



ARAB HEALTHCARE  
SUSTAINABILITY CENTER

المركز العربي للاستدامة الصحية

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# Driving Change:

## Appointing a Chief Sustainability Officer for Your Organization

# How will you drive sustainability change with a CSO?

The healthcare sector is responsible for a significant portion of global carbon emissions, estimated at around 5.2%. This percentage is expected to rise if proactive measures are not implemented to minimize the environmental footprint of healthcare systems.

As hospitals and healthcare facilities continue to grow, it is essential for leaders in the sector to prioritize sustainability initiatives to curb these environmental challenges.

Implementing strategies such as energy-efficient technologies, waste reduction programs, and sustainable practices can help reduce the sector's environmental impact and safeguard public health.



## Where to start?

A good starting point for driving sustainability in healthcare organizations is to embed it across all operations. Assigning a dedicated leader, such as a Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO), can ensure accountability and oversight of key initiatives, from reducing energy consumption to improving waste management.

This focused approach can streamline efforts, making sustainability goals more achievable and impactful.



#### SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR A CSO

## What does a CSO do?

A CSO is a senior leader that will be able to:

- Create sustainability policies that align with the organization's overall objectives and regulatory requirements.
- Lead the execution of sustainability initiatives.
- Work with cross-functional teams to integrate sustainability into daily operations and decision-making processes.
- Track performance against sustainability goals, reporting progress, and ensuring transparency for stakeholders.
- Promote sustainability across the organization, educate employees, and engage with external stakeholders.

The CSO plays a crucial role in leading an organization's environmental and social responsibility efforts. He is responsible for developing, implementing, and overseeing sustainability strategies that reduce the organization's ecological footprint and contribute to long-term environmental goals.



ACTION PLAN OF A CSO

# Ecological Footprint

- Defines specific, measurable sustainability objectives that align with the organization's long-term vision. These could range from **reducing carbon emissions** and **improving energy efficiency** to **enhancing waste management practices** and sourcing sustainable materials.
- Evaluates current practices, identifies areas for improvement, and establishes a baseline for sustainability performance. This assessment should include **energy use, waste production, supply chain sustainability, and water conservation**.
- Develops Sustainable Policies and Guidelines that could include **energy-efficient building designs, sustainable procurement practices, waste segregation, and the adoption of green technologies**.



## ACTION PLAN OF A CSO

# Ecological Footprint

- Fosters a culture of sustainability by educating and engaging employees at all levels via training sessions, awareness campaigns, and incentives for sustainability initiatives.
- Rolls out practical programs like waste reduction initiatives, energy-efficient upgrades, and eco-friendly transport options.
- Uses key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress, and regularly update stakeholders on the organization's efforts and outcomes.
- Scales successful initiatives and integrates new practices as they emerge, ensuring sustainability remains a dynamic and evolving priority.

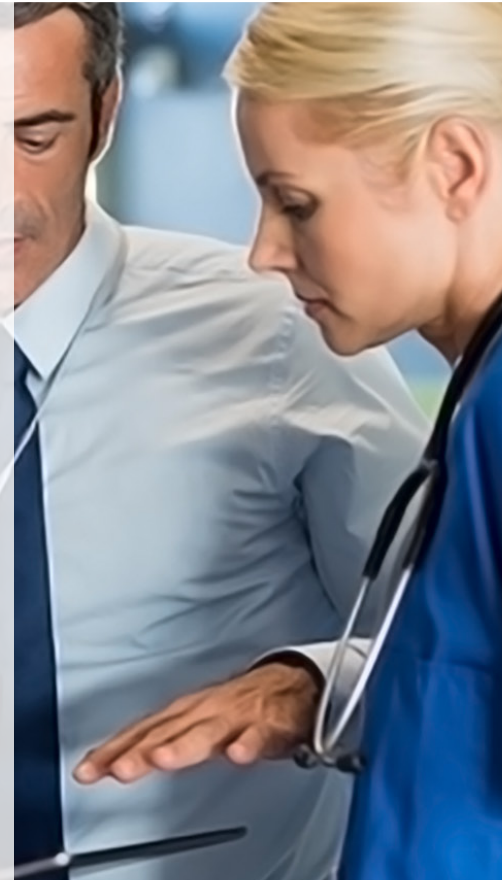




ACTION PLAN OF A CSO

# Leadership Commitment

- Works closely with senior leaders to embed sustainability into the organization's core values and strategic objectives. This ensures that the leadership team not only supports sustainability but also actively champions it across the organization.
- Engages the workforce and provides education and training on sustainable practices. Employees are encouraged to take ownership of sustainability practices, creating a more inclusive culture of sustainability.
- Designates "sustainability champions" across departments to help embed sustainable practices in daily operations.
- Ensures that both leadership and workforce efforts are tracked.

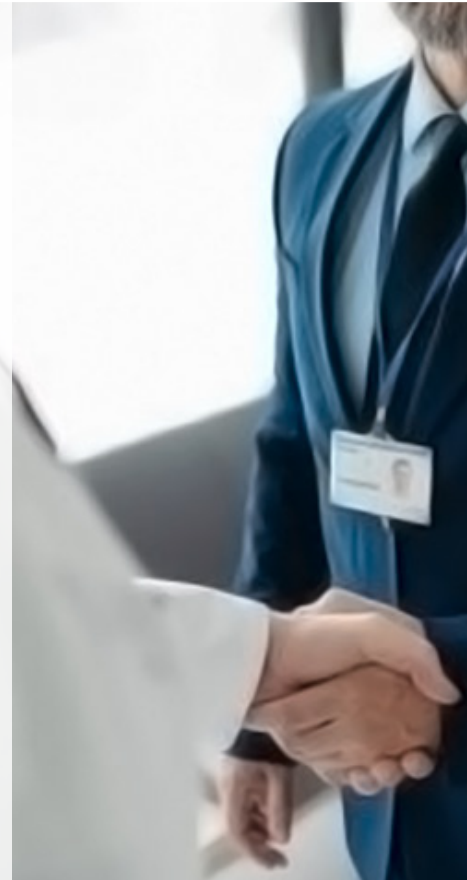


ACTION PLAN OF A CSO

# Climate & health equity interventions

Integrates climate and health equity into healthcare sustainability by executing the following strategies:

- Assessing and reducing the carbon footprint of Healthcare organizations through energy-efficient practices and waste reduction initiatives.
- Building climate-resilient infrastructure that ensures healthcare services remain operational during extreme weather events.
- Promoting health equity in sustainability efforts.
- Engaging and educating communities.
- Collaborating with stakeholders to advocate for policy change.



## Expertise, Qualifications, & Competency

- The CSO should have a strong background in leadership, with experience in managing teams, guiding strategic initiatives, and influencing organizational change, particularly in sustainability.
- A deep understanding of sustainability principles, frameworks, and best practices across various sectors is essential. This includes knowledge of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards and how they apply to healthcare or other industries.
- The ability to lead and manage large-scale sustainability projects, including budgeting, resource allocation, risk management, and meeting deadlines.





# Expertise, Qualifications, & Competency

- Understand the environmental impact of the organization and how to mitigate it, particularly with regard to carbon emissions, waste management, energy efficiency, and sustainable sourcing.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills for engaging internal stakeholders (e.g., hospital staff, department heads) and external ones (e.g., government bodies, NGOs, supply chain partners) to align sustainability goals.
- CSO needs to advocate for sustainability within the organization and beyond, often engaging with the public, policymakers, and industry groups to further the organization's sustainability goals.



## Expertise, Qualifications, & Competency

- Background in working within hospitals or healthcare organizations, familiar with their unique operational dynamics.
- Proven track record in senior-level roles, reporting directly to the CEO or board of directors, ensuring alignment with strategic goals.
- Expertise in leading diverse teams, with a focus on collaboration and achieving common objectives.
- Skilled in guiding and developing team members, fostering growth, and enhancing team performance.
- Capable of enhancing the capabilities of both individuals and teams to meet organizational goals.



## Expertise, Qualifications, & Competency

- Proficient in forming and nurturing strategic partnerships across various stakeholders to support organizational initiatives.
- Strong verbal and written communication abilities, essential for conveying ideas clearly to different audiences.
- Skilled in negotiating agreements and influencing key decision-makers to drive sustainable change.
- Capable of presenting strong, data-driven arguments to support sustainability initiatives and organizational priorities.
- Ability to link sustainability efforts with tangible benefits for patients, communities, and public health.



“True change begins when leadership commits to embedding sustainability at every level, starting with a dedicated officer to steer the vision.”



On the Occasion of the Arab Hospitals Federation Silver Jubilee, the Arab Healthcare Sustainability Center in collaboration with the AHF Healthcare Sustainability Division continues its mission by providing you a collection of guides.

Thank you to the team that worked on these guides to support Healthcare Systems, Facilities, Leaders & Providers to incorporate sustainability into all Healthcare Aspects.

Explore our Additional Resources  
[www.ahfonline.net/ahsc](http://www.ahfonline.net/ahsc)

