**Pearl Initiative Launches Online Platform for SMEs**

* *Platform was launched during interactive expert roundtable convening SMEs, and business leaders to discuss why good governance supports and boosts business outcomes*
* *Launch of online platform tailored for MSMEs to learn about how to apply corporate governance in their day-to-day business affairs*
* *The* [*‘Corporate Governance Fundamentals’*](https://www.pearlinitiative.org/corporate-fundamentals) *platform offers free access to bespoke governance solutions including 16 toolkits and templates as well as 11 videos and infographics*

**Dubai, September 14, 2019:** ThePearl Initiative, a business-led non-profit organisation promoting corporate accountability in the Gulf Region’s private sector, has taken the next big step in fortifying the governance atmosphere for one of the Gulf’s most prolific economic sectors – micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) – by launching a unique digital platform in the Gulf region at a recent roundtable event.

Titled [Corporate Governance Fundamentals](https://www.pearlinitiative.org/corporate-fundamentals), the platform is a dedicated centre designed to help MSMEs build and improve their corporate governance practices.

Powered by the leading expertise of the Pearl Initiative, the Corporate Governance Fundamentals platform features 16 toolkits and templates, 11 graphic guides, and 11 educational videos. The platform provides information that will help businesses of all sizes customise corporate governance practices to attract funding, establish strong market credibility, and increase their profitability.

Yasmine Omari, Executive Director of the Pearl Initiative, noted, “The Corporate Governance Fundamentals platform is a significant step forward in our efforts to not just raise awareness on the need for corporate governance in MSMEs, but to make it understandable and easily accessible for them. The Pearl Initiative is delighted to offer bespoke tools and information to the Gulf Region’s MSME sector, free of charge, guiding them in successfully adopting the right governance practices based on their needs.”

The event also hosted a panel discussion featuring corporate governance leaders, policy experts, and MSME founders and financiers. Moderated by Sheikh Fahim Al Qasimi, Chairman of Sharjah Department of Government Relations and Partner at AQ&P, the discussions were led by Essam Disi, Director of Policy and Strategy, Dubai SME, Dr. Sassan Khatib-Shahidi, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors, German Imaging Technologies, Aman Merchant, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Impact Hub, and Tushar Singhvi, Director – CE-Ventures. Panellists shed light on why best practices in corporate governance are the integral foundation for long-term sustainable business growth.

Sheikh Fahim Al Qasimi stated, “"The implementation of good corporate governance is as much about 'function' as it is 'structure’. Changing how an organisation’s corporate culture functions takes time, so we work with our clients on introducing a staged approach to corporate culture, whether a start-up or growing industry leader."

The most essential corporate governance practices for increased investments, funding, and geographic growth, and panellists’ accounts of cases where governance practices helped MSMEs increase their economic and geographic footprint were also discussed.

Tushar Singhvi noted, “Corporate governance has proven pivotal in helping companies improve their resilience. It is the cornerstone of any successful business model. For micro, small and medium-sized businesses, bespoke approaches to corporate governance provide the foundation for scale up and growth, shaping entrepreneurial leadership, attracting funding and ensuring the efficient use of capital.”

Dr Sassan Dieter Khatib-Shahidi added, "Good governance has certain basic elements such as proper management structures, flow of information, financial reporting, succession rules, advisory structures and independent audit. As such it would benefit any SME to adhere to certain minimum implementation."

The roundtable event, which convened owners and employees of MSMEs, corporate governance experts, and business leaders in the audience, witnessed robust engagement. Audience members were able to engage with the panel of experts to discuss common business concerns, and hear about how corporate governance can help solve these concerns with proper implementation.

Founded in 2010, Pearl Initiative is a Gulf business–led organisation promoting a corporate culture of accountability and transparency as a driver of competitiveness and sustainable economic growth across the Gulf region of the Middle East. The organisation develops programmes and publishes regional research reports and case studies, with aims to influence the regional business and student community towards implementing higher standards of corporate governance within the Gulf Region.

**- End -**

**Photocaption:**

**During the launch of the Corporate Governance Fundamentals online platform at Pearl Initiative’s MSME Roundtable**

**About the Pearl Initiative**

Prominent business leaders from across the Gulf Region formed the Pearl Initiative in 2010 to create a non-profit vehicle for the Private Sector to collectively take the lead in adopting higher standards in corporate governance, accountability and transparency to enhance business innovation, opportunity and value creation. With over 40 regional and international partners, the Pearl Initiative brings together business, government and civil society decision-makers to share best business practices and to help maximise the economic opportunities available to companies within the region. The Pearl Initiative also supports Gulf-based university students to identify and embrace strong ethics as they embark on their future careers.

The Pearl Initiative seeks joint collaborative action between regional and global business leaders, international institutions, government bodies and wider initiatives within the Gulf Region, exhibiting positive leadership and sharing knowledge and experience in order to influence the entire regional business and student community. For more information, please visit [www.pearlinitiative.org](http://www.pearlinitiative.org) or contact us on +971 6 515 4605 or via email at enquiries@pearlinitiative.org

Follow us also on @PearlInitiative on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter and @ThePearlInitiative on LinkedIn.