

# How the Global Sustainable Development Goals Can Help Promote Corporate Social Responsibility

**Author Name:** Eleanor Allen, CEO of Water For People

## ABSTRACT

The [GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS \(SDGS\)](#) were adopted by 193 countries in 2015. All 17 SDGs represent excellent business opportunities, especially [SDG #6 – ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all](#). Policies and global investment will be channeled in this direction, which creates business opportunities for water and sanitation technologies and innovation. The need to manage water sustainably also acts as an incentive to improve business.

## WHAT ARE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)?

On September 25, 2015, 193 countries adopted 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) to **end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all**. The SDGs were built about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were set by the United Nations in 2000 to eradicate poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease, and expired in 2015. Significant progress was made over the past 15 years with the MDGs yet there were large areas that did show much progress, especially in groups marginalized by gender, age, ethnicity or disability. These learnings informed the SDGs.

As a next step, the SDGs are broader and are more unifying. “Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development,” as noted in the [second clause of the SDG declaration](#). The process to develop the SDGs was also unusually inclusive. In total, [5 million people from 88 countries contributed and helped created a 2030 vision for the state of the world](#).



Source: United Nations: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

**Figure 1: The Sustainable Development Goals**

Each SDG has a detailed set of specific targets. For the goals to be reached, the world will need to work closer together and have stronger collaboration between government, the private sector, and civil society. The SDGs are a call for action by all countries – rich, poor and middle-income – to align in a more organized fashion to promote development while also protecting the planet. It is recognized that to achieve economic growth in any country, basic needs must also be met such as education, health and employment. To do this while also mitigating climate change and protecting the environment is a challenge.

The SDGs are not legally binding. They do, however, require governments to step up and make a delivery and investment plan to achieve these goals. This includes development frameworks and systems, and creating the enabling environment for success. Progress will be monitored by each country itself and periodic global reviews will be made by the United Nations.

## HOW DO THE SDGS AFFECT MINING

The mining industry cuts across all 17 SDGs, and mining activities can swing SDG outcomes positively or negatively. The world needs resources and the world will continue to extract them. Mines will continue to operate for as long as humans continue development. Natural resources are critical base materials for infrastructure, agriculture, and industry and we need mines to get these resources from the ground. How mines are developed and operate can be modified to be more sustainable.

A comprehensive document was published in July 2016 called [Mapping Mining to the Sustainable Development Goals: At Atlas](#). This publication included the figure below, which highlights the major issue areas for mining and the SDGs. Each of the SDGs has three to four issue areas specifically for mining as shown below. Some are easier to address than others. Let's look in detail what compliance with the SDGs looks like.

## WHAT MINING COMPANIES CAN DO TO COMPLY WITH THE SDGS

This complex array of issue areas under each SDG can be overwhelming. A company's specific engagement in, and compliance with, the SDGs depends on the local social, political and economic context. In addition, the type of mine and the phase of mining activities (exploration, development, extraction or closure) impacts community programs and operations. Often, companies solicit input from their stakeholders, including local community members. To enhance the sustainable development outcomes from the mining sector, the [Atlas](#) focuses on four broad areas of policy and practice:

1. **Understand the SDGs**
2. **Build capacity of stakeholders** for SDG implementation, monitoring, enforcement
3. **Align policies & practices** across business interests, national development interests and the SDGs
4. **Create dialogue & partnerships** with the common goal of reaching the SDGs



**Abbreviations:**  
**EIDs** = emerging infectious diseases;  
**OSH** = occupational health and safety;  
**TVET** = technical, vocational, and educational training;  
**CCS** = carbon capture and storage;  
**IFFs** = illicit financial flows;  
**FPIC** = free, prior and informed consent;  
**PPPs** = public/private partnerships

Source: United Nations: [http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mapping\\_Mining\\_SDGs\\_An\\_Atlas\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mapping_Mining_SDGs_An_Atlas_Executive_Summary.pdf)

**Figure 2: Major Issue Areas For Mining and the SDGs**

Here are the typical starting points:

**Environment:** Mining impacts water, land, people and the biology in the vicinity of the mine. Adverse impacts can be mitigated or avoided.

- SDG6 – Clean Water and Sanitation
- SDG15 – Life on Land

**Energy and climate:** Mining uses energy and emits pollution to the atmosphere. Energy use and emissions can be reduced.

- SDG7 – Energy Access and Sustainability
- SDG13 – Climate Action

**Infrastructure:** Mining can help drive economic development by supporting the construction of new infrastructure for transportation, communications, water and energy.

- SDG9 - Infrastructure, Innovation and Industrialization
- SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities

**Social:** Mining activities can significantly impact local communities positively and negatively by creating jobs but also threatening other livelihoods and workers/citizen's rights.

- SDG1 – End Poverty
- SDG5 – Gender Equality
- SDG8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG10 – Reduced Inequalities
- SDG16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

There are many different types of mines around the world, and different mining companies with different priorities and corporate cultures. Some are more inclined to positively contribute to their local communities than others. Achieving sustainable development is challenging for any industry. For mining to be successful it is critical that mining companies enhance their stakeholder engagement and partnerships, principally with the communities directly impacted by their work, local/national governments and civil society. Here are some example roles for engagement with multiple stakeholders from an October 2015 session on mining by [Casper Sonesson](#), the Policy Advisor for Extractive Industries at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP):

**Role of Industry and mining operations:**

- Core business – align with national / local development plans
- Social investments – align with community interests
- Indirect – taxes, contribute to public policy
- Beyond compliance with the law in weak governance environments

**Roles of Governments:**

- Legal, regulatory & policy frameworks, aligned with national sustainable development plans
- Monitor and enforce regulations
- Manage and invest revenues in the SDGs
- Facilitate inclusion, dialogue and collaborative processes
- Transparency and information

**Communities, civil society, academia**

- Monitoring, transparency
- Capacity development
- Information, data, statistics

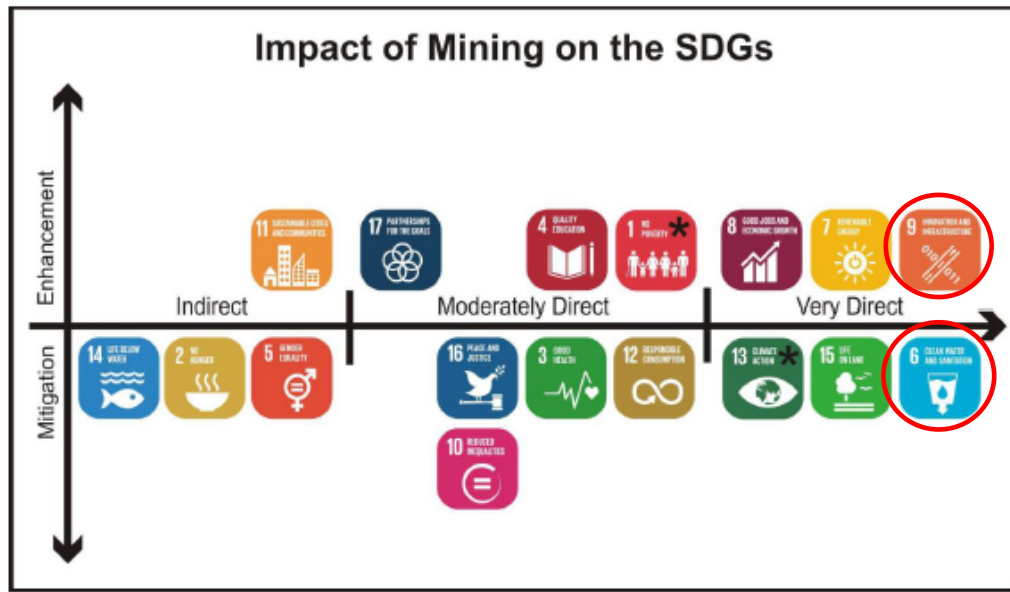
**Development partners, multilateral organizations**

- Capacity development
- Expertise
- Facilitate cross-country exchanges, learning

Source: Extractive Industries and the SDGs, Oct 2015: [http://globaldialogue.info/Casper%20Sonesson%20-%20Extractives%20and%20SDGs\\_Geneva%20Oct%2027\\_1.pdf](http://globaldialogue.info/Casper%20Sonesson%20-%20Extractives%20and%20SDGs_Geneva%20Oct%2027_1.pdf)

**Figure 3: Stakeholder Management For Mining and the SDGs**

Another interesting way to analyze the SDGs, also from Casper's presentation, is to see in which areas mining can positively enhance communities and in which ways mining can negatively enhance communities. These are the impacts that can be mitigated.



Source: Extractive Industries and the SDGs, Oct 2015: <http://globaldialogue.info/Casper%20Sonesson%20-%20Extractives%20and%20SDGs%20Geneva%20Oct%2027%201.pdf>

**Figure 4: Impact of Mining on the SDGs**

For the purposes of this presentation, we will focus specifically on SDG6 (sustainable water and sanitation) and SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) – see the red circles above highlighting these SDGs. Both are recipients of very direct impacts from mining.

There are two aspects to [SDG 6](#) – *ensure available and sustainable water and sanitation for all* – that are relevant to mining:

- 1) Managing use of water in the mining operation to minimize impacts to water resources
- 2) Helping the neighboring communities develop their own sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure and services

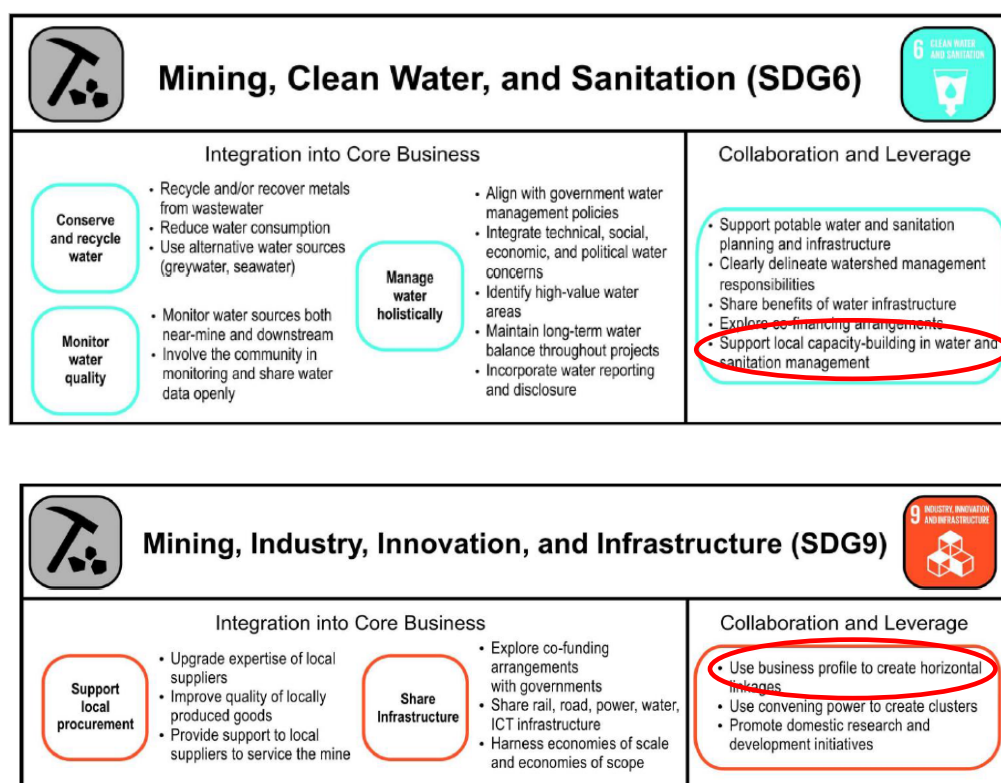
The same goes for [SDG 9](#) – *Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation*.

- 1) Developing supply chains and infrastructure needed to support mining operation
- 2) Helping the neighboring communities develop their own sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure and services



The activities on the left in Figure 5 below, *Integration into Core Business*, is what compliance with the SDGs looks like when seen through the lens of the core business only. The right side, *Collaboration and Leverage*, is where the surrounding communities can benefit. These collaborative community activities also can be classified as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) but in a much more meaningful and impactful way than traditional CSR activities of just “giving away” profits to a charity. In this specific case, needed water and sanitation infrastructure and sustainable service delivery can be accelerated when the mining company partners with a local nonprofit organization and the local mayor(s). Together they can help develop the infrastructure while also creating or improving the service authority to ensure long-term operations and maintenance of the infrastructure for generations to come. This is a true partnership that is aligned with the core business – mining (that is water intensive) – and matched with a community that needs basic water service. A true “win-win” for all stakeholders.

[Water For People](#) has many positive examples of these types of partnerships. We have extensive experience working with corporate partners around the world that really believe in, and can see, the impact of their financial contributions to support local capacity building in water and sanitation. This innovative approach and direct connection to SDG 6 also positively supports the horizontal linkages of mining companies to local communities, which is a link to SDG 9.



Source: United Nations: [http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mapping\\_Mining\\_SDGs\\_An\\_Atlas.pdf](http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mapping_Mining_SDGs_An_Atlas.pdf)

**Figure 5: Mining and SDGs 6 and 11 – SDG Compliance and Social Impact Beyond Compliance**

## CSR CASE STUDY – VALE

The case study of Vale's S11D iron ore mine in the municipality of Canaã dos Carajás, Pará, Brazil, is a good example of a CSR program that specifically highlights SDG 6 and SDG 9. S11D is the biggest iron ore mine in the world and is expected to reach 80% of capacity ([90 million metric tons](#)) by 2018. Vale has been using S11D as an opportunity to highlight advancement of the 2030 SDG agenda. The integration of the SDGs at the project and municipal level in Canaã dos Carajás is an excellent example of how the SDGs can be customized into a unique and local context. Activities related to SDG 6 and SDG 9 are highlighted with the red circles below.



Source: SDG Business Hub: <http://sdghub.com/realizing-the-potential-for-sdg-impacts-at-a-sectoral-global-and-local-level/>

**Figure 6: Vale's Approach to Achieving the SDGs at the S11D Mine and in the Municipality Canaã dos Carajás**

Along with the development of the mine, [the municipal population of Canaã dos Carajás grew 144%](#) between 2000 and 2010. This growth has resulted in significant socio-economic challenges. Here are some photographs to gain an understanding of the scale of the mine.



Source: <http://observatoriodaimprensa.com.br/jornalismo-local/vale-e-minerio-dominam-economia-mas-cobertura-e-esparsa-e-burocratica/>

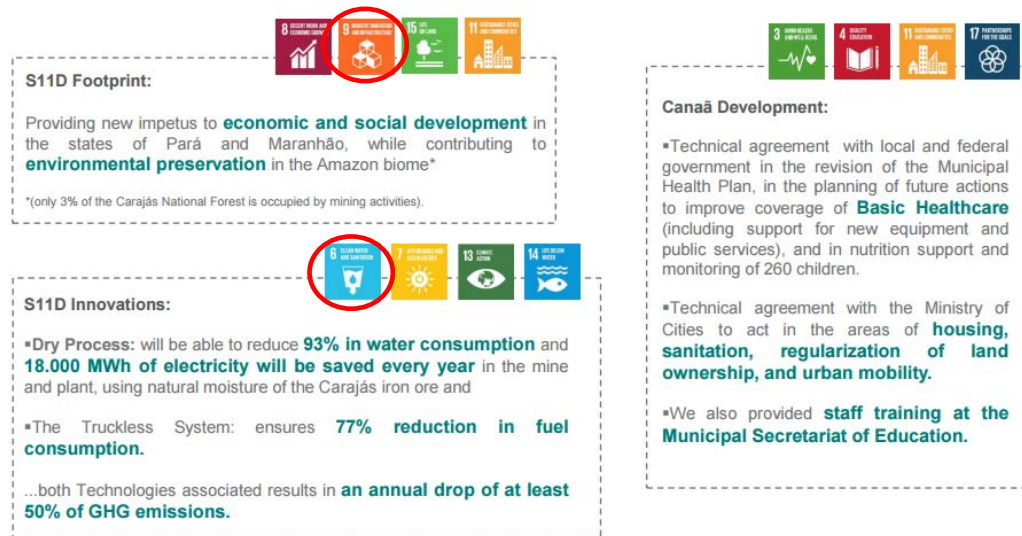


Source: <http://www.mining.com/vale-readies-iron-ore-price-war/>

**Figure 7: Photos of the Carajás Iron Ore Project (S11D)**

Vale's is a major contributor to the local socioeconomic development. Vale works with local authorities, civil society and national institutions. [More than 30 projects](#) have been completed or are underway with the municipality of Canaã dos Carajás and nonprofit civil society institutions. When looking specifically at SDG 6 and SDG 9, the S11D project has spurred a significant increase in the development of the local economy and accompanying infrastructure. This includes [increasing water demand as well as water and sanitation services](#) to the growing population and supporting infrastructure expansion with the local water and sewer authority, [Serviço Autônomo de Água e Esgoto \(Saae\) de Canaã dos Carajás](#). In the mine itself, water use was reduced dramatically (93%) by using a dry process (no slurry) instead of a wet process. Also, local water resources are protected from mine wastewater contamination by suing on-site wastewater treatment facilities prior to effluent discharge to local waterways. See the highlights in the figure below, with the red circles.





Source: SDG Business Hub: <http://sdghub.com/realizing-the-potential-for-sdg-impacts-at-a-sectoral-global-and-local-level/>

**Figure 7: Innovations aligned with the SDGs at the S11D Mine and in the Municipality Canaã dos Carajás**

## FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE CHANGING FACE OF CSR WITH THE SDGS

Business around the world are now looking at their CSR strategies to see how they can be enhanced to achieve even greater impact to the environment while also complying with the SDGs. I like the way that [Mr. Christophe Yvetot](#), the Head of The United Nations Industrial Development Organization ([UNIDO](#)) Liaison Office to the European Union described this new movement:

“SDGs are about achieving development goals from an economic, social and environmental perspective. In this view, we can think about CSR as a way to implement these goals at the level of enterprises. It is essential to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries in utilizing CSR as a management tool to improve their competitiveness while complying with international standards and norms.”

The main change here is that CSR and sustainability reporting will shift from trying to demonstrate that a company is not doing negative things to the environment to how the company is positively impacting the environment and community. The time is right for the corporate world to make this shift. The SDGs present incentives that guide and encourage companies to go above and beyond traditional programs to enhance social and economic contributions with local civil society, businesses and government partners.

The world has a fighting chance to achieve the SDGs by the target year of 2030. To do so we will need enhanced participation from the private sector; all hands on deck. Since the mining sector has a global reach, mining can lead the way for other industries. Coupled with a focus on basic services such as water, sanitation and community infrastructure development, this is a sure win for high impact for both industry and the local community.

## REFERENCES

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