



مجموعة أبوظبي للاستدامة  
ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

## **PIONEERING SUSTAINABILITY** 15 YEARS OF ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP



An aerial photograph of a dense mangrove forest. The trees are a vibrant green, and a clear, light blue waterway winds through the center of the forest. The water reflects the surrounding greenery. In the bottom left corner, there is a faint, semi-transparent graphic of a globe with latitude and longitude lines.

## EDITORIAL NOTE

In commemoration of the 15-year anniversary of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group (ADSG), this publication endeavours to highlight the history and evolution of a pioneering Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) initiative. The last decade and a half have seen the ADSG grow from 15 to 52 multi-sectoral member organisations; meanwhile, the sustainability agenda and landscape has changed dramatically on a global level. During this time, however, the ADSG has successfully argued the case for tackling the greatest economic, social and environmental challenges collectively and in a spirit of cooperation and open dialogue.

On the eve of 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC, aka COP28 Dubai, and in this ‘Year of Sustainability’ it seems more than apt to delve into the methods, strategies, actions and players behind the ADSG’s achievements to date. In doing so, it is the Editors’ hope that readers will take inspiration from the tremendous work of others and find hope in this testament to the power of collaboration and collective action.

Our thanks and respect go to every individual who has contributed to the viability and development of this extraordinary and long-standing membership initiative.

*Sustainability to Action (STA), October 2023*

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*Over the past 15 years, I have witnessed with pride the unprecedented success of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group, which has developed into a key player in the sector and enjoys a strong presence in Abu Dhabi due to its ever-growing body of members. Initially, we started with 15 members, and have recently welcomed our 52nd.*

*It is fitting that we celebrate the 15th anniversary of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group in the UAE's Year of Sustainability and as the nation gears up to host COP28 – a key event in the UAE's climate action history. I am certain that Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group will have a major role to play at the global forum and going forward well into the future.*



**His Excellency Mohammed Ahmed Al Bowardi,**  
Minister of State for Defence Affairs and Vice Chairman of the Board  
of Directors of EAD, 2023





*Dear members, stakeholders, and friends of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group, as we celebrate our 15th anniversary, we reflect on the progress we have made and renew our dedication to sustainability. The work you are doing, integrating sustainability into your organisational governance and making your corporate decisions by balancing social, environmental and economic considerations together is visionary. I am proud of your efforts, your achievements and your commitment. Together, we are changing our future, by creating lasting legacies for future generations. Today, we stand together, committed to fostering innovation, driving change, and ensuring a sustainable future as custodians for our children and our grand children. Our efforts towards sustainability mean that we are leaving this planet in a better shape than how we found it. Congratulations to the members of the Group on this remarkable milestone.*

**H.E. Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri,**

Secretary General of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD),  
August 2023



## 2008 AD SG LAUNCHED WITH 15 FOUNDING MEMBERS

ADSG Mission To promote sustainability management in Abu Dhabi by providing learning and knowledge sharing opportunities for government, private and not for profit organisations who are, or wish to become ADSG members in a spirit of cooperation and open dialogue.

ADSG Values Principles

1. Responsibility
2. Accountability
3. Transparency

## 2009 19 MEMBERS

ADSG Charter We, the undersigned, Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group founding members hereby declare our commitment to work together in adopting sustainability as the fundamental approach in developing and executing strategic policies and using integrated management of our economic, environmental and social performance for the purpose of realising the vision of H. H. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, and the vision of Abu Dhabi Emirate to achieve sustainable development.

## 2010 23 MEMBERS

In 2010, 15 members of ADSG published a sustainability report (based on GRI) - with 10 from government agencies - the highest amount in the world.

## 2011 31 MEMBERS

Moving from Reporting to Action

ADSG Launch 2011 - 2013 strategy with 6 strategic goals:

- Goal 1: Raise awareness and understanding of sustainability management and reporting principles and practices.
- Goal 2: Facilitate the adoption of sustainability management reporting practices.
- Goal 3: Provide a forum for experience sharing and learning about sustainability management and reporting practices.
- Goal 4: Support sustainability initiatives within Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- Goal 5: Create opportunities for international cooperation and recognition.
- Goal 6: Build an excellent, autonomous organization.

Flagship Programs

1. Sustainable Procurement
2. Sustainable CT
3. Sustainable Labor Practice
4. Waste Management

## 2012 39 MEMBERS

Launched Capacity Building Program. Produced Guidance Handbook. Over 2,500 training hours, over 65 professionals trained, and 7 member sustainability reports. Online Maturity Assessment Tool. Training courses and theme workshops. One-to-one guidance and support to members.

## 2013 43 MEMBERS

ADSG Launches the First Sustainability e-Journal

ADSG Governance Structure



## 2014 47 MEMBERS

Participated in Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2014 and launching ADSG's Strategic Framework

Hiwar on 'Sustainability, Water Governance and Policy' on 17th June 2014, attended by over 85 delegates from ADSG members and stakeholders

Hiwar on 'Sustainability and Organisational Governance' on 3rd September, attended by over 100 delegates from ADSG members and stakeholders

ADSG Launched the First Sustainable Business Leadership Awards – November 2014

ADSG launched the Sustainability in Practice Report (SIPR)

## 2015 48 MEMBERS

Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum 2015 – 17th -18th February 2015, over 200 delegates attended the Forum – Anantara Hotel

Abu Dhabi Awards & Gala Dinner 16th February 2015, over 110 ADSG members and stakeholders attended – Anantara Hotel

GRI G4 Certified Training 28th to 30th April, 16 ADSG Member organisations certified

Hiwar on Effective Energy Management 3rd June 140-150 people attended

Hiwar on Journey to Paris COP 21, 8th October, 80 people attended

CFO Leadership Meeting, 2nd November, 40 CFO's attended

CFO Leadership Reception, 2nd November, over 70 attendees

Energy Management Flagship Program – 3rd to 7th May, 9 organisations certified with Energy Institute CDP Level 1 Energy Management Essentials

## 2016 to 2020

ADSG Strategy update and implementation

ADSG Management Model review and update

## 2020

ADSG Webinar Series 2 on Net Zero Future – Realign strategy and ambitions beyond Covid-19 APR 21st

Launching ADSG eJournal Q1 2020

Final ADSG strategy designed draft to be shared with SG

ADSG Webinar 3

ADSG Quarterly Meeting

ADSG Webinar 4

EI training (ongoing till August 2020)

ADSG Hiwar session (energy carbon management)

ADSG Awards Digital Ceremony

Launching the COP benchmarking and case study report

ADSG Forum and Awards 2020 Theme: Delivering Business Growth and Contributing to Societal Growth

## 2021

ADSG annual business plan development and review in light of Covid-19

Members' engagement meetings (ongoing annual meetings) Aldar, ITC, Emirates Foundation, FAB, HSBC, PWC, SCAD and TAQA.

ADSG Members' Quarterly Meeting and Knowledge Sharing Session on Implementation of ESG Disclosure

ADSG to launch strategic implementation initiatives

Launch of Gulf Region Circle of Practice Benchmarking Case Studies in partnership with A4S.

2nd ADSG Members' Quarterly Meeting

ADSG New Branding Launch.

Launching the official call for entries for ADSG Awards 2021.

Deliver ADSG Certified GRI training.

Communication and engagement on ADSG events and workshops.

3rd Members Quarterly Meeting

Delivery of ADSG Sustainable Business Leadership Forum and Awards 2021.

4th ADSG Members' Quarterly Meeting.

## 2022

Launched ADSG Carbon Management

Launched ADSG Sustainability in Practice Report 2022

ADSG Strategy Review (2022-2025)

Launch of Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum and Awards 2023

## 2023

Hiwar Session on The Path Towards a Nature-Positive Future in collaboration with Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week

Hiwar Session on 'The Journey to Dubai' – A Roadmap to Delivering the Goals of the Paris Agreement in the Run Up to COP28

The Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum and Awards 2023

## 2030

"A safe and secure society and a dynamic open economy"

"Abu Dhabi as a sustainable, diversified, high-value-added economy"

".... To preserve and enhance Abu Dhabi's natural heritage"

Economic Vision 2030

## 2050

9 billion people live well, and within the limits of the planet WBCSD Vision 2050

ADSG Mission: to promote sustainability management in Abu Dhabi by providing learning and knowledge sharing opportunities for government, private and not for profit organisations who are, or wish to become, ADSG members in a spirit of cooperation and open dialogue



مجموعة أبوظبي للاستدامة  
ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

## OUR MISSION

To promote sustainability management in Abu Dhabi by providing learning and knowledge sharing opportunities for all government, private companies and not for profit organisations who are, or wish to become ADSG members, in a spirit of cooperation and open dialogue.

The Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group (ADSG) is a non-profit organisation based in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), that was established in 2008 by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD). The ADSG was founded with a mission to “promote sustainability management in Abu Dhabi by providing learning and knowledge sharing opportunities for governmental entities, private companies and non-profit organisations in a spirit of cooperation and open dialogue”.

The ADSG mission remains unaltered and has served as the inspiration for fifteen years of work that has contributed to a culture

of sustainability within the business community in Abu Dhabi and the wider UAE. The Group has focused on fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst its members to drive sustainable development and the implementation of sustainable practices.

Since its formation, the ADSG has achieved many significant milestones and played a crucial role in advancing sustainability practices in the region through: and celebrates 15 years of action, innovation, dialogue and collaboration by the ADSG as a milestone in the journey towards a more sustainable future.

## MULTI-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The ADSG has successfully engaged organisations from various sectors, including government entities, corporations, academic institutions, and non-profit organisations. By bringing together stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, the group facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practices to address sustainability challenges.



## SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

The ADSG encourages its members to adopt transparent and robust sustainability reporting practices. The group provides guidance and support to organisations in developing sustainability reports that adhere to international standards, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework.



## CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

Recognising the importance of building local expertise, the ADSG offers training programs and workshops to enhance the knowledge and skills of sustainability professionals. These initiatives contribute to the development of a skilled workforce capable of driving sustainability within organisations.



## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The ADSG organises the annual Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Awards to honour organisations that demonstrate outstanding commitment and achievements in sustainability. These awards recognise companies that have implemented innovative sustainability strategies and practices.



## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

The ADSG actively collaborates with local and international organisations to promote sustainability in the region. The group has established partnerships with entities such as the Capitals Coalition, Accounting for Sustainability (A4S), CDP, United Nations Global Compact and the World Green Building Council to leverage expertise and resources for collective impact.



## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

The ADSG serves as a thought leader in the field of sustainability by conducting research, publishing reports, and advocating for sustainable practices. The group engages in policy discussions, participates in conferences and forums, and contributes to shaping the sustainability agenda in Abu Dhabi and beyond.



Through its initiatives and partnerships, the ADSG has become a driving force in promoting sustainable development in the region. The group's efforts have helped create awareness, build capacity, and foster collaboration, contributing to the transition towards a more sustainable future in Abu Dhabi and the UAE.

2023 marks the 15-Year anniversary of the ADSG and a particularly significant year for sustainability in the UAE and beyond. 2023 is the

UAE Year of Sustainability and a year in which the Emirates will host the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), COP28. COP28 UAE will be the first Global Stock Take (GST) to assess the progress of the Paris Climate Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C. It is within this context that this publication commemorates and celebrates 15 years of action, innovation, dialogue and collaboration by the ADSG as a milestone in the journey towards a more sustainable future.



إدارة البيئة  
Environment Agency

الإدارة العامة  
GENERAL AUTHORITY  
BU DUBAI

سنة التنمية  
YEAR OF DEVELOPMENT



# **CHAPTER 1**

## LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS - INCEPTION OF THE ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP



# CHAPTER 1

## LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS - INCEPTION OF THE ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

In May 2008, H.E Mohammed Ahmed Al Bowardi, then Secretary General of the Executive Council of Abu Dhabi and Managing Director of the EAD called for the establishment of the ADSG inviting

government, private companies and not for profit organisations to contribute to the achievement of the Emirate's vision to achieve a balanced development by embracing sustainability.



*When we started the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group (ADSG) in 2008, the Government had already launched Abu Dhabi into the global sustainability spotlight by initiating the Masdar Initiative... At that time; however, very few existing leading organisations in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi were taking sustainability seriously. Integrating social and environmental progress with our economic success was more theory than practice for most organisations. Although sustainability was clearly at the centre of the Government's future growth strategy; many existing companies needed guidance on what sustainability meant for them and how to get started.*

**H.E. Mohammed Al Bowardi  
and H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, 2011**



The ADSG was launched as voluntary membership initiative on June 30th 2008 by the EAD to promote sustainable practices and development in Abu Dhabi; and to address environmental, social, and economic challenges in the region. Representative organisations from some of the most important sectors for the Emirate's sustainability (energy, industry, transport, tourism, health, oil and gas, construction and building) signed the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group Declaration committing to adopt sustainability management and reporting practices.

The founding members of the ADSG included prominent government entities, corporations, and non-profit organisations committed to advancing sustainable practices. These members recognised the importance of collaborating and sharing knowledge to achieve sustainable development goals in Abu Dhabi and collectively signed the ADSG Declaration.





all it takes is positive energy.

مجموعة أبوظبي للاستدامة  
Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group

صروح  
Sorouh

إحتويات  
ADNOC



مجموعة أبوظبي للاستدامة  
Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group



ADSG Declaration  
إعلان مجموعة أبوظبي للاستدامة

Text in Arabic and English detailing the ADSG Declaration, including the group's commitment to sustainability and its impact on the UAE's economic and social development.

Informational table with brochures and logos of partner organizations including ADNOC, Mubadala, and others. The table is part of the ADSG booth structure.



# CHAPTER 1

## LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS - INCEPTION OF THE ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

Founding ADSG member organisations:

- Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (ADDED)
- Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ADCCI)
- Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC)
- Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA)
- Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (ADWEA)
- Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA)
- Department of Transport (DOT)
- Dolphin Energy
- Emirates Foundation
- Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD)
- Health Authority - Abu Dhabi (HAAD)
- Higher Corporation Specialised Economic Zones (ZonesCorp)
- Aldar
- National Bank of Abu Dhabi (NBAD)
- Sorouh Real Estate



*Aldar is proud to have been a founding member of ADSG, and we remain committed to its core values and objectives. Through ADSG, we have had the privilege of working alongside like-minded organizations, exchanging best practices, and collectively tackling the most pressing sustainability challenges facing our region. Looking forward, we will continue to invest in sustainable solutions, raising the bar for sustainability in our region and contributing to the UAE Leadership's vision and aspirations.*

**Faisal Falaknaz,**  
Acting Chief Financial and Sustainability Officer,  
Aldar Properties



The group set out to achieve several key objectives, including:

- The promotion and raising of awareness about sustainability issues among organisations and the general public in Abu Dhabi.
- The sharing of best practices and knowledge related to sustainability initiatives, thereby encouraging organisations to adopt sustainable practices.
- The facilitation of collaboration by creating a platform for partnerships among its members to drive sustainable development projects in Abu Dhabi.
- The development of sustainability reporting, performance and decision-making capabilities in the emirate; and the implementation of global reporting standards, particularly the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)'s framework.



# CHAPTER 1

## LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS - INCEPTION OF THE ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP



*I do think you are doing something that could be quite remarkable--true public/private/not for profit partnership; I have never seen anything like it.*

**Dr Paul C. Light,**

Paulette Goddard Professor of Public Service,  
New York University (NYU), 2011



In its first year the AD SG established a General Secretariat; in 2009 it established the AD SG Charter and Membership Criteria and the first annual AD SG Action Plan was approved. The AD SG began offering members technical support to develop business cases for sustainability; meanwhile, the first founding member sustainability

report was issued by ADCCI and three new members joined the Group. A further three organisations joined in 2010, which saw the AD SG launch four flagship programs and deliver workshops on sustainability reporting and transparency in the value chain. The AD SG published its first strategy in 2011.





CLIMATE CHANGE

مجموعة أبوظبي للاستدامة  
Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group  
Partnership to Champion Sustainability  
In Abu Dhabi  
الشراكة الاستدامة في أبوظبي

# CHAPTER 1

## LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS - INCEPTION OF THE ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

The early support and participation of founding ADSG members was pioneering and paved the way for growth of the initiative. By 2011, the ADSG membership had doubled to thirty members, which increased

to forty-four by 2014 and forty nine by 2018. Today, the ADSG membership numbers fifty-two organisations



*"It was an honour and a privilege to be elected and to serve as a member of the General Secretariat of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group (ADSG) in 2010. This role provided me with a unique opportunity to collaborate with the other members of the General Secretariat and to actively contribute to the success of ADSG's flagship programs, capacity building and facilitating crucial discussions on sustainability through quarterly meetings and regular interactions with the members of the Group.*

*The visionary leadership of the Abu Dhabi Government remains a continuous source of inspiration to me and has also been an empowering experience. The ADSG has allowed me to connect with like-minded professionals and, more importantly, to collaborate effectively, gaining the strength and knowledge needed to drive meaningful change within my organisation at the time. Becoming a part of this platform has truly enriched my professional journey, highlighting the significant benefits it offers to individuals and businesses alike.*

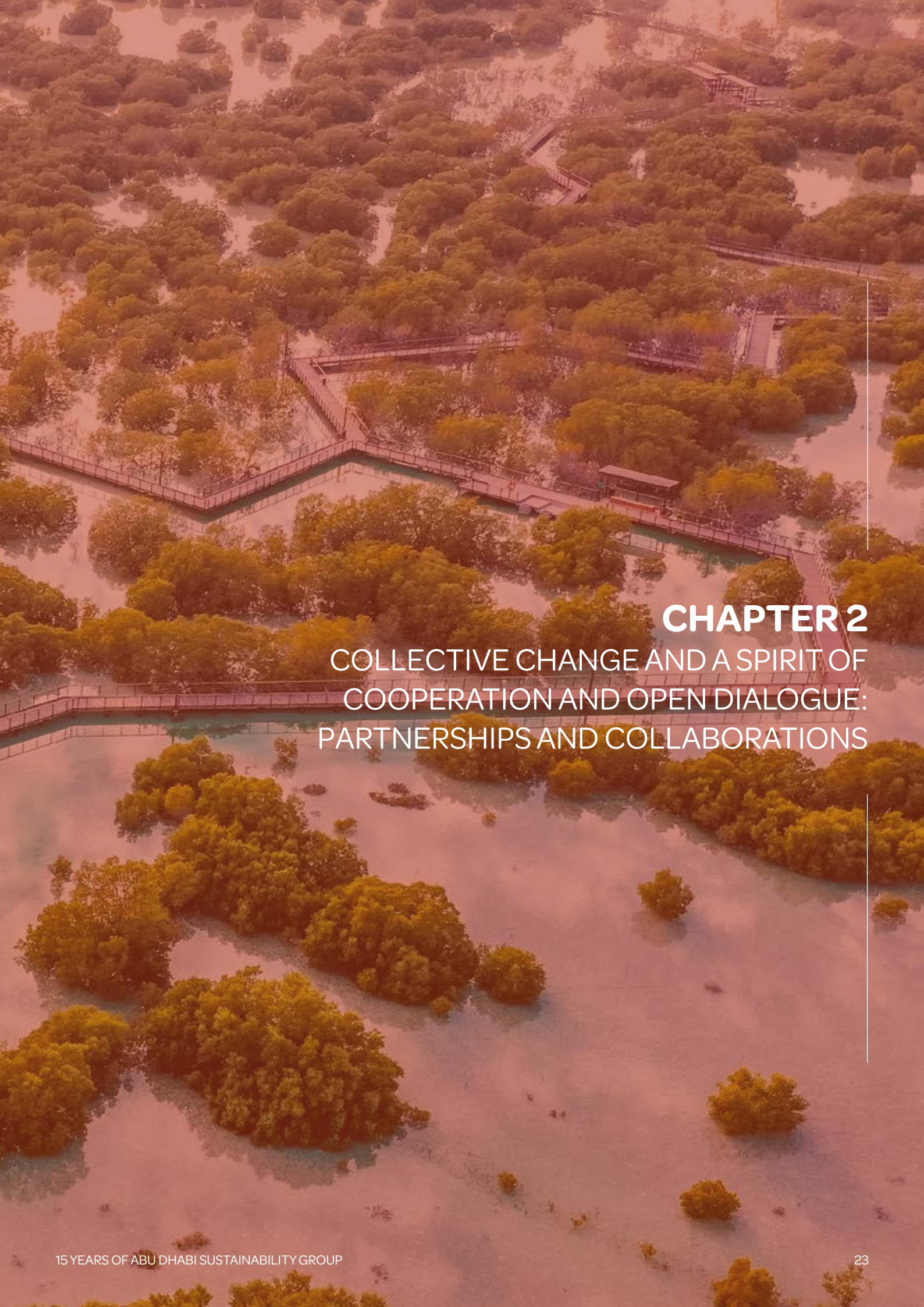
*Engaging in a peer review with top sustainability experts within the ADSG community for the inaugural Corporate Responsibility Report of the world's first airport to adopt GRI reporting with Airport Operators Sector Disclosures in 2011, played a pivotal role in achieving the significant milestone of releasing our company's inaugural sustainability report."*

**Sandra Anani,**

Former Corporate Responsibility and International Affairs Senior Manager, Abu Dhabi Airports Company (ADAC)







## **CHAPTER 2**

COLLECTIVE CHANGE AND A SPIRIT OF  
COOPERATION AND OPEN DIALOGUE:  
PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS





# CHAPTER 2

## COLLECTIVE CHANGE AND A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND OPEN DIALOGUE: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS



The AD SG is premised on group working and partnerships and recognises that knowledge sharing both disseminates information and promotes best practice. Collaboration and dialogue between members are fostered via regular AD SG group meetings and events, such as quarterly meetings and AD SG peer to peer workshop, Hiwar and Majlis sessions.

In the last fifteen years, the AD SG has had the privilege of working with

leading international knowledge partners, such as Accounting for Sustainability (A4S), the Capitals Coalition (formerly Natural Capital Coalition), Emirates Nature – WWF, CDP and the Energy Institute (EI), to deliver training and develop regional case studies, reports and guidance. These collaborations have resulted in a number of publications and continue to enable the AD SG membership to leverage resources, harness knowledge and implement efficient and sustainable working practices.





ACCOUNTING  
SUSTAINABILITY

# Future-proofing financial decision making

The Ad



# COLLECTIVE CHANGE AND A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND OPEN DIALOGUE: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

The AD SG's collaboration with member organisations and sustainability experts has enabled the AD SG to deliver high quality, far-reaching and accessible training and events to member organisations and beyond. The annual Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Awards, for example, are open to all medium to large organisations operating in the Gulf region, and attendance

to the sister Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum is free to all delegates. These flagship events remain contingent on a "spirit of cooperation open dialogue", with member organisations contributing their time, expertise and resources to make for such a successful legacy and programme of work.

The AD SG is proud to commemorate the historic support of member organisations who have sponsored and enabled AD SG activity over the years:



Dolphin Energy first sponsored the Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum and Awards as Lead Sponsor in 2015 and has sponsored a total of 8 Forum and Awards to date.



Etihad Airways first sponsored the Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum and Awards in 2015 and has served as the events' official Aircraft Carrier for 7 Forum and Awards to date.



The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) also sponsored the Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum in 2015.



**SUSTA**  
Quarter 4, 21

A Public-Private

A Public-Private Partnership Initiative to Champion Sustainability in Abu Dhabi



مركز أبوظبي للاستدامة  
Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group

# SUSTAINABILITY JOURNAL

"We are dedicated to finding alternative solutions that fuel the economy."

# CHAPTER 2

## COLLECTIVE CHANGE AND A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND OPEN DIALOGUE: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

The AD SG also encourages joint initiatives between member organisations through internal and external communications, such

as the quarterly AD SG eJournal circulated to members, partners and stakeholders.



### VANGUARD INITIATIVE EMIRATES FOUNDATION FOR PHILANTHROPY AND ABU DHABI WATER AND ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY LAUNCH A MODEL GRANT PROGRAM TOGETHER

The Emirates Foundation was founded in 2005 as a vehicle to fund individuals, organisations, and projects that “contribute to the nation’s long term progress and sustainability”. The Foundation awarded 59 grants under Society and Culture in 2009. The Emirates Foundation launched a model grant program in 2009 in cooperation with the Abu Dhabi Electricity and Water Authority (ADWEA), another AD SG member. The Special Needs grants were designed for applicants seeking funding to “improve education, training and facilities for individuals” with special needs. An Advisory committee reviewed and judged the merits of the 40 applicants

An early example of a successful partnership between two founding AD SG member organisations.

The AD SG eJournal was established in 2013 and features interviews with CEOs and leading experts on the topic of sustainability. 2023 represents the ten-year anniversary of the AD SG sustainability eJournal, which is curated to capture key insights and highlight important issues and initiatives within the Emirate and beyond. The

eJournal also provides a forum for AD SG members to drive dialogue and showcase their work to members and stakeholders. Each issue therefore features a mix of member and non-member updates, interviews and editorials, such as case studies.



# CHAPTER 2

## COLLECTIVE CHANGE AND A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND OPEN DIALOGUE: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

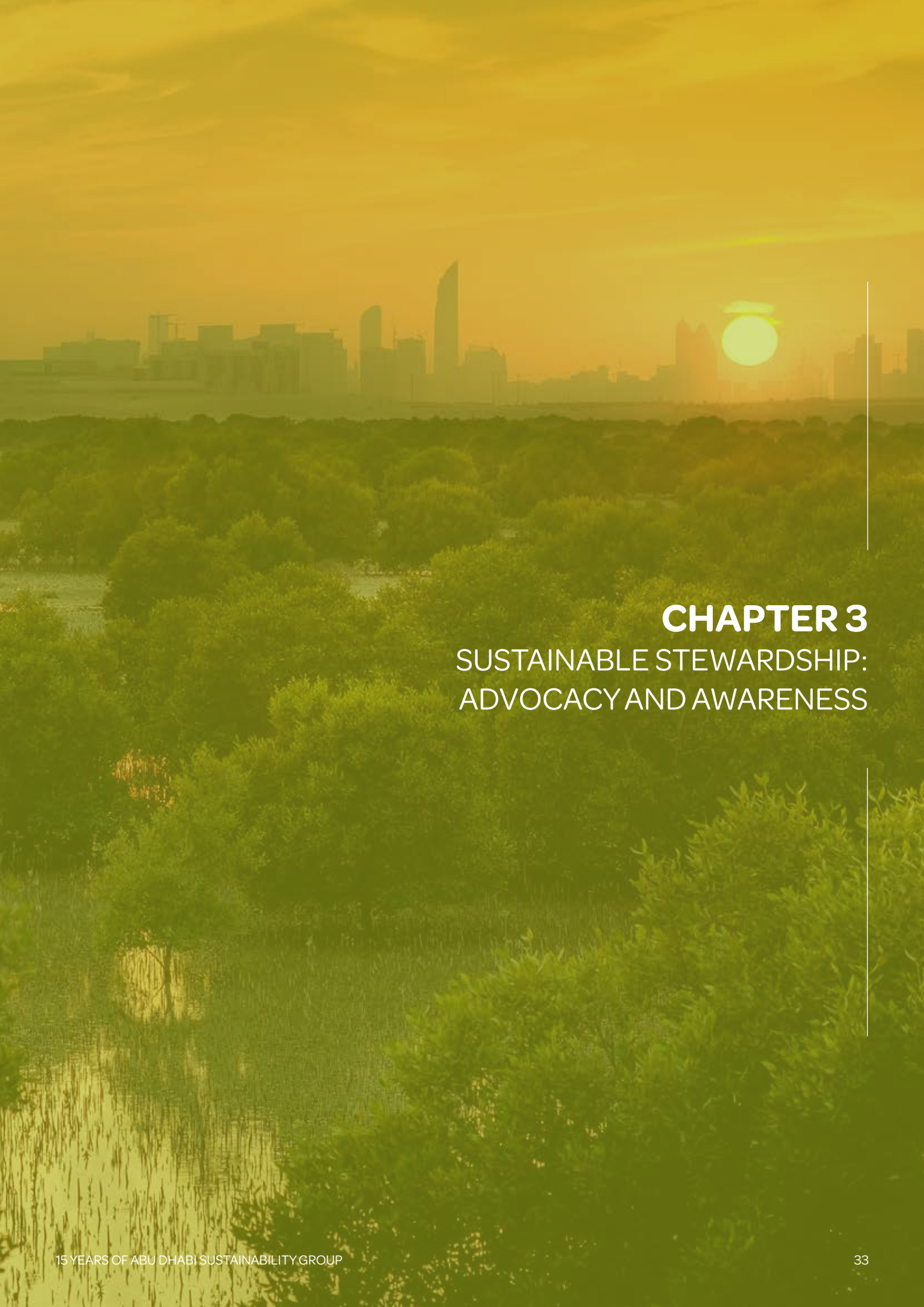
The resilience and innovation of the ADSG leadership have maintained a spirit of collaboration during some challenging times in the Group's history. For example, key ADSG events were migrated to an online format throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to allow members to connect safely during an unprecedented time of uncertainty and

disruption. Since 2020, the ADSG have held a number of webinars and online Hiwar sessions, most recently in collaboration Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW) and Masdar.









## **CHAPTER 3**

### SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP: ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS



## CHAPTER 3

# SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP: ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

Advocacy and awareness have always been priorities of the ADSG and defining components of the Group's remit, identity and activity to date. A glimpse of the ADSG's work in this arena over the past fifteen years shows how members' concerns have evolved and

matured in response to regional - and global - developments, and under the visionary leadership of the Government of Abu Dhabi and the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi (EAD).



*At Schneider Electric, we have an unwavering commitment to sustainability. Our association with ADSG over the years has inspired us not just to amplify our sustainability goals but also to share our journey with a global audience.*

*Moreover, our association with ADSG has propelled us to actively participate in and recognize global and regional sustainability efforts, such as the Gulf Sustainability Awards. Through these platforms, we've been able to not only benchmark our efforts but also collaborate, learn, and evolve. We're incredibly proud of the strides we've made in sustainability, and much credit goes to the inspiration and collaboration opportunities ADSG has provided us.*

**Schneider Electric, 2023**



The ADSG launched its first Capacity Building program in 2008. The program was then updated in 2012 to better capture the new members and non-members that need awareness raising information and cater to more 'mature' members. As a result, one of the first advocacy programmes of the ADSG was to embed non-financial reporting and disclosure in the reporting practices of its members by promotion of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G3 Sustainability Reporting Framework. In 2009, all fifteen founding

members published GRI compliant sustainability reports. By extension, in 2010 Abu Dhabi published ten sustainability reports by government entities, making it the territory with the highest number of GRI compliant reports released by the public sector worldwide. Since then, members have transitioned to and from GRI G4 Guidelines to GRI Standards.



*The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) certified training course that was conducted in November 2022 in partnership with EY allowed us a wonderful opportunity to learn more about this sustainability framework for reporting non-financial disclosures, especially in preparation of the 2022 ESG Report. As sustainability disclosures become increasingly important to shareholders, coupled with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) standardising sustainability reporting globally, we look forward to similar opportunities to further develop our knowledge and adopt best practices.*

**Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank (ADCB), 2023**





مجموعة الأعمال الخيرية للاستدامة  
ALL CHARITABLE SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

# س تأثير الأعمال في تحقيق مستقبلية مستدامة

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## CHAPTER 3

# SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP: ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

Today in 2023 the majority of ADSG members issue regular sustainability reports. Not only has the ADSG encouraged sustainability reporting amongst its membership, it has advocated for the use of universal standards, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) universal framework. What's more, the ADSG issues its own reports that conduct a strategic review and analysis of member sustainability reports. These have become known as the Sustainability

in Practice Reports (SIPR), the first of which was published in 2011 and represented the first report of its kind in the UAE and Middle East. The most recent SIPR was published in 2021 entitled

The ADSG recognises each member organisation who has issued a sustainability report during the given year at the annual Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Awards ceremony and gala dinner.



*ADCB recognises the value of external collaboration in order to advance the climate agenda, and contribute to the UAE's goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050. ADSG is one of our most highly valued external stakeholders and the first external group ADCB joined since the revamp of our Board-approved ESG strategy. One of the proudest moments for ADCB's sustainability journey was receiving the Certificate of Recognition for promoting sustainability management and best practices through issuing the 2021 Sustainability Report. Since this recognition, we have even further advanced our reporting within the 2022 ESG Report and currently hold one of the highest levels of transparency within the region and also industry leading ESG scores from two leading international investor ratings - MSCI and Sustainalytics.*

**Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank (ADCB), 2023**



The Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Awards is a recognition scheme designed to celebrate sustainability best practice and to raise awareness about the benefits of sustainable management practices for organisations. The Awards offer a unique opportunity for all member organisations, stakeholders and sustainability professionals to recognise sustainability achievements across the region.

The Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Awards are now comprised of six categories judged by a panel of independent experts looking for organisations and individuals who demonstrate integration of sustainability; a plan/ do/ review cycle; impact; innovation and thought leadership; recognition; and communication and engagement.



# CHAPTER 3

## SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP: ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS



*Our proudest achievement was establishing robust sustainability reporting reflecting our long-term vision and demonstrating our commitment to transparency and accountability. Since 2010, we have published our annual sustainability report outlining our environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices. Demonstrating our transparency and putting actions in place to ensure progress in our sustainability journey is a source of great pride for the company. We are equally proud to have been recognized by AD SG for the best sustainability report award during their annual Business Leadership Forums of 2015, 2017, 2020, and 2021.*

**Dolphin Energy, 2023**



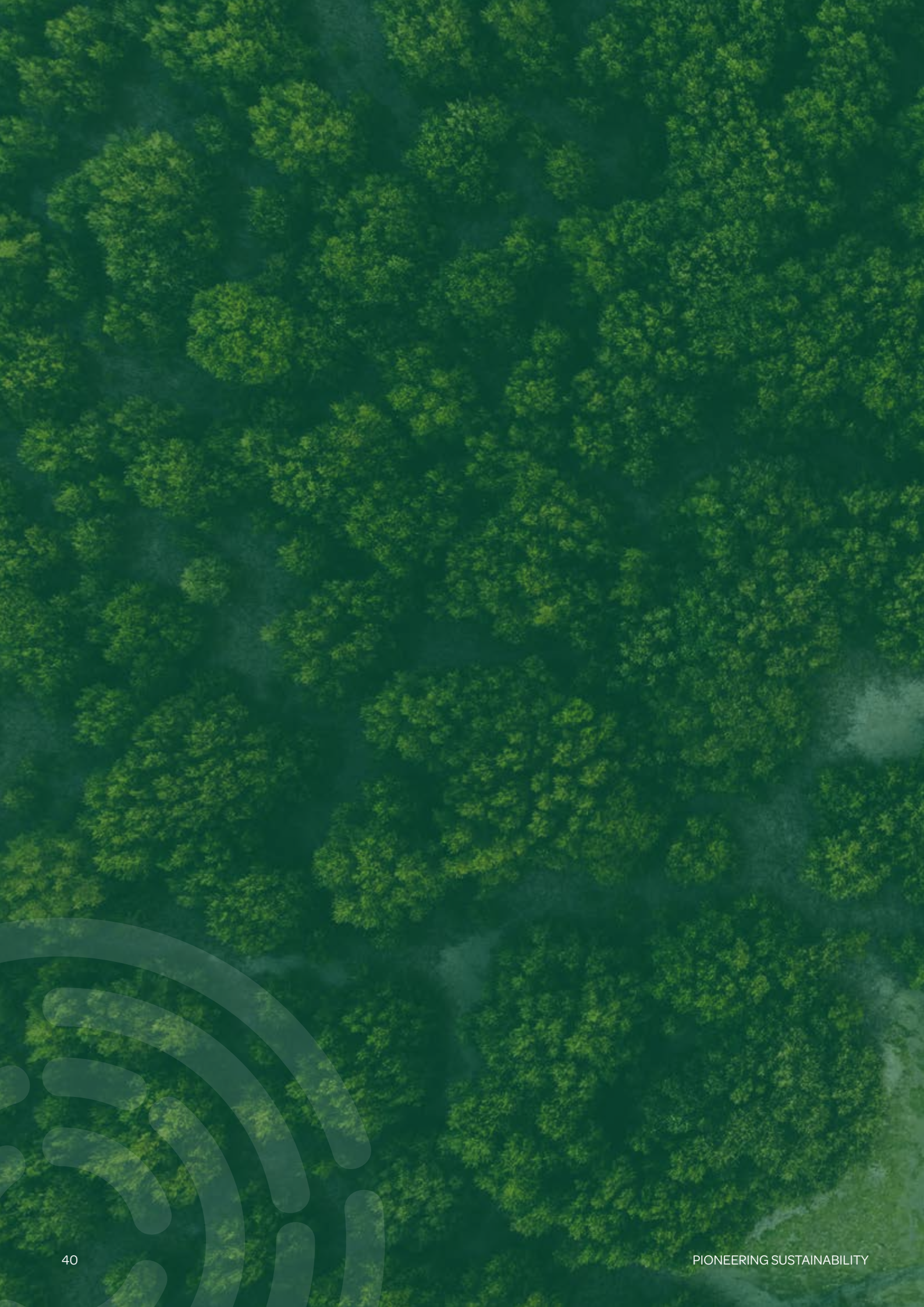
The annual Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Awards and the accompanying Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum are the flagship events of the AD SG calendar.

The Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum was launched in 2015 to deliver topical insights from sustainability thought leaders and experts to the AD SG membership, stakeholders and beyond. The AD SG have had the privilege of welcoming some of the Emirates' and the world's greatest thinkers to the Forum stage, including His Majesty King Charles III and Ellen MacArthur, to discuss sustainable business practices, innovation, and solutions to regional and international problems.

On the eve the 8th Forum and in celebration of this monumental anniversary, the AD SG is proud to look back on previous years' Forums as symbolic markers of the Groups' awareness and advocacy efforts to date.

- 2015:** Corporate responsibility and sustainability trends
- 2016:** Innovation for Sustainable Business Leadership
- 2017:** Managing and Measuring Your Impact to Secure a Profitable and Sustainable Future
- 2018:** Taking Nature in Account
- 2019:** Business Leadership in a Sustainable Economy
- 2020:** Delivering Business Growth and Contributing to Societal Growth
- 2021:** Transitioning to the Future Today
- 2023:** Nature-Positive Growth

The legacy of the Annual Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum is made possible by the ongoing participation of AD SG members as speakers, delegates and sponsors.







**CHAPTER 4**  
SPEARHEADING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS:  
ADSG MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS



شهادة شكر وتقدير  
CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

السيد  
سنجاي كوليري - بنك ابوظبي الوطني  
Sonjay Kollery - HEAD

# CHAPTER 4

## SPEARHEADING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS: ADSG MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

The ADSG encourages its members to share their sustainability challenges and solutions. As well as encouraging face to face dialogue, the ADSG utilises a quarterly sustainability eJournal, the annual Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Awards and a quaternal Sustainability in Practice Report (SIPR) to showcase

member's efforts, experiences and examples of best practice. All ADSG members are invited to contribute to the SIPR by sharing their organisations' sustainability reports. Over the years this report has served as an archive of sustainable best practice and innovation in the Emirate and beyond.



ADSG member organisations have made significant contributions to sustainable development in Abu Dhabi and collectively focused on a broad and comprehensive array of key sustainability issues, such as: renewable energy, supply chains, waste management, water conservation, green building practices and equitable recruitment

and retention and working practices. Thanks to members sharing their experiences, knowledge, innovations and best practices, it is possible to outline a history of economic, environmental, social and administrative sustainable developments in the Emirate.



*As a proud ADSG member, I stand humbly amid the green revolution that we've collectively nurtured over the past 15 years. Under the visionary guidance of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, we have sown the seeds of sustainability that have transformed the emirate of Abu Dhabi. Reflecting on our journey, we are profoundly proud of our collective achievements. As we look towards the future, we remain committed to expanding our green footprint, and together will act as the joint stewards of Abu Dhabi's sustainable future.*

**Dr Nashwa Al-Ruwaini, CEO of Pyramedia Group, 2023.**





# CHAPTER 4

## SPEARHEADING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS: ADSG MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

### Capturing a snapshot of the ADSG's early economic impact

*ADSG members are integral to the economic and social prosperity of Abu Dhabi. Together, ADSG members were responsible for over 25.2 billion UAE Dirhams in reported economic activity in 2009 or over 5 percent of Abu Dhabi's 2009 GDP, which is 547 billion AED.2 In addition, ADSG members employed approximately 46,000 people, of which over 14,000 are Emirati and approximately 4,300 are women. Most of the employees were based in Abu Dhabi.*

*Collectively, the ADSG members employed approximately 46,000 people in 2009. This is about 5 percent of the working population of Abu Dhabi in 2008. In 2008, the working population*

*was 919 thousand persons according to the Summary of the Economic Report of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi 2010 published by the Department of Economic Development. Two of the largest sectors that employ workers, oil and gas and construction are well represented in the ADSG membership. According to the Statistic Centre - Abu Dhabi's Statistical Yearbook 2010, oil and gas activity accounted for 60 percent of Abu Dhabi's GDP and the construction industry accounted for 10 percent of GDP in 2008. In addition, the construction sector was the largest employer, at 20 percent of the workforce.*

*Sustainability in Practice: The case for the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group, 2011*

### Climate Change Action at Dolphin Energy – Reducing Fugitive Methane Emissions

*One of the key sources of methane emissions in a natural gas plant are leaks from equipment and pipes known as fugitive emissions. Fugitive leaks are unintentional losses due to wear and tear on the facility and manufacturing defects or corrosion. Eliminating fugitive methane leaks from our facilities is one of the most effective short-term strategies we implemented two years ago to combat climate change.*

*To achieve this goal, we implemented a leak detection and repair (LDAR) program which relies on advanced monitoring and measuring technologies. Under the LDAR project, we measure potentially leaking sources in our upstream assets using a SMART LDAR approach, where 100% of the sources are monitored using an optical gas imaging (OGI) camera. Any leak identified by the camera is then measured, following US Environmental Protection Agency Method 21, using toxic vapor analyzers (TVAs).*

*Leaks measured during the first round of monitoring exceeding*

*10,000 parts per million are then raised to the maintenance team for repair. All sources and associated measurements are then captured using LDAR software for methane fugitive emission calculation and reporting. First leak repairs are performed, and the source is re-monitored. Repairs are often successful, resulting in significant methane fugitive emission reduction. If the repair was unsuccessful, the source is then registered for service during the next shutdown opportunity. By prioritizing these leak repairs, we aim to significantly reduce our methane emissions and meaningfully contribute to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.*

*Successful implementation of the LDAR program has enabled Dolphin Energy to reduce its product losses, sustain productivity, maintain plant equipment integrity, reduce the fire and toxic gas leak risks in the plant, minimize emissions of hazardous air pollutants to the atmosphere, and most of all reduce the carbon footprint of its operations.*

*Dolphin Energy, ADSG member as of 2008*

### Family Development Foundation (FDF): Innovating in Order to Deliver

*With the budget cuts faced in 2016, FDF did not have an allocated budget for training. In order to ensure that their employees still underwent training, the Human Resources Department developed a database on the employees having certificates in training. Based on their abilities, these employees were provided*

*with the opportunity to train FDF's staff internally and in turn to create role models within the enterprise. As a result of the 38 employees that have the ability to provide training, 247 of FDF's employees were trained during 2016.*

*Family Development Foundation (FDF), ADSG member as of 2011*



# CHAPTER 4

## SPEARHEADING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS: ADSG MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

### The National Bank of Abu Dhabi [NBAD] Gains Recognition for its Outstanding Corporate Governance and Transparency

*NBAD won its first major award for "high standards of corporate governance and transparency among regional firms" from the Middle East Investor Relations Society in 2009.*

*In June 2013, NBAD won the Hawkamah Institute for Corporate*

*Governance's regional Bank Corporate Governance Award. During the same year, the NBAD Group General Counsel and Head of Legal & Compliance Division was named the Corporate Governance Officer of the Year 2013 by ACC Achievement Awards.*

*The National Bank of Abu Dhabi [NBAD], ADSG member as of 2008*

### Pride in Progress – Successes at Schneider Electric

*At the heart of Schneider Electric's sustainability ethos is our comprehensive Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) program; we're currently at the midpoint of this transformative initiative, and we're proud of the significant strides we've made. By consistently measuring and transparently disclosing our progress, we are committing to our promise of achieving the program's 11 global and nearly 200 local targets.*

*Moreover, the advancements we've made concerning supply chain sustainability are beginning to materialize. We've witnessed significant improvements in sustainable packaging, materials utilization, and in curbing emissions from our top suppliers. Our focus is not just on the environment; we're equally committed to fostering a fair workplace.*

*We have several success stories to share. We have been chosen to supply a range of electrical solutions for the first waste-to-energy facility being built in the UAE at Sharjah. The 30-megawatt facility is being built by Masdar and Bee'ah through their joint venture, Emirates Waste to Energy Company.*

*Additionally, Schneider Electric has been instrumental to the Biogas to electricity plant at Warsan, a first of its kind project in Dubai, using biogas to produce green energy, and will be implemented in cooperation with Veolia.*

*Earlier this year, we marked significant strides in eMobility through setting up an electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at our regional headquarters located in Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO), an integrated free zone technology park and member of the Dubai Integrated Economic Zones Authority (DIEZ). This comes as part of our efforts to encourage the adoption of e-mobility solutions among electric vehicle users as well as its employees to adopt green mobility solutions.*

*Last year, we were recognized at the Gulf Sustainability Awards for the successful implementation of renewable energy across our Smart Regional Distribution Center.*

*Schneider Electric's Smart Regional Distribution Center in Jebel Ali is well on its way to becoming one of the country's most sustainable distribution hubs. This is due to the implementation of key 'Circular Economy' initiatives such as being designated as a 'Zero-plastic' site, electric-powered forklifts, and, most importantly, its advanced solar rooftop solution, which covers up to 90% of the site's energy needs. The center also includes a Customer Experience Zone where customers and partners can see live demonstrations of Schneider Electric's cutting-edge IoT-enabled EcoStruxure solutions.*

*Schneider Electric, 2023, ADSG Member as of 2021*

**ABU DHABI SUSTAINABLE  
BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARDS  
2023**

**BEST SUSTAINABILITY  
INITIATIVE**



مجموعة أبوظبي للاستدامة  
ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP



# CHAPTER 4

## SPEARHEADING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS: ADSG MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

Recognising the achievements of individuals and organisations – within and outside of the ADSG membership – is an important cornerstone of the Group's operations. Award-winning initiatives, innovations and inspiring individuals are celebrated and showcased annual at the Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Awards Gala Dinner Ceremony.

Even in 2020 and 2021 ADSG members remained dedicated to

internal sustainability targets and prioritised social capital and employee and stakeholder welfare during the COVID-19 pandemic. In what was a particularly challenging time for all across the globe, ADSG members demonstrated an unflagging commitment to sustainability and shared many innovative sustainability initiatives in their organisations' reports for the years 2020 and 2021, as highlighted in the ADSG Sustainability in 2022 Practice Report (SIPR).



### Enabling Emirati Talent

Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank (ADCB) Group appointment more than 700 UAE nationals in 2021 and 2022, underlining the importance of Emiratisation to the Group. Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank (ADCB) is a major force in the ongoing process of Emiratisation in the UAE banking sector – and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi as a whole – and is committed to the Abu Dhabi Government's economic vision and related Emiratisation strategy. Over the years ADCB have implemented a comprehensive career development framework for UAE

Nationals that hones personal growth and skill acquisition without compromising social values. Their diverse range of customised programmes include: Future Teach Leaders Programme, Emirati Academy, The Bankers Programme, Emirates Institute of Finance (EIF) Ethraa Programme, Front Desk Forge Programme, Tamooha Programme, The Sales Specialisation Programme, and UAEN Internships. The significant and ongoing impacts of these programmes are outlined in the 2023, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank PJSC case study Nurturing UAE Talent.

*Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank PJSC case study Nurturing UAE Talent.*





**CHAPTER 5**  
FINANCE FOR THE FUTURE:  
ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION



# CHAPTER 5

## FINANCE FOR THE FUTURE: ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION

The concepts of sustainable and green banking were in their infancy and largely unfamiliar to the wider business community when the AD SG was formed in 2008. Now, in 2023, Abu Dhabi and the UAE are home to a vibrant sustainable finance hub that is internationally praised for pioneering policing and innovative initiatives. In the preceding years the AD SG have made contributions to this culture change.

The AD SG is proud to count a number of banks and financial institutions amongst its numbers and recognises that economic sustainability is a fundamental consideration and asset for all organisations across all sectors.

### First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) – Sustainable Finance in Action

*For several years FAB has been making significant strides to become a regional pacesetter within sustainability for the banking sector. We recognise the challenges posed by climate change to the earth, society, and the economy. That's why the transition to a more sustainable economy and society is now fundamental to our growth platform where we seek to create purposeful outcomes that will deliver sustainable impact. These initiatives strongly connect to the objectives of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group (AD SG) where together we support the transition to a greener tomorrow.*

*FAB became the first bank in the GCC to join the Net Zero Banking Alliances (NZBA) in 2021, with a commitment to become net zero by 2050. FAB was also the first bank in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to join the partnership for carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF) in 2022. An initiative to set targets eyeing financed emissions reduction for the bank's three priority sectors: oil & gas (O&G), power generation and aviation which account for over 70% of FAB global GHG emissions. These initiatives align with the AD SG vision to make tangible progress through action.*

*Alongside this, by building on AD SG's capacity building and sustainability training programmes, in 2022, FAB delivered over 10,000 hours of mandatory ESG training to its employees with a focus on awareness, strategy, risk and sustainable finance. Last year's overall training provided by the bank amounted to more than 144,000 hours.*

*One of the biggest lessons FAB has had from its AD SG membership journey was to become an industry agnostic cooperation driver. The bank is pushing its sustainability agenda forward, while being a catalyst for positive and tangible change within the financial industry and beyond. As an illustration, FAB enabled the first sustainability-linked loan in global aviation tied to ESG targets, under a USD 1.2 billion deal with Etihad Airways.*

*In light with AD SG's spirit to foster economic sustainability and financial innovation, FAB aimed to reduce inequalities and tackle barriers to financial inclusion of underbanked segments. Through*

*the Ratibi prepaid payroll card program, one of the products under FAB's financial inclusion umbrella, the bank strives to serve low-wage employees without access to a bank account. Ratibi customers can enrol for Payit and get access to financial products such as remittances, domestic transfers, utility bill payments and Money on Demand.*

*As a recent and relevant case study, FAB financed Uzbekistan's first utility-scale wind farm and along with another bank closed Masdar's deal on the Zarafshan wind project. The USD 102 million green term loan facility supported the energy mix in Uzbekistan which mainly consists of thermal power generation and domestically produced natural gas and coal, while enabling the largest wind power plant in Central Asia. The project contributes to the development of the UAE's export credit insurance, aids exporters and re-exporters in obtaining finance to boost their business. It also supports the achievement of SDG's Goals 7 (affordable and clean energy), 13 (climate action), 17 (partnerships for the goals).*

*In 2021, the AD SG published Sustainability Engagement in the Gulf Region: Circle of Practice Case studies. The Circle of Practice was established in 2015 by AD SG in partnership with The Prince of Wales's Accounting for Sustainability Project (A4S). It brought together like-minded organisations and finance leaders committed to embedding sustainable business practices and improving transparency in corporate reporting.*

*As the six published case studies demonstrate, there was – and continues to be – real and tangible progress being made by individual businesses and partnerships to build environmental and social considerations into the strategy and business processes of AD SG member organisations. The participating organisations recognised in 2021 that finance is an enabler and grasped an opportunity, paving the way for other member organisations to follow suit.*

Members who participated in this pioneering project included: Etihad Airways, Masdar, Gulf International Bank, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), Emirate NBD and Majid Al Futtaim. However, all AD SG

members continue to contribute to a sustainable economy and the UAE's goals, with many harnessing support from the AD SG to do so.



# CHAPTER 5

## FINANCE FOR THE FUTURE: ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION



*ADSG has been instrumental in guiding Schneider Electric towards a more integrated approach to economic sustainability and financial innovation. Through the collaborative platforms provided by ADSG, we've been exposed to a wealth of best practices and innovative strategies that prioritize long-term economic viability alongside environmental and social responsibility.*

*One area where the ADSG's influence has been particularly evident is in our approach to green financing. The group's emphasis on sustainable investment and their outreach initiatives with global financial stakeholders have given us the insights to tap into green bonds and sustainable loans to finance our initiatives. This not only aligns with our sustainability commitments but also offers our investors and stakeholders more eco-centric financial instruments.*

*A specific example that stands out is our recent initiative to upgrade infrastructure in developing regions. By leveraging sustainable financing models, we've embarked on projects that not only ensure reliable and efficient energy solutions but also create local job opportunities and foster economic growth. Through these projects, we're demonstrating that financial innovation and sustainability aren't mutually exclusive; instead, they can be complementary forces driving both our corporate goals and broader global objectives.*

**Schneider Electric, 2023**



*ADSG has served as a catalyst for economic sustainability and financial innovation by providing resources and training, insights, and support to our organization, especially when we were beginning the process of integrating sustainability principles into our strategies and operations. ADSG also contributed to improving our brand image, reputation, and market differentiation by demonstrating we are a socially responsible and environmentally conscious organization.*

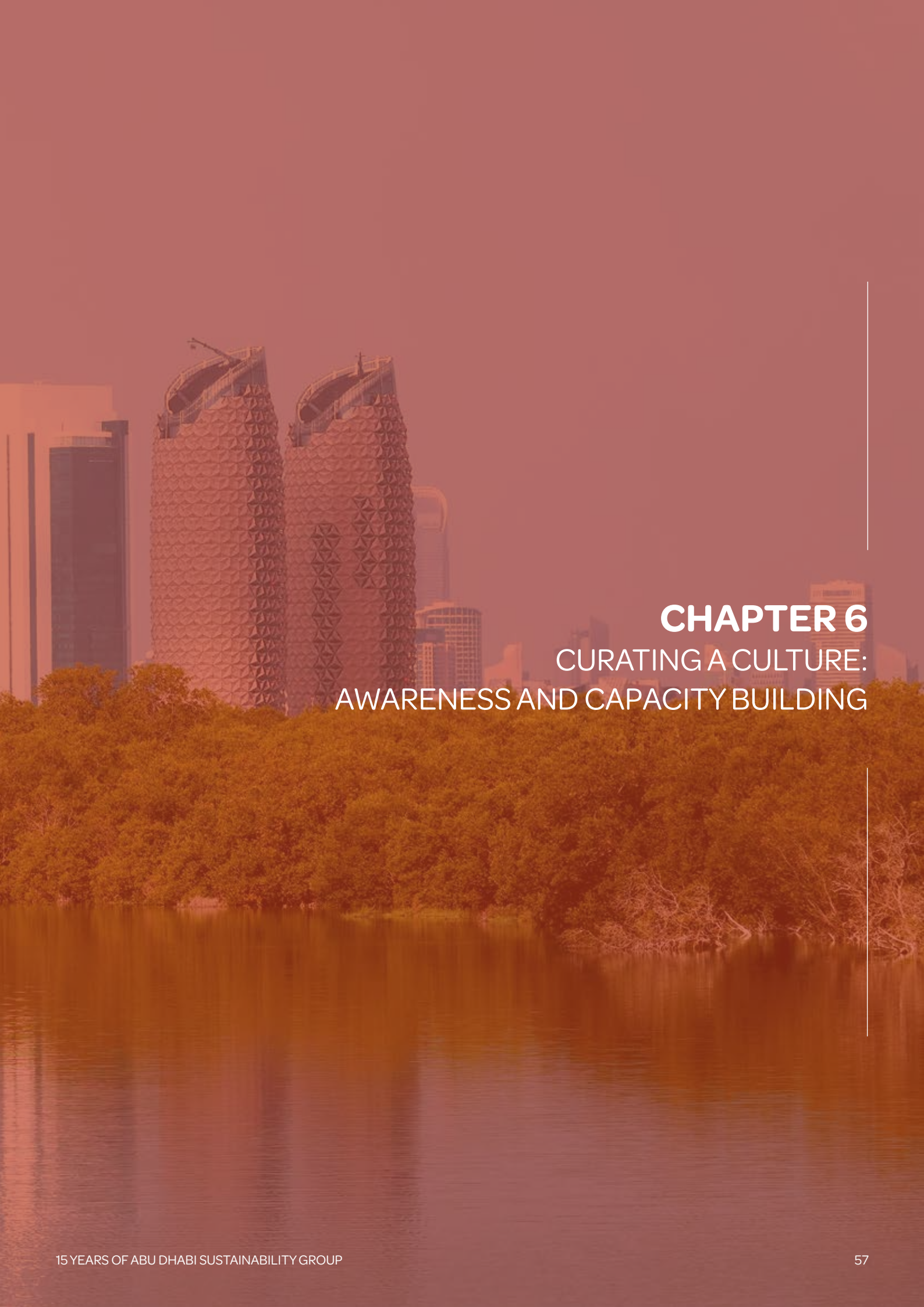
**Dolphin Energy, 2023**



The ADSG is committed to championing financial leadership and guidance that inspires people and organisations to act. The ADSG host an annual CFO Panel plenary session at the Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum and will continue to advocate for disclosure, sustainability reporting, transparency and sustainable business practices.







**CHAPTER 6**  
CURATING A CULTURE:  
AWARENESS AND CAPACITY BUILDING



# CHAPTER 6

## CURATING A CULTURE: AWARENESS AND CAPACITY BUILDING



Sustainability is a multi-faceted concept that means different things to different people, organisations, regions and cultures. While the word may be familiar now, 'sustainability' was not a common nor clearly defined concept in the region when the ADSG was launched. This is one of the reasons that the ADSG has prioritised and championed education and capacity building in order to foster a sustainable mindset within its membership and beyond. In particular, the ADSG's work in this area has accounting for the differing needs and maturity levels of its member organisations, as well as regional and international policy developments and guidelines, such as:

- Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 (launched 2007)
- UAE Vision 2021 (launched 2010)
- The Paris Climate Agreement (adopted 2015)
- United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (launched 2015)
- UAE Year of Sustainability (2023)

The ADSG launched its Capacity Building programme within its founding year to offer a comprehensive range of services to help members improve their sustainability management and reporting practices. These include a customised Guidance Handbook, an online Sustainable Maturity (SMAT) tool, training and sustainability management courses, themed workshops coaching and support. This program was spearheaded by the ADSG General Secretariat (GS), who become the ADSG Facilitation and Coordination Committee (FCC) in 2013.

The ADSG is particularly proud of its educational legacy to date, highlights of which include:

- GRI certification training and advocacy of non-financial reporting and international reporting standards

- The ADSG Energy Flagship Pilot Project
- The ADSG Natural Capital Flagship Programme
- ADSG Flagship programs, including topics such as Sustainable Procurement, Sustainable Labour Practices, Waste Management and Sustainable IT.
- Carbon Management Training
- Peer to Peer Workshops on topics such as Impact Valuation to Support Decision-Making, and Advancing the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Implementation in the UAE
- Annual Abu Dhabi Sustainability Business Leadership Forum
- Annual Abu Dhabi Sustainability Business Leadership Awards
- Series of topical 'Hiwars' and webinars
- ADSG Sustainability Maturity Assessment Tool (SMAT)

The ADSG Sustainability Maturity Assessment Tool (SMAT)<sup>10</sup> was developed by the ADSG for members in 2014 as part of a wider Capacity Building Program (including a Guidance Handbook, training courses and support services). Since then, the SMAT has been optimised and updated and is currently available publicly online free of charge. SMAT generates customised reports and provides users with an overall quantitative assessment of their organization's current sustainability maturity level across:

- Four Dimensions (Policies, Approaches, Performance Results, Perception Results)
- Seven Areas (Management, Owners, Employees, Suppliers, Customers, Community, Environment)

SMAT also provides users with a comparative maturity level versus a) all organizations which have conducted the assessment, and b) all ADSG member organizations.




  
 وزارة التخطيط والتنمية الاقتصادية  
 Ministry of Planning and Economic Development  
 المجلس الأعلى للتخطيط  
 Supreme Council of Planning  
 المجلس القومي للتخطيط  
 National Council of Planning  
 المجلس الوطني للتخطيط  
 National Council of Planning

## CHAPTER 6

### CURATING A CULTURE: AWARENESS AND CAPACITY BUILDING



*ADSG capacity building and training programmes have given Dolphin Energy focal points the skills and knowledge required to implement sustainability practices within the company. One of the most critical areas has been in the way we have developed important relationships with our stakeholders. By understanding the issues most important to them, we have been able to build, develop and evolve a materiality matrix that reflects their expectations and their needs. Engaging with stakeholders on sustainability matters has led to stronger partnerships and enhanced collaboration.*

**Dolphin Energy, 2023**



*Joining ADSG and participating in its capacity building and training programs has positively impacted Schneider Electric's sustainability agenda and activities. The training programs have been instrumental in aligning our corporate goals with global sustainability benchmarks. They have equipped our teams with the knowledge and skills to integrate sustainability more deeply into every facet of our operations. From R&D to production, marketing to supply chain management, the ADSG's emphasis on sustainable best practices has left an indelible mark on our approach.*

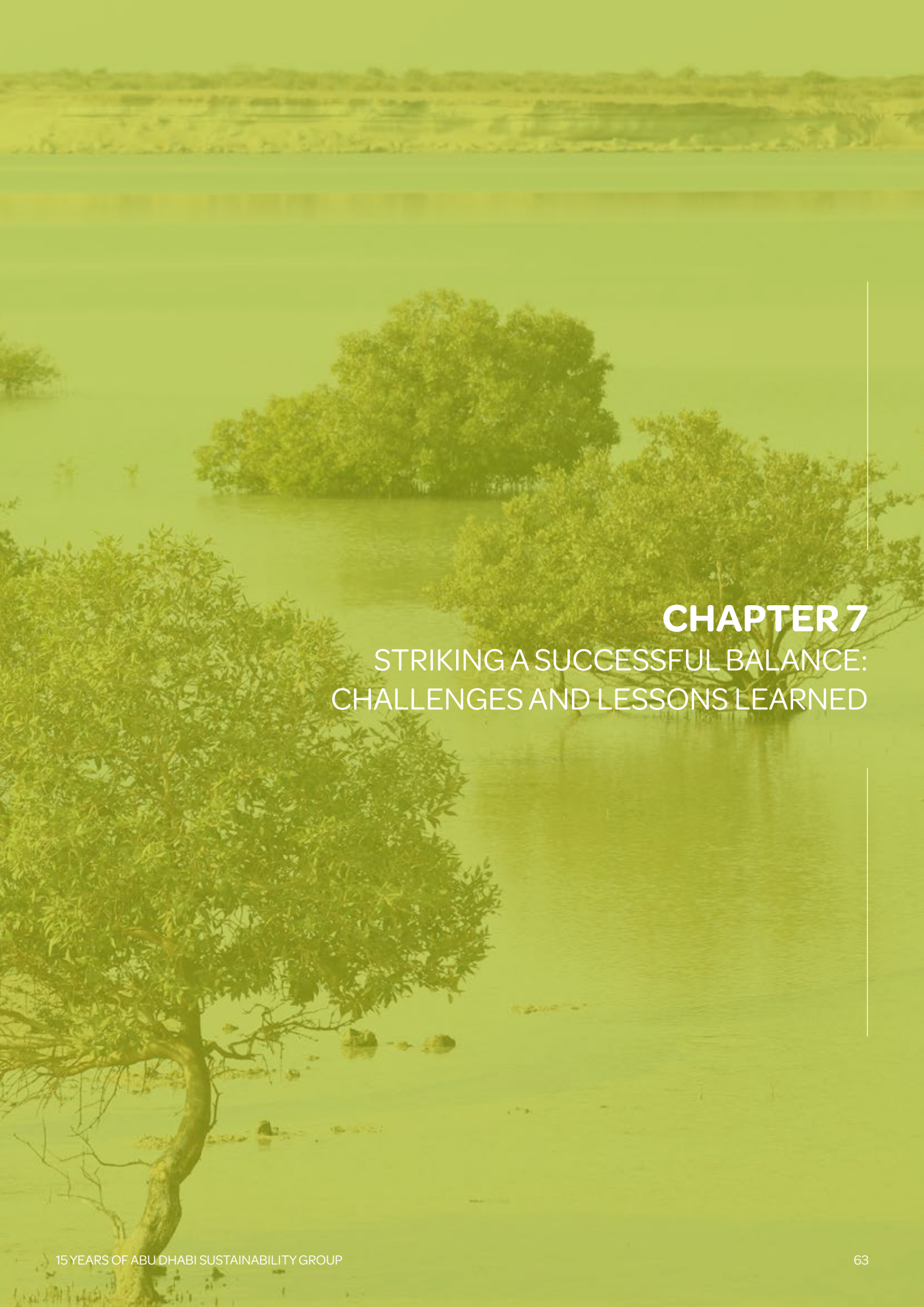
*Through the ADSG, we have been introduced to industry leaders and experts who have generously shared their experiences and lessons. This exchange of knowledge has enabled us to fast-track many of our sustainability projects. Not to mention, the collective spirit and shared vision among ADSG members serve as a constant reminder that we're part of a larger community all working towards a greener, more equitable future.*

**Schneider Electric, 2023**



Today, Huda Al Houqani, ADSG Director, and Mohammed Juma Saeed Al Dhaheri, Section Head – Membership Management & Business Development, lead on developing and delivering this stream of work.





## **CHAPTER 7**

### STRIKING A SUCCESSFUL BALANCE: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED





# CHAPTER 7

## STRIKING A SUCCESSFUL BALANCE: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED



*The Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group is an innovative attempt to mobilize and harness the key stakeholders from the public and private sectors to advance the sustainability agenda in the Emirate.*

*While it is sometimes difficult to reach consensus among such a diverse set of stakeholders, the consensus that is reached has a great deal more value than the sum of individual commitments and is likely to last over time. ADSG has understood that sustainability will not come about through government decree only, or through the good will and vision of CEOs only, but from creating a framework that allows both sectors to support one another and advance in the interest of the community as a whole.*

**Mark Halle, Executive Director of the International Institute for Sustainable Development-Europe (IISD-Europe), 2011**



Sustainability should inherently be seen as a means to solve shared problems and to mitigate the associated risk and damage to the planet and all life on Earth. The ADSG has faced many challenges in the past 15 years, but the Group has always been pioneering and ambitious. When the ADSG was launched in 2008, for example, Abu Dhabi did not have any multi-sectoral organisations and sustainability was deemed a far less imperative consideration for organisations than it is today.

ADSG members are a diverse and ever-growing group of organisations that span a wide range of enterprise types, industries and size. The variety within this group gives the ADSG credibility and collective

impact and also allows for the distillation and dissemination of key universal sustainability principles, lessons and concerns. However, the level of diversity can present a challenge to identifying common concerns and, by extension, delivering valuable services for a multi-sectoral group. Ultimately members do not and will not always share the same sustainability material issues nor maturity levels. It has therefore been difficult to facilitate and coordinate services in the past. This is why member engagement, through regular communications and surveys with members, as well as regular introspection, is so important to the ADSG management team and is utilised to update and develop Group strategies, the first of which was published in 2011.



*The greatest lesson learnt from our ADSG membership is the recognition that sustainability is a shared responsibility and a collective effort, and that real change requires collaboration, commitment, and a long-term perspective. Considering that sustainability is a dynamic field with evolving challenges and solutions, being part of ADSG underscores the importance of continuous learning about the global trends, latest developments, issues, and solutions.*

**Dolphin Energy, 2023**



Abu Dhabi Sustainable  
Business Leadership  
Forum 2017



ملتقى أبوظبي لريادة  
الأعمال المستدامة 2017



Show one thing you've learned

One thing I will change as a result of the Forum



# CHAPTER 7

## STRIKING A SUCCESSFUL BALANCE: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED



*We have amassed a transformative power of collaboration in the pursuit of sustainability and in collaboration with associations such as the ADSG. Sustainability does not take place in silos. It's a collaborative effort, driven by the commitment of various stakeholders, from government agencies to energy leaders such as Schneider Electric.*

*Being a part of ADSG has taught us that by joining hands and pooling our expertise, resources, and passion, we can achieve far greater milestones in our sustainability journey than if we tread on this journey individually. This spirit of collective drive and shared knowledge has been a guiding beacon for Schneider Electric, influencing how we approach sustainability not just in Abu Dhabi, but globally.*

**Schneider Electric, 2023**



Consistent consultation with members and an emphasis on good governance has maintained the Group's viability over the past fifteen years and allowed the ADSG to grow in number and strength. Such strength will be needed to tackle the manifestations of global climate crises, population growth and resource insecurity but the ADSG has built a strong foundation and culture that promises to

foster sustainability development in Abu Dhabi for many more years to come. For this, we would like to extend thanks and appreciation to every ADSG member organisation. Their efforts continue to demonstrate determination and resilience and to deliver and inspire meaningful impact towards a sustainable future for all.



# Abu Dhabi Sustainable Business Leadership Forum 2017



## Managing and Measuring Your Impact to Secure a Profitable and Sustainable Future



ADSG  
Sustainable  
Business  
Leadership  
Forum  
2017



## CHAPTER 7

# STRIKING A SUCCESSFUL BALANCE: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED



*Although we cannot say that all ADSG members are approaching sustainability with the same intensity - we can say that every ADSG member that reported in 2009 can demonstrate tangible projects, data and organizational changes that reflect their pursuit of becoming sustainable organizations.*

**Sustainability in Practice  
-The Case for the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group, 2011**



*Today, the ADSG is not dominated by planners and speech makers but thoughtful engineers and architects of Abu Dhabi's sustainable future. The leadership message that ADSG was created by the Executive Council to spread has been delivered and taken up on a large scale. The high level course is clear; the Visions are published and pinned to the walls. The ADSG Members and others like them are expected to breathe life into the new sustainable Abu Dhabi, now. It is a daunting, hands-on task. Many hands and heads will be needed.*

**Sustainability in Practice  
- From Vision to Action, 2014**



*It is now acknowledged that sustainability is an international imperative and that it is the responsibility of all nations to legislate, incentivise and sanction policies, programmes and research that mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and halt further change; protect and foster biodiversity; and assure economic opportunity and stability for future generations. The COVID-19 pandemic has only emphasised this reality, but it has also distracted efforts and attentions during 2020 and 2021; while 2020 was supposed to be the 'super year' for experts and leaders to chart a course for slowing climate breakdown and protecting biodiversity, this was inevitably postponed to 2021 with mixed results. With the critical issues now cemented as international concerns, every country is in the spotlight and under increasing scrutiny and pressure. This is especially the case for large high-emitting countries, as well as for oil producing countries and the GCC region in general.*

**The Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group  
- Sustainability in Practice Report, 2022**







## **CHAPTER 8**

### **FORGING A PATH FORWARD: FUTURE VISION AND IMPACT**





## CHAPTER 8

# FORGING A PATH FORWARD: FUTURE VISION AND IMPACT



*The Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group's members have played an important role in integrating sustainability governance to achieve impact in the emirate the UAE and our region.*

*Together, we have achieved many milestones over the past 15 years, and I am confident that our collective efforts will continue to shape a more sustainable future for Abu Dhabi. We will continue with our journey and redouble our efforts to deal with a range of sustainability challenges in a way that is aligned with EAD's mandate to protect biodiversity and Abu Dhabi's environmental sustainability.*

**H.E. Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri,**

Secretary General of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD),  
August 2023



In celebrating the 15-year anniversary of the ADSG, it is necessary to reflect on a decade and a half of remarkable progress but also looking forward with renewed determination and hope. This milestone is a testament to the unwavering commitment of individuals, organisations, and the entire Abu Dhabi community towards building a sustainable future.

Over these years, the ADSG has evolved from a visionary concept into a thriving hub of sustainability, catalysing change across sectors and inspiring a mindset shift towards responsible practices. The journey has been one of collaboration, innovation, and resilience, where challenges were met with solutions, and doubts transformed into determination. The stories within this book bear witness to the transformative power of collective action.

The ADSG recognises the accomplishments that have shaped the sustainability landscape of Abu Dhabi and the UAE. From pioneering renewable energy projects to fostering water conservation and equal opportunity employment initiatives, the ADSG's impact is woven into the fabric of the city's development. The diverse voices showcased here illustrate how sustainability is not just an abstract notion, but a guiding principle that informs policies, businesses, and daily lives.

Looking to the future, the 15-year mark is not an endpoint, but a stepping stone. The urgency of global environmental issues demands that we accelerate our efforts and deepen our commitment. The lessons learned from the ADSG's journey will serve as the foundation for even greater strides.



مجموعة أبوظبي للاستدامة  
ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

# منتدى أبوظبي لريادة الأعمال المستدامة 2023

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## CHAPTER 8

# FORGING A PATH FORWARD: FUTURE VISION AND IMPACT



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ABU DHABI SUSTAINABILITY GROUP



### A New Look for Another Decade – and Beyond

*As the ADSG commemorates its 15th-anniversary milestone, the time has come to unveil a symbol that will reflect the Group's journey and commitment to sustainability, and encapsulate their purpose, achievements and aspirations for the years to come.*

*The new logo is inspired by the natural wonders of Abu Dhabi, from the lush greenery of its oases and mangroves to the stunning coral reefs lining its coast. These elements are featured at core of the new logo, which represents the harmony and balance between nature and human development.*

*The circular shape was chosen to signify continuity, a reminder of the everlasting commitment to sustainability. It symbolises the interconnectedness of all living beings, and the importance of maintaining a delicate balance for a prosperous future.*

*Within the circular structure, is a maze-like pattern, representing the journey towards sustainability. It was – and is – a path filled with twists and turns, challenges, and discoveries. The maze stands for the collective efforts of the ADSG members, navigating through complex issues, finding innovative solutions, and overcoming obstacles together.*

*The members of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group know that this new logo is more than just a symbol; it is a testament to their passion, resilience, and unity in shaping a brighter and more sustainable future for the UAE and the world, as we embark on the next chapter of our journey, knowing that together, we can overcome any maze and build a truly sustainable legacy for future generations.*

*“Over the past 15 years, the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group has stood as a testament to the power of collaboration and commitment. Our journey, embraced voluntarily by visionary corporations across Abu Dhabi, has not only yielded remarkable achievements but also embodies the spirit of shared responsibility.*

*As we reflect on our history, we see a mosaic of accomplishments - a collective effort that has transformed industries, mindsets, and landscapes. In addition to the members of the group, our partnerships with esteemed entities like CDP, The Capitals Coalition, A4S, The Energy Institute, and Emirates Nature-WWF have amplified our reach, allowing us to innovate and drive change at a pace we could not have achieved alone.*

*Yet, the chapters we've penned so far not only mark where we have come from, but also indicate where our journey continues. As we move forward, we aim to not only sustain, but to thrive by building sustainable communities, economies and critically, nature.*

*The ADSG and its members are collectively building a legacy that will resonate into the future, far beyond our years.*

**Huda Al Houqani, Director, Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group, 2023**





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group (ADSG) would like to express their ongoing gratitude to the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD); the ADSG Membership; and to each and every individual, organisation, stakeholder and partner who have been a part of the ADSG journey to date.

If your organisation is not yet an ADSG member, please visit our website <https://www.adsg.ae/> for more information on how you can become a member. By joining the ADSG, organisations gain an experienced sustainability partner ready to help. They also become part of a network of organisations that share a common vision about the importance of sustainability to achieve balanced development, as well as to improve organisational and national competitiveness.



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