacity development, continues to be centered on the role of business in sustainable development, and the triple pillars of economy, society and environment", said ACSRN President & CEO at the Awards Gala on **6th October, 2020**.

The winners of the 13th cycle of Arabia CSR Awards were recognised and felicitated in a befitting platform under the kind patronage of H.E Eng. Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan Bin Saqr Al-Qasimi, Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Civil Aviation Department and member of the Executive Council of the Government of Ras Al Khaimah. The Awards Gala was one of the first public physical events post the COVID-19 outbreak in the UAE, sponsored by McDonald's UAE and Tristar Group. It has also unfailingly received the carbon neutral event stamp courtesy of FARNEK. The 2020 Awards was also externally verified by one of the world's most reputed providers of business assurance, DNV.GL.

Regarded as the 'Green Oscars of the Middle East', the awards recognised the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and sustainability strategies of 20 green champions from across the region. They were selected from entries representing 9 countries in the Middle East, covering 34 sectors, including 'Automotive Industry,' which was introduced this year. The Awards is built on international benchmarks such as the Ten Principles of United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model and the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Since the inception of the Arabia CSR Awards in 2008, the Network has been celebrating the inspiring journey of exploring, commending and sharing the best practices nationally, regionally and globally.

The 13th cycle was the most challenging year in the entire history of the Awards due to the outbreak of and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, the commitment of the ACSRN and driving force among the entities of Arab Region, eventually made the 2020 Awards Gala the most unique one. "As we address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and work towards the new reality, the Arab region has yet again proved its perseverance and persistence in undertaking CSR initiatives to enhance the welfare of the community and to preserve the environment while at the same time ensuring the sustainability of their operations and businesses" concluded ACSRN President & CEO.

The official Communications Partner was ASDA/BCW. The Climate Control Middle East, The Sustainability, Dubai Global News, Mazaj FM, Radio Dahab, 88.4 City FM and Khaleej Times were the media partners.

The Environmental Partner was the Emirates Environmental Group. The Arabia CSR Network calls on organisations in the Arab Region to be a part of the prestigious awards in its 14th Cycle to be launched in January 2021.



Winners	Country	Organisation Name
Small Business Category		
Winner	UAE	Al Etihad Energy Services LLC
1 st Runner Up	UAE	Transworld Group
2 nd Runner Up	UAE	Acer Middle East
Medium Business Category		
Winner	UAE	Can Pack Middle East LLC
Large Business Category		
Winner	Bahrain	Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC)
1 st Runner Up	Kuwait	ALSAYER Group Holding Co.
2 nd Runner Up	UAE	Accenture Middle East
Public Sector Category		
Winner	UAE	Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA)
1 st Runner Up	UAE	Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Energy Sector Category		
Winner	UAE	Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC)

Winners	Country	Organisation Name
Hospitality Sector Category		
Winner	UAE	Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha
1 st Runner Up	UAE	Two Seasons Hotel Dubai
Financial Sector Category		
Winner	Morocco	Bank of Africa BMCE Group
Healthcare Sector Category		
Winner	UAE	Aster DM Healthcare
Automotive Industry Category		
Special Recognition	UAE	Avis UAE Rent a Car
Partnerships & Collaborations Category		
Winner	Bahrain	Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC)
1 st Runner Up (Tie)	UAE	Tristar Group
1 st Runner Up (Tie)	Bahrain	Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC)
2 nd Runner Up (Tie)	Morocco	ACWA Power Maroc
2 nd Runner Up (Tie)	KSA	SEDCO Holding

Organised by



Silver Sponsors



Environmental Partner



Official Communications Partner



Assurance Provider



Technical Support



Media Partners



Carbon Neutral event courtesy of





ACSRN News & Events

The 55th GRI Standards Training

The Arabia CSR Network has been conducting trainings on Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards virtually since the beginning of 2020 because of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Developed and released by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), these are the leading and most highly accepted standards for sustainability reporting worldwide.

The Network conducted yet another virtual training on **11th - 13th October 2020**, which brought the total number to 55 sessions since 2011, when it became the 1st certified training partner to GRI in the Arab World. These standards are critical tools for companies to report on their sustainability impacts in a consistent and credible way. This enhances global comparability, transparency and accountability that channelise

tangible contributions in the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals. Through a series of lectures, discussions, exercises and case studies in the 3-day training, the Network has been engaging with the entities and individuals from various sectors across the Arab Region. Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was one of the chief organisations that has benefitted from this certified training recently.

The training registered 9 participants who actively engaged in discussions and case studies of CSR and sustainability to enhance their knowledge and skills on objectives, targets, strategies, policies and performance indicators. On the completion of the training, all the participants were also issued certificates from GRI Headquarters in Netherlands.

The President and CEO of ACSRN highlighted the key updates from the SDGs 2020 Report and stressed on the impacts posed by the pandemic. She said "The need and urgency to align the core and operational activities has become predominant for an inclusive and sustainable development moving forward."

Workshops on Stakeholder Engagement and Materiality Mapping

Arabia CSR Network organised two workshops on **14th October**, wherein the team of Dubai Health Authority were trained on the concepts and strategies of stakeholder engagement and materiality mapping. Further on **28th October**, ACSRN conducted a separate virtual workshop on materiality mapping.

These workshops are designed by the ACSRN, with the input from its wide global network of experts in the field of CSR and Sustainability. They are designed in a way to help organisations develop insightful knowledge and skills for sustainability reporting and CSR activities for their respective entities.

Member News

Vehicle-To-Grid (V2G) Partnership Project

ABB's global e-mobility leadership has introduced the bi-directional charging technology to a Vehicle-To-Grid (V2G) partnership project. As a part of contract with DREEV, a joint venture between Électricité de France (EDF) and Nuvve, specialising in intelligent charging for EVs (electric vehicles), ABB will supply its brand-new 11 kW bi-directional charging technology, specially designed for V2G. It provides a concrete answer to the energy challenges faced by network operators, while meeting the most stringent grid compliance requirements

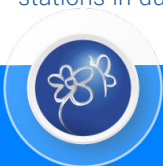
as per the global benchmark for V2G charging. "The development of this intelligent bi-directional charging solution will be key in enabling the next step in the evolution of our e-mobility ecosystem and represents a key milestone in ABB's sustainability strategy," stated the Head of ABB's global business for E-mobility Infrastructure Solutions.

please click for read more



New Marine Station at Dubai Harbor

Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC), a corporate member of ACSRN will be opening its 6th marine station in the UAE at Dubai Harbor in November 2020. This is further to the marine station that was opened in Um Sequim recently. With its futuristic design, both marine service stations include innovative technologies to enhance energy efficiency with features such as Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) air-conditioning to cut down electricity use by as much as 35 % and LED lighting that helps to achieve 50% reduction in use of energy. The stations also have a vapour recovery unit, high-efficacy LED signages and solar deck lighting on the pontoons. The new marine station is equipped with two 50-metre long pontoons in the sea and has six fuel dispensers, fed through underground fuel tanks in addition to a ZOOM convenience store. The entire station is set on an area of 37,690 square feet. Please click to read more, <https://www.enoc.com/en/media-centre/news-releases/press-release-detail/id/224/enoc-group-opens-two-marine-service-stations-in-dubai>





Member News

EGA Renews its Corporate Membership

Arabia CSR Network is glad to announce that Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA) has renewed its corporate membership with ACSRN for another year. EGA aspires to be measured amongst the world's most responsible metals and mining companies and in 2017; EGA became the 1st Middle East headquartered company to join the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative. ACSRN congratulates EGA for its consistent and responsible approach towards the environment and sustainable development.

Know more about EGA in the link below, <https://www.ega.ae/en>

National News

UAE Ranked 1st for Indicator of Economic Recovery from COVID-19

The UAE is ranked the 1st in the indicator of economic recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 in the Arab World by the Horizon Research Group. The UAE also came at the forefront of the Arab countries proving its strength, foremost of which are the strong institutional systems, the high digital capabilities of various sectors and high educational level of the population.

The strong performance of the state in its various institutions during dealing with the pandemic from its outbreak until now was also reflected in the results achieved. The UAE ranked among the top 25 in the world in many sub-indicators, as it ranked 5th in the "health level of the population" index, and the 15th position in the "labour market strength" index, the 17th position in the "debt level" index, the 19th position in the "governance and social capital" index, and the 21st position in the "digital economy" index.

The UAE has always put the health of the population in the country at the utmost priority. The Minister of Health and Community Protection and Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs said, "The UAE's achievement of the fifth rank in the world in the "Population Health File" indicator reflects the relentless efforts made by the UAE government to confront the global pandemic, taking into account that the population's health in the country is the most important priority, pursuant to the wise leadership's vision that the human being is the basis of development and its main focus, and that he must always be healthy in order to ensure that he plays his role in the development of society and the sustainability of its prosperity".

please click to read more



International News

Gold Mining's Contribution to the SDGs

The World Gold Council (WGC) has recently published a report titled, Gold Mining's Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals featuring 39 case studies on how its members are bringing positive change in global partnerships, social inclusion, economic development, and responsible operations, energy and the environment. The WGC has released the 'Responsible Gold Mining Principles' that set out the responsible ESG principles in large-scale gold last year, and is now supporting the formalisation of artisanal gold mining to address the poor social and environmental practices.

please click to read more



Infrastructure Debt Fund (IDF)

The Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance has been pushing the implementation of Sustainable Bonds and during its online conference in July 2020, the Blue Orchard introduced the Infrastructure Debt Fund (IDF) initiative to advance the sustainable infrastructure in emerging markets (EM) and frontier markets (FM) with strong climate focus. This debt investment platform was founded in 2001 as a UN initiative; it is committed towards integrated environmental, social and governance (ESG) & Impact framework, clear impact targets and measurable contribution to the SDGs. Further to the

launch of its Infrastructure Debt strategy, they have announced the return model from USD fixed (7-9%) to USD floating (Libor+ 600-700). The Blue Orchard has established its niche as a largest microfinance fund worldwide. Arabia CSR Network encourages its network of private companies to explore the investment opportunities to contribute in sustainable infrastructure. The first closing of the IDF will be in November 2020.

please click to read more





FEATURE ARTICLE

'People want a Job with Purpose': Why Businesses are Becoming more Sustainable



Visit Please
click here



By Anna Turns, featured in The Guardian

As more businesses and industries focus on reducing their carbon footprints, this could usher in a green industrial revolution, kick starting a boom in the green jobs market. In agriculture alone, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that responding to the climate emergency will create 200 million full-time jobs globally by 2050. Searious Business, a Dutch company committed to preventing plastic pollution, has seen a sharp increase in job applications from "people wanting a job with purpose", especially from generation Z. "Polluting industries are having trouble attracting the right people to help them future-proof their business. The key is to be able to demonstrate the right culture that is contributing to a step-change," says the Founding Director of Searious Business.

A successful transition to a green economy will create more stable jobs. A 2018 International Labour Organisation's report estimated that 6 million jobs could be created by adopting a more circular economy approach. Globally 1.2 billion jobs directly rely on a healthy environment – for example, fishing, farming and forestry – and environmental degradation and heat stress will threaten these jobs.

Banks are all about investing, often that can be in fossil fuels and arms, but choosing to bank ethically boosts the green infrastructure across today's economy. The CEO of Triodos Bank UK believes that banks can support green jobs by financing positive impact and environmental innovators. For example, Triodos Bank UK has funded many businesses such as Pod Point and Ember that are pioneering electric vehicle and infrastructure technology.

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation's 2019 report, How the Circular Economy Tackles Climate Change, demonstrated that if the circular economy was adopted in just five areas (Food, Plastic, Steel, Aluminium and Cement), annual greenhouse gas emissions from those industries could be reduced by 40% in 2050, based on current projections. That's equivalent to eliminating all transport emissions globally. So better financing is crucial.

Sustainability needs to be ingrained into the design stage across all sectors. One designer keen to use fewer products that last longer is Bernice Pan, founder of the sustainable fashion brand Deploy, which up cycles offcuts while avoiding overproduction and stock discarding. Pan, who leads a team of 10 and is currently seeking new staff, believes that creating green jobs goes far beyond employing people with new stand-alone roles such as "sustainability officer". "All jobs should be greener," says Pan. For her, sustainability permeates every decision, from whether to discard an old laptop or buy new office equipment – just as much as it runs throughout an ethical supply chain.





Best Practices 2019 From The Archives AL JAZEERA INTERNATIONAL CATERING LLC Arabia CSR Awards 2019 - Winner - Medium Business Category

Al Jazeera International Catering Company (JIC) is one of the top brands in the hospitality sector in the United Arab Emirates. It was established in 2008 as a result of a partnership between Force 10 Group and Gulf Catering LLC. Over the years, this collaboration has resulted in the merging of over 5 decades of experience and expertise. Al Jazeera caters to corporate, industrial and individual clients and provides them with unparalleled excellence and quality services.



Summary

As part of sustainability innovation, JIC developed a best practice called Our Planet – Our Responsibility, this project is based on 4E strategy through which all stakeholders are educated, enabled, empowered and engaged. As a catering service provider, JIC understands its responsibility in food waste reduction, environmental impact and economic development. Process related to procurement and production is streamlined as part of the Project Our planet – Our Responsibility. Sustainability has been integrated as an organisational culture and as a part of JIC's operation, through structured CSR strategic approach over the years and demonstrated as an industry leader, incorporating innovation and partnership into its sustainability approach. The company's innovative approach towards sustainability has enabled it to set industry benchmark in global forums. JIC's clear strategy plan 2020 for the organisation is linked to the relevant SDGs that focuses on the following key areas,

- Development of a multi ethnic work force
- Support to the local economy by reinvesting
- Nurture people through continuous learning and skill improvement
- Develop the local talent in the hospitality sector
- Operate in a sustainable manner, ensuring less impact to the community and the environment
- Design and deliver sustainable products and service, which exceed stakeholder requirements
- To be preferred employer service provider within its sector of operation

The company has implemented international standards for Food safety, Environmental management and Occupational Health and Safety Series (OSHAS). JIC practices the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model where sustainability is a key criterion. JIC joined the GR initiative since 2013 and since then, it has been reporting its sustainability practices performance using GRI Standards and guidance which are assessed by 3rd party certification bodies i.e. DNV.GL/SGS. JIC follows RADAR methodology as part of its business excellence framework and implements the same for its community involvement as well. To understand the level of performance and implement improvement measures, JIC ensures reviews of the performance through feedback from all stakeholder groups in the form of surveys, meetings, email communications etc. Further, JIC has an Idea Management Process as a part of its Agility Management Process, which clearly defines the criteria required for evaluation of suggested ideas, innovations and hence, guides the evaluation committee for structured evaluation.

