

CEO Guide

to the Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals and the role of business

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out a framework of 17 goals and 169 targets to tackle the world's most pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges in the lead-up to 2030.

While ultimately it is governments who are being asked to deliver the SDGs, the simple fact is that this critical agenda cannot be realized without effective engagement from the private sector.

Business has a crucial role to play as:

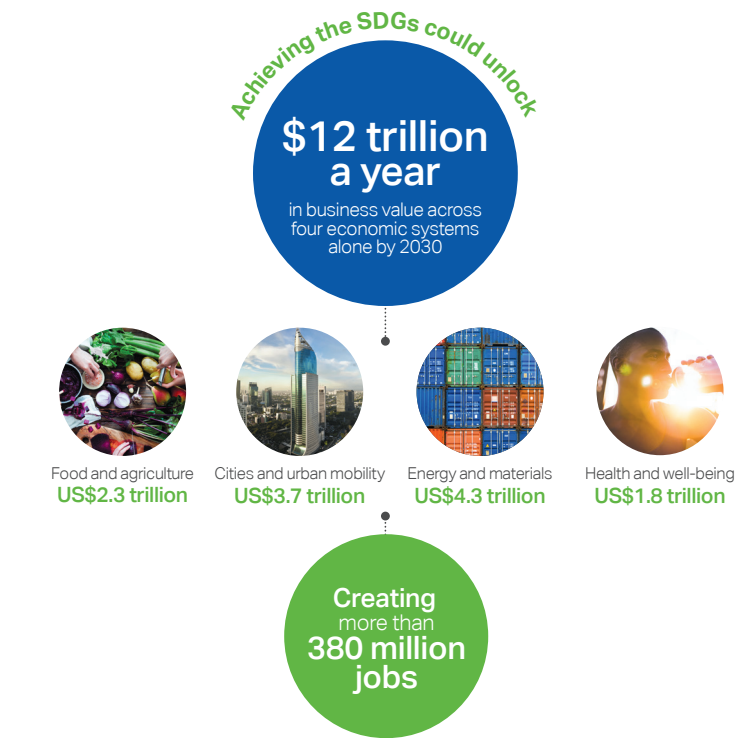
- 1 an engine of economic growth and employment;
- 2 a driver of innovation and technology;
- 3 a source of finance.

The Business and Sustainable Development Commission

As much as the SDGs need business, long-term business success also hinges on the realization of the SDGs. The **Business & Sustainable Development Commission**, which is led by over 30 business and civil society leaders, has produced compelling research mapping the economic prize that could be available to business if the SDGs are achieved. Its *Better Business, Better World* report points to market opportunities of at least \$12 trillion a year that could be unlocked by 2030.



This critical agenda cannot be realized without meaningful engagement from business



Implications for business

From a business perspective, it is important to understand the implications of the SDGs across four key pillars:

1 Risks of inaction

Doing nothing is a costly option

As escalating environmental and social burdens begin to restrain future growth prospects, failure to take action on the SDGs represents a **mounting business cost**. Furthermore, neglecting to integrate the SDGs strategically also poses a long-term **regulatory risk** and a **reputational risk** as governments move to reflect the SDGs in national policy, and stakeholders look to business to engage meaningfully in this agenda.

2 Capturing opportunities

The prize of aligning business strategies with the SDGs

There is a massive **market incentive** for companies who are able to offer SDG-relevant technologies and solutions through sustainable and inclusive business models. Furthermore, companies who align themselves with the SDGs will also be able to **consolidate a strong license to operate**, differentiating themselves from competitors **and building trust** among governments, shareholders and customers.

3 Governance & transparency

Better information = better decisions

The SDGs also bring a new dynamic to **governance and transparency**. Better information equals better decision-making; **disclosing sustainability risks and impacts, and pricing them appropriately**, is increasingly where the market is headed.

4 The need for collaboration

Realizing the SDGs is beyond the reach of one company

Business as usual will not achieve the SDGs, nor will innovation by a few pioneers. This agenda is beyond the reach of any one company and will require collaboration across **sectors, supply chains and economic systems**, as well as **innovative partnership, with governments and civil society**.

At this time of political and economic uncertainty, strong and visionary CEO leadership is essential



Action points

There are a number of actions that you can take to align your organization with the SDGs and plot a course towards unlocking the value they represent.

- 1 Risks of inaction
- 2 Capturing opportunities
- 3 Governance & transparency
- 4 The need for collaboration

Individual-level

- Stay informed 1 2
Make the SDGs your business. Keep up with the sustainable development agenda to ensure that your organization is well-placed to capitalize upon opportunities and pre-empt disruptive risks.
- Spread the word 4
Engage your network of peers on this agenda to create a tipping point for business engagement.

Company-level

- Understand and measure 3 externalities
Develop a thorough understanding of how your company's business activities translate into economic, environmental and social impacts in the context of the SDGs.
- Set goals 1 2
Plot a course towards enhancing positive and mitigating negative SDG impacts.
- Develop business solutions 2
Apply an SDG lens at the strategic level to harness your organization's potential to engineer business solutions that make your company more successful and sustainable.
- Communicate 3
Consider regular and transparent communication of SDG performance and progress.

Sector-level

- Come together 3 4
Collaborate with peers and other stakeholders to frame the SDGs in the context of your sector.
- Roadmaps 4
Set a collective vision for your industry, and collaborate on initiatives to realize sector transformation.
- Issue calls to action 4
Call for all companies in the sector to align, collaborate and report on their progress.

Policy-level

- Advocate 1 2 3 4
Openly advocate for the introduction of key policy and finance enablers that will help to achieve a tipping point.

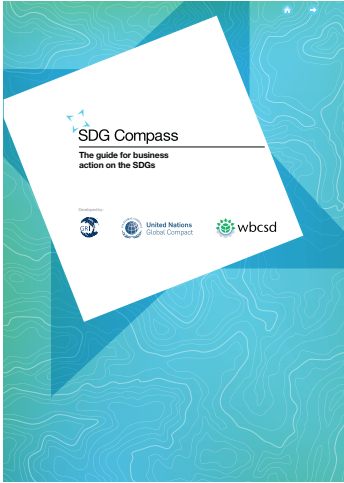


WBCSD as an enabler for action at scale

WBCSD is pursuing initiatives that promote business action on the SDGs at scale. These are led by our membership of 200 leading companies and supported by strong institutional partnerships, including a Global Network of over 60 business organizations worldwide.

- Sector roadmaps
WBCSD is taking steps to leverage our extensive networks across multiple industries to create sector-specific roadmaps which articulate a common vision towards realizing the SDGs.
- Redefining Value
We are developing innovative frameworks and resources to advance non-financial capital measurement, valuation and reporting, helping companies to improve their decision-making, and produce more effective and meaningful external reporting and disclosure.
- WBCSD Business Solutions
WBCSD has a ready-made suite of over 40 Business Solutions that are being driven forward by our member companies. These solutions can help your company strengthen its competitiveness and resilience whilst contributing to the realization of a wide range of SDGs.

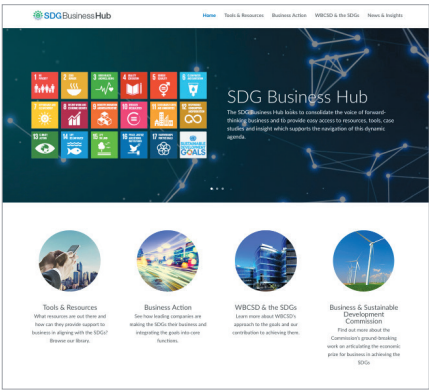
- SDG Compass
In collaboration with GRI and the UN Global Compact, WBCSD has developed a step-by-step guide for companies to align their strategies with the SDGs and measure and manage their impacts. This SDG Compass is available in 12 languages.



Stay informed

The SDG Business Hub consolidates the voice of forward-thinking business. It provides easy access to resources, tools, case studies and insights that support you in the navigation of this dynamic agenda.

www.sdghub.com



We invite colleagues, partners and stakeholders to work with us to scale up action towards 2030 and beyond



