THE INSTITUTE OF
Company Secretaries of India
भारतीय कम्पनी सचिव संस्थान
IN PURSUIT OF PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE
Statutory body under an Act of Parliament
(Under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Corporate Affairs)

Vision
"To be a global leader in promoting good corporate governance"

Motto
सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर। speak the truth. abide by the law.

Mission
"To develop high calibre professionals facilitating good corporate governance"

ESG CATALYST

A JOURNEY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The ICSI has always promoted good corporate governance, environmental sustainability, and social responsibility among stakeholders including its members as well as students' community.

The "ESG Catalyst" is a bimonthly initiative launched by the ICSI to build awareness about the ESG amongst the professionals by sharing key ESG term, write-up, promising practices and latest developments in ESG domain with professional fraternity.

Company Secretaries are vital in ESG reporting, ethical governance, and stakeholder engagement. By implementing ESG initiatives in their organisations, the Company Secretaries can drive positive change towards a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient future.

Through this initiative of ICSI, we urge upon the professional's fraternity to take a lead in prioritising and setting the ESG agenda in their respective organisation in alignment with the sustainable development goals.

To embark on this journey, the ICSI will continuously mentor the professionals by sharing knowledge on concepts, sustainable practices and latest developments in ESG.

VOL.2/No.23/08TH DECEMBER, 2025

BIOREMEDIATION

Bioremediation refers to the process of "restoring life through biology." It relies on microorganisms—such as bacteria, fungi, algae, and even plants—to capture or transform harmful substances like oil, pesticides, plastics, and heavy metals. These organisms treat pollutants as food, breaking them down into harmless by-products such as water, carbon dioxide, or organic acids. In certain cases, they can even convert toxic metals into safer forms that no longer seep into soil or groundwater.

India's rapid industrial growth has come at a steep environmental price. Oil spills, pesticide residues, and heavy-metal contamination pose serious risks to ecosystems and public health. Conventional clean-up methods are costly, energy-intensive, and often generate secondary pollution. Bioremediation, by contrast, offers a more affordable, scalable, and sustainable solution, particularly valuable in a country where vast areas of land and water are polluted but resources for remediation remain limited. India's rich biodiversity further strengthens its potential to adopt such strategies.

Globally, bioremediation is gaining traction. Japan incorporates microbial and plant-based systems into its urban waste management. The European Union funds collaborative projects that deploy microbes to clean oil spills and rehabilitate mining sites. China has prioritized bioremediation as part of its soil pollution control framework. For India, the opportunities are immense: restoring rivers, reclaiming degraded land, and cleaning industrial zones, while simultaneously generating employment in biotechnology, environmental consulting, and waste management.

Good Practices in ESG

ENVIRONMENTAL

Organizations should adopt climate-resilient and environment friendly infrastructure.

SOCIAL

Organizations should conduct well-being programs for employees and society at large.

GOVERNANCE

Organizations should adopt a policy to promote governance at value chain.

Tips for Environment Friendly Initiatives

Inculcate Walking Habits | Commute When Necessary | Use Shared Transport

News in ESG

(i) UK Releases Sustainability Reporting Assurance Standard

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) of UK recently released the International Standard on Sustainability Assurance (UK) 5000, "General Requirements for Sustainability Assurance Engagements," a new standard aimed at ensuring quality and consistency for practitioners in carrying out assurance engagements for sustainability reporting.

The publication of the new standards comes as the UK government is considering whether to introduce mandatory sustainability reporting requirements for some companies, and follows the launch of a series of sustainability disclosure-related consultations by the UK government earlier this year, focused on areas including exposure drafts of new UK Sustainability Reporting Standards (UK SRS) and climate-related transition plan requirements, as well as a consultation regarding the development of a voluntary registration regime for the providers of assurance of sustainability reporting.

According to the FRC, the new standard forms a UK version of the global benchmark standard for sustainability assurance, developed by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB). The FRC said that the new standard is intended for voluntary use by UK assurance providers, adding that the standard will help assure the credibility of UK sustainability reporting, supporting more informed investment decision-making and enhance the UK's attractiveness of the UK as a leading destination for sustainable finance.

Source: https://tinyurl.com/UKAssurancestandard

(ii) New Rules Proposed to Regulate ESG Ratings Providers

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) of United Kingdom announced the release of new rules for governing ESG ratings providers. It will be applicable to UK-based providers, as well as foreign providers offering ESG ratings in the UK.

According to the FCA, the proposed rules are aimed at making ESG ratings more transparent, reliable and understandable, citing its own research indicating that a majority of those who use ESG ratings express concerns about ESG rating providers' systems and controls, such as use of outdated or inaccurate data and estimates, while 48% raised concerns about transparency in areas including methodologies and data sources, and many also had concerns about how existing or potential conflicts of interest could impact ratings.

Key proposals focus on four key areas, including increased transparency, improved governance, systems and controls, identification and management of conflicts of interest, and setting clear expectations for stakeholder engagement and complaints handling.

The FCA initiated a consultation into the new proposals, which will remain open until the end of March 2026, with plans to finalize its rules for ESG ratings providers in Q4 of 2026, and for the new requirements to come into effect from June 2028.

Source: https://tinyurl.com/esgtoday-ukesgrating

(iii) PCAF Launches Updated Emissions Measurement and Reporting Standard for Financials

The Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF) announced the launch of its updated Global Greenhouse Gas Accounting and Reporting Standard for the Financial Industry, a new standard aimed at enabling a broad range of financial institutions including banks, asset managers and insurance companies to measure and report GHG emissions related to their financial activities.

PCAF is a global partnership of financial institutions, launched globally in 2019 with a mission to develop and implement a harmonized approach to assess and disclose the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with loans and investments. In November 2020, the PCAF launched its initial Global GHG Accounting and Reporting Standard for the Financial Industry, designed to provide a standardized, robust and clear way for banks, asset managers, and asset owners to measure and report the GHG emissions impact of their loans and investment. The standard has become the single most widely used methodology for measuring and reporting financed emissions globally, included being incorporated and referenced in key sustainability reporting standards including IFRS S2 and the CSRD's ESRS.

According to PCAF, the update to its key standard, alongside the release of new supplemental guidance on Financed Avoided Emissions and Forward-Looking Metrics, is aimed at significantly expanding the ability of financial institutions to measure and report emissions, by addressing the complex challenges of calculating GHG emissions across diverse portfolios consisting of many types of financial instruments including loans, investments, insurance products and others.

(iv) Vietnam Positions Itself as Emerging Green Transition Hub in Asia

Vietnam restates its net-zero 2050 commitment and prepares new legal frameworks to attract global green capital and advanced technologies. Experts highlight Vietnam's potential to become a regional centre for green logistics, low-carbon supply chains and renewable-energy deployment. Revised national energy policies accelerate wind and solar expansion, while the government moves to resolve pricing, grid congestion, land issues and energy-storage gaps. Vietnam's challenge now lies in execution: turning its net-zero pledge, logistics ambition and renewable-energy blueprint into systems that meet international standards and attract sustained cross-border investment.

Source: https://tinyurl.com/VIETNAMGREEN-TRANSITION

We hope that the above information provided in the ESG Catalyst will be useful for professionals and inspire them to adopt ESG practices. Your suggestions and inputs on ESG Catalyst may be shared by email at **esgsb@icsi.edu.**