



مجموعة أبو ظبي للإستدامة  
ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

## SUSTAINABILITY JOURNAL

Quarter 2, 2016

"As a leading Islamic financial institution, the principle of pursuing mutual benefit is one that comes naturally to us. Our activities demonstrate that we share the conviction that banking can be a force for good in the wider community."

H.E. Tirad Al Mahmoud,  
Group Chief Executive Officer,  
Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank

Sharing insights from ADSG Award winners, find out how you can drive sustainability in your organisation

ADSG members collaborate and provide updates at the recent Quarterly Meeting

An Interview with H.E. Barbara Leaf  
US Ambassador to the UAE



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# 5 our approach to Sustainability

We are also committed to transparency regarding all our activities, as we ensure that sustainability remains a consistent and visible consideration for consideration.

## 5.2 ETHICS, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

Our strong corporate governance framework and robust risk management system, together with a number of policy and ethical conduct which are...

## Starting the Next Reporting Cycle

**Date:** September 2016

**Venue:** Al Hur Training Room, Al Mamoura Building A, Abu Dhabi

**Time:** 9:00 am to 14:30 pm

It is common for many organisations to stop working on their sustainability reports after the report is published. However, as covered in an earlier workshop such reports need to be communicated effectively to gain the maximum value from working on and publishing such a report. This workshop focuses on what organisations can be doing after completing the communication of the report. Organisations should consider taking time to work on the outcomes from the sustainability reports and identify next steps. Such next steps would include identifying strategy, targets and goals or any changes needed thereto. It is also the time to work on increasing buy-in from within the organisation for the sustainability activities. In addition to that, methodologies need to be put in place to prepare for the next reporting cycle to ensure that the data is collected through a concise effective methodology.

### Agenda

9:00 – 9:15	Registration
9:15 – 9:45	Outcome of Sustainability Reports
9:45 – 10:30	Strategy, Targets, Goals, Communication
10:30 – 11:30	Buy-in and Engagement
11:30 – 11:45	Break
11:45 – 12:45	Next Reporting Cycle Preparation
12:45 – 13:30	Mechanisms for Data Collection
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch



## Editor's Note

Welcome to this issue of the ADSG eJournal. We are proud to showcase our lead interview with H.E. Tirad Al-Mahmoud, Group Chief Executive Officer of Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB), who shares with us valuable insights from the banking sector and how Islamic finance relates to ethics and sustainable finance. We are also delighted to bring to you the unique perspective of H.E. Barbara A. Leaf, Ambassador of United States of America to the UAE as she shares with us her experience and insights.

To round off, this issue brings an excellent update of news from our members, as well as providing progress on the various ADSG activities over the last quarter. We hope you find the issue useful and insightful. As ever, please share with us your latest sustainability developments and let us know your feedback!

With best wishes,

**Sandra Anani**  
Sustainability & Communications Consultant



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The opinions and views expressed in the ADSG Sustainability eJournal do not necessarily reflect the ADSG's policy or position. Special thanks to the members of ADSG for providing information, pictures and support in the production of this Journal.

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هيئة البيئة - أبوظبي  
Environment Agency - ABU DHABI



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# *Ramadan Mubarak*

The Holy Month of Ramadan unites us, its teachings gives us happiness and reward as we help others all around us.

May the spirit of Ramadan illuminate the world and show us the way to peace and harmony.

The ADSG wishes all members and partners a Ramadan Mubarak.

We are also delighted to mark the 8th ADSG Anniversary, which falls during the Holy Month, and congratulate all our members on their commitment and dedication towards sustainability and the ADSG over the last 8 years.





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ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

## Looking Ahead 2016 and Beyond

Welcome to your issue, quarter 2 2016 of the ADSG eJournal. This quarter, we celebrate and mark the occasion of the 8th anniversary of the ADSG since it was established by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi. To commemorate this occasion, we have a special interview with H.E. Tirad Al-Mahmoud, Group Chief Executive Officer of Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB). We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you, our member organisations, your esteemed leadership and each individual representative over the last 8 years for your continued support to the Group. With every passing day, you are making changes towards a more sustainable future, with each ADSG activity that you support, host, sponsor or ADSG event that you attend, you are helping us to get closer to achieving the Group's mission as set out by the founding members those 8 years ago. A big thank you for your outstanding contributions.

Over the period of the last quarter, all ADSG members saw a busy period with many of our members working hard on sustainability projects and campaigns,

while many others are gathering and checking data and placing final touches on their sustainability reports. I was happy to see and hear many of our members at the recent ADSG Quarterly Meeting which we held in April, and I was heartened to hear about the impressive progress our members are making.

As we move forward collectively toward improved sustainability governance and work together to drive resource efficiency, we look ahead to the next quarter which will focus on renewing and refreshing various aspects at the core of the ADSG work, this include the ADSG Strategy and the review of the ADSG Management Model. We will be contacting you with updates in the coming weeks.

We wish you a blessed and peaceful Ramadan,




هدى الحوقاني

Huda Al Houqani,  
ADSG Director

## Comment from ADSG Director





**ADSG Interview with H.E. Tirad Al Mahmoud,  
Group Chief Executive Officer Abu Dhabi  
Islamic Bank (ADIB), on Sustainability and  
Islamic Banking.**

Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank has been a member of the ADSG since 2014 and have been active in various sustainability events and fora. We are proud to showcase this interview with H.E. Tirad Al Mahmoud, Group Chief Executive Officer, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB).



## Q1 What does Sustainability mean for Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank?

Put simply, sustainability underpins everything we do. For ADIB it is a value system that says that our commercial activities must not only benefit our shareholders and staff, but also our customers and the wider economy. At the same time, it also means that we need to be aware of and prevent any undue effects on society and the natural environment of what we do, from how we operate our buildings to who we lend to, and how we employ our people to what we give back to the community. Corporate Social Responsibility also comes within sustainability, so we take steps through our outreach programmes to improve society and the environment.

Banks like ADIB can play an influential role in encouraging the shift to a low-carbon society – because we provide access to capital and we can assess and manage any downside risk of our financings eg on the environment or on unacceptable business practices. We cannot do this alone, of course, but thankfully this is a common objective on which banks can and do have a very positive influence.

As a leading Islamic financial institution, the principle of pursuing mutual benefit is one that comes naturally to us. Our activities demonstrate that we share the conviction that banking can be a force for good in the wider community. We believe positive change starts at home, and as a UAE-based bank, we have made contributing to the development of the country's economy and finance industry a top priority.

## Q2 How do you engage with your stakeholders on your key sustainability priorities?

We define anyone who comes into contact with the Bank as a stakeholder. We recognise that it is important to look at our business from our stakeholders' perspective and to find areas where our agendas overlap. This means listening to and working with our stakeholders here and around the globe and being very clear about our intentions and priorities. Corporate Social Responsibility is an important area in which we engage with stakeholders. In this context ADIB has developed an approach to CSR which ensures that all activities meet the needs of our staff, customers, the community and the environment on a sustained, long-term basis.

Key initiatives under our CSR program

include:

- Empowering consumers to make sound financial decisions through financial education
- Investing in employees by consistently celebrating their achievements and providing them with a healthy work environment as well as opportunities for learning and career progression, with a specific focus on the development of UAE nationals and fresh graduates
- Minimising the environmental impact of the business and contributing to global efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change
- Developing the Islamic banking industry through productive and sustained dialogue with peers, civil society representatives and regulators, as well as initiatives such as the Ethical Finance Innovation and Challenge Awards
- Building our ties with the community by supporting local culture, sport and charity Initiatives.

## Q-3 How does Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank measure its sustainability performance?

ADIB has developed a comprehensive set of key performance indicators (KPIs) to provide an objective measurement of the success of and progress in its various CSR initiatives. Programme outcomes are regularly assessed versus the targets set and action is taken where necessary to improve alignment with them. The KPIs are divided into the various areas covered in the bank's CSR drive, and include:

**Marketplace:** the number of students and indebted customers receiving financial education training  
**Workplace:** our Emiratisation rate, and employee awareness of our CSR goals

**Community:** donations, visits to special needs centres, Iftar boxes distributed in Ramadan

**Environment:** employee awareness of energy usage, and environmental education

**Disclosure:** accreditations, as well as communication with investors and the public on CSR activities

## Q-4 How important is sustainability reporting for investors and why is it relevant?

Sustainability reporting has become an important element of the conversation with existing and potential investors, as well as employees and the public at large. It tells them something about the organisation and its purpose that

the numbers in the accounts do not. Companies that have a developed sustainability strategy are companies that think about their impact on society, as well as their long term future. They are now judged on these criteria. Sustainability reporting therefore offers companies a framework to respond to the requirements of their stakeholders, and enhances business value.

## Q-5 What are the main challenges facing the banking sector currently, and how could a responsible approach to business provide solutions?

Return on assets has been falling in recent years because of competition from conventional peers, as well as new entrants to the market, and the prevailing economic conditions have also had a significant effect on net interest margins

Cost-to-income ratios tend to be higher in Islamic banks than in conventional banks, because the latter have a wider choice of investments and better access to liquidity at lower cost

Islamic banks have yet to reach a level of innovation which enables them to compete with conventional banks on a wide range of products

Islamic banks have strong balance sheets which should generally easily meet capital requirements. But a lack of Islamic money market instruments affects our liquidity as does a lack of liquid Islamic investment instruments with short maturities.

Islamic banks face challenges in finding enough talent trained specifically in Islamic Finance

There is a need for harmonisation and standardisation in the accounting and contract structures for the global Islamic banking and finance industry. The responsible approach to business through adopting a framework of sustainability goals helps us to address at least some of these challenges. For instance the more effort we put into creating a flow of new, specially trained talent into the industry the more likely we will be to grow the industry as a whole. But many of these challenges are structural and regulatory, and these can only be addressed by the industry acting as one to implement changes which will impact the long term future of all Islamic banks.

## Q-6 Please tell us about how you view the ADSG and what this partnership means to you.



From what we have already said about our approach to sustainability, it is easy to see that our partnership with ADSG helps us both to work towards achieving our goals of economic, environmental and social sustainability, as well as contributing to the local, international and global dialogue about sustainability trends. In this sense we feel that we both contribute to the work of ADSG and benefit from the programmes, debates and consultations that ADSG regularly engages in with its members.

### Q-7 How do Islamic, Ethical and Sustainable finance fit together?

They not only fit together but are complementary. Islam sees the role of the individual as a value and knowledge creator, and in many Islamic nations, Shari'a, which is the moral code of Islamic law, provides the legal framework for regulation of many aspects of public and private life.

Islamic finance encompasses those aspects of Shari'a pertaining to business and economics. In the broadest sense, individuals are expected to balance their needs with those of the community at large. This concept is put into practice in Islamic finance in several ways. Muslims are encouraged to invest resources for the welfare of the community, especially the destitute. It is, therefore, expected that Islamic financial institutions provide special services for those in need. This is does not mean just providing charitable donations but also certain forms of profit-free loans and services that do not penalise people eg when they are in difficulty.

The Holy Qur'an also advises against extravagance and waste, and stresses the importance of being responsible to the environment. It states "Eat and drink, but waste not by excess; Verily He loves not the excessive". Islamic finance translates these ideas into action in a number of ways. It shares benefit, does not penalise people when they are in difficulty, and its products are structured to be productive rather than self-satisfying. A key financial instrument is the sukuk, or Islamic bond. "Green" projects funded by sukuk include clean energy, mass transit, water conservation, forestry, and low-carbon technologies. These green financing initiatives also include socially responsible investments designed to improve the lives of people and communities. They are also designed to encourage investors to move capital into companies that

instil high governance standards for diversity, accountability, and transparency.

The UAE is expected to issue the world's first Sharia-compliant bond aimed at financing green energy projects this year. This initiative is anticipated to open up the regional Gulf market and allow smaller corporations to pursue "green sukuk" as a means for financing their products and services. Sukuk is also being used to enable public health improvements. Last year, the International Finance Facility for Immunization used the proceeds of its sukuk to finance projects for the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). Since its founding in 2000, GAVI has financed immunization efforts in 73 countries, with half of its investments directed to 33 Muslim-majority countries, including Yemen, Mali, and Indonesia.

### Q-8 In your view, have ethical and Islamic finance become synonymous?

In a way, yes. Ethical finance is not always Islamic, but Islamic finance is always ethical. Banks need to be profitable to survive, but are not like any other business - they carry real systemic importance/risk. The only way to square these two elements is to put ethics at the very heart of the bank-customer relationship. Our aim must be to use financing to further societal progress - not to undermine it. Our goal should be to enable individuals to live larger, more productive and better lives, to pursue personal and communal development. Ethical finance is not just about the numbers, it is all about attitude of the bank to the people it serves. Customers are long-term partners, not people to make a quick profit from.

Our experience in the UAE shows that Islamic finance can gain wide appeal beyond a purely Muslim customer base. Some %20 of our customer base in the UAE is non-Muslim.

To illustrate this point ADIB launched the Ethical Finance Innovation Challenge Awards with Thompson Reuters to reward innovative and ethical initiatives with much needed financing. These awards are now in their 4th year and through them we are helping to stimulate innovative thinking to push the industry forward, as well as recognizing contributions that have already been made either through specific projects implemented, or through the lifetime achievement awards.

### Q-9 What is your view of the future of the Islamic finance sector when it comes to sustainability?

We are very confident that with sustainability at its heart, there is huge scope for the Islamic finance industry to grow. But this question does not relate just to Islamic finance. It is a creed that is now being seen as essential for companies to engage with their stakeholders, which includes not only their investors and their employees, but other groups whose opinions help to shape their reputation. The fact that the very nature of Islamic finance has so much commonality with the principle of sustainability simply makes it easier for Islamic banks and other companies to ensure that they are being sustainable and that they can avoid any practices that would offend this goal. The future of Islamic finance depends on other criteria, such as industry regulation, talent creation and management and consistent application of Islamic principles. But sustainability is already a given.

### Tirad Al-Mahmoud, Group Chief Executive Officer, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB)

Tirad Al-Mahmoud is a Group Chief Executive Officer of Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB), the world's fourth largest Islamic bank by assets. With over 30 years of experience in banking and finance, Tirad is a prominent voice in the global debate on ethical banking, advocating a "back to basics" approach that puts client interests and a transparent and honest service culture at the heart of the banking industry. Tirad joined ADIB in 2008, leading the bank as it successfully navigated the global financial crisis. ADIB is now the 3rd largest retail bank in the UAE with 88 branches locally and a presence in Egypt, Qatar, KSA, United Kingdom, Sudan, and Iraq.

Prior to joining ADIB, Tirad held the position of General Manager & Head of Corporate and Investment Banking of the Samba Financial Group (formerly Saudi American Bank) based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 2004 to 2007. He previously held various leadership positions during his 22 years with Citigroup, including stints as Chief Executive Officer for Citibank Romania and Slovakia. He was also Regional Credit Director for Citibank North Africa, and a Division Head at Saudi American Bank.

# Let us Celebrate a Peaceful Ramadan with our Community

Ramadan - Muslims all over the world observe the annual fast during the daylight hours of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, in keeping with the divine commandment. The month when the faithful fast between sunrise and sunset is also a time to attain taqwa, a time for reflection, spiritual renewal and peace. It is a time to seek forgiveness and share your blessings with family, friends and those less fortunate, a time for social consciousness.

Ramadan is about going back to basics, being humble and having respect and appreciation for all God's creation. The physical effects of the fast help to remind us of those who suffer throughout the year; our fellow humans who are poor, homeless and those who cannot meet their own basic needs on a daily basis. It reminds us all not to be wasteful and to feel empathy for those who face hunger as part of their normal day to day life. We should take this chance to appreciate our blessings, to feel gratitude for things we normally take for granted such as clean water, sufficient healthy food, comfort of a home and family as well as our health - basic needs that so many people in the world are forced to exist without. Ramadan is a time for us to give thanks, practice self-restraint and reaffirm our commitment to helping those less fortunate. Therefore, fasting is not merely physical but is rather the total commitment of the person's body and soul to the spirit of the fast.

## Stay healthy and fit during the holy month

The fast of Ramadan is rigorous, particularly during long summer days when it may be required to resist all food and drink for as many as sixteen hours at a time. It is important to focus on healthy foods and habits in order to manage your body, mind and energy to have a truly healthy and prosperous Ramadan. We would like to share with you some of our best tips that we are sure your body will thank you for!

## Say bye to bad habits

Know what bad habits you have and stop them already now, don't wait until Ramadan begins. This can include reducing coffee intake, weaning off smoking, saying no to junk food and for those who are not exercising at them moment to start taking daily walks. It might sound much easier said than done, but once you've committed yourself it will be a lot easier to keep up with a healthy lifestyle during the holy month.

## A blessed and healthy Iftar

As the sun sets, the ceremonious sounds of the traditional cannon roar is an eagerly welcomed invitation to the joyous meal of Iftar - a time when family and friends celebrate the special season of Ramadan together as one. A healthy Iftar goes hand in hand with the traditions: a good way to break the fast is to start with 2 dates, then a glass of water or laban. Start the meal with a warm bowl of soup as this will comfort the stomach after a long day of fasting and it replenishes your body with fluids and helps prepare the digestive system for this meal.

## Stick to an exercise routine

A proper diet and exercise plan are more important than ever during Ramadan. Make sure you have your exercise planned into your diary each week, just like you would with any other important appointment. It is only a small part of your day, but the positive effects it has on your physical and mental well-being are unquestionable. You should not exercise while fasting, so plan your exercise before suhoor or after iftar. If you want to exercise before your suhoor meal, you should not exercise for more than 30 minutes.

If you normally do both cardio and resistance training as a part of your workout routine and can't find the time or energy to do both in Ramadan then combine them both into a resistance training circuit. Circuit training has the extra benefit

of allowing you to burn more calories in a short amount of time. A circuit is performed by doing 3-6 exercises in a quick succession without stopping between each exercise. Doing this will allow you to build muscle and increase cardiovascular endurance all in one workout.

Here is a basic circuit you can do at home:

- 10-15 pushups (Straight legs or on your knees)
- 10-15 squats (Without weights)
- 1 min jumping jacks (or walk in place)
- 10-15 Bench dips
- 10-15 lunges
- 1 min jog in place (or walk in place)

Repeat 2-3 times or until you have exercised for 30 consecutive minutes

## Stay hydrated - eat your water

During Ramadan it can be a challenge to drink the recommended daily amount of water in a short period of time. In order to stay hydrated try to choose fruits and vegetables that contain lots of water like watermelon, cucumber and pineapple. Eating the fruit or vegetable rather than having it in form of juice will give you many more benefits in forms of fiber and nutrients. \*\*Remember that many juices also contain added sugar, which you should try to avoid.

## After Ramadan

The Holy Month of Ramadan offers us a precious time for peaceful reflection, on our faith, how we impact our fellow humans, how we impact our environment, how we can make this world a better place. The lessons learned and spiritual benefits gained during the holy month are intended to carry over for the rest of the year, think about how you can keep the spirit of Ramadan all year round!

Ramadan Kareem - ADSG wishes everyone an enlightened, peaceful and healthy Ramadan!



# An Interview with H.E. Barbara Leaf US Ambassador to the UAE



The AD SG met with H.E. Barbara Leaf, the United States Ambassador to the UAE, and we had the opportunity to ask her some questions and gain some valuable insights to share with our readers.

**1.** We are delighted to meet with you and to learn from your experience and expertise. We wanted to ask you as a successful female in the diplomatic field, who was your role model? What advice would give the youth of today in terms of handling setbacks and being able to manage tricky situations in a diplomatic manner?

Achieving success in the diplomatic field is very much like achieving success in other fields, you need to pursue it. My first mentor, who was a beloved boss and former US Ambassador to UAE, once said that women diplomats couldn't serve successfully in the Gulf - I am happy that I, and many others, have proved my old friend wrong. When faced with possible setbacks and challenging situations, push ahead. Don't be passive, be active.

**2.** In your opinion, what are the major challenges that we need to overcome for a more sustainable future

Although there are many, in my view the most urgent is climate change, as it has serious consequences for many other sustainability issues. For this reason, I am especially

proud that the United States is taking a leading role in tackling it. As part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan, for example, we are making unprecedented efforts to reduce carbon pollution, promote clean sources of energy, protect communities from the effects of climate change, and work with partners to lead international climate change efforts. But we must move quickly, consider the problem of food insecurity. Already, close to 800 million people across the globe go to bed hungry each night; those numbers are likely to worsen as the climate becomes more unpredictable. Food insecure populations tend to be mostly small-scale farmers who depend on agriculture to make a living and feed their families - they are less able to cope with even the smallest decline in production as a result of decreased rains or more extreme temperatures brought about by climate change. But wealthy countries will likewise be negatively affected, especially those whose lands are resource-intensive to farm, like the UAE and parts of the U.S. With a world population that is expected to grow to nine billion people by 2050, we already have to double current global food production rates in order to feed them all. Climate change will make that an even harder goal to reach.

**3.** Please share with us your thoughts and views on sustainability in your personal life. Is it something that you easily take in stride? How

does it affect your day? (Is it easy to apply sustainability practices personal life? What does it entail in terms of behavioral change?)

Like all lifestyle modifications, making changes that promote sustainability in our personal lives can seem daunting at first. But I am convinced that every little step counts, so what is most important is committing to taking that first step. For example we have a hybrid car; it seemed like a big step at first, but now we love it - and we have had it for 10 years! Take recycling - there are more and more ways to reduce your own carbon footprint in the UAE by separating your trash and placing recyclables in designated bins for paper, plastics, and metals - this is something we strive for in our family. Or water conservation - people can really help lower the amount of precious desalinated water that is wasted by taking very simple measures: installing lower flow showerheads, choosing water conserving toilets, running the dishwasher only when it's full, or opting for drought-resistant plants in your garden. Small measures can yield very big outcomes, and they become automatic over time, for example we use solar power to help heat our water and save energy.

**4.** What sustainability projects are you most proud of in your current role?

At the U.S. embassy, we are





proud participants in what is called the "Greening Diplomacy Initiative," which seeks to minimize our environmental footprint. Working with local governments, communities, and partners around the world, the State Department is now focused on incorporating sustainability into our overseas missions' use of energy, water, and other natural resources, as well as reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. As mentioned above, dealing with the issue of water scarcity is hugely important in Abu Dhabi, and a shared priority for both the UAE and the U.S. To improve water management, the Embassy's management and facilities teams developed a wetlands project that allows us to recycle 3,000-4,000 gallons (around 15,000 liters) of waste water daily, using it to irrigate our the Embassy's grounds. To reduce consumption, we have used landscaping that does not require irrigation and upgraded our faucets to advanced automated designs that save 70% of the water that would otherwise swirl down the drain unused. We also found a way to reduce the use of bottled water, installing new drinking fountains that produce less waste (and save money that we used to spend

on water delivery). To lower our energy consumption, we installed solar collectors on the warehouse roof; water is stored in isolated water tanks, producing hot water and saving electricity. We also installed a centralized, real-time, and automated smart-metering system for utility data, which helps identify system anomalies, track energy use, and identify opportunities for conservation and cost savings. Finally, I should note that our consulate in Dubai, which opened just a few years ago, is one of 20 LEED-certified buildings in the State Department's worldwide inventory.

**5.** There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals, how do you see those goals being embedded into your area of work?

Those goals really underpin most everything we do as a diplomatic mission. When the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at its 70th Session last year, both President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry underscored the United States' commitment to the Agenda as a whole. In the UAE, we are especially fortunate to have such a like-minded host country in this regard, and

we are able to work cooperatively to advance many of these goals. But let me focus in on one area in which U.S.-UAE collaboration is really promising: the promotion of Sustainable Development Goal 7, which seeks to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Despite being one of the world's most important producers of oil and gas, the UAE has now built a strong reputation as a global leader on renewables. In this, it has an eager partner in the U.S. – not just our government, but our private sector and our educational and research institutions as well. U.S. companies are working to develop new technologies that will accelerate the development of cleaner, cheaper and more sustainable sources of energy, and are proud to have been selected to implement those innovations locally.

In the area of research and development, there is an exciting partnership between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Masdar Institute. And the U.S. and UAE engage at the governmental level twice yearly in a Strategic Energy Dialogue, to look at policy issues that are related to this.



6. What are your views on the agreement made in Paris at COP21?

It would be hard to overstate its importance. We now have in place an ambitious, durable global framework that will do much to stem the tide of climate change by setting the world on a course to a low-carbon future. To do so, the Paris Agreement defines a long-term goal of keeping the rise in global temperatures to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and to pursue efforts to limit that increase even further, to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Importantly, it applies to all countries, and thus gets us beyond historical distinctions between developed and developing countries that had hindered progress in the past. It also sends a strong market signal to businesses and the private sector that the world is moving to a clean energy economy, both in the U.S. and around the world. Most significantly, in my view, is that this agreement is more than 195 nations coming together (although that in itself quite a feat): it is about cities, nations, businesses and civil society taking a new view of tomorrow, and deciding to work together to ensure we leave the planet a better place for our children and grandchildren.

7. Can you share with us a particularly successful community engagement project that you were part of? What was it? Why was it



a success? How did it impact the community? (Please share photos if possible)

Last October, I led a beach cleanup effort in partnership with the Emirates Marine Environmental Group, at Al Ghantoot Reserve. We were thrilled when 90 volunteers, from our embassy community and from the local community, showed up on a weekend to help – even my daughters were eager to give up their weekend time in order to contribute.

Here again, the challenge is enormous: every year, an estimated 5-12 million tons of plastic enters

our oceans, harming the marine environment and contributing to climate change. While that one beach clean-up may have been just a single step toward solving a bigger problem, it was nevertheless a step forward. And even more than that, it was really satisfying that representatives from the rainbow of nationalities that makes the UAE such a dynamic place came together as a one, to help preserve our oceans and our environment – because we are, truly, one world. We are definitely looking for more such opportunities as a Mission, so that we, too, can keep giving back.



**Barbara A. Leaf**  
Ambassador to the  
United Arab Emirates

Barbara A. Leaf was confirmed as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates on November 17, 2014. Prior to that, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Arabian Peninsula in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs from 2013-2014, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Iraq from 2011-2013. Ambassador Leaf directed the U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Team in the strategic province of Basrah, Iraq from 2010-2011, leaving an assignment as Political Minister Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Rome, Italy, to oversee the PRT's transition to a U.S. Consulate General. Prior to Rome, Ambassador Leaf served as the first Director of the Department of State's Office of Iranian Affairs.

From 2004-2006, Ambassador Leaf served as Political Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, where she helped advance key U.S. policy goals on democratization and

political reform, counter-terrorism, and regional reintegration among the former combatant states of the former Yugoslavia. From 2003-2004, she directed the Regional Headquarters of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, enforcing implementation of civilian aspects of the Dayton peace accords, including the return of refugees to areas from which they had been ethnically cleansed.

From 2001-2003, Ambassador Leaf served as Advisor to the Department's Medical Director, in a position created in the wake of September 11 to develop medical and security programs to counter and respond to chemical/biological/nuclear threats to U.S. diplomatic installations abroad.

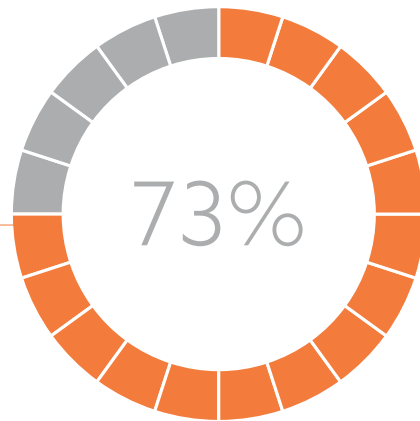
From 1996-2000, Ambassador Leaf served as the Department's Middle East "Watcher" at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, reporting on French policies on Iraq, Iran, the Arab-Israeli dispute, Libya, and terrorism issues.

Ambassador Leaf's previous tours include assignments in Cairo, as Kuwait Desk Officer during the first Gulf War, Jerusalem, the Department's Operations Center, and Port-au-Prince. Ambassador Leaf is a member of the Senior Foreign Service, and has received six Superior Honor and four Meritorious Honor Awards during her career. She received a B.A. in Government from the College of William and Mary and a Master's Degree in Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia, with a focus on Soviet Affairs.

Ambassador Leaf speaks Arabic, French, Italian, and Serbo-Croatian.



# Supported by the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group, The CFO Leadership Circle of Practice Meeting Launched Successfully in Dubai



Survey during the event found that 73% of finance leaders feel water scarcity, climate change, staff well-being, and community relations can have a major commercial impact on business in the Gulf Region.

Leading experts urged businesses in the Gulf Region to prioritise embedding sustainability into financial decision-making, at the Finance Leaders Circle of Practice Meeting: Towards Integrated Thinking in the Gulf Region' held in Dubai on 27 April 2016.

The event, hosted by the Pearl Initiative and in collaboration with

HRH The Prince of Wales' Accounting for Sustainability Project (A4S) and the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group (ADSG) was attended by CFOs and finance leaders from top public and private companies from across the Gulf Region. The meeting presented an opportunity for participants to shape the Gulf Region Finance Leaders Circle of Practice – a vehicle to help share ideas, experiences

and good practices amongst a group of experts in the regional finance community, to drive sustainability and set the pathway towards Integrated Thinking. The platform looks to create a space for collaborative innovation, and encourage companies to adopt an integrated approach by providing networking, mentoring and knowledge sharing opportunities.





During the event, attendees were asked to vote on their perceptions of Integrated Thinking and how they feel it can have an impact in the region. 73 per cent of participants agreed that issues such as water scarcity, climate change, staff well-being, and community relations can have a major commercial impact on business, and 79 per cent expressed an interest in joining the Gulf Region Finance Leaders Circle of Practice.

Speaking about the session, Jessica Fries, Executive Chairman of A4S said: "A4S aims to inspire finance

leaders to take action and to integrate economic, environmental and social matters to enhance business decision making and create resilient business models.

By bringing together companies, governments and investors in the Gulf Region, the Circle of Practice Roundtable will help drive integrated thinking and action and will encourage finance leaders to incorporate sustainable business practices into their organisations."

Huda Mohd Al Houqani, Director, Abu

Dhabi Sustainability Group, Director of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group who hosted the first CFO and Finance Leaders Meeting on 2nd November 2015 in the capital city of the UAE, Abu Dhabi in partnership with Pearl Initiative and A4S said: "Sustainability is integral for organisations to be able to create and maintain value in the long-term and the finance community must take the lead to a more resilient future.

Our collective mission should be to encourage all types of sustainability to overcome future challenges







through an integrated approach. This event was a fantastic opportunity for the community to come together once again to shape the future of Integrated Thinking."

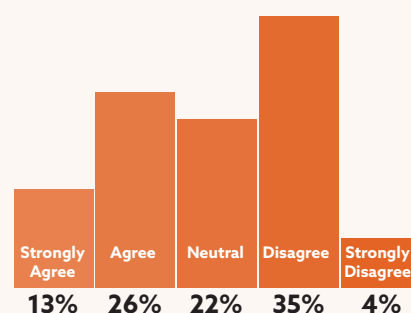
Speaking at the event, Imelda Dunlop, Executive Director of the Pearl Initiative said: "We are pleased to be collaborating with the HRH The Prince of Wales' Accounting for Sustainability Project and Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group to help drive the conversation on the importance of integrated thinking in organizations across the Gulf Region."

She added: "Today's event is a great platform for CFOs and finance leaders to innovate on how best to improve the region's sustainability practices through increased accountability and transparency in business."

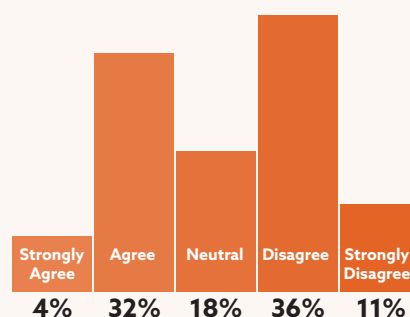
Please contact us on [communication@adsg.ae](mailto:communication@adsg.ae) to join or if you would like more information about the CFO Leadership Circle of Practice.



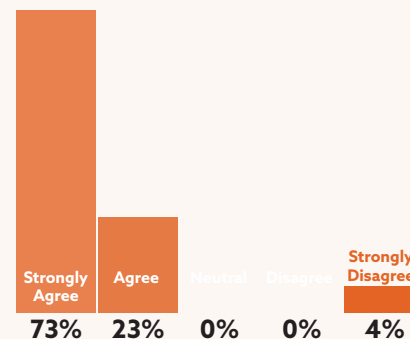
### CFO 2016 Voting Results



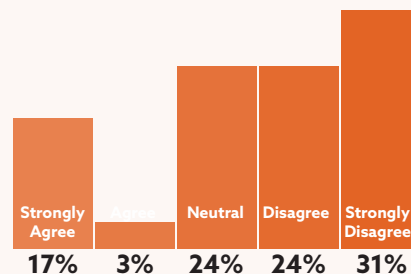
It is generally accepted within the Gulf Region that the integration of environmental, social and governance factors in strategic decision-making creates significant value for the organization.



In 5 years, the majority of companies in the Gulf region will have identified their key sustainability issues, quantified their impact, and included them in their strategy.



"Issues such as water scarcity, climate change, staff well-being, and community relations can have a major commercial impact on business."



"Material sustainability issues are fully integrated into strategy and decision-making within my organisation."





# ADSG Awards - Winners Sharing Knowledge to Promote Sustainability: Christiane Abou Zeidan, Rotana Hotel Management



The group's corporate director of environment, health & safety, Christiane Abou Zeidan, was awarded the ADSG 'Sustainability Manager of the Year 2016 Award' for her efforts in spearheading Rotana's sustainability achievements, headlined by its 'global corporate sustainability platform' - Rotana Earth.

Rotana's sustainability journey started in 2012 when Christiane, Corporate Director of EHS, widened her role scope & developed an expansive sustainability platform "Rotana Earth" to meet the company's fast expansion and set it on the sustainable tourism map. Developed entirely in-house, the holistic framework addresses economic, social, environmental sustainability aspects: [www.rotanaearth.com](http://www.rotanaearth.com).

Furthermore, Christiane established a corporate sustainability committee (CSC), which included in its members VPs and the company COO.

Together, they developed policies, set a vision and strategic goals by integrating the company core values. Those goals were cascaded to annual sustainability KPIs for all operating 48 hotels to achieve (via CEO Memos). Embedded sustainability in the company's top 5 business priorities (CEO Memos). Appointed 40 EHS managers, developed them, added sustainability implementation under their scope of role, to ensure successful implementation and reporting on KPIs. Integrated sustainability in the hotels corporate audits criteria done by the vice presidents annually. Published 2

sustainability reports so far. Christiane utilised the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group's Sustainability Maturity Assessment Tool, which enabled her to conduct a thorough assessment of the 48 hotels operations, policies and approaches, with the goal of evaluating performance and creating rigid strategy. It also helped her to develop short term 2012-2015 plan under each of the platform areas: governance, colleagues, suppliers, guests, communities and environment and have identified for every year the following:

1. Annual comprehensive sustainability plan,
2. Policies to be developed,
3. Approaches & Programs to be





- implemented in each department,
- 4. Annual Sustainability Key Performance Indicators for the hotels,
- 5. Performance monitoring tools for related KPIs, and implemented perception collection methodologies

Achievements and progress towards KPIs were evaluated and reported back to the group and shared with all stakeholders. Since sustainability KPIs were mandatory for all operating 48 Rotana hotels, the results achieved have made a relatively major impact towards the economic, social and environmental goals of the company. She implemented several programs leading to significant impact. Those included:

- Green office program
- Green rooms program
- Waste management program
- Food waste reduction program
- Energy management program
- Water management program

Since then, Rotana has included all the Groups' properties in the GCC and Middle East under the sustainability strategy scope. With 48 hotels in the chain, Christiane was faced with some challenges to collect and validate all the data. Having certain budget limitations to purchase a software, she developed web based e-tool for sustainability indicators reporting and monitoring to ensure:

- Effective accurate data reporting, Benchmarking by brand and country;
- Evaluating performance towards target

Some other initiatives were implemented for the group, using the

available technology and innovative products (drinkable air, converting air to drinkable water for guests & employees to use, eliminating the use of plastic water bottles, added composting machines food waste in several hotels (80-90% food waste converted to compost), cooking oil filtration system (40% less oil used). Developed Corporate giving program, highlighting the communities needs, launched the company focus to these specific needs, occupational Health & Safety program, social programs,

community engagement programs. To achieve this remarkable feat, Christiane:

- Developed the structure and the content of the company's sustainability website: Rotana Earth [www.rotanaearth.com](http://www.rotanaearth.com).
- Designed a holistic stakeholder engagement program and materiality assessment plan.
- Managed the implementation of variety of multidisciplinary sustainability projects in







coordination with Abu Dhabi & UAE government's authorities (transport, health, ..)

- Played a key role in designing and promoting numerous successful cross sector partnerships on sustainable initiatives.
- Developed a consultation policy to have sustainability champions committee at employee's level and EHS committee at executive management level in each hotel. Analyses hotels performance every 6 month to engage hotels and update them on their progress. Implemented 335 activities engaging hotels employees and community on various sustainability topics and 123 activities to engage

hotels guests.

- Developed Rotana sustainability report to communicate sustainability strategy, achievements, and goals with various stakeholders.

The framework for Rotana Earth was launched to address environmental, economic and social sustainability across the company's entire portfolio of new and operating hotels, hotel apartments and resorts in middle east & northern Africa . Rotana Earth's focus areas include energy optimisation strategies to minimise harm to the environment; training programs, best practice awareness among colleagues

and communicating sustainability initiatives to its guests; responsible procurement policy implementation among its suppliers; practice of transparent and ethical governance processes as well as engagement activities among the local communities.

"The company remains committed in its efforts to embrace and promote sustainable business practices through values and principles that demonstrate the strong sense of responsibility towards the environments it operates in" said Omer Kaddouri, President & CEO, Rotana.





# ADSG Awards - Winners Sharing Knowledge to Promote Sustainability: Al Jazeera International Catering LLC



We are asking all winners to share their achievements for which they won the prestigious ADSG Award in 2016 with an objective of promoting awareness about best practices in sustainability in the region and as an additional way that our members and stakeholders can learn from those successes.

## 1. Introduction

Al Jazeera international Catering LLC is a medium sized privately owned catering company set up in 2008, that offers catering, housekeeping and laundry services to specialized

customers like oilfields, remote sites, Labour camps and institutions across the Middle East.

Objective of this Submission is to demonstrate as to how Al Jazeera International Catering LLC, converted its stakeholder sustainability requirement in to a competitive advantage by incorporating innovation into its sustainability context through sustainability Initiative "Our planet - Our Responsibility".

"Our planet - Our Responsibility" Sustainability initiative was designed as part of JIC's Sustainability strategy to address the stakeholder requirement raised by 60% of the stakeholders in the engagement process conducted in the year 2012.

## 2. Overview / Analysis

As part of the engagement process,

It was expressed that JIC need to address a sustainability issue regarding waste management especially concentrating on food waste. Also concerns were raised on E.coli injection to land fill.

In an analysis we found that JIC has generated overall of 6572 m3 food waste over the years which resulted in occupying 350 m2 of landfill and had the potential to generate 52567 m3 of methane and affecting the ecological & food chain balance, as there is a high chance of E.coli ingestion into land due to decomposing of food waste in landfill. Also raw material production of this food has involved an approximate of forty eight hundred billion gallons of water.

Some of the identified key challenges include reduction of food waste generation, Reduction of food waste





to landfill and prevention of E.coli to entering the eco system through waste.

To address this issue JIC did an operational analysis to understand the underlying reasons at the grass root level, based on which a strategy addressing three core areas of operation was implemented starting with product modification, process alteration & infrastructural change.

This Initiative was internally developed based on JIC past performance and experience and was built on our core 4E methodology for sustainability, through which stakeholders were Educated, Enabled, Empowered and Engaged.



All employees were involved in the process of Education, Enabling, Empowerment and Engagement through implementation of this Strategic Initiative.

Based on the analysis, JIC created a strategy addressing three major areas of JIC operations which include Procurement, Food production & Waste disposal.

JIC created a waste reduction plan and incorporated action items in three areas as below:-

**Procurement**

Procurement policy and plan was revised including sourcing of raw materials which has less production waste (i.e. vegetables like cauliflower were avoided) and packaging specifications were revised to ensure reduction of waste at the point of generation.



**Operations**

Food production plan was reworked and process was revised which ensured food production based on client requirement, i.e. production was altered on daily basis based on the occupancy level at each of the camp site and overall 10% of production was decreased.

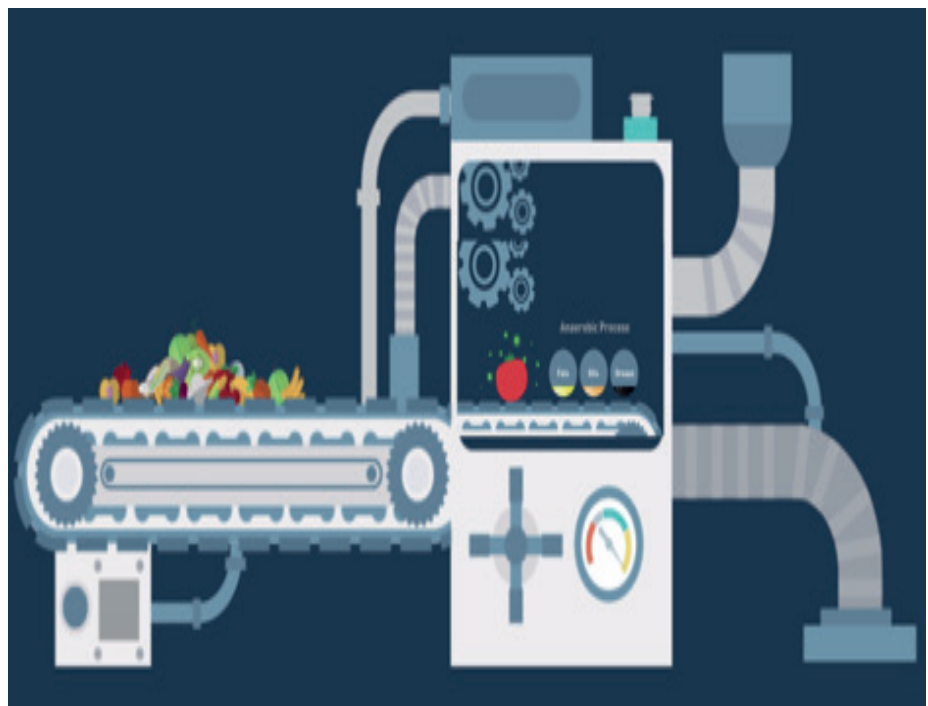
Staff were trained on controlled food portion service at food counters to avoid plate wastage. Menu was reworked and some of non-preferred food items were removed from our menu. Customer were encouraged to support JIC's food reduction initiative through signature campaigns &

awareness flash mobs.

**Waste Disposal**

Apart from the above control measure, JIC implemented a state of art waste disposal method to reduce impact on the environment. As part of its innovation management JIC substituted its disposal method by investing quarter million dirhams in a food digester machine.

This state of art machine acts as giant stomach and digests food waste in to liquid waste using oxygen based aerobic process. It uses blend of microorganisms to digest fat, protein & fiber present in food waste.







Output of the process is an organic grey water which has no harm to the environment as validated by Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity council central testing laboratories. This process also ensures reduction of greenhouse gas emission due to waste decomposition and transportation of waste material to landfill.

### 3. Sustainability Aspects

- Overall 55% reduction achieved in food waste generation for the year 2014 when compared to 2013, as a result of operation & service modification.
- Reduction of 526 tons of food wastes due to operational controls and modification, results in reduction of 2200 tons of Co2 emission.
- Usage of 3.8 X 108 gallons of water (I.e. Four hundred billion gallons of water) has been avoided which would be used in production of raw

materials of the food items.

- 20% of the generated food waste (i.e. 105 tons) was avoided reaching the Landfill as an outcome of investing in the food digester system.
- By reducing 105 tons of food waste reaching the landfill, JIC was able to reduce generation of 8942 m3 methane gas (CH4) by avoiding food decomposition.

### 4. Conclusion

To sustain the initiative JIC has developed an Excellence team which overlooks the sustainability practices of the organization. Our CSR strategy is focusing on the global sustainability requirements concentrating and coinciding with the millennium development goals of the UN and is helping us to sustain our best practice meeting the global sustainability requirements. As part of continual improvement we have incorporated innovation

& partnership collaboration as part of our CSR strategy to ensure evolution of our process. As an improvement to our performance our employee involvement in social welfare activities has increased to 81% and overall employee morale has also increased.

We have partnered with local NGO's to support the regions ongoing sustainability requirements and as a future development plan we have incorporated sustainability requirement as a key factor for our vendors to be pre-qualified with our organization.

We have started training suppliers on our sustainability requirements and have extended our boundary to our supplier stakeholder as part of evolution and further development. You can visit our website [www.aljic.ae](http://www.aljic.ae) to know more about our sustainability practices and initiatives.





# ADSG Quarterly Meeting Q1&Q2, Members Meet and Share Sustainability Updates

The ADSG Held its quarterly meeting with members on 26 April. One of the cornerstones of the ADSG is knowledge sharing and learning for each other to accelerate the adoption and implantation of sustainability management practices.

The first half of the meeting focused on knowledge sharing with our member PwC sharing insights on sustainable procurement.

## Sustainable Supply Chain

"Sustainable supply chain management involves integrating environmentally and financially viable practices into the complete supply chain lifecycle..." 1 With the rapidly changing business context, organizations find the need to innovate in order to survive. There are 5 global trends that have a major influence on the economic and commercial landscape, and will continue for the next decade, and that permeate across all sectors of economies and societies, and fundamentally disrupt industries.

These are:

1. Resource Scarcity and Climate change

2. Rapid Urbanisation
3. Demographic and Social Changes
4. Shift in global economic power and related political changes
5. Technological Breakthroughs

As supply chains become more complex and extended, managing the sustainability risks that emerge from Megatrends, have become ever more critical and difficult.

However, there are ways in which organizations can practice sustainable supply chain such as purchasing less, purchasing zero carbon technology, purchasing recycled material, etc. Common constraints faced by organisations that want to integrate sustainability into their supply chains include, misalignment with the overall organization's strategy, culture, operating model and procurement processes and procedures.

The UAE government has already committed to supporting organisations in practicing sustainable supply chain. In 2015, the UAE government joined two UN- led global networks aimed at supporting Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP). Further, a few

organisations in the UAE have already implemented sustainable supply chain management, such as the Jumeriah and Rotana hotels, which have set green procurement strategies, and from the Public Sector, companies such as TDIC, DEWA, and RTA, have all embedded sustainability into their procurement processes.

To help build sustainability into an organisation's supply chain, PwC has developed a tool to measure organisational impact. TIMM - Total Impact Measurement and Management, is a flexible tool that helps analyse an organisation's impact through four dimensions:

- 1) Economic
- 2) Social
- 3) Environmental
- 4) Tax

TIMM helps measure, value and communicate (material) impacts. It helps organisations understand their impact, on the entire organisation value chain and for all stakeholders - government, customers, suppliers, employees, and communities. The second half of the meeting





covered exciting developments and progress made by the Group, as well as upcoming activities. Here are highlights that were shared by AD SG members

### Department of Transport

DoT is keen to establish and maintain an effective transport system for Abu Dhabi. Five objectives were set for this purpose: reducing congestion and enhancing mobility; enhancing transport safety and security in coordination with key stakeholders; providing high quality and reliable transport services to all Abu Dhabi; establishing an effective and efficient transport sector that responds to the rapid growth of Abu Dhabi's economy and building a collaborative and result-oriented organization to achieve the set goals.

DoT assumes four main roles of a planner; a developer; an operator and a regulator. Its approach to sustainability aligns to its vision of achieving sustainable development through providing a sustainable transport system, by integrating sustainability into its roles. Its sustainability framework translates into a manageable and measurable set of objectives, based on the five strategic objectives plus the environmental sustainability which is incorporated in the framework in accordance with international sustainability management guidelines and best practice, and aligned to the three pillars of sustainable development.

DoT is proud to be one of the original founding members of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group (ADSG) which is major supporter for its sustainability efforts. DoT is also a member of the International Association for Public Transport; a signatory member of the Charter on Sustainable Development and GOLD community member of the Global Reporting Initiative. DoT has been annually reporting since 2009.

DoT's Sustainability Team does champion and embed sustainability into DoT's strategy, management systems and operations; identify, plan, implement and review sustainability initiatives that will accelerate sustainability performance gains; ensure that DoT regularly reports publicly on its sustainability performance and maintains a meaningful dialogue with stakeholders, seeking to cooperate to further enhance the sustainability of Abu Dhabi's transport system.

### Managing Sustainability at EAD

In 2015, the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD) has captured between 13% - 18% reduction in electricity, water, fuel consumption and waste generation. This resulted in around 6% reduction in GHG emissions per capita. This was a result of self-assessment and internal performance review conducted to identify strengths and explore opportunities from gaps. The sustainability team at EAD leveraged the ADSG maturity

assessment tool to conduct this comprehensive analysis of current environmental impact and means to minimize its footprint.

In 2016, and with in-depth analysis of current environmental status; subject-matter experts (e.g. energy experts, the fleet management team, the procurement department, etc.) in collaboration with the sustainability team studied best practices and researched success stories and best practices to propose and recommend both quick wins and long term objectives addressing strategic, operational and behavioral material issues. These material issues are areas where EAD has an impact as an organization and/or are impacted by these areas.

EAD management formed a sustainability strategic priority team, led by the Corporate Sustainability Unit, in order to strategically manage our environmental objectives and targets implemented internally by EAD sectors and departments; with the key aim to improve our environmental performance and minimize footprint.

EAD maintains relations with partners, set mutual targets and lead environmental efforts where relevant to "Distinguish EAD as a Leader in Environmental Sustainability". For more information, visit: [www.ead.ae](http://www.ead.ae)





# ADSG Sustainable Business Leadership Forum held for the Second Time in the Capital



There could have been no more timely moment to hold the Second Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum, with 2015 having witnessed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change, both of which represent bold steps undertaken by the global community to advance the sustainability agenda. In the UAE, 2015 was also celebrated as the 'Year of Innovation' inspiring innovative thinking and approaches in the country. To that end, the forum with its theme of innovation – which featured widespread representation from government, private industry, NGOs and academia – was a much-needed platform to foster innovative initiatives promoting the transformation towards a greener economy.

The event Lead Sponsor, Dolphin Energy, supported the event for the second consecutive year and further participated as speakers in the Circular Economy Plenary. Commenting on the company's sponsorship of the Forum, Mr. Adel Ahmed Albuainain, Chief Executive Officer, Dolphin Energy Limited said, "We are delighted to sponsor this important initiative once again and take a leading role in helping highlight the importance of pursuing

sustainability strategies aimed at driving future prosperity. As a key player in the energy sector we have a responsibility to look at ways in which we address the soaring energy demand and the need to use less. We look forward to sharing our thoughts on this issue and others over the course of the Forum."

The Forum Official Airline: Etihad Airways, also supported the event for the second time this year, the national carrier provided a key speaker for the Creating Shared Value Plenary. James Hogan, Etihad Airways' President and Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are pleased once again to demonstrate our support to the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group and its second Leadership Forum. This is an important event to share, inform and educate and we look forward to active and productive participation."

Speaking at the forum were over 30 high caliber global sustainability professionals. The event was opened with a keynote address by H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak Secretary General, Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi (EAD).

H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Secretary General, Environment

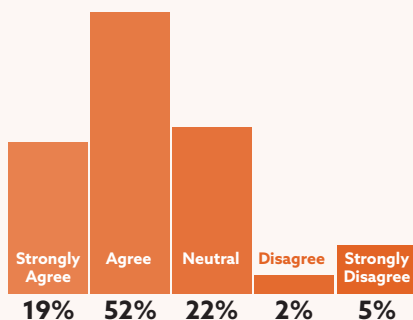
Agency- Abu Dhabi (EAD) commented: "We are experiencing unprecedented levels of change in our economies, our societies and of course our environment. There is a genuine national and international commitment to respond to these changes which has been reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals and the commitments made at COP21. Honouring these commitments also requires the government and the private sector to radically change their approach to development. This can only be done through creation and adoption of innovative practices. It is therefore fitting that the theme behind this ADSG Forum has innovation at its core."

The Forum launched with a spectacular start with the CEO Panel: Board Oversight – Within Transformational and Disruptive Innovation Cycles. The discussion established the importance of the Board's buy-in for promoting and institutionalising the sustainability agenda. Ownership at the top level is often the case within international companies with strong sustainability-driven brands, such as Unilever and Nestle, where sustainability has an unequivocal strategic priority at the heart of boardroom decisions.

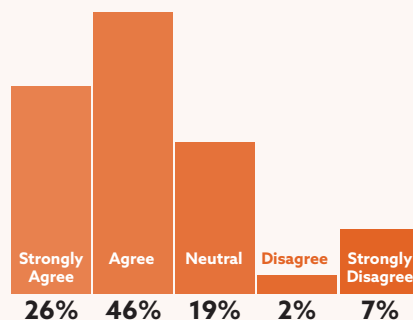


## Feedback

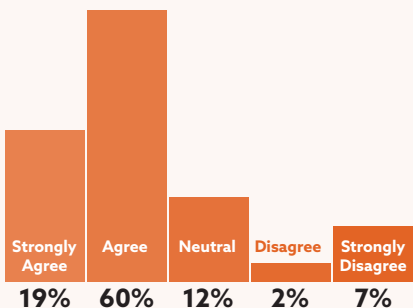
Q1 Good range of topics covered



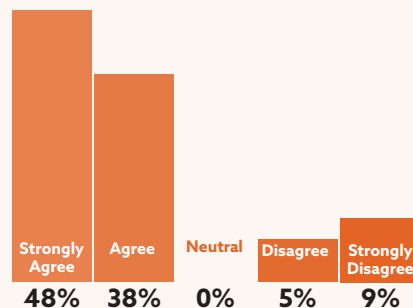
Q2 Good quality and range of speakers



Q3 Helpful plenary sessions



Q4 I would attend a future AD SG Forum:



## Testimonials

*"Overall event was good, I liked day 1 panelists and strong messages"*

*"All parts of the event were useful"*

*"A very interesting speech of HE Razan Al Mubarak, and very interesting intervention, mainly the one of Rotana, GRI, DoT and TCA"*

*"Listening to the speakers; provided us with useful information on the current situation and the way forward. The event provided us with practices which we can implement in our own business. It widens our vision on how or who we can offer our services to further assist in the sustainability growth in the region"*





Furthermore, the panel discussed the importance of achieving diversity in the C-Suite, not only in terms of gender but also ethnicity, race and age. Clare Woodcraft, CEO of the Emirates Foundation, argued that "If we still have boards that suffer from a lack of diversity, those boards will struggle to navigate their companies through the 21st century. That is essentially what sustainability is about, it is the future equipping of your organisations". In line with the spirit of the UAE Government's recent establishment of a Ministry of Youth Affairs, the panellists encouraged executive boards to carefully listen to young people.

Not only are they more tech-savvy than most current executives, young people are also naturally ethical and inclined to be green. Most of the young generation are frustrated with the way environmental issues are handled by businesses. Given that sustainability is an intergenerational issue, it is only fair that boards directly engage with youth. After all, research has shown that diversity – be it in terms of gender, race, ethnicity or age – in corporate board membership clearly correlates

with effectiveness and positive financial performance.

Speaking at the event, Huda Al Houqani, ADSG Director, said "It is the ADSG members and sponsors that facilitate and foster collaboration to tackle sustainability issues – every one of them makes a contribution to ensure the success of events such as this. We are particularly grateful to our members Dolphin Energy and Etihad Airways as sponsors of this event, and for the continued support and guidance of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi "

In conclusion, innovation continues to be so important. Whilst 2015 was tagged as the UAE's 'Year of Innovation', time has come to realise that for an innovation to be sustainable, it must bring about a change that results in creating a shared value – a novel purpose that goes well beyond traditional philanthropy or CSR.

The forum offered a unique platform for showcasing innovative practices – such as Estidama and circular business models – with the aim of inspiring innovative and sustainable ways of

doing business. There is a growing consensus and confidence among key leaders in business, government, academia and NGO about the future direction of climate action and the need for radical responses to poverty and resource scarcity, among a host of related issues.

The challenges of global economic slowdown, commodity price fluctuations and the migrant crisis have placed further pressure on companies and global capitalism to redefine their role in order to better serve societal needs. The emergence of global initiatives such as 'Conscious Capitalism' and 'Coalition for Inclusive Capitalism' add further pressure on businesses to solve escalating social and environmental issues. At the same time, the emergence of new technologies and business models brings a host of new risks and benefits to corporations and consumers alike. 3D printing, robotics, big data, Internet of Things, crowdsourcing have the potential to disrupt the global business and sustainability landscape in profound ways; so they denote key areas to watch in 2016 and beyond.

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# ADSG Holds A Workshop On "Communicating Your Sustainability Report"



As part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group's (ADSG) commitment to its members, in April 2016, ADSG held a workshop focused on communicating sustainability reports.

Not to risk sounding like a broken record, sustainability has been repeatedly positioned as a journey that is key to business. However, communicating such journey has often been overlooked. From one extreme to another, companies have either been resistant to communicating their sustainability efforts (a form of green blushing-worried that they have not done enough), or communicating everything (a form of green washing-communicating more than what they are actually doing with no focus on what's material).

As sustainability experts and not marketing or communication experts, finding the right balance is not always easy.

The workshop covered: (i) communicating sustainability in general; (ii) objectives of communicating sustainability reports; (iii) methods of communicating sustainability reports; (iv) feedback from sustainability reports; and (v) challenges in communicating sustainability reports.

Communicating sustainability illustrates the dedication of the organization to sustainability by showing the path of progress embedding corporate values across the organization and helps manage

and improve the organization's reputation by providing the organization with benchmarks against which they can measure their performance.

However, to communicate sustainability effectively, there are three pillars for consideration: (i) the sustainability message that ought to be communicated; (ii) the effective form of communication (i.e., forming the message in a manner that takes into consideration the audience, the best form of communicating with them, the language to be used, and the time of communicating); and (iii) that the message be responsible (i.e., transparent with accountability and a means of engagement for feedback).

Nonetheless, to best handle communicating sustainability reports, it is important to ascertain the purpose of preparing and issuing sustainability reports. When organizations prepare sustainability reports to engage their stakeholders, then the most important factor to consider is how to best reach the stakeholders. Alternatively, if the organization is preparing the sustainability report to manage performance, then it is of great value to focus on communicating the report internally to maximize employee's engagement to improve performance. In each case, communicating the sustainability report maximizes on the value of preparing the report.

Taking the above into consideration, a road map of who the primary

audience of the sustainability report are identified and the key messages to be communicated to them are known. It is now useful to consider the different methods of communicating sustainability reports available: online, offline, social media, various publications etc. and which one is the most beneficial to communicate the right message, to the right audience, in the right manner and at the right time. Things to account for in this realm are new practices such as visualization of data, creating concise data that is easy to read and understand, and ensuring that such data is presented in the right context.

Since finding the right balance of information and means of communication comes with many challenges, ensuring that there is an avenue for feedback is key to on-going development in this area. Feedback provides organizations with an option to regularly improve their communication strategy based on the organization's objectives and its stakeholder's needs.

To conclude the workshop, there were many discussions on how to improve existing communication strategies to take into account the sustainability needs of an organization and means of collaborating with different departments (sustainability department/officers and communication department/officers) to create best practices for communicating sustainability reports.

# ADSG and CDP Collaboration



مجموعة أبوظبي للإستدامة  
ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

We are delighted share with you that following collaboration and partnership with CDP over a series of events and activities in the last couple of years, the ADSG and CDP are planning to work more closely on various activities in the near future.

CDP have shared their online content and various webinars and information on their website and we encourage you to have a look and register for free to any activities that may benefit your organisation.

Want to learn about CDP and their various programmes, such as:

CDP Supplier Support Webinar - First time disclosers \*\*

These webinars provide an introduction to CDP's supply chain program, explaining the value and opportunities that result from disclosing on climate change and water. The webinars will cover how the disclosure process works; briefly introduce the component parts of the 2016 questionnaire, instructions on using the ORS, and where you can find guidance. They will be most useful to those people and companies new to CDP.

Climate change program guidance\*\*



sustainable economic and social growth.

We also approach publishing an annual report that explains our sustainability management approach and the contribution of our environmental, economic and social performance. We please



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