



Upcoming Trainings

الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
الاجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network®

**Online Certified Training
on Fundamentals
of CSR & Sustainability**

Date: 8th - 10th February 2022

الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
الاجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network®

**ONLINE CSR ADVANCED
CERTIFIED TRAINING
COURSE**

15th - 17th February 2022

**Online
Stakeholder
Engagement
Workshop**

Date: 17th March 2022

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Note from the President & CEO Habiba Al Mar'ashi

Hello Arabia CSR Network members,

I trust that the New Year has started on a positive note and is proving to be a successful one for you all.

For us at the Arabia CSR Network, our start to the year is always marked by the launch of the much-loved and awaited programme the "Arabia CSR Awards". Once again we are calling on the sustainability champions of the Arab region, organisations that are doing innovative and high-impact work to improve the lives of their customers, their communities, their employees and the environment.

The Arabia CSR Awards is a very prominent sustainability benchmark in the region, and it is an excellent platform for recognising organisations that have demonstrated exceptional leadership, creativity and strong commitments to CSR and sustainability.

The Arabia CSR Awards has established itself as the most rigorous and highly acclaimed award of its kind on the global level, as it has sought to integrate and implement the strongest international guidelines and frameworks. Over the past fourteen cycles, the network has received 1,319 submissions from 1,236 organisations from 14 countries in the Arab world, representing 43 industries and businesses.

This year's cycle – the 15th to date - is available in fifteen categories to choose from. We call on all government and private institutions, joint ventures, industries and social enterprises, of all sizes, to apply for this prestigious sustainability award.

From the 18th-20th January, we conducted the Certified GRI Standards training for sustainability reporting via a virtual platform. The training included a session on the support

services, resources and tools offered by GRI to reporting organisations.

The participants were able to put their newly acquired knowledge to the test at the end through a highly effective exercise in which they were asked to review and evaluate two GRI Standards compliant reports issued from the region.

If you would like to take a deep dive into CSR topics ranging from biodiversity to waste to emissions – to HR and ESG practices, we highly recommend you to consider signing up your CSR and other related team members for our CSR training courses available throughout the year.

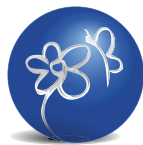
This month we also participated in the UNHCR Philanthropy Circle conducted by Accenture. Accenture has made sustainability one of their foremost responsibilities because they believe that it will create the most powerful force for change in our generation. Last year, Accenture supported the UNHCR by conducting an in-depth research on the philanthropy landscape in the Middle East region.

I had the pleasure during the month to participate as a Jury member in the Sharjah Excellence Award. I look forward to celebrate the winning entities with Sharjah Chamber of Commerce in the coming months.

I was also very delighted to join the World Majlis on 30th January under the topic "Healthier World, Healthier People: Designing Spaces that Heal our Planet" as a panel speaker I discoursed with the other co-speakers on the diverse points of views on this important topic of our time. You can read more about this engagement in page 4.

We'd like to reiterate that we all have a long way to go to be classified as sustainability models. Nonetheless, with our collective achievements to date, I am very hopeful that we will have a very productive journey ahead of us.





ACSRN News

UNHCR Philanthropy Circle

Accenture organised on **11th January** an event titled "Philanthropy Circle" with the purpose of delivering on the promise of technology and human ingenuity. Sustainability spans environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues, from transitioning to a zero-carbon economy to human rights to inclusion and diversity. Furthermore, Accenture has made sustainability one of their greatest responsibilities—not just because it's the right thing to do, but also because they believe that it will create the most powerful force for change in our generation.

In fact, last fiscal year Accenture supported the UNHCR in conducting an in-depth research on the philanthropy landscape in the Middle East region. Refugees and migrants are more and more relevant in the diverse workforce that Accenture would like to see in the future.

Accenture took the opportunity to build an equitable future and solidarity not just in words, but in action. The exclusive post research event described it as an interactive forum that discussed the results of the analysis, vision and tools to enact change as leaders of the circle.

Arabia CSR Awards 15th Cycle Press Launch

Once again the search is on for the Sustainability Champions in the Arab world! The Arabia CSR Network announced the opening of nominations for the 15th round of the Arabia CSR Awards, during a hybrid press conference held in Dubai at the Stella Di Mare Hotel - Dubai Marina. The launch was attended by media and many representatives from government and private entities both physically and virtually.

The Awards have always aimed at promoting, acknowledging and appreciating CSR and Sustainability champions that are operating in the Arab region. These awards have been declared to be the "Arab Sustainability Benchmark" recognising organisations that have demonstrated exceptional leadership, creativity and strong commitments to CSR and sustainability.

Speaking at the conference, Ms. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder, President & CEO of the Network, said, "The Arabia CSR Award has established itself as the most rigorous and highly acclaimed award of its kind in the region and beyond. The way it has sought to integrate and implement the strongest international guidelines and frameworks in the Arab Region and bridge the gap between theory and practice is beautiful. The network has received in the last 14 years over 1,319 submissions from 1,236 organisations from 14 countries in the Arab world, representing 43 industries and businesses.

This year's awards include **15 categories** to choose from, an organisation can apply to the one that best fits its description and activities. The categories are: Small Public Sector Organisations/Departments, Medium Public Sector Organisations/Departments, Large Public Sector Organisations/Departments, Large-sized Enterprises, Medium-sized Enterprises, Small-sized Enterprises, Energy, Financial Services, Social Enterprise, Construction, Hospitality, Healthcare, Best New Business, Automotive Industry and Partnerships & Collaborations (projects/programmes/initiatives).

Mrs. Al Mar'ashi called on all government and private institutions, joint ventures and social enterprises in the Arab region to apply and win the prestigious award. She said that the door for candidacy is open to entities of any size, sector and geographical location within the Arab World.

The following are the key dates of the year 2022 awards:

Wednesday, 12 th January	Press Launch of Arabia CSR Awards in Dubai, UAE Registrations are open for the 15 th Cycle (Hybrid)
Thursday, 7 th April	Arabia CSR Awards 2022 Clinic – A workshop to assist applying organisations and those interested to apply (Virtual)
Thursday, 30 th June	Deadline to submit the Awards application. 17:00 UAE time
Friday, 1 st July - Monday, 15 th August	Review of applications by ACSRA Jury Panel
1 st Week of September	Announcement of short-listed Organisations
Wednesday, 5 th October	Arabia CSR Awards Gala Event





GRI Standards Training

As the 1st Certified Training Partner of GRI in the Arabic Speaking Middle East Country that provides best practice for impact reporting, ACSRN organised the 1st GRI Standards certified training for 2022 on **18th – 20th January** via a virtual platform. This was the 64th training overall that has been carried out by ACSRN with more than 440 professionals having completed it successfully.

The training included a session on the support services, resources and tools offered by GRI to reporting organisations. The participants were able to put their newly acquired knowledge to the test at the end through a highly effective exercise in which they were asked to review and evaluate two GRI Standards compliant reports issued from the region.

The GRI Sustainability Reporting training imparts knowledge about reporting by removing misconceptions regarding sustainability and explaining the benefits of sustainable practices for organisations. Through the training, delegates get to learn how to intensify their understanding about how best to use sustainability reporting for strategic purposes. Given that transparency and reporting are almost the minimum requirement for a sustainable business, GRI provides a well-structured process to mainstream it into business activities. Many reports have been launched by organisations that have taken part in these trainings and gained both knowledge and technical know-how related to sustainability reporting based on the GRI structure.

World Majlis

Climate change is causing major transformations across the world, putting entire populations at risk. How important is the role of architecture and urban planning in helping restore health of communities and planet? From pandemics to droughts, wildfires to hurricanes: nature's response to our growing activities is now affecting entire communities at a scale and frequency that we have not seen before. Current studies show that an ailing planet has a direct correlation with human health. While in 2015, diseases caused by air, water and soil pollution were responsible for 16% of all global death. Today, the frequency of climate related events continues to accelerate as well as increase in scale and impact.

Under the invitation of Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimy, UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation and Director General of Expo 2020 Dubai, ACSRN Founder, President & CEO joined the World Majlis as a panel speaker under the topic "Healthier World, Healthier People: Designing Spaces that Heal our Planet" that took place on **30th January** at Expo 2020 Dubai. The World Majlis is an open conversation platform where participants are not expected to give a traditional speech or presentation. Participants respond to a moderator's questions as well as build on each other's points.

Mrs. Habiba during her speech has shared an important point that "Overall, the pandemic recovery offers a panoply of lessons, which will continue to emerge for years. It also offers a historic opportunity – to ground urban planning and development of the built environmental firmly in human health, justice, and environmental sustainability." The discussions revolved on areas where architecture can provide solutions for our cities and communities, how can design help us build resilient spaces that can live in balance with our natural world, the biggest challenges with designing and building spaces that provide for people's wellbeing while also being good for the environment. The discussion highlighted the role of innovation, technology and local knowledge to harness the best from both worlds. In addition, the session deeply talked on the best actors to solve these challenges (e.g NGO, Governments, City Councils, Private Sector...etc).

Member News

ABB celebrates its 45th anniversary in the UAE

With the UAE opening its doors to the world at Expo 2020, ABB Dubai – one of the world's leading technology companies, looks back at 45 years of success in the country and commits to advancing the UAE's transformative projects through electrification, robotics, automation and motion technology. As a company with Swedish heritage, ABB commemorated its success and presented its future outlook as an official partner of the Swedish Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, showcasing its industry-leading technology essential to building a smart society. ABB was set to highlight innovations under the pavilion's theme of 'Co-creation for Innovation', including a specially adapted robot that helps turn plastic waste into furniture.

The company celebrated the ABB Day with its key stakeholders, including its partners, customers, and employees. During the six-month run of Expo 2020 Dubai, passengers traveling via Dubai International Airport and Dubai Metro will discover how ABB delivers on its 'Let's write the future. Together.' brand promise.

Björn Rosengren, Chief Executive Officer at ABB, said, "We congratulate the UAE's visionary leadership on the successful opening of Expo 2020 Dubai. At ABB, we are dedicated to aligning with the future aspirations of the countries in which we operate, and we look forward to further growing our relationship with public and private entities in the UAE."





EGA's new Chief Supply Chain & Business Development Officer

Emirates Global Aluminium, ACSRN's Platinum Member, the largest industrial company in the United Arab Emirates outside oil and gas, recently announced the appointment of Simon Storesund to the newly-created position of Chief Supply Chain & Business Development Officer, as the company increases its focus on strategic procurement and responsible sourcing.

Mr. Storesund will report to EGA's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Abdul Nasser Bin Kalban and will be a member of the company's Executive Committee. Mr. Abdul Nasser Bin Kalban said: "EGA spends billions of dollars every year on the goods and services we need. Our demand creates opportunities for new companies and industries to supply us, further contributing to economic growth in the countries where we operate. We also expect those goods and services to be made responsibly, to the environmental, social and governance standards our stakeholders expect. I welcome Simon Storesund to EGA and to this important new role for our company."

EGA aims to double its absolute contribution to the economy in the countries where it operates by 2040, partly through increasing strategic procurement and spurring the development of new supply industries. In the month of November, EGA joined the Ministry of Industry & Advanced Technology's In-Country Value Programme, which aims to increase the proportion of goods and services UAE companies procure locally and contribute to the achievement of the Operation 300bn strategy to grow UAE industry.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Ten major sustainability trends to watch out for in 2022

By Rajiv Tikoo

The idea that the health of the planet is as important as human health is gathering steam and sustainability will be its driving force. Be it the net-zero goals set at the 2021 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) or the launch of the Green Grids Initiative-One Sun One World One Grid (GGI-OSOWOG)—sustainability will be the keyword. The ongoing threat from the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to act as a catalyst for embedding sustainability in all walks of life. Both COP26 and COVID-19 will prove to be inflection points for the future reset.

Sustainability, as the new normal for the conduct of life and business, will give a push to the ongoing trends as well as throw up new trends. Here are some sustainability trends to watch out for in 2022:

All about data: With the spotlight on sustainability, data will be the ticket to not only the low-carbon bandwagon but also to showcase results to the regulators, investors and other stakeholders. All this while the data analytics lifecycle keeps getting more nuanced to better measure, manage, record and showcase results. Companies will have to keep track of emerging products like leading asset manager Arabesque's recently launched ESG Book, a data platform for companies and investors to disclose ESG data in real-time.

Rise in ESG investment: Investing is being guided more and more by ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) considerations. Triggered by COVID-19, ESG investment, which factors in a lasting impact on the environment and the society, has got a boost. The surge in ESG investments is expected to continue and now has a helping hand from the Omicron coronavirus variant, which may not even be the last variant.

Push for renewable power: The phasing down of the use of unabated coal and subsidies for fossil fuels were mentioned in the Glasgow Climate Pact adopted by 197 countries. That can be achieved, to a large extent, on the back of retiring coal power plants that are warming up the planet and by increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix. More investments will flow for the setting up of solar, wind and other renewable energy facilities as compared to fossil fuel facilities.



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Best Practices 2020 From The Archives

Bank of Africa BMCE Group

Arabia CSR Awards Winner - Financial Services Category

Profile

The BMCE Bank of Africa Group is a banking group based in Morocco with multiple business lines serving customers in 31 countries around the world. It is the 2nd Pan-African group with geographical coverage in 20 African countries.

The Bank was established in 1959 by a Royal Decree as 'Banque Marocaine du Commerce Extérieur' prior to becoming 'BMCE Bank of Africa' in 2015. Today it is a multi-national group that has evolved into an institution specialising in international trade, a universal bank and a continental group.

With over 15,000 employees working across the Group's various business lines, the Bank of Africa caters to over 6 million customers, including retail, professional, corporate and institutional customers.



Summary

Over the past 15 years, Bank of Africa - BMCE Group has consolidated its position as a regional pioneer in the field of sustainable finance. It has done so by responding to the broader societal, environmental and economic development trends and needs of the region. With its focus on innovation and excellence, the Bank has been able to push a new business model that focuses heavily on Environmental and Social risk assessment with emphases on the global SDG agenda.

In 2015, for example, the Bank literally co-created the "Energy Efficiency" market by being the first to offer the Morocco Sustainable Energy Financing Facility (MorSEFF) to cater to the potential of sustainable energy finance to address climate and other environmental risks.

The Bank has spearheaded financial services to address other risks that are prominent in the region, such as water shortages, working conditions, youth employment, corporate governance and transparency. It is based on its efforts and successes in these areas that the Bank of Africa was awarded the winner of the Financial Services category at the Arabia CSR Awards 2020.

Conclusion

BMCE Bank of Africa is a multi-business and multi-brand banking group – a commercial bank, specialised in financial services, business banking, etc. and is present in 31 countries and 4 continents.

The Bank's CSR Charter and its sustainability performance is in 6 focus areas such as business ethics, sustainable finance, responsible employment, governance & risk management, environmental protection and community interests.

They reflect the Bank's priorities towards areas of development in its operations, in its communities and in alignment with its expertise. The Bank truly believes and demonstrates the fact that Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability is about transforming an organisation's core business to make a positive impact.

The Bank has taken a very strong approach towards the development of rural and underdeveloped areas in Morocco through the medium of schools and education. This maturity is rare amongst corporates that are looking for a quick and easy 'PR-able' impact when it comes to social development. The Bank has leveraged on its rural outreach by also integrating it with financial literacy and expanding its potential customer base. To drive its corporate sustainability objectives, the Bank of Africa collaborates with a number of organisations such as the UN Global Compact, Morocco's Ministry of Education, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and more.

To ensure it receives good guidance and stays committed to its 6 priority areas, the Bank is a signatory of various programmes, such as the UNEP Statement of Commitment by Financial Institutions on Sustainable Development, the Equator Principles, the UNEP-FI Positive Impact Finance Working Group, the Environmental & Social Management commitment & Partnership with IFC and more.

