

# The Why's and How's of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015, with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, business leaders set the comprehensive, coherent, holistic framework to aspire Governments, businesses and civil society to march toward green, inclusive and sustainable world. At the heart of “[Agenda 2030](#)” are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 corresponding targets which are the guidance to all nations for addressing economic, social, environmental and governance challenges. The SDGs are built on the [Millennium Development Goals](#) established in 2000 replacing them with the more inclusive goals to be achieved in the next 15 years, until 2030. Governments around the world have the pivotal role setting a level of ambition, formulate a long-term development vision and action plan to contribute to the SDGs. The Goals provide an international reference for updating the National agenda toward sustainable development, addressing the issues that are not sufficiently covered by current policy targets. In this way, translating the global SDG targets into the national context, enable governments to hold each other to account on progress.

As a responsible global citizen, every company which strives to achieve business excellence needs to take responsibility for its operations and choose to be accountable for associated impacts on the society and environment. Businesses that have strong sustainable practices and support the achievement of SDGs, enjoy wider business benefits. These can include:

- \* drive profitable growth and performance boost
- \* outperform market
- \* deliver innovative and effective solutions
- \* attract, retain and motivate employees
- \* enjoy improved public image and reputation
- \* are attractive to investors
- \* are more capable to manage environmental
- \* social and governance (ESG) risks
- \* build sustainable, inclusive and resilient business models

For companies, SDGs do not represent another framework for reporting but a rather integral part of materiality assessment to identify impact areas to focus and work on and an extraordinary blueprint in turning challenges into opportunities and capitalizing on them. For example, with a solid understanding of SDGs, a company can expand new markets based on SDG-relevant technologies and solutions, differentiate from competitors, improve and forge the most valuable business commodity: trust.



## A global call for a sustainable future

Successful integration of SDGs into a business model requires a solid understanding of the Goals, knowledge of the company's current state and its impact areas. Related to its business operations, an organization can commit to the most relevant Goals treating them as interconnected as well as interdependent. Taking into consideration its governance structure, locations of operation and impact measurement methodologies, a forward-thinking organization can align its business planning, strategy and reporting practices with SDGs and reap multiple benefits.

We are aware that companies must be more proactive in getting the most from the Goals which can help them to accelerate brand relevance, growth and impact. Sustainability Knowledge Group is dedicated in supporting organizations to navigate past risk and focus on opportunities reflected in the **SDG Agenda**. We can set a clear action plan to accelerate progress against reaching selected goals, align strategies with laws, local regulations and policies based on the Global Goals, fuel inclusive growth and achieve tangible results.

**Achieving the SDGs could create 380 million jobs and help unlock at least \$12 trillion in opportunities for business by 2030, which is stated in a flagship [report](#) from The Business & Sustainable Development Commission.**

# The five pillars of sustainable development

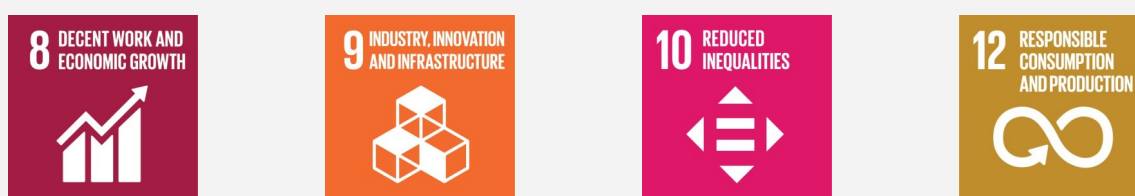
## Planet



## People



## Prosperity



## Peace



## Partnerships



In the most recent [UN Global Compact-Accenture Strategy CEO study](#), 87% of CEO state that the SDGs represent an essential opportunity to rethink existing approaches to sustainable value creation.

“ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders two years ago, is a blueprint for making our world more equitable, sustainable and livable.

To implement this plan—and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals—we need to broaden the circle of action to include governments, bilateral and international organizations, and international financial institutions. Partnerships with civil society, the business community and others are critical to success

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, at the UN staff address, 2017

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The 17 Goals pose an excellent opportunity for organizations to form meaningful partnerships, resolve interconnected challenges and showcase leadership. Seizing a lot of opportunities goes beyond any single company and requires revitalized and enhanced partnerships. According to the [Global registry on partnerships for the SDGs](#), around 3,800 partnerships worldwide have been registered, mostly committed to Goal 15, on “Life on land”.

# How Sustainability Knowledge Group can help



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## Understand SDGs and how your company can benefit

### Initial steps in reshaping the future by clarifying company's position and aspirations.

- Assess the impact of your company's business strategy, operations, technology, product portfolio on any of the SDGs
- Evaluate your company's impact through accurate materiality assessment methodologies
- Identify where the company can be more effective in achieving the Goal(s) given a country and sectors in which your company operates
- Draft and build your business case for SDG adoption
- Identify new growth opportunities and lower your risk profile
- Identify opportunities for successful partnerships with governmental institutions, other companies and civil society
- Recognize requirements set by governmental development programs
- Determine your level of business maturity

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## Link SDGs to strategy

### Match SDGs with current business priorities.

#### Select goals

- Identify your business level of ambitions based on organisation's business model, current and historical performance, projecting trends, benchmarking with industry peers
- Select relative and absolute goals while taking into account the company's size, performance, served regions and market segments
- Select and implement transformational goals based on the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)

#### Prioritize goals

- Train your employees through ILM certified, interactive and highly-specialized Sustainability and CSR Training courses for setting the appropriate strategy pathway
- Support goals that grant scalable business solutions and durability while benefitting society and environment
- Set clear targets and key performance to measure impact
- Develop effective metrics, measure impacts, monitor and improve performance toward your selected Goals
- Develop customized sustainability balanced scorecard with clearly defined strategy map, performance measures, targets and initiatives
- Systematically monitor performance against targets based on KPIs and identify corrective actions
- Set SMART targets to help you to steer your sustainable development

**Embedding SDGs in business strategy, culture and operations especially in early stages, grant long-term growth, stability and resilience.**

**Anchor SDGs into business decisions and day to day management**

- Apply tools and roadmap in integrating Goals you're your everyday business and investment decision-making
- Choose and successfully implement projects in line with SDGs
- Identify adjustments of strategies, products, services, supply chain, innovation and R&D process realigned with SDGs and corporate goals
- Select and engage in strategic collaborations you can capitalize on and achieve mutual benefits by combining skills, technologies and resources
- Help in establishing cross-functional sustainability councils, committee, boards or task forces

**Measure effectiveness and results**

- Select the range of indicators that can assess impact on SDGs
- Develop reliable measurement and data collecting system and methodologies for assess SDG issues
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis to identify the company's strengths, weaknesses and areas that need improvement in relation with the Goals
- Use Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodologies to measure and communicate your social value

**The SDGs offer a common framework and language for sustainable development that can help in prioritizing reporting narrative.**

- Help corporations and SMEs to increase transparency by effectively communicating program outcomes and performance on the SDGs
- Disclose targets and strategies across the business operations related to SDGs. Inform stakeholders and initiate a dialogue
- Structure information for a stand-alone SDG report or embed such information in sustainability report
- Link selected Goal(s) with the GRI Standards
- Verify the accuracy of non-financial information in Sustainability reports to enhance credibility and reliability
- Receive recognition for contributions and achievements toward sustainable development



**Sustainability Knowledge Group**

is a global advisory firm dedicated to creating value through strategic Sustainability & CSR solutions, including advisory, training, coaching and meetups. In recognition of the importance of sustaining competitive advantage in today's marketplace, we support companies to develop strategies that minimise risks and demonstrate leadership.

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