



الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية  
الاجتماعية للمؤسسات  
Arabia CSR Network®

# NEWSLETTER

August 2023 Volume 12 Issue 145

Under the Patronage of



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE CHANGE  
& ENVIRONMENT

Organised by



الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية  
الاجتماعية للمؤسسات  
Arabia CSR Network®

## ARABIA CSR FORUM 10<sup>th</sup> CYCLE

**Unlocking Sustainable Transformation:  
Breaking Barriers, Creating Solutions**

3-4 October 2023  
Anantara Downtown Dubai

[Book your seat now!  
www.arabiaccsrnetwork.com/forum](http://www.arabiaccsrnetwork.com/forum)

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## Upcoming Trainings

### Sustainability Reporting Training

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023



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### Online Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### ONLINE TRAINING ON CSR STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP

10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023



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## Note from the President & CEO Habiba Al Mar'ashi

Marhaba, dear members,  
friends, well-wishers and  
followers!

August held a unique position on the global stage as it witnessed notable occasions like the International Day of World's Indigenous People on 9<sup>th</sup> August, International Youth Day on 12<sup>th</sup> August and World Humanitarian Day on 19<sup>th</sup> August. It goes without saying that the Agenda 2030 goals cannot be imagined without the inclusive development and active participation of these 3 communities. We at Arabia CSR Network stay committed to persistently encouraging and engaging these crucial partakers in our strides towards a sustainable future.

Moving forward, kindly allow me to give you a glimpse into the activities of the Network in August. To begin with, I am delighted to share that the jury members of the **16<sup>th</sup> Cycle of Arabia CSR Awards** have finished their exhaustive evaluation process. It was impressive to witness the outstanding applications received from various parts of the Arab region, simply acting as a testament to the sincerity and willingness of the region to commit to the sustainability and corporate responsibility. Undoubtedly, the jury faced strong dilemmas while selecting winners. It wasn't an easy task at all considering the superb level of applications.

The finalists under each category have already been intimated. If your organisation was an applicant that couldn't make it to the awards podium this year, please don't feel discouraged. I want to let you know that Arabia CSR Network is very proud of your entity for taking the bold step of getting assessed on sustainability scale on the regional level. Participation in these acclaimed competitive awards by submitting a comprehensive application is in itself worthy of immense applause. I hope that your firm derives inspiration from the case studies of the winners and overcomes shortcomings through the valuable feedback of the jury. I look forward to seeing you submit an incredible application again next year with fresh energy and enthusiasm.

We eagerly await the elegant evening of **2<sup>nd</sup> October** when the winners will be honoured and celebrated during the grand **Gala Awards Ceremony** at Anantara Downtown Hotel in Dubai. It is my genuine pleasure to cordially invite you to grace the occasion with your presence and boost the morale of the sustainability champions of the 16<sup>th</sup> Cycle of the Awards. Information about the registration process can be found on the inside pages of this newsletter.

The month also observed the year's **3<sup>rd</sup> Panel Discussion** organised in support of the UAE's "Year of Sustainability" and in collaboration with our Environmental Partner, the Emirates Environmental Group. The discourse established the indispensable need to stabilise or at

least decelerate the rapid biodiversity loss that the world is experiencing in the form of 6<sup>th</sup> mass extinction. The Network is appreciative of all the distinguished guests hailing from both the public and private spheres who convened to attentively absorb the profound insights unveiled by the seasoned panellists regarding the intricate interplay between human and wildlife populations.

Having gleaned inspiration from the remarkable ambience surrounding the three preceding dialogues of the year, I am looking forward to the last intellectually invigorating instalment of our series – the **4<sup>th</sup> Panel Discussion**, slated for **27<sup>th</sup> October** on the topic "Integrating Stakeholder Alliances: To a Carbon Free UAE". I warmly invite all our network members to join us as revered speakers and participants. Further details can be explored in the dedicated section of this newsletter.

The Network brims with profound exuberance for the upcoming sequence of meticulously crafted **training and workshop** initiatives, planned from September to December. These thoughtfully curated programmes cater to a diverse array of professionals spanning the Arab world. Among these offerings are the Sustainability Reporting Training, Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, CSR Strategy & Leadership Training, Gap Analysis Workshop and more. For comprehensive details, I direct your attention to the dedicated section in the subsequent pages.

As I near the end of my note, please allow me to draw your attention to the resplendent and grandiose congregation encompassing CSR and sustainability dialogues - the **"Arabia CSR Forum,"** unfolding on **3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> October** at Hotel Anantara Downtown in Dubai and being held under the patronage of the Ministry of Climate Change and the Environment. Our devoted team is sparing no effort in fortifying the Forum's discourse, ensuring its discussions are elevated to a realm of exceptional calibre. This proactive approach aligns harmoniously with the backdrop of COP28, poised to commence in Dubai this November/December 2023. Your vibrant participation in the Forum will be an invaluable contribution, enhancing the depth and significance of this momentous event. For details and registrations, please visit [www.arabiacsrnetwork.com/forum](http://www.arabiacsrnetwork.com/forum).

I conclude by saying if our esteemed readers are seeking erudition in crafting potent sustainability and CSR strategies, orchestrating rigorous environmental stewardship, validating prevailing CSR frameworks, or devising bespoke training initiatives anchored in sustainability for their organisations, we stand ready to extend our assistance. A simple communication to [admin@arabiacsrnetwork.com](mailto:admin@arabiacsrnetwork.com) is all that you need to do.

Let us work together to build partnerships for a sustainable future as now more than ever we need to forge effective partnerships and fruitful collaboration!





## ACSRN News

### Decreasing Wildlife Population, Increasing Human Population: Balancing the Natural Biodiversity

ACSRN joined its Environmental Partner, the Emirates Environmental Group in conducting the **3<sup>rd</sup> Panel Discussion** of the year on **23<sup>rd</sup> August** in support of the UAE's "Year of Sustainability." The content-rich hybrid discourse was held under the theme **"Decreasing Wildlife Population, Increasing Human Population: Balancing the Natural Biodiversity."** The session's central focus was the indispensability to promptly mobilise actions that reinstall equilibrium and harmonious coexistence between the realms of wildlife and Homo sapiens.

In her inaugural address, the President & CEO of ACSRN eloquently highlighted the gravity of preserving our intricate biodiversity. She concurrently extolled the enduring contributions of EEG, spanning decades, in cultivating environmental awareness and advocacy across various strata of society's stakeholders.

The discussion brought 5 distinguished and experientially-diverse panellists namely:

- **H.E. Mr. Andreas Feil** - 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary for Climate, Energy and Environment Policy, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
- **Ms. Maitha Al Hameli** - Section Head, Marine Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation, Terrestrial and Marine Biodiversity - Environment Agency Abu Dhabi.
- **Mr. Mohammed Yousef Al Fageer** - Acting General Curator, Al Ain Zoo - UAE
- **Ms. Maitha Abdulla Al Mheiri** - Biologist, Ministry of Climate Change & Environment
- **Dr. Amol Patwardhan** - Assistant Professor, K J Somaiya College of Science and Commerce, India

Through meticulously crafted presentations, the panellists elucidated the factors behind dwindling wildlife populations, both conventional and emerging strategies in biodiversity conservation, the intricate interplay between anthropogenic pursuits and wildlife metrics, as well as the often underestimated repercussions of biodiversity erosion on human survival. Valid inquiries were raised, questioning the potential for wildlife adaptation to rapidly transforming climate when human beings themselves have yet to acclimatise adequately. The expert data-driven perspectives of the speakers combined with the intriguing questions of the audience crystalised the narrative of safeguarding wildlife habitats and preserving their sustainable population sizes.

ACSRN extends its profound gratitude to the Event Sponsor - Labotel Workers Village, Venue Host - Holiday Inn & Suites Dubai Science Park, all supporting entities, and attendees comprising esteemed government dignitaries, private sector professionals, inquisitive students and supportive members of the media, who contributed to yet another milestone to The Network's voyage of **building partnerships for a sustainable future**.







## Tristar Sustainability Report 2022

Tristar Group, the fully integrated Energy Logistics giant serving the downstream oil and gas industry across 29 countries has published the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of its Sustainability Report in full compliance with the internationally recognised GRI standards and principles. The Group is dedicated to upholding and promoting the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact and has a strong commitment to attaining the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through its comprehensive Environmental, Social, and Governance policy and on-site implementation.

The comprehensive report assesses the performance of the firm elaborately on different ESG parameters and categorises the content among the following sections - Reporting Frameworks, Business Highlights, Economic Growth, Governance, Commitment to People, Safety Culture, Environment and GRI Index.

Arabia CSR Network derives profound satisfaction from highlighting that we conducted an independent limited assurance engagement for Tristar Group in June 2023. Guided by the precepts of the International Standard on Assurance Engagements ISAE 3000, this engagement was strategically orchestrated. Its focal point was Tristar's Annual Sustainability Report, encompassing the reporting interval spanning from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. The fundamental aim of this endeavour was to scrupulously assess both the quantity and quality of evidence, with the overarching intent of furnishing a substantively meaningful degree of assurance to the diverse array of internal and external stakeholders associated with Tristar.



Follow the link to access the all-inclusive Sustainability Report of Tristar: <https://shorturl.at/bgs14>

## Member News

### Pioneering Gender Equality and Sustainability: McDonald's UAE Opens All-Female Operated Restaurant

Arabia CSR Network's corporate member, McDonald's UAE recently commemorated the launch of its 197<sup>th</sup> restaurant in the UAE situated in Umm Suqeim 2 - Dubai. Distinguished from its counterparts, this establishment proudly boasts an entirely all-female workforce – a groundbreaking initiative in the country. This pioneering move underscores McDonald's UAE's steadfast dedication to advancing gender equality, an endeavour that has been at the forefront since the inauguration of the Women Leadership Network (WLN) in 2020. The WLN, designed to nurture and empower female team members, remains a cornerstone of the company's commitment to inclusivity and progress.



Beyond its strides in gender diversity, the new restaurant symbolises McDonald's UAE's unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability and innovation. Outfitted with solar panels that partially power the establishment and equipped with electric vehicle charging ports, the restaurant exemplifies the company's ongoing mission to curtail its carbon footprint while promoting renewable energy sources.

It is also worthwhile to state that McDonald's UAE has been actively operating the Biodiesel programme since 2011, wherein used cooking oil is ingeniously converted into biodiesel to fuel the company's trucks. This dual-purpose approach minimises waste and diminishes reliance on non-renewable fossil fuels.

The inauguration of this restaurant signifies a momentous achievement in McDonald's UAE's journey toward championing gender diversity, advancing sustainability, circular economy and low carbon economy as well as enriching customer convenience within the quick-service restaurant industry.

Go through the full coverage at: <https://shorturl.at/pxz01>





## Upcoming Events

### The Arabia CSR Forum & the Arabia CSR Awards Ceremony

The Network is glad to extend a cordial invitation to all the esteemed corporate members and supporters to join us at the Arabia CSR Forum, the prestigious biennial platform that will assemble outstanding experts, thought leaders and policymakers of national, regional and international repute to engage in meaningful and practical conversations on critical global issues.

The 10th Cycle of the Forum, aptly themed **"Unlocking Sustainable Transformation: Breaking Barriers, Creating Solutions,"** will transpire on **3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> October** at the elegant Anantara Downtown Dubai Hotel. The event's intellectually stimulating agenda will traverse diverse dimensions of sustainable development, encompassing finance, technology, entrepreneurship, environment, society, youth and collaborations. Venerable speakers will expound upon these facets, beautifully dissecting the overarching theme into interactive sub-topics across the two-day span.

We are equally delighted to announce the grand Awards Ceremony commemorating the sustainability champions of the 16<sup>th</sup> Cycle of the Arabia CSR Awards. Set for the evening of **2<sup>nd</sup> October**, the ceremony will take place at the same venue prior to the Arabia CSR Forum. The Awards jury invested significant time throughout July and August to rigorously assess applications spanning the entire Arab region, culminating in the identification of exemplary contenders across diverse categories. Your presence at the event to encourage and support the winning entities will be deeply valued.

As a proactive participant, we encourage you to mark your calendar and reserve your spot promptly by registering for these highly anticipated gatherings, unfolding within the UAE's exceptional "Year of Sustainability." For inquiries regarding sponsorship opportunities or additional details, kindly reach out to [admin@arabiaccsrnetwork.com](mailto:admin@arabiaccsrnetwork.com).

Please utilise the following link to secure your attendance for both the Forum and the Awards Ceremony: <https://shorturl.at/gBMW6>. Your engagement will contribute to the cultivation of enriching discourse and the celebration of extraordinary sustainability achievements.

### Trainings & Workshops

As the region's premier knowledge and training hub, Arabia CSR Network consistently champions capacity-building, fortifying public and private sector entities in sustainable practices. Committed to value-centric training, the Network fosters a workforce primed for societal, environmental and corporate governance transformations. These programmes are rooted in renowned frameworks such as the EFQM, GRI, 10 Principles of the UN Global Compact and the 17 UN-SDGs, equipping professionals within the Arab region with the expertise to recalibrate CSR and sustainability.

We are pleased to present to you below our curated set of CERTIFIED ONLINE trainings and workshops scheduled for the coming months.

#### Sustainability Reporting Training (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> September)

- Imparts proficiency in planning, quantifying and illustrating non-financial institutional performance as well as in crafting comprehensive data-driven sustainability reports

#### Stakeholder Engagement Workshop (14<sup>th</sup> September)

- Develops adeptness in stakeholder mapping, dynamics, theory, analysis, engagement, dialogue, basic collaboration principles and CSR issues prioritisation

#### CSR Strategy & Leadership Training (10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> October)

- Enhances leadership attributes with a focus on social responsibility and sustainability for those already versed in Strategic Planning & Management

#### Gap Analysis Workshop (26<sup>th</sup> October)

- Equips attendees with precise delineation of components like materials, people, machines, methods and measurements, formulating robust strategies for rectifying sustainability gaps

Please feel free to contact us at [trainings@arabiaccsrnetwork.com](mailto:trainings@arabiaccsrnetwork.com) for more information or registration. We look forward to receive your employees registrations to enable them to experience the impact of these well-structured programmes.





## FEATURE ARTICLE

### Why startups must factor in ESG for investment success

Summary of the article written by Lucy Chow, Secretary General of the Dubai-based World Business Angels Investment Forum and General Partner of the WBAF Angel Investment Fund



In years gone by, it was idealistic millennials who spurred growth in sustainable investments. But today, every single generation is considering environmental, social and governance (ESG) options or how their funds can help to build a positive impact economy. ESG is often talked about as strategically vital for larger corporations, but little is said of how startup success and growth can be directly linked to a solid ESG strategy.

An optimal ESG framework takes various factors into account including reducing carbon footprint, encouraging diversity, going green and introducing wellness programmes for employees. It also focuses on initiatives that matter the most to a business and are the easiest to mobilise. A solid ESG strategy also earns customer loyalty, reduces operating costs and improves both asset management and financial performance.

Investors and lenders are highly attracted to organisations that invest in ESG – in fact, a 2022 Dow Jones survey of 200 investment professionals projected that ESG investments would more than double over the next three years. By providing a comprehensive view of their ESG practices and goals, entrepreneurs can influence decisions and encourage investors to pick their companies for funding.

If you are a smaller player do not assume that a lack of resources will be a hindrance to adopting ESG, or that your ESG efforts won't pay off in the long run. They will always have a positive effect on a business. Smaller businesses are frequently in closer proximity to their customers and have more opportunities to share their sustainability stories and connect at a deeper level.

Founders who make efforts to promote diversity, give back to the community, improve labour relations and take a stand on socioeconomic issues will play a major role in strengthening a company's brand. And startups can attract socially conscious investors with less bureaucracy than larger organisations.

ESG not only makes a company favourable to investors, but it can also lead to an uptick in its financials. Even small efforts towards sustainability, such as recycling, going paperless and making energy-efficient upgrades can improve a company's bottom line and ROI. And naturally, this makes it even more attractive as an investment.

[CLICK FOR MORE](#)







## Best Practices 2021 From The Archives

### SALAM Social Enterprise

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Runner Up - Social Enterprise Category

### Profile

Salam Social Enterprise is a platform that focuses on community development and women's empowerment by producing local face masks and other community products in order to cover shortages in Sudan. It envisions a society where Sudanese women are strong and financially independent and therefore works towards empowering them to achieve these ends.

Some of the values the organisation has imbibed for its work with the community include: honesty, integrity, professionalism, respect, gender sensitivity and equity, teamwork, social accountability and community participation. It was set up in 2018 in Sudan and supports underprivileged population to gain access to better life and employment opportunities by addressing developmental and skill gaps. Salam has been able to move towards and achieve its goals through effective collaborations.

### Conclusion & Lessons Learnt

SALAM Social Enterprise has undoubtedly made good strides in the field of community development and supporting women's empowerment. Its project for the manufacturing and provision of low-cost sanitary pads for underprivileged women is a one-of-a-kind initiative in the region. Its overall vision and commitment to the cause are very evident from its solid work on the ground and effective partnerships. SALAM Social Enterprise has used community initiatives to generate much-needed interventions in areas where employable skills and employment were lacking.

The organisation has been able to make inroads in places which were unreachable and has put a special focus on underprivileged women. Through its initiatives of skills training amongst these women, as well as providing employment and income generation opportunities, it has provided a ray of hope for women in the remote communities of Sudan. Its two-fold approach of training women in the required employment skills, while also creating products to cater to present requirements – like face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic, and sanitary pads to cater to essential feminine hygiene requirements – have shown its foresight and commitment to address and support local and regional community issues.

Environmental concerns have also been well integrated into its initiatives as its products are sustainable and environment friendly and there is a clear adherence to energy conservation. The organisation's work has shown that good partnerships can help scale up operations and prove to be beneficial for the community, as demonstrated by its association with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit for the production of facemasks for COVID-19 prevention, and collaboration with Norwegian Refugee Council as well as Relief International for the provision of dignity kits.

