



GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY & CSR FORUM

13TH CYCLE

Sustainable Growth Orchestrating a Global Change

8th - 9th October 2025



Upcoming Trainings & Workshops



الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
الاجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network®



CSR Strategy & Leadership Training



4th - 5th August 2025



الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
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Materiality Mapping Workshop

6th August



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Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

15th September 2025

Note from President and CEO	2
ACSRN News	3
Member News	4
Upcoming	4
Feature Article	5
Best Practice	6

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Note from the Founder & CEO

Dear members, partners and valued supporters,

As we step into the second half of 2025, the urgency and scale of global challenges facing our planet continue to deepen. From climate change and biodiversity loss to widening social inequalities and resource depletion, the call for decisive action is loud and clear. In this context, sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) must move from ambition to action—firmly embedded in the DNA of organisations, institutions and economies.

We are witnessing in the region a growing awareness and commitment towards sustainable development, but there remains a vast journey ahead. The transition to a sustainable future must be inclusive, strategic and aligned with both local priorities and global imperatives such as the UN SDGs and Net Zero commitments. It is in this spirit that the Arabia CSR Network continues to push forth with its efforts; building capacity, enabling dialogue, nurturing partnerships and recognising excellence.

I am pleased to share here that we are deep in preparations for our most significant and transformative event — **the 13th edition of the Global Sustainability & CSR Forum**, taking place on **8th – 9th October** at **Dubai Chambers**, who proudly serve as our **Strategic Partner**. Held under the patronage of the **Ministry of Economy and Tourism**, this year's forum will convene global and regional leaders, sustainability professionals, policymakers and corporate pioneers under the compelling and timely theme: **“Sustainable Growth: Orchestrating a Global Change.”**

The theme reflects the urgency of driving holistic, system-wide transformation that transcends borders, sectors and silos. It underscores the critical need to move beyond incremental improvements to bold, coordinated action that can shape the course of our future.

Sustainable growth must become the backbone of every economic and development agenda, and our Forum will be the platform where this change is envisioned, discussed and ignited.

The 13th Forum will convene over 40 influential speakers and moderators, representing diverse disciplines—from climate policy and ESG investing to social equity and responsible business leadership. We are curating high-impact plenaries and networking sessions designed to challenge assumptions, share real-world innovations and foster cross-sector collaboration.

Delegates from across the Arab world and other regions will engage in rigorous dialogue around sustainable finance, circular economy, inclusive growth, digital sustainability, climate justice and more.

One of the Forum's most defining elements is its ability to connect thought to practice. It manages to turn ideas into action. The Forum will feature practical case studies, success stories and interactive engagements that highlight how sustainability can be embedded in organisational culture and strategy. The goal is to ensure that every participant leaves inspired and equipped with new tools, networks and pathways for action.

Simultaneously, the Arabia CSR Awards—now in its 18th cycle—continues to serve as the region's most rigorous and respected recognition platform for sustainability excellence. The judging process is currently in full swing, with a distinguished panel of global and regional experts assessing submissions through our pioneering framework that integrates UNGC Principles, GRI Standards, SDGs and national visions.

The Awards have helped create a benchmark for CSR and sustainability performance in the Arab region and have motivated organisations to continuously raise the bar in pursuit of sustainable impact.

Beyond our flagship events, ACSRN continues to engage with important regional and global platforms that shape policy and practice. Over the past few weeks, I and the team had the honour of participating in several key engagements.

On 10th July, we took part in the CEPA Ministry of Economy Workshop focused on “Enhancing Trade in the Services Industry”.

On 16th July, we attended the WPO–BRCGS Webinar, focusing on resilience, traceability and sustainable manufacturing practices. I was also delighted to be featured in an insightful interview with Villa88 Magazine, where I shared reflections on my environmental journey, the founding of ACSRN, and the vital role of Arab women in sustainability leadership. You can read more about these engagements inside this newsletter.

These engagements, together with the work of ACSRN, are part of a broader mission—to mainstream sustainability in every aspect of society and economy, and to empower all stakeholders to become drivers of this change.

We remain committed to serving as a trusted hub for knowledge, capacity-building, collaboration and recognition in the Arab world.

I warmly invite you to join us at the 13th Global Sustainability & CSR Forum, a unique opportunity to connect with leading minds, share your vision, and be part of shaping a global movement for sustainable growth. More Forum details and the registration process can be found inside this newsletter.

I also encourage you to follow us on our social media pages @arabiaccsr to stay informed on how you can join, contribute and amplify the movement.

Together, let us orchestrate the global change our world so urgently needs.



ACSRN News

CEPA Ministry of Economy Workshop

The Arabia CSR Network had the privilege of attending the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) Workshop, organised by the Ministry of Economy in collaboration with Dubai Chambers, on 10th July. The workshop, titled "Enhancing Trade in the Services Industry", was held at the Dubai Chambers headquarters and brought together key stakeholders from various sectors to explore the evolving role of CEPAs in shaping the UAE's international trade landscape.

The event aimed at raising awareness and encouraging insightful dialogue on the opportunities and benefits that CEPAs offer to the UAE's dynamic services sector, with a particular focus on hospitality, tourism, transportation and logistics. As the UAE continues to establish itself as a global trade hub through strategic bilateral and multilateral agreements, understanding the provisions and potential of these partnerships is becoming increasingly important.

Since signing its first CEPA with India in February 2022, the UAE has concluded nine CEPAs with different countries, forming a network of agreements designed to reduce trade barriers, attract foreign investment, and promote sustainable economic growth.

The workshop provided a valuable platform to examine the liberalisation of services under these agreements, and how businesses within the UAE can effectively align their strategies to capitalise on the opportunities presented.

The Arabia CSR Network's participation underscores its ongoing commitment to advancing sustainable and inclusive economic development.



WPO-BRCGS Webinar on Packaging Industry Standards

On 16th July, the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) took part in a live webinar jointly organised by the World Packaging Organisation (WPO) and BRCGS — Brand Reputation through Compliance Global Standards, a globally recognised certification body dedicated to setting rigorous standards for quality, safety and operational excellence within the packaging industry. This free online event provided a comprehensive overview of the newly released BRCGS Global Standard for Packaging Materials – Issue 7, focusing on its implications

for packaging manufacturers and suppliers seeking certification. The webinar emphasised the critical role that certification plays in ensuring product safety, enhancing brand reputation and meeting increasingly stringent regulatory requirements. Senior representatives from both WPO and BRCGS shared expert guidance on the certification process, available resources and best practices to help organisations successfully prepare for and maintain compliance.

The session also included a live Q&A segment, enabling participants to engage directly with industry experts and clarify their queries.

The knowledge gained by attending this webinar will contribute to advancing responsible packaging solutions within the region, aligning with broader goals of environmental stewardship and corporate social responsibility.



Villa88 Magazine

The Founder and CEO of the Arabia CSR Network was recently featured in an exclusive interview with Villa88 Magazine, a renowned Emirati-owned and led lifestyle publication that celebrates the achievements of pioneering women and reaches some of the UAE's most distinguished audiences.

The candid interview delved into her lifelong dedication to sustainability, exploring the personal and professional values that have guided her remarkable environmental journey. She reflected on the early days of her mission, the obstacles she encountered and the passion and perseverance that have defined her leadership over the years.

The conversation also highlighted her commitment to nurturing the next generation of changemakers, offering heartfelt insights on reaching one's potential, leading with purpose and creating meaningful impact.

With honesty and grace, she shared her vision for the future of environmental advocacy in the region, along with timeless advice on finding joy in service and staying anchored to one's core mission.

This inspiring profile will appear in the August issue of Villa88 Magazine, which honours women shaping a sustainable and empowered future for the UAE. Look out for your copy and don't miss this compelling feature.

Member News

Wasl Supports Dubai's New First-Time Home Buyer Programme

Arabia CSR Network proudly highlights its Gold Member, Wasl, for playing a key role in a transformative government initiative that could redefine homeownership in Dubai.

In a significant move to empower residents and encourage long-term settlement, the Government of Dubai has launched the First-Time Home Buyer (FTHB) programme—an inclusive initiative designed to ease the transition from renting to owning a home.

Wasl, one of Dubai's premier real estate developers and a trusted CSR champion, has been announced as a key partner in this groundbreaking initiative.

As part of its commitment to sustainable urban living, Wasl is offering eligible first-time buyers early access to select residential units—ensuring reduced competition from brokers and more favourable purchase opportunities.

This initiative aligns seamlessly with the goals of the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan, placing residents at the heart of the city's future development. Arabia CSR Network commends Wasl for their forward-thinking approach and continued efforts to build inclusive and resilient communities in the UAE.

Upcoming

Upcoming Training Opportunities

1-Sustainability Reporting Masterclass

4th – 5th August 2025

Join this comprehensive two-day masterclass designed to equip you with the tools and knowledge to produce impactful, globally aligned reports that build stakeholder confidence.

Gain a solid grasp of key frameworks such as GRI, ISSB, and others, and learn how to effectively integrate ESG performance into your broader business strategy. Discover how to craft an authentic and persuasive sustainability narrative that resonates with stakeholders.

Engage in interactive sessions guided by industry experts, designed to provide practical insights and real-world applications. Ideal for sustainability practitioners, ESG specialists, and corporate communication teams aiming to stand out in the reporting landscape.

Walk away ready to produce robust, transparent, and regulation-ready sustainability reports that enhance your organisation's credibility. This session empowers you to meet evolving stakeholder and regulatory expectations with confidence.

Sustainability
Reporting Training
Online
Date: 4th & 5th August 2025



2 – Materiality Mapping Workshop 6th August

Want to sharpen your focus on what truly matters in your sustainability strategy? This one-day intensive workshop will equip you with the tools and insights to identify, prioritise and communicate your organisation's most material ESG topics.

Gain a clear understanding of double materiality and stakeholder engagement, align material issues with global frameworks like GRI and ISSB, identify key risks and opportunities, and turn insights into strategic action and transparent disclosures.

Ideal for sustainability managers, CSR leads, risk officers and corporate strategists who need to align sustainability efforts with stakeholder expectations and regulatory demands.

Shaping the Future: The 13th Global Sustainability & CSR Forum Set for October 2025

The stage is set for the highly anticipated 13th edition of the **Global Sustainability & CSR Forum**, scheduled for **8th – 9th October** at the iconic **Dubai Chambers headquarters**—our valued Strategic Partner for this prestigious occasion. Held under the esteemed patronage of the **UAE Ministry of Economy and Tourism**, this year's Forum carries the powerful and timely theme: **"Sustainable Growth: Orchestrating a Global Change."**

The Forum is poised to be a landmark gathering for sustainability leaders, CSR champions and purpose-driven organisations from across the globe.

With global expectations for transparency, climate resilience, inclusive development and responsible governance rising faster than ever, this year's Forum will serve as a dynamic platform to accelerate progress and spark meaningful change. We invite public and private sector entities, thought leaders, innovators, and changemakers to be part of this forward-looking and action-oriented platform.

Participants can expect a rich agenda featuring high-level panels, executive roundtables, in-depth case presentations and practical workshops, all focused on delivering impactful solutions aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Beyond the sessions, the Forum offers unparalleled opportunities for collaborative networking, cross-sector partnerships, and visibility in one of the region's most respected sustainability platforms.

Secure your place now – as a partner, sponsor, speaker, or delegate – and join us in building a more sustainable, inclusive future.

Materiality Mapping
Workshop Online

6th January 2025



Register Now

Feature Article

What Is CSR? Corporate Social Responsibility Explained

Excerpt from Jason Fernando

What Is CSR?

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders and the public.

By practicing corporate social responsibility, also called corporate citizenship, companies are aware of how they impact aspects of society, including economic, social and environmental. Engaging in CSR means a company operates in ways that enhance society and the environment instead of contributing negatively to them.

Understanding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Through corporate social responsibility programmes, philanthropy, and volunteer efforts, businesses can benefit society while boosting their brands. A socially responsible company is accountable to itself and its shareholders.

CSR is commonly a strategy employed by large corporations. The more visible and successful a corporation is, the more responsibility it has to set standards of ethical behaviour for its peers, competition and industry.

Types of CSR

• **Environmental responsibility:** Corporate social responsibility is rooted in preserving the environment. A company can pursue environmental stewardship by reducing pollution and emissions in manufacturing, recycling materials, replenishing natural resources like trees, or creating product lines consistent with CSR.

• **Ethical responsibility:** Corporate social responsibility includes acting fairly and ethically. Instances of ethical responsibility include fair treatment of all customers regardless of age, race, culture, or sexual orientation, favourable pay and benefits for employees, vendor use across demographics, full disclosures and transparency for investors.

• **Philanthropic responsibility:** CSR requires a company to contribute to society, whether a company donates profit to charities, enters into transactions only with suppliers or vendors that align with the company philanthropically, supports employee philanthropic endeavors, or sponsors fundraising events.

• **Financial responsibility:** A company might make plans to be more environmentally, ethically, and philanthropically focused, however, it must back these plans through financial investments in programmes, donations, or product research including research and development for products that encourage sustainability, creating a diverse workforce, or implementing DEI, social awareness, or environmental initiatives.

Benefits of CSR

According to a study published in the Journal of Consumer Psychology, consumers are more likely to act favourably toward a company that has acted to benefit its customers.

As a company engages in CSR, it is more likely to receive favourable brand recognition. Additionally, workers are more likely to stay with a company they believe in. This reduces employee turnover, disgruntled workers, and the total cost of a new employee.

For companies looking to outperform the market, enacting CSR strategies may improve how investors view the company's value. The Boston Consulting Group found that companies considered leaders in environmental, social, or governance matters had an 11% valuation premium over their competitors.

CSR practices help companies mitigate risk by avoiding troubling situations. This includes preventing adverse activities such as discrimination against employee groups, disregard for natural resources, unethical use of company funds and activity that leads to lawsuits, and litigation.



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Best Practice

Labotel Workers Village

Small Business Category

1st Runner Up

Arabia CSR Awards 2023

A Brief about the Organisation

Labotel workers village is a pioneering example of sustainable accommodation for contracted labourers in the heart of the UAE. With a profound commitment to both environmental stewardship and community welfare, Labotel has emerged as a beacon of change.

Their journey is deeply rooted in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as they continuously strive to create a positive impact. Labotel, often referred to as "The Labour Hotel," offers a comprehensive solution for labour services. Their vision is to be the preferred workers' accommodation in the region, enriching customer experiences, and delivering integrated solutions. They are dedicated to excellence and seek to empower their workforce while promoting innovation and integrity. Labotel's mission revolves around providing innovative, high-quality customer service and maximising asset value for sustainable business practices.

They actively engage with stakeholders, contributing to tools for development. Labotel's core values include a strong customer focus, empowerment, teamwork, commitment to excellence and innovation. Their strategy emphasizes robust operational and financial performance, enhancing workforce diversity and equality and fostering a healthy living environment for residents and the broader community while aligning with the UN SDGs.

Lessons Learnt and Conclusion

Labotel Workers Village serves as a remarkable case study in sustainability and community focused innovation. Their journey, deeply rooted in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provides several valuable lessons: Labotel actively participates in sustainability and excellence awards, reflecting a proactive approach to sustainability. Regularly seeking external recognition and engagement with industry bodies can offer valuable insights and benchmarks for improvement.

Staying informed through trend monitoring and stakeholder surveys keeps them agile in a dynamic landscape. Embracing innovation, from digital platforms to smart recycling, reduces their environmental footprint while enhancing service quality. Collaboration is key; as Labotel partners with communities, NGOs and others, fostering shared responsibility for sustainability. Transparent reporting aligns with frameworks like the UN Global Compact, building trust and accountability. Beyond legal compliance, they prioritise occupational health, safety and human rights. Strict anti-corruption policies and ethical business practices have helped set a high standard. Engaging with communities through initiatives

like humanitarian aid and cultural events underscores their positive impact.

By listening to and involving all stakeholders, Labotel showcases the power of multi-faceted stakeholder engagement. Labotel's story is a powerful reminder: proactive engagement, innovation, transparency, stakeholder involvement and a holistic approach are key to impactful, sustainable business practices. Labotel has undertaken a transformative journey rooted in a profound commitment to the environment and the community, aligning its efforts with the UNSDG goals.

Labotel's sustainability practices have led to significant achievements, including a remarkable 23.7% reduction in energy consumption and substantial reduction of 2,046,924 MT CO2 emissions since 2015. Labotel's strategic investment in water and energy-saving infrastructure, such as solar panels and LED lighting, has redefined resource efficiency in its facilities. Labotel's holistic approach to sustainability includes circular economy principles, fostering recycling, composting and waste reduction.

These initiatives extend to the community, where residents are actively engaged in sustainable practices, fostering a sense of responsibility. Beyond environmental efforts, Labotel is dedicated to empowering its workforce and contributing to society.

The company offers scholarships to workers' children, engages with local charities and encourages employees to volunteer. Labotel's story is one of triumph over environmental challenges and a testament to the power of vision and commitment in reshaping accommodation for blue-collar workers while intertwining ecological consciousness with social responsibility.

Labotel exemplifies the positive influence that businesses can have on sustainability, society and the environment, serving as a beacon of hope and inspiration for responsible development. Labotel's sustainability journey provides a comprehensive roadmap for organisations looking to make a positive impact on the environment, society, and governance.

