

The company secretary strategic role in shaping corporate ESG strategy

14 March 2025, Friday

9.00am - 1.00pm

Speaker: PROF DR ZUBAIDAH ZAINAL
ABIDIN FCIS (CS) (CGP)

Virtual

Course code CG140325W1

Closing date: 12 March 2025

**4 CPD
HOURS**

Introduction

In today's business landscape, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors have moved beyond being mere buzzwords to become integral components of corporate strategy. With increasing pressure from investors, regulators, and consumers for companies to demonstrate responsible business practices, the role of the company secretary has evolved significantly. Traditionally viewed as a compliance and governance expert, the company secretary now plays a pivotal role in shaping and driving corporate ESG strategies.

The company secretary's strategic involvement in ESG is crucial for ensuring that sustainability and ethical considerations are embedded within the organization's core operations and long-term vision. From advising the board on regulatory requirements and best practices to facilitating transparency in ESG reporting, the company secretary acts as a key enabler in the integration of ESG factors into governance structures. Furthermore, as businesses face growing demands for accountability in environmental impact, social responsibility, and governance, the company secretary's ability to align these areas with corporate objectives is vital for fostering a sustainable and forward-thinking organization.

This paper explores the evolving responsibilities of the company secretary in shaping corporate ESG strategy, highlighting their role in integrating ESG into corporate governance, ensuring compliance with emerging regulations, and helping organizations navigate the complexities of sustainability in a rapidly changing global environment. Through strategic oversight and proactive engagement, the company secretary is essential to guiding the organization towards achieving its ESG goals while enhancing long-term value creation.

Course objectives

The objective of this course is to explore and develop an understanding of the evolving and strategic role of the company secretary in shaping and implementing corporate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies. Participants will learn how company secretaries can move beyond traditional governance functions to become key drivers of sustainable business practices that align with corporate goals and meet stakeholder expectations.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the growing importance of ESG factors in modern corporate governance and business strategy.
2. Identify the critical role of the company secretary in advising the board on ESG issues, regulatory requirements, and best practices.
3. Develop the skills to integrate ESG into corporate governance structures, ensuring alignment with organizational objectives and long-term sustainability.
4. Learn how to facilitate ESG reporting and disclosure, ensuring transparency and compliance with global standards and regulations.
5. Analyze the company secretary's role in stakeholder engagement, risk management, and fostering a culture of sustainability within the organization.
6. Explore the emerging trends and challenges in ESG governance, and how the company secretary can help navigate these complexities to drive long-term corporate success.

This course will equip company secretaries, governance professionals, and business leaders with the knowledge and tools needed to strategically influence ESG strategy, ensuring that their organizations thrive in a rapidly evolving business environment focused on sustainability and responsible governance.

Who should attend

Company secretaries, corporate governance professionals, ESG professionals and sustainability managers, board members and directors, C-Suites executives.

Course outline

Module 1: Introduction to ESG and Its Impact on Corporate Governance

- Understanding ESG
 - Overview of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors and their growing significance in corporate governance.
 - The business case for integrating ESG into corporate strategy: value creation, risk management, and stakeholder expectations.
- The Evolving Role of the Company Secretary
 - How the role of the company secretary has expanded to include ESG responsibilities.
 - Overview of traditional governance responsibilities versus modern ESG-related duties

Module 2: The Company Secretary's Role in Shaping ESG Strategy

- Advising the Board on ESG Strategy
 - The company secretary as an advisor on ESG trends, regulations, and strategic integration.
 - Guiding the board through the development and implementation of an effective ESG strategy.
- Aligning ESG with Corporate Governance
 - Integrating ESG factors into governance frameworks, policies, and procedures.
 - Ensuring that ESG becomes a core part of the company's long-term business objectives.

Module 3: Regulatory Landscape and Compliance with ESG

- Navigating ESG Regulations
 - Overview of global and regional ESG regulations (e.g., EU Taxonomy, Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), GRI standards).
 - The company secretary's role in ensuring compliance with ESG reporting and governance requirements.
- ESG Risk Management and Reporting
 - Identifying and managing ESG-related risks.
 - How the company secretary ensures accurate and timely ESG disclosures, aligning with global reporting frameworks and standards.

Module 4: Governance, Transparency, and Stakeholder Engagement in ESG

- Corporate Governance and ESG Leadership
 - The role of the company secretary in establishing a governance structure that supports ESG initiatives.
 - Leading the board's engagement on ESG issues and fostering a culture of ethical leadership.
- Stakeholder Engagement and Communication
 - Managing communication with internal and external stakeholders regarding ESG initiatives.
 - The company secretary's role in addressing stakeholder concerns, promoting transparency, and building trust through clear ESG reporting.

Module 5: ESG Implementation and Continuous Improvement

- Implementing ESG Strategy Across the Organization
 - The company secretary's role in driving the practical application of the company's ESG strategy.
 - Overseeing the integration of ESG into business operations, decision-making, and company culture.
- Monitoring ESG Performance
 - Developing and tracking ESG Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
 - Conducting internal ESG audits and reviews to measure progress, assess effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement.

Module 6: Emerging Trends and Challenges in Corporate ESG Governance

- Technological Advances and Data Analytics in ESG
 - Leveraging technology and data analytics to improve ESG monitoring, reporting, and decision-making.
 - The role of the company secretary in using digital tools to enhance ESG governance.
- Navigating Challenges in ESG Governance
 - Addressing emerging challenges in ESG, including regulatory changes, stakeholder expectations, and balancing short-term financial performance with long-term sustainability goals.

About the trainer: Prof Dr Zubaidah Zainal Abidin FCIS (CS) (CGP)**Expert in Corporate Governance, Board Leadership, and Sustainability Reporting**

Dr. Zubaidah Zainal Abidin is an esteemed academic and corporate governance expert with over 40 years of experience bridging academia and industry. Currently an Academic Fellow at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), she has previously held prestigious roles, including Professor at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Deputy Vice Chancellor at Kolej Universiti Poly-Tech MARA (KUPTM), and Professor at Putra Business School. Before her academic tenure, Dr. Zubaidah spent 13 years as a company secretary in private and public-listed companies, equipping her with invaluable insights into corporate operations and governance. A prolific author, she has penned five influential books on company secretarial practice, widely adopted in Malaysian universities, and authored the 2022 CGI Study Text on Company Secretarial Practice (Malaysian Version), now a critical resource for the CGI Qualifying Programme. Dr. Zubaidah's expertise lies in corporate governance, board dynamics, ESG, and sustainability reporting. Her groundbreaking research in these areas has been presented at over 20 national and international conferences and published in refereed journals. Her speaking engagements with professional and regulatory bodies, including the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM), The Malaysian Governance Institute (MAICSA), and the Malaysian Association of Company Secretaries (MACS), have positioned her as a sought-after thought leader.

Key Speaking Topics

- Corporate Governance and Boardroom Dynamics: Strategies for effective leadership and governance.
- Diversity and Inclusion: The role of diverse boards in driving organizational success.
- Sustainability Reporting and ESG: Practical approaches to embedding sustainability in corporate practices.
- Corporate Social Responsibility: Insights into aligning CSR with strategic business objectives.

Dr. Zubaidah captivates audiences with her deep knowledge, practical insights, and engaging delivery. She is passionate about fostering ethical and sustainable corporate practices and is available for speaking engagements, panel discussions, and workshops.

Webinar Fee

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