

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ICDM BOARD SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
ADVOCACY DIALOGUE & DEBATE SESSION
“Impact in Action: From Leadership to Stewardship”
14 February 2025



Global ESG assets projected to [surpass USD50 trillion by 2025](#), highlighting that sustainable investing is no longer a niche approach but a driving force in international finance. In Malaysia, this shift is evident through the rise of green bonds, sustainability-themed investments and heightened regulatory requirements. However, despite these positive developments, the progress remains slow.

In this [dialogue session](#), we explored the role of steward leaders in accelerating this transition and how true stewardship can inspire businesses to embrace sustainability as a core principle that creates lasting value. Here are the five key insights from our discussion:

- 1 Making The Choice:** When leaders actively choose sustainability, they send a strong message that doing good and doing well go hand in hand. It is not about jumping on a trend but about making sustainability a core part of the business. However, this decision is not always easy. It takes belief, consistency and a real commitment, especially when times get tough.
- 2 Intrinsic Value Beyond Profit:** Sustainability is more than just financial gains. It is about building legacy that benefits the communities, safeguard the environment and ensures long term resilience. While the immediate impact might not always show in quarterly profits, the long-term benefits are clear such as trust, loyalty and a future-proofed business. These are the real returns that come when sustainability is prioritised.
- 3 Walk the Talk:** Steward leaders run an enterprise as if they own it because they believe in the organisation's culture, mission, vision and values. When leaders take ownership of sustainability initiatives, they become more than just a corporate checkbox. It becomes part of the cultural norm where everyone understands its importance and is motivated to take action.
- 4 Third Party Validation:** Sometimes, an outside voice is needed to help make the case for sustainability. Whether it is a trusted expert or a well-respected organisation, third-party validation can make a real difference in overcoming resistance. When someone else vouches for the importance of sustainability, it lends credibility to the effort and gets others on board. Find your allies or be the voice of reason that helps in driving the change.
- 5 Innovate, Innovate & Innovate:** Sustainability is not just about doing the right thing. It can also a catalyst for innovation. By rethinking how we operate and embracing sustainable practices, we can unlock new business opportunities, explore untapped markets and create products or services that offer a competitive advantage while addressing pressing environmental and social needs.

Key questions for Boards to consider:

- Where does sustainability sit within the organisation’s competing priorities and what actions can the board take to steward the sustainability agenda?
- What is stalling the board’s sustainability stewardship journey and how can they be addressed to move forward effectively?
- How to better engage internal and external stakeholders, i.e. employees, suppliers, customers, investors, to actively champion and support the organisation’s sustainability goals?
- Are the necessary resources being allocated to sustainability efforts and how can boards ensure these are prioritised appropriately amidst other business goals?
- Is ESG competency included in the board’s evaluation process to ensure directors are effectively contributing to sustainability goals?

Sincere appreciation to the panellists for sharing their impact stories:

- Yoosuf Moiz, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships, Stewardship Asia Centre (*moderator*)
- Teh Soo Tyng, Sustainability Director, Nets Printwork Sdn Bhd
- Dr. Renard Siew, Head of Sustainability, Yinson Holdings Bhd
- Sandra Liz Hon, Executive Director, H2 Energy Sdn Bhd

Special thanks to Rajeev Peshawaria, CEO, Stewardship Asia Centre and Shai Ganu, Managing Director; Global Leader – Executive Compensation & Board Advisory, WTW for the interesting and thought-provoking debate exchange session.



From L-R: Yoosuf Moiz, Teh Soo Tyng, Dr. Renard Siew, Sandra Liz Hon, Shai Ganu and Rajeev Peshawaria.

Do reach out to advocacy@icdm.com.my for any enquiries on corporate governance, board leadership and director development.