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ARABIA CSR &
SUSTAINABILITY
AWARDS



18


**LAUNCH OF THE
ARABIA CSR & SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS
18th Cycle - 2025**



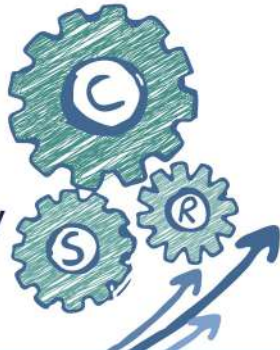





Upcoming Trainings & Workshops



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

4th – 6th February 2025



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**CSR Advanced
Certified Training
Course**

19th – 21st February 2025



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**Sustainability
Reporting
Training**

5th – 6th March 2025

Note from President and CEO	2
ACSRN News	3
Member News & Upcoming Events	5
Feature Article	6
Best Practice	7

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Note from the Founder & CEO

Dear Members, Followers and Well-wishers,

As we begin 2025, it is an opportune moment to reflect on the significant strides we have made in the past year and to look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead. The start of this year brings a renewed sense of purpose and energy, as we continue to drive sustainability in ways that are impactful, innovative, and meaningful.

Earlier this month, on **15th January**, I had the honour of joining the WiSER Annual Forum, where the theme was "**Igniting the Climate Economy.**" I participated in a roundtable discussion on "**Accessibility: Empowering Emerging Economies,**" where we explored how sustainable solutions can be integrated into the economies of emerging regions. This forum provided an invaluable platform for exchanging ideas and discussing how we can accelerate climate action through economic empowerment, paving the way for a more sustainable future for these regions.

One of the most significant milestones in this new year was the press launch of the **18th Cycle of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards**, which took place on **20th January**. This prestigious programme continues to celebrate and recognise the remarkable efforts of organisations across the Arab region that are advancing sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards have long been a cornerstone of our mission to promote environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

As we kicked off the 18th cycle, we were reminded of the importance of recognising the leading entities in our region who are pushing the boundaries of sustainability and corporate citizenship. This year's launch was particularly exciting, because of the continuation of this important programme and also because it coincided with the unveiling of our newly redesigned website. This revamped platform is designed to streamline the application process, enhancing the user experience and making it easier for organisations to engage with the Awards.

As I shared during the launch event, "The 18th Cycle of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards builds upon our enduring legacy of fostering sustainability excellence in the region. This enhanced platform will inspire even more organisations to participate and showcase their exemplary contributions toward sustainability." This statement reflects our shared vision to continue advancing CSR and sustainability efforts through collaboration, innovation and recognition of excellence.

Key dates for the 18th Cycle include the Awards Clinic on **15th April**, where we'll offer guidance and support to those preparing their submissions. The submission deadline will be on **30th June**, with the grand Awards Ceremony to be held on **7th October** under the esteemed patronage of **H.H. Eng. Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan bin Saqr Al Qasimi**.

The ceremony promises to be an unparalleled opportunity for networking, knowledge exchange and celebrating the achievements of those leading the sustainability agenda forward. You can read more on page 03.

I urge all organisations that are committed to advancing sustainable practices to register and participate in this prestigious programme. It is not just a chance for recognition, but also an opportunity to reflect on the collective impact we are making and to inspire others to follow suit. The Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards is a powerful tool for driving positive change and fostering a culture of responsibility within businesses.

On **29th January**, we joined the Emirates Environmental Group in rolling out the first panel discussion of 2025, marking the beginning of a series of important events for the year. We were pleased to support this special edition panel discussion as the CSR Partner, where the engaging dialogue focused on the role of artificial intelligence in driving sustainability.

The following day, on **30th January**, I attended the World Green Building Council (WGBC) Executive Committee Meeting. It was a productive session that allowed us to assess global green building initiatives, set new objectives, and review the progress of sustainable building practices. As a Board Member & Vice Chair of the WorldGBC, I remain committed to fostering collaboration within the green building community and driving forward solutions that address the urgent need for energy-efficient buildings, sustainable construction practices, and climate resilience.

As we continue our efforts, we've also been busy this month meeting with new entities eager to join the organisation and be involved in our programmes. Their enthusiasm to contribute further strengthens our mission and we are excited about the partnerships ahead, which will enable even more impactful work toward sustainability in the region.

Building on this momentum, at ACSRN, we are equally excited about the opportunities ahead. Our calendar is packed with training programmes and capacity-building platforms throughout the year. These initiatives will offer valuable opportunities for professionals to enhance their knowledge, acquire essential skills and contribute to a more sustainable future. Looking ahead to the rest of 2025, I am excited about the many opportunities before us, especially with the announcement by His Highness the President of the UAE, declaring this year as the Year of Community.

This year offers us a unique chance to unite, build stronger networks, and drive meaningful change within our local communities and societies. With the year ahead full of promise, we have a collective responsibility to continue leading the way in advancing sustainable practices and creating lasting positive impact across the region and beyond. Let's make 2025 a year of significant impact, driving progress on our sustainability journey.

ACSRN News

ACSRN Founder at WiSER Forum 2025

Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder and CEO of the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN), was a distinguished panelist at the WiSER Annual Forum 2025, held at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) on **15th January**. Speaking during the roundtable discussion titled Accessibility: Empowering Emerging Economies, Mrs. Al Mar'ashi shed light on the systemic barriers preventing women entrepreneurs in underserved communities from accessing green technologies, critical funding and capacity-building opportunities.



Mrs. Al Mar'ashi emphasised the urgent need for solutions that address the funding gap, reduce the digital gender divide, and provide context-sensitive training. Drawing on experiences from the MENA region, she highlighted the value of gender-responsive policies, sustainable practices and collaborations with local organisations to empower women as pivotal contributors to the green economy.

The forum provided an opportunity for Mrs. Al Mar'ashi to advocate for targeted actions and foster partnerships among global stakeholders, promoting inclusivity and equity in the sustainability agenda. Her insights reaffirmed the necessity of empowering women entrepreneurs to ensure a fair and balanced transition to a green economy. Mrs. Al Mar'ashi's participation underscores her commitment to advancing sustainability and creating opportunities for women entrepreneurs to thrive in the global green economy.

Unveiling 18th Cycle of Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards

The Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) proudly announced the launch of the 18th Cycle of the "Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards" on **20th January**. This prestigious programme continues to celebrate organisations championing sustainability and corporate social responsibility across the Arab region, while fostering innovative and impactful initiatives that drive positive change.

This year's launch featured a significant milestone: the unveiling of a newly redesigned website for the Awards. The revamped platform enhances the digital experience by simplifying the application process, providing in-depth resources and showcasing past winners' achievements. With improved navigation and user-friendly features, the website reflects ACSRN's commitment to leveraging technology to advancing sustainability practices and accessibility.

During the event, Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of ACSRN, highlighted the importance of these developments: "The 18th Cycle of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards builds upon our enduring legacy of fostering sustainability excellence in the region. This enhanced platform will inspire even more organisations to participate and showcase their exemplary contributions toward sustainability."

The Awards programme maintains its 16 categories, offering diverse organisations opportunities to showcase their initiatives in sectors such as energy, healthcare, education and hospitality amongst others. Key dates include the Awards Clinic on **15th April**, the submission deadline on **30th June** and the grand Awards Ceremony on **7th October**, to be held under the esteemed patronage of **H.H. Eng. Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan bin Saqr Al Qasimi**. EEG, a long-standing environmental partner of ACSRN, will support the initiative, reinforcing the shared mission of driving sustainability forward.

The Awards have opened the doors for registration. We encourage all organisations committed to sustainability to register and make their mark in this influential programme.



Participating in the Committee of Permanent Representatives Meeting

On **23rd January**, the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) participated in the Subcommittee Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), held in a hybrid format at Conference Room 4 and online via Microsoft Teams. The meeting, chaired by H.E. Mr. Firas Khouri, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Kenya and Permanent Representative to UNEP, brought together stakeholders from various environmental sectors.

The meeting opened with a key address, followed by the adoption of the meeting's agenda. UNEP's Secretariat then presented updates on two key thematic areas: Towards Zero Waste and Pollution and Health. The Towards Zero Waste programme focused on improving waste and wastewater management systems, while Pollution and Health centred on enhancing environmental quality and public health outcomes. ACSRN took part in the discussions, underscoring the importance of supporting UNEP's initiatives and aligning with the region's sustainability goals.

A significant focus of the meeting was the introduction of A Policymakers' Guide to Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), a tool to help policymakers utilise LCA studies in the development of sustainable policies.

ACSRN expressed its strong support for LCA and its role in promoting a circular economy and reducing environmental impact. The meeting also covered the results of the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 16) and their alignment with UNEP's ongoing work.

Engaging with National Media Platforms

On 20th & 28th January, Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN), was interviewed by Fujairah TV (on the 20th) and the National Newspaper (on the 28th) in recognition of the official launch of the 18th Cycle of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards, where she shared her insights on the evolution of sustainability practices in the region and what to expect from this year's awards.

The Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards, launched on 20th January, is designed to recognise organisations in the Arab region that have demonstrated leadership in sustainable practices and corporate social responsibility (CSR). During the interview, Mrs. Al Mar'ashi discussed several key areas, touching upon the ongoing efforts to enhance sustainability in the region.

She reflected on the growing importance of sustainability reporting and highlighted how companies are increasingly adopting transparent, structured approaches to demonstrate their environmental and social responsibility. While she noted that sustainability reporting is progressing, she also mentioned that there is still room for improvement, particularly in aligning regional frameworks with global standards.

Reflecting on the history of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards since its inception, Mrs. Al Mar'ashi shared that the number of applicants has consistently grown year after year. From modest beginnings, the programme has now seen hundreds of organisations across the Arab world striving to showcase their sustainability achievements. This year's cycle is expected to see even higher levels of engagement, as more businesses are prioritising sustainability as part of their corporate strategies.

Looking ahead to the 18th edition of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards, Mrs. Al Mar'ashi expressed her hopes that this cycle will inspire even more organisations to participate and showcase their commitment to sustainability.

Supporting EEG's Groundbreaking Panel Discussion on AI and Sustainability

Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) is proud to have been the CSR partner for Emirates Environmental Group's (EEG) first panel discussion of 2025, titled "Emergence of AI: A Boon or Detriment to Sustainability?" Held on 29th January at FIVE Palm Jumeirah, this event brought together students, industry leaders, academia and governments to explore the intersection of AI and sustainability.

The event was made possible by the generous sponsorship of **McDonald's UAE**, whose continued commitment to sustainability initiatives in the UAE is integral to EEG's efforts. The event began with an engaging Inter-School Debate featuring two of EEG's active academic member schools.

The debate set the stage for a dynamic Expert Panel Discussion, where thought leaders shared their insights on AI's role in sustainability. The panel included **Dr. Youssef Al Assaf**, President of the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT Dubai), who provided his perspective on how AI could reshape industries, particularly in education and innovation, to encourage more sustainable practices; **Dr. Mahamadou Tounkara**, Regional Director of MENA at the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), discussed how AI can drive green growth and support sustainable economic development in the MENA region. **Ms. Lama Zakzak**, Principal Researcher at Mohammad Bin Rashid School of Government, emphasised AI's role in shaping public policy and governance to promote sustainability; while **Mr. Rohit Ghose**, Global Head of Future of Finance at Citi, shared insights on the role of AI in the financial sector and its potential impact on sustainability.

All panelists explored AI's potential to revolutionise green technologies while also addressing its environmental impact. They discussed how to balance AI's benefits with mitigating its challenges to meet global sustainability goals, including those outlined by the United Nations.

The event concluded with an interactive Q&A session and the welcoming of EEG's new corporate members. **Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi**, Co-Founder & Chairperson of EEG, reflected: "Today's panel was a great success in sparking meaningful conversations on AI's role in sustainability. It's crucial to ensure that AI is leveraged responsibly to achieve global sustainability targets."



WGBC Executive Committee Meeting

On 30th January, Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN), virtually attended the World Green Building Council (WGBC) Executive Committee Meeting in her capacity as a Vice Chair of the World Green Building Council (WGBC). The session provided an invaluable opportunity to review the progress of global green building initiatives, establish new objectives, and ensure alignment with the WGBC's overarching mission to promote sustainable building practices.

The meeting began with a reflection on recent achievements and significant milestones. Primary focus of the meeting included the Strategy and work-planning, 2024 Staff survey and actions for 2025 and the Impact Pathways report.

Member News



Accenture Middle East: Prioritising Employees for Success and Excellence

At Accenture Middle East (an active corporate member of ACSRN), the well-being of employees is at the heart of the company's philosophy, serving as the foundation of its success. Accenture believes that when employees are supported, valued and empowered, the entire organisation thrives.

This people-centric approach directly translates into the company's remarkable performance, growth and innovation. As a testament to this, Accenture Middle East was honoured with 1st place in the Companies category at the prestigious #EmiratesLabourMarketAward. This recognition reaffirms Accenture's unwavering commitment to excellence, talent empowerment and fostering a workplace where employees feel genuinely valued.

Accenture creates an environment where employees can maintain a healthy work-life balance. This emphasis on well-being has led to higher engagement, increased productivity and greater job satisfaction across the company.

Moreover, Accenture places a significant emphasis on continuous learning and development. Recognising the fast-paced changes in technology and business, the company invests heavily in providing its employees with access to various training programmes, workshops and mentorship initiatives. Another contributing factor is Accenture's dedication to employee empowerment and leadership development. Employees are encouraged to take on leadership roles, contribute to decision-making and participate in the company's strategic direction.

Accenture's success at the Emirates Labour Market Award is not just a moment of pride but a launching pad for future growth. As Ms. Shaima Al Mar'ashi, HR Partner Associate Manager at Accenture, reflects in an exclusive video, "Winning this award is a significant milestone for us, but it also validates the work we've been doing to prioritise our people. We remain committed to creating a workplace where our employees feel valued, supported and empowered. As we move forward, we will continue to focus on well-being, innovation and personal growth to ensure that we remain a top choice for talent."

Know More: [CLICK FOR MORE](#) 

Upcoming Trainings & Workshops

CSR Fundamentals Training

Join us for the CSR Fundamentals Training on **4th - 5th February**, where ACSRN provides a learning platform on the foundational principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability. This training will introduce participants to the key concepts, strategies and best practices in CSR, helping organisations align their corporate activities with social, environmental and ethical values. It's a perfect starting point for those looking to integrate CSR into their business operations effectively.

Through practical case studies and interactive sessions, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of CSR frameworks, the importance of stakeholder engagement and how to measure the impact of CSR initiatives. By the end of the training, participants will be equipped to initiate and manage CSR projects that foster positive change and promote sustainable business practices within their organisations.

CSR Advanced Training

Building on the CSR Fundamentals, our CSR Advanced Training from **19th - 21st February** takes a deeper dive into advanced CSR strategies and practices. This course is designed for those looking to elevate their CSR efforts and create a more significant impact within their organisation and the wider community.

Participants will explore advanced topics such as CSR strategy development, sustainability integration, impact measurement and the evolving role of CSR in business leadership. The training will include real-world examples and tools for creating more robust CSR programmes, enhancing stakeholder relationships and aligning CSR efforts with global sustainable development goals.

By the end of this training, attendees will have the expertise to drive complex CSR initiatives, lead impactful programmes, and effectively communicate CSR performance to stakeholders, positioning their organisation as a leader in corporate responsibility & sustainability.

Sustainability Reporting Training

Mark your calendars for the exclusive two-day Sustainability Reporting Training hosted by the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) on **5th & 6th March**. This training is designed to enhance your skills in crafting transparent and impactful sustainability reports. It will provide participants with the latest tools and frameworks required to create reports that align with global industry standards and best practices.

Throughout the two days, you will gain valuable insights into various reporting frameworks, learn effective ways to communicate your organisation's sustainability journey to stakeholders, and understand the role of sustainability reporting in driving business success. You will also explore how to measure and present your organisation's environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance. By the end of this training, participants will be empowered to create comprehensive sustainability reports that build trust, demonstrate impact

Feature Article



Safeguarding and Nurturing Local Communities for Sustainable Growth

Excerpt from Georges Assy and Antoine Nasr

The adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 marked a seminal moment in humanity's collective effort to achieve peace and prosperity. This moment was particularly significant in the context of social services and benefit systems, where the SDGs have set the foundation for enhanced social outcomes.

These include good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, decent work, reduced inequalities, and the development of sustainable communities. As demographic structures, technology, and economic contexts evolve, the need for social reforms becomes even more critical in fostering local communities for sustainable growth.

In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, the UAE stands as a front-runner in advancing a robust social reform agenda. The nation has been proactive in creating policies that elevate the living standards of its citizens and ensure inclusivity. From education to social protection, healthcare, and employment opportunities, the UAE's initiatives are paving the way for a just and equitable society.

Notably, the UAE's pioneering programme for People of Determination exemplifies its commitment to social reform and inclusivity. Through these reforms, the UAE has positioned itself as a global leader in social responsibility, with its initiatives impacting not only the local community but also setting an example for other nations to follow.

One prominent example of the UAE's social reform efforts is in education, where significant reforms were introduced in 2022 aimed at improving state schools, early childhood development, and youth education. Despite the challenges in implementation, such reforms reflect the nation's ongoing commitment to addressing educational gaps and providing quality learning opportunities for all. However, the article highlights that many community development programmes across the region face challenges in translating plans into successful outcomes, as these programmes take place within complex matrices that require alignment with international, national, and local drivers.

In the realm of social protection, several GCC countries, including the UAE, have made strides in enhancing their social protection systems. However, issues such as limited data availability and technological infrastructure remain challenges in accurately identifying and assisting vulnerable populations.

Some countries still rely on rudimentary mechanisms to verify eligibility for social support programmes, which can lead to inclusion errors and gaps in support. Modernising social protection systems is a critical step in addressing vulnerabilities while empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to society. This entails adopting more efficient targeting mechanisms, integrating case management systems, and implementing conditionalities that promote long-term human development.

In addition to government-led initiatives, social responsibility and community engagement are increasingly recognised as vital components of national development. As demonstrated by the UAE's "Strategy for the Year of Giving," governments play a crucial role in driving effective stakeholder dynamics by regulating, incentivising, and coordinating community activities.

These initiatives foster a culture of social responsibility, positioning the UAE as a leader in the region. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 emphasises the role of NGOs in social activity, with the recent launch of the "Sakhaa" programme aimed at connecting donors with impactful community projects.

As GCC countries continue to enhance their social responsibility frameworks, opportunities exist for more effective collaboration and impactful outcomes. By building cohesive ecosystems where governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders collaborate, these nations can tackle complex social challenges more efficiently. This approach not only diversifies funding sources but also leverages the unique expertise and networks of various sectors to drive meaningful change.

Arabia CSR Awards 2023 From The Archives Department of Civil Aviation, Ras Al Khaimah Winner - Public Sector Category - Small Organisations

A Brief about the Organisation

Instituted in 1976 and restructured under the auspices of His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr AlQasimi, the Department of Civil Aviation in Ras AlKhaimah (RAK DCA) functions as the autonomous regulatory authority for the emirate's aviation sector. Committed to aligning with the state and international civil aviation protocols, RAK DCA emphasizes the enhancement of safety, security, and air navigation integrity within its jurisdiction. RAK DCA has delineated strategic objectives focused on the expansion of aviation activities, the elevation of safety and security measures, the refinement of customer experience, and the fostering of service innovation. The department upholds stringent adherence to the standards set by the UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), reinforcing its position in supervising the emirate's aviation framework. Integral to the RAK Vision 2030, RAK DCA's operational philosophy is anchored in its dual role of regulatory overseer and developmental catalyst. It endeavours to fortify Ras Al-Khaimah's reputation as a distinguished travel and investment nucleus by fostering sustainable aviation growth and enhancing the Emirate's appeal as a global destination.

Lessons Learnt and Conclusion

- **Strategic innovation as a business cornerstone:** RAK DCA's deliberate integration of the Innovation Management System underlines the importance of embedding innovation in the corporate DNA. This practice helps to enhance process efficiency and also serves as a catalyst for sustainable development.
- **Targeted community investment:** The department's focused investments in sectors like education and health demonstrate the impact of targeted social responsibility initiatives. RAK DCA's approach indicates that well-chosen community projects can yield high social returns, a lesson for entities assessing their CSR investment strategies.
- **Digital advancements for sustainability:** The transition to e-services has positioned RAK DCA as a leader in environmental stewardship through digitalisation. The department's specific outcome measures offer a template for other entities to quantify the sustainability impact of digital transformation.
- **Resource management with measurable outcomes:** RAK DCA's strategic reductions in energy and water usage, tracked through clear metrics, highlight the importance of setting quantifiable targets in resource management.
- **KPI-Driven sustainability:** The development of specific KPIs for projects like online service transformation showcases RAK DCA's commitment to accountability. This focus on measurable sustainability performance is instructive, though a critical view suggests that continuously evolving these KPIs is necessary to keep pace with changing technologies and stakeholder expectations.

- **Critical review of ethical commitment:** RAK DCA's ethical commitment to sustainability and social responsibility is commendable. There is an opportunity for RAK DCA to become a thought leader, advocating for sustainability across the aviation industry and government sectors, thus multiplying its impact.

In conclusion, RAK DCA's commitment to sustainable innovation, reflected in its strategic shift towards digital solutions, has significantly reduced its environmental footprint, marking substantial progress in resource conservation. Notably, the department's initiatives have resulted in a marked decrease in energy and water consumption, bolstering operational efficiency while enhancing customer satisfaction.

What sets RAK DCA apart is its holistic approach to sustainability. The department has successfully aligned its digital transformation with global sustainability goals, achieving a measurable 5% increase in online customer happiness from 2021 to 2022. These efforts, underpinned by a clear strategic vision for 2022- 24, demonstrate RAK DCA's commitment to innovation and environmental stewardship. The department's initiatives extend beyond internal operational improvements. RAK DCA's active involvement in supporting local communities, education and health programmes reflect a deep-rooted dedication to societal well-being.

This community-centric approach, combined with its achievement of multiple ISO certifications, underscores RAK DCA's commitment to international sustainability standards. By implementing a range of initiatives aimed at reducing its carbon footprint, supporting charitable causes, and promoting diversity and inclusion, RAK DCA has made a positive impact on the world and has fostered a sense of pride and purpose among its employees, customers and stakeholders. RAK DCA's endeavours offer profound insights into how environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors can be effectively integrated into corporate responsibilities.

