

# Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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# What are the SDGs?

## The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- Define global sustainable development priorities and aspirations for 2030 that seek to mobilize efforts around a common set of goals and targets
- Were developed through an inclusive process reflecting substantive input from all sectors and society across the globe
- Were adopted by all UN member states in 2015
- Call for worldwide action among governments, businesses and civil society to end poverty and create a life of dignity and opportunity for all, within the boundaries of the planet
- Primarily target governments but can be used by companies.
  - Companies can use the SDGs as an overarching framework to shape, guide and communicate their sustainability strategies, goals and activities



# What are the SDGs?



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## SDGs:

- 17 goals
- Each goal is underpinned by specific targets (169 targets set by the UN)
- Progress on targets is measured using indicators (232 described by UN), which can be customized to reflect different contexts

# 12

## Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



Target

### 12.2

By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources

Indicators ▲

#### 12.2.1

Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP

#### 12.2.2

Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP



# Why report on the SDGs

- **Use a common language and a shared purpose:** The SDGs provide a common framework that allows companies to communicate consistently and transparently about relevant, critical and actionable sustainability goals.
- **Identifying future business opportunities:** By redirecting resources towards the challenges outlined in the SDGs, the goals define areas for future innovation where companies can deliver solutions.
- **Strengthen stakeholder relations:** The SDGs reflect stakeholder expectations as well as future policy direction. An opportunity exists for companies that align their priorities with the SDGs to strengthen engagement with customers, employees and other stakeholders
- **Stabilizing societies and markets:** Investing in progress around the SDGs supports the societies and environments that businesses need to succeed, including rules-based markets, transparent financial systems, non-corrupt and well-governed institutions, and a healthy and educated workforce. **“Business cannot thrive in a world of poverty, inequality, unrest and environmental stress, and so it has a vital interest in ensuring that the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs are delivered<sup>1</sup>”.**

**Business is a vital partner in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Companies can contribute through their core activities, and we ask companies everywhere to assess their impact, set ambitious goals and communicate transparently about the results.**





**Ban Ki-moon,  
United Nations  
Secretary-General**

<sup>1</sup>Integrating the SDGs into corporate reporting: A practical guide  
<sup>2</sup>SDG Compass Guide



# Current state of reporting on SDGs

A [recent report](#) by the Global Reporting Initiative on the contributions of businesses to the SDGs found that while most businesses seem to have a good understanding of the SDGs that are most relevant to their business, most organizations have yet to set targets that explicitly align with these goals.

<p><b>Number of companies stating their support of the Goals</b></p>	<p>83%</p>	<p>The vast majority of businesses in the research group are stating their support of the Goals.</p> <p>This is significant as the companies in this study recognize the value of aligning their sustainability plans with the SDGs.</p>
<p><b>3 most common Goals:</b></p>		<p>The most common Goals supported by companies mirror the priorities of previous research conducted by Support the Goals, and are SDGs 8,12,13.</p>
<p><b>3 least common Goals:</b></p>		<p>Goal 2: Zero Hunger is consistently the least reported across research conducted by Support the Goals. However, the support for SDGs 1 and 14 varies among research, and they are not always within the 3 least common Goals.</p>
<p><b>Companies that state which Goals are most relevant to their business</b></p>	<p>69%</p>	<p>The majority of the research group has taken time to understand which goals are most relevant to their business.</p>
<p><b>Companies that make measurable commitments to the Goals</b></p>	<p>40%</p>	<p>Nearly half of the assessed businesses make measurable commitments towards the SDGs. While there is room for improvement, this is a promising figure.</p>

# Shortcomings of the SDGs

- **Voluntary:** The SDGs are voluntary, not enforceable, and therefore can be used without any external validation, opening them up to misuse
- **Risk of “Rainbow washing”:** The term “Rainbow washing” refers to the use of the SDGs colorful logos with no meaningful action (a version of “greenwashing” where firms make claims around sustainability actions that are unsubstantiated or exaggerated)
- **Tradeoffs between SDGs:** There is a risk that companies will cherry-pick goals, and overstate the benefits to one goal while ignoring negative impacts on others
- **Lack of guidance:** The goals are aspiration, outcome-oriented, and lack guidance on HOW to achieve the goals. The means for achieving the SDGs remain open-ended.
- **Lack of data and clarity around how to measure progress:** The 17 goals are vague, and it is relatively easy for organizations to make connections between almost any activity and one of the SDG. While there are current efforts underway to improve this by refining lists of indicators that can be used to **measure** progress against a particular target, very few organizations report on the SDGs down to the indicator level.

# SDGs in CANADA

- **The Government of Canada** works with partners and stakeholders to advance the 2030 Agenda through concrete actions of the SDGs
- Canada will review its progress on the SDGs and present the findings in its second [Voluntary National Review](#) in July 2023
- The [Federal implementation plan](#) outlines how the GoC will advance the strategy for SDGs at the federal level
- Resources for Canadian businesses:
  - Learn about how **Canadian programs and policies** [contribute to each of the SDGs](#)
  - [The Canadian Indicator Framework](#): Developed by Statistics Canada, this resource adds targets and indicators that are specific to the Canadian context





# Resources for businesses

[SDG Compass](#): The SDG Compass provides guidance for companies on how they can align their strategies as well as measure and manage their contribution to the realization of the SDGs (developed by the Global Reporting Initiative, Global Compact, World Business Council for Sustainable Development)

[Inventory of Business Tools](#): This inventory maps existing business tools against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It allows you to explore commonly used business tools that may be useful when assessing your organization's impact on the SDGs.

[Inventory of Business Indicators](#): This inventory maps existing business indicators against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It allows you to explore commonly used indicators and other relevant indicators that may be useful when measuring and reporting your organization's contribution to the SDGs.

[SDG industry Matrix](#): Showcases industry-specific examples and ideas for corporate action related to the SDGs. Presented in a series of publications, each matrix highlights bold pursuits and decisions made by diverse companies for each SDG

[Guide on integrating SDGs into corporate reporting](#): A practical guide developed by the GRI and Global Compact to

## No Poverty

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere



- [Why business should support poverty eradication](#)
- [Human Rights Principles and Resources](#)
- [Poverty Footprint](#)
- [Private Sustainability Finance](#)
- [Framework for Social Enterprise and Impact Investing](#)
- [From our library](#)
- [Additional tools: SDG Compass; SDG Matrix](#)

Showing 1 to 10 of 1,553 indicators

SDG Goal	SDG Target	Business Theme	Type of Indicator	Indicator Source	Indicator Description
1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere	1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of	Access to financial services	Sector-specific	GRI G4 Financial Services Sector Disclosures	Access points in low-populated or economically disadvantaged areas by type

