



**FORWARD  
FASTER**

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## **SCALING THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT OF BUSINESS TOWARDS THE SDGS**

As the world crosses the halfway point for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, the Forward Faster initiative of the United Nations Global Compact will challenge businesses to raise their ambition levels by taking tangible, accountable actions in five areas — living wage, gender equality, climate, water and sustainable finance. These are the five areas where the business sector is best positioned to advance the 2030 Agenda and serve as critical levers to accelerate progress across all 17 SDGs. Through a principles-based, holistic approach, companies have the opportunity to drive impact on the Global Goals and advocate for policies to unlock new opportunities, build resilience and secure long-term prosperity for business, people and the planet.

### **A PRINCIPLES-BASED APPROACH TO THE SDGs**

A principles-based approach is vital for businesses to make their greatest contribution to sustainable development and is, therefore, foundational to the Forward Faster initiative. Businesses must adopt a principles-based approach to the SDGs by aligning their operations with the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact and assessing their impact across human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Alignment with the Ten Principles establishes a baseline of doing no harm and of business integrity — including meeting fundamental responsibilities — to ensure that companies do not undermine efforts towards the 2030 Agenda. The Forward Faster initiative will call on companies to go beyond this baseline by making additional ambitious commitments.

### **ACCOUNTABLE COMPANIES**

The Forward Faster initiative also aims to increase accountability by calling for companies to publicly declare their commitments and highlight the actions they will undertake to meet the targets. Companies committing to the targets will report on progress annually to the UN Global Compact (see Appendix A for the indicators) and provide updates on the actions they have taken. Therefore, companies are expected to be UN Global Compact participants.

### **AMBITIOUS BUSINESS TARGETS TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS**

**LIVING WAGE:** Improving the lives of the most vulnerable among us — including those living in poverty — is an overarching theme across all of the SDGs. Working poverty is a reality worldwide. All workers should receive a wage that ensures them a decent standard of living.

Companies can commit to: (1) 100 per cent of employees across the organization earning a living wage by 2030.  
(2) Establish a joint action plan(s) with contractors, supply chain partners and other stakeholders to work towards achieving living wages and/or living incomes with measurable and time-bound milestones.

**CLIMATE ACTION:** Addressing climate change is a fundamental precondition to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A 1.5°C future is the only livable future for humanity. To achieve this, we must halve global emissions by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050. At the same time, companies must ensure that their mitigation and adaptation measures do not deepen inequalities but contribute to climate justice through a just transition.

Companies can commit to: (1) Set corporate science-based net-zero emissions reductions targets in line with a 1.5°C pathway, with the goal of halving global emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero by 2050 at the latest.  
(2) Contribute to a just transition by taking concrete actions that address social impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, in partnership with actors such as workers, unions, communities and suppliers.

**GENDER EQUALITY:** The empowerment of women and girls is vital to enable progress towards all 17 SDGs, including through the eradication of poverty, climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity protection and sustainable economic growth.

Companies can commit to: (1) Equal pay for work of equal value by 2030.  
(2) Equal representation, participation and leadership across all levels of management by 2030.

**SDG FINANCE AND INVESTMENT:** The UN has estimated that between \$3 trillion and \$5 trillion will be needed annually to meet the SDGs by 2030. Shifting corporate capital towards these goals will be critical to closing existing financing gaps.

Companies can commit to: (1) Align corporate investment — to the fullest extent possible — with SDG policies and strategies and set targets, track and report on the amount and proportion of such SDG investments.  
(2) Establish a corporate financing strategy that is linked to SDG investments and performance, and report on the amount and proportion of such SDG finance.

**WATER RESILIENCE:** The global water crisis is one of the most urgent challenges of the 21st century, and resilient water systems are critical to the SDGs — including through supporting food security, human health, biodiversity, gender equality and other priorities.

Companies can commit to: Build water resilience across global operations and supply chains and join hands to achieve collective positive water impact in at least 100 prioritized water-stressed basins by 2030.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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## 1. Why were these five areas selected?

The five areas were identified by the UN Global Compact because they represent critical enablers across all 17 SDGs where the business sector is uniquely positioned to drive progress. In addition, the Forward Faster initiative is comprised of areas that lend themselves to corporate target-setting and that are already embedded in the UN Global Compact through our programming on Labour Rights and Decent Work (i.e., Living Wage Think Lab), Gender (i.e., Target Gender Equality Accelerator), Climate (i.e., Climate Ambition Accelerator, Just Transition Think Lab and the Science Based Targets initiative), Water Resilience Coalition and CFO Coalition for the SDGs.

## 2. Why public target setting?

Most companies recognize the importance of aligning their operations with the SDGs to ensure the long-term viability of their business. However, too many companies are making sustainability commitments without having a platform to publicize them to increase transparency or hold themselves accountable. The Forward Faster initiative will aim to mobilize more credible, ambitious and measurable targets from companies that are reported on annually to increase transparency.

## 3. Does my company need to commit to all the targets to participate?

No, it doesn't. Companies can opt to commit to as few or as many of the business targets as they choose in order to participate in the Forward Faster initiative.

## 4. Does my company need to be a UN Global Compact participant to join?

Yes, to commit to the Forward Faster initiative, a company must be a UN Global Compact participant. Companies must be participants to track their progress through the UN Global Compact annual reporting mechanism, the Communication on Progress (CoP).

Further, the UN Global Compact strongly advocates for companies to adopt a principles-based approach to the SDGs to make their greatest contribution, and this is a foundation of the Forward Faster initiative. Alignment with the Ten Principles establishes a baseline of doing no harm and of business integrity — including meeting fundamental responsibilities such as eliminating forced labour, abolishing child labour and working against bribery — so that companies can ensure they do not undermine efforts towards the 2030 Agenda.

Subsidiaries of parent companies participating in the UN Global Compact are welcome to commit separately to one or more of the Forward Faster initiative targets provided they are also UN Global Compact Participants in their own right. Learn more about the UN Global Compact subsidiary policy [here](#).

## 5. How does my company submit its commitment?

Companies can commit to the Forward Faster initiative business targets with the online form [here](#). Companies must submit their commitment through the [online form](#), even if they are already engaged in other UN Global Compact initiatives, such as Accelerators, Think Labs and Coalitions.

In order to submit the online commitment to the Faster Forward initiative, the company's primary representative will have to sign on to their UN Global Compact account. Only primary representatives (as designated by the 'contact point' role in their UN Global Compact account) may approve the commitment for their company. If the form is submitted by someone at your company who is not the primary representative (not designated with the 'contact point' role in our system), then the request will be sent to the primary representatives for approval to ensure they are aware and prepared to report on the progress each year.

You can find out who your company's contact point is by logging into the UN Global Compact Dashboard [here](#). You can update your contact points in the UN Global Compact Dashboard under the "Contacts" section or create a new contact point [here](#).

## Is there a deadline?

The Forward Faster initiative officially launches on 18 September 2023. While all UN Global Compact participating companies will have access to the form starting on that date, there is no formal deadline, as this initiative runs through 2030.

Companies also have the option to commit to different targets over time. For example, a company may sign on to one of the Living Wage targets in 2023 and sign on to one of the Gender Equality targets in 2024.

## 6. If my company made a commitment through a different programme (i.e., an Accelerator), do I still need to commit through the Forward Faster initiative platform?

Yes, you do. With the exceptions of net-zero commitments made through the Science Based Targets initiative and water resilience commitments made through the CEO Water Mandate, all companies that have engaged in other UN Global Compact programming and wish to join the Forward Faster initiative must sign up through the platform to officially commit.

While we strongly encourage all our participating companies to join the Forward Faster initiative, companies are not required to do so.

## 7. How will progress be tracked for companies that have committed to the Forward Faster initiative?

To track progress on the Forward Faster initiative targets, companies will be asked to report on specific actions they have adopted to meet their commitments. Please see Appendix A for a complete list of the indicators that will be used to report on progress on the SDG-aligned business targets.

Companies will have a one-year grace after committing to a target before they will be required to report. Hence, companies that commit in 2023 will have to report on the commitment-specific indicators during the 2025 reporting period.

## **8. What happens if my company fails to report on the relevant indicators?**

Companies that fail to report on the relevant indicators after the one-year grace period will have the commitment removed from their public profile on the UN Global Compact website. While this 'withdrawn' status will not be indicated directly on a company's public profile, an annual list of withdrawn companies will be made available on the Forward Faster initiative webpage.

Companies that withdraw have the option to recommit to a target, and have the commitment relisted on their company profile upon successful submission of the reporting requirement.

## **9. What resources will be made available to companies that commit to a target?**

Implementation guides will be available for companies that commit to any of the targets. These guides include many tools and resources to support companies with incorporating best practices into their business to help them achieve the targets by 2030.

The UN Global Compact will also host a series of Academy sessions on the step-by-step implementation of the targets. This is in addition to the array of engagement and learning opportunities available to companies at the UN Global Compact, including the Accelerator programmes, coalitions, peer learning groups, on-demand Academy sessions and Think Labs.

## **10. Does my company need to sign up for the net-zero climate commitment through the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)?**

Yes, it does. For Climate Action Target 1\*, the Forward Faster initiative will accept both net-zero commitments and already validated science-based net-zero emissions reductions targets as long as the commitments/validations have been officially processed by the SBTi. Official SBTi commitments and already validated targets can be found on the SBTi Target Dashboard located on their website.

Companies interested in Climate Action Target 1 can find more information on how to commit to net-zero and how to set a target [here](#).

The UN Global Compact is a founding partner of the SBTi. A net-zero commitment or validated target through the SBTi by a UN Global Compact participant will be noted on the company's profile and on the Forward Faster initiative webpage.

\*Climate Action Target 1: Set corporate science-based net-zero emissions reductions targets in line with a 1.5°C pathway, with the goal of halving global emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero by 2050 at the latest.

## **11. Does my company need to sign up for the water resilience commitment through the CEO Water Mandate?**

Yes, it does. Companies that wish to commit to Water Resilience Target 1 to “Build water resilience across global operations and supply chains and join hands to achieve collective positive water impact in at least 100 vulnerable prioritized water basins by 2030” must endorse the CEO Water Mandate to be recognized on the Forward Faster website.

The CEO Water Mandate is a partnership of the UN Global Compact and the Pacific Institute with extensive programming to support corporate water resilience. To make your commitment and connect with opportunities for water action, utilize the CEO Water Mandate submission platform.

## **12. Can my company sign up before the initial launch and how will this be recognized?**

Yes, companies can commit to one or more targets before the official launch of the Forward Faster Initiative. This will be by invitation only. Companies that commit to one or more of the targets by 11 September 2023 will be announced as ‘early movers’ of the initiative during the UN Global Compact [Leaders Summit](#). Their CEO might also have the chance to be invited to this year’s [Private Sector Forum](#), depending on capacity.

The list of first movers will be embargoed until the official launch on 18 September 2023. After the official launch on 18 September, companies will be allowed to publicly communicate their commitments as part of the initiative. A press release template will be provided along with a communications toolkit.

# APPENDIX A. REPORTING INDICATORS PER TARGET



## LIVING WAGE

### (1) 100% of employees across the organization earn a living wage by 2030.

#### Reporting indicators:

1. What percentage of your employees is paid a living wage?
  - a. xx%
  - b. I am in the process of collecting that data
2. For the employees below a living wage, what percentage of these employees are paid:

90% to 99% of the Living Wage estimates for the countries/regions you operate in	
75% to 89% of the Living Wage estimates for the countries/regions you operate in	
50% to 74% of the Living Wage estimates for the countries/regions you operate in	
less than 50% of the Living Wage estimates for the countries/regions you operate in	
Total	100%

3. Please specify the methodology(ies) you have used to measure current wages, and what living wage estimates you have used to compare them to. Have your living wage estimates been validated by official sources and/or been developed in the framework of social dialogue?
4. Please describe the progress you have made in the last 12 months on this target.

### (2) Establish a joint action plan(s) with contractors, supply chain partners and other key stakeholders to work towards achieving living wages and/or living incomes with measurable and time-bound milestones.

#### Reporting Indicators:

1. Do you have a joint action plan with contractors to work towards achieving living wages and/or living incomes with measurable and time-bound milestones? Yes/No  
If Yes: With what percentage of your contractors?  
If <100 %: How did you choose these contractors (for example, high-risk location, product/sector, etc.)?
2. Do you have a joint action plan with supply chain partners to work towards achieving living wages and/or living incomes with measurable and time-bound milestones? Yes/No  
If Yes: With what percentage of your supply chain partners?  
If <100 %: How did you choose these supply chain partners (for example, first-tier suppliers, high-risk location, product/sector, etc.)?
3. Please describe the measurable objectives towards 2030 and the progress you have made in the last 12 months on this target.



## CLIMATE ACTION

**(1) Set corporate science-based net-zero emissions reductions targets in line with a 1.5°C pathway, with the goal of halving global emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero by 2050 at the latest.**

### Reporting indicators:

CoP Required Question:

E4.1. For each environmental topic for which the company sets time bound goals/targets, what kind of targets has the company set?

**(2) Contribute to a Just Transition by taking concrete actions that address social impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, in partnership with actors such as workers, unions, communities and suppliers.**

### Reporting Indicators:

1. What type of action has the company taken in the reporting period to contribute to a just transition and address the social impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation? (multiple answer options, open text field for additional information)
  - a. As part of the due diligence process, the company has considered relevant aspects related to a Just Transition [Yes/No] [please provide more information in CoP question G7]
  - b. In the course of the reporting period, the company has engaged with affected stakeholders or their legitimate representatives (e.g., workers, unions, communities and suppliers, etc., including those stakeholders where the risk of adverse impacts may be particularly severe) to develop a Just Transition Plan [Yes/No] [please provide additional information]
  - c. The company integrates the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and specifically the principle of free, prior and informed consent in its plans [Yes/No] [please provide additional information]
  - d. The company is investing in a just transition, including in skills and human resource development, mitigating employment impacts through worker retention, retraining, redeployment, creating additional economic opportunities and contributing to social protection [Yes/No] [please provide additional information]
  - e. The company has set targets and is tracking progress in relation to its Just Transition plan [Yes/No] [please provide more information in CoP questions E4, E4.1 and E4.2]

## GENDER EQUALITY

### (1) Equal representation, participation and leadership across all levels of management by 2030.

#### Reporting indicators:

CoP Required Question:

G11. Percentage of individuals disaggregated by sex within the company's board/highest governance body by: (male/female)

Commitment-specific questions:

1. What were the average gender ratios of your employees during the reporting period across different levels?:

	Gender Ratio		
	Male %	Female %	Other %
Total			
Top management			
Middle management			
Professionals			

2. In the reporting period, what was the average gender ratio of new employee hires and employee turnover, employees who were promoted and employees who took parental leave?

	Gender Ratio		
	Male %	Female %	Other %
New hires			
Employee turnover			
Employees promoted			
Employees taking parental leave			

3. In the reporting period, what was the total number of work-related incidents of discrimination on the grounds of gender?
  - a. Possibility to disclose the status of incidents and/or complaints and corrective actions taken..
4. Do you have an organization-wide gender equality strategy that identifies specific priority areas where further improvement can be made?
5. What type of action has the company taken in the reporting period with the aim of advancing equal representation, participation and leadership? (select all that apply):
  - a. Review the requirements for board membership, and other governance bodies and committees, to remove any discrimination or bias against women.
  - b. Pay equal remuneration, including benefits and bonuses, for work of equal value and ensure at a minimum a living wage for all women and men employees.
  - c. Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors.

- d. Offer flexible working arrangements, family-supportive practices, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status.
- e. Support access to child and dependent care through services, resources and information.
- f. Establish internal policies, training and procedures preventing all forms of violence and sexual harassment at work.
- g. Invest in professional development opportunities, networking and mentoring and programmes that open avenues for women's advancement at all levels and across all business areas.
- h. Conduct unconscious bias training and awareness raising on the corporate gender equality policies and action plan.
- i. Collect, analyze and use gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data and benchmarks to measure and report results at all levels.
- j. The company has not taken any actions in the reporting period to advance equal representation, participation and leadership.

## **(2) Equal pay for work of equal value by 2030.**

### **Reporting indicators:**

CoP Required Question:

L8. What was the average gender ratio of the basic salary and remuneration (comparing jobs of equal value) during the reporting period?

Commitment-specific questions:

1. What type of action has your company taken to achieve equal pay for work of equal value? (select all that apply)
  - a. Established a policy or a commitment embedded in a broader corporate policy that addresses equal pay for work of equal value, aligned with national regulatory requirements and/or the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration, 1951.
  - b. Established a pay committee that includes significant employee presence. This committee receives training and acquired comprehensive knowledge of the jobs across the business. The committee reviews promotional and recruitment decisions, addresses employee concerns and complaints alongside developing in-house expertise in areas of equality and job evaluation.
  - c. Established gender neutral job evaluation to help set up a rational and fair pay structure, including identifying jobs where men and women are doing work of equal value and comparing their remuneration.
  - d. Estimated wage gaps for jobs of equal value and making pay adjustments where needed.
  - e. Undertook an objective gender pay gap audit or evaluation by internal or external parties in the past five years to ensure jobs of equal value are remunerated equally.
  - f. Put procedures in place to remediate pay inequalities (including working with unions or staff representatives).
  - g. Publicly disclosed to company stakeholders the overall ratio and ratio by employee level of basic salary and remuneration by gender.
  - h. The company has not taken any action to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value during the reporting period.

Please specify the gender neutral job evaluation methodology that you have used to measure remuneration, including salary or ordinary wage and other basic fees and benefits, directly or indirectly paid, in money or in kind.



## **SDG INVESTMENTS AND FINANCE**

**1) Align corporate investment — to the fullest extent possible — with SDG policies and strategies and set targets, track and report on the amount and proportion of such SDG investments.**

**Reporting indicators:**

1. What is your target for the amount and proportion of SDG-aligned investments for 2030?\* (Please also indicate any interim targets)
2. How much of your current corporate investment is aligned with the SDGs (as of the end of reporting year)? Please indicate the total amount in USD and the percentage of total corporate investments.
3. What is included in the definition of SDG-aligned investments?
4. Is this information independently verified?

**(2) Establish a corporate financing strategy that is linked to SDG investments and performance, and report on the amount and proportion of such SDG finance.**

**Reporting indicators:**

1. What is your strategy to link corporate finance to SDG investments and performance?
2. How much SDG-linked finance was issued during the reporting period?
3. How much of the company's outstanding corporate finance is linked to SDG-aligned investments or SDG performance (as of end of reporting year)?
4. What is included in the definition of SDG-linked finance?

## **WATER ACTION**

**Companies can commit to build water resilience across global operations and supply chains and join hands to achieve collective positive water impact in at least 100 vulnerable prioritized water basins by 2030.**

The Forward Faster water resilience target is aligned with the commitment areas of the CEO Water Mandate. To plan how your company can achieve this 2030 target, reach out to the CEO Water Mandate team for more information.



**Reporting indicators:**

1. Corporate Water Targets

Water Dimension	Does your Company have a Target? (Yes/No)	What is the Target – include achievement year (if applicable)	Target Applies to Direct Operations? (Yes/No)	Target Applies to Supply Chain? (Yes/No)	Target Applies to Communities (either where you operate or in a market)? (Yes/No)	Progress Towards the Target in this Reporting Year.
Water Quantity						
Water Quality						
Water Accessibility (WASH)						

2. Please indicate all water-stressed basins where your company has direct operations (from list of CEO Water Mandate 100 Priority Basins)

Basins	Basin 1	Basin 2	Basin 3	Basin 4	Basin 5	Basin 6
	Basin 7	Basin 8	Basin 9	Basin 10	Basin 11	Basin 12

3. Indicate your companies' 10 highest priority water-stressed basins and the actions you are engaging in.

Basin	Currently Engaging? (Y/N)	Planning to Engage? (Y/N)	Quality	Quantity	Accessibility (WASH)	Direct Ops	Supply Chain	Communities	Is the Engagement a Collective Action? (Y/N)	Additional Information

4. Identify all other basins outside of the CEO Water Mandate 100 Priority Basins where your company is currently engaging or has plans to engage (from the list of WMO HydroSHED Level IV basins).

Basins	Engaging Actively	Planning to Engage

The primary focus of tracking the progress of the open call is to track companies' targets and progress against those targets, in relation to the three dimensions of water: water quantity, water quality and water accessibility. The questions are also designed to evaluate the current engagement and potential future engagement in water-stressed basins and beyond against the needs within each basin. In parallel, the CEO Water Mandate will develop digital monitoring systems.