الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية الإجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network®

NEWSLETTER

2026 Volume 7 Issue 180

Upcoming Trainings & Workshops

Follow us: @arabiacsr

P.O Box 112101, Villa No. 117 A, JMR 68, Jumeirah 1, Dubai - UAE
+971 4 344 8120, +971 4 344 8622 Fax: +971 4 344 9677
admin@arabiacsrnetwork.com www.arabiacsrnetwork.com

Editiorial Team: Dr. Habiba Al Mar'ashi & Mariella Gaspar

Design by: Mostafa Khattab

الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
الإجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network©

July
Volume 7 Issue 180

Note from the Founder & CEO

Dear Members, Partners, Stakeholders, Friends and Well-wishers. The global business landscape continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace. Geopolitical tensions, econom uncertainty, shifting supply chains & changing regulatory expectations are redefining how organisations operate and compete. While these developments undoubtedly present challenges, they also reveal an important truth—organisations that have embedded sustainability, responsible governance and corporate social responsibility into their core business strategies are proving to be more resilient, more adaptable and better positioned for long-term success.

Increasingly, investors, customers, regulators and society at large are looking beyond financial performance alone. They seek organisations that demonstrate ethical leadership, sound governance, environmental responsibility and a genuine commitment to creating long-term value for all stakeholders. Sustainability has evolved from being a desirable corporate initiative into a strategic business imperative. It is no longer simply about doing less harm; it is about creating lasting positive impact while strengthening organisational resilience, innovation and competitiveness. This transformation is encouraging to witness. It demonstrates that responsible business is not only the right thing to do—it is increasingly proving to be the smart thing to do. Organisations that embrace sustainability are finding themselves better equipped to manage risk, attract investment, build stakeholder confidence and navigate uncertainty with greater agility.

Against this backdrop, Arabia CSR Network continues to witness an inspiring commitment from organisations across the region that are raising the benchmark for responsible business practices. One of the most exciting milestones currently underway is the judging process for the 19th Cycle of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards. Our distinguished panel of independent jurors is carefully reviewing an impressive portfolio of submissions representing organisations from diverse sectors and from different Arab countries, each showcasing innovative initiatives, measurable impacts and a steadfast commitment to sustainability excellence.

Every application tells a unique story of leadership, innovation and perseverance, it is also immensely rewarding to witness the remarkable progress organisations have made in integrating sustainability into their operations, governance and business strategies. We eagerly look forward to announcing and celebrating the outstanding winners of the 19th Cycle, whose achievements will undoubtedly inspire many others across the region to pursue even greater sustainability ambitions.

Throughout July, Arabia CSR Network continued its commitment to capacity building and international engagement. On 2nd July, we participated in the World Packaging Organization (WPO) Online Course: Evolving Packaging Trends and Consumer Demands, exploring emerging trends in sustainable packaging, circular economy solutions and innovation across global supply chains.

On 4th July, I had the privilege of being featured in the Sustainability Lounge Podcast, where I shared reflections on the evolving sustainability landscape across the United Arab Emirates and the wider region. The discussion explored the growing importance of environmental leadership, strategic partnerships and collective responsibility, while emphasising how organisations can successfully embed sustainability into their core business strategies and translate commitments into measurable outcomes. Our engagement with stakeholders continued on 6th July through a productive meeting with ADNOC Sour Gas, where discussions focused on opportunities for future collaboration in advancing sustainability, stakeholder engagement and responsible business initiatives.

As a member of the United Nations Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance Board, I continued participating in important international discussions throughout the month. On 7th July, I joined the dialogue on "Unlocking Private Capital for Kenya's Sustainable Development," exploring innovative approaches to mobilising finance for sustainable development. This was followed on 9th July by the GISD Alliance Blended Finance Work-stream Meeting, where global leaders examined collaborative financing mechanisms capable of accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals through stronger public-private partnerships and innovative investment models.

On 24th July, Arabia CSR Network conducted a Gap Analysis Workshop, providing organisations with practical guidance on assessing their current sustainability performance, identifying opportunities for improvement and strengthening their ESG strategies. Workshops such as these continue to play an important role in supporting organisations as they advance their sustainability journeys through continual improvement and strategic planning. While these engagements have kept us actively involved throughout the month, much of our focus has also been dedicated to preparations for one of the region's most anticipated sustainability gatherings—the Global Sustainability & CSR Forum 2026, taking place on 12th –13th October 2026 under the inspiring theme "Currents of Change: Impact Beyond Promises." We are delighted that many distinguished speakers from different parts of the world have already confirmed their participation, ensuring rich discussions, practical insights and forward-looking solutions that address today's most pressing sustainability challenges. I warmly encourage all of you to secure your place and join us for what will undoubtedly be an inspiring and impactful event.

At Arabia CSR Network, our mission extends beyond conferences and awards. We remain committed to building organisational capacity by equipping professionals with the knowledge, tools and practical skills required to navigate an increasingly complex sustainability landscape. Through our specialised training programmes, workshops and knowledge-sharing initiatives, we continue to support organisations in embedding sustainability into their governance, operations and long-term strategies.

I therefore encourage you to become an active part of the Arabia CSR Network community. Join our growing network of responsible organisations, participate in our upcoming training programmes, engage with our forums and workshops, and take advantage of the opportunities available to learn, collaborate and contribute towards advancing sustainability across the region. Every organisation has the potential to create positive change, and together we can amplify that impact far beyond what any one of us could achieve alone.
Thank you for your continued trust, collaboration and unwavering commitment to creating a more responsible, resilient and sustainable future.

الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية الإجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network©

July
Volume 7 Issue 180

ACSRN News

WPO Course on Sustainable Packaging Trends

The Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) participated in an online training course organised by the World Packaging Organisation (WPO) on **2nd July**, entitled "Evolving Packaging Trends and Consumer Demands." The session brought together participants from industry, academia and packaging organisations to explore the latest developments shaping the future of sustainable packaging.

The course highlighted how packaging is evolving beyond its traditional role to support sustainability, consumer engagement, supply chain efficiency and digital transformation. Discussions explored emerging trends in consumer-focused packaging, innovative and nature-inspired materials, smart packaging technologies and the growing application of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance traceability, optimise recycling processes and improve operational efficiency. Participants also examined circular economy approaches, including reusable packaging systems and solutions to minimise food waste through extended product shelf life.

An interactive discussion further explored the opportunities and challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises in adopting smart packaging technologies, emphasising the long-term environmental and business value of investing in sustainable innovation. By engaging in international learning platforms such as those offered by the WPO, ACSRN continues to support organisations across the region in adopting innovative, sustainable and future-ready business practices.

EGBC Sustainability Lounge Podcast

The Arabia CSR Network is pleased to share that Dr. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of ACSRN, was featured in the latest episode of the Sustainability Lounge Podcast, released on **4th July**. In this engaging conversation, Dr. Habiba shares her insights on the evolving sustainability landscape, the growing importance of responsible business practices and the critical role of collaboration in advancing sustainable development. Drawing upon her extensive experience in corporate sustainability and CSR, she highlighted how organisations can integrate sustainability into their strategies to create long-term value for businesses, communities and the environment.

Watch here

ACSRN Meets ADNOC Sour Gas Team

The Arabia CSR Network hosted at its office a productive meeting with a delegation from ADNOC Sour Gas, one of ADNOC's operating companies, on **6th July**. The meeting provided an excellent opportunity to discuss potential areas of collaboration in advancing corporate sustainability, responsible business practices and stakeholder engagement.

The discussions focused on exchanging insights into each organisation's sustainability priorities and exploring opportunities to work together on initiatives that promote environmental stewardship, social responsibility and sustainable development. Both parties also explored avenues for knowledge sharing, capacity building and collaborative programmes that contribute to the UAE's sustainability agenda and the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

During the meeting, ACSRN highlighted its role in supporting organisations across the region through sustainability training, advisory services, stakeholder engagement platforms, recognition programmes and knowledge-sharing initiatives. The dialogue reinforced the importance of strategic partnerships in driving responsible business practices and creating long-term value for organisations, communities and the environment.

The meeting marked a positive step towards establishing a long-term relationship founded on a shared commitment to sustainability, innovation and collective action for a more resilient and sustainable future.

ACSRN Conducts Gap Analysis Workshop

On **24th July**, the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) successfully conducted a Gap Analysis Workshop, bringing together professionals and organisational representatives to strengthen their understanding of sustainability performance assessment and continuous improvement.

The interactive workshop provided participants with practical guidance on identifying gaps between current practices and recognised sustainability standards, enabling organisations to better evaluate their existing systems, policies and performance. Through structured discussions and practical examples, participants explored methodologies for assessing organisational readiness, identifying priority improvement areas and developing strategic action plans that support long-term sustainability objectives. The session also highlighted the importance of gap analysis as a valuable management tool for enhancing governance, improving operational efficiency, strengthening stakeholder confidence and aligning organisational practices with internationally recognised sustainability frameworks. Participants gained practical insights into translating assessment findings into measurable actions that support continual improvement and organisational resilience.

As organisations face increasing expectations for transparency, accountability and sustainable performance, workshops such as these play an essential role in building the knowledge and capabilities required to navigate an evolving sustainability landscape.

UN GISD Engagements

1) On **7th July**, Dr Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder and CEO of the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN), participated in her capacity as a Board Member of the United Nations Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance in the Public-Private Dialogue on Unlocking Private Capital for Kenya's Sustainable Development, convened virtually by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

The dialogue convened senior representatives from the Government of Kenya, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, development partners and private sector leaders to explore practical approaches for increasing private investment in support of Kenya's sustainable development agenda. Discussions focused on innovative financing mechanisms, public-private partnerships, sustainable finance instruments and investment opportunities that can strengthen economic resilience while advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The meeting highlighted the importance of collaboration between governments, financial institutions and investors in mobilising capital for sustainable development and concluded with a commitment to establish a steering committee to advance the agreed priorities ahead of the next engagement scheduled for November.

2) On **9th July**, Dr. Habiba also participated in the Blended Finance Workstream Meeting of the UN GISD Alliance, organised virtually by UN DESA. The session brought together global financial institutions, multilateral development banks and international organisations to explore innovative blended finance models that can unlock greater private sector investment for sustainable development. Discussions examined ways to improve financing structures, strengthen collaboration across the investment ecosystem and develop practical frameworks that align commercial investment with measurable development outcomes.

Participants also reviewed case studies presented by leading financial institutions, showcasing innovative financing solutions that support climate action and sustainable infrastructure while encouraging greater private sector participation. These engagements reflect ACSRN's continued commitment to contributing to international dialogue on sustainable finance and responsible investment. It remains connected to global initiatives that promote innovative financing solutions, strengthen partnerships and accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

These engagements reflect ACSRN's continued commitment to contributing to international dialogue on sustainable finance and responsible investment.

Upcoming News

Sustainability Reporting Training
3rd & 4th August

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, sustainability reporting has become far more than a compliance exercise—it is a strategic tool for building trust, strengthening stakeholder confidence and demonstrating long-term organisational value. Organisations are increasingly expected to communicate their environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance with transparency, credibility and measurable impact.

Join this comprehensive two-day training programme to gain practical knowledge on developing effective sustainability reports aligned with internationally recognised frameworks and best practices. Participants will explore key reporting principles, data collection and analysis, materiality, stakeholder engagement and performance measurement, while learning how to transform sustainability initiatives into meaningful and credible disclosures.

Whether you are new to sustainability reporting or looking to enhance your organisation's existing practices, this training will provide valuable insights and practical tools to help your organisation communicate its sustainability journey with confidence.

Register here

Materiality Mapping Workshop
5th August

How do you determine which sustainability issue truly matters to your organisation and its stakeholders? Materiality is at the heart of every successful sustainability strategy, enabling organisations to focus resources where they create the greatest value and impact.

This interactive workshop will provide participants with a practical understanding of the materiality assessment process, from identifying and prioritising key environmental, social and governance topics to engaging stakeholders and integrating the findings into strategic planning and sustainability reporting. Through real-world examples and practical exercises, participants will learn how materiality mapping supports better decision-making, enhances organisational resilience and strengthens stakeholder trust. Whether you are developing your first sustainability strategy or refining an existing one, this workshop will equip you with the knowledge and tools to identify what matters most—and transform those priorities into meaningful action.

By the end of the workshop, participants will be better equipped to conduct effective materiality assessments, interpret and prioritise sustainability issues, and apply the outcomes to strengthen organisational strategy, improve stakeholder engagement and enhance the credibility and effectiveness of their sustainability reporting and disclosures.

Register here

Global Sustainability & CSR Forum 12th & 13th October

As the world faces increasingly complex environmental, social and economic challenges, the need for bold leadership, cross-sector collaboration and practical action has never been more critical. The Global Sustainability & CSR Forum 2026, organised by the Arabia CSR Network in association with the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) Sustainability Dialogue, returns under the inspiring theme "Currents of Change: Impact Beyond Promises."

Taking place on **12th & 13th October** at the Dubai World Trade Centre, this flagship forum will bring together an influential network of policymakers, C-suite executives, sustainability professionals, academics, innovators, investors and civil society leaders from across the region and around the world. Together, they will explore how organisations can move beyond commitments and deliver measurable, lasting impact.

This year's programme is being carefully curated to feature an exceptional line-up of highly sought-after global thought leaders, internationally recognised experts and influential changemakers, who will share cutting-edge insights, practical strategies and inspiring success stories from across industries. Participants can look forward to engaging keynote addresses, dynamic panel discussions and thought-provoking conversations that challenge conventional thinking and inspire transformative action.

The Forum will explore some of the most pressing sustainability priorities of our time, including climate resilience, sustainable finance, ESG leadership, responsible governance, circular economy, innovation, stakeholder engagement, biodiversity, social impact and emerging trends shaping the future of sustainable development.

More than a conference, the Global Sustainability & CSR Forum is a platform for building strategic partnerships, exchanging knowledge and creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration that drive positive change across organisations, industries and communities.

Whether you are strengthening your sustainability strategy, seeking innovative solutions, expanding your professional network or looking to learn from some of the world's leading sustainability experts, this is an event not to be missed.

Join us in shaping the future of sustainable development and be part of the conversations that will drive impact beyond promises.

Register here

Member News

Tristar Group Secures USD 800 Million Financing to Support Future Growth

Tristar Group has successfully secured a US$ 800 million syndicated financing package, marking a significant milestone in the company's long-term growth strategy. The financing, which attracted strong interest from both regional and international financial institutions, was oversubscribed, reflecting market confidence in Tristar's operational strength and future prospects. The package comprises a combination of a five-year Revolving Credit Facility (RCF) with extension options and a six-year Term Loan Facility. The company is also exploring a Shariah-compliant Islamic term financing arrangement with a leading regional bank to further diversify its funding structure.

The new facilities will refinance and consolidate existing debt while providing greater financial flexibility to support Tristar's expansion plans, capital investment programmes and overall liquidity. The improved financing terms also strengthen the company's capital structure and broaden its relationships with banking partners.

Commenting on the achievement, Mr. Eugene Mayne, Founder and Group Chief Executive of Tristar, described the financing as a significant milestone that reflects lenders' confidence in the company's strategy, operational excellence and long-term vision. The Group Chief Financial Officer, added that the transaction enhances liquidity, extends debt maturities and positions the company to pursue strategic opportunities across its key markets.

The Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) is proud to recognise Tristar Group as one of its long-standing and active Corporate Members. ACSRN congratulates Tristar Group on this significant milestone and looks forward to its continued contributions towards advancing sustainable business practices across the region.

This achievement further reinforces Tristar Group's position as a resilient and forward-looking organisation that continues to invest in sustainable growth while maintaining strong partnerships with the financial community. Such milestones demonstrate the vital role that sound financial management and strategic planning play in supporting long-term business success and creating lasting value for stakeholders.

TRISTAR

Read More

الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية الإجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network©
July
Volume 7 Issue 180

Feature Article

What is the difference between CSR and ESG?

Excerpt from David W Duffy, Co-Founder and Chair of The Corporate Governance Institute

What is the difference between CSR and ESG? If you're getting into the weeds with corporate sustainability, you'll likely see the term ESG everywhere but, especially in older documents, you might also encounter the term CSR. The bottom line is that there is a technical difference between the two. If your role is connected to sustainability in any way, it's vital that you understand what separates one from the other as well as how both have evolved through the long history of corporate efforts to take care of the planet and its people.

What is CSR?

People today are more socially conscious than ever, and buyers are prepared to pay more for sustainable products. Companies can report their efforts to buyers and other stakeholders by developing a CSR model. Promoting CSR has become a critical part of brand management. The activities in a CSR strategy include lowering the business's carbon footprint, corporate volunteering, improving labour practices, and engaging in charity. For example, Microsoft aims to reduce its carbon footprint and help customers do the same. Verizon has provided school children with technology to help them engage in virtual learning, thus reducing the digital divide.

What is ESG?

ESG stands for environment, social, and governance. Rating agencies can round up performance in these areas as a score similar to CSR but more measurable. ESG improves the valuation of the business, and more capital becomes available. Investors can use ESG as a measure of how sustainable the company is. The pandemic has increased awareness of such practices. Without some such measures in place, it is likely to become more challenging to maintain corporate reputation and financial success in the future.

CSR vs ESG

Such policies help inform the public about the values and goals of the business. CSR practices are usually self-regulated and can have a lot of variation. It is a more qualitative measure and can be challenging to define. ESG, on the other hand, provides investors with a measure they can use to decide which companies to invest in.

Both CSR and ESG could be used by a business simultaneously. CSR may provide an internal framework for the company to communicate with employees, while ESG provides measurable goals. So, CSR can be excellent for driving awareness of initiatives, but ESG can provide solid numbers behind them.

How can businesses incorporate these approaches?

To incorporate CSR practices, businesses can consider the company culture, its impact on the environment, and its relationship with the local community and can educate employees on how they can be part of the solution.

To incorporate ESG, the business can conduct a materiality assessment, collect insights from stakeholders, set goals and conduct a gap analysis, develop a measurable roadmap and KPIs, and report on progress.

Why do ESG and CSR matter?

CSR is not just about the external impact of company policies but also the internal, as it can help employees feel empowered to do good and embrace diversity. This can further boost employee morale and retention.

ESG helps to highlight the ethics of the business to the external world. Companies who signal that they are using actionable ESG criteria show that they have a long-term vision and are viable opportunities for investors.

ESG programs can even lead to cost savings by reducing waste and helping to attract better talent.

Essentially, ESG considers the ethics of the business in terms of people and the planet, and while in the past, the focus might have been on profits, this has now been swapped out with governance. CSR can be good for building accountability within the organisation itself. Still, ideally, you would want to have this and a strong ESG rating, demonstrating to the outside world that your business is sustainable.

Which approach is better – ESG or CSR?

In summary, CSR can be used to build awareness and highlight goals within the business and is more qualitative. At the same time, ESG provides metrics that can instil confidence in investors and the broader market. Rather than viewing ESG and CSR as competing approaches, organisations achieve the greatest value when they integrate both into their overall business strategy.

Read More

Best Practice

LES EAUX MINÉRALES D'OULMÈS
Large Business Category
WINNER
Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards 2024

Brief

Les Eaux Minérales d'Oulmès (LEMO) has redefined sustainability in Morocco's non-alcoholic beverage industry through its steadfast commitment to environmental stewardship, social responsibility and ethical governance. Established in 1933 and publicly listed since 1943, LEMO is recognised as a leader in integrating ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) principles into its core operations. With over 500 employees and a presence spanning decades, LEMO demonstrates that corporate success and sustainability can go hand in hand.

LEMO's sustainability strategy is guided by a comprehensive approach aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ISO standards. With a unique sustainability strategy rooted in a "5Cs" approach- "Consumers, Customers, Colleagues, Communities and Environmental Capital"- LEMO addresses pressing global challenges while fostering shared value. The company has earned multiple accolades, including recognition from the Casablanca Stock Exchange for its exemplary non-financial reporting. By reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, fostering community empowerment and championing innovative practices, LEMO actively addresses global challenges while creating shared value for stakeholders. This article delves into LEMO's best practices, offering insights into its visionary leadership, strategic planning and impactful initiatives, which serve as a model for other organisations aspiring to embed sustainability into their business ethos. LEMO's mission is to deliver healthy, refreshing hydration responsibly and sustainably across Morocco and Africa. Its vision is to establish itself as the sustainable leader in the non-alcoholic beverage market, prioritising both market expansion and environmental stewardship. These goals are firmly rooted in sustainability principles, as reflected in its public commitments and annual ESG reports.

LEMO's core values are encapsulated in the acronym FIERS: Fidelity, Innovation, Engagement, Respect, and Solidarity. In 2024, Humility was introduced as an additional value to deepen its commitment to shared progress. This comprehensive framework ensures that the company creates tangible, positive impacts across its value chain. Through its alignment with the UN SDGs and focus on shared prosperity, LEMO reinforces its reputation as a responsible corporate citizen committed to achieving long-term sustainability. Socially, LEMO fosters community-driven innovation through initiatives like the Morocco Water Race, which engages youth in conservation efforts and raises awareness about water sustainability. Collaborative projects with NGOs such as Enactus empower over 1,500 students annually to design creative solutions for water resource management, cultivating the next generation of sustainability leaders. LEMO's innovation framework is guided by a strategic committee that evaluates potential projects based on technical feasibility, market trends and alignment with ESG priorities. By embedding innovation into its core operations, LEMO addresses critical sustainability goals and reinforces its position as an industry leader in sustainable practices, demonstrating the power of technology-driven solutions.

Summary & Lessons Learnt

Les Eaux Minérales d'Oulmès serves as a compelling example of aligning business objectives with global sustainability goals. By integrating internationally recognised frameworks such as ISO 26000 and the UN SDGs, LEMO has demonstrated that a comprehensive ESG strategy can drive impactful results across environmental, social and governance dimensions. A key lesson from LEMO's journey is the value of stakeholder engagement and materiality assessments in identifying and addressing key priority areas. The company's transparent reporting practices, validated by external agencies like Vigeo Eiris, have fostered trust and accountability, reinforcing stakeholder confidence in its sustainability initiatives.

LEMO's proactive approach to renewable energy investments, innovative packaging solutions and community development programmes highlight the importance of adaptability in meeting emerging challenges. The reduction of PET bottle weight, for instance, exemplifies how operational efficiencies can deliver both environmental and financial benefits. Collaboration and employee empowerment are integral to LEMO's success. Partnerships with international organisations like UNEP and COALMA amplify its impact, while initiatives like the Morocco Water Race cultivate a culture of sustainability amongst the youth.

LEMO's efforts illustrate how a holistic ESG approach ensures long-term resilience and helps create shared value for stakeholders. For businesses navigating sustainability challenges, LEMO provides a blueprint for achieving profitability while fostering social and environmental responsibility.

Les Eaux Minérales d'Oulmès exemplifies the harmony between sustainability and profitability, setting an industry standard for ethical and responsible business practices. Through its robust ESG strategy, LEMO addresses global challenges while delivering measurable value to its stakeholders. Its commitment to transparency is evident through detailed ESG reporting aligned with international standards, fostering trust and accountability. By prioritising renewable energy adoption, innovative packaging solutions and water conservation under ISO 46001, LEMO demonstrates its dedication to environmental stewardship.