

Harsha Saxena, Founder and CEO of IICSR, Leads Global Conversation on Sustainable AI as Energy Demand Surges

Harsha Saxena, Founder and CEO of IICSR, leads global dialogue on sustainable AI as rising energy and water demands reshape climate responsibility.

PALO ALTO, CA, UNITED STATES, June 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Harsha Saxena](#), Founder and CEO of [IICSR](#), Leads Global Conversation on Sustainable AI as Energy Demand Surges

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly embedded in business, government and everyday life, concerns are growing over the environmental cost of the technology powering it.

Data centres, the physical backbone of artificial intelligence, are drawing rising amounts of electricity and water as companies expand their use of generative AI, machine learning and automated digital systems. The International Energy Agency has projected that global electricity consumption from data centres could nearly double to around 945 terawatt-hours by 2030, representing just under 3% of global electricity demand. Data-centre electricity use is expected to grow at around 15% annually from 2024 to 2030 — more than four times faster than growth in electricity demand from other sectors.

Against that backdrop, Harsha Saxena, Founder and CEO of IICSR, led IICSR USA's one-day executive workshop in Palo Alto, California, focused on the intersection of artificial intelligence and sustainability.

The workshop, titled "AI and Sustainability: From Strategy to Scalability," was conducted on 15



May 2026 at Venture Dock, bringing together sustainability professionals, technology leaders, entrepreneurs, corporate executives and climate-tech practitioners from across Silicon Valley.

The event was organised as part of IICSR USA's wider effort to build global capacity around sustainability, ESG, responsible business and emerging technologies.

"The future of sustainability will be shaped by how responsibly we integrate emerging technologies into our economies, businesses and societies. Artificial intelligence has the potential to accelerate climate action, ESG transformation and sustainable development, but only when it is deployed with accountability, transparency and respect for planetary boundaries," said Harsha Saxena, Founder and CEO of IICSR.

Group Picture AIS-USA

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AI can accelerate climate action, but only when innovation is guided by accountability, transparency, and respect for planetary boundaries.”

*Harsha Saxena, Founder and
CEO IICSR Group*

“Through IICSR USA, we are building global bridges between sustainability leaders, policymakers, entrepreneurs and AI innovators to create scalable impact solutions for the planet. Palo Alto is only the beginning of a much larger global expansion vision where education, technology and sustainability converge to shape the future of humanity,” said Harsha Saxena, Founder and CEO of IICSR.

The event was sponsored by TheAgentic and supported by ecosystem partners including Women in Cleantech and

Sustainability, Founders Bay and Medallion XLN as Knowledge Partners. Tissage joined as Gift Partner, while Crewz supported the programme as Travel Partner.

AI's growing environmental footprint

Artificial intelligence has been widely promoted as a tool that can help address climate change. It can improve energy efficiency, support renewable energy forecasting, detect emissions, optimise



logistics, strengthen climate-risk modelling and assist companies in sustainability reporting.

But the technology also has an expanding environmental footprint.

AI systems require high-performance computing infrastructure, including data centres, servers, advanced chips and cooling systems. As more companies integrate AI into operations, the demand for computing power has increased sharply.

Goldman Sachs Research has estimated that global data-centre power demand could rise by about 160% by 2030, with data centres' share of global electricity use potentially rising from 1–2% today to 3–4% by the end of the decade. The firm has also warned that carbon dioxide emissions from data centres may more than double between 2022 and 2030 if the expansion is not matched with cleaner power and more efficient infrastructure.

Water use is also becoming a concern. The Environmental and Energy Study Institute reported in 2025 that large data centres can consume up to 5 million gallons of water per day, comparable to the water use of a town of 10,000 to 50,000 people. Water is used directly for cooling and indirectly through electricity generation, making it an increasingly important sustainability metric for the AI sector.

For companies, the issue is becoming more than a technical concern. AI infrastructure is now linked to energy planning, water security, emissions accounting, corporate governance and ESG



CSO session on AI and Sustainability



Group Discussion at the Workshop on AIS

risk.

From technology adoption to responsible implementation

The Palo Alto workshop focused on how businesses can adopt AI responsibly while ensuring that sustainability remains central to decision-making.

Sessions examined AI for net zero, ESG transformation, sustainable data centres, AI governance, ethical deployment, climate-tech innovation, circular economy models and regenerative business strategies.

Speakers and contributors included Keynote speech by Nikunj J. Parekh, Head of AI Business and Chief AI

Architect at Wipro AI & Data; workshop by Christian Butzlaff, Chief Sustainability Solution Architect at SAP; AI and Finance book author speech Prof. PK Prasanna Kumar, CEO of Business Optima and Chief Entrepreneurship Officer at AI Trust Foundation; Sadia Raveendran, Founding Head of GTM at Hammerhead and Board Member at Women in Cleantech and Sustainability; Mariane Bekker, Head of DevRel at You.com and Founder of Founders Bay; and Dwayne Campbell, CEO of Medallion XLN.

Participants discussed how AI could be used to improve sustainability reporting, identify emissions across supply chains, support climate-risk analysis, optimise energy use and create more efficient business systems.

At the same time, the workshop addressed concerns around transparency, governance, resource consumption and ethical implementation.

The central question was not whether AI can support sustainability, but whether it can do so without creating new environmental and social risks.

Sustainability skills gap

For Harsha Saxena, Founder and CEO of IICSR, the issue is also one of education and workforce readiness.



AIS Certificate Award Ceremony - USA

Companies are under increasing pressure to meet climate targets, comply with sustainability disclosure rules, reduce emissions and show measurable ESG performance. At the same time, many are rapidly adopting AI tools without fully understanding their environmental footprint or governance implications.

IICSR's work focuses on training professionals in sustainability, ESG, CSR, climate action, responsible business and related fields. Through IICSR USA, the organisation is now extending that focus to AI-enabled sustainability leadership.

Harsha Saxena, Founder and CEO of IICSR, said the next phase of sustainability will require professionals who can understand both technology and impact. The workshop highlighted the need for sustainability teams to understand AI, and for technology teams to understand sustainability. It also called for stronger collaboration between corporate leaders, policymakers, educators, investors and technology providers.

Industry perspective

Akash Saraf, Founder and CEO of TheAgentic, said the future of AI lies in combining technology with domain expertise.

"AI is entering a new era — one where intelligence is no longer confined to large language models alone, but evolves into systems capable of deeper reasoning, contextual understanding and real-world problem solving. At TheAgentic, we believe the future of AI lies in empowering domain experts to transform decades of industry knowledge into scalable, revenue-generating solutions without the traditional barriers of capital, infrastructure or technical complexity. As industries worldwide navigate sustainability, operational efficiency and economic transformation, the convergence of AI and human expertise has the potential to unlock unprecedented impact. The next generation of sustainable innovation will not be built by technology alone, but through collaborative ecosystems where responsible AI accelerates smarter businesses, resilient industries and long-term global progress," said Akash Saraf, Founder and CEO of TheAgentic.

A global debate

The debate over AI's environmental impact is gaining urgency as governments and companies race to expand digital infrastructure.

In the United States, Europe and Asia, data-centre development has raised questions about grid capacity, renewable energy access, local water use and community impact. Some regions are actively courting data-centre investment, while others are examining how to manage resource constraints.

For sustainability professionals, the issue presents a new challenge. Digital transformation was

once often viewed as inherently low-carbon because it reduced paper use, travel and manual processes. AI has complicated that assumption.

A company may reduce emissions in one part of its business through AI-enabled efficiency, while increasing energy use through computing infrastructure elsewhere. As a result, sustainability teams are being pushed to examine the full lifecycle and operational impact of digital tools.

The Palo Alto workshop reflected that shift. It called for AI systems to be assessed not only for productivity and commercial value, but also for electricity use, carbon intensity, water consumption, hardware lifecycle, transparency and social impact.

What comes next

Following the workshop, IICSR USA said it plans to conduct additional in-person and online executive education programmes focused on AI, sustainability, ESG leadership, climate innovation and the regenerative economy.

Under the leadership of ****Harsha Saxena, Founder and CEO of IICSR****, the organisation aims to strengthen collaboration between businesses, policymakers, academia, investors, climate-tech founders and technology leaders.

The wider challenge is likely to intensify over the rest of the decade. As AI becomes more deeply integrated into global business systems, companies will face mounting pressure to show that their use of the technology is not only efficient and profitable, but also responsible.

For Harsha Saxena, Founder and CEO of IICSR, and IICSR USA, the message from Palo Alto was clear: artificial intelligence may become one of the most powerful tools available for sustainable development, but only if it is governed, measured and deployed with care.

The question is no longer whether AI will transform the global economy. It already is.

The question now is whether that transformation can be made sustainable.

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