

## EADA CSO DAY 2026

### **The evolution of the CSO's role reflects a new stage of greater influence on critical company decisions.**

- The event welcomed more than 100 Chief Sustainability Officers (CSOs) and sustainability professionals who took part in the second edition of the event organised by EADA Business School.
- Choni Fernández, COO & Chief Sustainability Officer at PortAventura World, has been recognised with the CSO Award 2026, an award that distinguishes leadership and career achievements in corporate sustainability.

**Barcelona, 11 March 2026.** EADA Business School today held the second edition of CSO Day, the meeting that brings together Chief Sustainability Officers (CSOs) and business leaders committed to integrating sustainability into corporate strategy. The event, held at EADA's second campus in the centre of Barcelona, Campus 2-Provença, brought together **more than one hundred professionals and experts from the business community.**

Under the theme **“Resilience at the Limit: Sustaining Purpose in a World in Crisis”**, the meeting focused on the role of CSOs as key agents in driving more resilient organisations capable of maintaining their purpose and commitment to positive impact even in contexts of economic, geopolitical and social uncertainty.

**Ainhoa Grandes**, Chair of CSO Day, President of the MACBA Foundation, member of the Board of Trustees of the EADA University Foundation and of its impact committee, opened the **CSO Day 2026** by highlighting that the context of Western regression, led by the American administration, is enabling other powers such as China to begin leading major sustainability projects.

**CSO Day 2026** was structured around three key spaces that shaped the event: purpose in times of crisis, alliances in response to systemic risks and ESG leadership from governance. Each of these stages featured renowned experts such as **Olga Villacañas**, co-founder and Impact Director at Ocean52; **Ernesto Barceló**, Chief ESG Officer at Gestamp; **Choni Fernández**, COO & Chief Sustainability Officer at PortAventura World; **Laura Quintana**, Director of Sustainable Development at Redeia; **Josep Maria Ribas**, Climate Change Manager at Família Torres; and **Mario Rotllant**,

President of the Environmental, Social and Governance Committee at Coca-Cola Europacific Partners.

The first panel discussion addressed one of the main challenges organisations currently face: **how to sustain corporate purpose when crises place pressure on reputation, brand and corporate strategy**. Moderated by **Olga Villacañas**, co-founder and Impact Director at Ocean52, the conversation included **Ernesto Barceló**, Chief ESG Officer at Gestamp, and **Choni Fernández**, COO & Chief Sustainability Officer at PortAventura World.

During the discussion, **Choni Fernández** commented that the CSO is the conductor of sustainability within the company and the professional who coordinates all areas to integrate strategy, ensuring that commitments do not remain merely declarative but instead permeate the organisation and help lead the future of the business. Likewise, **Ernesto Barceló** noted that sustainability has become firmly established within executive teams and is increasingly part of corporate strategy, which today is measured using criteria that go beyond financial results.

The second panel focused on **the need to build alliances capable of collectively responding to systemic risks affecting companies and society**. This session was moderated by **Dr Federica Massa-Saluzzo**, CSO and professor at EADA Business School, and brought together **Laura Quintana**, Director of Sustainable Development at Redeia, and **Josep Maria Ribas**, Climate Change Manager at Familia Torres.

During the debate, both experts pointed out that in order to build strong alliances it is essential to carefully choose partners from the outset and establish shared ambition and objectives between the parties. They also highlighted the importance of maintaining rigorous monitoring of the collaboration and preserving the core of the agreement to ensure its long-term continuity.

The **Spotlight Speaker** session featured **Mario Rotllant**, President of the Environmental, Social and Governance Committee at Coca-Cola Europacific Partners, in conversation with **Dr Desirée Knoppen**, professor and Director of the Sustainability Hub at EADA Business School.

In this context, **Rotllant** stressed the importance of distinguishing between short-term factors driven by current geopolitical tensions and companies' structural commitments, ensuring that short-term pressure does not divert long-term sustainability ambitions and objectives.

He also emphasised that companies' credibility in sustainability depends on acting with honesty and leading by example, highlighting that large corporations also have the responsibility to influence constructively the development of regulations that benefit society and to share best practices across markets in order to drive progress in sustainability.

In addition, as the closing of the event, **the EADA Forest** was presented, an initiative launched following CSO Day 2025 that exemplifies tangible sustainability with a long-term vision. Developed in collaboration with **ReTree**, the project includes the planting and long-term maintenance of native trees, as well as the measurement of their impact through environmental and social indicators. Within the framework of this initiative, during the **2024–2025 academic year nearly 300 trees were planted in an area near Santa Coloma de Queralt (Tarragona)**, and the addition of **100 new trees is planned**.

## CSO Award

The event also included the presentation of the CSO Award 2026, a recognition aimed at highlighting those CSO professionals who, through their leadership and commitment, are achieving a significant impact in reducing emissions and implementing innovative practices that contribute to sustainable development.

**Jordi Díaz**, Dean and Director General of EADA Business School, and **Mario Rovirosa**, CEO of Ferrer, member of the Board of Trustees of the EADA Foundation and Chair of the jury for the CSO Award 2026, presented the **CSO Award** to **Choni Fernández**, COO & Chief Sustainability Officer at PortAventura World, for her work in integrating sustainability and for her ability to link it with the company's strategy and business. The jury also recognised the positioning achieved within PortAventura World, making it a benchmark in its sector and in female leadership.

This recognition was based on the award's rigorous evaluation criteria, which are structured around five key pillars: **Impact and Knowledge Sharing**, which assesses the ability to amplify efforts and create authentic content; **Acting Beyond Regulation**, evaluating progress towards the SDGs, ESG criteria and the Net-Zero target; **Innovation and Leadership**, recognising pioneering projects and industry leadership; **Leadership and Empowerment**, focused on integrating sustainability into corporate culture through training; and **Sustainability Brand and Media Content**, highlighting transparency in communicating impact.

## EADA Business School, a pioneer in its commitment to sustainability

**EADA Business School Barcelona** was created in 1957 by a group of entrepreneurs and professionals as an institution independent both ideologically and economically. Recognised by leading international rankings such as the *Financial Times*, it holds the EQUIS accreditation as well as AMBA, which recognises the quality of its MBA programmes.

Over the past decade, the institution has adopted a strong commitment to sustainability, promoting research and education in this critical area. In 2017, the School created its first programme in corporate sustainability, the [Master in Sustainability Management and Business Impact](#), a pioneering programme in Spain and Europe. Since then, thanks to the knowledge generated through research and a highly specialised academic team, the School has launched up to five specific programmes in business sustainability. The [Leading What Matters](#) manifesto defines the purpose of EADA Business School.

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