



# Post-Event Report

## Governance for Sustainable Growth: Enhancing MSME Outcomes

**Date:** 6 February 2019

**Location:** Bait al Zubair Museum, Muscat, Oman

# Word of Thanks

The Pearl Initiative would like to extend their gratitude to **Zubair SEC** and all their staff for their support in hosting the event and making the event such a success. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

A further word of appreciation is also extended to all the event attendees, and particularly the speakers who unconditionally shared their time and expertise to make this event a success:

- **Sayyid Hamid Al-Busaidi**, Executive Director, Oman Center for Governance and Sustainability;
- **Dr. Munther Albusaidi**, Assistant Professor, Sultan Qaboos University;
- **Faris Al-Harthy**, Project Specialist, Sharakah, and
- **Jamal Al-Wahaibi**, Head of SME Department, Oman Arab Bank.

It is heartening to see the commitment and passion that is extended in support of MSMEs and in promoting the value and implementation of corporate governance standards in the private sector.



# Event Overview

## Governance for Sustainable Growth: Enhancing MSME Outcomes

As part of the Pearl Initiative's commitment to supporting MSMEs and promoting the value of good corporate governance in promoting sustainable growth, we hold regular events through our Corporate Governance in MSMEs programme.

In collaboration with Zubair SEC, the Pearl Initiative organised an interactive roundtable session in Muscat, Oman. This roundtable was **designed** to connect small business owners with thought leaders and governance practitioners, and engage all parties in conversations about how good governance practices create opportunities for long-term, sustainable growth.

This roundtable was modelled upon the findings of the Pearl Initiative's report, titled [“Enhancing Gulf Business Competitiveness”](#), which identified key challenges faced by MSMEs across the Gulf Region, as well as misconceptions about the utility (or lack thereof) of governance for MSMEs.

The **goal** of this roundtable was to have MSME owners and employees learn about the importance of corporate governance, its customisability for individual business needs, and its role in attracting funding.

### Key Information

**Number of Attendees:** 56 Attendees

**Profile of Attendees:** Small business owners and employees

#### Attendee Feedback:

- Event quality – Excellent (52%)
- Registration process – Excellent (47%)
- Content – Excellent (42%)

# Strategic Objectives

The objectives of this event were to:

- To explain why best practices in corporate governance are integral solutions to sustainable business growth;
- To show MSMEs how corporate governance practices help build internal structures and secure stakeholder confidence, and
- To engage MSMEs on the various corporate governance structures that can ensure long-term output quality and control.

# Opening Remarks

Lina Hussein, Head of Communications and Social Impact, Zubair SEC

Yasmine Omari, Executive Director, Pearl Initiative



**Lina Hussein** began the event by thanking Pearl Initiative and the speakers. She introduced the speakers and moderator, and spoke briefly about the importance of corporate governance for MSMEs and its role in creating sustainable business growth. She concluded by touching on how Zubair SEC works to support Omani MSMEs with their plans for growth.



**Yasmine Omari** introduced Pearl Initiative to the audience, and identified the business case for accountability and transparency in all businesses across the Gulf Region. She noted that corporate governance is often disregarded by MSMEs as something for larger organisations and corporations, but that there is significant value for MSMEs to apply and utilise corporate governance principles.

# Moderator and Panelists



**Sayyid Hamid Al Busaidi, Executive Director, Oman Center for Governance and Sustainability**

Sayyid Hamed bin Sultan Al Busaidi is currently the Executive Director of the Oman Center for Governance and Sustainability. In the past, he has participated in several projects and managed major committees in the Capital Market Authority.

**Dr. Munther Albusaidi, Assistant Professor, Sultan Qaboos University**

Dr. Munther Albusaidi is an Assistant Professor of Accounting at Sultan Qaboos University. His research interests include capital market research, earnings quality, financial analysts' earnings forecasts and firms' disclosures.



**Faris Al-Harthy, Project Specialist, Sharakah**

Faris Al-Harthy is interested in the SME sector. He works in the financial services industry, serving SMEs in particular, monitoring their performance, and helping them improve their managerial skills.

**Jamal Al-Wahaibi, Head of SME Department, Oman Arab Bank**

Jamal Al Wahaibi is the Head of SME at Oman Arab Bank. He holds a Diploma in Banking Studies and a Specialized Diploma in Finance of Foreign Trade & Foreign Exchange from the Oman Institute of Bankers. Prior to this, he was Acting Head of Mid-Corporate at Alizz Islamic Bank.



# Introduction to Corporate Governance

Faris Al-Harthy, Project Specialist, Sharakah



**Faris Al-Harthy** led the opening discussion on corporate governance using his expertise facilitating business growth for Omani MSMEs.

Mr. Al-Harthy defined corporate governance, and explained its goals as being transparency, accountability, and justice.

As part of the definition of corporate governance, he listed three tools that fall under corporate governance: strategy, policies and procedures, and monitoring.

- He pointed out that most businesses don't have a **strategy**, so corporate governance would help businesses create these strategies.
- He also noted that sources of funding examine a business' **policies and procedures** before deciding on releasing funds.
- **Monitoring** is often a challenge for MSMEs, he said, with financial auditing being the core concern (as it provides MSMEs with insights as to the company's progress and activities).

Mr. Al-Harthy concluded with the advantages of governance, highlighting the fact that it fosters sustainability and builds trust among investors and eases geographical expansion.



# Panel Discussion



The panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Munther Albusaidi, was structured as a three-part narrative that covered the general role of corporate governance, the importance of corporate governance for MSMEs, and the links between the application of corporate governance and the acquisition of funding.

A key theme that emerged in the panel discussion was the necessity of corporate governance within an MSME to find and sustain funding from external stakeholders, such as banks, investors, and even government entities.

- Omani MSMEs were advised that it would take them between three to five years to break even, and should focus on business development activities during this period.
- Governance was noted as being a panacea for future problems: good governance would help businesses address business concerns before they cause serious problems.

# Panel Discussion



A second point that was reiterated throughout the discussion was that the earlier a company implements governance and keeps updating it, the better their business chances will be. Also of importance for business processes is a comprehensive monitoring system for operations at all levels within a business.

With regards to funding, it was noted that funders are concerned with the state of management in an MSME, including relationships with the board of governors and all stakeholders.

**The biggest challenge** with implementing corporate governance in an MSME is that it has a cost that most businesses do not want to bear, and they fail to see how critical it is to the longevity of their business. Governance needs to be implementable and not just on paper, and to be easily understandable by all stakeholders of a business.

Panellists agreed that **the most “minimal”, but essential, corporate governance policies** that MSMEs could implement were:

- A business procedure;
- A delegation of authority, and
- Good stakeholder management.

# Panel Discussion

Governance helps organisations do business better, and also makes it easier to do business.

Governance has a cost; however, it has a great return on investment.



Sayyid Hamid Al Busaidi



Faris Al-Harthy

Governance is critical to achieve sustainability, builds trust amongst investors, and helps ease geographical expansion.

Through governance, businesses will have access to large investors and government investment.

Owners of MSMEs are usually responsible for management, but this doesn't mean corporate governance is not important for them - it gives them numerous benefits.

Tools for corporate governance give investors confidence in an organisation, making it easier for MSMEs to obtain finance.



Jamal Al-Wahaibi

# Group Discussion

The group discussion covered a variety of topics, with attendees asking questions on the practical ways in which governance can be implemented, and the specific steps on what should and shouldn't be done in MSMEs for business success. Panellists provided specific, often technical, answers to each question. The group discussion took place for an hour and included conversations on how corporate governance can be tailored for MSMEs.



# On-Site Impressions



# On-Site Impressions



# Appendices

# Appendix 1

## About Zubair SEC



The [Zubair Small Enterprises Centre \(Zubair SEC\)](#) is one of the leading initiatives for supporting small businesses in the Sultanate of Oman. Established in 2013, the centre emanated from The Zubair Corporation's social responsibility vision towards Omani society. The vision reflects the corporation's belief in the importance of small enterprises in enhancing the national economy and contributing to sustainable socio-economic development.



# Appendix 2

## Event Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
3:30 PM	Meet and Greet
3:45 PM	<b>Introductory Remarks</b> Lina Hussein, Head of Communications and Social Impact, Zubair SEC
3:50 PM	<b>Introductory Remarks</b> Yasmine Omari, Executive Director, Pearl Initiative
3:55 PM	<b>Introduction: What is Corporate Governance?</b> Faris Al-Harthy, Project Specialist, Sharakah
4:05 PM	<b>Panel Discussion – Governance for Sustainable Growth: Enhancing MSME Outcomes</b> Discussing how corporate governance capabilities will benefit the MSME community for growth, and what steps MSMEs can take to incorporate tailored governance structures to ensure their business potential and longevity is achieved. <i>Panellists:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sayyid Hamid Al Busaidi, Executive Director, Oman Center for Governance and Sustainability</li><li>• Faris Al-Harthy, Project Specialist, Sharakah</li><li>• Jamal Al-Wahaibi, Head of SME Department, Oman Arab Bank</li></ul> <i>Moderator:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Munther Albusaidi, Assistant Professor, Sultan Qaboos University</li></ul>
5:20 PM	<b>Concluding Remarks</b> Lina Hussein, Head of Communications and Social Impact, Zubair SEC

# Appendix 3

## Social Media Coverage – Pearl Initiative

A comprehensive social media campaign was rolled out for two months by the Pearl Initiative on our social media accounts in both English and Arabic. Here is a selection of our posts:

**Governance for Sustainable Growth:  
Enhancing MSME Outcomes**



"The majority of Omani SMEs lack the simplest principles of management, which makes them collapse at the first instance of conflict. SME governance is the key to establish a sustainable SME sector, and Omani entrepreneurs need to learn more about it and reflect it in their businesses."

**Faris Mohammed Al Harthi**

6 February 2019 | Bait al Zubair Museum, Muscat | 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

**الحكومة للمستدام:  
تعزيز دور قطاع المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة**



تعد الحكومة المؤسسية ذات أهمية كبيرة للنسبة الشركات الصغيرة والمتوسطة في عمان، حيث تعمل على زيادة قدرة الشركات على إيجاد التمويل الضروري لتحقيق النمو المستدام، بالرغم من وجود عوائق أعمال وضخمة وصعقة طيبة في السوق لدى الشركات الصغيرة والمتوسطة، إلا أنها تستطيع توحيد الجهود في ظل عمل على الحكومة المؤسسية الملائمة، سوف يساعد الامانة الرائدة للحكومة من ضمان اتخاذ القرارات الصحيحة، وتحقيق السيطرة الملائمة وتوفر التمويل، والتي تعد جميعها من أهم العوامل لتحقيق النمو المستدام

**جمال الوهبي**

6 فبراير 2019 | زعفران كاهية، بيت الزبير، مسقط | ٣:٣٠ عصراً إلى ٥:٣٠ مساءً

**Governance for Sustainable Growth:  
Enhancing MSME Outcomes**



"I believe that good corporate governance will enable SMEs to grow and excel as it gives them a roadmap for success by implementing best practices in governance and management of an organization with clear distribution of responsibilities and roles."

**Dr. Munther Albusaidi**

6 February 2019 | Bait al Zubair Museum, Muscat | 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

**Governance for Sustainable Growth:  
Enhancing MSME Outcomes**



"Corporate governance is an essential element and very much needed in a financial business environment specifically, and for the Omani economy in general. SMEs are seen as one of the important pillars in driving the Omani economy to grow and sustain Oman's 2040 Vision. Therefore, corporate governance will support these enterprises to grow, sustain and contribute effectively in the Omani economy."

**Sayyid Hamid Sultan Al Busaïdi**

6 February 2019 | Bait al Zubair Museum, Muscat | 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM


**الحكومة للمستدام:  
تعزيز دور قطاع المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة**



أحد ٥١% من الشركات الصغيرة العمانية بأن عدم توفر السيولة النقدية والتمويل من أكبر التحديات التي يواجهونها.

6 فبراير 2019 | زعفران كاهية، بيت الزبير، مسقط | ٣:٣٠ عصراً إلى ٥:٣٠ مساءً

**Governance for Sustainable Growth:  
Enhancing MSME Outcomes**



Only 43% of Omani MSMEs have a functional Board of Directors. Forming a board can help MSMEs take their business to the next level.

6 February 2019 | Bait al Zubair Museum, Muscat | 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

**Governance for Sustainable Growth:  
Enhancing MSME Outcomes**



**ONE DAY LEFT**  
until our event on corporate governance and small business success!

6 February 2019 | Bait al Zubair Museum, Muscat | 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

**الحكومة للمستدام:  
تعزيز دور قطاع المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة**



٤٨% من الشركات الصغيرة العمانية أفادت بأنها تواجه تحديات في تعيين موظفين ذوي مهارة وخبرة.

6 فبراير 2019 | زعفران كاهية، بيت الزبير، مسقط | ٣:٣٠ عصراً إلى ٥:٣٠ مساءً

# Appendix 3

## Social Media Coverage – Zubair SEC

A parallel social media campaign was rolled out for two weeks by Zubair SEC on their social media accounts in Arabic:

**دعوة لحضور جلسة "تجربتي" الحوارية الخاصة بالتعاون مع مبادرة بيرل**

**تجربتي  
Tajribati**

يسرنا دعوتكم لحضور جلسة "تجربتي" الخاصة لشهر فبراير حول:

**"الحكومة للنمو المستدام: تعزيز دور قطاع المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة"**

**الأربعاء 6 فبراير 2019 | من الساعة 3:30 عصرا إلى 5:30 مساء | في بيت الزبير في مسقط**

ستعقد هذه الجلسة بالشراكة مع مبادرة بيرل وستتطرق الجلسة الحوارية الى المحاور الرئيسية التالية:

- كيف يمكن للشركات الصغيرة التغلب على المعوقات التي تواجهها في الحصول على التمويل؟
- كيف يمكن للشركات الصغيرة جذب الكوادر والمهارات الملائمة والإبقاء عليها؟
- كيف يمكن للشركات الصغيرة إيجاد الوقت للتركيز على القضايا الهامة والملحة التي من شأنها أن تصنع الفارق في نجاح أعمالها؟

وسيتيم استضافة المتحدثين:

- السيد / حامد بن سلطان البوسعيدي، المدير التنفيذي، مركز عمان للحكومة والاستدامة
- الفاضل / فارس بن محمد الحارثي، أخصائي مشروعات، صندوق تنمية مشروعات الشباب - شراكة الفاضل / جمال الوهيبي، رئيس الخدمات المصرفية للمؤسسات الصغيرة و المتوسطة ، بنك عمان العربي.

سيدبر الجلسة الحوارية السيد الدكتور / منذر البوسعيدي، شريك، الشركة للاستشارات الإدارية والاقتصادية ش.م.م

المقاعد محدودة لذا يرجى تأكيد الحضور في أقرب وقت بالتواصل معنا على [info@zubairsec.org](mailto:info@zubairsec.org) أو الاتصال بنا على 24737325 أو على 92838012.

يسرنا حضوركم ومشاركتنا هذا الوقت القيم

بالتعاون مع



مبادرة  
بيرل



مركز الزبير  
ZUBAIR SEC

مركز الزبير للمؤسسات الصغيرة  
ZUBAIR SMALL ENTERPRISES CENTRE



مؤسسة الزبير 50  
The Zubair Corporation

منارة لرواد الأعمال العمانيين  
A Beacon for Omani Entrepreneurs

[www.zubairsec.org](http://www.zubairsec.org)

# Appendix 4

## Digital Press Release #1

[Zawya press release](#) (9 February 2019): “OAB Participates in MSME Forum”

- Released by Oman Arab Bank

#OMAN | 09 FEBRUARY, 2019

## OAB Participates in MSME Forum

The event, which was attended by over 100 budding entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners from across the country, was focused on finding out why corporate governance matters to small businesses seeking funding, and what MSMEs can do to incorporate best practices in corporate governance for sustainable growth.

### Press Release

**Muscat:** In recognition of the importance of SMEs to the growth of the economy, Jamal Al-Wahaibi, the Head of the SME Department at [Oman Arab Bank](#), recently participated in a panel at an MSME forum titled 'Governance for Sustainable Growth: Enhancing MSME Outcomes'. The event was organised by The Pearl Initiative and [Zubair SEC](#) on Wednesday, 06 February 2019 at the Zafran Cafe, Bait al Zubair Museum.

The event, which was attended by over 100 budding entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners from across the country, was focused on finding out why corporate governance matters to small businesses seeking funding, and what MSMEs can do to incorporate best practices in corporate governance for sustainable growth.

# Appendix 4

## Digital Press Release #2

[Zubair SEC press release](#) (10 February 2019): “Zubair SEC and Pearl Initiative highlight benefits of corporate governance to small businesses”

- Released by Zubair SEC



### LATEST NEWS



**Zubair SEC** and Pearl Initiative highlight benefits of corporate governance to small businesses Omani MSMEs take a close look at how good governance practices can boost their reputation, profitability and role in economy

Muscat, 10 February 2019

# Appendix 4

## Digital Press Release #3

[Sharjah24 press release](#) (11 February 2019): “Pearl Initiative, Zubair SEC highlight benefits of corporate governance to small businesses”

- Released by Pearl Initiative

### Pearl Initiative, Zubair SEC highlight benefits of corporate governance to small businesses

Sunday 10, February 2019 in 5:57 PM



Comments (0)

**Sharjah24:** The Pearl Initiative held a special dialogue session in collaboration with Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC) to address how corporate governance practices can help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) navigate growing economic challenges and boost business outcomes.

#### Most popular

Read Shared Watched

- 1 Pearl Initiative, Zubair SEC highlight benefits of corporate governance to small businesses
- 2 Tesla's delivery team gutted in recent job cuts - sources
- 3 Oil drops as global economic concerns grip market
- 4 MoF to discuss development of SMEs with IMF's Lagarde
- 5 SEDD honours holders of strategic partner ID

# Programme Team

## Corporate Governance for MSMEs



**Yasmine Omari**

*Executive Director*

*yomari@pearlinitiative.org*

An expert in governance for family firms, Yasmine joined the Pearl Initiative as Head of Programmes, and became Executive Director in 2019. She has experience in the implementation and operation of governance systems, as well as business performance and risk management capabilities for private companies and family offices. Prior to joining the Pearl Initiative, Yasmine was a Senior Manager at Deloitte and supported clients in navigating the business challenges faced by entrepreneurial families in business. Yasmine has a legal background and holds a degree in Law and Arabic from SOAS, University of London.



**Shruti Sardesai**

*Jr. Programme Assistant*

*ssardesai@pearlinitiative.org*

Shruti has a background in international relations, particularly in humanitarian practice, gender, and research. Prior to joining the Pearl Initiative, she held internships with international organizations such as the World Food Programme, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security, and the Association for Women's Rights in Development. Shruti graduated with a Masters in Global Affairs from the University of Toronto, and holds a BA in International Relations (magna cum laude) with minors in Women's Studies and History from the American University of Sharjah.