



Impact
Redefined

Annual Sustainability Report
2016-2017

 **SUSTAINABLE**
S Q U A R E

www.sustainablesquare.com

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1. ABOUT THIS REPORT (102-54)

1.1 Message from Co-Founders



After five years of thinking, planning, writing, debating (and occasionally arguing) the details of our growing band of loyal clients, we are pleased to present our first annual Sustainability Report.

Back in 2001, when we began thinking about founding a consultancy focused on sustainability and social investment, we aimed to address a clear gap in the regional market. We envisioned selected services that would kickstart a conversation between the private, public and nonprofit sectors, while bringing forward expectations about the responsibilities related to social and environmental governance: especially those increasingly expected from the private sector.

Alongside the classical difficulties faced by all start-ups, we were venturing into an industry that was really new to the region, and the glossary of

sustainability was still vague and under a lot of debate. We must add that we were also driven to continue with our obsession for exactly the same exact reasons! The vagueness about sustainability – and how it could be translated into daily operations, presented a broad opportunity for us. How best to define its terms? And how to build the glossary, using our backgrounds, experience, passion and the issues that needed tackling?

We both came from solid social impact backgrounds. We've used our knowledge and have created services that capitalise on our expertise which are very much needed in the market.

We have also aimed to work with larger, renowned companies in the most influential industries. Our reasoning? If we were to create any long-term impact, we had to start by working with

organisations influential enough to set recognised trends and respected benchmarks.

As time went by, and we signed up our first few clients, we were deeply curious about testing a whole range of approaches to sustainability and social impact/CSR. We are grateful that we had clients who were equally curious and open to experimentation, while giving us honest feedback. Years later, we are now to celebrate how we are redefining 'impact' – by creating meaningful, targeted approaches to our profession.

As we look back at Sustainable Square, we have found that the years 2016 and 2017 proved challenging on many levels. Regionally, economic momentum stalled due to political and economic uncertainties – along with oil price volatility and the introduction of new taxes in the UAE, impacting growth and investment. We witnessed companies making significant cuts in funding that were previously dedicated to sustainability and social impact/CSR.

On an industry level, we witnessed the rise of aggressive competition: we raced to keep ourselves differentiated and to continuously reassess the value we offered to clients. Internally, we faced an operational challenge of how to keep a healthy balance between the number of projects we managed, while ensuring we had the appropriate resources and expertise.

Looking back over these two years, we can identify many lessons learnt. Overall, we can really say that Sustainable Square has proven its resilience and ability to maintain healthy revenues, with more than 57 projects delivered. We sustained growth by expanding to new markets like Kenya, thus establishing our first hub in Africa. We continued to manage our clients' sustainability funds, which are over USD 30 Million in value. Most importantly, we stayed true to our approach of constant innovation and launched and delivered

new services, including the region's first Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA).

All of this work would not have been possible without the dedication of our passionate, talented, diverse team. We grew our team steadily. We spent, and continue to spend, significant time ensuring every new member had the right cultural fit. We ensured to prioritise character over expertise, which can always be acquired. We are proud of the team we have today and have full faith in the ability of each individual to deliver on what we believe matters: redefined impact.

As we launch our first Sustainability Report, we consider ourselves officially 'talking the talk and walking the walk'. Annual disclosure will help us improve our business, identify gaps and continue to test new methods internally before we bring them to our clients.

We thank all of our stakeholders for being with us through our journey. We invite them to continue to engage with us in an open and ongoing conversation.

Sustainably yours,

Eric Hensel & Monaem Ben Lellahom

1.2 The Beginning of Our Journey

As a dynamic, fast growing company, Sustainable Square has achieved many milestones since its inception in February 2012. The production of our first Sustainability Report covers the years 2016 and 2017, and represents our determination to uphold sustainability disclosure as an integral practice for our business.

For further context, as practices of environmental and social governance become increasingly mainstreamed by companies in the Middle East and across emerging economies, there remains ambiguity in the way these practices are implemented and measured, giving us a valuable opportunity to leverage this deficit in expertise in regions like India and Kenya.

Sustainable Square has been playing its own part in the Middle East's new methodological approach to corporate sustainability and social investment: advancing the practice of sustainability across a breadth of sectors.

This means that a growing number of major companies now understand their social, environmental and economic responsibilities, and are ready to publicise and promote their actions through advisories such as ours.

We offer advisory services to major active organisations in the sustainability and social investment space. It is therefore vital for us to encourage a culture of disclosure and

transparency, and to move towards building a sustainable global business which engages responsibly in all our areas of operation. Engaging in GRI reporting gives Sustainable Square, as a young and rapidly growing organisation, scope to understand the implications of our impact and what it means for our clients and stakeholders.

This report delves into material social, environmental and economic issues which affect Sustainable Square as a global active advisory. It explores areas from organisational culture and employee empowerment to promoting clients' impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through our work and our service innovation.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the GRI Standards: Core Option, and aligns with the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) principles. It has been produced following a detailed internal review of Sustainable Square's social, environmental & economic performance.

No third party external assurance was applied to the process and all information for material topics has been collected internally and consolidated to provide accurate content.

The data disclosed has been analysed thoroughly to assure stakeholders that the information is legitimate and aligns fully with the scope.

1.4 Sustainable Square at a Glance 2016-2017



\$30 Million worth of clients' **CSR budgets managed**



48 projects completed



14 Full Time Employees



Expanded to **2 countries** serving **10 markets**



Over **11 speaking engagements globally and regionally** at key **CSR and Sustainability Events**



12 industry articles, 1 white paper and 7 reports published between 2016 and 2017



First Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) of GCC completed in 2017



Trained 500 practitioners in Social Return On Investment (SROI)



Male to Female Ratio: **1:1.25**

0%

Employee turnover in 2016 and 2017



1.3 Contact Point (102-53)

For further information on our performance and activities in these areas, please contact: **Eric Hensel** eric@sustainable-square.com



2. WHO WE ARE

(102-02)(102-03)(102-04)(102-10)



2.1 Overview

Eric Hensel conducting a Social Impact workshop at Al Ahli Group CSR in ACTION 2017, in Dubai.

Sustainable Square is a Dubai-based, global advisory firm offering specialised services in sustainability management, responsible investment and social impact. Operating for six years, Sustainable Square has grown to offer a breadth of advisory services to companies in emerging markets, establishing a presence across three continents including Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

We support organisations to help them identify sustainability risks, empower them to become more resilient, drive and up-scale their impact and assist them in conducting their operations in a responsible and inclusive manner.

With each year of operation, Sustainable Square

continues to gain in strength as we develop our portfolio working with leading organisations and companies in more than 10 markets. Developing strong regional partnerships, to create innovative and customised services for clients, means that we approach our work in a collaborative spirit, engaging closely with stakeholders and industry experts to introduce innovative solutions following a creative advisory style.

Driven by our motto **#Impact_Redefined**, we focus on developing the most advanced practices in the field – provoking new concepts and challenging existing models, as we endeavour to create purpose-built strategic solutions for the benefit of our clients, partners and the industry at large.

development of an integrated culture that highly respects ethics, robust policies and a sound values system.

2.2 Our Core Strengths and Business Conduct

The clients we serve promote Sustainable Square as a high-values-driven advisory. It has become our sign of success and exposure. Since our inception, we have invested heavily in the

2.2.1 Our Values

1

Embodying Principles of Responsible Business, Integrity and Transparency

Serving our clients and stakeholders with the highest degree of impartiality, Sustainable Square endorses a strong base of business ethics and values. We conduct our work through an honest and transparent working style as we manage client relations, project expectations and pricing practices with a fair approach.

2

Advancing a Global Culture of Innovation

We aim to be at the forefront of the industry and strive to introduce new practices by challenging, provoking and advancing current models. Rather than replicating conventional methods, our focus is to redefine impact through developing the next set of practices, tools and methods.

3

Always Prioritise Stakeholder Engagement

In all our assignments and projects we place utmost importance on implementing an in-depth stakeholder engagement process that engages people from all aspects of a client's business. This allows us to develop valuable insights that can be transformative to the culture and management of a company or community.

4

Human Values and Workplace Synergy

Striving to cultivate the best talent, Sustainable Square is dedicated to the professional and personal development of its people, supporting our advisors in their career aspirations through a flexible and inclusive work culture. This allows everyone to contribute to the growth of the organisation, while maximising their own skills and expertise.

5

Client Partnerships

Managing client relations so that there is a consistent channel of communication allows Sustainable Square to establish close working relationships, enabling the development of collaborative alliances. Through our client engagement process, we become an extended arm of the company and is seen by the client as a strategic partner in facilitating change and impact through its social and environmental strategies.

6

Generating Value and Market Intelligence

As an efficiency-driven organisation, Sustainable Square prioritises knowledge-sharing and management to deliver competitive advantage and the highest strategic value to our clients, both locally and globally.

2.4 Our History

2011	Monaem Ben Lellahom and Eric Hensel reconnected in Jordan some years after working together in AIESEC. They decided to capitalise on their old friendship and expertise in the field of CSR, sustainability and community impact	Both started work on the development process of the idea, business plan and project that focused on impact and sustainability in the Middle East			
2012	Sustainable Square was officially established in Dubai , United Arab Emirates	First project signed in the UAE : Emirates NBD, Social Return on Investment (SROI) Analysis	Sustainable Square produced the first SROI Analysis in the Arab World - Coverations, Emirates NBD		
2013	Produced the North Africa CSR Study : a comparative analysis between Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco	First project signed in Kuwait : Al Sayer Group, Sustainability Strategy	Produced the first research strategy for Entrepreneurship Opportunities for people of determination in the UAE		
2014	Established Sustainable Square India Ltd with an office in Mumbai	First project signed in Oman : Omran, SROI	Sustainable Square produces the first SROI Analysis of Oman - Intajee & Zaree	First project signed in Qatar : Vodafone, Sustainability Strategy and Report	First project signed in India : Omkar Developers, Community Needs Assessment
2015	Sustainable Square set up a partnership in Oman , with an office in Muscat	Sustainable Square set up a partnership in Saudi Arabia , with an office in Riyadh	First project signed in Saudi Arabia : Maaden, Social Impact	Developed the first version of the PERStakeholder Materiality Tool	
2016	Established Sustainable Square Kenya Ltd with an office in Nairobi	Established Sustainable Square Ltd as a holding company for UAE, Kenya and India	Delivered our first sustainability report quality assurance in the UAE	Activated partnership with AIESEC in the UAE and its global HQ	Organised the first Sustainable Square Summit in Dubai, with delegates and team members from five countries.
2017	Partnerships in Oman and KSA ended and management of both markets shifted to the UAE offices	First project signed in Kenya : Kenya Commercial Bank, impact measurement for 3 country flagship programmes	Conducted a CSR & sustainability landscape research for eight Asian countries and produced two country insights: for Indonesia and Malaysia.	Produced the first Human Rights Impact Assessment in the region	

2.5 Our Expertise and Services

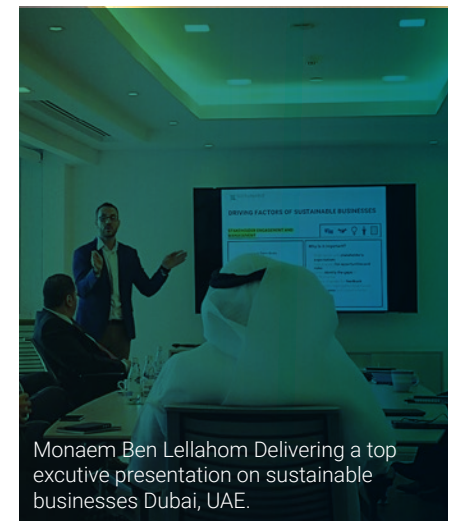
With our experience from multiple vocations, we at Sustainable Square believe it is our diverse background that informs our expertise of the sustainability and social impact landscape. With our people coming from a wide range of cultural, professional and academic backgrounds, our expertise in sustainability and social impact has been developed through extensive experience in numerous fields and markets, creating integrated specialisation and a comprehensive understanding of sustainability and CSR solutions.

Working with both regional and international clients, our expertise in the sustainability and social impact sectors extend beyond the local context of our markets of operation, as it is derived from continuous learning and the advancement of global best practices. Staying informed of

global industry developments, while applying global methodologies and principles to regional programmes, differentiates Sustainable Square as a leading practitioner of social impact: it is the depth and breadth of our diversified insights that allow us to deliver comprehensive offerings to clients.

Our expertise is complemented by industry accreditation. Our advisors have attended certified trainings in Social Return On Investment (SROI), GRI Standards, Impact Investing and sustainability management and leadership. Knowledge sharing and proactive engagement remain central practices at Sustainable Square, as frequent collaborations with industry practitioners allows us to nurture local networks for sustainability and social impact in the GCC

	Sustainability Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Materiality Analysis Sustainability GRI Reporting Sustainability Benchmark Analysis Sustainability Value Chain Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Report Quality Assurance Stakeholder Management Sustainability Strategy
	Social Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Investment (CSR) strategies Social Impact Measurement (SROI) SROI Training Portfolio IMPACT Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and Evaluation Human Rights Impact Assessment Impact Studies
	Responsible Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) Rating Sustainable Finance Impact Investing 	
	Carbon Footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reporting Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) 	
	Philanthropy & Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundations Management NGO Operational Sustainability Zakat Fund Management 	



Monaem Ben Lellahom Delivering a top executive presentation on sustainable businesses Dubai, UAE.



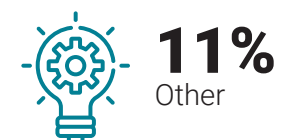
Moniem Ben Lellahom Delivering an impact measurement training for the National Center for Performance, Measurement (Aadaa) in Riyadh, KSA.

2.6 Projects Delivered

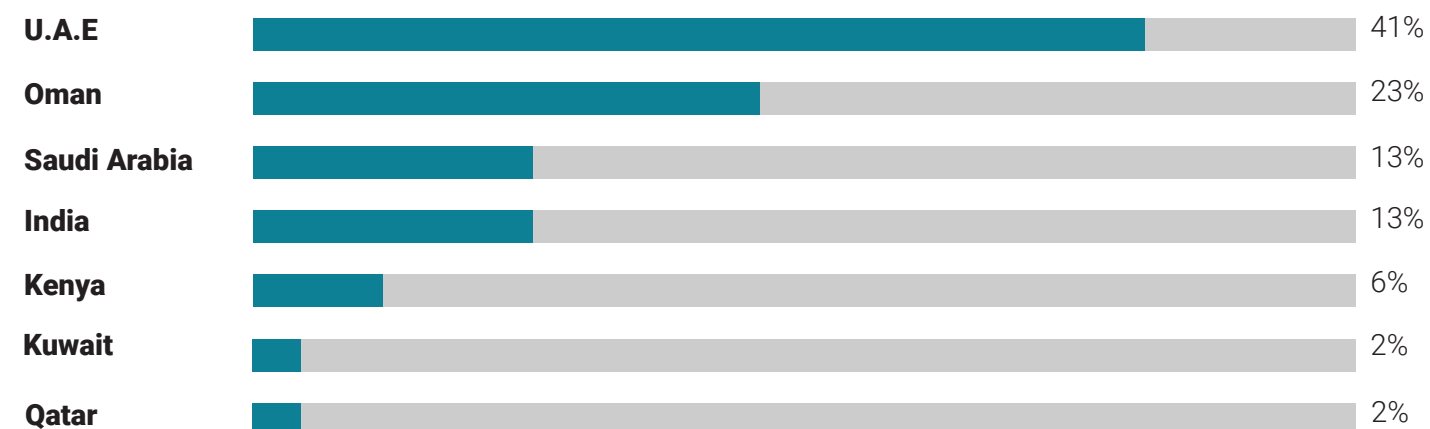
2016 and 2017 were prosperous years for Sustainable Square, as our global advisors worked with a range of clients to deliver a variety of services including SROI training, Sustainability

Assessments, GRI reporting and Impact Studies for various sectors. **The total number of projects delivered by Sustainable Square during this period: 48 Projects delivered.**

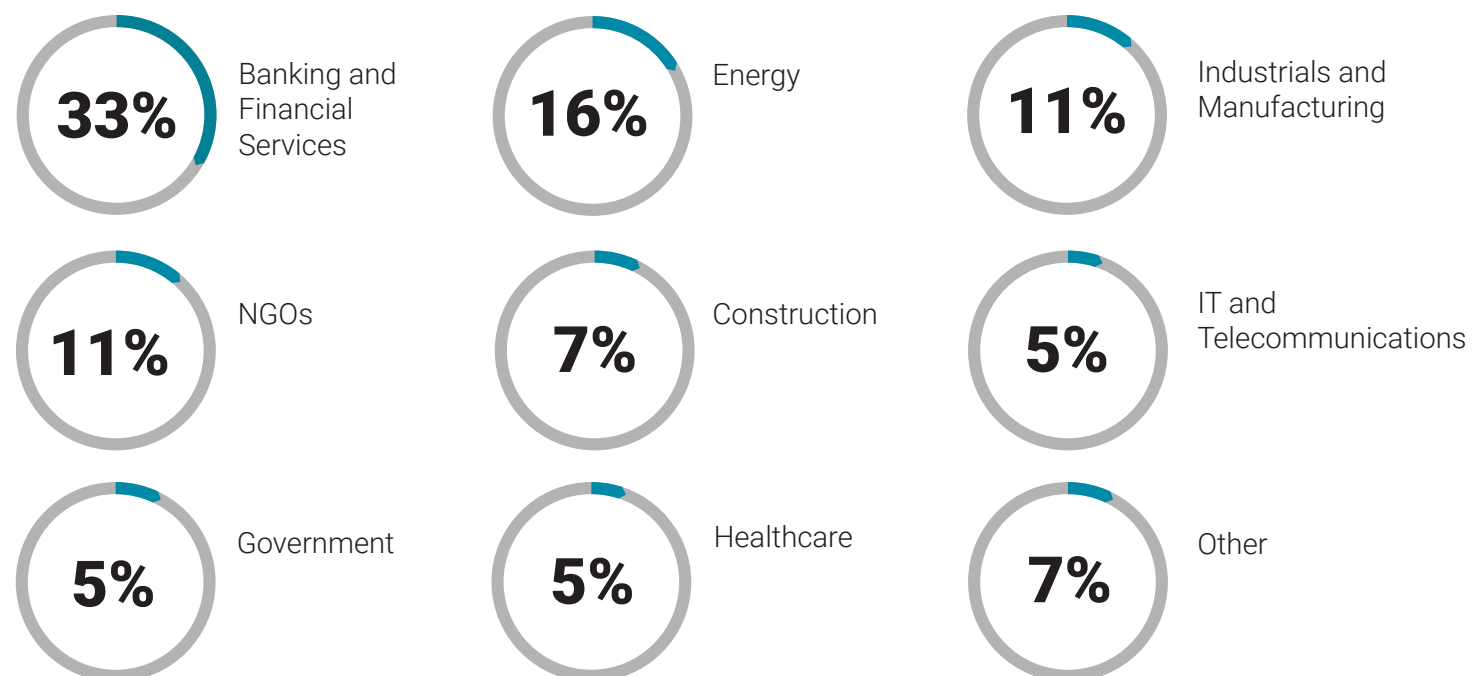
Projects by Product



Projects by Countries



Projects by Sectors



2.6 Our Suppliers (102-9) (103-1) (103-2) (103-3) (414-1) (204-1)

Our business operations required only a limited amount of purchasing activities. Our supply chain and procurement practices therefore are not considered as high risk in the framework of assignments and projects. Regardless,

Sustainable Square encourages purchasing of sustainable materials and services, such as the usage of environmental-friendly alternatives, and locally-sourced procurement needs.

2.7 Rewards and Recognition

February 2017: Senior Advisor, Mohammed Jebreel participated as a judge for the Gulf Sustainability and CSR Awards for two consecutive years.

June 2016: Monaem Ben Lellahom participated in the Ajman Ramadan Majlis, hosted by H.E. Salem Ahmed Al Nuaimi. Focusing on Green Economy, Monaem tackled the issue of Responsible Investment and Sustainability as enablers for building a Green Economy.

February 2016: Hana Alawi addressed the Global Women's Forum in Dubai with a keynote on the impact created when investing in women's community programmes.

January 2016: Eric Hensel delivered a keynote on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to executives from Dubai Municipality, the UAE Ministry of Environment & Water and Department of Sustainability & Climate Change at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2.9 Memberships and Associations (102-12) (102-13)

Strategic partnerships within the region and the global sustainability and CSR community have helped Sustainable Square remain connected to influential social organisations – assisting us to advance our vision for promoting social impact and development. Over our years of operation, we have established a rich ecosystem of networks

with various associations, such as Social Value International.

Members of Sustainable Square are registered with renowned sustainability and business associations both in the UAE and internationally.

These include:

- The International Society of Sustainability Professionals
- The Foundation of Sustainability and Responsibility in Africa (FSRA)
- The Tunisian Business Council in Dubai and Northern Emirates
- YoungProfNet: A global youth network for environmental and social development professionals
- Kenya Forests Working Group: A Gender and Climate Change Working Group

2.8 Speaking Opportunities

- Social Impact Summit “Ta’attheer”, 2017 - Dubai, UAE
- CSR in Action, 2017 - Dubai, UAE
- 18th CSR & Sustainability meeting, 2017 - Dubai, UAE
- The Social Enterprise - The Art of Doing Business & Doing Good, 2017 - Dubai, UAE
- Social Value Matters, 2017 - Istanbul, Turkey
- African Green Revolution Forum, 2016 - Nairobi, Kenya
- SDGs For Dubai, 2016 - Dubai, UAE
- Arab Foundation Forum, 2016 – Abu Dhabi, UAE
- Palestine CSR Conference, 2016 – Ramallah, Palestine





3. OUR BUSINESS & SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH

(103-1)(103-2)(103-3)(201-1)

As a maturing start-up that continues to grow its brand credibility, Sustainable Square strives to pioneer practices by developing CSR and impact measurement models that take into account the full range of a business impact.

As businesses shift away from traditional CSR frameworks, Sustainable Square positions itself in the forefront of this change and works to initiate new systems by innovating services and improving current reporting and investment practices.

3.1 Global Reach, Local Focus (102-3)(102-4) (102-6) (102-7)

Sustainable Square's business activities are conducted as decentralised operations, under the same brand and with common processes and systems. A strong corporate culture with shared values ensures that we work together and leverage all experience and skills that are represented by our people within the organisation.

While we continue to strengthen our local presence, we continuously seek opportunities for potential expansions of our business footprint between the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia. Our expansion to India and Kenya have been

3.1.1 Sustainable Square UAE



As global momentum for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) continues, Sustainable Square is in a unique position to lead the industry with a new approach to sustainability disclosure and social investment. More importantly, we act as an agent of innovation and disruptive change within our markets of operations – initiating sustainability and CSR services by advancing sustainability and social impact reporting for companies across a breadth of sectors and geographies.

strategic milestones in our strategy to become a truly global sustainability advisory firm, as we continue our progress towards increasing our revenues in new markets outside of the Middle East.

Both expansions have allowed us to serve new types of clients in new and challenging business environments. Yet they present a unique set of opportunities, including knowledge diversification, client servicing in multiple markets, implementing business efficiencies and identifying low-cost outsourcing opportunities.

Sustainable Square Consultancy and Think Tank (UAE) serves as the primary hub of the organisation, housing the majority of our core team. Located in the heart of the city of Dubai, the office oversees and coordinates our operations throughout the Middle East, including our markets in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan. The Dubai office also serves as a global

3.1.2 Sustainable Square India

With a base in Mumbai, Sustainable Square offers advisory services in Impact Assessment, CSR Strategy and Sustainability Management. Having already completed projects in agriculture, manufacturing and cosmetics, our India HQ prioritises development of non-profit affiliations, strategic partnerships with local organisations, providing training in Impact Assessment to local businesses and conducting baseline studies for corporate clients.

Expanding our market intelligence in this region allows us to lead in the social impact space, as our advisors work on the ground to cultivate local insights with specific organisations, so that we can interpret and translate this knowledge into localised solutions.

Innovating services, in order to offer unique tools and methods of impact measurement,

headquarters for Sustainable Square Limited, managing a range of shared administrative functions like Financial Management, IT, HR and Branding & Communications. In this way decisions and longer-term developments for the organisation are made and then consigned to our global offices.

thus brings a crucial opportunity to differentiate ourselves from established competitors, as we work to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and connect organisations from different tiers.

In the coming years, Sustainable Square India plans to invest in further training and education, so as to spread the teaching of impact measurement techniques in the region.

Impact investing is also a major opportunity for development by the India team, as the social entrepreneurship sector continues to grow rapidly and is supported extensively by both public and private institutions. Developing products in this area offers Sustainable Square major business development opportunities for sustained future growth.



3.1.3 Sustainable Square Kenya



Eric Hensel speaking at the Africa CEO Round Table and Conference in Lagos - Nigeria

Since inception, Sustainable Square Kenya has gained attention for the services we offer in sustainability and social impact. We work to target established, substantial businesses, mostly ones that are listed in the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE), for their potential in initiating community impact programmes.

To date, Impact Management and Assessment remain the most sought-after advisory services, as more institutions foster disclosure practices to demonstrate the impact of their community investments. Sustainability disclosure and reporting are new practices in the region, as most companies consider impact measurement as an expensive undertaking. Moreover, business associations such as the Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE) and The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) partnerships are yet to implement core practices of corporate sustainability, as these require specialised expertise and knowledge of sustainability and social impact measurement techniques.

Through research and on-the-ground experience, Sustainable Square Kenya has identified our need for strategic affiliations and partnerships with both for profit and non-profit organisations,

as sustainability gains acceptance. With the availability of funds, and a willingness by multi-stakeholder to address pressing societal challenges in the region, the market offers several opportunities for impact investment. This is fuelled by the interest of private and not-for-profit organisations which continuously seek to measure the impact of their projects.

Our vision for Kenya is to create an East African hub for sustainability and social investment advisory through strategic partnerships – as Sustainable Square Kenya continues to spread its impact and looks to serve surrounding markets such as Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

With the aim of targeting long term, continuous projects through our impact assessment services, we combine our measurement models with monitoring and evaluation principles for continuous phase-to-phase assessment and reporting. In all these aspects, Sustainable Square Kenya looks to partner with local community organisations and large businesses in delivering on our promises, providing robust business development opportunities for the benefit of both clients and society.

3.2 Our Sustainability Approach





3.2.1 Engaging with Our Stakeholders (102-8) (102-21) (102-40) (102-42) (102-43) (102-44)

Fostering a dialogue with key stakeholders is a crucial element in managing our sustainability agenda. It helps us better understand and communicate the topics that are of most importance to our stakeholders and to our company, and to create roadmaps based on these priorities.

which entailed engagement with multiple groups of internal and external stakeholders. We identify stakeholders as groups or individuals which have significant influence on, or are influenced by, our operations – including direct and indirect impact resulting from our work.

As part of publishing this report, Sustainable Square conducted a materiality analysis exercise

The table below lists all the stakeholder groups that we have identified:

Stakeholder Group	Frequency of Engagement	Engagement Avenues	Material Topics Identified
 Sustainable Square Colleagues	Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily engagement through meetings and project tasks Weekly wrap-up meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company Culture and Values Innovation Systematization Employee Wellness Coaching and Mentoring
 Governance Board	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-annual Meetings with the Board of Advisors Quarterly reports and communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance Accountability & Transparency Financial Stability
 Sustainability Practitioners	Occasionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry events and panel discussions Annual Conferences and Summits Collaborative projects Online discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry knowledge and expertise Products' and services' innovation Communicating practices and achievements Publishing data, studies and research Organizing CSR/Sustainability meetups Knowledge sharing
 Partners	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative projects Industry events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for collaboration Future development of the partnership Knowledge sharing

Stakeholder Group	Frequency of Engagement	Engagement Avenues	Material Topics Identified
 Suppliers	Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly maintenance services Collaborative projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future business opportunities Bargaining, offers and discounts Fair selection of suppliers
 Clients	Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-Face meetings and engagements Conference calls Kick off meetings Industry events Panels and Conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair Pricing Data privacy and confidentiality Technical quality servicing Brand and reputation Ethics and integrity Products and services innovation

3.3 Materiality and Identifying the Report's Scope

(102-46) (102-47) (102-48) (102-49) (102-50)

Identification of material sustainability topics enables Sustainable Square to align its strategies, operations and processes accordingly. To determine our material topics, we followed the

principles of Stakeholder Inclusiveness and Materiality as per the GRI Standards. This process included the following steps:

1 Research and Review

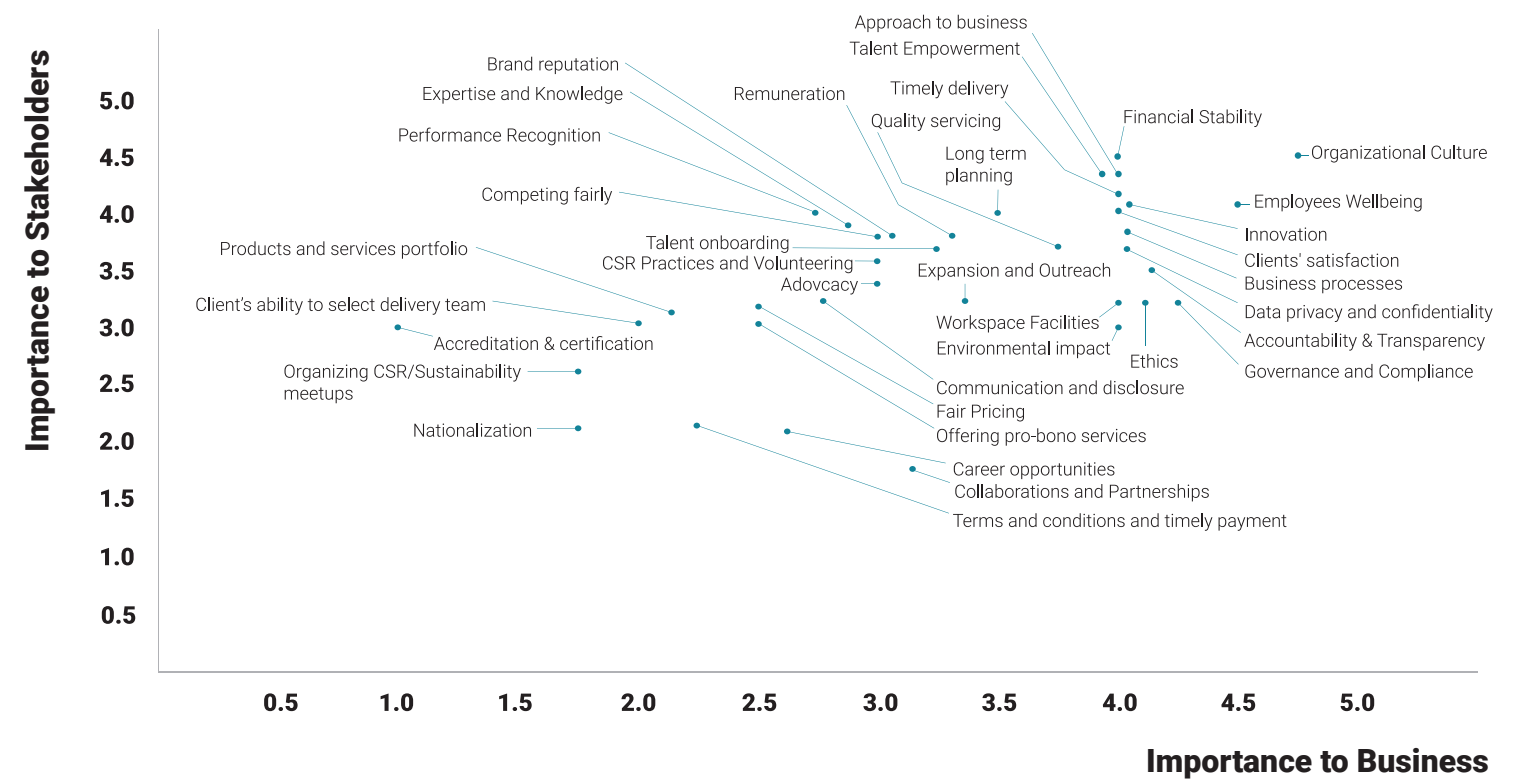
We began by using our expertise in the field, plus knowledge of our industry, to come up with topics that could potentially be material for our business and stakeholders. We then conducted a thorough review of our business model, strategies, operational plans, goals and KPIs to come up with the final list of 38 topics to be rated by our stakeholders.

2 Stakeholders' Ratings

We subsequently engaged our stakeholders to rate the materiality of these topics from their individual perspectives, and we asked our team of management and employees to rate the same topics from their perspectives as well. The rating system used was a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being least material and 5 being most material.

3 Outcomes

The topics were then mapped on the materiality matrix in three areas: high, medium and low materiality. The content of the report was then based mostly on the topics that were considered highly material; which received a rating of 3.50 and above, and which can be seen in the top right quadrant. We also addressed other select topics in the remaining quadrants to shed some light on additional sustainability efforts.



Sustainable Square Materiality Matrix

3.4 Material Topics and Impact Boundaries

(102-46) (102-47)

The table below lists all the material topics identified by Sustainable Square, along with the corresponding GRI topic and impact boundaries.

No.	Material Theme	GRI Material Topic	Impact Boundary
1	Company culture and values	Organisational profile (Products and Services), Employment (401)	Employees
2	Investment in colleagues' wellbeing	Occupational Health and Safety (403)	Employees
3	Financial stability	Economic performance	Employees, Suppliers
4	Communication, engagement and attitude	Economic performance	Clients, Partners, Governance Board
5	Timely delivery	Organisational profile (Products and Services)	Clients
6	Talent empowerment	Employment (401)	Employees
7	Advisory services innovation	Organisational Profile (Products and Services)	Employees, Clients, Partners
8	Clients' satisfaction	Organisational Profile (Products and Services)	Clients
9	Internal business processes	Organisational Profile (Products and Services)	Clients, Partners, Governance Board

No.	Material Theme	GRI Material Topic	Impact Boundary
10	Data privacy and confidentiality	Customer privacy (418)	Clients, Partners, Governance Board
11	Accountability & transparency	Governance (102-18), Ethics and Integrity (102-16)	Clients, Partners, Governance Board
12	Governance and compliance	Governance (102-18)	Clients, Governance Board
13	Ethical practices and integrity	Ethics and integrity (102-16)	Employees, Clients, Partners, Governance Board
14	Technical quality Servicing	Ethics and integrity (102-16)	Clients, Partners
15	Workspace facilities	Employment (401)	Employees
16	Remuneration	Employment (401), Governance (102-35)	Employees
17	Recruitment and induction	Employment (401)	Employees
18	Environmental impact	Environment (300)	Employees
19	Industry and market knowledge	Organisational profile (Products and Services)	Clients, Partners, Governance Board
20	Brand and reputation	Organisational profile (Products and Services)	Clients, Partners, Governance Board
21	Performance recognition	Employment (401)	Employees
22	Competing in a responsible and fair manners	Ethics and integrity (102-16)	Clients, Governance Board
23	Markets presence	Organisational profile (Products and Services)	Clients, Partners, Governance Board
24	CSR practices and volunteering	Local communities (413)	Local Community
25	Supporting regulatory framework	Governance (102-18),	Clients, Partners, Governance Board
26	Communication and disclosure	Ethics and integrity (102-16)	Clients, Partners, Governance Board
27	Offering pro-bono services	Organisational profile (Products and Services)	Clients, Partners
28	Products and services portfolio	Organisational profile (Products and Services)	Clients, Partners
29	Bargaining, offers and discounts	Organisational profile (Products and Services)	Clients, Partners, Suppliers
30	Client's ability to select delivery team	Organisational profile (Products and Services)	Clients
31	Collaborations and partnerships	Collaborations and partnerships	Clients, Partners, Governance Board

No.	Material Theme	GRI Material Topic	Impact Boundary
32	Career opportunities	Employment (401)	Employees
33	Terms and conditions and timely payment	Governance (102-18),	Clients
34	Organizing CSR/sustainability meetups	Local communities (413)	Local Community
35	Accreditation & certification	Organisational profile (Products and Services)	Clients
36	Nationalization	Employment (401)	Employees

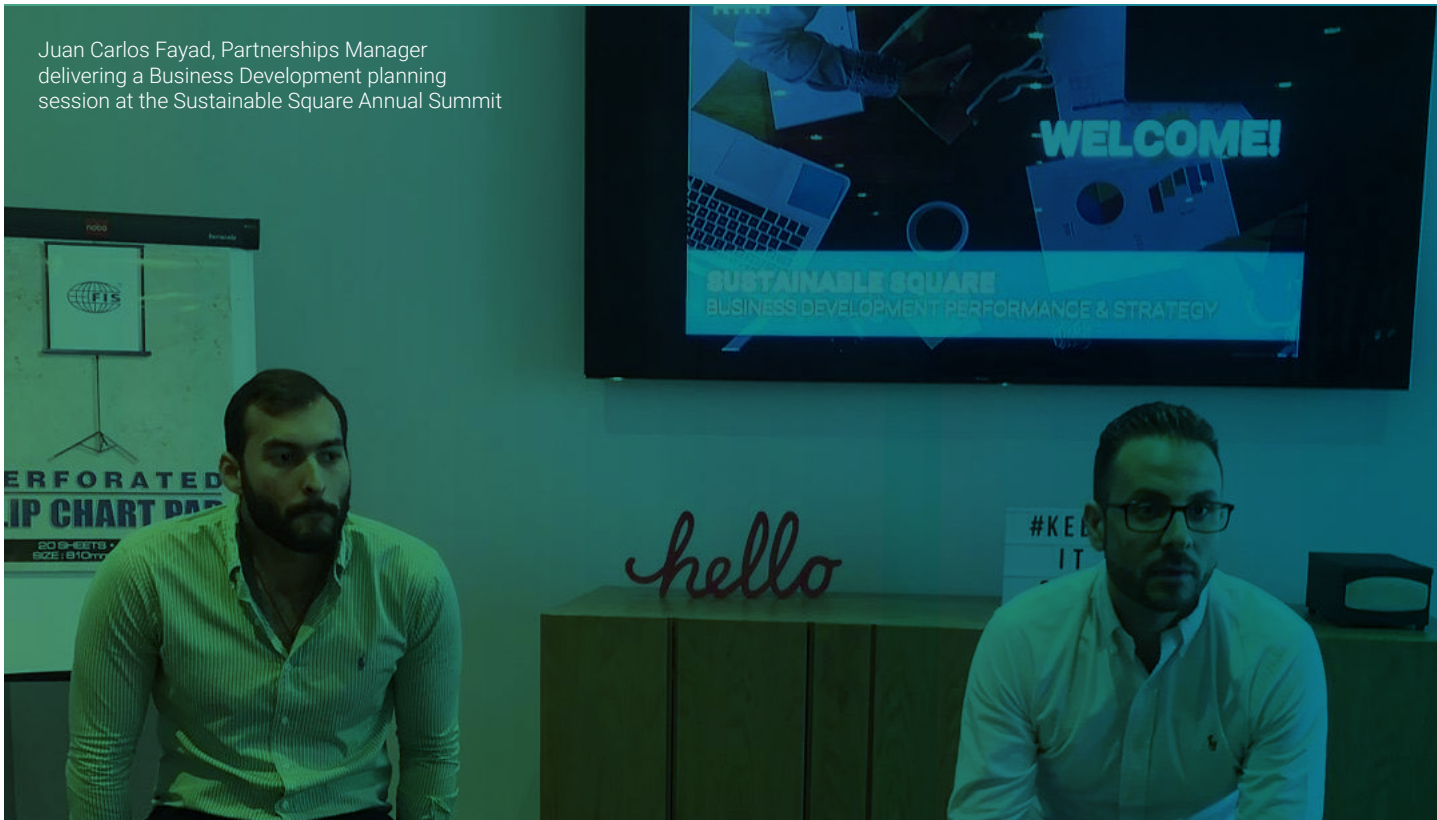
3.5 Our Sustainability Framework

Together with our stakeholders, we focus on operating our business in a sustainable manner by creating economic growth, tackling social challenges and promoting environmental sustainability in our communities. Our commitment is manifested on an organisational

level through our own practices, and through the impact we enable our clients to achieve.

Our commitment to sustainability is detailed in the **#Impact_Redefined** Sustainability Framework below:





3.6 Our Business Strategy

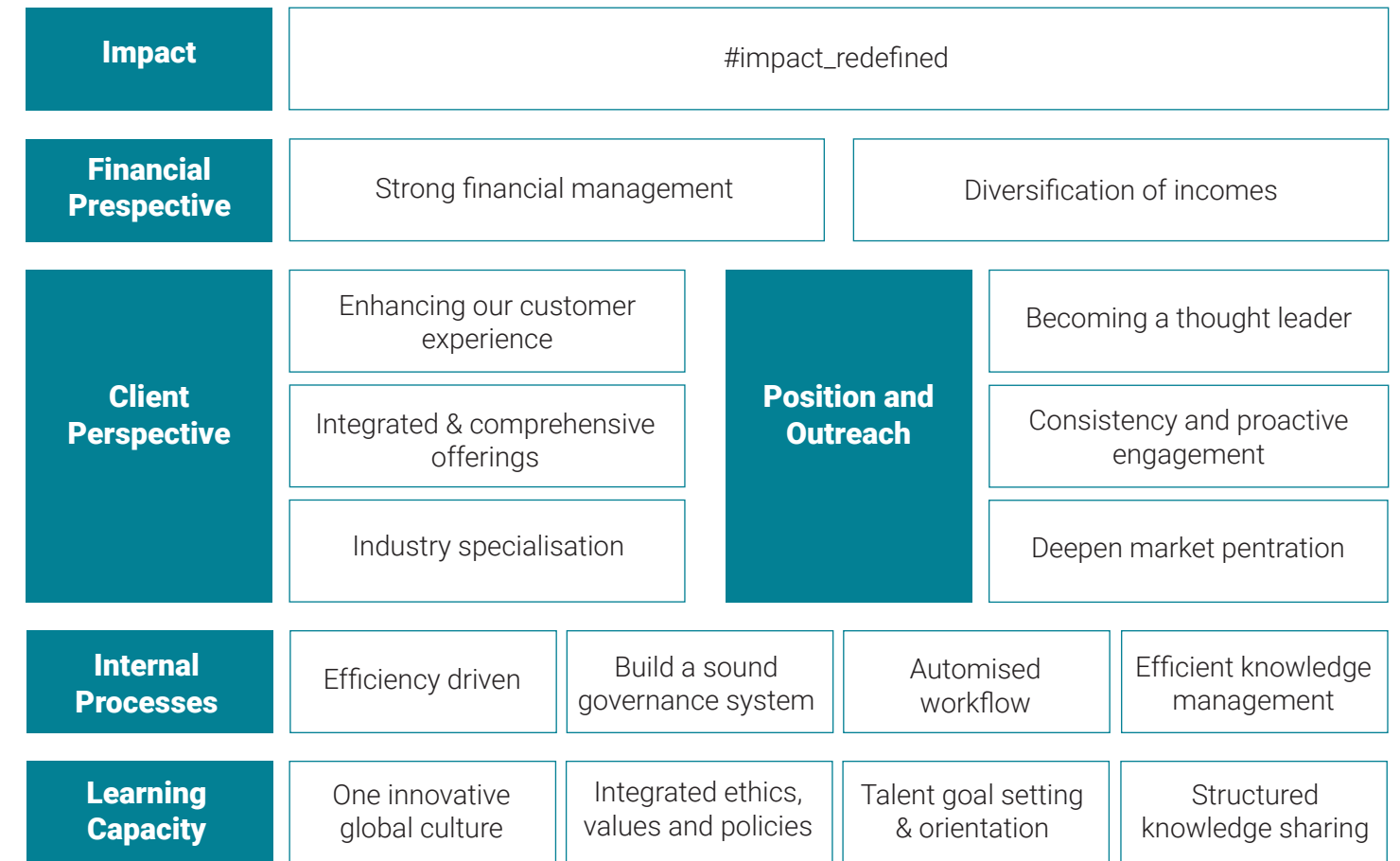
Sustainable Square fosters a hybrid business model which blends traditional components of an SME business with impact-oriented strategic priorities. Specifically, the inclusion of 'organisational impact' (which we have branded as **#Impact_Redefined**) as a key strategy differentiates our business approach from other conventional for-profit agencies that do not typically invest beyond achieving optimal financial performance.

As part of our business mapping process, Sustainable Square uses a balanced scorecard, which acts as the organisation's key management tool for aligning our operational tactics and strategies with our wider vision and mission. This tool takes into account the Critical Success Factors (CSF) that affect Sustainable Square and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will impact internal decision making for the achievement of set goals and targets.

The use of a balanced scorecard gives us an insight into past performance and how Sustainable Square can progress towards successful future development. In addition, using a balanced scorecard allows us to track the financial health of the organisation, as we refer to this tool as part of our monthly financial disclosure, helping us maintain a healthy and prosperous organisation that is fulfilling its targeted KPIs.

Engaging in a thorough evaluation process to continually assess our targets, results and performance, our business targets are revised on a quarterly basis to review the average of our KPIs and the performance of CSFs. From this review, we can judge how well business targets are being achieved and how we can alter current strategies to maximise the value of our impact – to the mutual benefit of clients and Sustainable Square.

The illustration below outlines our strategic business map for the next three years



3.7 Risk Management (102-11) (102-30)

Addressing risk is a reality for every business irrespective of size, sector or market impact. Being transparent about the risks we face as an organisation in an increasingly competitive

market, means that risks have to be accurately identified and addressed – with appropriate strategies that will secure future growth and development.

3.7.1 Our Risks:

1

Market Instability

The economic and geopolitical instability of the GCC region is a significant risk for Sustainable Square, particularly in the UAE, where constant fluctuation in oil prices affect the pricing of our services. Implementing fair pricing practices becomes even more critical to us as an advisory, if we wish to remain competitive in the market

2

Lack of Client Knowledge and Experience

As advisors on sustainability, CSR and social impact, a common obstacle in our work is encountering a lack of awareness from clients about sustainability and social investment practices. This poses a challenge to us, as this can affect the way we communicate and build client relationships. This risk runs in tandem with an absence of knowledge, as our clients are often producing a sustainability or SROI report for the first time. First time adopters of these practices are generally unclear about the phases and key milestones involved around implementation, and the often do not understand the opportunities around disclosures. We therefore approach these scenarios with enhanced communication plans to reassure clients about the process and its benefits to the company, helping to ensure a more fruitful engagement process

3

A Compliance-Driven Market

Often, clients do not see beyond compliance and only follow mandated practices for sustainability and CSR. National laws and regulations remain the key drivers for companies intending to invest in sustainability and social investment practices. Our role as advisors is to empower our clients with a progressive mindset that overtakes purely compliance-based decision-making

4

Competition and Pricing

Sustainable Square faces a complex and diverse competition eco-system, composed of actors from multinational firms, specialised CSR firms, PR and communications agencies and freelancers. Each category presents a different approach to pricing, which makes it challenging for Sustainable Square to develop a defined pricing strategy

5

Tender Evaluation and Negotiation

Lack of knowledge in procurement departments about the level of effort involved in delivering specific services makes the evaluation process cost-based – rather than taking into consideration the quality of proposed deliverables

6

Payment Practices

Massive delays remain a common risk relating to the payment of delivered milestones based on agreed terms and conditions. Practices such as 100% post-completion payments are additional risks in this area, having an adverse impact on cash flow management and the financial sustainability of the organisation

7

Standardising and Systemising our Operations

As Sustainable Square increasingly works with more clients in different markets, maintaining the quality of our services and ensuring that we continue to deliver the highest standards is vital

3.8 Financial Management

Following the initial start-up phase, a business needs to incorporate financial management frameworks that regulate the growth of the business as it develops incrementally.

The growth of Sustainable Square is measured against our financial, sales and account servicing performances, which are tracked on a weekly basis to review progress. In particular, our pricing frameworks are adapted to specific sectors and markets to ensure that we practice as a responsible organisation and remain aligned with local pricing benchmarks.

Our business model is characterised by strong cash generation, low capital needs, low working capital requirements, negligible debt, and securing attractive returns on equity.

Sustainable Square is a near zero-debt company, and we fund our growth entirely through internal accounts.

The structural attributes of our business model are sustainable and we continually scan the environment for potential threats using our robust risk management framework.

To achieve financial sustainability, Sustainable Square prioritises the following key practices:

- **Maintaining a healthy cash flow:** Managing financial transactions on a daily basis in order to make instant decisions on necessary payments, thus ensuring a healthy cash flow for our operations
- **Collection of Payment:** Ensuring the submission of zero error invoices on time and based on clients' payment instructions. This entails the practice of consistent follow-ups to secure timely payments
- **Optimising Investment Decisions:** Reviewing operational needs and priorities in order to make the right financial decisions that ensure value will be added to our operations
- **Careful financial planning and budgeting:** Ensuring full understanding of our business and sales cycles and aligning these with financial planning to allocate the necessary budgets to maintain progressive and healthy operations

The bulk of our revenue comes from working directly with clients—those organisations which hire Sustainable Square to help them develop and implement a sustainability strategy and manage their social impact work. That work includes assessments for sustainability and Human Rights, stakeholder engagement, sustainable

supply-chain management, the production of sustainability reports, measurement of social impact, development of social investment strategies, and specific tasks like carbon management, sustainability assurance and training programmes.

A teal-tinted photograph of a meeting around a wooden table. Several hands are visible, some holding a white pen, others pointing at a document on a clipboard. A tablet is being held by one hand. The scene is dimly lit, with a focus on the collaborative work environment.

4. Governance and Ethics (102-16) (102-17)

The way in which we innovate, collaborate and deliver value to our clients and our shareholders is grounded on our core strengths and shared business ethics.

Sustainable Square’s sustainability work is based on the ten principles enshrined in the UNGC which endorses respect for human rights, securing reasonable working conditions and engaging in practices of anti-corruption.

These principles influence Sustainable Square’s core values of promoting outstanding and motivated employees, plus a strong culture of teamwork and autonomy.

Sustainable Square Ltd (the holding group) is established under the Ajman free zone as an Ajman International Business Company and is

duly authorised to exercise therein all the power invested in the company.

It has been incorporated in accordance with the authority conferred by Ajman Amiri Decree No. 2 issued in the year 2014.

Sustainable Square’s corporate governance matters are covered in our Memorandum and Articles of Association, which form the governance framework of our organisation.

The document outlines the role of the Board of Directors and shareholding rights, the management of general meetings and shares, directors’ appointments and interests, dividend distribution and other general governance practices.

4.1 Our Shareholding Structure (102-45)

Sustainable Square limited is currently directed by two shareholders and one legal secretary:



Monaem Ben Lellahom

Holds 50% ownership



Hana Alawi

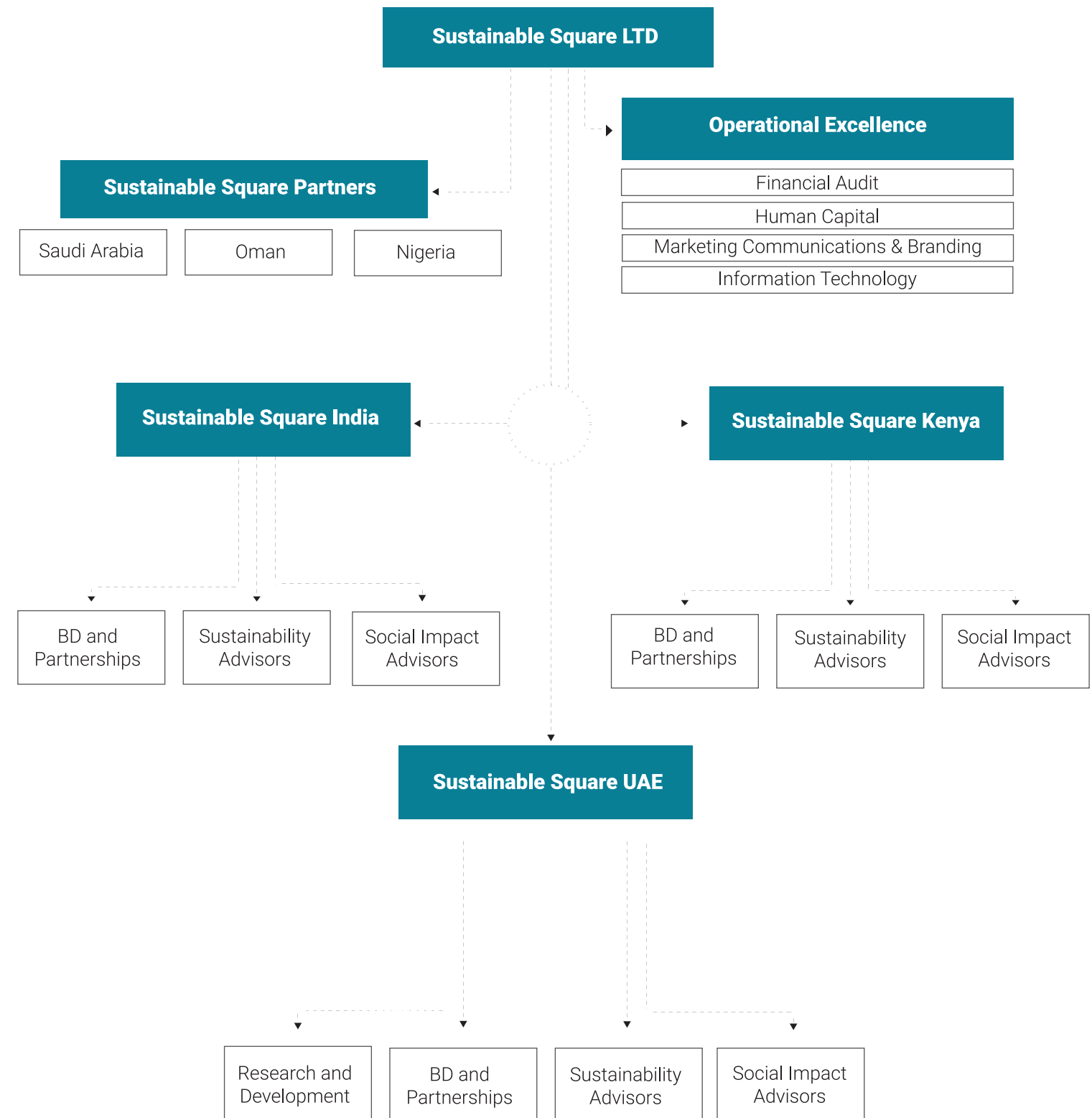
Holds 50% ownership



Eric Hensel

Appointed Legal Secretary of Sustainable Square

4.2 Organisational Structure (102-5) (102-45)



4.3 Our Code of Conduct

The Sustainable Square Code of Business Conduct defines the minimum standards of ethical conduct that Sustainable Square requires of its personnel. Compliance with our Code of Business Conduct helps us to achieve compliance with the fundamental principles of the **International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants® (IESBA®)** which Sustainable Square recognises as the standard of behaviour for all employees.

These fundamental principles entail: integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, and professional behaviour.

Sustainable Square professionals are required to:

- Comply with all applicable laws, regulations and Sustainable Square policies
- Report any illegal acts, whether committed by Sustainable Square personnel, clients or other third parties
- Report breaches of risk management policies by Sustainable Square firms or people
- Uphold the highest levels of client confidentiality
- Not promise, offer, make, solicit or accept bribes (whether directly or through an intermediary)

Sustainable Square holding companies and subsidiaries are committed to the Sustainable Square set of values and have adopted the Sustainable Square Global Code of Business Conduct. Moreover, our value-based compliance culture encourages individuals to raise their concerns when they see behaviours or actions that are inconsistent with our values or professional responsibilities, without fear of retaliation.

A commitment to **ethics and compliance** and strong corporate governance are key elements of Sustainable Square's business strategy. These commitments are essential for us to continue to grow and differentiate ourselves from our competitors, while protecting our people, brand and financial performance. They are part of the foundation on which we build trust with our clients, our people, our investors and other stakeholders.

The Sustainable Square Code of Business Conduct builds on our core values by providing greater detail about expected behaviors and drives our culture of compliance, ethical conduct and accountability in our markets of operation.

The Code applies to all Sustainable Square partners and employees and serves as a road map to help guide actions and behaviours while working at Sustainable Square. It spells out fundamental ethical principles and highlights resources available to help partners and employees understand and uphold those principles.

This trust is demonstrated in the enduring relationships with our clients. Much of our business is built on long-term relationships—all of our top clients have been clients for at least 3-5 years with a 95% client retention rate.

Sustainable Square has zero tolerance for all forms of **corruption, extortion and bribery**. Within the framework of our business management process, internal audits of processes, projects and locations are carried out bi-annually.

O During the years **2016** and **2017**, there were no reported cases of corruption

4.4 Respecting Human and Labour Rights

As a socially responsible advisory firm which champions business ethics, we fully endorse internationally recognised human rights within our organisation and wherever we conduct our services.

We believe that respect for people's human rights is an indispensable and fundamental business practice. We take our mandate from local labour laws and from conventions listed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which covers areas like occupational health and safety (to be discussed further in section 5 of this report), working hours, discrimination and equal remuneration for employees. Sustainable Square

is also aligned with the principles endorsed in the UNGC, and has begun to integrate measures from the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP), which emphasises the use of internal grievance avenues.

O During the years **2016** and **2017**, Sustainable Square did not encounter any cases concerning the violation of employee or stakeholder human rights.

4.5 Transparency

Every organisation that wishes to make a truly global impact must base its foundation on the bedrock of transparency, which typically attracts and retains talented employees and is more successful in the long term.

At Sustainable Square, delivering our services and operations in a transparent manner is an integral part of our business ethos. Our business practices are incentivised by the global GRI standards, which has become a fundamental benchmark for companies who wish to maximise their impact and manage their operations with the highest degree of integrity.

Stakeholder and Client Imperative: According to a Nielson global online study published in 2015, 66% of global respondents disclosed they were willing to invest more for products and services that come from companies with a commitment to positive social and environmental impact, particularly in a business-to-business (B2B) context, companies are increasingly demanding ESG disclosures from their suppliers and partners to compliment their own sustainability strategies.

With this in mind, Sustainable Square's first annual sustainability report is a step towards disclosing detailed information relating to our business practices as we strive to communicate our principles to our stakeholders and clients in a transparent manner. Demonstrating transparency about our non-financial performance therefore acts to reduce reputational risks, open up dialogues with stakeholders and demonstrate leadership, openness and accountability.

As a standard practice, Sustainable Square advisors and account managers maintain an open dialogue with our clients by sharing all information about the progress, challenges and operations throughout each project's life cycle.

In addition to our open communication policy, we are always clear about project challenges and incidents and address these scenarios with the highest level of integrity and tolerance.

4.6 Accountability

Upholding practices of accountability at Sustainable Square improve our processes, expand our vision and reduce compliance costs.

1

Regulatory Imperative

Building avenues of accountability into the foundation of an organisation through GRI standards helps Sustainable Square establish trust and engage our stakeholders and clients on governance issues in relation to the company. Hence, engaging in GRI reporting improves accountability for our organisation and encourages the sharing of values on which to fabricate mutual development.

2

Structured/Systematic Accountability

At Sustainable Square, we have created an accountability system between executive directors, subsidiary operations managers and the advisory team to make sure that we are regulating our progress in a healthy manner. Engaging consistently with this network during a project phase ensures that any issues relating to a project deliverable are addressed proactively and transparently.

4.7 Conflict of Interest

Conflicts of interest are not uncommon in client partnerships. They can constitute a significant issue, as they affect the ethical practice of a business and could potentially distort decision making – they can even generate consequences that could undermine the credibility of an organisation.

The advisory sector is a dynamic place where struggles between power, bureaucracy and confidentiality continuously occur: it is not always clear, in the complexity of group dynamics, what constitutes a conflict of interest.

Working globally also means that the duties of advisors and partners need to be more clearly defined, as responsibilities tend to diverge from one company to another and from country to country, which adds even more complexity.



Gift Policies: As competitors in an increasingly volatile market, clients appreciate our up-front and transparent advisory approach. Remaining mindful of liability from potential conflict of interest means that during client engagements, Sustainable Square always strives to adhere to the gift policy of our clients. This ensures the highest level of business integrity. For future projects, Sustainable Square will look into developing its own gift policy, which will reinforce our commitment to responsible business practices.



Fair Judging: Another important area, where we are mindful of practices that may lead to a conflict of interest, is when we engage in judging activities for industry panels and awards. We will not judge our own clients and avoid judging award applications that come from our clients in order to avoid any conflict of interest.



Fair Treatment of Partners and Subcontractors: When engaging with our subcontractors, such as copywriters and designers, Sustainable Square ensure that commissions are not taken for project work and that quality is always a priority.



5. Talent Empowerment and Career Development

(103-1) (103-2) (103-3)



Global team gathering in Dubai for the Sustainable Square annual summit

Our business is our people and our relationships. The ability to attract, develop, motivate and retain talent is critical to the sustainability of our business. Our employee-friendly workplace and

commitment to talent development has resulted in consistently high-retention levels and a strong employer brand.

5.1 Our Dynamic Work Culture

A defining aspect of Sustainable Square as an organisation is our open-minded culture and our desire to create a rich working environment that celebrates autonomy, creative problem solving, proactive learning and internal leadership and collaboration.

of their work, which we believe contributes to a fulfilling career experience.

By engaging with our people not just as employees, but as individuals with potential, enables us to develop robust working relationships that extend beyond a conventional work environment

The Sustainable Square workplace encourages open dialogue, ongoing skill development and an innovative, global, culture: We aim to create and sustain a collaborative and energised workplace, where all members feel engaged and are empowered to step up and take leadership

As part of our HR process, Sustainable Square is governed by two sets of guidelines, which merge into our culture of informal policies created to maximise our employees wellbeing, longevity in their careers and client satisfaction.

1

Fundamental Policies

Providing an official employment contract for all Sustainable Square employees, with details of work leave, health insurance, adherence to local labour laws, employee rights and protection from discrimination and workplace harassment. The employment contract also offers employees flexibility over the duration of their employment with Sustainable Square, in order to attract unique individuals as well as those who would normally find the constraints of a rigid workplace off putting.

2

Additional Practices

These are informal guidelines offered by management, left open for employees to interpret in order to remove unnecessary bureaucracy and arbitrary limitations on our people's abilities and preferences. These are the core, unique practices that form the Sustainable Square work culture, which is constantly the highest ranking value that our stakeholders hold dear

Mohammad Jebreel Sr. Advisor Sustainability and Social Investment



The working culture at Sustainable Square cannot be described in one word, nor does it follow any conventional corporate approach. I see it as a mix of several positive corporate cultures that focus on:

1) Empowerment: No employee is made to feel undervalued and all are encouraged to participate internally and publicly. The company is happy to expose its experts to the public, something other companies would avoid, to minimize talent turnover.

2) Innovation: Sustainable Square employees are encouraged to challenge traditional business approaches by publishing articles and suggesting innovative approaches that provide better value.

3) Adding Genuine Value: Working at Sustainable Square does not only entail mastery of the craft, but is about making a real difference in a field where very few companies are serious and where some companies are merely looking for business! Sustainable Square can easily refuse projects if it feels there will be no real value. It strives to make the best use of the opportunities in hand and encourages stakeholders to make real change.

From what I observe, Sustainable Square also invests seriously in employee development; employees are truly encouraged to read and learn during their working hours, an employee's self-development does not depend on learning outside of the working environment. A culture where you are encouraged to innovate, employees will find greater enjoyment in their and ultimately exceed beyond their perceived limitations. The attribute which I admire the most is respect in the workplace. I see respect as the main driver to loving the company and then the job. If you are respected, you give back what you receive, which nurtures a positive culture where everyone is supported and encouraged

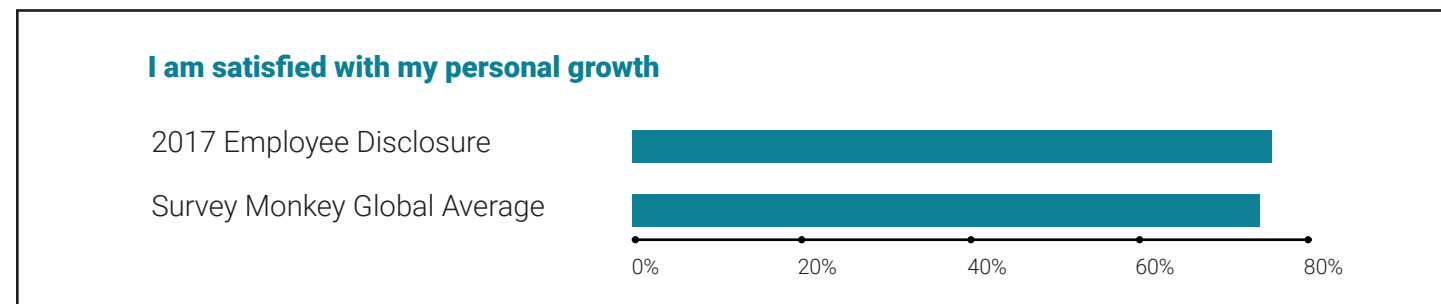
5.2 Working Autonomy

Working Hours: While we have set working hours, which we maintain for the purposes of workplace availability, we do not mandate that employees are present during those working hours on any fixed, measured manner.

Offering employees flexibility over their working hours means that our people can work from any location as required and can create work schedules that enable the highest level of focus, productivity and creativity. Empowering with this kind of trust contributes to a more robust organisational culture, where people have control over their work and their time, allowing for a more holistic work-life balance.

Flexible Leave As an international advisory headquartered in Dubai, we understand that our employees are normally working far from their home cities and countries. With a flexible approach towards taking leave, our employees are able to travel frequently and make regular trips back to their families. With an unofficial policy on company leave, we implement a practice whereby employees are able to take vacations freely and have the option to work remotely, while being trusted to manage client's expectations and work loads during their leave. To this end, the official policy is that no one tracks vacation days and leave, instead we rather look at overall performance and feedback of clients and partners as our core indicator of success.

Overall, our workplace flexibility is one of our employees' favourite benefits of working at Sustainable Square, and puts us clearly in top ranking firms globally (figure from the 2017 Employee Engagement Survey):



5.3 Endorsing a Culture of Open Communication

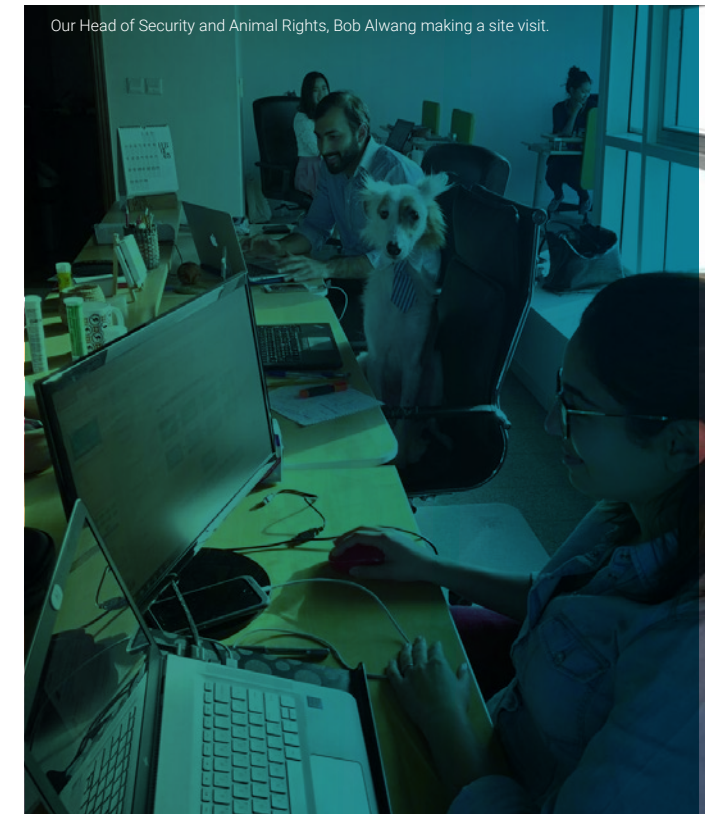
Sustainable Square strives to foster a dynamic work environment where everyone is approachable, regardless of position or level of experience within the company. We place great emphasis on open exchange and actively encourage the communication of new ideas and models, which forms part of our innovative outlook as an organisation. An important aspect

of facilitating a culture of open dialogue also means encouraging employees to provide honest feedback and suggestions in the workplace. This ensures that any issues or concerns are addressed directly and promptly.

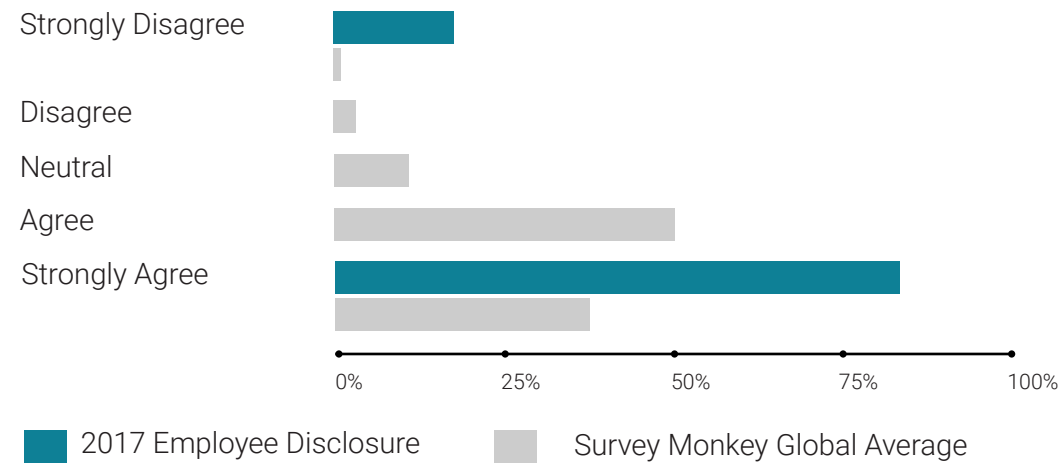
Acting on employee feedback also forms part of our culture for open workplace communication,

as feedback is reviewed by HR to initiate any needed changes or improvements in the management of projects, clients and employees.

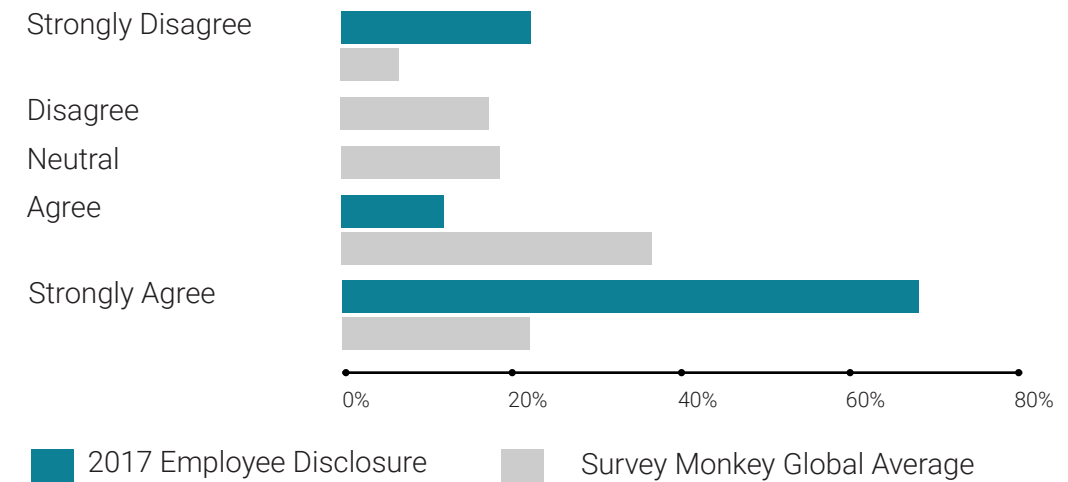
Lastly, we source ideas for improvement once a year (via the employee HR survey), and use those to brainstorm individual policies, initiatives or targets. We hold one-to-one meetings with each staff member at least twice a year in order to ensure that all needs are met and that they are on track professionally, career-wise and personally. During our 2017 engagements, we learned vital information related to employee commitments and future directions (90% plan to stay at Sustainable Square for the next two to three years) and talent development (100% of staff have indicated what/how they wish to learn and develop in the future).



My coworkers and I have a good working relationship



My organisation is dedicated to diversity and inclusiveness



5.3.1 Grievance Mechanisms (103-2)

Where an employee has a grievance or work-related concern, he or she is encouraged to approach the head of HR to express their issues without any sense of apprehension. We always listen sensitively to the concerns raised, which are acted on promptly and addressed with the appropriate action. An independent third party

connected with the company, but in no official capacity, has also been introduced to the team and joins annually for our meetup in order to allow employees a neutral/external perspective on personal issues. This is in order for actionable discussions to take place outside the sphere of employees' direct activities.

5.4 Diversity and Inclusion (103-1) (103-2) (103-3)

Sustainable Square accommodates a truly diverse organisational fabric which reflects the distinctiveness and cultural background of all its members.

During the hiring process, Sustainable Square places greater merit on the individual rather than previous credentials and academic background, we welcome people into our team who are able to integrate into our culture, valuing the person first.

As part of creating an inclusive work environment, Sustainable Square also utilises a range of

communication channels, including an internal messaging system which provides a platform to share news, information and insights which are relevant to our operations and practice. This ensures that we leverage digital platforms and tools to create greater inclusion and synergy.

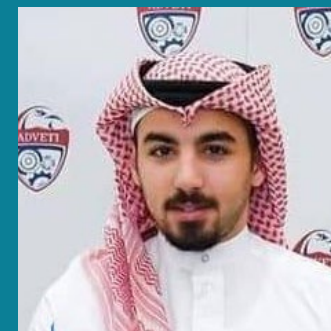
Our people disclosed a high level of satisfaction with the Sustainable Square culture of diversity and inclusiveness, exceeding the global average for this area, a discovery we are very proud of.

In 2017, as part of our commitment to creating a diversified workplace, Sustainable Square welcomed three joiners from AIESEC UAE (a global youth organisation that empowers young people with opportunities to pursue career and skill development), who joined the company through a Global Exchange Programme.

Coming from countries as diverse as Vietnam, the United Kingdom and Colombia, this inclusion of international talent in the Sustainable Square workplace has enriched our culture as an

organisation, introducing new perspectives and skills while developing the performance of our teams.

We are also proactive board members to AIESEC in the UAE. As alumni to this global organisation, Sustainable Square co-founders and employees have maintained close ties to the group, which helps to facilitate rich working experiences for graduates and young people who hope to join Sustainable Square and develop their careers in sustainability and social impact.



Ahmed Samara
CEO of AIESEC UAE (2017-2018)

The main objective of our partnership has been to facilitate youth development. As AIESEC UAE's national partner, Sustainable Square have been providing top-quality learning experiences to young talent acquired through the AIESEC exchange programme. This has made opportunities provided by AIESEC more attractive due to the development and learning curves available within these opportunities. This year, Sustainable Square acquired interns from Colombia, the United Kingdom and Vietnam to be part of their family

2016 - 2017 Employee Profile (102-8) (401-1) (102-8) (401-1) (401-1)

Employees By Gender



17
Full time employees currently present at Sustainable Square in **UAE, India and Kenya** offices.



53%
Female Employees



47%
Male Employees

Employees By Age



3
Between 18 to 24



12
Between 25 to 34



2
Between 25 to 34

Newly Hired Employees Annually



During the year 2016, Sustainable Square welcomed **3 new employees**, while in 2017 we welcomed **7 new employees**.

Turn over rate



Zero turnover rate: During the years 2016 and 2017, no one has left Sustainable Square. We are happy to report a high level of career satisfaction from our Advisors across our 3 offices.

Employees by Years of Service



10
0-2 years of service

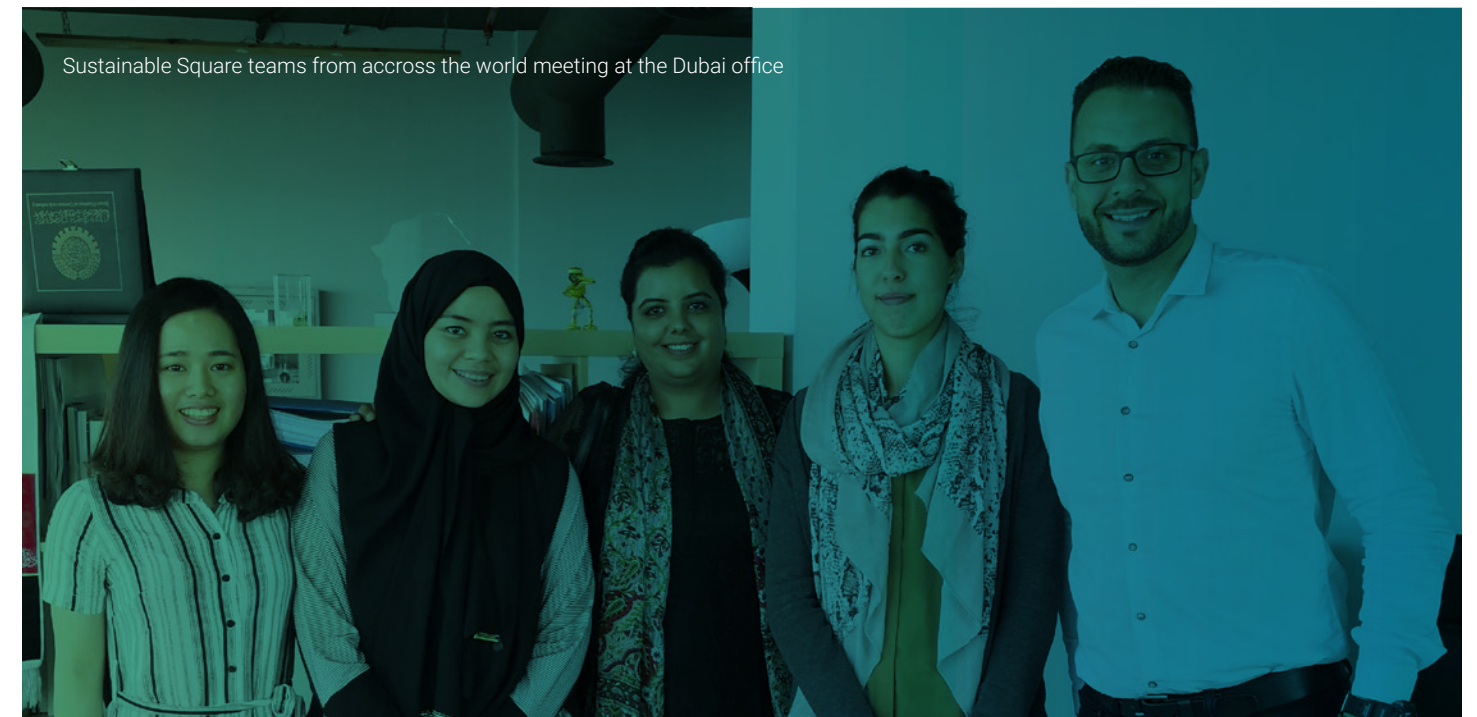
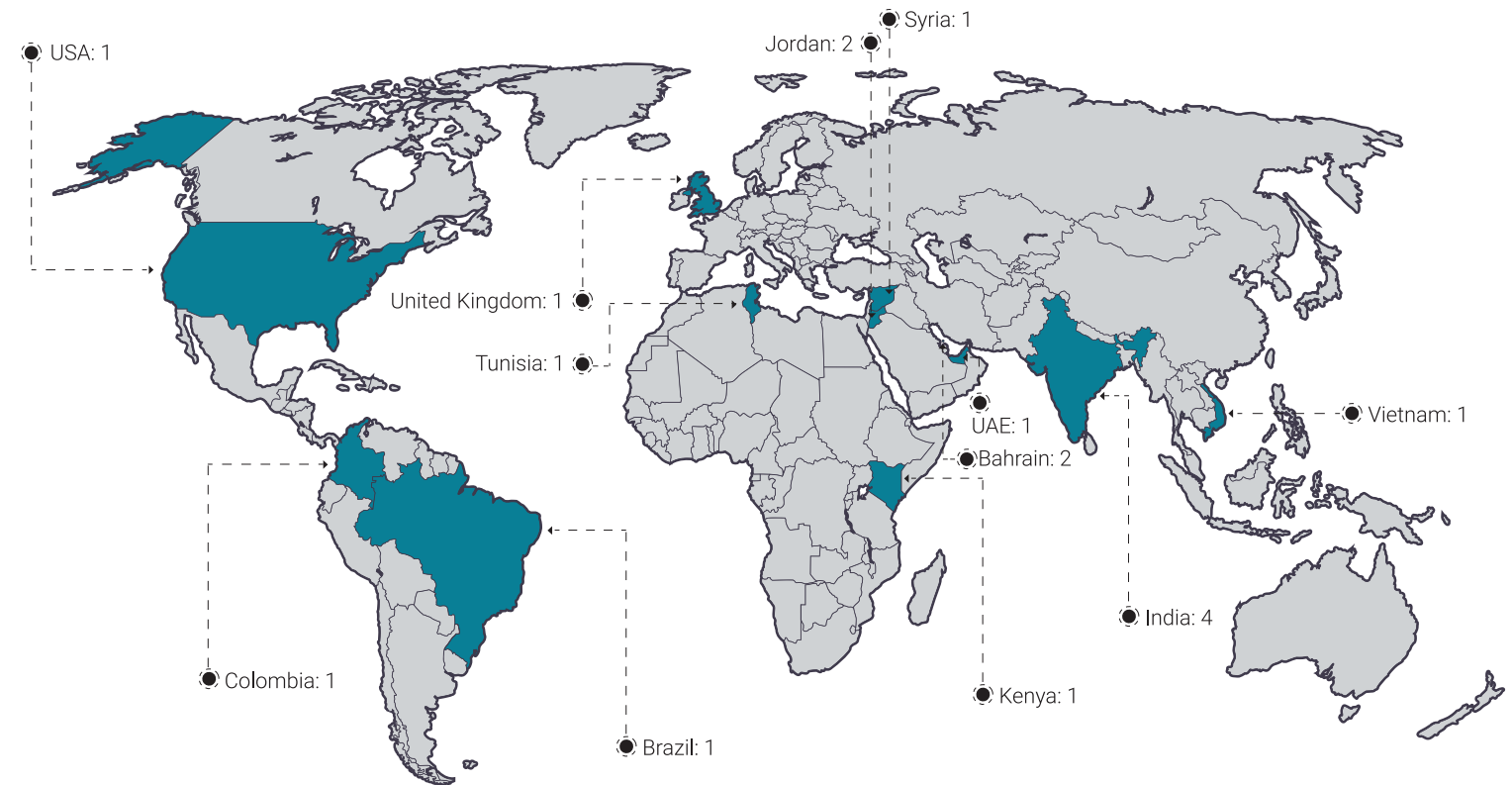


4
2-4 years of service



3
+4 years of service

Employees by Nationality



5.5 Employee Engagement (402-1)

Employee engagement has been defined as the level of psychological investment employees make in their organisations. Global figures indicate that employee engagement rates currently rest at 63 percent. Sustainable Square ranks above this benchmark, reporting an engagement rate of 100 percent from our employees.

There are several important factors that drive engagement exercises, including the need to measure senior leadership, job security, employee performance, talent development and practices of diversity and inclusion. During 2016 and 2017, we deployed various employee engagement methods to assess our success in meeting needs and expectations.

An employee engagement survey was conducted online to gather an overview of employee perception about Sustainable Square. Consisting of 68 questions, the survey was dispensed anonymously to gather employee opinions on aspects relating to management, career development and satisfaction, benefits and compensation and the overall organisational

culture of the company. With a 100 percent response rate, the survey indicated overall good practices and satisfaction in areas like career development and communication.

Another method of engagement is ensuring that each employee at Sustainable Square is given access to in-person, one-on-one meetings that are held twice a year. This gives our advisors the opportunity to raise personal concerns, ideas and suggestions for their development, making sure that they are empowered and heard.

As an annual company practice that commenced in 2016, Sustainable Square also arranged an annual summit held in Dubai, the location of our headquarters, which allowed our advisors to gather and participate in the exchange of ideas on how to improve current systems and processes. Following the success of this global meet up, we plan to continue the tradition of this summit, to be held annually, for the continued development of our business and management strategies across our offices.

5.6 Career Development and Talent Empowerment

(101-1) (101-2) (101-3) (403-2)

In a competitive global market, facilitating the professional development of our team members is a priority for us, as we strive to support the next generation of sustainability and social impact experts. This support extends to every member who joins the organisation irrespective of prior experience and background.

Our 2017 survey score for Career and Talent development, while aligned with the global averages, is not yet at the level we would prefer.

This has led to a three-year learning strategy

to improve results, in order to be above the global average for “strongly agree”, and below the global average for “strongly disagree”. This is being achieved by focusing in 2018/19 on formal education and empowerment, learning progress reviews, and in 2020 by dedicating a full time equivalent staff member to boost team knowledge, individual career development, and specific skills focusing on annual KPIs.

With the aim of expanding and sharing our sustainability and social impact expertise within the region and beyond, members of Sustainable

Square are encouraged to pursue ongoing learning and knowledge development, to remain leading practitioners at the forefront of our industry. Our advisors are consistently challenged to work on new projects and to engage with clients so that they can master new practices and develop innovative

and sector-specific solutions. Sustainable Square employees are therefore encouraged to fulfill their highest potential, by taking up courses and online learning to continuously refine their skill sets and expertise.

Our advisors have attended certification and training workshops from numerous institutions including:

- Impact Investing courses at the University of Oxford, UK and the University of Cape Town, South Africa
- SROI training received from Social Value International
- The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainability Report training

Moreover, we have a practice of bringing back learnings from meetups, in that anyone who attends a forum or a class must return with a document or presentation to share with the rest of the team.

We also have dedicated Slack channels: we have channels for reading and learning as

well as channels dedicated to innovation and development in related fields.

Lastly, we hold an Annual Summit called “Square’ly” whereby we collect all our key learning points, and new ideas for the coming year and bring together the entire team to brainstorm and assimilate new ideas for the markets.



Thao Phuong delivering a presentation about Asian market research project at the Annual Sustainable Square Summit



Dubai team celebrating New Years and Christmas

5.7 Welcoming New Hires

The Sustainable Square application process is designed to identify the most able and motivated candidates who are seeking competitive and rewarding careers in the consultancy sectors. Our application process involves three phases of interviews, in which candidates are selected based on their values, skills and potential dedication to the organisational value and mission of Sustainable Square.

Partnering with AIESEC UAE to find the most ambitious candidates has proven incredibly beneficial, with Sustainable Square hiring three Advisors from a diverse range of backgrounds through the organisation.

For new hires, Sustainable Square implements a standardised induction process that is designed to familiarise new employees with the culture, ethos,

rules and code of conduct of the organisation. Growing the Sustainable Square team during each year of operation, our induction process has been developed to offer a comfortable transition into the work environment. It has been well received by new hires, who feel that the process has been useful in introducing them to the fundamentals of the Sustainable Square workplace culture. In future, HR will introduce a more formalised process for integrating and mentoring new hires.

In the spirit of peer-to-peer learning, we also practice expertise induction, whereby our Advisors take time to give new employees a detailed induction into their area of engagement and expertise. This has included introductions to our work ethos, approach and practices, expertise, tools, methodologies and brand alignments.

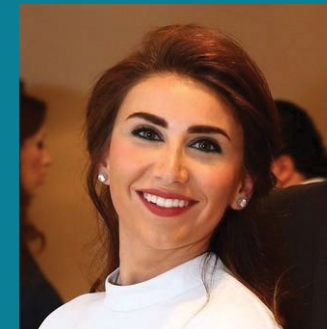
5.8 Employee Health and Wellness (103-1)(103-2)(103-3)(403-2)

The Sustainable Square workplace is ergonomically designed to ensure a comfortable work environment. All Sustainable Square employees are provided with their own desks, comfortable chairs and keyboard holders, and drinking water is made available in all offices.

Giving our employees the option of flexible working hours is also a way for us to promote a healthy work-life balance, as employees are encouraged to take vacations and breaks throughout the working year.

All Sustainable Square employees are provided with competitive healthcare packages, and in November 2017, the Sustainable Square office in Dubai undertook the Dubai Fitness Challenge as a way of encouraging members to stay active.

A first aid kit is also kept in the office and functioning fire extinguishers ensure the highest level of workplace safety.



Aziza Osman
Sr. Social Investment and Philanthropy Advisor

As the global movement towards a sustainable future spreads across the Arab world, the team at Sustainable Square positioned themselves at the heart of the cause. I had the privilege to meet Monaem, one of the Co-founders, at the Dubai chapter of Impact Hub, where he and his

team are frequently invited to speak at events and facilitate mentorship programmes relevant to social impact. When Monaem shared his expertise on the ways in which each field and sector can optimise towards a more sustainable future, I was drawn to the commonalities I shared with the team's mission as my efforts were focused on capacity building in youth.

Fortunately, Sustainable Square has been a welcoming family to new members in its drive towards social impact. Together with Sustainable Square, I was able to be part of a government-led initiative to mentor and place youth in the private sector, host a summit themed around "the year of giving" and facilitate public-private partnership that would endorse the Dubai Government's strategy to create resilient human capital and encourage sustainable practices across the Emirate.

A group of people in business attire are shaking hands in a circle, symbolizing teamwork and client relations. The image is overlaid with a dark teal color.

6. Our Clients' Experience: Empowered Client Relations

6.1 Client Servicing

Curating a unique client-management style, our aim is to maintain a healthy and robust relationship with all our clients, as our management approach requires us to go the extra mile to collaborate with our clients and ensure the highest level of

satisfaction when delivering our services. As a result, we have created the Sustainable Square Client Servicing Principles, which are 5 guiding principles that all our Team practice to guarantee the highest quality of service:

The Sustainable Square Client Servicing Principles:

1

Creating the right expectations

Working closely with the client to set the right expectations by explaining the project's scope, timeline, potential challenges, solutions and desired outcomes. Advisors are proactive in engaging clients in every phase of the project, to ensure agility and efficiency.

2

Matching expertise with projects

Pairing clients with the most capable and suitable Sustainable Square advisors and giving them access to the in-depth knowledge needed to generate the most impact and value, based on their project needs.

3

Innovation

Striving to provide innovative solutions that introduce new processes, methods, practices and technologies.

4

Social Engagement

Part of our client engagement strategy is to maintain client networks in the region by attending social activities and meet-ups. Annually, Sustainable Square attends dinners, cultural events, industry conferences and volunteering activities in order to build friendly relationships with clients.

5

Value-Added Services

Throughout the life cycle of the project, Sustainable Square provides pro-bono value-added services as seen fit, and according to an internal evaluation process. During the lifecycle of projects, clients might need additional services that were not foreseen during the initial planning phase. Sustainable Square delivers on these services to ensure the final completion of projects and to encourage clients to return and collaborate on new projects.



6.2 Continuous Innovation

Mohammad Jebreel delivering a strategy development workshop at Al Majid Society in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

The innovative elements of our services and management processes are a major theme at Sustainable Square, as market disruption poses a significant risk for organisations operating in the sustainability and CSR sectors.

In the current landscape, there is a need for advancing current practices of corporate disclosure and reporting – which Sustainable Square recognises by regularly adapting our business model to market changes. In doing so,

we remain relevant to our client base and markets of operation.

During the years 2016 and 2017, Sustainable Square boosted innovative product development by introducing a variety of new services and models to the market. This involved merging our expertise in current reporting frameworks to offer fresh strategies and outlooks on the measurement and reporting of corporate sustainability and social impact.



Dima Alashram
Sr. Sustainability and Social Investment Advisor

At Sustainable Square, we partner with our clients to create solutions that are customised to suit every context and situation. We focus on thoroughly engaging all stakeholders, so as to get a comprehensive understanding of the opportunity or challenge at hand. Instead of

resorting to pre-existing solutions (or similar projects that we have delivered to clients in similar industries), we use the past only as a guideline, to help steer our clients towards solutions that cater especially to their needs.

Our open communication style encourages clients to share all their feedback in a friendly and transparent manner. Our agility allows us to meet clients where they are comfortable, whether it's revising the entire process of a project delivery, the timeline or the approach. This is supported by our belief that every project provides a learning opportunity and a chance to innovate and expand on our expertise.

Collaborations for Innovation: The InfoFort Partnership

In 2016, Sustainable Square initiated a collaboration with InfoFort, a leading provider of Information Management Solutions in the Middle East, to create a customer loyalty scheme based on sustainability practices.

Engaging in such a collaboration was a new experience for Sustainable Square, as we were able to leverage our partnership to create an innovative strategy that produced business benefits for both our Partner and our brand. In particular, this project enabled our Advisors to engage in the consumer market by creating a system to encourage sustainable consumer behaviour through the use of InfoFort's products and services.

As InfoFort strives to be a sustainable business at its core, this collaboration with Sustainable Square has helped to incentivise that vision by providing customers with a sustainability-oriented benefits scheme that decreases paper waste and reduces storage needs.

6.2.1 The PerStakeholder Materiality

Sustainable Square is the first consultancy in the market to develop an innovative approach to stakeholder engagement and materiality assessment: PerStakeholder Materiality (PSM). PSM operates on the foundation that each stakeholder group is critical to the overall sustainability of an organisation. Therefore, each group is consulted through face to face interviews, phone calls or surveys, depending on the most appropriate method for that group.

While the sustainability industry has left the term "materiality" wide open for interpretation, we at Sustainable Square have developed detailed and specific criteria that breaks down the meaning of

'materiality' for stakeholders and the organisation. This consists of a series of criteria, with rating scales and open-ended questions, that together constitute a materiality matrix of three main parts:

- Topics that are not material to the organisation and its stakeholders.
- Topics that are material to the organisation and its stakeholders and where the organisation is performing well.
- Topics that are material to the organisation and its stakeholders and where the organisation needs to improve its performance.



Throughout our engagement with Sustainable Square, I witnessed a defined character in project leadership, subject cognition, proactive actions, attentive team members and time delivery assurance. What made working with Sustainable Square a unique experience, the team members made the process of completing assurance of EGA's sustainability report and getting the end result so clear and transparent during all stages, which kept us engaged and eager for the final outcome.

Noaman Alsaleh
Sustainability Manager
Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA)

6.2.2 Sustainability Reporting: Expanding on Scope 3 of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions

We are often faced with the fact that many clients do not have enough information to calculate Scope 3 of the Greenhouse Gases (GHG) Emissions Protocol. Organisations would regularly, for example, cover this scope by reporting on their air travel emissions, while leaving out emissions resulting from their employees' daily commutes to work. This results in carbon calculations that are much less than the actual footprint in reality.

To address this issue, we have developed an in-house formula that help organisations estimate

the carbon emissions resulting from their employee commutes, even if data is very limited. These take into account commuting patterns, carbon emission factors per vehicle type, and monetary amounts spent on fuel consumption.

This method helps organisations get a much more realistic estimate of their carbon footprint, and encourages them to start monitoring their fuel consumption and introducing solutions and processes to decrease it.

6.2.3 Social Investment Strategy: Social Investment Priority Mapping

This innovative process combines the classical benchmarking exercise with our PerStakeholder Materiality process.

The combination of these two tools allows the organisation to better understand the frequency with which social topics are adopted in certain countries, regions or industries.

It then maps out these topics based on three criterias:

A. Non-Priority Topics: Topics that are not material to the organisation and its stakeholders,

which no, or very few, other players in the market are adopting.

B. Potential Topics: Topics that are material to the organisation and its stakeholders, which several other players in the market are adopting.

C. Priority Topics: Topics that are material to the organisation and its stakeholders, which no, or very few, other players in the market are adopting.

This process then allows organisations to identify topics that are clearly underserved and where

6.2.4 Blended Value and Portfolio Assessment

The creation of the **Blended Value Assessment** tool is a significant innovation for Sustainable Square, as it allows our advisors and clients to map out material impacts that take into

account financial and nonfinancial aspects of the investment. Enabling the measurement of positive and negative impacts for a variety of areas, blended value is used to value investments

that are designed for impact, but have a huge profitability component.

For 2018, Sustainable Square is currently in

6.3 Post-Engagement Evaluation

Following the completion of projects, all Account Managers at Sustainable Square are responsible for gathering feedback from clients on the process, final deliverables and communication style.

This phase will typically involve an assessment of the project process, followed by a comprehensive review of a completed assignment.

Our Advisors may engage in brainstorming sessions to review avenues of process improvement, both within the Sustainable Square team and with a company, unit or team engaged during the project.

We then internally evaluate clients' overall experience on a satisfaction scale: 1 being least satisfied and 5 being most satisfied. This evaluation process can take the form of a face-to-face meeting, a phone call or an online survey.



Dima Alashram and Eric Hensel conducting stakeholder engagement with Oman LNG Foundation in Muscat, Oman.

the process of develop a new tool - Portfolio Assessment, which enables measurement of the impact of an entire Social Investment (CSR) portfolio.

For new clients, or new services, Sustainable Square follows a more detailed evaluation process that identifies new challenges that might have emerged, and will help us to address them before taking on future projects.

This follow-up engagement process ensures that the project process is evaluated internally. Outcomes and challenges with our client teams are identified to review our own performance and to give our clients the opportunity to provide feedback on our work. This ensures continuous improvement and development of our services.

For 2019, Sustainable Square is developing and streamlining a systematic evaluation process that will provide our team with more detailed insights, using a data-based approach while capitalising on trends and lessons learned.



Elena Cruz
Head of Branding and CSR
Emirates NBD

As an invaluable partner of Emirates NBD, Sustainable Square has brought a wealth of expertise in social impact and sustainability in the planning, strategy and reporting of our community efforts

6.4 Data Protection and Client Confidentiality

Data protection is a material issue to Sustainable Square and is addressed through several key practices.

6.4.1 Data Protection Policies

All dealings with our clients are protected through Non Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), which are signed before any project is initiated. Having these contracts of confidentiality ensures security, trust and competence during a project and when sharing company data.

It also legally binds Sustainable Square not to share confidential material, knowledge or information. In addition, Sustainable Square is currently developing its own Data Protection

Policies, which all team members must abide by as part of their onboarding process. These policies will be in effect as of 2019.

When it comes to safeguarding online data, we invest carefully in the cybersecurity of our systems and devices and run regular data security checks to ensure the protection and privacy of all our systems. Potential threats and compromises are identified and remediation plans are acting upon swiftly.

6.4.2 Protection of Ideation

With regard to actual delivery of our services and products, we regularly engage in ideation with clients. It is our practice in these situations to ensure that client ideas and concepts remain totally confidential from the ideas and concepts

of other clients in the same sector. Therefore we approach each client differently to offer each a unique experience and to present customised services and solutions..

A group of diverse people, including men and women of various ages and ethnicities, are standing in a circle on a grassy field. They are all wearing light-colored t-shirts and have their arms around each other's shoulders, symbolizing unity and community. The background consists of lush green trees. The entire image has a dark teal overlay.

7. Our Community Impact

Guided by our mission to **redefine impact** in the sustainability and CSR sectors, Sustainable Square acts as an enabler of community impact through our assigned projects and as a centre for knowledge management and integrated expertise.

As a growing organisation, the impact of our business stems from the projects and assignments we deliver.

Our project managers and advisors take each project as an opportunity to drive a positive impact in our community through influencing the scope of work, nature of implemented programmes and culture shift within workplaces.

Creating Value through client's Projects

Sustainable Square's value chain impacts many processes and spheres of influence. The value in assignments is developed by our Advisors and determined through their expertise and range of technical skills. Our most significant impact is found in assignments through project management, client servicing and stakeholder engagement exercises.

Through our assigned projects, Sustainable Square Advisors are able to influence the nature and relevance of community interventions, plus the effectiveness of sustainability strategies and targets – as well as a project's sustainability

7.1 Our Impact on the SDGs

THE GLOBAL GOALS For Sustainable Development



The complexity of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a particular challenge for SMEs, which may prevent the disclosure of SME contributions to these global goals. Regardless

of these obstacles, it is undisputable that SDGs have enormous potential to drive corporate action and community impact. The ability to create customised solutions using global frameworks and methodologies means that Sustainable Square is a committed endorser of SDGs.

We work closely with companies to facilitate the implementation of sustainability and social impact solutions that are designed to align with global and national sustainability agendas. This allows Sustainable Square to be a proactive force in the advancement of SDGs within our regions of operation.

In 2016 and 2017, Sustainable Square delivered projects in more than five operational markets, all of which made significant impact in their respective communities. Details of the projects and how they align with the SDGs can be found in the table below:

AMBUJA CEMENT FOUNDATION, INDIA

A social impact measurement was carried out on the Daseran Watershed project, implemented by Ambuja Cement Foundation in India. The project aimed to encourage the utilisation of rainwater for domestic consumption, agriculture, horticulture and livestock rearing. This enabled communities to attain self-sufficiency in drinking water, increase employment opportunities in the region and increase the standard of living of the communities impacted.



ARAMEX, UAE & JORDAN

The most significant human rights risks to high risk stakeholders at Aramex were identified and communicated to country team leaders, helping the client to prioritise training in human and labour rights and to enhance corporate practices that ensure human rights across business operations in the UAE and Jordan are upheld.



Existing policies and whistleblowing platforms were also assessed for improvement during the assessment process, encouraging the global compliance team to be more proactive in their regulation and management of human rights related cases.



Emirates NBD, UAE

Sustainable Square created a carbon calculator to measure the amount of carbon used in Emirates NBD marketing events. This calculator categorised all carbon generating items in a streamlined way that allowed the client to pick and choose priorities, based on the need of every event. Suppliers were encouraged to introduce sustainability elements to their services, so that supplier engagements during events were not solely based on the pricing of a service, but on how suppliers manage their overall environmental impact. Suppliers were also given the option to offset their carbon by communicating with Emirates NBD.



AIESEC, UAE

Young people have been empowered through work opportunities at Sustainable Square, where they are able to benefit from on-the-job learning and exposure to a variety of challenging projects. This has contributed significantly to both the professional and personal development of AIESEC members, who have begun to develop their own expertise in the field and their own career networks.





We want to dedicate this homage to **Tariq Al Junaibi**, CSR Manager of Oman Oil Company & Duqm Refinery.

Tariq was one of the most passionate and dedicated CSR practitioners we have engaged with. He played a strategic role in aligning between the local community interests and business drivers and has left a landmark in the CSR field in Oman.

May your soul rest in peace, Tariq.

Duqm Refinery, Oman

The Wadha initiative is a women's empowerment programme

Created by Duqm Refinery in partnership with the Omani Women Association. The study has helped identify the skills that women in Duqm are seeking to gain and learn, in order to participate and be involved in the economic development of the area. The programme has led to a cultural shift, as it was once considered a taboo for women to sell handicrafts, whereas now they are encouraged to do so. The results have helped the client to redirect its focus on developing programmes that will have a higher, better targeted impact on its beneficiaries.



The Science of A Refinery Programme

Aims to provide students in Duqm with opportunities to study science and technology, create new employment openings and advance Oman's expertise in the field of technology. Sustainable Square was commissioned in 2017 to measure the social impact of four of the labs and engage with students and teachers to understand the change created. The project has helped to increase student interest in STEM related subjects while enriching the existing school curriculum. In addition, it provided the students with



the necessary tools to compete in national and regional STEM competitions, an opportunity they were previously never able to take up.

Marefa programme

An initiative of Duqm Refinery that aims to provide skill development and training opportunities for job seekers, government and private sector employees, and fresh graduates. The initiative is done in partnership with local agencies who are experienced in facilitating youth development programs that focus on addressing the following topics: improvement of communication skills, development of leadership abilities, project management skills, effective CV writing and job seeking skills as well as the ability to embrace change.



Horizon Services, India

Sustainable Square was appointed by Horizon Services to obtain environmental clearance for a new construction project for manufacturing activities. The test results confirmed the norms of the State and Central Pollution Control Boards (CPCB) and Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and recommendations were made to specifically maintain the MPCB and CPCB standards.



Ajman Centre for Social Responsibility, UAE

We partnered with the Ajman Chamber of Commerce to establish the Ajman Centre for Social Responsibility (Ajman CSR). Incubated within the Ajman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ajman Center for Social Responsibility is the platform of resources and the voice for businesses' social and philanthropic interests. Its mission is to advance the positive role of business by actively supporting and promoting an increased awareness of CSR and the application of its principles in the Emirate, ensuring long-term social and economic well-being in Ajman.



Al Jalila Foundation, UAE

Sustainable Square assisted in delivering Capacity Building programme to the Foundation members to equip them with better tools on how to manage, impact and upscale their healthcare programmes. These initiatives focused on creating more effective ways to combat preventable and genetic illnesses in the region, by supporting cutting-edge medical research. The tool that we have provided has helped the Foundation to establish a more efficient allocation of funds. This, in turn, will potentially generate better outcomes and eventually have a higher impact on the community.



Kenya Commercial Bank

The 2jjajiri Programme

A youth Empowerment programme that seeks to create jobs and wealth for youth through training, mentoring and funding. Beneficiaries have gained skills, through training and internships, that have prepared them for employment and/ or to run their own businesses.



Since its launch, the programme has seen 70 indirect beneficiaries employed, while the businesses have increased incomes as well as contributing to improved work and employment situations. This programme has contributed to the eradication of poverty as most of the beneficiaries come from poor backgrounds, so far benefitting more than 2,234 young people.

Inua Jamii Programme

A payment programme by the Kenyan Government for vulnerable members of society, elderly people, orphans and people with severe disabilities.



The programme has directly contributed to eradicating inequality, as it targets only the most vulnerable members of society. Through these actions, the programme has significantly reduced existing social economic inequalities in Kenyan society.

The funds received have also improved beneficiaries' living standards as they are now able to afford basic needs, pay school fees and support small businesses.

KCB Mpesa

A mobile platform that allows MPESA customers to access low interest loans and save money. Beneficiaries have used these loans for emergencies as they can access the funds at night, pay school fees and expand their businesses.



Most of the KCB MPESA customers are low-earning members of society who depend on these loans for daily survival and to upgrade their small businesses



Eman Husain
Sr. Advisor Sustainability and Social Investment

What makes Sustainable Square different is the groundwork that we do. We go straight to stakeholders to gather direct feedback from our beneficiaries and we do not rely on secondary data unless we exhaust all other options. This approach has given us the opportunity to innovate solutions in the local

context. Through our social impact assessments, we listen to stakeholders and take the time to learn from them, while looking to identify best practices and adapt them to local reality. Over the past few years, we have worked in different markets, exposing us to a variety of societal topics, and allowing us to better understand local stakeholders and local context. The work we do, and our depth of analysis, have given clients insight on the impact of their investments, stakeholder expectations, best practices, and tools for assessment and implementation. At Sustainable Square, we also share our knowledge, expertise, and experience with our clients, working alongside them even after the project ends. We maintain our relationship with them and advise on how to maximise community impact wherever we can.



Enock Nyachae working on a community impact assessment for Kenya Commercial Bank's M-pesa Program at Lake Victoria, Kenya

7.2 Knowledge Sharing

As a global advisory and hub for regional expertise in sustainability and social impact, Sustainable Square strives to advance dialogue in and among our client and business communities, through various knowledge-sharing activities. we can nurture sustainable connections with

our stakeholders and industry practitioners. This allows for creative innovation to take place, inspiring new solutions for impact measurement and corporate responsibility within our regions of operation.

1

Publishing Insights

Our role involves working to advance insights in sustainability and social impact. Over the years, our Advisors have been proactive in publishing thoroughly researched articles, industry roadmaps, white papers and country and market insights, for the purposes of not only demonstrating our expertise but sharing our insights with our long-term stakeholders. Since curating and releasing our insights, Sustainable Square makes it a point to publish findings in several languages including French, English and Arabic, to cater to all our markets and to ensure that this information is accessible for all. For more information please visit our website: www.sustainablesquare.com/insights

2

Speaking Engagements

Sustainable Square is proactive in attending industry events to connect with clients and regional practitioners. These events act as information-sharing platforms, where beneficial partnerships and collaborations can be forged to push forward the practices of CSR and sustainability reporting. Key speaking engagements from 2016 and 2017 include: speaking at the Ajman Ramadan Majlis on Responsible Investments and Sustainability as enablers for building a Green Economy; addressing the Global Women's Forum in Dubai on the benefits and impact of community programmes and delivering a keynote speech on the SDGs to the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

3

Judging in Awards

Sustainable Square was active on various judging panels during 2016 and 2017 – which enabled us to offer our expertise to the industry, as a way of reviewing and contributing to advancements produced by competitors and practitioners.

4

Translating and Localising Standards

Making global frameworks accessible to the markets we serve remains an important activity for Sustainable Square, as we hope to lead in GRI reporting and work towards advancing awareness and knowledge of the practice to both existing and potential clients and partners. During the reporting years, we have led the Arabic translation of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) standards. Our Sr. Sustainability Advisor Mohammed Jebreel volunteered his time to chair the drafting of the Arabic translation of the GRI guidelines



7.3 Volunteering Activities

Sustainable Square employees have engaged in various volunteering activities as part of our organisational culture, in order to contribute to wider social initiatives. In 2017, our team participated in a day of volunteering activities organised by Emirates NBD to help children with disabilities.

Members of Sustainable Square also volunteer on an individual basis and contribute their time, knowledge and experience to causes that are important to them.

Some volunteering activities that Sustainable Square members engage in include:

1. Advising and supporting NGOs including: AIESEC and Manzil (for managing programme impact and fundraising activity)

2. Participating with Community Groups: the Kenyan Forest Association

As part of our 2018 commitment to community impact, we are proud to announce our commitment to support social entrepreneurs and NGOs within our countries of operations in the area of social impact.

To get in touch with us please email us on info@sustainablesquare.com

A hand holding a small green plant against a blurred green background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The hand is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, holding a thin branch with a small, vibrant green sprout. The background is a soft-focus bokeh of green leaves and light. The overall mood is one of growth, care, and environmental stewardship.

8 Our Environmental Impact

(103-1) (103-2) (103-3)

Environmental stewardship at Sustainable Square is something we are passionate about endorsing throughout our business operations.

As a global organisation, our operational impact is no longer limited to a single location or region, it extends to different countries through our client engagements, increasing our environmental footprint as we grow the reach of the brand.

It is essential for every business to understand and assess the scope of the environmental strains they are generating through their activities and supply chains.

Environmental disclosure extends to various scopes – including the total consumption of energy, water and waste by Sustainable Square operations. Our environmental data has been gathered through consolidating annual records

8.1 Energy Consumption (302-1)

The Sustainable Square office was intentionally chosen as an open plan space to allow in a high volume of light, therefore reducing our reliance on electricity to light the Dubai workspace during daytime.

To power our UAE office, we receive our electricity from the national grid supplied by the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), using **774 KWH** worth of electricity in 2016, and **1,946 KWH** worth of electricity in the operating year 2017.

Our energy usage has remained consistent during both years, with electricity consumption peaking slightly in the summer months due to the high temperatures in the UAE.

Energy consumption for 2016 has been estimated at one third of the 2017 energy consumption, as

of our travel activities, water and electricity consumption at our Dubai Headquarter and our travel activities in India and Kenya.

Headquartered in the UAE, Sustainable Square also aims to align its business practices with the UAE's National Agenda on the Environment (2021) which emphasises the use of clean energy and the reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions.

This section highlights our most prominent environmental impacts and the practices implemented to mitigate these impacts through raising awareness, capacity building and self-activated employee initiatives.

These strategies play a key role in the management of our environmental governance, where we have invested in numerous practices to ensure that we maintain an environmentally friendly workplace.

the Sustainable Square office space was much smaller and had fewer staff. In addition to this, our staff worked remotely during this period, further reducing the collective consumption level of the organisation.

The Sustainable Square team remains conscious of our daily energy consumption in the workspace and we encourage energy saving habits whenever we can, ranging from switching off lights when not in use and practicing climate and temperature control in our office space.

In coming years, we aim to look into more creative methods for offsetting our energy usage.

Energy consumption from our operations in India and Kenya are not included in this indicator.

Electricity	2016	2017
Electricity consumption within the organisation (in KWH)	610	1,831
Electricity consumption outside the organisation (in KWH) (employees commuting by metro)	164	115
Total electricity consumption (KWH)	774	1,946
Average Electricity Consumption per Employee (in KWH)	153	243

8.2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (305-1)(305-2)

As global agency working with international and regional clients, our projects take us to different continents and countries to deliver our advisory services.

Managing our carbon footprint and ensuring environmental friendly processes is therefore

crucial to achieving sustainability within our operations. In this report, we have tracked all domestic and international journeys made in 2016 and 2017 by Sustainable Square employees, by air and vehicle, to estimate our collective carbon footprint.

Greenhouse Gases (GHG) Emissions	2016	2017
Scope 2 Indirect Emissions Electricity consumption (tCO2e)	0.580	0.578
Scope 3 Other Emissions Emissions by employees commuting and business travel (tCO2e)	25	29
Total Emissions (tCO2e)	25	30
Average GHG Emissions per Employee (tCO2e)	4	3

Fuel consumption has been measured and includes disclosures relating to a variety of vehicles and transportation methods. The figures in the table below include our operations in India and Kenya.

Greenhouse Gases (GHG) Emissions	2016	2017
Estimated fuel consumption by employees commuting to work and returning home (Diesel, Litres)	61	62
Estimated fuel consumption by employees commuting to work and returning home (Petrol, Litres)	4,246	6,053



Phuong Thao Thai
Advisor Sustainability and Social Investment

As a growing Start-up Sustainable Square is proud of its commitment to best environmental practices, since businesses our size do not typically disclose their environmental impact. Committing to the measurement of

our fuel and energy consumption has challenged us to account for the greenhouse gas emissions produced by our travels. The calculation of our environmental impact was extended to Scope 3 in which employees commuting for work have been included. Employees who use public transportation (bus/metro) for commuting can reduce CO2 emissions by 70 times, compared to employees commuting with a small-sized car. An admirable aspect of the Sustainable Square commitment to the environment is our culture of encouraging employees to use public transportation and to minimise travel by working locally or remotely. These initiatives all contribute to making our organisation more sustainable.

8.3 Water Consumption (303-1)

Currently, water for office utility purposes comes from DEWA and we have water tanks delivered to the office on a weekly basis. All members are encouraged to utilise cups and reusable water bottles to stay hydrated throughout the working day.

India and Kenya operations have not been included in the measurement of this indicator,

due to a lack of substantive data. Utility water consumption in 2016 was estimated as one third of 2017 consumption. In 2016, our employees used half of the water recorded in 2017 as, most of the time, they worked on a remote basis. The table below illustrates the average consumption of water during 2016 and 2017.

Water consumption	2016	2017
Utility Water Consumption (Litres)	10,183	30,550
Drinking Water Consumption (Litres)	1,141	1,137
Total Water Consumption (Litres)	11,324	31,686
Average Water Consumption Per Employee (Litres)	2,831	3,961

8.4 Waste Management

As a small organisation, Sustainable Square still produces waste. Paper, plastic and food waste are the main sources of waste generated by our

main office, for which we have activated various initiatives for managing it sustainably.

8.4.1 Paper Waste – The GreenBox Initiative:

To manage our waste more efficiently and sustainably, we have partnered with **InfoFort** to process our paper waste through **Green Box** Scheme. All paper waste produced in our UAE office is processed through this recycling initiative. Sustainable Square benefits from this partnership by receiving a monthly analysis from InfoFort

about our impact on the environment. Moreover, our green box helps us track and measure:

1. Weight of recycled paper
2. Gallons of water saved
3. Gallons of oil saved
4. Offset carbon footprint

Waste Management Impact

2016



11 KGS paper recycled



0.18t CO2e offset



4.22 gallons of oil saved



0.18 gallons of water saved

2017



53 KGS paper recycled



0.88t CO2e offset



20.32 gallons of oil Saved



377 gallons of water saved

8.4.2 Pastic Waste

At Sustainable Square, employees minimise their use of plastic products, specifically of plastic bottles, through the use of reusable drinking bottles. With a water dispenser for potable water in the office, any plastic waste used is collected in a plastic recycling bin. When full, the plastic waste is deposited at a local recycling facility

in Dubai. This employee initiative has proved very successful and has engaged our people in understanding the importance of recycling and selecting the products they consume in a more responsible manner.

GRI Standards Content Index (102-55)



GRI Standard	Disclosure	Chapter	Page No.	Omission			UNGC Principles		
				Part Omitted	Reason	Explanation			
GRI 101: Foundation 2016									
General Disclosures									
GRI 102: General Disclosures 2016	Organisational profile								
	102-1 Name of the organisation	Who We Are	12				No Specific COP Requirements		
	102-2 Activities, brands, products and services		15						
	102-3 Location of headquarters		12						
	102-4 Location of operations		14						
	102-5 Ownership and legal form	Governance and Ethics	36						
	102-6 Markets served	Governance and Ethics	37						
	102-7 Scale of the organisation	Governance and Ethics	37						
	102-8 Information on employees and other workers	Talent Empowerment and Career Development	51-52						
	102-9 Supply chain	Who We Are	18						
	102-10 Significant changes to the organisation and its supply chain		Entire disclosure	Not applicable	This is our first sustainability report sustainability report				
	102-12 External initiatives		18-29						
	102-13 Membership of associations		18-29						
	Strategy								
	102-14 Statement from senior decision-maker	About This Report	8					Statement of Continuing Support	
102-15 Key impacts, risks and opportunities	Our Business and Sustainability Approach	31-33							
Ethics and Integrity									

GRI 102: General Disclosures 2016	102-16 Values, principles, standards and norms of behavior	Who We Are, Governance and Ethics	12-13, 38				No Specific COP Requirements	
	102-17 Mechanisms for advice and concerns about ethics	Governance and Ethics	38					
	Governance							
	102-18 Governance structure	Governance and Ethics	36				Principles 1 - 10	
	102-19 Delegating authority	Governance and Ethics	36					
	102-20 Executive-level responsibility for economic, environmental and social topics	Our Business and Sustainability Approach	25-29					
	102-21 Consulting stakeholders on economic, environmental and social topics		25-29					
	Stakeholder Engagement							
	102-40 List of stakeholder groups	Our Business and Sustainability Approach	25				No Specific COP Requirements	
	102-41 Collective bargaining agreements	Collective bargaining is not permitted within the UAE, Not existence of such a structure in india and kenya						
	102-42 Identifying and selecting stakeholders	Our Business and Sustainability Approach	25					
	102-43 Approach to stakeholder engagement		25					
	102-44 Key topics and concerns raised		25					
	Reporting Practice							
	102-45 Entities included in the consolidated financial statements	Sustainable Square is aprivately owned SME, with two shareholders. More information about Sustainable Square ownership and entites can be found on page 36 & 37						
102-46 Defining report content and topic boundaries	Our Business and Sustainability Approach	26				No Specific COP Requirements		
102-47 List of material topics		27						
102-48 Restatements of information	This is our first sustainability report sustainability report							
102-49 Changes in reporting	This is our first sustainability report sustainability report							
102-50 Reporting period		8						
102-51 Date of most recent report	About This Report		Entire disclosure	Not applicable	This is our first sustainability report sustainability report			
102-52 Reporting cycle		8						
102-53 Contact point for questions regarding the report		8						
102-54 Claims of reporting in accordance with the GRI Standards		8						
102-55 GRI content index	GRI Standards Content Index	82-88						
102-56 External assurance	About This Report	8						

Material Topics							
Procurement 2016							
GRI 102: General Disclosures 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Who We Are	18				Principles 1-10
	103-2 The management approach and its components		18				
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		18				
Anti-corruption 2016							
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Governance and Ethics	39-41				Principles 1 - 10
	103-2 The management approach and its components		39-41				
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		39-41				
GRI 204: Procurement Practices 2016	205-1 Operations assessed for risks related to corruption		39-41				
	205-2 Communication and training about anti-corruption policies and procedures		39-41				
GRI 300 Environmental Standards Series 2016							
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Our Environmental Impact	76-77				Principles 7,8,9
	103-2 The management approach and its components		76-77				
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		76-77				
GRI 302: Energy 2016	302-1 Energy consumption within the organization		76-77				
	302-3 Energy intensity		76-77				
GRI 302: Energy 2016	302-4 Reduction of energy consumption		Entire disclosure	Not applicable	This is our first sustainability report sustainability report		
	Water						
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Our Environmental Impact	78				Principles 7,8,9
	103-2 The management approach and its components		78				
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		78				
Emissions							
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Our Environmental Impact	76-77				Principles 7,8,9
	103-2 The management approach and its components		76-77				
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		76-77				
GRI 305: Emissions 2016	305-1 Direct (Scope 1) GHG emissions		76-77				
	305-2 Energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG emissions		76-77				
	305-4 GHG emissions intensity	76-77					

Effluents and Waste							
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Our Environmental Impact	79				Principles 7,8,9
	103-2 The management approach and its components		79				
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		79				
GRI 400 Social Standards Series 2016							
Employment							
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Talent Empowerment and Career Development	44-54				Principles 6
	103-2 The management approach and its components		44-54				
	3103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		44-54				
GRI 401: Employment 2016	401-1 New employee hires and employee turnover		44-54				
	401-2 Benefits provided to full-time employees that are not provided to temporary or part-time employees		44-54				
GRI 401: Employment 2016	401-3 Parental leave	44-54					
	Labour/Management Relations						
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Talent Empowerment and Career Development	44-54				Principles 6
	103-2 The management approach and its components		44-54				
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		44-54				
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	402-1 Minimum notice periods regarding operational changes		44-54				
	Occupational Health and Safety						
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Talent Empowerment and Career Development	44-54				Principles 6
	103-2 The management approach and its components		44-54				
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		44-54				
GRI 403: Occupational Health and Safety 2016	3403-2 Types of injury and rates of injury, occupational diseases, lost days and absenteeism, and number of work-related fatalities		44-54				
	GRI 103: Management Approach 2016						
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Talent Empowerment and Career Development	44-54				Principles 6
	103-2 The management approach and its components		44-54				

	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		44-54					
GRI 404: Training and Education 2016	404-1 Average hours of training per year per employee	Talent Empowerment and Career Development	44-54				Principles 6	
	404-2 Programmes for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programmes		44-54					
	404-3 Percentage of employees receiving regular performance and career development reviews		44-54					
Diversity and Equal Opportunity								
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Talent Empowerment and Career Development	44-54				Principles 6	
	103-2 The management approach and its components		44-54					
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		44-54					
GRI 405: Diversity and Equal 2016	405-1 Diversity of governance bodies and employees		44-54					
	405-2 Ratio of basic salary and remuneration of women to men	44-54						
Human Rights Assessment								
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Governance and Ethics	39				Principles 2	
	103-2 The management approach and its components		39					
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		39					
GRI 412: Human Rights 2016	412-1 Operations that have been subject to human rights reviews or impact assessments		39					
Local Communities								
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Our Community Impact	66-73				Principles 1	
	103-2 The management approach and its components		66-73					
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		66-73					
GRI 413: Local Communities 2016	413-1 Operations with local community engagement, impact assessments and development programmes		66-73					
Supplier Social Assessment								
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Who We Are	18				Principles 1	
	103-2 The management approach and its components		18					
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		18					
GRI 413: Supplier Social Assessment 2016	413-1 Operations with local community engagement, impact assessments and development programmes		18					

Marketing and Labeling								
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	Who We Are	12-13				No Specific COP Requirements	
	103-2 The management approach and its components		12-13					
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		12-13					
GRI 417: Marketing and Labeling 2016	417-2 Incidents of non-compliance concerning product and service information and labeling		12-13					
	17-3 Incidents of non-compliance concerning marketing communications	12-13						
Customer Privacy								
GRI 103: Management Approach 2016	103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary		63				Principles 1	
	103-2 The management approach and its components		63					
	103-3 Evaluation of the management approach		63					
GRI 418: Customer Privacy 2016	418-1 Substantiated complaints concerning breaches of customer privacy and losses of customer data			Entire disclosure	Not applicable	This is our first sustainability report sustainability report		

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