

ESG Newsletter

February 2026

Your Knowledge Digest

When Sustainability Reporting Regulation Steps Back, Data Steps Forward

The Missing Middle of the Energy Transition: Financing Industrial Decarbonization

News | Regional

Sustainability Forum Middle East concludes successful fourth edition driving climate action and economic resilience

More than 650 leaders convened in Bahrain for the fourth Sustainability Forum Middle East to advance regional dialogue and collaboration on energy transition, sustainable finance, and climate action.



MENA sustainable finance market hits \$35.1bn in 2025, shows report

MENA's sustainable finance market reached \$35.1bn in 2025, with Saudi Arabia leading issuance and banks driving rapid growth in green-labelled instruments, reflecting stronger regulation and rising investment needs in renewables, water, and climate-resilient infrastructure.



Oman hits sustainability milestone: 589 projects delivered under Vision 2040 strategy

Oman has completed 589 environmental projects under its Tenth Five-Year Plan, marking major progress toward Vision 2040 by advancing biodiversity protection, improving air quality, and strengthening natural resource governance.



Qatar advances data-driven sustainability with circular economy indicators framework

Qatar has launched a national workshop to develop circular economy indicators, bringing together over 80 experts to build a unified, data-driven framework that will guide policymaking and support the country's transition to a resilient circular economy aligned with its Third National Development Strategy.



CBI Caps interest rate for solar energy financing initiative | Iraq Business News

The Central Bank of Iraq has lowered the interest rate on its solar financing initiative to a maximum of 2.5% after public complaints, but uptake remains weak due to limited participation from state-owned banks and low citizen demand.



KUNA: Kuwait set to host 5th KOGS 2026 oil, gas event

Kuwait will host the 5th Kuwait Oil and Gas Show (KOGS 2026) on February 3, highlighting the country's regional energy leadership and expected to drive economic activity, global collaboration, and investment opportunities.



Oman: Zero-carbon approach to drive sustainability

Oman is accelerating its zero-carbon vision through strengthened environmental governance, large-scale sustainability projects, and flagship initiatives like the Blue Carbon programme, which aims to plant 100 million mangrove trees to absorb 14 million tonnes of CO₂ annually.



New report calls for stronger governance and finance to tackle GCC climate threats

The report warns that rising climate-related physical risks in the GCC demand urgent, proactive adaptation through stronger governance, data, finance and cross-sector coordination to safeguard communities and long-term economic stability.



News | International

EU Financial Regulators Release Guidelines for Integrating ESG Risks Into Stress Tests

EU regulators released final ESG stress-testing guidelines to help supervisors consistently integrate climate and broader ESG risks into stress tests and strengthen financial system resilience.

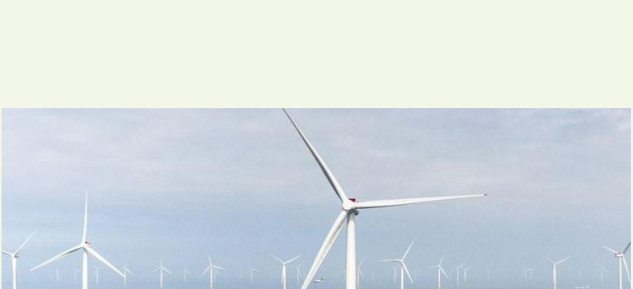


China Releases Corporate Climate Reporting Standard

China has introduced a trial climate-disclosure framework aligned with IFRS ISSB S2 to guide companies in reporting climate risks and opportunities, with plans to expand it into mandatory, sector-specific requirements over time.

UK Completes Largest-Ever Offshore Wind Auction in Europe

The UK's latest offshore wind CfD auction delivered a record 8.4 GW mostly won by RWE unlocking £22 billion in investment and powering 12 million homes, marking a major rebound that supports the UK's push toward 95% clean electricity by 2030.

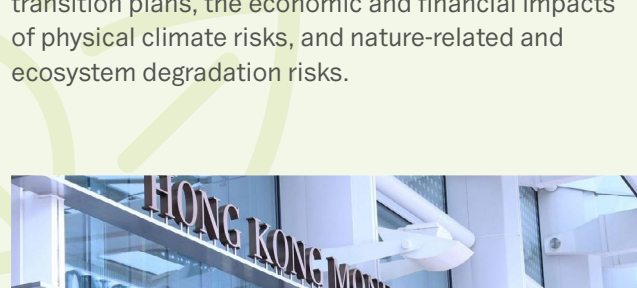


ESMA Guides Investment Firms on Expectations to Avoid Greenwashing in ESG Strategies

ESMA warns that inconsistent and unclear ESG integration and exclusion practices are creating greenwashing risks and urges firms to make sustainability claims accurate, transparent, and clearly tied to how portfolios are constructed.

ECB to Intensify Monitoring of Physical Climate Risk Impact, Transition Plans for Banks

The ECB announced that it will further strengthen the integration of climate and nature-related risks into its activities, with enhanced focus on banks' green transition plans, the economic and financial impacts of physical climate risks, and nature-related and ecosystem degradation risks.



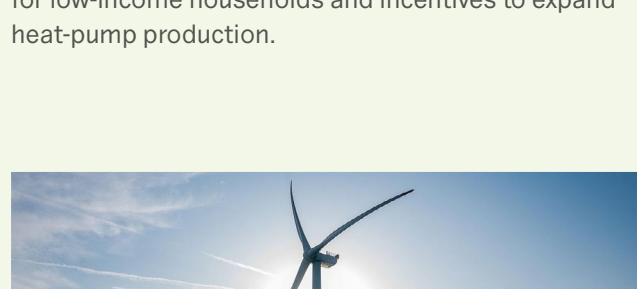
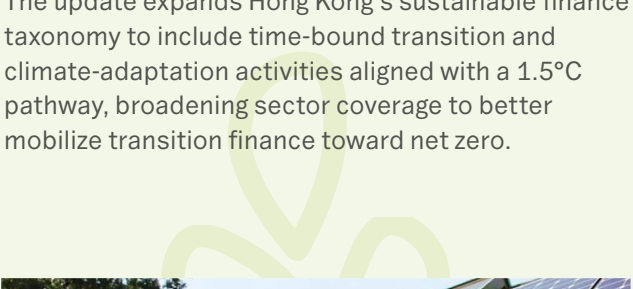
Hong Kong Adds Climate Transition, Adaptation Categories to Sustainable Finance Taxonomy

The update expands Hong Kong's sustainable finance taxonomy to include time-bound transition and climate-adaptation activities aligned with a 1.5°C pathway, broadening sector coverage to better mobilize transition finance toward net zero.



UK Invests £15 Billion to Upgrade Homes with Solar Panels, Heat Pumps

The UK's Warm Homes Plan allocates £15 billion to upgrade 5 million homes with clean energy and efficiency measures by 2030, including major support for low-income households and incentives to expand heat-pump production.



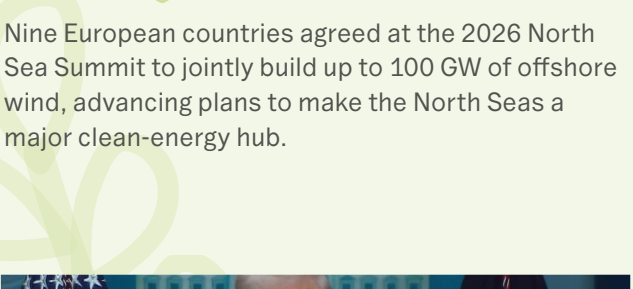
European Countries Pledge to Jointly Develop 100 GW of Offshore Wind, Infrastructure in North Sea

Nine European countries agreed at the 2026 North Sea Summit to jointly build up to 100 GW of offshore wind, advancing plans to make the North Seas a major clean-energy hub.



U.S. Formally Exits the Paris Agreement (Again)

The U.S. has again withdrawn from the Paris Agreement under President Trump, becoming the only country to exit the pact.



NBK ESG Highlights of the Month

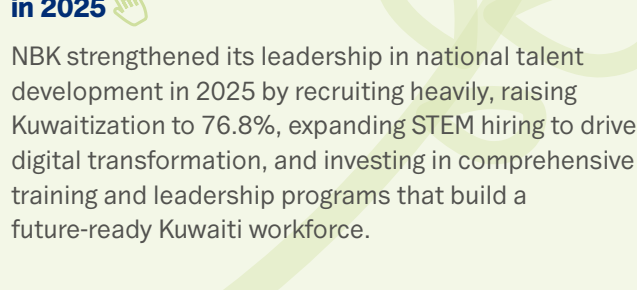


NBK Wins the Gold Medal in Corporate Social Responsibility from Brandon Hall Group Excellence Awards

National Bank of Kuwait earned the Brandon Hall Gold Medal for Corporate Social Responsibility in recognition of its extensive 2025 community, environmental, youth empowerment, and health initiatives, reaffirming its leadership in social responsibility and its role as a key partner in Kuwait's sustainable development.

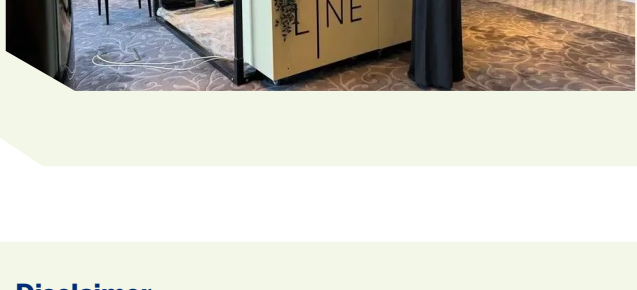
NBK Accelerates National Talent Growth in 2025

NBK strengthened its leadership in national talent development in 2025 by recruiting heavily, raising Kuwaitization to 76.8%, expanding STEM hiring to drive digital transformation, and investing in comprehensive training and leadership programs that build a future-ready Kuwaiti workforce.



NBK launches for its employees the "Wellness Week" initiative with more than 10 companies

NBK launched its "Wellness Week" to promote employees' mental and physical wellbeing through diverse health-focused activities and partnerships, reflecting the bank's commitment to a sustainable, supportive work environment that enhances quality of life and productivity.



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