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للتجارة COMMERCE



Second Edition

# Green Circle

Enabling the Sustainability Ecosystem for  
Responsible Business

White Paper



# Disclaimer

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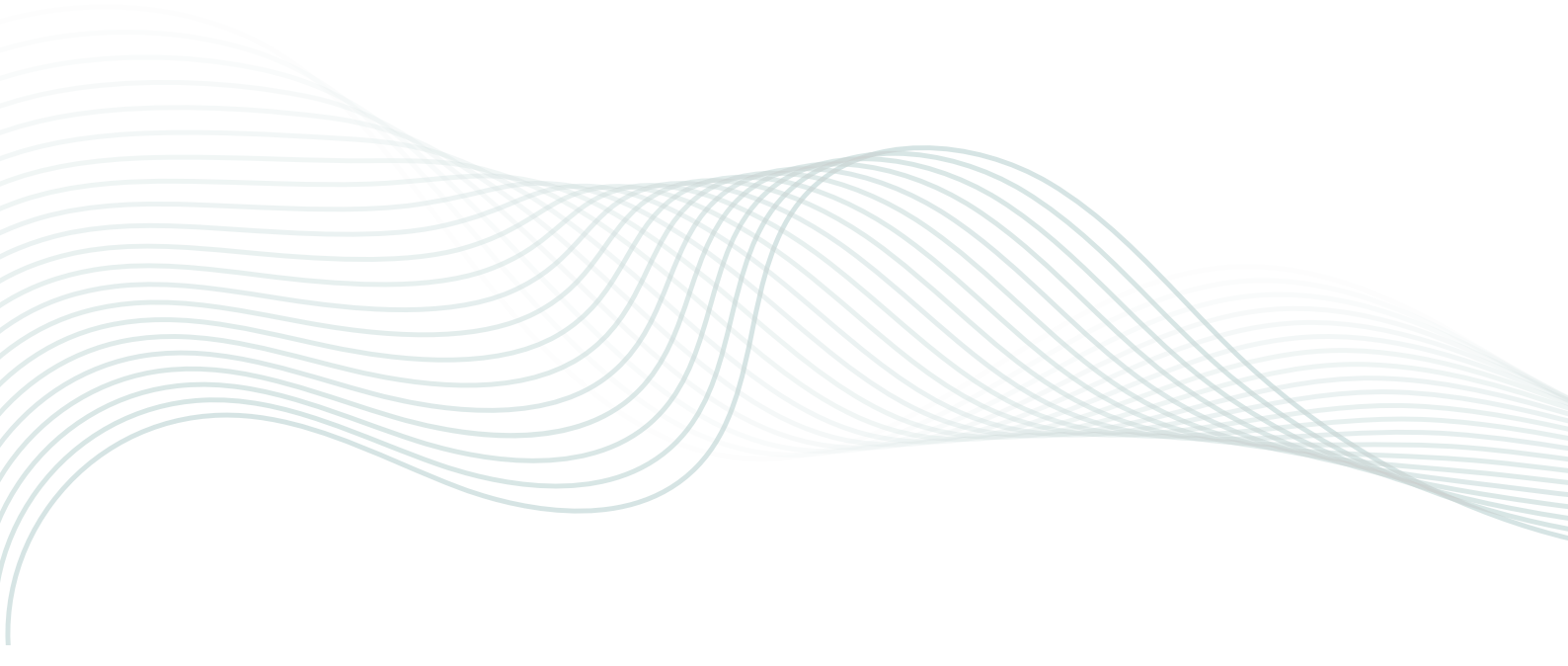
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# About **WGEO**

The World Green Economy Organization (WGEO) was launched during the 2016 World Green Economy Summit under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai. WGEO operates as a global platform to accelerate the transition towards a green economy by forging partnerships between the public and private sectors, international organisations, and civil society.

The work of the organisation spans policy innovation, capacity building, and cross-sector collaboration to promote the widespread adoption of green economy principles and practices. The strategic areas of focus can be summarized as follows:



### **Policy Advisory**

Supporting governments and institutions in shaping policies that enable climate-resilient, low-emission development pathways.



### **Green Finance**

Facilitating access to finance and investment opportunities that align with ESG principles and sustainable outcomes.



### **Capacity Building**

Delivering training programmes and leadership platforms to upskill individuals and institutions across the green economy value chain.



### **Innovation & Partnerships**

Accelerating the deployment of cutting-edge green technologies through cross-sector collaboration and public-private initiatives.

By fostering practical cooperation between institutions and governments, WGEO aims to unlock opportunities for green growth while addressing the complexities of challenges faced by the global community. Over the years, WGEO has collaborated with leading multilateral organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), along with other government entities, development banks, and corporate partners. These efforts are accelerated through initiatives such as the Global Green Innovation Initiative (GGII) and the Global Alliance on Green Economy (GAGE) with a focus on scaling innovative technologies and building capacity for green investments. These combined efforts are grounded in the fundamental belief that the green economy is not simply a dream, but a reality driven by a transformative mindset.



*The Green Circles reflect WGEO's commitment to accelerating the global green transition through unified, inclusive action. By convening governments, businesses, and communities, we catalyze policy innovation, mobilize strategic investments, and enable measurable climate solutions. Together, we are shaping a sustainable future grounded in equity, resilience, and shared prosperity.*



### **AbdulRahim Sultan**

Director General,  
World Green Economy  
Organization

# About Green Circle

The Green Circle conceptualized by WGEO is a premier high-level event strategically designed to convene influential leaders across private sector, government, academia, and civil society to accelerate progress towards a green economy. Beyond the conventional, the Green Circle is a **catalytic platform** for unlocking bold ideas, aligning on shared sustainability priorities, and co-creating actionable pathways towards a responsible and inclusive future.

At its core, the Green Circle breaks down formalities and hierarchies to enable candid, forward-looking exchange. Held without speeches or panel structures, each session is curated to give participants an **equal voice**, a deliberate shift from transactional forums to **transformational dialogue**.

With a focus on practical outcomes, each Green Circle culminates in the development of a **strategic White Paper**, consolidating key takeaways, sector insights, and policy-aligned recommendations that contribute to global green economy discourse.

The Green Circle held on 2nd October 2025 at the **World Green Economy Summit (WGES)**, was convened in collaboration with **Dubai Chambers** and brought together C-suite executives, global sustainability experts, and ecosystem enablers to explore the future of sustainability ecosystems for responsible business. The session is part of a recurring series that aims to build long-term alignment and momentum across the green economy ecosystem.



# Hosting partner **Dubai Chambers**

Dubai Chambers is the engine of Dubai's economic development and business growth. As the umbrella organisation of Dubai Chamber of Commerce, Dubai International Chamber, and Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy, Dubai Chambers empowers the local business community, builds and reinforces international partnerships, and accelerates the growth of the digital economy to cement the emirate's position as a leading global hub for business, trade, and investments.



*Our collaboration with WGEO reflects Dubai Chambers' belief that sustainability advances fastest when the public and private sectors work hand in hand. This white paper captures the insights shared during the recent Green Circle dialogue and translates them into actionable recommendations that can support companies on their ESG journeys. We remain committed to working together to empower businesses to lead with purpose and shape a more resilient and sustainable future.*



**Maha Al Gargawi**  
Vice President of Business  
Advocacy, Dubai Chambers

# Executive Summary

Businesses today are navigating one of the most significant transitions of the modern era: the shift from traditional growth models to ones that prioritise resilience, transparency, and long-term sustainability. This transition brings both challenge and opportunity. The Green Circle dialogue at WGES 2025, convened by WGEO and Dubai Chambers, brought together leaders from industry, academia, and civil society to examine how companies in the UAE and wider region can respond to this moment, by strengthening governance, improving reporting, and realising the economic value of sustainable business.

Across the discussion, participants highlighted that sustainability has moved firmly into the realm of strategic necessity. Regulatory mandates, stakeholder expectations, and evolving market dynamics are accelerating the need for companies to embed sustainability into decision-making, build credible reporting systems, and demonstrate measurable outcomes. At the same time, many organisations, particularly SMEs—require clearer guidance, harmonised frameworks, and practical tools to navigate the transition.

The insights shared during the dialogue centred on three interconnected themes that reflect the evolving sustainability landscape in the region:



## Embedding sustainability as a business imperative

Leaders emphasised that sustainability becomes impactful only when anchored in governance and leadership accountability. Organisations highlighted how performance-linked incentives, procurement expectations, and regulatory requirements are driving internal alignment and cultural change. However, many SMEs still face capability gaps and require training within regionally contextualised frameworks to translate ambition into effective action.



## Transparency and reporting for impact

Mandatory disclosure under Federal Decree Law No. 11 is reshaping expectations and strengthening organisational discipline. Participants agreed that credible reporting enhances trust, informs strategic

decisions, and improves investment readiness. Yet, businesses face challenges in data readiness, comprehension of reporting frameworks, and differentiation between terminologies such as ESG and sustainability. Calls for unified reporting mechanisms, practical tools, and simplified guidance reflect the need to support companies at all stages of their journey.



## The cost and value of sustainable business

The dialogue demonstrated that sustainability delivers tangible benefits such as strengthened resilience, improved efficiency, enhanced market access, and greater stakeholder trust. While perceptions of cost remain a barrier, several examples illustrated how long-term value outweighs initial investment. Participants also emphasised the importance of life-cycle thinking, supply-chain alignment, and early-stage education to build a sustainability-literate workforce and unlock broader economic benefits across sectors.

Across all three themes, a consistent set of messages emerged:

- **Leadership and governance** are central to embedding sustainability.
- **Transparency and reporting** build credibility and enable better decision-making.
- **Sustainability creates value** by strengthening resilience and competitiveness.
- **SMEs need tailored support** through clear frameworks, guidance, and capacity building.
- **Collaboration across sectors** is essential for building a coherent sustainability ecosystem.

The Green Circle continues to serve as a platform for strategic alignment, knowledge exchange, and practical action. The insights captured in this whitepaper reflect both the urgency and the opportunity ahead: to embed sustainability into business performance, strengthen transparency, and unlock long-term value across the private sector as the UAE advances toward a more resilient and future-ready green economy.

# Embedding Sustainability as a Business Imperative – Aligning Purpose, Profit, and Performance



- *With the necessity of sustainability reporting as a legal mandate to companies, what practical steps help companies embed ESG into corporate strategy, beyond compliance?*
- *Which examples best illustrate the business case for sustainability in terms of growth, resilience, and innovation?*
- *What frameworks or models can be recommended to businesses still early in their sustainability transition?*

## Overview

While global markets shift under the pressures of climate risk, evolving stakeholder expectations, and tightening regulatory requirements, sustainability has emerged as a strategic driver of business competitiveness and long-term value. Around the world, companies are being called to integrate sustainability into governance, operations, and enterprise strategy to move beyond compliance towards a model where purpose and performance reinforce one another.

The Green Circle dialogue at WGES reflected this global reality. Participants emphasised that while commitment to sustainability is increasing across the region, many organisations still face challenges in translating ambition into execution, linking sustainability to profitability, culture, and day-to-day decision-making. Discussions explored the organisational shifts required to embed sustainability as a core business imperative and the enablers that support companies at different stages of their transition.

These reflections were anchored in questions posed at the outset of the discussion:

## Discussion Insights

### Leadership accountability and governance drive meaningful integration

Participants underscored that sustainability becomes more than a reporting exercise only when leadership sets the direction and embeds clear accountability. Representatives from Majid Al Futtaim highlighted how Federal Decree Law No. 11, which mandates disclosure and includes penalties for non-compliance, has created a direct financial incentive for companies to strengthen internal governance and adopt more robust sustainability practices. This regulatory context is accelerating the shift from voluntary action to strategic necessity.

Similarly, e& emphasised that embedding ESG targets into employee incentives, linking performance to sustainability outcomes has helped shape internal culture and accountability. When leadership commitment is reinforced through governance structures, incentives, and transparent reporting, sustainability becomes a shared organisational responsibility rather than a standalone function.

## **Building capabilities is essential for the transition**

A recurring concern across the dialogue was the capability gap faced by SMEs, which often lack the tools, data clarity, and resources needed to operationalise sustainability. Majid Al Futtaim stressed the importance of developing vetted frameworks and training pathways that help SMEs integrate sustainable practices and understand regulatory requirements. Without structured support, many smaller firms struggle to measure emissions, produce compliant reports, or align with supplier expectations.

Goumbook echoed that many SMEs still perceive sustainability as a cost rather than a strategic advantage. To address this, participants called for accessible sustainability guides and harmonised reporting mechanisms. These resources would enable SMEs to meet rising expectations while contributing meaningfully to national sustainability goals.

## **Culture change is central to embedding sustainability beyond compliance**

Several participants highlighted that sustainability requires deep cultural transformation. E& shared how internal ideation platforms, staff-driven proposals (such as electrifying fleet vehicles), and flexible work practices introduced after COVID-19 have helped shift mindsets and drive behavioural change. These internal channels allow sustainability to evolve organically and foster a culture where employees contribute to, and benefit from sustainability initiatives.

Participants also noted that sustainability is often misunderstood as limited to recycling or one-off activities. Representatives from academia and Sanipex Group stressed the need for systems thinking and early education to build a society where sustainability is understood holistically, encompassing environmental, economic, and social dimensions.

## **Sustainability must be localised to the regional context**

There was broad agreement that sustainability frameworks and definitions must be adapted to the UAE and GCC context. The academic representative from Oman emphasised the need to differentiate clearly between ESG and sustainability, as the terms are often conflated. He highlighted the importance of balancing social and economic priorities with environmental responsibility in a manner suited to the region's cultural and economic landscape.

Goumbook reinforced the need for a regionally grounded sustainability narrative, proposing initiatives such as sustainability guides for residents and businesses entering the UAE. These tools would promote awareness, support compliance, and ensure that sustainability education begins early, shaping a future workforce aligned with national sustainability goals.

## **Role of large companies in enabling transformation across value chains is critical**

Several contributors noted that large corporates act as catalysts for wider sustainability adoption through procurement expectations, supplier engagement, and training programmes. Majid Al Futtaim's Sustainability Roadshow was cited as a model for empowering suppliers to reduce Scope 3 emissions through blended learning, roadshows, and market-level capacity building. Although complex due to diverse national contexts, this approach is driving long-term transformation across the value chain.

Daikin added that leadership buy-in and long-term investments beyond regulatory compliance are essential for enabling sustainable industrial ecosystems. Their experience reinforced the importance of collaboration and shared learning across industry networks to support consistent progress.

## Case Study Spotlight

### Daikin – The Green Heart Factory Framework

Daikin's Green Heart Factory (GHF) system provides a comprehensive framework for embedding sustainability into core manufacturing operations. The GHF integrates advanced technology, real-time environmental monitoring, and strong governance to systematically reduce environmental impact across all Daikin factories worldwide.

Under the initiative, each site, including those in the Middle East, is required to meet ambitious targets for carbon emissions reduction, energy and water efficiency, and waste minimisation. All factories (excluding chemical plants) are on track to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, with three already achieving carbon-neutral status as of June 2025. The Rinkai Factory in Japan serves as the reference model for global rollout, supported by third-party verification and ongoing employee engagement.

Regionally, Daikin Middle East and Africa advances this commitment through solar integration at its UAE headquarters and factory. Nearly 1,000 rooftop solar panels now supply over 80% of the facility's electricity, generating 826,000 kWh of clean energy annually and reducing carbon emissions by more than 300 tonnes per year. This illustrates how site-level renewable deployment complements the global Green Heart Factory roadmap and reinforces Daikin's net-zero ambition.

Daikin's approach demonstrates how sustainability becomes a business imperative when embedded across governance, operational processes, and long-term investment planning, offering a transferable model for industrial climate leadership.

## Key Takeaways

- Leadership alignment is foundational. Reporting requirements and executive incentives strengthen internal accountability and drive adoption.
- Capability building is essential especially for SMEs. Practical frameworks, training, and tailored guidance enable consistent implementation.
- Culture change deepens impact. Internal advocacy and employee-led initiatives help sustainability move beyond compliance.
- Localisation ensures relevance. Region-specific definitions, educational approaches, and reporting pathways support effective integration.
- Large corporates accelerate transformation. Supplier engagement and value-chain capacity building create system-wide momentum.

# Transparency and Reporting for Impact – Building Credibility, Clarity, and Consistency



- *With the necessity of sustainability reporting as a legal mandate to companies, what practical steps help companies embed ESG into corporate strategy, beyond compliance?*
- *Which examples best illustrate the business case for sustainability in terms of growth, resilience, and innovation?*
- *What frameworks or models can be recommended to businesses still early in their sustainability transition?*

## Overview

As sustainability reporting advances towards becoming a legal requirement, and as stakeholder expectations rise, transparency has emerged as a cornerstone of responsible business. Around the world, companies are being asked not only to disclose their environmental and social performance, but to do so in a way that is accurate, comparable, and meaningful. This shift marks a transition from ad-hoc sustainability communication to structured, standards-aligned reporting that strengthens trust, informs strategy, and enables long-term value creation.

The Green Circle dialogue highlighted that transparency is both a challenge and an opportunity for companies in the UAE and wider GCC. Many businesses struggle with data readiness, reporting frameworks, and the practical steps required to produce reliable disclosures. At the same time, leaders recognised that strong reporting systems can drive operational improvements, investment readiness, and deeper organisational accountability.

These reflections were anchored in questions posed at the outset of the discussion:

## Discussion Insights

### **Mandatory disclosure is driving internal alignment and organisational discipline**

Participants noted that Federal Decree Law No. 11, which mandates disclosures and enforces penalties, has created a new level of seriousness around ESG reporting. Majid Al Futtaim emphasised that this regulatory shift has moved sustainability from “optional to essential,” requiring companies to invest in systems, governance, and training to meet reporting expectations.

Dulscio Group echoed the need for clear guidance, noting that many companies do not understand carbon accounting or the importance of diverting waste from landfills. Without structured support, businesses struggle to interpret regulatory requirements or understand the implications of non-compliance.

The message was clear: mandatory reporting is strengthening organisational discipline, but support is needed to help companies navigate complexity, build data readiness, and avoid treating disclosure as a tick-box exercise.

### **Clear, harmonised frameworks are needed to reduce confusion and create consistency**

Across the discussion, participants highlighted significant confusion between ESG and sustainability, particularly among SMEs. Participants stressed the need for clearer differentiation and better localisation of global frameworks so that reporting becomes relevant to the GCC context.

Goumbook reinforced this point, calling for unified reporting mechanisms across all seven Emirates and proposing the creation of a national sustainability guide for businesses. Such tools would help reduce fragmentation, simplify compliance, and enable companies to produce consistent and comparable disclosures.

Participants observed that without clear frameworks and accessible tools, many businesses rely on improvised reporting methods that limit transparency and weaken credibility.

### **Reporting is a pathway to internal education and culture building**

Participants stressed that developing sustainability reporting forces organisations to confront gaps in data, governance, and strategy. E& noted that embedding ESG targets into employee incentives has strengthened understanding and ownership of sustainability metrics.

Goumbook highlighted the importance of raising awareness at an early stage, from schools to the workplace, demonstrating that transparency is not only about measurement but also about education and behavioural change. Several participants agreed that reporting can become a catalyst for internal capacity building, particularly when supported by clear guidelines, industry partnerships, and chamber-led initiatives such as the Dubai Chambers ESG Label programme.

### **SMEs need support to develop practical reporting systems**

SMEs were identified as the segment most in need of support. Dulsco Group noted that many SMEs lack the knowledge, data infrastructure, or technical capacity to produce reports, often perceiving sustainability as “nice to have” rather than essential. Participants emphasised the importance of: simple reporting templates, mobile-friendly tools, SME-focused workshops, clear explanation of laws and decrees and pre-qualified sustainability service providers.

The suggestion of creating a vetted ecosystem of training and advisory partners recommended by Majid Al Futtaim was reinforced as a means of ensuring SMEs have credible, accessible options for advancing their reporting capabilities.

### **Transparency enhances long-term credibility and investor confidence**

Several contributors highlighted that strong reporting practices help organisations demonstrate progress, improve internal decision-making, and build trust with customers, regulators, and investors. Examples shared during the discussion highlighted how reporting frameworks help track emissions, measure social impact, inform procurement and build confidence among global partners.

Participants agreed that transparency is not merely a compliance requirement. It is a driver of operational excellence and a foundation for long-term business resilience.

## Case Study Spotlight

### Dulscó Group – Building a Structured ESG Reporting System

Dulscó Group provides a clear example of how structured reporting can support organisational transformation. Beginning in 2022, the company initiated a formal journey to measure and disclose its environmental and social impact. This started with the calculation of carbon emissions and the introduction of a social impact measurement framework, enabling transparent communication of community engagement, employee well-being, and CSR efforts through its Social Value Report.

In 2023, the Group advanced to ESG reporting aligned with the GRI Standards, broadening its disclosures across environmental stewardship, workforce development, and governance performance. This progression led to the establishment of a dedicated ESG Department in 2025, formalising sustainability as a core business function.

Dulscó Group complements its reporting efforts with tangible initiatives including:

- Carbon sequestration projects (mangrove planting, pond financing in India)
- Advanced waste processing and recycling facilities
- Water treatment and reuse systems
- Solar installations at staff accommodations
- Deployment of biofuel and electric vehicles across its fleet
- EV charging infrastructure
- Drinking water stations to reduce single-use plastic

These initiatives reinforce the Group's commitment to transparency while enhancing investor confidence and supporting national sustainability goals. This structured approach demonstrates how reporting, when paired with operational programmes becomes a catalyst for measurable impact, organisational learning, and strengthened stakeholder trust.

## Key Takeaways

- **Mandatory reporting strengthens discipline and alignment.** Legal requirements push companies to invest in governance, systems, and data readiness.
- **Harmonised frameworks reduce complexity.** Clear, locally relevant reporting models improve consistency and relevance across the private sector.
- **Reporting is an educational tool.** It builds organisational awareness, capacity, and shared accountability.
- **SMEs need targeted support.** Simple tools, guidance, and advisory ecosystems are essential to enable meaningful participation.
- **Transparency enhances trust and long-term value.** Credible disclosures improve operational decision-making and strengthen investor and stakeholder confidence.

# The Cost and Value of Sustainable Business – Unlocking Growth, Resilience, and Long-Term Competitiveness



## Overview

As sustainability becomes a competitive expectation, companies increasingly face questions about the cost of implementation, the return on investment, and the value created through long-term environmental and social performance. Across global markets, businesses are recognising that sustainability is not merely a moral consideration, but a strategic lever for resilience, profitability, and innovation.

Yet, numerous challenges remain. Many organisations still perceive sustainability as a financial burden, particularly in the early stages of transition. Others understand its value but struggle to quantify benefits such as customer trust, market access, operational efficiency, and supply chain stability. The discussion highlighted that identifying and communicating the business case for sustainability is essential to driving organisational buy-in, investment, and long-term commitment.

These reflections were anchored in questions posed at the outset of the discussion:

- *Which examples best illustrate the business case for sustainability in terms of growth, resilience, and innovation?*
- *What frameworks or models can be recommended to businesses still early in their sustainability transition?*

## Discussion Insights

### Sustainability enhances competitiveness by reducing risk and strengthening market relevance

Participants agreed that businesses integrating sustainability early gain a competitive advantage. Views from academia noted that companies with sustainability embedded into strategy were more resilient during global disruptions such as the pandemic.

Goumbook highlighted that many companies still fail to see how sustainability drives profitability, despite clear benefits in operational efficiency, customer trust, and long-term resilience. They stressed the need to move beyond superficial sustainability activities toward approaches grounded in people, nature, and prosperity (three foundational pillars guiding impactful business models).

Majid Al Futtaim added that the financial sector is increasingly rewarding companies with strong ESG records, as seen through instruments such as sustainability-linked loans and Sukuk bonds. These mechanisms directly connect sustainability performance to financial outcomes, reinforcing the business case for long-term investment.

Sanipex Group also observed that many consumers and industry players still lack a proper understanding of what sustainability truly entails, with persistent misconceptions such as assuming that recycling or the use of recycled materials is always the optimal solution. They emphasised the importance of prioritising full life-cycle emissions calculations when assessing products using comparisons such as bioplastics versus traditional plastics to illustrate how environmental impact must be evaluated holistically rather than through surface-level attributes.

### **Cost barriers can be overcome through strategic investment and value chain alignment**

Many participants acknowledged that sustainability transitions may require upfront investment, particularly in reporting systems, renewables, or greener supply chain practices. However, long-term value creation: reduced energy consumption, stronger supplier resilience, enhanced compliance, and improved brand reputation often offsets initial costs.

Majid Al Futtaim shared that efforts to engage suppliers on Scope 3 emissions require extensive training and roadshows, which can be slow and resource-intensive due to diverse country contexts. Still, this investment is essential for sustainable value chains and market credibility.

Sanipex Group reinforced that cost perceptions persist partly because companies focus on short-term profit rather than full life-cycle value. They noted that sustainability strategies for mid-sized companies are often shaped more by government policies and the requirements of major contractors than by internal ambition. Without clear regulations, incentives, or subsidies, many businesses may not prioritise sustainability. They stressed that corporate decision-making does not always align with government strategies, and that large industry players hold a critical responsibility in educating, guiding, and mandating sustainability practices across SME networks.

### **Sustainability creates value by shaping culture and driving stakeholder engagement**

Participants observed that sustainability is increasingly influencing customer expectations and employee preferences. Goumbook noted the evolution of sustainability in the UAE from CSR-driven marketing to core business strategy, mirroring national priorities such as hosting COP28 and advancing the UAE Climate Law.

E& demonstrated how employee-driven initiatives (such as electrification proposals or remote work policies adopted during COVID-19) can reduce costs and strengthen culture. When employees see their contributions reflected in organisational sustainability initiatives, it builds engagement and internal momentum.

Sanipex emphasised that cultural change at executive levels is essential to shifting mindsets from cost to value ensuring sustainability is not treated as an optional enhancement, but as integral to long-term business health.

### **Clear regional frameworks help companies understand the value of sustainability**

A major barrier identified during the dialogue was the lack of clarity around what sustainability means within the GCC context. Participants stressed the need for: regionally aligned definitions, harmonised reporting expectations, curated sustainability guides for businesses and tools to help quantify impact and cost savings.

Goumbook's proposal to create a national sustainability directory and unified reporting system was highlighted as a potential mechanism to reduce cost uncertainty and help organisations identify credible pathways to value creation.

Academic speakers reinforced that sustainability must be contextualised for the unique economic, cultural, and environmental realities of the Middle East to ensure corporates view sustainability as local and relevant, not imported or abstract.

### **Education and awareness unlock long-term value across society and industry**

Several speakers such as Goumbook, WWF, and academic representatives, emphasised the importance of integrating sustainability education from early years into higher education and corporate training. Awareness at school level, coupled with clear business frameworks, helps build a generation that understands not only the cost of inaction but the value of sustainability-driven growth.

This long-term societal investment helps businesses by creating a more sustainability-literate workforce and a customer base that appreciates responsible products and services.

## Case Study Spotlight

### Mars – Demonstrating the Financial and Operational Value of Sustainability

Mars’ Sustainable in a Generation Report (2024) illustrates how long-term sustainability commitments can deliver measurable reductions in emissions while supporting business growth. Between 2015 and 2024, Mars achieved a 1.9% absolute reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, amounting to a total reduction of 16.4%, even as annual net sales grew to US\$55 billion. This demonstrates how sustainability can reinforce—not constrain—commercial expansion.

This approach links sustainability performance to leadership accountability, with long-term compensation for approximately 2,000 leaders tied to greenhouse gas reduction outcomes. This reinforces internal alignment and ensures leadership commitment to decarbonisation and responsible growth.

The company also advances sustainability across its value chain through:

- Climate-smart agriculture projects across 29 countries
- More than 60 initiatives targeting regenerative practices
- Efforts to eliminate deforestation from supply chains
- Investment in next-generation packaging with 64.1% of consumer packaging designed for reuse, recycling, or compostability
- US\$250 million Sustainability Investment Fund to accelerate innovation
- Delivering 3.5 billion healthy meals by improving nutritional profiles

Mars’ progress demonstrates that sustainability can deliver cost savings, mitigate long-term risks, enhance supply chain stability, and strengthen brand trust—reinforcing sustainability as a strategic driver of value creation.

## Key Takeaways

- **Sustainability is a driver of competitiveness.** Early adopters demonstrate stronger resilience, operational efficiency, and financial performance.
- **Cost barrier is temporal whereas the real value is structural.** Upfront investment paves the way for long-term efficiencies, market access, and regulatory readiness.
- **Cultural alignment strengthens business value.** Employee engagement and customer trust grow when sustainability aligns with organisational identity.
- **Localised frameworks reduce uncertainty.** Clear definitions, unified reporting, and regional guidance help companies quantify and communicate value.
- **Case studies demonstrate measurable returns.** Mars’ progress shows that sustainability can reinforce growth, innovation, and leadership accountability.

# Conclusion

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The Green Circle convened by WGEO and Dubai Chambers at WGES 2025 reaffirmed that sustainability is no longer a parallel ambition—it is a core determinant of business competitiveness, resilience, and long-term value. As regulatory mandates expand and stakeholder expectations intensify, companies must embed sustainability into governance, culture, operations, and value chains to stay relevant in a transitioning economy.

Across the dialogue, leaders highlighted three essentials for progress. First, **embedding sustainability as a business imperative** requires clear leadership accountability, strong governance, and capabilities that translate ambition into measurable action. Second, **transparency and reporting** are critical enablers. Mandatory disclosure strengthens accountability. However, businesses (in particular SMEs) need harmonised frameworks, practical guidance, and accessible tools to build data readiness and avoid treating reporting as a compliance exercise. Third, the **economic value of sustainability** is increasingly evident, with companies citing enhanced resilience, improved market access, and stronger stakeholder trust as tangible outcomes. Overcoming cost perceptions will require long-term thinking, life-cycle assessment, and continued support for SMEs as they scale their efforts.

A recurring message throughout the discussion was the importance of **collaboration**. Large corporates, SMEs, academia, NGOs, and government entities each play a role in building a coherent and trusted sustainability ecosystem. Whether through supplier development, unified reporting mechanisms, early education, or innovation partnerships, systemic progress is only possible through shared commitment and collective action.

The Green Circle remains a platform designed to accelerate this alignment turning dialogue into direction, and direction into measurable progress. The insights captured in this whitepaper reflect both the urgency of the moment and the opportunity ahead: to build a greener, more resilient, and more competitive economy grounded in clarity, capability, and collaboration.



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