

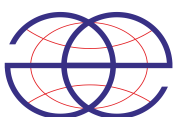


EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATIONS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

EMPLOYERS' AND BUSINESS MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

A Handbook for EBMOs



ACT/EMP
The Bureau for Employers' Activities



ITC
International Training Centre

WHY SHOULD THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY CARE ABOUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a new blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership.

The SDGs are a global UN driven process, but all member States are called to develop ambitious national responses and contribute to the overall implementation of the Goals.

Although fundamentally it will be the responsibility of governments to implement SDGs at the national level, **it would be impossible to achieve the Goals without meaningful contribution by business.** The private sector has a key role to play as a generator of employment, economic growth and a source of technology, innovation and finance.

Equally, **there is real opportunity here.** Even if SDGs are not legally binding, they still act as an important road map regarding future policy direction at international and national level. This potentially represents a big catalyst for innovation and new market opportunities for the private sector to embrace and drive economic and social growth. For countries with rigid labour market policies, SDGs can be an opportunity for advocating for a better business environment. In addition, businesses that align themselves with the Goals and are able to communicate effectively on how they contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, are likely to consolidate a strong license to operate and to differentiate themselves from competitors.

Lastly, investing in the implementation of the SDGs supports stable and peaceful societies and markets – in the absence of which business cannot succeed.

WHY SHOULD YOU READ THIS HANDBOOK?

Within the private sector, there is relatively good awareness of the SDGs that is translating at many levels into great engagement. However, there is little consistency in approaches or priorities. **Coherent guidance is needed,** written in a way that is tailored to resonate with the business community and inspire action.

In this sense, **the role of Employers and Business Members Organizations (EBMOs) is critical.** EBMOs are well-positioned to have a holistic view on how the private sector contributes to the achievement of different SDGs.

This Handbook aims to do the following:

1. Provide key information on what the SDGs are and why they are relevant for the private sector;
2. Inspire with examples of SDGs-related activities implemented by other EBMOs;
3. Give guidance on how to assert the leadership of EBMOs in representing the voice of business, and use their convening power to bring business on-board to achieve the SDGs.

I. WHAT HAPPENED SO FAR

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

In 2000, world leaders came together to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out eight time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**.

In January 2015, the General Assembly began the negotiation process on the post-2015 development agenda. The process culminated in the subsequent adoption of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, with **17 SDGs** at its core, in September 2015.

The Agenda is the most comprehensive blueprint to date for eliminating extreme poverty, reducing inequality, and protecting the planet. **It is a much broader extension** of the previous MDGs.

1.2. WHAT'S IN THERE FOR BUSINESS?

Below is a list of the SDGs that are more relevant to business according to the International Organization of Employers (IOE).

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| <p>GOAL 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere</p> <p>GOAL 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</p> <p>GOAL 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p> <p>GOAL 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</p> <p>GOAL 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries</p> <p>GOAL 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p> <p>GOAL 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p> <p>GOAL 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</p> |  <p>1 NO POVERTY</p>  <p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p>  <p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>  <p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p>  <p>5 GENDER EQUALITY</p>  <p>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p>  <p>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p>  <p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>  <p>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>  <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>  <p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>  <p>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p>  <p>13 CLIMATE ACTION</p>  <p>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</p>  <p>15 LIFE ON LAND</p>  <p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>  <p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>  <p>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS</p> |
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KEY FEATURES OF THE 2030 AGENDA AND SDGs

- **Universal:** unlike the MDGs, which were considered mainly as an agenda for development focusing on achieving a set of basic, minimum living standards in developing countries, the 2030 Agenda is universal in scope.
 - **Locally owned:** with the SDGs defined at global level, national processes are needed to adapt these collective goals and define national targets in accordance with national priorities and circumstances.
 - **Rights based:** this is a human rights-based agenda, which emphasizes the need for addressing all forms of inequalities and discrimination between different population groups.
 - **Leaving no one behind:** it is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda. This means that the specific needs of vulnerable people, such as those of ethnic minorities, women or people with disabilities, need to be addressed. SDGs need to be met for all segments of society.
 - **Linked to partnerships:** partnerships are at the core of the 2030 Agenda, since SDGs can only be realized with strong global partnerships. National participatory decision-making is therefore a pre-requisite for ensuring meaningful contribution of all stakeholders.
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WHAT GETS MEASURED GETS DONE: THE SDGs INDICATORS

Follow-up and review is a key aspect of the 2030 Agenda, that calls for an extensive set of global indicators that are “simple yet robust, address all SDGs and targets including for means of implementation”.

Each Goal is broken down into a range of targets, with a total of 169 targets spread out across the 17 goals. According to these targets, **232 indicators**, selected on the basis of their relevance, methodology soundness and measurability, have been established.

Governments have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review: they are called to decide how the SDGs should be embedded into national policies and report on their implementation at the global level in the framework of the **High Level Political Forum (HLPF)**.

The HLPF has been created at Rio+20 Conference in 2012 to carry out regular voluntary reviews of the 2030 Agenda which will include developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders. The reviews are State-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants as well as major stakeholders.

HOW CAN EBMOs CONTRIBUTE TO THE REVIEW AND FOLLOW-UP PHASE?

Even if the primary responsibility of assessing the implementation of SDGs lies with governments, the private sector has a role to play in the follow-up and review phase of the 2030 Agenda. EBMOs have the expertise, technology, and resources to partner with governments to facilitate the collection of data required to monitor SDGs. More specifically, EBMOs can support this process by:

- Conducting surveys and collect relevant data among their members;
 - Providing a comprehensive outlook of collective trends and progress on the 2030 Agenda and formulating an employers' agenda contributing to the achievement of SDGs.
 - Promoting corporate reporting as a means of monitoring, review and verification.
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II. WHY ARE SDGs RELEVANT FOR COMPANIES?

Discussions taking place since the launch of the SDGs tend to focus on how the private sector can contribute to the SDGs achievement. However, it is often taken for granted that businesses know already **why they should engage**. There are several reasons why companies should contribute to the implementation of the SDGs:

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The SDGs define new, growing markets for companies that can deliver innovative solutions. In the “Better Business, Better World” report, the Business & Sustainable Development Commission concluded that sustainable business models could open **new markets worth up to \$12 trillion**.

ADAPT TO NEW CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

SDGs are contributing to change consumers' expectations and lifestyles. For instance, consumers have new concerns around health and the environment, which influence their choices. By incorporating social and environmental criteria into their business strategies, companies **enhance their reputation and respond to new societal dynamics**.

CONTRIBUTE TO STABLE SOCIETIES AND BETTER BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS.

Business cannot succeed in societies that fail. Investing in the achievement of the Goals contributes to **peaceful, rules-based and stable societies and to enabling business environments**, with robust financial systems, and transparent and well-governed institutions, which are conditions of business success.

SEIZE NEW INVESTMENTS OPPORTUNITIES

Investors are becoming more concerned with companies' sustainability risks. The SDGs define the world's most pressing issues and, as such, list the material **environmental, social and governance (ESG)** factors that should be taken into account by investors.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE SAME THING?

There is a certain degree of confusion between the notion of CSR and the concept of sustainability.

CSR is generally considered as the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society. It is about organisations acting responsibly over and above compliance with national laws and regulations, especially where such laws do not exist or are poorly enforced

Sustainability is more of **an holistic concept, encompassing the full range of environmental, social and economic issues**, that should be integrated into the core purpose of business and in its operations.

The differences between the notion of CSR and the one of sustainability are becoming less evident in recent years, when we arrived at a new conceptualization of CSR.

Due to climate change and increasing pressures from civil society and governments, there are more and more expectations that companies will integrate CSR into their business models and incorporate social and environmental concerns into the core of their decision-making process. Nowadays CSR and sustainability are therefore much more interrelated, since by integrating CSR and acting responsibly in daily operations, businesses are likely to act sustainably and make a positive contribution to the SDGs.

III. WHY ARE SDGs RELEVANT FOR EBMOS AND HOW CAN THEY ENGAGE?

According to a recent survey run by the IOE and ILO/ACTEMP¹, sustainability is one of the main megatrends impacting businesses. Companies are therefore looking more and more for support to understand how to align their strategies with the SDGs.

In line with their role as representative organizations of the whole private sector, EBMOS have an important role to play. They can show to decision-makers and civil society that companies can contribute positively to the achievement of the Goals. They can launch new services that can help members to deal with sustainability-related issues. They can contribute to create a level playing field among companies by coordinating the development of common sectors' vision on SDGs.

Beside responding to members' needs, there are also a **number of opportunities that arise in this process that EBMOS should not miss out.**

¹ IOE, ILO/ACTEMP, Changing Business and Opportunities for EBMOS, 2019

1. ENGAGING WITH SDGS CAN IMPROVE EBMOs' OUTREACH AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENTS AND POLICY MAKERS

Since the SDGs cannot be achieved without the corporate sector, governments are looking more and more for reliable partners able to give a positive contribution on sustainability topics. Companies, on the other end, need EBMOs to engage with policymakers to shape the regulatory environment and address different sets of restrictive regulations. As the common voice of the private sector, **EBMOs are well-positioned to have a holistic view on how the private sector may contribute to the SDGs and work side-by-side with policy-makers in their implementation.** These new field of collaboration can reinforce ties between EBMOs and governments.

BETTER REPUTATION VIS-À-VIS CIVIL SOCIETY

There is a growing societal expectation that organizations not only have a responsibility towards social and environmental welfare, but they also should play a positive and integral role in achieving it.

By launching initiatives on sustainability-related issues, EBMOs can show that businesses are not only part of the problem, but they are also an essential part of the solution, since they can contribute to solve sustainability issues. This can improve EBMOs' members' social license to operate and strengthen their reputation among consumers.

1.1 HOW CAN EBMOs IMPROVE THEIR OUTREACH AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH SDGs?

LINKING EBMOs' ACTIVITIES TO SDGs

There is a broad acknowledgement that EBMOs must be involved in the implementation of SDGs at the national level. **EBMOs** are well-positioned to have an holistic view on how the private sector impact different SDGs and they **can therefore speak in one clear voice**, with a coherent message.

EBMOs have decades-long experience in working on issues strictly related to SDGs, from job creation to economic growth; from education and training to skills mismatch. However, their contribution to the achievement of the Goals is not always obvious for external observers. **EBMOs should rebrand their agenda and activities around SDGs so that policy-makers and civil society can see their value and contribution in achieving the 2030 Agenda.** This does not mean changing their business agenda, but it means changing the narrative and linking their priorities and actions to SDGs, highlighting how EBMOs are already supporting governments in reaching their targets.

HOW CAN EBMOs REBRAND THEIR POLICY PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS AROUND THE SDGs?

Step 1: Identify the relevant Goals and targets

The first step is identifying the Goals and targets directly related to the EBMOs' policy priorities and actions, as well as those Goals that will be indirectly affected.

For instance, if one of the EBMO's priority issues is skills mismatch, the relevant Goal would be SDG 4, which aims to ensure a substantial increase of the number of people who have relevant skills for employment, including technical and vocational skills. In addition, since all the Goals are interconnected, the issue of skill mismatch might have an indirect impact on Goal 5 ("Providing women with equal access to education") as well as Goal 8 ("Achieve full employment and decent work") and related targets.

Step 2: Re-formulate policy proposals and actions using a SDGs lens

The second step is re-formulating the policy proposal or action using a SDGs lens, linking it to the Goal and to the targets at national level. EBMOs should highlight how their activities are directly contributing to the implementation of the SDGs. If possible, EBMOs should collect and include data using the same indicators selected by the government to back their arguments. In addition, EBMOs should keep in mind that, in order to contribute to SDGs, all actions and policy proposals should respect human rights and take into account those who are left behind by current patterns of growth within the country (disabled persons; women; those living in rural areas etc.).

Step 3: Re-shape advocacy strategy

The process of localization of SDGs might have created a new map of actors who bear the responsibility for implementation of SDGs' target at the national level. EBMOs therefore need to review the government's strategy for engagement and identify all actors (e.g., legislative branch, elected officials, administrative arms) who are in charge for SDGs' targets implementation. EBMOs should also consider that SDGs are common goals for a number of different and new stakeholders. They should therefore have a broad look at UN agencies, NGOs, social movements, youth movements, and other communities to see whether they can find allies for their advocacy work.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY ON SDGs

At the heart of advocacy is effective communication. EBMOs need to develop clear and compelling messages they will use as they speak of their contributions and expectations from the 2030 Agenda.

An SDG-related communication strategy does not differ too much from a general one. The core principles remain the same, namely that a persuasive communication plan should be coherent, systematic and consistent.

However, **SDGs have brought about a number of developments** that EBMOs must take into account when defining their communication strategy:

1. **SDGs concern not only businesses**, but also citizens, NGOs, and many other non-state actors. Communication on SDGs shall therefore strive to engage with new audiences that could support EBMOs' campaigns, also using **non-traditional communication tools**.



For instance, GSMA, the business association representing mobile operators globally, developed and launched the **SDGs in Action mobile App**. The App has the objective of engaging with the broader public and raise awareness on the ways in which the mobile industry is helping to achieve the goals. Users are able to discover the latest mobile-led initiatives and also post their own contributions and actions toward the SDGs.

2. EBMOs' should use **new storytelling techniques** to make their messages more engaging and understandable by the broader public, inspiring positive emotions and ensuring that such public can "own" EBMOs' messages.



The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has created concrete stories and narratives to show the impact of the sector on SDGs for its **#ICT4SDG campaign**. ITU has branded a campaign tagline "fast forward together", which highlights the potential of ICTs to be a driver towards achieving the SDGs. The idea with this tagline was that it could be used interchangeably, e.g. fast forward health, fast forward education, fast forward climate action.

3. EBMOs should also **communicate internally** with their members, raising awareness on the benefits and opportunities related to SDGs and inspiring them.



The Federation of Belgian Enterprise, which has been elected as one of the 2018 ambassadors to promote sustainability and SDGs in Belgium, has launched a communication campaign to raise awareness on the SDGs among its members. To this end, the FEB has launched a dedicated website, which collects:

- Information on what the SDGs are;
- Information on the benefits of engaging;
- Interviews to CEOs of Belgian companies on their actions on SDGs.

2. ENGAGING ON SDGs TO RAISE AWARENESS AND BUILD MEMBERS CAPACITIES

EBMOs have a key role to play in raising awareness and build capacity of their members about the SDGs. As sustainable practices become more important to both companies and consumers, there is a growing need of new services and forum for ideas that could support businesses seeking change on SDGs-related topics.

2.1 HOW CAN EBMOs RAISE AWARENESS AND BUILD MEMBERS CAPACITIES ON SDGs?

LAUNCHING NEW SERVICES AND DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS ON SUSTAINABILITY-RELATED TOPICS

EBMOs will only remain relevant if they are able to offer relevant services that could, on the one side, help members to solve sustainability-related issues and, on the other side, enhance members' operational efficiencies. A survey recently launched by the IOE and ILO ACT/EMP² showed that the following SDGs-related services are needed:

- Peer-to-peer learning on sustainability topics
- Advice on legal, industrial and political developments connected with SDGs
- Support on how best to measure impact, communicate and report on the SDGs
- Help with the identification and replication of best practices

Business in the Community Ireland

(BITCI), a network for responsible business founded in 2000, launched the **Business Working Responsibly Mark**, the only independently audited standard for CSR and Sustainability in Ireland. The Mark is audited based on ISO26000. It is open to both members and non-members of BITCI. Once achieved, it is valid for 3 years.

The benefits of the Mark include improved company brand, support for businesses' tendering credentials and investor relations and profile as an organisation that is integrating sustainability into its practices.

The **Philippines Business for the**

Environment (an independent business membership organisation) offers **several advisory services** on sustainability topics:

- Advice on business solutions that could reduce greenhouse gas.
- Advice in developing a quality sustainability report in line with Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) Standards.
- Advice on the development of proper solid waste management systems that are specific to company operational sites.

These services on different sustainability matters helped PBE to develop value chains and increase members and revenues.

² IOE, ILO/ACTEMP, Changing Businesses and Opportunities for Employer and Business Organizations, 2019

In 2016, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), together with the Vietnam Business Council for Sustainable Development (VBCSD), **launched the Vietnam Program on Benchmarking and Announcing Sustainable Companies**. Entries submitted by companies across Vietnam are benchmarked with the Corporate Sustainability Index, which was developed by VCCI together with experts. The index is built on economic, social and environmental aspects and takes into account the specific reality of Vietnam. An awarding ceremony is held to celebrate the most sustainable companies. Engaging in the programme provides a good opportunity for members to enhance their reputation, attract human resources and new business opportunities.

In 2018 the **Fédération des Entreprises de Belgique** (FEB), in partnership with three Belgian Universities, launched the **SDG Barometer**, which has two main objectives:

- analyze the current state of affairs on the level of implementation of the SDGs by Belgian firms through a quantitative survey.
- get a better understanding of the application of the SDGs in practice through analyzing the choices organizations made.

The SDG Barometer may therefore stimulate the adoption of SDGs by companies, contribute to developing new governmental actions, and provide insights for NGOs and knowledge institutions to spur the effective implementation of the SDGs.

RAISING STANDARDS

Business leaders that choose to align their strategy with the SDGs might face, sooner or later, challenges and costs that their competitors do not have to deal with. This makes it very difficult for an individual company to raise standards on its own.

EBMOs are well-placed to serve as an essential partner to tackle this issue and support member companies by **raising sustainability standards collectively** and, consequently, by creating a level-playing field among companies.

The Indonesian Business Council for Sustainable Development has developed, in partnership with the **Indonesia Chambers of Commerce and Industry (KADIN)**, the **Vision of Indonesia 2050** and joint corporate action plan based on the principles of sustainable development.

This vision is expected to be a guide to gradual and holistic improvement in corporate governance.

It will also be a business response to the challenges Indonesia may face, and, as a contribution that is intended to help shape the sustainability agenda, to catalyze actions and to provide relevant stakeholders with a platform to bring change. Above all, the document is expected to show that sustainability is becoming a key strategic driver for business.

In 2018, 60 of New Zealand's leading CEOs and the Sustainable Business Coalition (SBC) launched the **Climate Leaders Coalition**, which has the objective of helping New Zealand transition to a low emissions economy.

By joining the Coalition, companies committed to voluntarily reporting their greenhouse gas emissions, setting a public emissions reduction target consistent with keeping within 2 degrees of warming, and working with suppliers to reduce their emissions.

Signatories are also able to commit to a second higher ambition pledge and to further try to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees.

This initiative helps SBC's members to be profiled as providers of local sustainable solutions related to climate change.

CREATING NEW, SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

By drawing feedback from diverse stakeholders, EBMOs can also enable their members to seize opportunities for competitive advantage by developing new sustainable products.

The **Sustainable Packaging Coalition** (SPC) is a US based collaborative partnership that believes in the power of industry to make packaging more sustainable.

Since the production of multi-material flexible packaging is growing exponentially, but there are a lack of recycling and recovery options, the SPC has recently launched the **FlexPack Recovery Challenge**. The objective of the Challenge is identifying innovations and new technologies that will allow flexible packaging comprised of several materials to be recovered and re-used or reprocessed for use in making new packaging or other products.

Finalists attended SPC Impact in Seattle on April 2019 and presented their work to an audience of brands, retailers, suppliers, and impact investors. The winner received an award, dedicated communication in the SPC newsletters and website, a mentorship program and a one-year SPC membership.

3. ENGAGING ON SDGs CAN HELP EBMOs TO REACH OUT TO NEW SEGMENTS OF MEMBERS AND ACCESS NEW SOURCES OF FUNDING

NEW SEGMENTS OF MEMBERS

EBMOs working actively on sustainability can have a positive impact also in terms of targeting new segments of membership.

For instance, **companies of sectors that are mostly affected by sustainability-related issues** (e.g. mining, oil and gas etc.), **MNEs, social entrepreneurs, new generations of entrepreneurs and companies active in the renewable energy sector** might be interested in joining an organization actively engaged on SDGs-related topics.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND SOURCES OF FUNDING

Since the SDGs cannot be achieved without the cooperation of the private sector, being identified as an active stakeholder in the field of sustainability might be an opportunity for EBMOs to enter **into new partnerships and have access to potential new sources of funding**. In many countries, governments, the UN and other international donors are striving to find new reliable partners from the private sector to support the achievement of the SDGs.

HOW CAN EBMOs REACH OUT TO NEW SEGMENTS OF MEMBERS THROUGH SDGs?

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF SECTORAL COLLABORATION

Harnessing the potential of SDGs is beyond the reach of any individual company. **It will be possible to achieve them only through pioneering collaboration**, with companies of the same sector coming together to define a new SDG-based strategy for their industry.

In addition, businesses that align their strategy with the Goals will, sooner or later, start to incur costs that their competitors do not face. A sectoral approach help all the players to raise and maintain standards at the same time to keep the playing field level.

EBMOs can support this process in two ways:

1. By coordinating the development of a common sector vision on SDGs

EBMOs can have a crucial role in supporting their members to define a **sector roadmap on sustainability**. A SDGs sector roadmap enables firms to articulate together a common vision for how their industry can contribute to achieving the SDGs agenda through business solutions. This will also help both large and small players of the sector to collectively increase their license to operate.

KEY STEPS TO DEVELOP A SECTOR ROADMAP

In order to do that, EBMOs can follow the three-step framework developed by the **World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)**.

Step 1: Establish current position of the sector

The first step consists in understanding the sector's level of SDGs impact across the value chain. Since this mapping exercise is likely to produce an extensive list of relevant SDGs targets, the assessment may be qualitative, determining impacts as low, medium or high. Mapping will determine where and how a sector can contribute to the SDGs and this will help to determine which SDGs are a priority.

The sector should prioritize the Goals where it has the most leverage and ability to:

- Have a significant influence or impact through business solutions;
- Act as a driver for transformation at scale; and
- Shape new markets that will generate business value.

Step 2: Identify key impact opportunities

The outcomes from Step 1 will provide a view as to which SDGs are priority focus areas for the sector. EBMOs should then support the sector to identify the **most material impacts to contribute to each goal prioritized**. Opportunities may involve implementing existing programs at scale across the sector or stopping or altering an activity identified as having a negative impact within the sector's. EBMOs should then create a list of impact opportunities that:

- are most likely to minimize negative impacts or increase positive impacts;
- can realistically be implemented.

Step 3: Call to action

Once identified priorities and impact opportunities, EBMOs shall support the sector to agree upon and implement a series of short-, medium- and long-term actions to deliver on the opportunities identified in Step 2.

Actions will typically consist of new sector-wide activities or initiatives that a number of companies in the sector agree to integrate into existing business operations. Such actions can be identified using engagement sessions, including workshops and in-depth meetings with subject matter experts.

Actions can be prioritized based on likelihood to contribute to the SDGs and they should be measurable, replicable and scalable.

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE:

The **Chemical Sector SDG Roadmap** is an initiative led by a selection of leading chemical companies and EBMOs, convened by the WBCSD, to help realize the potential of the chemical sector to leverage its influence and innovation to contribute to the SDG agenda. To develop the Roadmap the sector has piloted the three step framework described above.

The chemical sector is diverse and complex, and as such interacts with a wide number of SDGs. Ten goals were therefore identified as being priority SDGs for the sector: Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health); 6 (Clean Water), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 8 (Decent Work), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 11 (Sustainable Cities), 12 (Responsible Consumption), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water).

The Roadmap outlines a series of 18 impact opportunities that the sector has to contribute to the 10 priority SDGs identified. These opportunities have been grouped into five key themes: food, water, people and health, energy, and infrastructure and cities. For instance, under the theme "Food", one of the opportunities is to transform food packaging to prevent food loss and waste.

The Roadmap then proceeds to map out key pathways for how these opportunities can be realized by the sector through various collaborative efforts moving forward. For example, in order to seize the opportunity of transforming food packaging to prevent food loss and waste, the industry should increase implementation of high performance packaging to improve food safety, shelf life and nutrition while also improving recyclability.

2. By implementing concrete initiatives for sector's transformation

Beside helping their members to define a common vision on SDGs, another way for EBMOs to support sectoral collaboration is by **developing and implementing concrete initiatives for sector transformation**. By fostering partnerships, building capacity, setting technical standards, and diffusing best practices, EBMOs may enable sectoral corporate action on sustainable development to be scaled up.

In 2016 the GSMA, which represents mobile operators worldwide, launched a comprehensive plan to guide the industry towards the achievement of the Goals. It identified four Goals on which the mobile industry has most impact (Innovation and Infrastructure - Goal 9, No Poverty - Goal 1, Quality Education - Goal 4 and Climate Action - Goal 13), as well as the impact opportunities of the industry, which are:

- “Connecting Everyone”: scaling networks and access to the Internet;
- “Connecting Everything”: contribute to the development of Internet of Things and the promise it brings;
- “A Better Future”: contributing to sustainable development policy alongside governments and agencies.

In order to support the achievement of these impact opportunities, in the last two years the GSMA has implemented a number of **SDG-related specific actions and projects**.

For instance, the GSMA launched the “**Connected Society**” Project, which has the objective of supporting the mobile industry to increase access to the mobile internet for the underserved. The Internet is an important enabler of social development and economic growth, but it is estimated that 4 billion people remain offline.

The unconnected population is predominantly located in developing world markets, typically on low incomes and lacking digital literacy skills. Women are disproportionately affected by these challenges. Against this background, the GSMA is working with its members and key stakeholders to increase access to and adoption of the mobile Internet, focusing on underserved population groups in developing markets.

Through this initiative, the sector can directly contribute to Goals, 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 17, while creating new business opportunity for mobile operators.

SUMMING UP: SOME USEFUL TIPS FOR EBMOs ON HOW TO IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT ON SDGs

1. Appoint a focal point for sustainability and SDGs-related matters

Even if SDGs are transversal by nature, having a designated person (or unit, if appropriate) responsible for SDGs-related matters would be useful for EBMOs to interact systematically with relevant stakeholders and monitor the overall process of implementation of the Goals. It would also send a clear message across that EBMOs are taking sustainability seriously.

2. Define priority Goals and impact opportunities for better advocacy work

EBMOs should better understand how the private sector interacts with the SDGs agenda within the national context, in order to identify the priority Goals and key impact opportunities where businesses have the most significant impact on. This will allow EBMOs to advocate effectively with governments on SDGs-related matters, such as policies that integrate the Goals into national action plans.

3. Raise awareness on SDGs among members

Agenda 2030 has given to EBMOs a new mandate to raise awareness on sustainable development. Lack of awareness of the 2030 Agenda, particularly among SMEs and local authorities, remains a major challenge to unleash the potential of the SDGs. To tackle this issue, EBMOs could:

- set up or contribute to business-friendly information-sharing platforms, such as a dedicated website;
- promote forums to connect business leaders, policymakers, and experts to discuss good practices and determine sustainability strategies;
- establish an internal SDGs Committee so that EBMO's members can meet regularly and discuss about issues and activities related to sustainability;
- support sectoral member associations in scoping industry-specific impact opportunities and implementing sectoral action plans.

4. Raise awareness of the contribution of business to the SDGs among policy makers and civil society

SDGs concern not only businesses, but also governments, citizens and civil society organisations. EBMOs should raise awareness on the contribution of the private sector to SDGs among non-business actors. This will help EBMOs' members to strengthen their license to operate and improve their reputation. Awareness-raising activities might include:

- Websites or Apps showing ways in which the private sector is helping to achieve the Goals.
- A "SDGs' Champion Network" getting together companies that perform better on sustainability topics so that they can share best practices with other firms.
- A "SDGs Ranking and Awards Programme" with the objective of assessing and ranking sustainable businesses.
- Conferences and events open to members, government representatives and civil society organizations to discuss how to tackle effectively sustainability issues.

5. Do not forget SMEs

SMEs can give a great contribution to the SDGs, since they have structures that are more agile and they are closely connected to local communities. However, they also face particular challenges due to their size. EBMOs and bigger players in the value chain can team up with them to raise awareness and collect information on good practices leading to SDGs' implementation.

6. Identify and set up the services needed by members to deal with SDGs

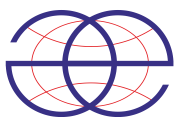
Sustainability and SDGs provide the private sector with a lens through which to translate global needs and ambitions into business solutions. This complex exercise brings about new challenges along with new opportunities. EBMOs should assist companies in this process and identify their members' needs in order to set up related services. This might also be an opportunity for EBMOs to have a better and wider service offer and increase their revenues.

7. Be relevant in the follow-up and monitoring phase of SDGs implementation

Even if the primary responsibility of assessing the implementation of SDGs lies with governments, the private sector has a role to play in the follow-up and review phase of the 2030 Agenda. EBMOs can support this process by launching surveys and collecting data from their members that could be used to monitor the implementation of SDGs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **[SDG Guide – Getting started with SDGs](#)**: a useful entry point for business to understand in detail the Goals and the history behind them.
- **[Better Business, Better World Report](#)**: a report which demonstrates how pursuing the SDGs could open new market opportunities.
- **[SDG Compass Guide for business action on the SDGs](#)**: a guide for companies on how they can align their strategies as well as measure and manage their contribution to the realization of the SDGs.
- **[CEO Guide to SDGs](#)**: a video that sets out clear actions that CEOs can take to begin to align their organizations with the SDGs and plot a course towards unlocking the value they represent.
- **[Agenda 2030 and the Role of Business](#)**: the official position of the International Organization of Employers on the role of business in the process of implementation of the SDGs.
- **[Business and the UN working together towards the SDGs](#)**: this report focuses on how to create successful partnerships between the UN and business for SDGs implementation.
- **[UN-Business Action Hub](#)**: a platform where the UN and business can engage in dialogue, share information and take action to advance UN objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **[Business for 2030](#)**: a website developed by the US Council for International Business with the aim of stimulating a more productive partnership between the public and private sectors at the UN and at national levels.



ACT/EMP
The Bureau for Employers' Activities



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International Training Centre

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