



Why Sustainability Matters For SMEs

ASEAN SMEs in Action: Real Stories of Sustainability Creating Business Value

Published by
GRI ASEAN

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Foreword

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are at the heart of ASEAN's economy. They create jobs, support local communities, drive innovation, and contribute significantly to the region's growth and resilience. As business expectations evolve, SMEs are increasingly expected not only to deliver quality products and services, but also to demonstrate how they operate responsibly and sustainably.

For many SMEs, sustainability can appear complex or resource-intensive. Yet sustainability is not simply about compliance or reporting. When integrated into everyday business management, it can help organizations identify risks, improve efficiency, strengthen governance, build trust with customers and partners, and prepare for future opportunities. Increasingly, sustainability is becoming a source of business resilience and competitiveness.

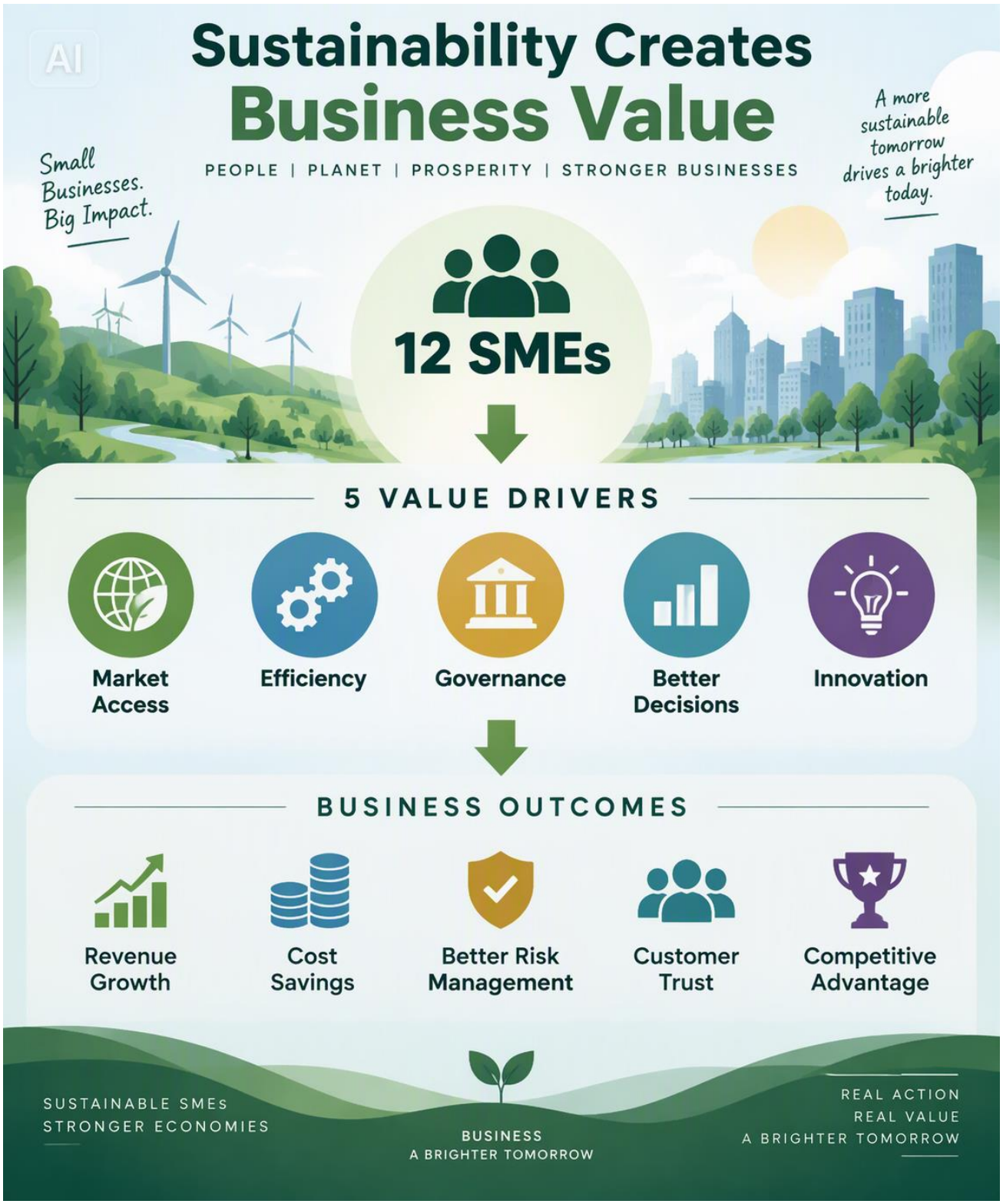
This publication showcases 12 SMEs across ASEAN that have used sustainability practices to strengthen customer relationships, improve efficiency, enhance governance, make better decisions, and unlock new opportunities. Their stories demonstrate that sustainability is not an additional burden but a practical business tool that helps SMEs become more resilient and competitive.

The stories featured here demonstrate that there is no single path to sustainability. SMEs have used sustainability practices to strengthen customer relationships, improve operational efficiency, enhance internal management, and identify new opportunities for growth and innovation. While their experiences differ, they share a common lesson: sustainability creates the greatest value when it helps businesses make better decisions and improve how they operate.

This publication also highlights the importance of collaboration. SMEs thrive when supported by a wider ecosystem of customers, financial institutions, government agencies, technical experts, and other partners that help build capabilities and unlock opportunities.

We hope these stories inspire SME owners and managers to see sustainability not as an additional burden, but as a practical tool for building stronger, more competitive, and more resilient businesses. We also hope they encourage ecosystem partners to continue supporting SMEs on their sustainability journey.

The journey begins with understanding. The value emerges through action.


Sustainability Creates
Business Value
PEOPLE | PLANET | PROSPERITY | STRONGER BUSINESSES
Small Businesses. Big Impact.
A more sustainable tomorrow drives a brighter today.
12 SMEs
5 VALUE DRIVERS
Market Access
Efficiency
Governance
Better Decisions
Innovation
BUSINESS OUTCOMES
Revenue Growth
Cost Savings
Better Risk Management
Customer Trust
Competitive Advantage
SUSTAINABLE SMEs
STRONGER ECONOMIES
BUSINESS
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW
REAL ACTION
REAL VALUE
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

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The Ecosystem Advantage

WHY COLLABORATION IS THE COMPETITIVE EDGE FOR ASEAN SMES

No business succeeds alone. SMEs rely on customers, suppliers, banks, governments, universities, mentors, and industry partners to grow.

As sustainability expectations continue to rise, collaboration has become even more important. Across ASEAN, SMEs have shown that strong ecosystems help them learn, innovate, access finance, and unlock new market opportunities. This is the vision of the ASEAN Sustainability Accelerator Hub—bringing together businesses and ecosystem partners to help SMEs accelerate their sustainability journey and strengthen their competitiveness.

A Shared Responsibility

The Accelerator Hub brings these stakeholders together into one ecosystem, using sustainability information as a common language to help SMEs move from awareness to implementation—and from implementation to business opportunities.

Strong ecosystems create a multiplier effect: better information, stronger partnerships, easier access to finance, and more opportunities for SMEs to grow.

Ecosystem Partner	Role in the Accelerator Hub
Buyers & Supply Chains	Connect sustainability-ready SMEs with responsible buyers and strengthen sustainable supply chains.
Financial Institutions	Use standardized sustainability data to improve lending decisions and expand access to sustainable finance.
Investors	Identify resilient, well-governed SMEs with strong long-term growth potential.
Government Agencies	Support SMEs through policies, capacity building, enterprise development, and sustainability programs.
Universities & Innovation Partners	Provide research, innovation, technical expertise, entrepreneurship support, and sustainability tools.
Technical Experts & Mentors	Guide SMEs in implementing sustainability practices, reporting, and continuous improvement.


STRONGER BUSINESSES
BRIGHTER ASEAN
The ASEAN Sustainability Accelerator Hub
People. Partnerships. Opportunities for a Sustainable Tomorrow.
A stronger ASEAN is built by sustainable SMEs.
The ASEAN Sustainability Accelerator Hub brings together businesses and ecosystem
sustainable and prosperous ASEAN.
Buyers & Supply Chains
• Connect sustainability-ready SMEs with responsible buyers.
• Strengthen sustainable supply chains.
MARKETS • PARTNERSHIPS • GROWTH
Government Agencies
• Provide enabling policies and regulatory support.
• Create programmes and incentives for SME sustainability.
POLICY • ENABLING ENVIRONMENT INCLUSIVE GROWTH
Financial Institutions
• Use standardized sustainability data to improve lending decisions.
• Expand access to sustainable finance for SMEs.
FINANCE • ACCESS • LONG-TERM VALUE
SME
SUSTAINABLE TODAY
STRONGER TOMORROW
Universities & Innovation Partners
• Provide research, training and innovation support.
• Develop future-ready skills and solutions for SMEs.
KNOWLEDGE • INNOVATION • TALENT
Investors
• Identify resilient, well-governed SMEs with strong long-term potenial.
• Provide capital and strategic support for sustainable growth.
CAPITAL • CONFIDENCE • SCALE
Technical Experts & Mentors
• Offer practical guidance and tools.
• Help SMEs build capacity and implement sustainability practices.
GUIDANCE • CAPACITY BUILDING • PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS
Together for People, Prosperity and a More Sustainable ASEAN.
SMEs BRIGHTER ASEAN
GRI
Empowering Sustainable Decisions
ASEAN SUSTAINABILITY ACCELERATOR HUB
A STRONGER ASEAN
A MORE SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW


STRONGER BUSINESSES
BRIGHTER ASEAN
The Ecosystem Effect
Collaboration creates real opportunities for SMEs.
Stronger Business Performance
Improve efficiency, manage risks, and build resilience.
Greater Market Opportunities
Access new customers and sustainable supply chains.
Improved Access to Finance
Turn sustainability data into financing opportunities.
Innovation and Skills
Develop new solutions and future-ready talent.
More Inclusive Growth
Stronger communities and a more sustainable ASEAN.
THRIVING SMEs BRIGHTER ASEAN
GRI
Empowering Sustainable Decisions
ASEAN SUSTAINABILITY ACCELERATOR HUB
A STRONGER ASEAN
A MORE SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW

Business Results

Buyers increasingly expect suppliers to demonstrate responsible business practices. For SMEs, sustainability reporting helps build credibility, strengthen relationships, and unlock market opportunities.



PHILIA
HANDMADE • ORGANIC PRODUCT

SME PROFILE

PHILIA Ventures Inc.

Stronger Communities Brighter Futures

Turning community impact into market opportunity

PEOPLE • PARTNERSHIPS • LASTING IMPACT

PHILIA Ventures Inc. is an impact-driven social enterprise led by Roma C. Padua. Based in the Philippines, PHILIA connects Filipino smallholder farmers and community producers—across coffee, cacao, coconut, and other sectors—directly to markets. The enterprise focuses on scaling inclusive value chains through stronger systems, partnerships, and market access. Her leadership has gained global recognition, including a recent panel role at the United Nations Partnership Forum on SDG 17.



COFFEE · CACAO · COCONUT · AND OTHER SECTORS

FROM FILIPINO PRODUCERS TO GLOBAL MARKETS

Country: Philippines

Sector: Social Enterprise / Agriculture & Inclusive Value Chains

Works With: Smallholder farmers and community producers

Main Challenge: Demonstrating impact and building credibility with stakeholders

Primary Benefit: Market Access & Strategic Growth

At a Glance

PHILIA connects Filipino farmers and community producers across coffee, cacao, coconut and **other agricultural** value chains directly to markets, helping strengthen inclusive and **sustainable liveiihoods.**

Key Outcomes from Sustainability Reporting

Expanded Market Access
Engagement from multinational companies seeking credible sustainable partners.

Enhanced Credibility
Structured reporting increased stakeholder confidence and trust.

Global Recognition
Recognized among Shell's Top 10 Global Innovators in Social Impact (2025).

Business Growth
Transitioned from a micro-enterprise into a growing small enterprise through new partnerships.

Testimonial

"How do you talk about sustainability to an indigenous person who has not even gone to school? Who cannot even measure? Who doesn't know a meter, a liter? Our claim now that we are a sustainabile enterprise has more depth and context... because we have gone through the program, definitely, there is credibility to what we are claiming. After we graduated from the SPARK Program, multinational corpocations came to our doors. We started as a micro-enterprise, now we're small because of the opportunities that we have attracted."

Ms. Roma Padua
Co-founder and CEO of Philia Ventures during the Project SPARK

Empowering People. Cultivating Inclusive Growth.

Participation in Project SPARK enabled PHILIA to formalize and articulate its sustainability practices, significantly enhancing its credibility and market positioning.

Sustainability reporting provided PHILIA with a structured approach to translate impact into measurable and communicable outcomes—positioning the company as a "partner of choice."

Key Lesson

Credibility attracts opportunity.

Sustainability reporting helps SMEs transform existing good practices into business growth.

Stronger Communities Brighter Markets

Lumina

PRO SPORTS

GIAO THUY PROFESSIONAL SPORTSWEAR COMPANY

Building sustainability capabilities for long-term competitiveness



Country:	Vietnam
Sector:	Apparel Manufacturing & Export
Serves:	International Textile and Garment Supply Chains
Primary Challenge:	Responding to increasing sustainability expectations from global buyers and brands
Primary Benefit:	Stronger Sustainability Strategy and Risk Management

At a Glance

Giao Thuy is a Vietnamese apparel manufacturer serving international markets. As sustainability requirements continue to shape global textile and garment supply chains, the company is strengthening its ESG capabilities and reporting practices to remain competitive.

Quality Sportswear for a Healthier, More Sustainable World

"GRI's STAR program provided valuable guidance on building a credible sustainability strategy and understanding the risks and impacts that businesses need to manage. It also highlighted the importance of avoiding greenwashing and taking a structured approach to sustainability.
Since completing the program, we have started applying these insights across our operations and strengthening our internal processes. Wihle sustainability is a long-term journey, we remain committed to continuous improvement and to meeting the evolving expectations of our customers and markets."

Nong Thi Nhi
ESG Assessment, Audit and Reporting Specialist
Giao Thuy Professional Sportswear Company

Key Outcomes from Sustainability Reporting

Stronger Sustainability Strategy
Developed a clearer understanding of how to design and implement a structured sustainability strategy aligned with business objectives.

Improved Greenwashing Prevention
Enhanced ability to identify, assess, and mitigate greenwashing risks through credible sustainability practices.

Enhanced Risk Management
Strengthened processes for identifying and managing environmental and social sustainability risks.

Operational Integration
Embedded sustainability considerations into daily operations and decision-making processes.

Sustainability Journey

Before

- Sustainability activities were not consolidated within a structured framework.
- Growing customer expectations created new ESG-related requirements and risks.

After

- Clearer sustainability roadmap aligned with business objectives.
- Better understanding of sustainability risks and opportunities.
- Sustainability considerations incorporated into operational decisions.

Key Lesson

Preparing for future market expectations starts with building strong sustainability foundations today.

Thanh Trúc

THANH TRUC

TRADING AND MANUFACTURING

BETTER DECISIONS THROUGH DATA

Country: **Vietnam**

Sector: **Manufacturing**

Markets: **Domestic and Export**

Challenge: Understanding sustainability expectations and identifying practical emissions reduction opportunities

Primary Benefit: Improved decision-making and operational efficiency



BUSINESS SNAPSHOT

Vietnamese manufacturing company supplying products to both domestic and international markets. As sustainability expectations from customers and global supply chains continue to increase, the company sought practical ways to integrate sustainability into business operations.

LOCAL STRENGTH
GLOBAL MARKETS

SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY

FROM

- Limited understanding of green transition requirements
- Unclear sustainability reporting expectations
- Emissions reduction opportunities not systematically identified

TO

- Greater readiness for the green transition
- Improved sustainability reporting capability
- Identified emission reduction opportunities
- More efficient logistics and warehouse operations

KEY RESULTS

Green Transition Readiness

Better understanding of sustainability requirements across global markets and supply chains.

Reporting Capability

Improved knowledge of sustainability reporting and ESG disclosure practices.

Operational Improvements

Identified transportation-related emissions as a priority area for action.

Logistics Efficiency

Redesigned logistics and warehouse layouts to reduce transportation requirements and associated emissions.

The STAR Program helped us understand both the urgency of the green transition and the growing sustainability expectations of our customers. It also provided practical ESG reporting tools that we could immediately apply in our business. Acting on these insights, we reviewed our logistics operations and relocated our raw material warehouse closer to production. This reduced internal transportation requirements and lowered emissions from our daily operations.

Ngoc Diep
Chief Accountant, Thanh Truc Trading and Manufacturing Co
On her experience in the STAR Programme

KEY LESSON

For SMEs, it can be a practical management tool. Thanh Truc's journey shows how measuring what matters can reveal opportunities to improve operations, deepen customer engagement, and build resilience for the future.

Smaller Steps Bigger Futures

ASEAN Success Stories: Different Industries, One Common Result

The experiences of PHILIA Ventures (Philippines), Giao Thuy Professional Sportswear (Vietnam), and Thanh Truc Trading and Manufacturing (Vietnam) highlight a common pattern despite operating in very different sectors.

Company	Industry	Business Result
PHILIA Ventures	Social Enterprise & Agriculture	Attracted multinational customers and expanded from a micro-enterprise to a small enterprise.
Giao Thuy Professional Sportswear	Garment Manufacturing	Strengthened export readiness and increased buyer confidence through credible sustainability reporting.
Thanh Truc Trading and Manufacturing	Manufacturing	Improved operational performance while building stronger customer relationships and preparing for future market expectations.

Reducing Costs and Improving Efficiency

Doing More with Less

For many SMEs, one of the most immediate benefits of sustainability is improved business efficiency.

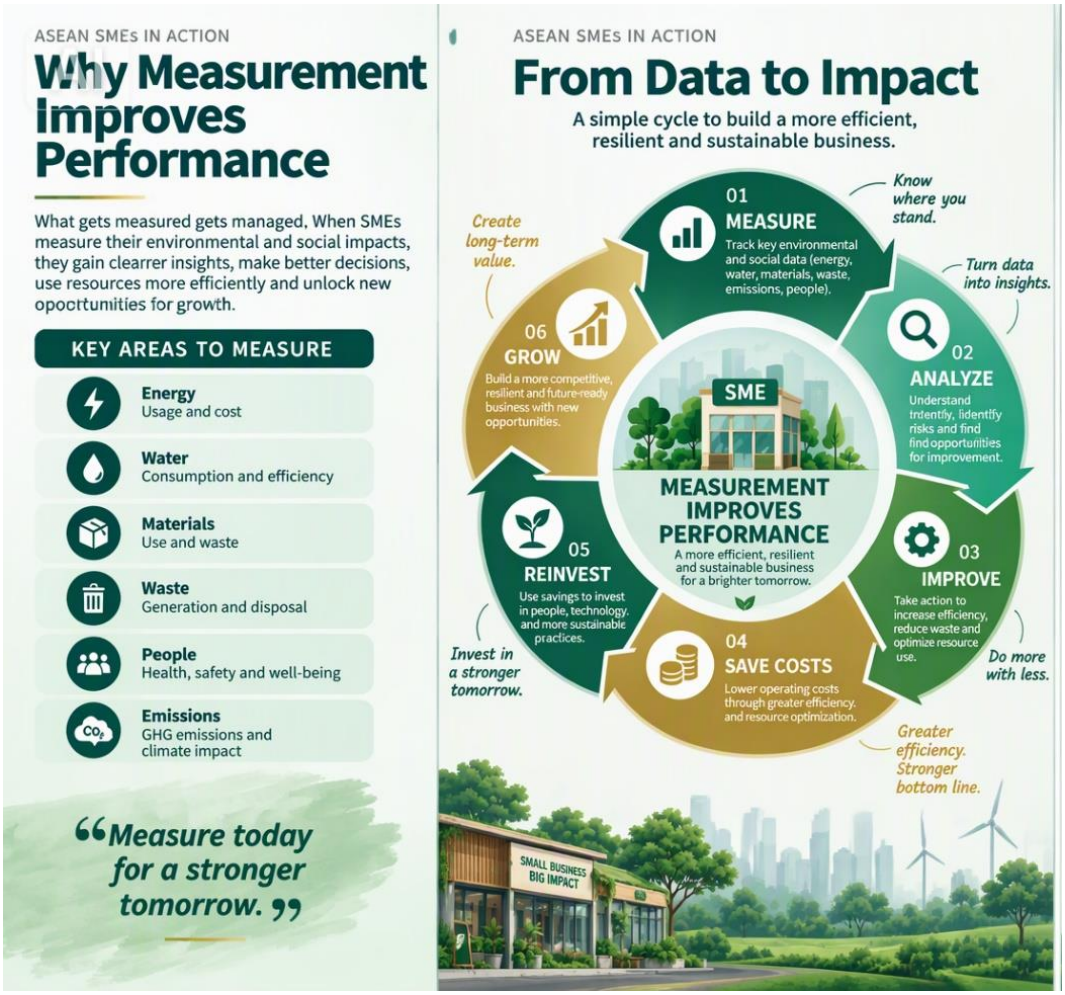
As costs for energy, materials, transportation, water, and labour continue to rise, even small improvements can make a significant difference to profitability. Sustainability reporting helps businesses identify these opportunities by providing a clearer picture of how resources are used across their operations.

By measuring key indicators such as resource consumption, waste generation, and operational performance, SMEs often uncover inefficiencies that would otherwise go unnoticed. What begins as a reporting exercise frequently becomes a process of business improvement.

The principle is simple:

You cannot improve what you do not measure.

Across ASEAN, SMEs participating in GRI-supported programmes found that measuring sustainability performance helped them reduce waste, improve efficiency, strengthen management practices, and make better operational decisions.




ASEAN SMEs IN ACTION
The Business Benefits
Measurement doesn't just help the planet — it strengthens your business.
Higher operational efficiency
Use resources smarter and reduce waste.
Lower costs
Save money through efficiency and optimization.
Reduced risks
Be better prepared for regulatory, supply chain and climate-related risks.
Stronger stakeholder trust
Build confidence with customers, investors and your community.
New market opportunities
Access green supply chains and meet growing demand for sustainable products.
A more resilient and competitive business
Adapt, innovate and grow for the long term.
Sustainable Businesses
Stronger Communities
A Brighter ASEAN
Lumina

The following stories demonstrate how sustainability reporting can help businesses do more with less.





SEAN-KRIS FOOD PRODUCTS

Finding Value in Everyday Operations.

Location: Surigao del Norte, Philippines

Sector: Seafood Processing

Owner: Bernadette Manuel

SEAN-KRIS Food Products produces processed seafood products including chiplets, dried squid, and salted squid, serving local and regional markets in the Philippines.



SEAN-KRIS
FOOD PRODUCTS
Quality Seafood for Brighter Communities

BUSINESS SNAPSHOT

SEAN-KRIS Food Products produces processed seafood products including chiplets, dried squid, and salted squid, serving local and regional markets in the Philippines. Led by owner Bernadette Manuel, the business is committed to delivering quality seafood products while supporting the local economy in Surigao del Norte.

Local Seafood. Local Opportunities. Lasting Impact.

SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY

SMALL CHANGES. BIGGER TOMORROWS.

FROM

- Sustainability performance was not systematically measured or reported
- Visibility over operational, environmental, and social performance was limited
- Opportunities for efficiency and improvement were not fully identified

TO

- Greater visibility through sustainability reporting
- Integrated sustainability into everyday decision-making
- More efficient and responsible operations
- Stronger performance monitoring and accountability

KEY RESULTS

LESS WASTE. MORE VALUE.

Improved Operational Efficiency
Enhanced efficiency across seafood processing activities.

More Sustainable Packaging
Introduced more sustainable packaging and explored energy-efficient technologies.

Stronger Monitoring & Accountability
Strengthened performance monitoring and accountability systems.

Sustainability in Business Planning
Embedded sustainability considerations into business planning and strategic decision-making.

AT A GLANCE

Main Sustainability Focus
Resource Efficiency

Biggest Business Benefit
Improved operational efficiency and stronger accountability

Key Sustainability Action
Sustainable packaging and exploring energy-efficient technologies

Contribution to Competitiveness
More efficient operations and better-informed decisions

SME VOICE

"The program changed how we think about running our business. Sustainability is now embedded in our day-to-day operations and long-term planning, helping us improve efficiency, strengthen accountability, and make better-informed decisions for the future."

– Bernadette Manuel
Owner, SEAN-KRIS Food Products

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES • STRONGER COMMUNITIES • A HEALTHIER PHILIPPINES

Good Food, Brighter Futures

SME PROFILE

Craftote Gallery & Coffee

Art, Coffee, and Community in Harmony

Indonesia
COUNTRY

Artisan Gallery & Café
BUSINESS TYPE

Local Artisans & Community
FOCUS



About the Business

A hybrid creative space combining an artisan gallery and café that showcases local crafts, artworks, and handmade products while supporting local creatives and community engagement.

Impact of Sustainability Reporting

Sustainability reporting helped Craftote Gallery & Coffee transform informal and fragmented processes into more structured ways of working, improving both efficiency and day-to-day management.

Operational Efficiency
Reduced wasted time, energy, and resources through better organization and planning.

Structured Workflow
Shifted from ad hoc practices to more consistent and systematic processes.

Cost Optimization
Improved planning and resource management, leading to more economical operations.

Owner Testimonial

"Yes, our work has become more optimal, more economical, and we don't waste as much time and energy because things are now more structured, whereas before they were messy and sometimes random."

— **Thio Siujinata**
OWNER, CRAFTOTE GALLERY & COFFEE

Overall Impact

By tracking and organizing operational information more systematically, the business became more efficient, productive, and better equipped to manage growth.

Key Lesson

Good reporting often leads to good management.

When businesses organize information more effectively, they are often able to organize their operations more effectively as well.



ASEAN Success Stories: Efficiency Creates Competitiveness

Although these businesses operate in different industries and countries, they reached remarkably similar conclusions.

Company	Country	Operational Benefit
Jerusalem Herbal Products	Philippines	Improved resource management and reduced operational waste.
SEAN-KRIS Food Products	Philippines	Used sustainability data to improve decision-making and operational efficiency.
Craftote Gallery & Coffee	Indonesia	Strengthened organization, coordination, and business efficiency.

Strengthening Governance and Management

Building Better Businesses from the Inside Out

Governance is simply how a business makes decisions, assigns responsibility, manages risks, and remains accountable. Sustainability reporting helps SMEs strengthen these capabilities through better information and clearer processes.



RADIUM
DEVELOPMENT BERHAD
PEOPLE PLACES PROGRESS

RADIUM DEVELOPMENT BERHAD

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



Country: **Malaysia**

Sector: **Property Development**

Markets: **Residential and Mixed-Use**

Challenge: Integrating ESG considerations into responsible development and urban planning

Primary Benefit: Stronger long-term value through sustainable and well-planned communities

BUSINESS SNAPSHOT

Radium Development Berhad is a Malaysia-based property developer engaged in residential and mixed-use developments. The company integrates design, construction and development practices to create long-term value for homeowners and stakeholders, with a growing focus on delivering quality, accessible, and well-planned urban communities.

PEOPLE
COMMUNITIES
LASTING VALUE

SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY

FROM

- Limited understanding of ESG frameworks and reporting standards
- High-level sustainability commitments without measurable actions
- Sustainability not yet fully integrated into business strategy
- Limited awareness of transparency and accountability in reporting

TO

- Improved understanding of ESG frameworks (e.g. GRI) and reporting standards
- Translation of sustainability principles into measurable actions and performance tracking
- Stronger integration of sustainability into business strategy
- Greater awareness of transparency and accountability to stakeholders
- Sector-specific application of sustainability in the built environment
- Enhanced peer learning and industry exchange

KEY RESULTS

ESG Knowledge & Reporting
Stronger understanding of global standards such as GRI for structured disclosures.

Measurable Actions
From high-level commitments to quantifiable indicators and performance tracking.

Strategic Integration
Recognition of ESG as a core component of long-term planning in property development.

Transparency & Accountability
Better understanding of how to communicate sustainability performance to stakeholders.

Industry Engagement
Opportunities to share emerging ESG practices and learn from fellow practitioners across industries.

TESTIMONIAL

"This program provided practical and valuable insights into sustainability and ESG reporting, particularly in applying the GRI Standards to build a structured approach to sustainability disclosure. It highlighted how organizations can turn sustainability principles into measurable actions and meaningful reporting.

With sustainability becoming increasingly important in the property development sector, the program offered relevant perspectives on embedding ESG considerations into business strategy and responsible growth. Equally valuable was the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with fellow participants and industry practitioners.

I am grateful for the enriching experience and look forward to applying these learnings within our organization."

Better Places Brighter Futures

Alan Wong Chin Lun
Senior Project Manager, Radium Development Berhad

Lumina



ASEAN Success Stories: Governance Drives Growth

Although Radium Development Berhad and Mozaic.You operate in different sectors and countries, their experiences reveal a common lesson.

Company	Country	Governance Benefit
Radium Development Berhad	Malaysia	Integrated sustainability into strategy, strengthened risk management, and improved organizational accountability.
Mozaic.You	Indonesia	Improved organizational alignment, stakeholder engagement, and purpose-driven decision-making.

Improving Data and Decision-Making

Better Information. Better Decisions. Better Businesses.

Every business relies on information to make decisions. Sustainability reporting helps SMEs collect and use data more effectively, providing greater visibility into operations, performance, risks, and opportunities.

By turning data into insights, businesses can make more informed decisions, improve performance, and plan more confidently for the future.

Across ASEAN, SMEs found that sustainability reporting strengthened internal management by improving documentation, performance tracking, and decision-making.

Good decisions depend on good information.

The following case studies demonstrate how Indonesian SMEs transformed sustainability data into business value.

Derry's Crochet
HANDMADE WITH PURPOSE
PEOPLE CREATIVITY SUSTAINABILITY

DERRY'S CROCHET

HANDMADE GOODS FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

Country: **Malaysia**

Sector: **Handicraft & Creative Products**

Markets: **Local & Online Customers**

Challenge: Documenting materials, activities and social contributions in a structured way

Primary Benefit: More intentional and accountable business practices



ABOUT THE BUSINESS

Derry's Crochet is a small creative business based in Malaysia, specializing in handmade crochet products—such as accessories, toys, or home décor—highlighting artisanal skills and personalized, handcrafted goods.

SMALL CREATIONS BIG IMPACT

IMPACT OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

FROM

- Limited documentation of raw materials and activities
- Unrecorded social contributions such as empowerment and training
- Past inefficiencies and missed practices not addressed

TO

- **Improved Documentation** Detailed tracking of raw materials and activities.
- **Learning & Reflection** Using reporting as a tool for continuous improvement.
- **Correction of Gaps** Addressing past inefficiencies and missed practices.

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIAL

"Previously, we never recorded in detail what we used—raw materials and activities such as empowerment, training, and so on. Now, by participating in this sustainability reporting (SR), moving forward Derry's crochet will use this as reflection and correction for past mistakes or oversights that we never addressed before. God willing, we will improve everything going forward."

Deni Rahayu
Owner, Derry's Crochet
Sharing her experience from the GRI Sustainability Reporting workshop for SMEs.

LESSONS FOR SMEs

Many SMEs already create positive impacts. The challenge is not doing more—it is understanding and measuring what they are already doing. Derry's Crochet demonstrates that good documentation leads to better management.

Small Stitches Brighter Futures



From Data Collection to Business Intelligence

The experiences of Derry's Crochet and Kadatuan Coffee demonstrate that sustainability reporting is much more than collecting numbers.

It transforms everyday business information into **business intelligence**. This shift creates several advantages:

- Data becomes knowledge.
- Knowledge supports better decisions.
- Better decisions improve business performance.
- Better performance creates long-term competitiveness.

For SMEs, this progression is often one of the most valuable outcomes of sustainability reporting. Instead of asking, *"What data do we need to report?"*, businesses begin asking:

"What information will help us make better decisions?"

That change in perspective is where real transformation begins.

ASEAN Success Stories: Better Data, Better Decisions

Company	Country	Decision-Making Benefit
Derry's Crochet	Indonesia	Improved documentation, stronger organizational learning, and better evidence-based management.
Kadatuan Coffee	Indonesia	Strengthened sustainability data, improved stakeholder communication, and more informed strategic decision-making.

Driving Innovation and New Opportunities

Turning Sustainability Challenges into Business Opportunities

Sustainability reporting helps SMEs see challenges differently. By measuring impacts and understanding business performance more clearly, companies can identify opportunities to reduce waste, create value, respond to customer needs, and drive innovation.

As the SME stories in this chapter demonstrate, sustainability is not only about managing impacts. It can also be a catalyst for new ideas, stronger competitiveness, and long-term growth.





ASEAN Success Story: Innovation Creates Opportunity

Company	Country	Innovation Outcome
Bali Waste Cycle	Indonesia	Used sustainability reporting to strengthen its circular economy business model, demonstrate environmental impact, and identify new opportunities for innovation and stakeholder engagement.

Different Businesses. One Common Result.

Twelve SMEs. Four countries. Five business value themes. One common lesson: sustainability creates value when it is integrated into everyday business decisions.

The SMEs featured in this publication used sustainability to strengthen customer relationships, improve efficiency, enhance governance, make better decisions, and identify new opportunities for growth. Their experiences show that sustainability is not just about reporting. It is about understanding your business better.

The journey does not begin with perfect systems or large investments. It begins with a willingness to measure, learn, and improve. The results demonstrate that when SMEs do this, sustainability becomes a powerful tool for building resilience, competitiveness, and long-term success.

