Collaboration for SDG Impact
Joining Forces to Solve Business Challenges and Contribute to the SDGs
Overview
Introduction

Businesses have a vital role to play in the sustainability transition. Over the last decades, both on a voluntary basis and spurred on by public authorities, an ever-growing number of companies have integrated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their competitiveness and growth strategy. They have understood that responsible business can lead to more sustainable profits and growth, new market opportunities, and long-term value for shareholders.

However, the SDGs pose complex, cross-boundary issues that involve multiple actors, making it difficult for the single business to have an impact. Our solution? Collaborative and cross-sector platforms that boost expertise amongst business partners, allowing them to identify and scale up solutions to the challenges posed by the SDGs. In other words, collaborative platforms help businesses in making systemic change happen.

While collaboration amongst businesses might sound easy, it can be hard to achieve. Different business stakes and perspectives, as well as difficulties in building trust and aligning goals can be problematic to manage.

The present document illustrates how CSR Europe is successfully supporting businesses in building effective collaborative partnerships to scale-up sustainable solutions.

The result of such effort has been the launch of several ongoing Collaborative Platforms: in the automotive sector; biodiversity; digitalisation; logistics; Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM); tyre road wear.

Is your company interested in another SDG-related issue? Join the yearly Roundtable Discussions at the Brussels SDG Summit. Other companies are most likely facing the same issue and, by working together, you could find the solution.
Our Methodology

**SCOPING & CONCEPT**

**DEFINE THE CHALLENGE:**
1. Input from companies
2. Gather facts for a Stakeholder Mapping
3. One-to-One Calls

**FOR AN IMPACTFUL COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM**

**LAUNCH OF THE PLATFORM**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

1. Contractual Agreement
2. Systematic Interactions with Platform partners
3. Follow through of the Action Plan

**PARTNERS OUTREACH**

**ENGAGE LEAD COMPANIES AND PARTNERS**
1. Develop first concept
2. One-to-one calls and webinar
3. Open Workshop to scope topic and approach

**PLATFORM CREATION**

**DEVELOP OPERATIONAL PLAN & BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT**
1. Recruitment of companies and partners
2. Preparation of the Action Plan
3. Budget Plan

**PARTNERSHIP BUILDING**

**ESTABLISH COMMON DIRECTION ON DELIVERABLES**
1. One-to-one calls and webinar
2. Project concept development and definition of the strategy
3. Closed workshop to finalise the concept
Our Collaborative Platforms
FROM IDEA TO PARTNERSHIP

BIODIVERSITY & INDUSTRY

RESPONSIBLE TRUCKING

DRIVE SUSTAINABILITY

TOGETHER FOR STEM

UPGRADED AND SUSTAINABLE VALUE CHAINS FOR EUROPE & AFRICA

TYRE & ROAD-WEAR
CHALLENGE

A car contains hundreds of materials that are all sourced from multiple tiers of suppliers. With such complex supply chains it is challenging to know exactly where materials come from and under what conditions they have been produced.

Legislation, customer pressure and societal concerns are pushing automotive manufactures to improve sustainability in their supply chain.

SOLUTION

Create transparency in the supply chain, identify challenges and support suppliers to improve.

SCOPE & TIMELINE

Drive sustainability was set up in 2012 with a focus on Europe, but is now active at global level.

HOW TO TACKLE THE SDGs?

Leading automotive manufacturers work together with key stakeholders to improve the social, ethical and environmental performance of automotive supply chains. They promote a common approach within the industry and integrate sustainability in the overall procurement process.

OUR APPROACH

1. Share experiences/information on sustainability issues in the automotive supply chain;
2. Develop and apply common tools for supply chain due diligence and capacity building;
3. Integrate sustainability into the procurement process;
4. Engage with relevant stakeholders for long lasting sustainability impact.

CONTACT

Heike Schulze
Responsible Trucking

CHALLENGE

The logistics sector faces many challenges connected with truck drivers, including difficulties in finding workers, poor working conditions, human rights violations, non-compliance with law, major fraud issues and technical and road safety breaches.

These problems are all magnified in the context of rising competition in the sector and complex cross-border legislations.

SOLUTION

Improvement of the working conditions of road transport workers and compliance with legislation.

HOW TO TACKLE THE SDGs?

Carriers and shippers work together to prepare for future policy developments and actively manage the social risks present in the sector.

OUR APPROACH

1. Executing of Root Cause Analysis of social issues in European trucking;
2. Produce Truck Transport Social Guidelines (TTSG) for the industry;
3. Ensure Compliance through spot-check tool;
4. Increase Capacity through cross-sector actions and policy dialogue.

SCOPE & TIMELINE

The Responsible Trucking platform was launched in June 2019 and is now expanding its group of partners.

CONTACT

Daniel Lissoni
Together for STEM

**CHALLENGE**

There is a shortage of people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) studies and jobs. The STEM industries are growing faster than others, yet the number of students in this field is stationary and remains too low, especially when it comes to women. This is causing tension in the labour market and an extreme lack of diversity in STEM jobs and companies.

STEM skills and jobs are critical for the well-being of the European economy and to design solutions to societal challenges.

**SOLUTION**

Inspire more young people to get interested in STEM; remove barriers, especially for women, to thrive in STEM studies and jobs; provide communication and training materials on careers.

**HOW TO TACKLE THE SDGs?**

Collaboration with leading companies is key in making STEM more strategic and provide a stronger offer to young people.

**OUR APPROACH**

1. Strengthen and scale corporate STEM programs and collaborate at European level through peer learning;
2. Connect local teams and work together on the ground to inspire young people with a stronger offer;
3. Engage in policy dialogue at EU and local level to drive systemic change;
4. Ensure a smooth transition to work for current and future generations.

**SCOPE & TIMELINE**

The Together for STEM platform was launched in May 2019 and is now expanding its group of partners.

**CONTACT**

Andrea Bittnerova
Tyre and Road Wear Particles (TRWP) are tiny debris produced during normal tyre functioning on the road. They are generated by the friction between tyres and the road surface and represent a source of micro-plastics in the environment.

The tyre tread abrasion rates do not only depend on tyre design, but are also affected by different external factors, such as driving behaviour, road and vehicle characteristics. To consider all these factors, solutions for TRWP require a multi-stakeholder approach.

The European Tyre and Rubber Manufacturers’ Association (ETRMA) adopted a pro-active approach and launched a multi-stakeholder initiative to tackle this challenge: the European TRWP Platform, facilitated by CSR Europe.

The Platform aims at creating an open and inclusive dialogue among all relevant stakeholders to explore a balanced and holistic approach to address and better understand TRWP.

1. Share scientific knowledge;
2. Achieve a common understanding of the possible effects of particles generated during normal tyre use and wear;
3. Co-design mitigation options to reduce TRWP.

The European TRWP Platform was launched in July 2018 with an initial focus on Europe.

CONTACT
Elisa Casazza
Digitalisation and innovation are important enablers for future development both in Africa and in Europe. Many European start-ups and multinational companies are increasingly doing business in Africa and vice-versa. 36% of Africa’s trade is with the EU. The EU’s investment stocks represent 40% of FDI in Africa, and the continent receives on average around EUR 22 billion in EU Official Development.

However, with a population expected to double by 2050, from 1.2 billion to around 2.5 billion of predominantly young people, the African continent faces the challenge to ensure sustainable economic growth while fostering job creation.

Coupled with the rapid pace of technological change, new opportunities are emerging for cross-continent and cross-sector exchange and support on digitalisation as a key enabler of progress.

CSR Europe will focus on three main areas:

1. Digitalisation Skills
2. Digitalisation & Renewable Energy
3. Digitalisation & Big Data

Stronger cross-sector collaboration between African and European companies to share knowledge and promote responsible investments in the digital economy.

The EU-Africa Platform on Digitalisation is currently under development and will be launched early-2020.

Contact
Soni Kanabar
In nature, all animals, plants and elements work together in an ecosystem to survive and thrive.

This balance, however, is currently disrupted by the rapid loss of biodiversity, caused by industrial activity, monoculture, loss of natural habitats and global warming.

Almost all businesses rely in some way on the resources provided by nature. Therefore, the loss of natural species is directly endangering the resources of all businesses.

Companies can collectively enhance the net positive biodiversity impacts of their industrial sites and across their value chains.

1. Steer working groups to exchange learnings;
2. Pool expertise together via stakeholder dialogues to assess impacts and drive concrete actions;
3. Organise policy round tables to drive reforms and raise awareness.

Develop industrial hubs of biodiversity and minimize the harmful impacts of business on the ecosystem.

The Biodiversity & Industry Platform is currently under development and will be launched early-2020.
Each year, businesses and stakeholders from all over the world gather in the Belgian capital city to attend the Brussels SDG Summit. Together, they discuss key issues they are facing in their business operations and how they relate to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Highlight of the event are the 15 SDG Roundtables, organised by CSR Europe and its network of National Partner Organisations (NPOs), to address specific SDGs challenges. Summit participants have the opportunity to choose their SDG topic of interest, and network with a small and selected group of experienced stakeholders.

The outcomes of the Round-table discussions and the business connections developed during the event form the basis to kick-start new collaborative platforms or enhance existing ones.

Each year, CSR Europe presents new key issues to discuss at the SDGs Roundtables of the Brussels SDG Summit. In line with our 2030 Strategy, CSR Europe selects relevant topics to stimulate the collaboration of businesses for:

- An economy with and for PEOPLE
- Sustainable raw MATERIALS & value chains
- Sustainable MARKETS and finance
Our 2019 SDGs Roundtable Topics

**PEOPLE**
- Youth Inclusion & Education
- Girls in STEM
- Long-term Stakeholder Engagement to Inform Business Strategy
- Skills for 21st Century Jobs
- Social Innovation Partnerships

**MATERIALS**
- Circular Procurement
- Education for Sustainability
- Combating Plastic Waste in Tourism
- Sustainable Water Management
- Climate Change and Sustainable Cities

**MARKETS**
- Social Impact Measurement
- Sustainable Finance & Impact Investment
- Principles for Responsible Banking
- Sustainable Supply Chain Management
- Disability in Sustainability Reporting
Even in the most developed countries in Europe, disadvantaged groups of **young people do not have access to quality education** and opportunities. As a result, they are at risk of falling behind in the **labour market**.

According to **Manoelle Lepoutre**, Senior Vice President and Civil and Society Engagement at Total, actions must be taken to build a professional and trust-based relationship between the civil society, educational institutions and private companies.

At the Brussels SDG Summit 2019, Lepoutre illustrated the project **“L’École de Production”** of the Total Foundation which supports schools in integrating and qualifying young pupils that are at risk of dropping out.

Participants of the SDG Roundtable **“Youth Inclusion & Education”** recognised the need for concerted action amongst stakeholders to respond to the **local needs** and **ensure the delivery of tailored educational models**.
The need for talents in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) is increasing. However, the number of students in STEM remains low, especially among girls.

**Stereotypes are a key barrier for women to enter and stay in STEM studies and jobs.** Nataliia Koshovska, Programme Analyst of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and Maryna Saprykina, Executive Director of CSR Ukraine, described their efforts to increase the number of girls in STEM: mentorship programme, hackathon for girls, Girls Day and social experiments on stereotypes. The activities included top female business and academic leaders mentoring one or more girls in STEM while addressing the stereotypes that are influencing young girls’ mindsets.

At the Roundtable, participants agreed that language, culture, parents, teachers and media contribute to shape girls’ mindsets. Therefore, CSR Europe launched the Collaborative platform “Together for STEM” to connect with STEM initiatives around the world and scale them up in other countries.
Companies need to open up and reach out to the increasingly connected world around them because their business will only grow, endure and earn acceptance if they know how to listen to and talk to the stakeholders in their ecosystem.

“Nowadays we cannot take a decision without engaging a full range of stakeholders”, said Yves Nissim, VP Head of Transformation and Operation in CSR, Orange. At the Brussels SDG Roundtable, companies identified 3 key elements to ensure stakeholder engagement: inclusivity, materiality and responsiveness. A trust-based relationship between people and communities are needed because the business is no longer the only core of the process.

Face-to-face dialogue is the most effective approach, according to Yves Nissim. Participants agreed and decided to explore potential cooperation in sustainable agriculture and biodiversity.
The demand of new skills is increasingly becoming an issue in many fields. Employees are requested to be able to move from one subject to another. However, cross-disciplinary expertise, combining different skills and competences, are difficult to develop.

Existing institutional frameworks for organising education and work tend to operate in silos, inhibiting the creation of a new cross breed of skills and competences.

The role of Human Resources needs to shift from categorical to more fluid. Dominic Nolan, Education Programme Manager at IBM, presented Skills Build, the online learning platform launched in 2019 to help job seekers gaining core professional skills needed in the modern workforce. Lisa Tahiri Rukiqi, Executive Director of Kosovo CSR Network, shared with participants the cooperation between the organisation and UNICEF to empower youth.
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are a big driver of social impact, however, their resources are generally limited. At the SDG Roundtable “Social Innovation Partnership”, Moody’s and HERE Technologies explained to participants how they are partnering up with NGOs and non-profits to drive social innovation and to help improving their performance and impact. How? By offering their technology, expertise and resources.

Rudo Mutambiranwa, Regional Head of Corporate Social Responsibility EMEA and APAC at Moody’s described the impact measurement process based for instance on proofing the efficiency of the input and the outcomes in the relationship with the beneficiary.

Participants agreed that building trusts amongst partners and assessing common goals would be pivotal for the success of the collaboration. At the same time, the presence of experienced partners on the ground, working with the communities where the project is implemented is essential.
How do you measure the value of your company to society? Putting a monetary value on social impact and non-financial activities helps your company in driving sustainability forward and connects it to its environment.

Andrea Salemme, Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility Specialist at UnipolSai, presented the project “Welfare, Italy. Laboratory for new social policies”, in collaboration with the European House Ambrosetti. Together, they developed a methodology that is allowing Unipol to measure the societal impact of the company’s activities, insurance activities and specific investments, in monetary terms. Targets of the project are mainly internal stakeholders for improved credibility and financial market players. For each area, impact was measured by following three steps:
1. Analysis of what are defined as data input driver;
2. Quantification;
3. Valuation and Estimation.

At the SDG Roundtable, participants recognised the need to define standards for social impact because otherwise, in presence of different methods, it is difficult to compare results.
Sustainable investments are more successful than traditional investments. They generate a higher return on investment; drive social value creation; they are purpose-driven; and create stronger connections between investors and clients.

The way companies invest is significantly changing, explained Steven Serneels, CEO of the European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA) to the participants of the SDG Roundtable. Under financial pressure, classic non-profits, where the societal mission comes first, are becoming social enterprises. On the other hand, classic for-profit companies, pressured by society, are starting to invest not only for profit but also for purpose. Why? To bring value to shareholders in the long term and find the right balance between Return On Investment (ROI), risk and impact. Classic investing is influenced by Environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria. Even if financial return comes first, companies are looking in a long-term impact investing direction.

At the event, Yoichi Mearashi, General Manager of Itochu, presented their management philosophy of sampo yoshi as a direction to sustainability initiatives. Itochu's founder, Chubei Itoh, set out from Toyosato Village to Nagasaki as a traveling linen merchant in 1858. Due to the merchants’ contributions to the society, they were permitted to promote business activities in the region. Since then, not only good for the seller and the buyer, but also for the society became the management philosophy.
As society’s expectations change, banks must be transparent and clear about how their products and services create value for their customers, clients, investors, as well as society. The Principles for Responsible Banking help any bank – whatever its starting point – to align its business strategy with society’s goals. The Principles represent a comprehensive global framework based on Alignment; Impact; Clients & customers; Stakeholders; Governance & target setting; Transparency & accountability.

Banks adopting the final Principles will commit themselves to using products, services and relationships to support and accelerate the fundamental changes in economies and lifestyles. They are necessary to achieve shared prosperity for current and future generations, explained Burcak Inel Martenczuk, Head of Financing Growth at the European Banking Federation (EBF) to the participants of the SDG Roundtable.

Participating companies discussed the challenges in the implementation of the principles, such as access to data, social impact assessment and the integration of sustainability risks in the overall risk management.
How to organize your business' supply chain to make it sustainable? How to go beyond the basics and deliver more impact?

At the Brussels SDG Summit Roundtables, Ilka Baert and Arjan Pouw, Sustainability Advisors at Corporate Vattenfall, illustrated their company's sustainable supply chain roadmap, based on three aspects:
1. **Materiality**;
2. **Change management**;
3. **Collaboration**.

One of the core issues in making the supply-chain more sustainable is the **difficulties posed by complex procedures**. Participants discussed several possible solutions, such as the importance of building supplier's capacity and dialogue with suppliers to reach a common denominator and standardise the procedures.

Vattenfall’s **Code of Conduct and Integrity** governs the way Vattenfall communicates and works with our own employees. Their Code of Conduct for Suppliers – CoCfS defines the company’s requirements and expectations of suppliers with respect to sustainability. The Code of Conduct for Suppliers also applies for contractors and subcontractors. As Vattenfall has so many suppliers and buys such a wide range of goods, services and fuels with varying risk profiles and legal and sustainability requirements, implementation of their CoCfS varies.
People with disabilities have difficulties to enter the labour market, even though they represent a source of talent and diversity for companies. Disability Hub Europe for Sustainable Growth and Social Innovation, an initiative led by Fundación ONCE and co-funded by the European Social Fund, focus on the potential of the binomial disability and sustainability to foster social and labour inclusion of people with disabilities in Europe while promoting inclusive and sustainable businesses.

At the SDG Roundtable, participants discussed the modalities in which universities could contribute to facilitate the entrance in the job markets of students with disabilities. They agreed that the narrative around disability needs to change from “charity” to “strategy”.

The key areas identified for further collaboration are to explore how companies can join the Disability Hub and discover other companies’ best practices, implementing them in their own reality, and how universities can enter in the discourse on the binomial disability & sustainability.
Moving from a linear to a circular economy is key to ensure a more sustainable economic system, using waste as a resource. An important way to drive this change forward is to include principles of circularity in the procurement process.

Working with suppliers on circular procurement might be challenging due to lack of understanding, transparency, and the constrains to companies’ capacity for change. Participants of the SDG Roundtable agreed that procurement is changing and can have a strategic role. Focus should be placed on how circularity can enable other functions and improve the performance of the supply chain.

Luca Meini, Head of Circular Economy and Environmental Strategies at Enel, explained how the company started this process by understanding the behaviour of suppliers and redesigned their full supply chain. Further, a circular economy model was developed and used as a decision-making tool. In the initial stage they developed a platform for communication with suppliers. Workshops and presentations were provided to align the suppliers understanding about circular procurement. In the assessment process suppliers were asked about recycled materials, renewable energy or water usage.
Education the next generation on sustainability is a great way to drive long-term changes. Guillermo Denaux, Senior Specialist Environmental Affairs & Corporate Citizenship at Toyota Motor Europe illustrated how the company is already working with NGOs to tackle the issues of biodiversity and education. Partnerships have been established with the Foundation for Environmental Education in Denmark, and the Royal Botanical Gardens in the UK amongst others. The objective these partnerships is to bring nature back to youth.

Boris Manev, Head of CSR and Government Affairs EMEAR at Epson Europe, explained how their are matching requests from NGOs willing to engage in educational partnership on topics in line with Epson’ sustainability strategy. The engagement led Epson to launch its first-ever Win-A-Robot competition to support teams of students and researchers around EMEAR in innovating the way of using an Epson robot.

Participants agreed that businesses must sit at the table together with Higher and Lower Education Institutions to redesign together educational programmes. Sustainability is a complex medium-long term journey that needs stable trustful partnerships among all actors.
Plastic waste is polluting our oceans and environment. As a result, paradise locations are turning into plastic soups, affecting not only the natural environment but also the travel and tourism industry.

Tessa Groenen, Project Manager at MVO Nederland, presented the organisation’s commitment to take responsibility on plastic waste and implement measures to reduce, reuse and recycle plastics to preserve tourism destinations. At the SDG Roundtable, Solène Padeletti, Project Manager at IMS Luxembourg, described to participants the new Zero Single-Use Plastic Manifesto, launched in September 2018. Since then 48 companies committed to stop using single-use plastic by the end of 2020.

Cross-sectorial collaboration could instil a sense of greater urgency in tourism companies to change the current situation. Participants agreed that a common pledge could ensure enough peer pressure to push more companies to switch to more eco-responsible behaviours. At the same time, it would create real cohesion, multiplying the impact and facilitating the negotiations with reluctant businesses and suppliers.
Only 2% of the world’s water is drinkable and climate change, urbanisation, lifestyle changes, and industrial activity are putting pressure on our freshwater reserves.

David Martin, Vice President Government Relations at Ecolab, and Therese Noorlander, Sustainability Director Europe at Coca Cola, explained to participating companies the importance of water management.

Current water prices do not reflect the real value of this natural resource, and customers are not always aware of this reality. Although many companies set targets on water reduction, many of them are lagging behind. Ecolab believes that current legislation is too complex and there are not enough incentives in place to encourage water saving amongst the population. At Coca-Cola they extended their water standards targets to the supply chain.

Participants agreed that building awareness, support recycling and innovation, working with non-governmental organisation and sharing information on the water footprint might contribute to solve the problem of water waste.
Climate Change is arguably one of the most pressing issues of our time as it will impact everyone, everywhere.

The Climate Change Cluster, presented by Carine Thomas, Senior Manager at Foretica, conveys different stakeholders to co-elaborate sustainable solutions to climate change mitigation on 5 main areas:
1. Sustainable mobility;
2. Infrastructures
3. Energy
4. Healthy Lifestyles
5. Innovation
6. Finance

Adam Hirny, Director of International Financial Institutions and Sustainable Growth Programmes Bureau at BNP Paribas Poland, together with his colleague Maria Krawczynska, CSR Manager, presented their Partnerships for sustainability on financial and non-financial instruments developed to ensure sustainable development and inclusivity.

Partnership among private and public bodies, as well as civil society, is a crucial element to foster sustainability in the development of cities. At the same time, companies recognised the need to build homogeneous criteria for the evaluation of the level of sustainability of a city.
Solve Your SDG Challenge

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS, BETTER FUTURE.

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About CSR Europe

CSR Europe is the leading European business network for Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility. With our corporate members and National Partner Organisations organisations (NPOs), we unite, inspire and support over 10,000 enterprises at local, European and global level.

We support businesses & industry sectors in their transformation and collaboration towards practical solutions and sustainable growth.

We are for systemic change; therefore, following the SDGs, we want to co-build with the European leaders and stakeholders an overarching strategy for a Sustainable Europe 2030.