



Sustainability Reporting Training

5th & 6th AUGUST 2024

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Upcoming Trainings & Workshops



Materiality Mapping Workshop
7th August 2024



Sustainability Reporting Training
Date: 11th - 12th September 2024



Stakeholder Engagement Workshop
16th September 2024

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Note from the Founder, President & CEO

Dear Members, Readers & Well Wishers

Welcome to the latest edition of our Arabia CSR Network newsletter.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a cornerstone of modern business strategy, driven by an acute awareness of environmental issues, societal expectations, and the imperative for ethical practices. One of the defining trends shaping CSR today is the growing emphasis on environmental sustainability. Companies globally are taking proactive steps to reduce their carbon footprints, adopt renewable & clean energy sources and integrate sustainable practices throughout their supply chains. This strategic shift helps them meet regulatory requirements and also enhances their brand reputation among environmentally conscious consumers.

In addition to environmental sustainability, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) have gained prominence within CSR frameworks. Organisations are increasingly championing diverse workplaces and inclusive cultures, recognising these as catalysts for innovation and reflections of the communities they serve. These trends underscore a broader shift towards stakeholder engagement, transparency and the integration of technology to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of CSR initiatives. Embracing CSR not only boosts corporate reputation but also fuels sustainable growth and generates positive societal impact in an interconnected global economy.

The month of July was marked by significant engagements that underscored our unwavering commitment to CSR and sustainability. Following the closure of the Arabia CSR Awards application on **30th June**, the month began with the crucial evaluation phase for the Awards' submissions. Applications were clustered and shared with the esteemed jury members, who promptly commenced their thorough review, leaving no detail unchecked. This rigorous scrutiny will continue through the first week of August, with every supporting document and piece of evidence meticulously examined. Another highlight of the month was the WPO Webinar on **11th July**, where industry leaders delved into the evolving dynamics of packaging and consumer goods. Insights from Mintel highlighted sustainability's pivotal role in modern packaging solutions, showcasing a global shift towards eco-friendly materials and the transformative impact of digitalisation on consumer experiences and supply chain efficiencies.

On the same day, I had the privilege of attending the EGBC Women Network meeting, which is pivotal in promoting gender balance within the UAE Green Building Industry. As Co-founder and Vice Chair of EGBC, I take pride in our initiatives aimed at empowering women through leadership programmes and networking opportunities. The network's commitment to sustainability and inclusivity is evident in its advocacy for increased female

participation and recognition in green building initiatives. I attended on **17th July**, the EmiratesGBC 2024 Awards judges meeting where industry experts convened to discuss the criteria for evaluating sustainability innovations in the MENA's built environment. This rigorous evaluation process will spotlight projects that demonstrate environmental impact, community engagement, and innovation, thereby driving continued dedication to sustainable practices in our region.

The WorldGBC Board Induction Meeting on **18th July** reinforced our dedication to advancing sustainable building practices. The WorldGBC Board members actively participate in discussions aimed at integrating sustainability metrics into building standards, advocating for robust policy frameworks, and fostering partnerships to address climate change through resilient building practices.

Coming up, I extend a warm invitation to all our corporate members to benefit from the capacity building platforms that we offer throughout the year, take advantage of the relatively quiet summer months to enroll your employees in the specific training programmes and workshops that we have so meticulously developed. I also invite you to join us on **27th August** as EEG together with ACSRN conduct the 4th Panel Discussion of the year, titled "Indeterminably Rising Buildings: Addressing the Widening Net Zero Curtain". In collaboration with esteemed partners, this event will delve into the strategies and challenges involved in achieving net-zero carbon buildings. It aims to shape sustainable practices and to foster innovation and strengthen collaboration across the green building industry.

Furthermore, mark your calendars for the Arabia CSR Forum and the Arabia CSR Awards Gala on **9th & 10th October**. The forum will serve as a vibrant platform for thought leadership, knowledge exchange, and industry collaboration. Esteemed speakers from the region and beyond will share invaluable insights, strategies, and best practices in advancing sustainable development goals. It's a crucial gathering for forging partnerships, driving meaningful change, and catalysing action toward a more sustainable future.

Following the forum, we will host the Arabia CSR Awards Gala on the evening of the **10th of October**, where we will celebrate exemplary leadership in CSR and sustainability that have made significant impacts in sustainable development. This gala serves as a testament to companies that are setting new benchmarks in corporate responsibility and sustainability, inspiring others with their unwavering commitment.

These flagship events are pivotal moments for the CSR community, fostering positive change and paving the way toward a resilient, sustainable future. Our commitments underscore our steadfast dedication to CSR and sustainability. It's crucial to recognise the significant responsibility we collectively shoulder. The decisions we make, the strategies we implement and the partnerships we cultivate today will shape the future world we inhabit. I invite you to join Arabia CSR Network and together, we will continue to innovate, collaborate and lead towards a more sustainable world.

ACSRN News

WPO Webinar: Packaging and CPG global trends by Mintel

ACSRN President & CEO participated in a virtual event on **11th July** hosted by the World Packaging Organisation (WPO), where industry leaders and stakeholders came together to discuss the evolving dynamics of packaging and consumer packaged goods (CPG). The webinar featured insights from Mintel, a renowned market intelligence firm, highlighting significant trends that are reshaping this critical sector and emphasizing the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in driving these changes.

The event began with a thorough examination of sustainability as a key driver in modern packaging solutions. Mintel's presentation highlighted a global trend towards the adoption of eco-friendly materials and sustainable practices, driven by increasing consumer demand, regulatory pressures, and corporate social responsibility commitments. A major theme of the webinar was the transformative impact of digitalization on packaging strategies. Mintel's analysis demonstrated how technologies such as smart packaging and augmented reality are revolutionizing consumer interactions and improving supply chain efficiencies. These digital innovations are seen as crucial for the future growth of the industry, and they also play a significant role in CSR by promoting transparency, reducing waste, and enhancing the overall consumer experience.

As the webinar drew to a close, participants left with a deeper appreciation for the need for ongoing innovation and sustainability in packaging, firmly linked to their CSR commitments. The WPO reaffirmed its commitment to promoting knowledge and collaboration within the global packaging community.

WorldGBC Board Induction Meeting

On **18th July**, the World Green Building Council (WorldGBC) convened for its Board Induction Meeting, marking a significant gathering attended by the President & CEO of ACSRN, a distinguished member of the WorldGBC Board of Directors. This meeting served as a crucial platform for welcoming new board members and setting strategic agendas aimed at advancing global sustainability initiatives through green building practices.

The event commenced with introductions and formalities, where the newly appointed and existing board members outlined their visions and commitments to promoting sustainable building solutions worldwide. Discussions focused on leveraging collective expertise to address pressing environmental challenges and enhance resilience in the built environment.

Key topics included strategies for advocating policies that promote green building practices, fostering partnerships with stakeholders across sectors, and advancing global initiatives to mitigate climate change. The board members exchanged insights on the integration of sustainability metrics into building standards, promoting innovation in sustainable construction materials, and advocating for regulatory frameworks that support green building adoption globally.

EGBC Engagements

1. EGBC Women Network

The EGBC Women's Network, a pivotal initiative within the UAE Green Building Industry, held a meeting on **11th July** which was attended by the ACSRN President & CEO, who also serves as Co-founder, Vice Chair, and Treasurer of the Emirates Green Building Council (EGBC). This gathering underscored the Network's commitment to achieving gender balance by advocating for the inclusion and support of women across various sectors within the sustainability domain. The EGBC Women's Network has outlined clear objectives to drive its mission forward. Firstly, it seeks to promote sustainability leadership by cultivating a community of women leaders in green building. Secondly, the Network aims to enhance knowledge sharing and collaboration by establishing platforms for seminars, workshops, and webinars. Lastly, advocating for gender diversity within the green building sector remains a key focus, with actions including policy advocacy and outreach programmes.

2. EmiratesGBC Management Committee Meeting

EGBC held on **15th July** its Management Committee (MC) meeting, marking a crucial step in promoting sustainable practices within the UAE's building sector. The meeting gathered important stakeholders and experts to deliberate on strategic initiatives designed to advance sustainable development throughout the region. Key topics of discussion included the adoption of renewable energy technologies, the rollout of innovative green building certifications, and efforts to boost public awareness of sustainable living. The committee made several important decisions aimed at strengthening collaboration with government agencies, industry partners, and educational institutions to advance the UAE's sustainability goals. These partnerships are intended to accelerate the implementation of eco-friendly practices and ensure that buildings are both energy-efficient and environmentally responsible.

3. EmiratesGBC 2024 Award's Judge Meeting

The EmiratesGBC 2024 Awards judging session, held on **17th July** with participation from the ACSRN President & CEO as a distinguished member of the jury, stood out as a pivotal occasion for celebrating sustainable excellence within the UAE's construction and development sectors. These awards serve as a prestigious platform recognizing groundbreaking innovations and initiatives that advance sustainability across various industries. The judging process is meticulous, commencing with careful consideration of nominations and submissions that showcase measurable impacts and inventive strategies. During the jury meeting, detailed scorecards were presented to the juries to independently assess each entry, providing valuable feedback and insights. This rigorous evaluation process will ensure a thorough discussion during the deliberations, where judges will collaboratively select winners based on a set of criteria. Beyond honouring exceptional accomplishments, the awards serve to inspire ongoing dedication to sustainability, thereby shaping the future of sustainable development throughout the region.



Member News

Accenture Celebrates Inaugural Graduate Cohort from KSA Training Hub



Accenture proudly announces the graduation of its inaugural cohort from its dedicated training hub in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), marking a significant milestone in talent development and localization efforts. This achievement underscores Accenture's commitment to nurturing local talent aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 objectives. The training hub focuses on equipping Saudi youth with essential skills in technology, consulting, and digital innovation through hands-on learning experiences and mentorship from industry experts. Graduates are not only proficient in technical competencies but also equipped with critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and leadership qualities essential for the competitive job market.

By investing in local talent development, Accenture aims to drive innovation and sustainable growth within the Kingdom. Graduates are poised to contribute to transformative projects across sectors such as government, healthcare, financial services, and telecommunications, developing localized solutions that address specific challenges faced by Saudi businesses and communities. This initiative aligns with Vision 2030's goals of reducing unemployment, enhancing workforce productivity, and promoting a knowledge-based economy driven by innovation and technology.

As Accenture celebrates the success of its inaugural graduate cohort from the KSA training hub, the company reaffirms its commitment to empowering Saudi youth and advancing the Kingdom's digital economy agenda. Through collaborative efforts and continued investment in talent development, Accenture looks forward to shaping a future where local talent thrives and contributes to global excellence.

Upcoming Events

Join Us for the 4th Panel Discussion on "Indeterminably Rising Buildings: Addressing the Widening Net Zero Curtain"

In collaboration with Emirates Environmental Group, supported by the Emirates Green Building Council, the Clean Energy Business Council and the Swiss Business Council, we are excited to invite you to participate in our upcoming 4th Panel Discussion scheduled for **27th August** at Five Palm Hotel Jumeirah. Titled "Indeterminably Rising Buildings: Addressing the Widening Net Zero Curtain," this event promises to be a dynamic gathering of experts and stakeholders from the green building industry. The discussion will focus on crucial topics surrounding the pursuit of net-zero emissions in building design and construction.



The panel will explore innovative strategies and challenges in achieving net-zero carbon buildings amidst evolving environmental standards and technological advancements. Participants will delve into topics such as technological innovations reshaping sustainable building practices, current policies driving net-zero initiatives, successful case studies, and industry perspectives on the future of sustainable architecture and construction. Attending this panel discussion provides a unique opportunity to gain insights from industry leaders, network with peers in the green building sector, and stay updated on the latest trends in sustainable architecture. By registering today, you can contribute to discussions that shape the future of net-zero carbon buildings and play a role in advancing sustainable practices in the built environment.

To secure your spot and participate in this insightful dialogue, please register by clicking this link: [CLICK FOR MORE](#)

Join us as we navigate the path towards achieving net-zero carbon buildings. We look forward to your participation!

Upcoming Trainings & Workshops

Sustainability Reporting Training

Arabia CSR Network continues to offer specialised training to entities in the Arab Region, known as Sustainability Reporting Training. This training, tailored by the Network, provides a robust understanding of how to produce a Sustainability Report, adding significant value for organisations developing and publishing non-financial reports. The training builds capacity, increases transparency and credibility, engages stakeholders, and integrates sustainability into business operations. Upcoming sessions are scheduled for **5th-6th August** and **11th-12th September**.

Materiality Mapping workshop

In the realm of sustainability, materiality mapping forms the foundation of effective reporting. It helps organisations pinpoint their most critical issues, ensuring transparency and accountability in sustainability reports. This process improves reporting quality, strengthens organisational reputation, and builds stakeholder trust. Arabia CSR Network offers workshops on materiality mapping to help organisations identify and address significant sustainability issues effectively. The next workshop will be conducted on **7th August**.

Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

This workshop aims to cultivate a deeper appreciation for the dynamic interplay between organisations and their stakeholders. Through theoretical insights and practical applications, participants will adopt stakeholder engagement as an integral part of their organisational culture, recognising its role in driving positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes. The workshop will enable participants to understand stakeholder dynamics and cultivate meaningful, collaborative relationships. It is scheduled for **16th September**.

To register for these trainings and workshops, please reach out to us at trainings@arabiacsrnetwork.com.



Feature Article



Saudi Summons Energy to Unearth Geothermal Potential

Written by Eva Levesque for Arabian Gulf Business Insight

A Saudi Arabian university has completed drilling a research well as the kingdom steps up efforts to harness its geothermal potential - which industry experts estimate could free up to 1 million barrels of oil a day for export.

The 400m deep observation well was drilled by a team from King Abdullah University of Science and Technology and Taqa, a state-backed energy fund, on the Kaust campus around 100km north of Jeddah. The well on the Red Sea coast was completed a few weeks ago. Researchers will assess the opportunities to harness heat from the Earth's crust.

"We want to de-risk drilling, reduce the costs and develop technologies to make it economically viable for implementation [of geothermal] along the Red Sea coast," Thomas Finkbeiner, a professor of energy resources and petroleum engineering at Kaust, tells AGBI.

Although Saudi Arabia is still reliant on its hydrocarbon reserves, it is investing heavily in the green energy transition. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, its renewables capacity increased by more than 200 percent in 2023. Experts say the kingdom is lagging behind on its ambition to develop geothermal into a viable energy source by the end of the decade, despite it being available around the clock, unlike solar or wind.

When it comes to geothermal, Riyadh is targeting the equivalent of 1GW of capacity - enough to power around 800,000 homes, according to the Carbon Collective - by 2030. In March 2023 it set up Taqa Geothermal Energy, a joint venture with Reykjavik Geothermal from Iceland. Iceland's geothermal electricity generation has increased significantly in recent years and accounts for 25 percent of the country's total production and 66 percent of its primary energy use. Taqa has previously established a geothermal centre of excellence in Turkey, which also has considerable geothermal potential, and has been involved in drilling wells in the UAE's Masdar City.

In Saudi Arabia exploration projects are focused on the northern and western regions, particularly along the coast of the Red Sea. Most of these initiatives are being led by universities and research centres. Industry sources have told AGBI that it is unlikely Saudi Arabia will develop geothermal energy projects to a commercial scale by the end of the decade, given the scant progress made so far. One energy expert, who asked not to be named, says it can take 10 years to delineate and properly map a geothermal reservoir.

Geothermal is high risk, requiring big upfront expenditure and hampered by a lack of clear regulation in Saudi Arabia, the industry

sources say. All this can be off putting to investors, who often end up supporting solar or wind projects instead.

Raid Bukhamseen, Taqa's well engineering manager, says drilling a geothermal well costs, on average, three times as much as a regular oil and gas well. Expensive specialist facilities need to be built on the surface too.

"Geothermal resources exist in more complex geology when compared to oil and gas, especially in medium and high enthalpy areas," he says.

Enthalpy, or heat content, is the amount of extractable thermal energy contained in geothermal fluids. The Red Sea coast is believed to have extensive low-enthalpy reservoirs, which can generate enough power for cooling or desalinating water. This could free up a significant amount of fossil fuel for alternative daily uses. Low enthalpy entails lower temperatures so does not produce huge amounts of energy, but there is less risk in harnessing it. High enthalpy may produce more energy, but it is more expensive and complicated to access.

In the futuristic giga-project of Neom, in the Tabuk region, in the northeastern part of Saudi Arabia, another research team from King Abdulaziz University has proved the availability of ground heat to generate geothermal energy. Kaust's Finkbeiner says other giga-project sites may also have reserves, including AIUla and the islands that form part of Red Sea Global. Saudi Aramco, the state-owned energy giant, has identified and mapped three potential areas on the west coast.

If developed on a commercial scale, geothermal can be used in industrial complexes, remote touristic areas with little land available, and agriculture. "If this is successful, we could scale it," Finkbeiner says of the Kaust pilot programme. Geothermal energy can complement solar and wind as it offers a sustainable source of baseload power. Harnessing it requires nearly 90 percent less space than solar farms, Bukhamseen said.

There is momentum behind geothermal in Saudi Arabia, but the timeline is unclear. Funding and clear leadership are needed, but Bukhamseen is optimistic. "Those major decisions are being taken and steps are being implemented on the ground as we speak," he says.

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Best Practices 2022 From The Archives Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha Winner - Hospitality Sector Category

A Brief about the Organisation

Holiday Inn Al Barsha (HIAB) is an owner-managed franchised hotel with the tagline “A 4-Star hotel with a 5-Star Look,” which refers to the exceptional amenities the establishment provides. This flagship franchisee, run by Splendid Commercial Investment LLC with permission from Inter-Continental Hotels Group (IHG), is devoted to upholding the integrity of the Holiday Inn Brand.

It is a 309-room, 4-star deluxe hotel. With 250 employees representing over 20 different countries, HIAB is a melting pot of cultures. It has 9 food and beverage establishments, offering a variety of cuisines and dining options, all of which have won awards. HIAB takes pride in being “**The Best 4-star Hotel in Dubai**” because of the outstanding services it offers, ensuring every guest enjoys a memorable and comfortable stay.

Lessons learnt

- All business decisions guided by their sustainability vision and mission helped HIAB to understand what changes are needed to make it a better place for future generations.
- Collaboration and partnership initiatives should be aligned with the company’s sustainability goals in order to ensure the best results.
- Hotels should be held accountable for environmental damage brought on by tourism and hospitality.
- Occupational health and safety for both the personnel and the guests should be of the utmost importance to any hotel.
- By emphasising the sustainability goals, HIAB ensured that stakeholders understood and assisted them in achieving the goals through a strategic and goal-based annual plan.



Conclusion

The CEO of HIAB is in charge of advocating sustainability and ensuring that its objectives are closely related to corporate plans. The CSR Executive Board (CEB), which meets with the CEO on a quarterly basis, is composed of 3 directors. The Board’s responsibilities include representing HIAB’s dedication to sustainability while interacting with the UNGC, forming partnerships and collaborations, submitting reports on time, and enforcing policy.

As part of its effort to promote its responsible business strategy, HIAB pays close attention to understanding the demands of the stakeholders and regularly engages with them. Strong Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place at the hotel for waste management, including segregation, reduction, reusing and recycling; water and energy usage and efficiency; and items used to satisfy health and safety laws, like cleaning chemicals and toxic-free substances.

HIAB uses the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) pillars to assess the impact of various factors on a range of performance measures connected to their strategic objectives. By incorporating these principles, HIAB ensures that sustainability is at the forefront of their operations, continuously striving for improvement and innovation in their practices. Additionally, the hotel actively participates in local and international environmental initiatives, supports community development programs, and encourages employees to engage in volunteer activities. These efforts demonstrate HIAB’s commitment to creating a positive impact not only within the organisation but also in the broader community, fostering a culture of sustainability and social responsibility.

