



## Upcoming Trainings & Workshops



الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية  
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Arabia CSR Network®

### Sustainability Reporting Training

22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025



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### Materiality Mapping Workshop

26<sup>th</sup> January



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## Note from the Founder & CEO

Dear members, partners, valued supporters and well-wishers,

As we step into the final month of 2025, it is remarkable to reflect on how swiftly this year has passed.

Time seems to have flown, yet the year has been filled with progress, milestones and meaningful action in the fields of corporate social responsibility and sustainability. Across the Arab region and globally, we have witnessed sustainability evolve from a strategic priority into an essential operational and societal imperative, shaping the way organisations, governments, communities and individuals act and engage with the world around them. Globally, 2025 has underscored the urgency of addressing climate change, social equity and responsible governance. We witnessed businesses accelerating their adoption of ESG principles, circular economy initiatives and climate disclosure frameworks, while innovative tools and technologies have enhanced their ability to measure, monitor and report environmental and social impact.

The focus has shifted from isolated initiatives to systemic transformation, with multi-stakeholder collaboration emerging as the cornerstone of effective sustainability. Civil society, academia and youth movements have increasingly influenced policy and practice, ensuring that sustainability is not merely a corporate function, but a societal commitment.

Regionally, the Arab world has seen equally remarkable momentum. Governments have advanced visionary strategies addressing climate, energy and waste management, while more and more private sector organisations are embedding ESG principles into their operations. Civil society, educational institutions and youth leaders have been pivotal in driving awareness and action, creating a culture of responsibility that extends beyond policy into daily practice.

Sustainable practices are increasingly embedded in organisational strategies and in the ethos of communities themselves, signalling a growing maturity in regional CSR and sustainability engagement.

For the Arabia CSR Network, November 2025 was an exceptionally vibrant and productive month, reflecting our commitment to inspiring change, facilitating collaboration and advancing the sustainability agenda at all levels.

Each engagement this month has reinforced the principle that collective action, knowledge sharing and leadership together accelerate meaningful impact.

As a Co-founder, Vice Chair and Treasurer of the EmiratesGBC, I had the privilege of delivering a keynote speech at the **MENA Green Building Awards Gala Dinner on 3<sup>rd</sup> November**, celebrating organisations and individuals who are leading the transformation of the built environment through innovative sustainable design, energy efficiency and community-focused planning.

On **6<sup>th</sup> November**, at the **3<sup>rd</sup> Sustainability Forum of Fujairah Hospital**, I shared insights on Sustainability in UAE Communities and engaged in a Q&A session on The Power of We, highlighting how individual and collective initiatives can generate lasting impact within communities and beyond.

The following day, **7<sup>th</sup> November**, marked the **1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Global EEE UAE Advisory Board**, a significant step in fostering international collaboration in environmental education. The meeting brought together experts, thought leaders and practitioners to discuss strategies for enhancing environmental literacy, empowering youth and promoting sustainable behavioural

change across generations. On **8<sup>th</sup> November**, we joined EEG as it conducted the 29th cycle of its community action programme, the **"Can Collection Drive"**, a practical demonstration of community action, recycling and responsible citizenship. Programmes like this highlight how tangible, hands-on initiatives can translate awareness into measurable environmental outcomes.

On **20<sup>th</sup> November**, I had the honour of delivering a keynote address on Green Business Strategies: Balancing Profit & Planet at the 2nd RAK Investment & Business Summit, where we explored how organisations can integrate purpose with profitability. Later that day, ACSRN team participated in the **Policy Hack on Accelerating Collective Action for Methane and Air Quality**, a forum that underscored the importance of innovative policy, cross-sector collaboration and data-driven solutions in driving regional environmental progress.

On **27<sup>th</sup> November**, I participated in the **Majra Impact Summit**, where I addressed thought-provoking questions around sustainability and governance. These included strategies to localise environmental and social governance standards to reflect UAE's cultural values while aligning with global frameworks, understanding regional CSR trends and translating them into measurable objectives and embedding robust governance practices into organisational culture to ensure sustainable impact across environmental, social and economic dimensions.

We concluded the month by joining EEG on **28<sup>th</sup> November** in conducting the **5<sup>th</sup> Panel Discussion** on **"The Carbon Reality: Understanding Market, Offset, Capture & Credit."** Convening cross-sector stakeholders to explore emerging sustainability trends, collaborative solutions and pathways for collective impact. You can read more about this month's engagements inside this newsletter.

Beyond these engagements, I also had the privilege of serving as a jury member for significant national and international awards, including the ICGN Awards 2025 and the Majra Impact Seal. These platforms highlight the UAE's advancing leadership in governance, sustainability and responsible business, and my involvement reaffirmed the vital importance of robust governance systems and recognising organisations that truly embed environmental and social impact at the heart of their operations.

Reflecting on these engagements, it is clear that progress in CSR and sustainability is driven not only by vision but by collaboration, commitment and consistent action. Each keynote, forum and initiative reinforces that when individuals, organisations and communities unite with purpose, the impact is amplified and measurable, creating tangible benefits for society and the environment alike.

With just a month remaining in 2025, it is the perfect time to reflect on our achievements and build momentum for the year ahead. As we close this remarkable year, we invite you to look out for the launch of the 19<sup>th</sup> Cycle of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards—an exciting opportunity to celebrate leadership, innovation and excellence in corporate responsibility. Together, let us continue to inspire change, champion sustainability and create a lasting positive impact for our communities and the planet.



## ACSRN News

### MENA Green Building Awards 2025: Advancing Sustainability Across the Region

On 3<sup>rd</sup> November, the Emirates Green Building Council (EmiratesGBC) hosted the MENA Green Building Awards, celebrating organisations that are shaping a greener, more resilient, and innovative built environment across the Arab region. The event commenced with an inspiring address by Ms. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) and, in her capacity as Co-Founder, Vice Chair, and Treasurer of EmiratesGBC.

Ms. Al Mar'ashi reflected on the Awards' journey since 2012, which began with six categories and the Dr. Owainati Student Excellence Award, and has grown into 16 professional categories, attracting applications from North Africa, the Levant, the GCC, and beyond.

She highlighted the Awards' evolution into a regional platform fostering collaboration, celebrating innovation, and advancing sustainable urban development, including the addition of the Net Zero Building of the Year category in 2019.

Since inception, the Awards have received 698 professional applications, demonstrating the dedication and innovation of sustainability leaders across the region. This year's 81 submissions exemplified creativity and commitment, while the Student Excellence Award continues to recognise youth innovation and the power of education in sustainability. Ms. Al Mar'ashi concluded by congratulating finalists and winners, and thanking judges, partners, and sponsors. The ceremony reaffirmed the Awards' role as a catalyst for regional collaboration and excellence, inspiring a greener, more sustainable future across MENA.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sustainability Forum – Fujairah Hospital

On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025, Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN), delivered an inspiring session titled "Sustainability in the UAE Community: Nurturing Collective Action for a Sustainable Future" at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sustainability Forum, held at Fujairah AlBahar Hotel & Resort and organised by Fujairah Hospital. Drawing on over three decades of experience in driving CSR and sustainability initiatives, Mrs. Al Mar'ashi shared insights on the importance

of engaging communities, organisations, and youth to foster collective environmental action. She highlighted ACSRN programmes that reach hundreds of schools and universities annually, empowering students to move from participants to leaders of change through practical initiatives such as tree planting, recycling drives, and community clean-ups.

A central theme of her session was collaboration: "Sustainability thrives on collaboration, not competition," she emphasised, encouraging organisations to work together, share knowledge, and align efforts to achieve greater impact. She also offered actionable advice for institutions, particularly hospitals, on starting sustainability programmes, measuring success, and embedding lasting environmental practices.

Looking forward, Mrs. Al Mar'ashi expressed her hope that ACSRN's work will leave a lasting legacy of collaboration, empowerment, and environmental stewardship — inspiring future generations to continue building a sustainable UAE.

Her session served as both a call to action and a testament to the transformative impact that the Arabia CSR Network continues to achieve across communities and institutions nationwide.

### Global EEE UAE Advisory Board

Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of the Arabia CSR Network, serves as a valued member of the Global Education Energy Environment (Global EEE) UAE Advisory Board, contributing her expertise in sustainability, corporate responsibility, and youth engagement to guide the organisation's strategy and programmes in the UAE.

Global EEE, a US-based volunteer-driven nonprofit, is dedicated to advancing hands-on STEM education worldwide. Its UAE initiatives include the UAE Electric Vehicle Grand Prix (EVGP), an international competition that challenges high school students to design, build, and race electric, hybrid-electric, and solar-powered vehicles. The program develops not only technical skills but also teamwork, problem-solving, and environmental awareness, nurturing the next generation of innovators and sustainability leaders.

The advisory board held its first meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November, during which Mrs. Al Mar'ashi joined fellow members in shaping strategic priorities, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring that Global EEE's programmes continue to inspire and empower young learners.

Her participation exemplifies the power of collaboration between education, sustainability, and innovation, highlighting the importance of preparing youth to meet the environmental and technological challenges of the future.

Through her advisory role, Mrs. Al Mar'ashi helps advance Global EEE's mission in the UAE, ensuring that students gain meaningful, hands-on experiences while cultivating a deep sense of responsibility toward their communities and the environment.

## Arabia CSR Network Proud to Partner with EEG for the 29<sup>th</sup> Can Collection Drive

Arabia CSR Network is proud to have partnered with the Emirates Environmental Group (EEG) for the 29<sup>th</sup> cycle of their flagship Can Collection Drive, held on 8<sup>th</sup> November across the UAE.

This iconic initiative, launched in 1997, has grown over nearly three decades into a nationwide movement, uniting schools, families, corporations, government entities, and the hospitality sector in collective environmental action.

Under the theme, "Say YES to Recycling, NO to Carbon Emissions," the campaign encouraged communities across all seven Emirates to embrace recycling, conserve resources, and promote climate awareness.

This year alone, **12,946 kilograms** of aluminium cans were collected, bringing the programme's lifetime total to over **476,316 kilograms** and preventing approximately **7,150 metric tonnes** of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions—a tangible contribution towards the UAE's Net Zero 2050 vision.

As the CSR Partner, Arabia CSR Network was honoured to support EEG in engaging corporate participants, facilitating awareness, and promoting the campaign's message of sustainability across diverse sectors. The initiative also aligns with several UN Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Co-Founder & Chairperson of EEG and Founder & CEO of the Arabia CSR Network, commented:

"The success of the Can Collection Drive 2025 shows the power of collective action. Every can collected represents awareness, responsibility, and a commitment to a greener, more resilient future."

Arabia CSR Network congratulates EEG, all participants, government entities, and corporate partners for their unwavering commitment to sustainability. Initiatives like the Can Collection Drive demonstrate the transformative impact of collaboration, reinforcing that environmental stewardship is a shared responsibility—and one that is central to building a greener, more sustainable UAE.



## Frontier25 Policy Hack to Accelerate Methane Action and Improve Air Quality

Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) was pleased to participate on 20<sup>th</sup> November in the Policy Hack on Accelerating Collective Action for Methane and Air Quality, hosted by Frontier25 (formerly UAE Independent Climate Change Accelerators) in partnership with the Global Methane Hub, at the Emerald Ballroom, Saadiyat Rotana Resort, Abu Dhabi.

The event convened a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from government, industry, and academia, to collectively identify key challenges, co-create solutions, and foster support for impactful policies targeting methane reduction and air quality improvement across the UAE and MENA region. By attending, ACSRN engaged in meaningful discussions on decarbonisation pathways, circular economy solutions, and climate adaptation strategies, reinforcing the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving national and regional climate goals. The event offered an opportunity to exchange knowledge, explore innovative approaches, and strengthen networks that are critical to advancing sustainable practices and clean air initiatives.

ACSRN's participation underscores its ongoing commitment to staying informed, connected, and actively involved in climate and sustainability initiatives. By being part of such high-level dialogues, the network continues to support the UAE's transition towards a greener economy while promoting collaboration and knowledge-sharing among key actors shaping the nation's environmental future.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> RAK Investment & Business Summit

Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of Arabia CSR Network, delivered an inspiring keynote at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ras Al Khaimah Investment & Business Summit, focused on Green Business Strategies: Balancing Profit & Planet that took place on 20<sup>th</sup> November. The summit provided a unique platform for dialogue with RAK's leaders, investors, and policymakers on the crucial role of sustainability in shaping the emirate's economic development.

During her session, Mrs. Al Mar'ashi highlighted practical strategies for integrating environmental stewardship into business operations without compromising growth. She emphasised approaches including resource efficiency, renewable energy adoption, circular economy solutions, and green innovation, showing how aligning profit with purpose can enhance competitiveness, strengthen resilience, and support RAK's vision for sustainable development. The keynote sparked lively discussions, with participants sharing their commitment to adopting greener practices, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and contributing to the UAE's broader environmental goals.

Mrs. Al Mar'ashi's message reinforced that sustainability is not only a responsibility but also a strategic opportunity—one that creates value for businesses, communities, and the planet. The summit highlighted the growing momentum for green business practices in Ras Al Khaimah, demonstrating that collaboration between government, investors, and the private sector is essential for achieving a sustainable and prosperous future.

## Arabia CSR Network Celebrates Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi's Honorary Doctorate from Heriot-Watt University

Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) is proud to highlight that Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Co-Founder of ACSR Network, has been awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University by Heriot-Watt University. The prestigious recognition was conferred on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at Dubai Opera House during the Winter Graduation Ceremony.

Heriot-Watt University acknowledged Mrs. Al Mar'ashi's pioneering contributions to sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and environmental leadership. She has been instrumental in founding ACSRN in 2004, the Emirates Environmental Group (EEG) in 1991, and the Emirates Green Building Council, where she serves as Vice Chair and Treasurer. Her work has set a benchmark for CSR and sustainability across the UAE and the MENA region.

Beyond national achievements, Mrs. Al Mar'ashi has played leading roles in global sustainability platforms, including the UN Global Compact, the Global Reporting Initiative, the World Green Building Council, and the UN Global Investors for Sustainable Development (UN GISD) Alliance, where her efforts continue to inspire environmentally responsible practices worldwide. She has also contributed to high-profile initiatives such as the UAE Sustainability Experts Network and was featured in the official film commemorating 50 Years of UAE National Day.

This honorary doctorate recognises Mrs. Al Mar'ashi's lifelong dedication to driving meaningful impact through cross-sector collaboration, empowering communities, and shaping a sustainable future. Arabia CSR Network celebrates this achievement as a reflection of her extraordinary leadership and as an inspiration to CSR practitioners, businesses, and institutions striving to integrate sustainability into their strategies.



## Majra Impact Summit 2025: Driving the Impact Economy through Partnerships

Arabia CSR Network was proud to see Dr. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of ACSRN, deliver a keynote at the Majra Impact Summit 2025, held at Space 42, Abu Dhabi on 27<sup>th</sup> November. The Summit brought together over 400 leaders from government, business and civil society to explore actionable strategies for CSR, sustainability and national impact under the theme "Unifying Collective Good for the UAE."

The Summit itself provided a dynamic platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange, featuring interactive panels, workshops, and sessions that showcased best practices and innovative approaches to advancing the UAE's sustainability and social impact agenda.

Participants engaged in rich discussions on multi-stakeholder partnerships, national priority projects, and strategies to translate CSR and sustainability ambitions into tangible, measurable outcomes, emphasising the power of collective action across sectors.

The event also hosted the Impact Seal Award Ceremony, celebrating organisations that have demonstrated exceptional commitment and measurable impact in sustainability and CSR initiatives.

Dr. Al Mar'ashi spoke during Session 2: Creating the Impact Economy – Partnerships for Good & National Priority Projects (NPPs), sharing her expertise on the role of cross-sector collaboration in achieving measurable social, environmental and economic outcomes.

During her address, she explored key questions on localising governance standards to reflect UAE cultural values while remaining aligned with global frameworks, interpreting regional CSR trends to create measurable organisational goals, and embedding governance practices deeply within corporate culture to ensure sustainability is integral, not just regulatory. She highlighted how organisations can integrate EESG frameworks, align corporate responsibility with national priorities and foster partnerships that accelerate sustainable development.

Arabia CSR Network celebrates her participation, reinforcing the network's commitment to promoting collaboration, inspiring responsible business practices and supporting initiatives that contribute to the UAE's impact economy.

The Summit demonstrated that progress is strongest when government, business, and civil society unite with a shared vision. Dr. Al Mar'ashi's insights continue to inspire organisations to turn sustainability commitments into meaningful, measurable impact.

## ACSRN Highlights EEG's 2025 Carbon Panel: Driving Collaboration for Climate Action

The Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) acknowledges the Emirates Environmental Group's (EEG) successful hosting of its 5<sup>th</sup> and final Panel Discussion of 2025 on 27<sup>th</sup> November at Dubai Chambers, under the theme: "The Carbon Reality: Understanding Market, Offset, Capture & Credit." The session brought together policymakers, corporate leaders, sustainability experts, and students to explore the evolving landscape of carbon management and pathways for scalable climate action in the UAE and beyond.

A standout feature of the session was the Inter-School Debate Competition, reflecting EEG's commitment to youth climate literacy.

Students debated the motion: "Carbon Offsets: A Credible Pathway to Net Zero or a Climate Loophole?" The Philippine School Abu Dhabi represented the proposition, advocating offsets as essential tools, while New Indian Model School,

Dubai, highlighted risks that could delay deep decarbonisation. This vibrant exchange showcased the next generation of climate champions.

The expert panel convened leading sustainability voices from the region, including:

- Mr. Abdelmuti Ahmed Murad, Director, Climate Change Department, UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment
- Dr. Steven Griffiths, Professor & Vice-Chancellor for Research, American University of Sharjah
- Ms. Carlina Marani, Managing Director, Accenture EMEA
- Mr. Vijay Bains, Chief Sustainability Officer & Group Head of ESG, Emirates NBD
- Ms. Samantha Shin, Independent Climate Finance & Policy Advisor

Discussions spanned market credibility, carbon offsets, carbon capture, climate finance, and the importance of inclusive, community-centred approaches to accelerate the UAE's low-carbon transition. Insights emphasised strong policy frameworks, data integrity, public-private collaboration, and measurable impact as critical enablers for effective climate action.

ACSRN, as CSR Partner, recognises the importance of such platforms in fostering cross-sector dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration. We congratulate EEG on driving actionable solutions that strengthen climate stewardship and empower communities, and we reaffirm our support for initiatives that integrate sustainability into corporate and community strategies.

The panel's success was made possible with the support of McDonald's UAE (Main Sponsor), Dubai Chambers (Venue Sponsor), Al Khoory (Catering Sponsor), and EEG's partners, including the Clean Energy Business Council, Emirates Green Building Council, and Swiss Business Council.

This 2025 series underscores EEG's leadership in sustainability, and ACSRN celebrates its role in mobilising knowledge, building capacity, and shaping the UAE's climate action agenda for a resilient, low-carbon future.



## Member News

### Sustainability Programme Driving Major Impact in Jerusalem

The Green Energy and Sustainability Programme—co-funded by the Palestine Investment Fund (PIF), a Corporate Member of the Arabia CSR Network, and the European Union—has successfully concluded in Jerusalem, delivering significant environmental and economic benefits to the community.

The programme supported over 35 Jerusalem-based projects, enabling them to improve energy efficiency and reduce operational costs. A key outcome was the installation of up to 1 megawatt of solar energy systems, which has cut electricity consumption by 50% to 60% and generated annual savings of approximately €250,000 for beneficiary institutions.

Beyond energy savings, the initiative injected more than €2.4 million into the local economy and encouraged an additional €700,000 in private investments from participating businesses. These combined efforts contributed to the creation and preservation of hundreds of direct and indirect jobs, strengthening economic resilience across the city.

By reducing energy burdens and promoting clean power, the programme has enhanced the long-term sustainability of Jerusalem's enterprises and empowered them to grow and operate more efficiently.



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## Upcoming

### 1.) Sustainability Reporting Masterclass

22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 & 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026

Communicate your organisation's sustainability journey with credibility and confidence. This comprehensive two-day masterclass equips you with the knowledge and tools to develop transparent, globally aligned sustainability reports that resonate with stakeholders. Throughout the course, participants will:

- Gain a solid understanding of key reporting frameworks, including GRI, ISSB and other leading standards
- Integrate ESG performance metrics into business strategy and decision-making
- Craft compelling and authentic sustainability narratives that reflect purpose and impact
- Participate in interactive exercises guided by seasoned industry experts

Tailoured for sustainability officers, ESG professionals and communications specialists, this training ensures you leave equipped to produce insightful, regulation-ready reports that enhance your organisation's reputation and stakeholder trust.



### 2.) Materiality Mapping Workshop

26<sup>th</sup> January

Strengthen your organisation's sustainability strategy with a focused and practical Materiality Mapping Workshop. This specialised session is designed to help participants pinpoint the environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues that matter most to their organisation and stakeholders—forming the foundation of effective sustainability reporting and long-term value creation. During this workshop, participants will:

- Gain a clear understanding of single and double materiality and their relevance in today's global reporting landscape
- Learn how to conduct meaningful stakeholder engagement to gather insights and expectations
- Develop a robust materiality matrix aligned with leading international standards
- Explore how to integrate materiality outcomes into strategy development, risk management and transparent sustainability disclosures



This workshop is ideal for sustainability practitioners, ESG managers, strategists and reporting professionals seeking to refine their organisation's approach to materiality. Register now to secure your place in these highly interactive and practice-driven trainings.

[Register Now](#)

### Launch of the 19<sup>th</sup> Cycle of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards

The Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) is preparing to unveil one of the most anticipated milestones in the region's sustainability calendar — the Launch of the 19<sup>th</sup> Cycle of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards. For nearly two decades, the Awards have stood as the Arab world's leading benchmark for corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practices, recognising organisations that demonstrate innovation, impact, and integrity in the pursuit of sustainable development.

The long-standing legacy of the Awards reflects the region's growing momentum toward ESG excellence. Over the years, the programme has become a powerful platform for shaping policy dialogue, elevating best practices, and celebrating changemakers across all sectors. Today, as sustainability continues to advance as a national and global priority, the Awards play an increasingly pivotal role in guiding and inspiring organisations toward higher standards of performance and disclosure. The official launch of the 19<sup>th</sup> Cycle is scheduled to take place on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026. The event will convene distinguished representatives from government, business, academia, and civil society, creating a dynamic environment for knowledge exchange and strategic reflection. Participants can expect rich insights into emerging sustainability trends, evolving regional expectations, and new opportunities within the Awards' refined frameworks.

A key highlight of the event will be the participation of winners from the 18<sup>th</sup> Cycle, who will offer candid perspectives on their journeys — sharing the commitments, challenges, and transformations that shaped their success. Their testimonies will provide invaluable guidance for organisations preparing to participate in the upcoming cycle, offering real-world examples of effective sustainability integration and leadership.



[Register Now](#)

## Feature Article

### Corporate Social Responsibility: A Strategic Imperative For Modern Businesses

Excerpt from Michael Shribman

In today's interconnected world, businesses are increasingly under pressure to not only deliver value to shareholders but also to contribute positively to society. This is where corporate social responsibility (CSR) comes into play. As consumers and investors alike demand greater transparency and ethical behavior from the companies they support, CSR has become ever more important for businesses aiming to remain competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### The Evolution Of CSR: From Obligation To Strategy

CSR refers to a company's commitment to operate ethically and sustainably, balancing economic, environmental and social considerations. It involves going beyond legal requirements to make a proactive effort to positively impact society.

CSR encompasses activities such as reducing carbon footprints, ensuring fair labor practices, supporting community development and investing in philanthropic initiatives.

Businesses in the U.S. adhere to SEC guidelines for ESG disclosures, while Canadian companies follow CSA standards. Both nations provide sustainability frameworks like GRI and ISO to help businesses integrate sustainability and ethical practices, address societal concerns, build stakeholder trust and ensure long-term success.

Today, CSR is an important part of business strategy that can fuel growth, foster innovation and strengthen brand loyalty.

#### People, Planet And Profit: Key Pillars Of CSR

CSR is centered around three pillars—people, planet and profit—often referred to as the "triple bottom line." This framework is intended to help companies focus not only on financial success but also on their societal contributions and environmental impact.

##### 1. People: Social Responsibility

Companies are increasingly taking responsibility for their impact on employees, customers and communities. By committing to fair labor practices, promoting diversity and inclusion, ensuring safe and healthy work environments, and engaging in community-focused initiatives, organizations can not only fulfill ethical obligations but also build trust with stakeholders.

For instance, Patagonia stands as a powerful example of a company whose CSR efforts have made headlines, particularly for its commitment to environmental sustainability and fair trade practices. Additionally, companies with robust CSR programs often experience enhanced employee satisfaction and customer loyalty, which con-

tribute to long-term success. From my own experience, I've witnessed a local tech firm transform its work culture by implementing volunteer programs and diversity initiatives, resulting in heightened morale and a stronger sense of community among employees.

##### 2. Planet: Environmental Stewardship

Environmental sustainability is an important part of corporate social responsibility, allowing businesses to positively influence the planet while boosting their brand image.

For example, Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan aims to reduce its products' environmental footprint and enhance the well-being of over a billion people. This initiative demonstrates how companies can integrate sustainability into their core operations, driving innovation and industrywide change.

##### 3. Profit: Ethical Governance

At its core, CSR is about ethical business practices. This includes transparency in financial reporting, responsible marketing, anti-corruption measures and ensuring that all operations align with international human rights standards. In my experience, companies with strong governance structures tend to have lower risk profiles, greater resilience during economic downturns, and better long-term financial performance. This alignment of ethical practices with strategic business goals is backed by numerous studies that highlight the tangible benefits of CSR in building sustainable, thriving enterprises.

#### Further Advantages Of Effective CSR

The potential benefits of CSR extend beyond mere goodwill. In my experience, an effective CSR strategy can enhance brand reputation, as many consumers prefer companies that align with their values. A positive brand perception can, in turn, lead to greater customer loyalty, higher sales and increased market share. Additionally, CSR can help attract and retain talent, as many employees seek purpose-driven companies. Deloitte reports that over 40% of Millennials and Gen Z have rejected assignments or employers based on personal ethics.

CSR can also aid in risk management, helping companies anticipate new regulations and evolving consumer preferences. By investing in sustainable practices, firms can uncover innovative ways to reduce costs and develop new products. For instance, the demand for sustainable packaging has spurred innovations in biodegradable materials. McKinsey & Company suggests that businesses adopting sustainable practices often gain competitive advantages.

Finally, CSR can provide access to capital, as investors are increasingly considering ESG criteria. Companies with strong CSR credentials may attract investment and benefit from the growing focus on ESG investing.

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## Best Practice

### Emirates Health Services Healthcare Sector Category

1<sup>st</sup> Runner Up

Arabia CSR Awards 2023

#### A Brief about the Organisation

The Emirates Health Services (EHS) is a federal government entity that was officially launched in April 2021 after its separation from the Ministry of Health and Community Protection with the aim of enhancing the efficiency of the federal health sector in the country.

Emirates Health Services is the official authorised body from the Ministry of health to create and provide world-class healthcare system across all facilities in the UAE.

It is responsible for ensuring high-quality services provided by both public and private hospitals. Also, the body that is in charge of taking preventive measures towards combating epidemics and diseases as well as achieving the national agenda of the UAE Vision 2021 and the sustainable development of the healthcare sector.

It is a pioneering organisation that is committed to redefining healthcare through innovation and sustainability. With a strong focus on providing quality and accessible healthcare, Emirates Healthcare Services has embraced cutting-edge technologies, partnerships, and sustainable practices to shape the future of the healthcare industry.

#### Conclusion and Lessons Learnt

- EHS has announced its Integrated Management System Policy on its website which indicates the importance of applying Best Management Practices in accordance with Federal Policies, Legislations, Laws, and Standards of Integrity and Transparency.
- Recognising the significance of understanding stakeholder requirements and expectations. EHS Top Management involves internal and external stakeholders in engagement sessions to incorporating these insights into decision-making processes.
- Implementing “Aadaa” system to monitor ESG performance indicators exemplifies the commitment to Transparency and Accountability commitment. This system helped management in making decisions focused on enhancing sustainability.
- EHS promotes building strategic partnerships and collaborations to improve flexibility, capabilities, service quality, and global competitiveness.
- EHS embraced environmental responsibility by implementing ISO 14001 & ISO 26000. This proactive approach assisted promoting sustainable operations and social responsibility.
- EHS undertook a study to reduce anaesthetic gas emissions and material consumption. These studies play

a crucial role in safeguarding the environment for the well-being of both current and future generations.

- The Digital Twin Model significantly contributes to sustainability, reducing energy consumption and enhancing efficiency. The model empowers decision-makers to explore various operational scenarios and assess development and modernisation projects. Which allows them to select the most effective options in terms of positive

Emirates Health Services, through its Innovation Strategy 2023-2026, aims to enhance a healthy lifestyle and community well-being.

The EHS has seamlessly integrated cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR), Blockchain technology, Internet of Things (IoT), and robotics, into its healthcare infrastructure and services.

The strategy places strong emphasis on fostering a culture of innovation across all organisational levels to ensure a continuous improvement approach.

Furthermore, the strategy underscores the importance of expanding the network of partnerships to develop healthcare innovation and collaborative relationships with relevant stakeholders.

This positions Emirates Health Services Company at the forefront of healthcare advancements, contributing to the overall well-being of community.

EHS reinforces that attracting and empowering the best human talents is a significant objective to deliver an efficient healthcare service in UAE. The organisation actively engages in educational initiatives to raise environmental awareness and implement programmes and services related to public and community health in alignment with the UAE health policies and programmes.

Additionally, there is a particular focus on the significance of healthcare economy and strategic investments to achieve national objectives for building economic resilience.

