



SIEW KIM BEH

CFSO

CAPITALAND INVESTMENT, LODGING

Siew Kim Beh, Chief Finance & Sustainability Officer of CapitaLand Investment, Lodging explains why working smarter can drive a sustainable career.

During my tenure as CEO of CapitaLand Ascott Trust Management Ltd (CLAS) (formerly Ascott Residence Trust Management Ltd), an investor asked what we were actively doing in terms of sustainability. It was a pivotal moment – one that made me realise sustainability is not just a buzzword.

Rather, sustainability is a significant aspect of our business – and I could see we needed more disclosure, enhanced transparency, and to demonstrate our dedication to responsible business operations.

My initial sustainability vision for CLAS was to align our operations with CapitaLand's Sustainability Masterplan, integrating our efforts with the broader framework, which included well-defined objectives and strategies.

Fortunately, we had a strong foundation to build upon. CapitaLand's Sustainability masterplan encompassed energy efficiency, waste reduction, responsible sourcing, and social wellbeing of our communities, etc.

In 2021, our efforts were rewarded.

Ascott Residence Trust (ART) was recognised for outstanding leadership in sustainability in the 2021 Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark (GRESB) and designated a 'Global Sector Leader - Hotel', clinching the top rank in the 'Asia Pacific Hotel – Listed' category.

ART was also awarded a 4-star rating in GRESB 2021 and scored 'A' for public disclosure.

The process of achieving this designation called for collaboration, and we worked closely with various departments to fulfill the requirements.

Having the right people in the team makes all the difference.



Of course, we encountered challenges along the way. But these reinforced a philosophy I hold dear: "Baby Steps".

I firmly believe in taking small steps towards a goal. Progress, even if imperfect, is still progress. It's about getting started and learning along the way.

No one achieves perfection on day one, and it is crucial to accept this.

It is the accumulation of those small steps and the lessons learned from them that ultimately lead to significant strides forward.

By embracing the ethos of "Progress versus Perfection" and recognising the value of every small achievement, we were able to achieve recognition as a global leader in sustainability.

The issuance of a S\$200 million sustainability-linked bond by Ascott Residence Trust in April 2022 was a significant milestone.

Being the first in the global hospitality trust sector to issue a sustainability-linked bond showcased our leadership and commitment to sustainability. It signalled that bold actions can set new industry standards and inspire others to follow.

It also sent a clear message to stakeholders that ART takes sustainability seriously.

Leverage technology and AI-driven tools for data analysis and reporting. This can significantly improve efficiency, productivity and allow you to focus more on strategic tasks such as financial analysis and driving business growth.

Siew Kim Beh,
Chief Finance & Sustainability
Officer,
CapitaLand Investment, Lodging



In 2022, I took on a new role as the Chief Financial & Sustainability Officer, CapitaLand Investment, Lodging overseeing all aspects of Lodging's finance, treasury, and investor relations functions, while also leading Lodging's sustainability efforts.

Shortly after my appointment, and credit to the Ascott team, Ascott Limited successfully achieved Global Sustainability Tourism Council Recognised Status. As one of the first hospitality groups to be conferred this status, it was an affirmation of Ascott's commitment to sustainable tourism.

Ascott also unveiled its Ascott CARES sustainability framework, centred around the five pillars of Community, Alliance, Respect, Environment and Supply Chain.

In July 2023, Ascott Limited and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly train and equip industry leaders and professionals in Singapore on principles and best practices in sustainability.

This milestone is further affirmation of Ascott's commitment to sustainable tourism and aligns our growth strategy with plans to drive sustainability in Singapore, and across its global portfolio.

PASSION BUILDS CREDIBILITY

My background in accounting has equipped me with strong analytical and problem-solving skills to analyse sustainability data and make data-driven decisions. My experience as a CFO has allowed me to translate sustainability goals into financial terms, which can gain buy-in from stakeholders.

However, it is my genuine passion for sustainability that has given me credibility as a CSFO. Being well-supported by a collaborative team of experts has bridged any knowledge gaps I may have. My own career experience highlights how a qualification in accounting opens doors to international career opportunities, making accounting an attractive choice for anyone looking to work in different countries and industries.



WORKING SMARTER – UNDERSTAND THE ‘WHY’

I believe that working smarter is about optimising our approach to work, to maximise results while maintaining a healthy work-life balance – and that’s essential to prevent burnout and ensure your career remains sustainable over the long term.

To ensure I am working smarter, I always ask “why” before diving into a task. Understanding the purpose and importance of a task helps me prioritise and focus on what truly matters.

Other steps matter too:

- Recognise when tasks can be delegated to others. Delegating lightens your workload but also empowers your team and promotes their development.
- Work collaboratively. Share knowledge and resources to achieve common goals more efficiently.
- Stay updated. Continuous learning ensures you remain relevant and can adopt more efficient methods.
- Build a strong professional network. It opens opportunities, provides insights, and connects you with mentors or advisors.

Most importantly, have a positive attitude. Be willing to do more and learn more to future-proof your career.

