

Organisations benefit from the Advanced Resource Efficiency Centre (AREC)

The launch of the Advanced Resource Efficiency Centre (AREC), led by Professor Lenny Koh from the Sheffield University Management School, has captured the attention of organisations looking to improve their sustainable credentials, both locally and on a national scale.

AREC has been formed as a facility to promote collaboration between industry and academics who can help introduce resource efficiency and sustainability across supply chains. It also offers a platform for access to policy makers and focuses on four main industries: Advanced Materials and Manufacturing; Energy and Nuclear; Water; and Agritech/Food.

Professor Koh together with her exceptional team across Faculties and disciplines, taken from leading industry and academia, have identified a number of issues affecting the development of resource sustainable supply chains in large organisations including getting support from the board for sustainability improvements, unless there is a legal requirement or financial benefit. AREC also recognises that Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) need to overcome supply chain challenges so gives them the opportunity to collaborate with larger industrial partners to benefit from their cutting edge academic research and skills – this endeavour fits directly with current Government and EU policies.

Industry partners such as the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) with Boeing, Rolls-Royce, Tata Steel, Unilever and DLA Piper – in collaborations overseen by Professor Koh's team, organisations of every size can benefit from their expertise and resources.

It is AREC's view that long-term success lies in achieving a fair and sustainable balance between rewarding all stakeholders in a business, not just the shareholders. With this approach, customers, suppliers, employees and the community in which the business operates should benefit.

'Green' and sustainable organisational elements are becoming increasingly important to reputation, and investors are developing a longer-term view on their partners – if firms are seen to be neglecting these vital criteria, customers may choose to go to a competitor that is doing them well.

AREC will support businesses in considering development in these areas, and will provide resources and partnerships with which to do so. Professor Koh said: "I am delighted to be leading this Centre. The calibre of our industrial and academic partnerships speaks millions about the attention and investment the University is putting into our initiative.

"Sustainability and socially-responsible work practices are built into Sheffield University Management School's mission statement, so my involvement and that of my Management colleagues is very relevant. This initiative sits strategically well with the specific research priority of the Faculty of Social Science on climate change and sustainable growth. The translational and cross disciplinary nature of the AREC work in partnership with industry, departments and Research Centres from the Faculties of Social Science, Science and Engineering as well as the University's AMRC and Nuclear ARMC, connecting lower TRL and higher TRL activities together for greater societal impact."

To find out more about the AREC, visit www.sheffield.ac.uk/arec, or email s.c.l.koh@sheffield.ac.uk.

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