Acknowledgements and Thanks

We wanted to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all of our partners who supported the whole Beyond ESG Month of events and discussions, as well as our incredible speakers for sharing their knowledge and insights with us. And of course, all of the amazing attendees who participated in these discussions throughout the month!

Without the support of this wonderful global community of changemakers all working in collaboration to achieve our shared ambition of wellbeing, equality and sustainability, our movement for change would not be possible and would certainly not be as powerful as it is today.
Executive Summary

Why are we talking about ESG?

Interest in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting and investing has increased dramatically in recent years. Capital markets are being shaped by ‘ESG’ products. It is estimated that trillions of dollars sit within an ‘ESG’ or ‘Sustainability’ branded fund. There are many reasons for this boom in ESG. No doubt, the global pandemic and the climate crisis have sharpened investors’ attention to how the wellbeing of people and the environment can impact financial returns. Perhaps, also there are more investors who want to balance financial returns with positive impacts on people and the environment?

Whilst the acronym ‘ESG’ originates from the investment world as a term for managing (ESG) risks to financial returns, it has now entered the lexicon of sustainability and social impact practitioners. It is not uncommon now to see ‘ESG’ be used interchangeably with the terms Sustainability, Impact and even Social Value. This has created confusion and in some cases anger and confrontation between practitioners.

What did we do?

Social Value International (SVI) is a diverse network of partners and practitioners. Throughout March 2022 SVI facilitated a series of webinars, discussions, technical masterclasses, surveys and thought leadership pieces all under the theme of “Beyond ESG”. The aims of the month were to

i. Improve technical understanding of ESG and its relationship to other key terms;

ii. Deepen the connectivity of the different concepts through convening diverse stakeholders to collaborate and share views;

iii. Crowdsource recommendations for how ESG practices should evolve in order to converge with the concepts of managing impact, social value and achieving sustainable development.
What did we learn?

While many practitioners agreed that the popularity of ESG can be an opportunity for the social value movement, we also identified several risks that come with current ESG practices. If ESG is to evolve into an approach that can contribute to solving our social and environmental challenges then SVI as a ‘network of networks’ need to follow these 8 key action points:

- **Clarity over Concepts**
  Improve definitions and interoperability of key terminology and concepts

- **Harmonization of Standards**
  Continue to collaborate with other standard setters

- **Measure what Matters**
  From outputs to outcomes and impacts on wellbeing for all materially affected groups

- **Promotion of Valuation**
  As a way to make better decisions

- **Assurance and Verification**
  Stimulate demand, awareness and provision to increase credibility and reliability

- **Amplify Marginalized Voices**
  To reduce inequalities

- **Skills and Professionalization**
  Build a community of practitioners through training and accreditation

- **Policy and Regulation**
  Campaign for stronger policies and regulatory frameworks for non-financial reporting and accounting
The Going Beyond ESG Summit was a really interesting opportunity to explore global ideas framed against our local context. New Zealand has far fewer large-scale institutional investment firms than other parts of the world, and here the conversations taking place about ESG are often focused on community-level practice and public sector investments. We really liked the idea of going ‘beyond’ ESG and focusing on other spheres of practice and knowledge that can be applied to our local context.

- Jo Nicholson, SVI Trustee and Director of Social Value Aotearoa

This “Beyond ESG Booklet” provides great insights and 8 clear courses of actions for global community of changemakers. It’ll take SVI Social Value Movement into next level – Social Value Movement Toward Achieving SDGs.

- Chiayuan S. Wu, SVI Trustee and Chairman of Social Value Taiwan

ESG investing and reporting requirements is bringing another circle of investors and stakeholders a little closer towards accounting for value. This is a positive step. There will be disagreements, and much nuance, but at least diverse stakeholders are having these discussions.

- Simon Faivel, Co-Chair of SVI Trustees and Chair of Social Impact Measurement Network Australia (SIMNA)

ESG is seen by many as primarily a reporting framework, whereas these SVI conversations demonstrated that for ESG to fulfill its potential, it must represent a way of operating that fully accounts for impacts on the wellbeing of all people and the planet, which then is transparently represented in corporate accounts and reports.

- Stephanie Robertson, SVI Trustee and Chair of Social Value Canada
About Beyond ESG Month

It seems Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investing and reporting is one of the most talked about subjects at the moment. This is not surprising considering that in 2020 net inflows into ESG funds in the U.S. alone reached $51.1 billion and by the end of the first quarter in 2021, Global ESG investing was nearly $2 trillion.

There have been many driving forces for the rise of ESG including, but not limited to, the global pandemic, the climate crisis and increasing client demand, but as interest in ESG has skyrocketed, so have the questions and challenges, including the question of what does it all mean for the social value movement and those striving to achieve the sustainable development goals? Despite the hype, there are clear weaknesses in current ESG practices; behaviours are not changing enough to address rising social inequalities or adequately tackle the climate crisis.

"The huge rise of ESG investing is positive in that investment decisions are increasingly being made in relation to social and environmental issues. However, we must recognise that the term ‘ESG’ relates to managing the risks to financial returns. This is very different to managing impacts on people and the environment. As a network of practitioners we must be clear on these differences and work with ESG specialists so that ESG evolves and converges with more transformative approaches that are needed to tackle the challenges of climate change, wellbeing and rising inequality."

– Ben Carpenter, CEO, Social Value International

In response to this, throughout March 2022, we hosted a month-long series of conversations and thought leadership exploring these questions as we focused on the key theme of “Beyond ESG”. Over the course of the month, we hosted webinars, discussions, masterclasses alongside blogs and thought pieces that culminated in a half-day conference, the Going Beyond ESG Summit, on the 29th of March.

Rather than be critical of ESG as a movement, we want to work with members and partners to provide constructive challenge and present practical solutions for how ESG can evolve.
Overview of Beyond ESG Month

8
INSIGHTFUL SESSIONS

26
SPEAKERS from 10 COUNTRIES

600+
ATTENDEES
Key Takeaways from
Panel Discussion: ESG and the Social Value Movement

On March 8th, in partnership with Impak Finance, we hosted the first in a series of discussions that are making up the Beyond ESG Month. This panel sought to understand the current ESG agenda, how we have got to where we are, and some of the possible solutions to the challenges ESG faces, and we were joined by:

Paul Allard
Co-founder & CEO
Impak Finance

Bonnie Chiu
Managing Director / Senior Contributor
The Social Investment Consultancy / Forbes Women

Fabien Couderc
Funding Partner
ALTALURRA ventures, Impact-driven early-stage tech and deep-tech venture capital fund

Jelena Stamenkova van Rumpt
Director, Responsible Investment
Anthos Fund & Asset Management

The mainstreaming of ESG has brought with it a lot of confusion and many challenges. A double materiality approach, increased regulation and auditing, and a recognition of the power we as consumers hold, are key to effectively evolving the ESG agenda.
RISE OF ESG

The term ESG was originally coined by investors to describe a risk management approach that explored how environmental, social and governance issues posed risks to financial investments. In recent years with greater awareness of ESG issues (thanks to the pandemic and climate crisis in particular) the term is being used more widely and in different contexts. Currently, it is very difficult to point out and understand the core characteristics of “ESG” as the term is so ubiquitous.

INVESTORS’ NEEDS ARE EVOLVING

Despite the boom in, “ESG investing” it is not creating the change that a lot of investors want to see in the world. Most investors do care about the impact their investments are having on people and the planet and so a move towards double materiality as well as increased regulation and auditing is needed. Impact data needs to be seen as important as financial data, subject to the same level of rigor, and verified by a third party.

CHALLENGES TO THE SOCIAL VALUE MOVEMENT

ESG practices present other challenges to the social value movement such as the single (financial) materiality lens, the fact that ESG reporting remains unregulated and unaudited (resulting in ‘greenwashing’), the focus on outputs rather than outcomes and impacts, no valuation, and the siloed way of thinking about E, S, and G.

ESG CANNOT BE IGNORED

Consumer power should not be underestimated. The rise in awareness regarding ESG over the last few years demonstrates how strongly the concept of ESG now belongs not just to the financial markets but also to consumers, and the purchasing decisions and power of these consumers will shape the future. The businesses that will succeed in the future are the ones that operate sustainably and are able to effectively communicate their impact with their consumers, and the financial markets will respond to this.
Key Takeaways from

Social Value Matters Webinar:
How businesses are responding to the IMM and ESG landscape

Partnering with SDG Impact, this webinar explores how businesses are responding to the impact measurement and management (IMM) and ESG landscapes, and the changes that we have seen globally in this space in the last few years. In this panel discussion, we were joined by 5 fantastic speakers who are shared some fantastic insights and advice for businesses grappling with the challenges faced as a result of the global rise in awareness about ESG and IMM.

Alexandra Heaven
Global Senior Manager
Danone & Business for Inclusive Growth

Dr. Rasha Dyatt
Director, Planning and Institutional Development
Amman Stock Exchange

Reinoud Willemsen
Partner
Embedding Impact

Vincent Siegerink
Economist / Policy Analyst
OECD WISE Centre

Moderated By:
Belissa Rojas
IMM Advisor
SDG Impact, UNDP

To tackle the challenges of ESG, we need to clarify definitions, harmonise standards and regulations, encourage assurance, improve measurement practices, and adopt longer term strategies that incorporate double materiality.
CONFUSION OF KEY TERMS AND DEFINITION

Globally, there is confusion among businesses as to the differences between key terms such as sustainability, ESG, CSR, IMM, social value, etc. These terms are often used interchangeably, and from the perspective of a business, this can create challenges in focusing on what impacts are material to them. Clarity and streamlining of definitions is needed. Increased harmonisation of the numerous standards, frameworks and regulations that exist is also vital to this.

OUTPUT MEASURES HAVE LIMITATION

In order to understand the impact of a business, we need to go beyond measuring what businesses are doing (the outputs) and begin measuring what matters to stakeholders themselves which is changes in aspects of wellbeing.

BIGGER STEPS NEEDED

A significant shift in management practices, as well as assurance, are needed if we are to ensure businesses are optimising their impacts on wellbeing and not just producing unverified, greenwashed reports.

LONGER TERM STRATEGIES FOR VALUE CREATION

If businesses adopt longer term strategies that incorporate double materiality, they are better able to manage and mitigate their negative impacts on society, as well as the external risks that are captured in ESG. Related to this is the need for ESG ratings themselves to evolve beyond short-term risk to long-term sustainability and the impact this can have on business performance.
Key Takeaways from Accredited Practitioner Conversation

On March 17th, we collaborated with Social Value UK to deliver the first Accredited Practitioner Community Discussion of 2022. In this interactive session, we invited our global community of Accredited Practitioners (APs) to have a conversation on the rise of ESG and its impact on their work. We sought to explore how APs have responded to ESG, the challenges they may have faced, and what more SVI can do to support the AP Community in this boom of ESG investing and reporting.

INTEGRATED THINKING NEEDED

One of the key challenges of ESG is the tendency to think of E, S and G separately rather than as a cohesive whole. Practically there are different people with different skillsets working on environmental sustainability and social impact. These need to discipline combine. It is vital that we adopt a broader definition of value that integrates impacts on all types of capital (financial, social, human, and natural).

GOING BEYOND REPORTING

ESG often seems to “get stuck” on the external reporting part without going further to implement the management systems needed to optimise the impact companies create. To tackle the problem of impact washing and to make ESG more than just a PR exercise, assurance processes are vital. This will help bring confidence to the impact and sustainability claims companies are making and thus drive forward the ESG and sustainability agendas.
NEED FOR A MINDSET OR ‘CULTURE’ CHANGE
The effectiveness of ESG largely depends on the culture of the company – if there is a willingness within the organisation to change the culture and see ESG as more than just a marketing strategy and to instead have it embedded into the wider strategy of the company and used as a tool to optimise the company’s impact, then ESG in itself could be much more helpful than it currently is.

ESG PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY
Despite its challenges, ESG is helping to provide a space for people wanting to make a difference to come together and have a discussion. It could also help open the doors for subsequent conversations on social value and thus help companies evolve their practice and move deeper towards an impact management approach.
Key Takeaways from
Social Value Masterclass:
Materiality: What matters and to who?
Delivered by Adam Richards PhD, SVIs Director of Impact, this member exclusive Social Value Masterclass examined Principle 4: Only include what is material. By attending you will better understand the concept of materiality, why it is important, and how we can determine what is material.

**THERE IS A LOT GOING ON!**

With the growth in discussions around sustainability, there has been a huge number of discussions around the concepts of materiality and whether we should be using the concept of single materiality, double materiality, dynamic materiality.

But at its simplest, materiality is about what matters.

Materiality is what is relevant and significant to stakeholders, to society, to an organisation’s financial objectives etc… and should create boundaries for what is included or excluded in our impact management approach or framework.
CHANGE THE QUESTION TO CHANGE WHAT IS MATERIAL

We are in a world where most decisions are underpinned by the question: ‘how can we maximise financial returns/efficiency?’. This means that information about financial value is ‘material’ to decision making whereas information about other types of value i.e. social or environmental value is immaterial. In order to improve the impacts we have on people and the planet it is important that we change the question to be about more than just financial returns: i.e. ‘how can we maximise financial returns and contribute positively to wellbeing?’. This would mean that information about impacts on wellbeing (social value) are as material as financial value!

FOCUS ON THE IMPACTS THAT MATTER TO THE PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE THE IMPACTS

By understanding which impacts matter (are relevant and significant) to the people affected by our activities from their perspective supports better decisions about optimising the positive impact we can make for all stakeholders. This leads to more value created.

SHARING AND OPENNESS IS REQUIRED

For us all to improve our understanding and application of materiality, a lot more sharing, openness and transparency is needed about the decisions being made and what is included and excluded.

LOG INTO SVI MEMBERS AREA TO WATCH BACK THE SESSION
And finally all these conversations culminate the
Going Beyond ESG Summit

On 29th March, SVI collaborated with partners to host the Going Beyond ESG Summit. The summit provided real solutions and actions that we can collectively take forward to evolve the ESG agenda and optimise positive impact for people and the planet.

We aimed to –

- Increase knowledge through sharing the latest developments within ESG Investing and ESG reporting
- Challenge the status quo by exploring the main problems with ESG reporting
- Be inspired by the latest innovations to propose solutions to the problems
- Feel empowered to play an active role in shaping ‘ESG’ discussions

The Summit consisted of 4 sessions:

- **Keynote Address**
- **PANEL DISCUSSION**
  - Is the financial sector willing and able to go beyond ESG?
  - Towards an impact management approach
  - Bringing the “I” into ESG – An Indigenous perspective

**LOG INTO SVI MEMBERS AREA TO WATCH BACK THE SUMMIT**

The sessions from the summit will not be in the members area until June/July
**Key Takeaways from Keynote Address**

Our Keynote Address was presented by three incredible leaders in the industry who discussed the different ways in which the corporate, investor and public sectors are looking at ESG, how we can work together to break down silos, and what they think is next for the world of ESG.

**RISE OF ESG SHOWS A STEP TOWARDS A NEW SYSTEM**

Although the concepts of ‘ESG’ and ‘impact’ are, strictly speaking, different approaches, the conflation of terms suggests that a convergence is happening and that we are all moving towards a similar ‘systems change’ where decisions are made based on more than just financial value. ESG can help unite people and organisations with a shared goal to think more broadly about value to different stakeholders, providing the possibility of a win–win situation for businesses, people and the planet.

**NEED MORE INTEGRATED THINKING**

E, S and G still tend to be viewed independently. If we are to evolve the ESG agenda and create real meaningful change, it is vital that we recognize and understand the interlinkages between people and society, the environment, governance, business performance, the economy, etc.
NEED MORE EDUCATION

There is a need for better awareness and education on the various issues surrounding ESG and impact. Often there is a real willingness on investors’ part to create more positive impact through their investments but there is a lack of understanding on how to do this effectively. However, it is not only investors and companies that need education – we need to focus on youth education too. Young people are incredibly motivated by the global issues we face, and they are the leaders of tomorrow.

MEASURING AND VALUING CHANGES IN WELLBEING IS WHAT MATTERS

When it comes to ESG, there is a risk that companies end up only measuring their activities, which does not provide a real understanding of the actual impacts on people and the planet and therefore does not allow stakeholders to make good, well-informed decisions for the long term. Organizations should instead measure and value the outcomes and impact of their activities. However, the argument that we do not have enough data or the right data, or that we do not understand the data, cannot be an excuse for inaction either. We simply have to make sure that the data we have is sufficient and relevant to the decisions that we need to make.
Key Takeaways from

PANEL DISCUSSION 1:
Is the financial sector willing and able to go beyond ESG?

In the first panel discussion of the summit, we looked at how the financial sector is responding to the rise of ESG and explored the question of whether it is willing and able to go beyond ESG. We were joined by three fantastic speakers from the investment, banking and asset management industries who shared a frank and honest discussion with valuable insights into the topic at hand. These speakers were:

John Levy
Director of Impact
Franklin Real Asset Advisors

Tom McGillycuddy
Co-Founder
CIRCA5000

Moderated By:
Boris Couteaux
VP, Business and Product Development
impak Finance

Distinguishing the differences between ESG and impact is important. The financial sector should adopt a double materiality approach, but in order to internally justify any investment, it must start with a financial returns-based argument.

ESG AND ‘IMPACT’ ARE DIFFERENT LENSES

ESG and impact are entirely different concepts and this should be more distinguished. The ‘Impact’ lens looks at where investments are creating positive impact from the outset. The current ‘ESG’ lens is essentially asking whether a company is a good ‘corporate citizen’, and this is not enough to move the world in any meaningful direction. For the financial sector to have a real positive impact, we need to replace ESG with an impact management approach.
BALANCING FINANCIAL RETURNS AND IMPACTS?

Many investors still hold the widely shared misconception that they must choose between ‘impact’ or financial returns. Therefore, while we should be embracing a double materiality approach, in order to internally justify any investments, you must start with single materiality – in other words, you need to first and foremost prove that an investment is viable from a financial returns-point of view, before you talk about its positive impacts.

OTHER SOLUTIONS

Other specific solutions to going beyond ESG in the context of the financial sector include more education, building trust in the data, more regulation of reporting, having the right incentives in place, diversifying investment portfolios and breaking barriers to investing.
The second panel discussion of the day, picked back up on the theme of impact and impact management, as we discussed how to evolve the ESG agenda towards an impact management approach.

Whilst increased ESG reporting and transparency is a positive development, it is not enough unless it leads to a change in the way in which we make decisions and greater accountability. Regulation, assurance, and collaboration are key to moving towards an impact management approach.
THE ESG INDUSTRY IS CATALYZING CHANGE
The boom in ESG reporting and investing is increasing knowledge and driving forward practice within mainstream markets and thinking.

ASSURANCE IS NEEDED TO BRING CREDIBILITY & RELIABILITY
To overcome the risks of greenwashing that has plagued so much of ESG, a greater focus on both regulation and assurance is needed.

EMBEDDING A ‘MANAGEMENT APPROACH’ IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN JUST REPORTING
Whilst increased reporting and transparency is a positive development, unless this is also leading to a change in the way in which we make decisions, and unless this is leading to greater accountability to those whose lives we are impacting upon, then we are failing to make the necessary changes. It is therefore vital that we work to go beyond disclosures and reporting and instead focus on adopting an impact management approach and ensuring that sustainability is embedded into strategic decision-making across organizations.

COLLABORATION IS KEY
We all have a personal responsibility to improve our own practices and to support others, which is why a shift in mindset towards collaboration is needed. Instead of critiquing the work of others, or saying “that’s ESG, not impact”, we should re-frame where we are coming from and ask “What is the problem we are trying to solve? How can we help?”.
Key Takeaways from
PANEL DISCUSSION 3:
Bringing the “I” into ESG – An Indigenous perspective

The last panel discussion of the day is focused on the importance of embedding Indigenous worldview, rights, and ways of being into sustainability approaches, including ESG standards for disclosure and ratings – the “I” in ESG.

‘SUSTAINABILITY’ IS NOT A NEW CONCEPT.
By including the Indigenous perspective into ESG, we are better able to understand and recognise that sustainability is not something new and has always been part of the Indigenous view, which is more qualitative and nuanced than Western ways of thinking.
INDIGENOUS LENS IMPROVES UNDERSTANDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF DECISIONS.

This recognition, and the inclusion of the “I” in ESG, also better enables community interests and values to be identified and included in discourse and ensures that there are meaningful measurements through which corporations can be held accountable.

GO BEYOND SIMPLE ‘OUTPUT’ MEASURES, EMBRACE QUALITATIVE DATA AND THE NUANCES THAT EXIST.

One of the most significant challenges of ESG is that it is so quantified. We must stop thinking in terms of “yes/no” and “winners/losers” and expand this narrow mindset into a more qualitative and nuanced approach to our way of looking at ESG – which is what the inclusion of the Indigenous perspective into ESG provides.

INDIGENOUS THINKING MAKES COMMERCIAL SENSE.

As well as being the right thing to do, including the Indigenous perspective also makes a lot of business sense as fully participating Indigenous communities will have a positive impact on economies. Bringing the Indigenous perspective into the ESG framework should therefore be seen as a win-win.

Including a more qualitative and nuanced Indigenous perspective into ESG facilitates the identification and inclusion of community interests and values, increases accountability, and makes a lot of business sense. Shifting power, building strong relationships, and ensuring effective communication are key to bringing the ‘I’ into ESG.
THIS IS ABOUT POWER.

Addressing power imbalances is key if we are to effectively include the “I” in ESG. This includes shifting power across communities, investing more in community members, changing who you have around the table when making strategic and system-level decisions, and sharing power with those who have traditionally been excluded. Power and communication go hand in hand in being able to be assertive in what is needed, and we must therefore ensure that through communication we build systems of accountability and trust.

Social Value International recognises this, and therefore commits to exploring how we can effectively tackle unequal power relations and systems within our own network, community and mission, to ensure the social value movement and the achievement of our mission is inclusive to all.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, LEARN AND DEVELOP TRUST.

To be an effective ally in this conversation and movement, non-Indigenous people must build relationships, make connections, establish common ground and put in the time and work to learn and develop trust – for ensuring that “I” is included and centered in ESG and conversations around sustainable development is only possible where there are strong and respectful relationships between us all.

LOG INTO SVI MEMBERS AREA TO WATCH BACK THE SUMMIT

The sessions from the summit will not be in the members area until June/July
Global Perspective on ESG Survey

We asked our members & greater community to help shape the future of ESG and our response by helping us to better understand the different global perspectives to ESG by filling out a short survey during the last few months.

How has the rise of ‘ESG investing and ESG reporting’ affected your work in the last 2 years?

Respondents of the Global Perspectives on ESG Survey told us that over the last 2 years, they have seen a huge rise in interest in ESG. Particularly for our members who offer support to clients, who told us that there have been increased questions and requests from clients to offer more services and support related to ESG.

Respondents also told us that conversations around how ESG/Social Value/IMM are connected have increased, and that the rise and mainstreaming of ESG as helped to mainstream discussions about social value and IMM.

I’m using ESG frameworks when developing results frameworks, theories of change and internal reporting processes for clients in a way I didn’t two years ago.

The rise of ESG has provided both clarity and confusion to my work. The concept of measuring non-financial is now a fairly understood but because the emphasis has been on “reporting” the concept of using non-financial information in decision making and a focus on improvement has been totally lost.

Does this present an opportunity or a threat? And why?

The vast majority of respondents told us that the rise of ESG investing and reporting presented an opportunity because not only is it a solution to help us achieve the SDGs and sustainable development, but it also presents an opportunity to mainstream social value and IMM practices, raise awareness of why impact is important, and help transform business and capital markets.
However, despite ESG being seen as an opportunity, many respondents told us that more still needed to be done, and that ESG should be used as leverage to improve impact measurement and management performances. You also told us that more needed to be done to include the “S” into ESG, and ensure that more stakeholder voices are included. You also told us that ESG could be a risk unless we do more to tackle greenwashing / impact washing in the space.

"ESG is an opportunity - it brings closer alignment across sectors between companies and organisations working towards similar impact goals"

**How would you describe the defining characteristics of current ESG practices?**

When we asked respondents to share the current defining characteristics of ESG however, these were far less positive with respondents telling us that ESG practices are “Very general and missing some important factors”, “limited”, “incomparable across organisations” and far too focused on reporting/disclosure and ignoring impact management/strategic thinking.

“Too technical and check-the-box compliance approach that does not integrate with core business activities”

“Passive (less proactive or merely risks mitigation as compared against positive impact creation), confusing (with no unifying standards or framework) and a lot of PR that may be bordering greenwashing and SDG washing”

**How would you like to see ESG practice evolve over the next 2–5 years?**

When asked how respondents would like ESG practice to evolve over the next 2–5 years, the vast number of respondents told us they would like to see more global standards that could help demystify ESG and enable business and investor ESG performance to be compared.
However, it was clear that whilst international standards are important, there is a need to have a common framework that works for everyone. Stakeholder engagement and listening to businesses, investors and non-profits is vital!

Respondents also told us they would like to see a shift from disclosure to effective impact management.

“Achieving a common framework for impact will be useful, as long as it reflects and diversity of issues and methods out there. Like the SDGs it needs to be universal and engaging and part of both policy and practice. It needs to be useful to investors, companies, philanthropists and non-profits of all stripes.”

“To embed a management approach - go beyond reporting and disclosures to management.”

“Would love to see it embody the concepts embedded in the SVI Principles and SDG Impact Standards!! Frameworks like TCFD are a small step in that direction and I have high hopes (maybe overly optimistic?) that the ISSB Standards will help move the needle. SVI has an important role to play in continuing to advance its principles and make ESG practice more about reporting against standard metrics.”

“Globally applicable standards of compliance, verification capabilities and reporting standards”

“Inclusion of a double materiality and inclusion of ALL stakeholders needs move to actual good practice of impact measurement on-par with financial returns.”
What’s next

SVI’s ACTION POINTS

After the month-long activities, there seems to be 8 key things that need to happen if we want to evolve the ESG discussion:

CLARITY OVER CONCEPTS
SVI will work to increase clarity around the concepts of ESG, Sustainability, social value, wellbeing, and impact by developing greater understanding and connectivity.

HARMONIZATION OF STANDARDS
SVI will continue to work in collaboration with other IMM Standard Setting bodies through partnerships and consultations, to develop further harmonisation of standards and an integrated approach across the E, S and G.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS
SVI will strengthen the argument for the double materiality approach and promote measurement that goes beyond outputs and measures changes to aspects of wellbeing (outcomes) for all materially affected stakeholders.

PROMOTE VALUATION
SVI will continue to develop standards and best practice for impact valuation that supports more effective and transparent decision making.
We do hope that you found the sessions, discussions, blogs, and thought pieces throughout Beyond ESG Month insightful and inspiring, and that you now feel motivated to take action and help us evolve the agenda to go beyond ESG.

Together, we can build a powerful movement for change and ensure positive impact for people and the planet!
About Social Value International

Social Value International is the global network focused on social impact and social value. Our members share a common goal: to change the way society accounts for value.

All too often key decisions about resources and policies are made using a limited economic concept of value, which fails to consider important effects on people and the environment. As the gap between rich and poor increases and the effects of climate change become more apparent, our work has never been more urgent.

For over 15 years, Social Value International has been working with our members, networks and partners to embed core principles for social value measurement and analysis, to refine and share practice, and to build a powerful movement of like-minded people to influence policy.

This pioneering community contains members from 45 countries, drawn from a huge range of different sectors and disciplines. Our goal is to support, connect, and represent our members through training, knowledge-sharing and networking.

Social Value International is much more than a professional network.

*Together, we are building a movement for change.*

Our Vision

A world where decision making, ways of working and resource allocation are based on the principles of accounting for value, which leads to increased equality and well-being and reduced environmental degradation.