

Sustainability Week 2024

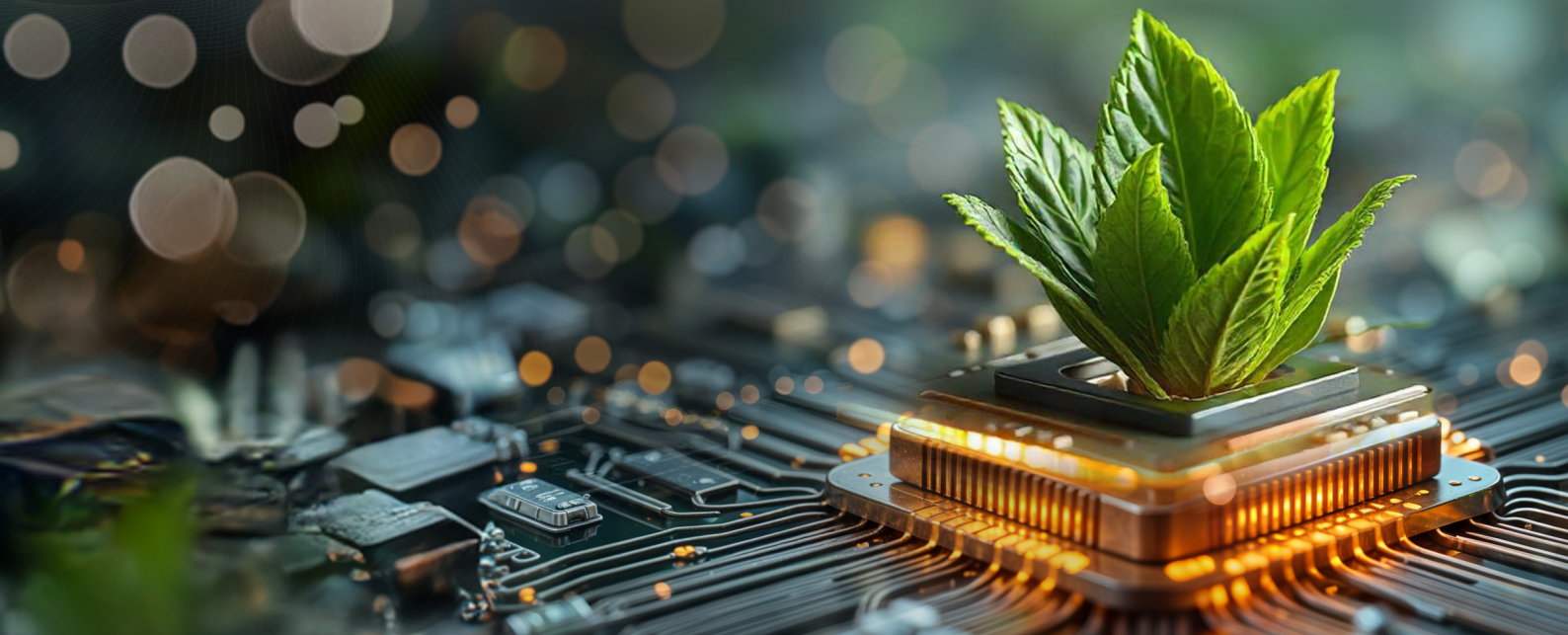


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Executive Summary:

In **October 2024**, the Dubai Chamber of Commerce Centre for Responsible Business hosted its annual Sustainability Week from **October 7th to 11th**. The theme for this year was **"Sustainability: Powered by AI and Digitalization,"** focusing on the role of digital innovation in advancing sustainability practices.

The week's main event, **"Sustainable Solutions Seminar: The Power of AI and Digital Innovation,"** featured a comprehensive agenda. Maha AlGargawi delivered the welcome speech, followed by a keynote address from H.E. Ahmed Bin Byat. The seminar included informative sessions by speakers from various organizations, including Dubai Future Foundation, Deloitte, Mohamed bin Rashid School of Government, and eGreenBadge. During this event, the first ESG Label Award ceremony took place, recognizing 27 companies for their outstanding contributions to ESG practices.

As part of Sustainability Week 2024, the Centre for Responsible Business also hosted the 12th Arabia Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability Forum in partnership with Emirates Environmental Group. Titled **"Sustainable Prosperity: Reorienting for a Balanced Future,"** the forum was attended by H.E. Engr. Sheikh Salem bin Sultan bin Saqr Al Qasimi. The event featured keynote addresses, plenary sessions, and interactive Fireside Chat discussions, providing insights into climate adaptation, environmental resilience, and best practices from the Global South. Participants explored strategic approaches for sustainable investments, circular economy innovations, and transitions in water and energy management. The forum emphasized the importance of transforming internal business processes to drive sustainability from within.

Additionally, SIMinstitute, known for gamification in education, hosted a roundtable and simulation session titled **"Fashion Forward."** Participants simulated managing the production and business of a retail company, aiming to maintain circularity without sacrificing profit.

Dubai SME had a brief segment during the roundtable to showcase their services:

- Private Partnership Relations (PPR) where Dubai SME Supports UAE national SME's by providing them access to private partners.
- Government Procurement Program (GPP) which supports UAE national SMEs' by providing them market access to the government, semi – government and federal entities.
- Entrepreneurship Commercial Promotion (ECP) that promotes UAE nationals via different channels, and participation in most prominent exhibitions and events.

Sustainability Week 2024 concluded with the participation of **526 representatives** from the business community, highlighting the growing interest in sustainable business practices and digital innovation in the region.

Impact Overview:

Sustainable
solutions
seminar:

Attendees: 138

Roundtable
discussion:

Attendees: 43

Online
trainings:



THE GREEN SPOON
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCIES

105



eGreen
Badge

42

[1] SEE
INSTITUTE

100



SPJ
GLOBAL
S P Jain
School of Global
Management

40

LRQA

151

Sustainable Solutions Seminar: The Power of AI and Digital Innovation

➤ Main Speakers



Faisal Kazim
Director,
Future Foresight, Dubai Future
Foundation



Sonia Ben Jaafar
CEO,
Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation



Farah Al-Khateb
Founder,
eGreenBadge

MAIN CASE STUDIES PRESENTED

Moro Hub: Dubai's solar-powered data center, enabled by the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park.

The Waste Lab: A Dubai-based startup focused on composting food waste, addressing environmental challenges.

Google DeepMind: Optimization of data centers using AI to reduce cooling energy by 40%.

44.01: An Omani climate tech company using carbon mineralization to permanently store CO₂, recipient of the Earthshot Prize.

Dubai Financial Market (DFM) Pilot: A voluntary carbon credit trading program supporting the UAE's net-zero by 2050 goals.

Tech-Driven Social Programs: The AI Ghurair Foundation incorporates technology in its educational and upskilling programs, enabling efficient data analysis and tracking of program outcomes.

Enhanced Operations through Digital Innovation: Digital solutions are applied to improve operational processes and strengthen partnerships, making social programs more scalable and impactful.

Human-Centered Tech Approach: The foundation combines technological advancements with human insights to create compassionate, customized solutions that address specific community needs and foster sustainable development.

Real-Time Data and Insights: The eGreenBadge dashboard provides real-time tracking of consumer recycling behaviour and package lifecycle data, supporting sustainability efforts in e-commerce.

Supply Chain Integration: eGreenBadge connects all e-commerce stakeholders—from service providers to recycling partners—to encourage a seamless and sustainable shopping journey.

Consumer Education and Engagement: The platform incentivizes sustainable actions by educating consumers on recycling and rewarding responsible behaviour, which aligns with the UAE's green agenda for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The fireside chat highlighted



Moderator:
Omar Khan
Head of Centre for Business
Studies and Research, Dubai
Chambers



Melodena Stephens
Professor,
Mohammed Bin Rashid School
of Government



Narendra Tiwari
Senior Manager of Risk Advisory,
Deloitte

- 1 Ethical and Environmental Concerns:** Professor Melodena pointed to risks such as bias, privacy issues, and increased carbon footprints from data-heavy AI applications, stressing the need for ethical governance in AI deployments.
- 2 Success in Green Financing:** Mr. Narendra shared examples where AI enabled better ESG-focused lending, underscoring that robust data and clear regulations are essential for success.
- 3 Global Lessons on AI Limitations:** Failures in other countries demonstrate the importance of regulatory clarity and stakeholder engagement to avoid pitfalls in AI's sustainability impact.
- 4 ESG Compliance with AI:** While AI can streamline ESG reporting, standardizing metrics and maintaining data quality remain challenging, requiring careful oversight.
- 5 Dubai's Unique Position:** Both panellists saw Dubai as well-positioned to lead in sustainable AI adoption but noted challenges like the need for local talent and regulatory adaptation.

➤ **The chat concluded by encouraging businesses to balance innovation with ethical considerations, paving the way for sustainable and responsible AI use.**



ESG Label:

During the first event of the Sustainability Week Dubai Chamber of Commerce awarded the Dubai Chamber of Commerce ESG Label to 27 companies that are leading the way in the adoption of sustainable business practices.

The Dubai Chamber of Commerce ESG Label is a significant recognition that highlights the dedication of awarded companies to ESG standards, underscoring their role in promoting sustainable business practices in Dubai. The label not only acknowledges their achievements but also acts as a framework for continuous improvement, aligning them with global and regional ESG benchmarks. By evaluating their ESG maturity, the awarded companies are empowered to integrate responsible practices that foster positive social and environmental impacts, enhancing their competitiveness and supporting Dubai's sustainability goals.

Following the award, these companies are encouraged to strengthen their ESG initiatives, with many likely to adopt advanced technologies as highlighted during the chamber's recent Sustainability Week. The Centre for Responsible Business at Dubai Chamber supports these efforts, providing platforms, resources, and expertise to help embed sustainability and governance in their business operations. This recognition thus serves as both an acknowledgment of their commitment and a catalyst for ongoing responsible business growth, benefiting the wider community and setting a benchmark for sustainable development in the region.



The key insights from the fireside chat are as follows:

Sustainability is becoming essential across industries as customers increasingly seek credible, sustainable local products. Initiatives such as Dubai SME offer opportunities for large companies to partner with local businesses to promote sustainable development.

Circularity can contribute significantly to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, thus playing a sufficient role to reach Net Zero targets.

To track and realize circularity, companies need to measure and report their progress, despite the complexity involved. The successful implementation of circularity depends on a collaborative effort among companies, customers, suppliers, and regulators.



Online Training Platform:

training providers



Application of Skills:

Core understanding of sustainability concepts, including UN SDGs, ESG, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Relevance: Essential for professionals seeking foundational knowledge in sustainability for strategic business applications.

Sustainable supply chain management, ESG policy development, and supplier screening using Environmental and Social Risk Management (ESRM) systems

Relevance: Critical for supply chain managers aiming to align operational practices with sustainability standards.

Overview of ESG challenges and digital tools for closing ESG gaps

Relevance: Foundational for beginners in ESG, applicable across business roles focused on sustainable growth.

Principles of transitioning to a circular economy, including resource reuse and recycling

Relevance: Suitable for businesses shifting from traditional to circular resource models.

Key Takeaways & Recommendations:

- 1** | **Appreciation of AI-Driven Sustainability**
Participants highly appreciated the integration of AI in sustainability efforts. Common sentiments included:
 - Innovative Solutions:** AI technologies can enhance efficiency and reduce waste across various sectors.
 - Enhanced Decision-Making:** AI tools contribute to making more informed sustainability practices decisions.
 - 2** | **Requests for Specific Future Content**
Suggestions were provided for future content, emphasizing:
 - Case Studies:** Real-world examples of successful AI applications in sustainability.
 - Practical Guides:** Participants seek actionable resources, such as step-by-step guides on implementing AI in sustainability.
 - Workshops and Webinars:** Requests for interactive sessions on specific AI tools and their applications in sustainable practices.
 - 3** | **Interest in Collaboration Opportunities**
Feedback also revealed a desire for collaborative initiatives:
 - Networking Events:** High interest in events that connect professionals working in AI and sustainability.
 - Partnerships:** Calls for partnership on AI-driven environmental projects.
 - 4** | **Concerns about Accessibility and Equity**
Concerns raised regarding:
 - Equitable Access:** Ensure AI access for smaller organizations and underrepresented communities.
 - Training and Resources:** More educational resources are needed to help diverse groups effectively understand and use AI.
- The feedback highlights strong support of AI in sustainability, and calls for practical content, collaboration, and accessibility. These insights can shape future initiatives to better meet participants' needs and promote inclusivity in AI-driven sustainability.

Ongoing Projects/Initiatives:

• ESG Label

- A framework designed to assess organizations' ESG readiness, gain recognition and foster growth
- Developed by Dubai Chamber of Commerce
- Aligned with global best practices

• Circular Economy Incubator (CEI)

- Focuses on empowering companies to develop sustainable ideas for government policy review.

• Dubai Reef

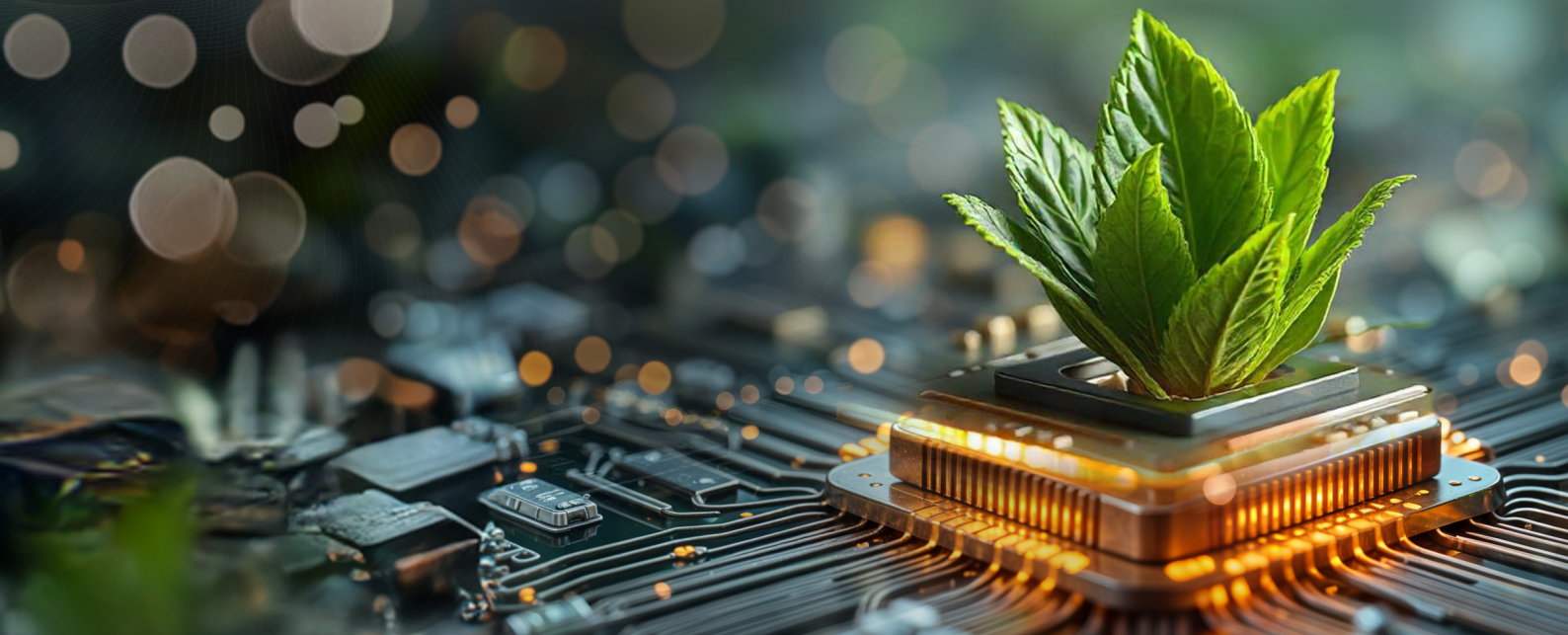
- World's largest marine reef development project
- Supports Dubai's eco-tourism and socio-economic prosperity
- Dubai Chambers is one of the strategic partners of the project

• Sustainability Knowledge Series

- A platform connecting thought leaders, experts, policymakers, and stakeholders
- Support the business community in addressing sustainability challenges and fostering investments in the UAE's sustainability sector.
- CRB organizes various Sustainability Knowledge Series events throughout the year



Sustainability Week 2024



Roundtable and Simulation - Leveraging Digital Innovation to Enhance Circular Economy Practices:

Dubai Chambers conducted a Roundtable and Simulation as part of their annual Sustainability Week. The event was attended by **over 40 participants** from different companies.

At the session Mr. Rafat Radwan Wahbeh, Director - Enterprise Development Department, DET, presented the private sector partnership initiative by Dubai SME that aims to enhance market access for UAE national SMEs through various channels under the Enterprise Development Department. It involves supporting SMEs by providing them access to government, semi-government, and federal markets through the Government Procurement Program (GPP), which facilitated contracts worth 1.2 billion AED in 2023. Additionally, the Private Partnership Relations (PPR) program that connects SMEs with private partners to expand business opportunities through signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs). Successful case studies were also shared with the audience.

In addition, Dr. Tim Rogmans, Managing Director of Sim Institute, led a circular economy simulation session, using the fast fashion industry as an example, while the Dubai Chambers Centre for Responsible Business introduced its Circular Economy Incubator initiative to collect ideas from the business community that may influence Dubai Government policies on the circular economy.

Participants were also encouraged to use the Circular Economy Incubator platform to submit their ideas and proposals, which may positively impact sustainability-related policies and regulations at the government level. The platform may also be used for material exchange to promote circularity and resource efficiency.

