

# Build a better future with the Sustainable Development Goals

A practical guide for construction and property companies



## About Bioregional

Bioregional works with partners to create better places for people to live, work and do business. We spent years lobbying at the United Nations for the creation of the SDGs, and were the NGO Global Focal Point for the successful efforts to make sure that the critical issue of sustainable consumption and production was properly recognised in the SDGs. We continue in this role, which is now focused on implementing SDG12 on Responsible Consumption and Production.

We also co-founded and now co-chair a growing initiative called the UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development. This is a cross-sector network set up to drive the implementation of the SDGs in the UK.

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“For companies in the built environment, the SDGs bring together the urgent issue of tackling carbon emissions with industry goals – like bringing more women into the sector, or consumer requirements for places that enable healthy lifestyles. They show all of us what true sustainable development looks like, all wrapped up in an attractive multi-colour framework. Let’s use them to build a better future together.”

**Sue Riddlestone, OBE**

Chief Executive and Co-Founder of Bioregional

## About this guide

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agreed by world governments in September 2015, are the first global blueprint for tackling climate change, reducing poverty and inequality and creating a better future for all of us.

But at Bioregional we realised that many companies working in the built environment either hadn't heard of the SDGs, or are struggling to get to grips with them.

So we decided to help.

### **Part One:** **Getting to grips with the SDGs**

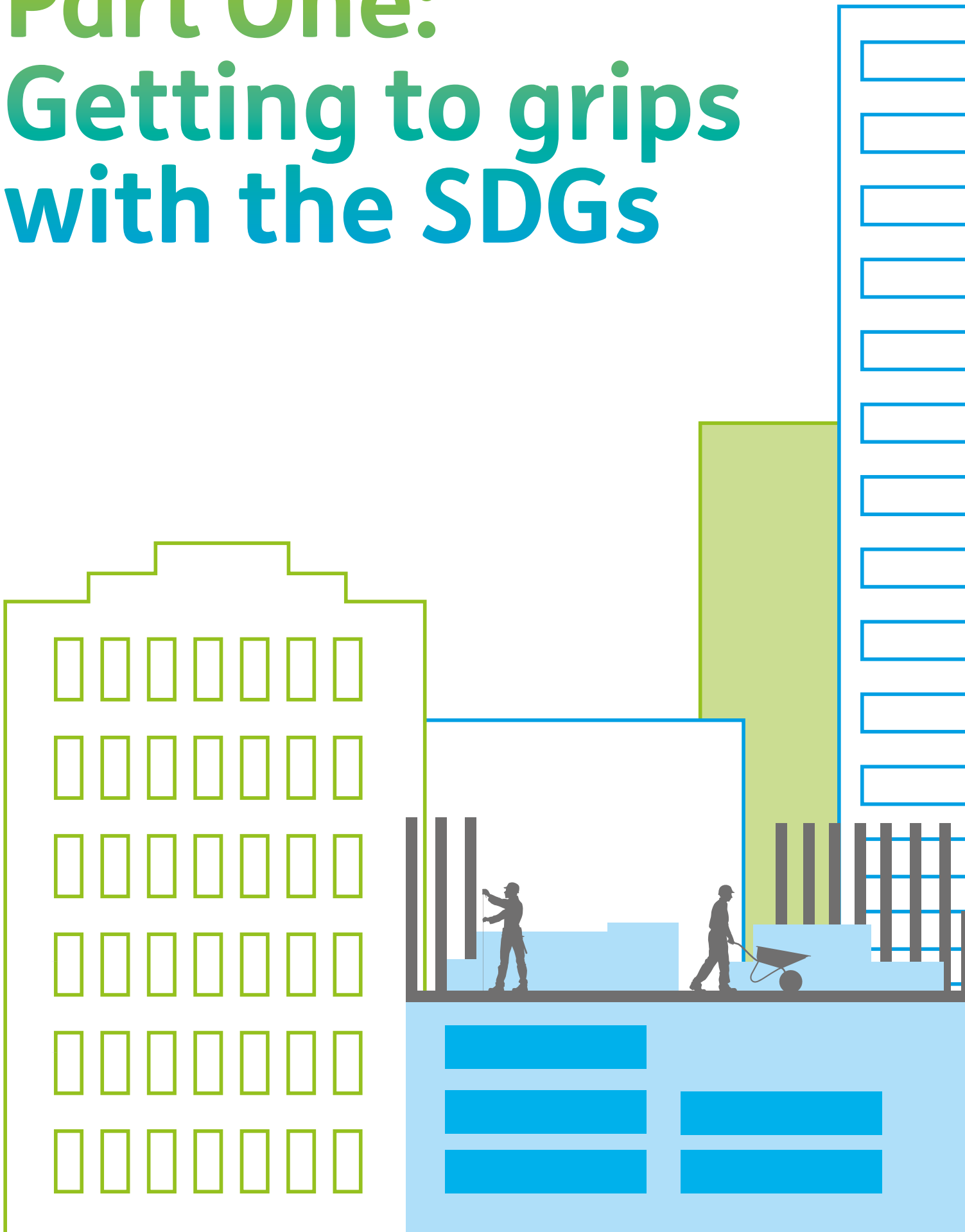
explains why the SDGs matter so much, explores the links between the SDGs and buildings, and offers some practical tips on how to get started in using them.

### **Part Two:** **Mapping goals, targets and responses**

sets out potential responses to the 56 SDG targets that can be most clearly linked to the construction and property sector.

This guide will be most relevant for anyone involved in designing, developing, constructing and managing homes, schools, offices, retail and other buildings. But the approach we suggest on page 11 for getting started on the SDGs will work just as well for other sectors.

# Part One: Getting to grips with the SDGs



# A blueprint for a better world

In September 2015, governments across the world agreed to an audacious plan. A plan to transform our world into one where people everywhere can have a decent life, prosperity is shared and our planet is protected.

That plan was called the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations had spent several years negotiating it, ending up with 17 Goals and 169 targets, all meant to be achieved by 2030.

These SDGs are wide ranging and universal, covering emerging and developing countries as well as developed nations like the UK. And while they are aimed largely at governments, achieving them requires all of us – including businesses and civil society – to act.

Because the construction and property sector builds tomorrow's world, it will play a critical role in determining whether we can achieve them.

Why? Construction and property build the places where people live and work, the infrastructure for supplying them with energy and water and the transport systems which move people, products and raw materials between them.

Construction has huge social, economic and environmental impacts during the design and build process. The property sector is responsible for important decisions on how to operate, maintain and reconfigure buildings.

Together, they create buildings, infrastructure and places that can last for hundreds of years, and a built environment that shapes all of our lives.

## The Sustainable Development Goals



## The impact of property and construction

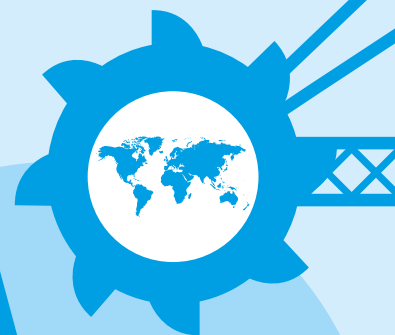
The construction sector contributes £138bn per annum to the UK economy and employs around 9% of the total workforce.<sup>1</sup>



**£138bn**

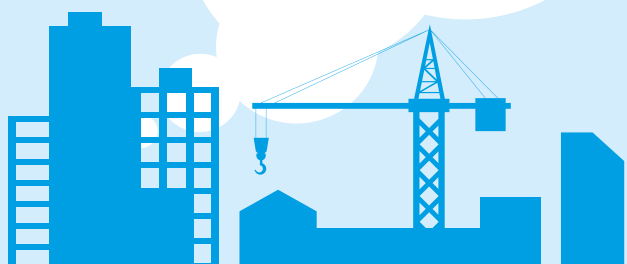
46% of all the raw materials extracted in the world are used for the supply of products and materials to the construction and buildings maintenance industry.<sup>3</sup>

**46%**



Buildings and construction account for nearly 40% of energy-related global CO2 emissions – around 12.5bn tonnes.<sup>2</sup>

**40%**



In the UK, the construction sector uses some 60% of all the sawn softwood consumed. This is equivalent to a forest of 170 square km, an area larger than Manchester, each year.<sup>4</sup>

**170 km<sup>2</sup>**



In the UK, 13% of people employed in the sector are women.<sup>5</sup>

**13%**



# Why the SDGs matter so much

Sustainable development is the concept, first set out more than 30 years ago, which connects planetary and environmental protection, prosperity and social justice. Now, looking just a dozen years into the future, the SDGs set out in detail what a sustainable world looks like.

The SDGs are a comprehensive agenda for sustainable development. And helping to achieve them doesn't just make sense for the planet – it makes good business sense too.

## You can use the SDGs as a framework to:

- **Check you're doing the right thing**  
– and where the gaps might be. Review and reaffirm what matters most to your company and its stakeholders.
- **Anticipate regulatory change**  
Stay ahead of policy interventions designed to drive the achievement of the SDGs.
- **Show leadership**  
Scrutiny by governments, investors and civil society of how companies across all sectors are addressing the SDGs is only going to increase. Get ahead of the game and show your leadership, demonstrating shared values and purpose and using a common language with your stakeholders.
- **Future-proof your business**  
The SDGs framework can help you identify and address risks. Investors across Europe and North America are already exploring using

## Building a business case – some quick facts

**US\$12 trillion**

A recent study revealed that pursuing sustainable and inclusive business models could unlock economic opportunities worth at least US\$12 trillion a year by 2030.<sup>6</sup>

**87% of CEOs**

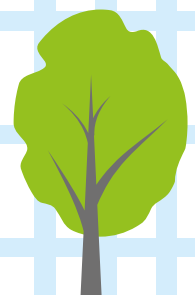
interviewed in a recent survey by PwC said that the SDGs provide an opportunity to rethink approaches to sustainable value creation.<sup>7</sup>

**80% of CEOs**

believe that demonstrating a commitment to societal purpose is a differentiator in their industry.<sup>8</sup>

the SDGs as a risk management tool and as a common language around environmental, social and governance risks.

- **Improve your customer offer to drive business growth**  
From early design concepts, through the supply of materials, architectural techniques, building operations and energy efficiency, companies can use the SDGs to create better solutions – which in turn can drive growth.



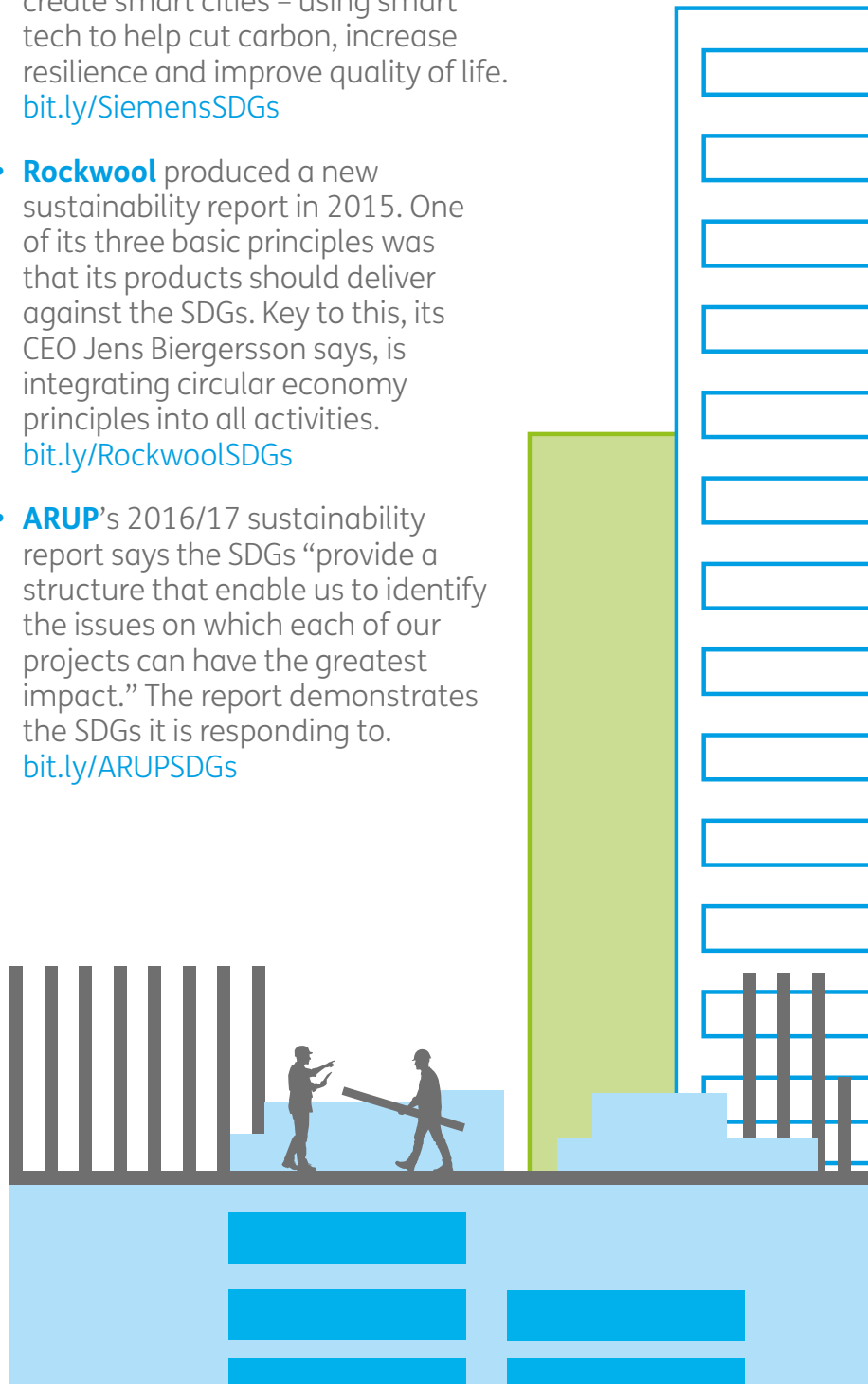
## How is the sector performing?

With some notable exceptions, the uptake of the SDGs has been relatively slow so far in the built environment sector

Business interest in the SDGs has been high since their launch in September 2015, with the retail sector probably furthest ahead. Most CEOs in the business community have now heard of them – and according to one study, 71% of CEOs have started to plan how they will respond to them<sup>9</sup>. For some companies, the SDGs have become central to their sustainability discussion.

Despite relatively slow uptake of the SDGs across the sector as a whole, some built environment companies are starting to seriously engage with them:

- **Ramboll** incorporated the SDGs in the development of its 2017–20 group strategy ‘Winning Together’. Read more: [bit.ly/RambollSDGs](http://bit.ly/RambollSDGs)
- **Cundall** has reviewed the SDGs and mapped its business impact against them as part of a major review of its long-term sustainability goals. The review included asking staff and key clients what they thought its future priorities should be. [bit.ly/CundallSDGs](http://bit.ly/CundallSDGs)
- **BAM Construct UK** has assessed its sustainability strategy against the SDGs, mapping current and future activities against six of the Goals where it decided it could have most impact. [bit.ly/BAMSDGs](http://bit.ly/BAMSDGs)
- **Siemens** has made Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities central to its sustainability strategies. It focuses on helping create smart cities – using smart tech to help cut carbon, increase resilience and improve quality of life. [bit.ly/SiemensSDGs](http://bit.ly/SiemensSDGs)
- **Rockwool** produced a new sustainability report in 2015. One of its three basic principles was that its products should deliver against the SDGs. Key to this, its CEO Jens Biergersson says, is integrating circular economy principles into all activities. [bit.ly/RockwoolSDGs](http://bit.ly/RockwoolSDGs)
- **ARUP**’s 2016/17 sustainability report says the SDGs “provide a structure that enable us to identify the issues on which each of our projects can have the greatest impact.” The report demonstrates the SDGs it is responding to. [bit.ly/ARUPSDGs](http://bit.ly/ARUPSDGs)





# Approaching the goals and targets

Hopefully by now we've convinced you that the SDGs matter to your business. But of all the 17 Goals and 169 targets, which might be most important for you?

Because most people live in towns and cities, and because the built environment has such a strong influence on society, economy and environment, it is possible to make some connection between the construction and property sector and every one of the 17 SDGs.

Some of these goals are obviously linked to this sector, none of them

more so than Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities. Others, such as Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy, and Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, stand out too.

The World Green Building Council lists nine goals whose achievement green buildings can, and have, been contributing to in a significant way:



Clearly, with such a long and comprehensive set of targets the temptation is to prioritise, and selecting a smaller set of goals to focus on is one way of doing that. But it's not the only way.

### The targets are just as important as the goals.

Each SDG has several associated targets, with 169 of them in total. These targets provide richer information on what each goal is really about. In Part Two we list the 56 individual targets that we consider to be the most important for companies in this sector.

### The goals were intended to be treated as elements of a whole system.

Although it's fine to start by picking a smaller set of goals (or targets) to focus on, they are all linked. Action on one goal can help achieve a whole set of other goals, and vice versa. These chances of achieving them will be undermined if the linkages are not recognised.

### Different types of businesses have different impacts.

Goals and targets that are most important for, say, a developer, will differ to those for an architecture firm, or an engineering firm.

For example, if you work for an architecture or design firm you are unlikely to have major supply chain risks, or employ large numbers of temporary labourers. But your advice to your clients on what materials they use could be critical to shaping places where people can live and work with minimal impact on the planet.

You can also make a positive choice to work with partners that have similar values.

### It also depends which bits of your operations you're looking at and where they are located.

We suggest differentiating between:

- **Upstream impacts** – materials, products and services procurement
- **Internal impacts** – maintenance and management of your own workplaces and practices, be it a building site or an office
- **Downstream impacts** – for example, influence on behaviours and users of buildings by occupants and visitors

Take Goal 5 – Gender Equality. Let's say you're a property manager. Clearly you're unlikely to have a significant upstream impact, because all the materials that went into constructing your building have already been selected and purchased. But you could have a big impact on improving gender diversity in your own operations, for example through ensuring gender pay equality and having working policies and culture that are family-friendly for male and female employees, and so on.

PwC's interactive SDG Selector helps companies prioritise relevant SDGs. The tool allows selection of relevant SDG-related information in several different areas, including industry, country and theme.

[dm.pwc.com/SDGSelector](https://dm.pwc.com/SDGSelector)



# Taking action

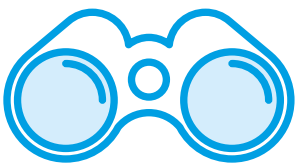
So it's time to get started. Rest assured – you've probably already begun to address the SDG challenge without being aware of it.

## 1

### Do some exploring

Do some reading around. Take a good look at the goals and targets, and look at leading practice – what are other companies doing? Many companies within and outside the built environment sector are already developing strategies to help make progress in achieving the SDGs.

Come up with your own view about how important they are for your business. We believe they will dominate discourse and debate about sustainability in the coming decade, both in the UK and globally.



#### BREEAM standards and the SDGs

The Building Research Establishment (BRE) plans to evolve the BREEAM family of standards and tools to enable significant contributions towards meeting the SDGs. It has produced a graphic showing how they currently support each of the 17 SDGs:

[bit.ly/BREEMSDGs](https://bit.ly/BREEMSDGs)

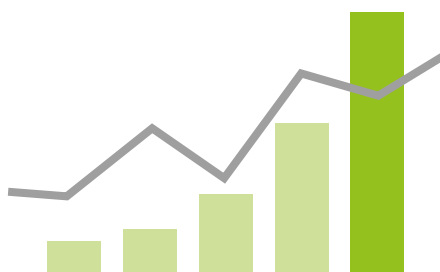
## 2

### Establish your business case

Develop a robust business case that emphasises the risks and the opportunities of the SDGs. You could use some of the facts and arguments we set out on page 7. Think about where the growth areas might be for your business – for example, durable and modular buildings, smart metering, or the expansion of renewable energy or resource recovery. Look at the opportunities for new and improved business offers.

Explore possible future trends and scenarios that could impact on your business – for example, the built environment sector is likely to become more low-carbon, smart, circular, and dense. That reflects wider trends including climate change, resource scarcity, changing consumer preferences and lifestyles.

More stringent environmental legislation is likely too – including legislation that directly links to making progress on the SDGs.



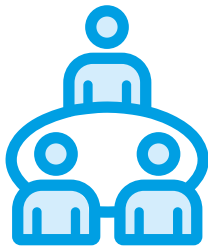
# 3

## Get internal buy-in

As is the case with all new initiatives, it's important to get senior management buy-in. When you communicate with leaders within your company, create a vision and a sense of common purpose, underpinned by a clear business case.

Once senior management is on board, consultations and workshops with middle management and other staff are a great way to engage around the goals and obtain feedback.

As part of this process, you'll want to spread understanding of the SDGs around your business. Tell staff what they are, why they were drawn up and why they matter to your organisation. Ask for their thoughts on how to respond to the goals.



- Sustainability reporting frameworks you already use
- 'Materiality assessments' you have already carried out – where you've asked stakeholders to help you prioritise the most important social, environmental and governance issues for your business
- Ways in which your business might already support clients or suppliers to achieve the SDGs.



Look at gaps too. Looking at the SDGs and their associated targets and indicators, are there any important areas that you are not addressing or where you are not currently tracking progress? Or are any of your business activities having unintended consequences in some areas?

Document your findings, as this information will be useful later on.

# 4

## Do a gap analysis

Analyse your existing approach to sustainability, or your CSR strategy if you have one, against the goals and targets.

Don't forget to include in your review any:

- Existing CSR or staff engagement initiatives that are helping meet any of the goals and targets

### Case study

Ramboll has identified Goals 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 as the focus areas for projects and services. For example, in a project in Hans Tavsens Park<sup>10</sup>, Copenhagen, it is helping address climate change and ensuring liveable and resilient cities – both key aspects of Goals 6, 11 and 13.

It has identified its internal operations as having greatest impact on Goals 5, 7, 8, 13 and 16. It has linked its aspiration to achieve 'zero harm' to Goal 8: to ensure decent work for all, including safe and secure working environments.

# 5

## Identify your priority SDGs – and priority targets

All of the SDGs are important, but not every business can support every goal and target. Taking time to understand which goals and targets you are best able to support will help you focus. For the greatest impact, choose goals that relate to your business – for example, Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities will be relevant across most of your operations and services.

You could also consider

- Looking at where you think the biggest negative impacts of your operations might be – and where are the biggest opportunities to help make progress.
- Taking a location-based approach. You'll likely have different impacts in different markets.
- Asking stakeholders – clients, partners, employees, suppliers etc – what's important to them.
- Reviewing the SDGs against your brand values.

Although there are benefits to taking a very structured approach to choosing your goals and targets, don't discount using your intuition. It may be obvious which are most appropriate for you to prioritise.

Once you've chosen your priority SDG goals and targets, decide:

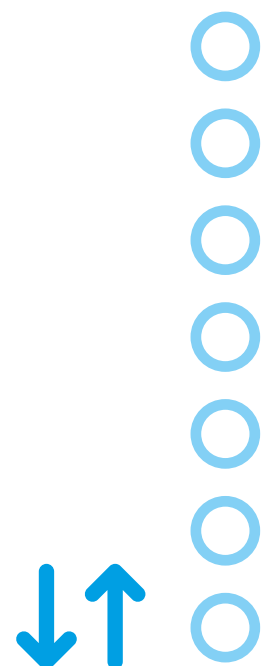
- **What you want to achieve.**  
What's the scale of your ambition? Where could you lead and where might you simply want to make sure that you are acting as a responsible business?
- **What indicators** you might use to measure progress. You may already have some useful corporate key performance indicators (KPIs) and you may need to put in place some new ones.
- **How you're going to report** on progress. Where possible, make sure this slots into any existing reporting systems.

### CRH – aligning sustainability focus areas with specific SDGs

Building materials group CRH focuses on three key aspects of sustainability: supporting the transformation towards a sustainable built environment; reducing the impacts of climate change – why concrete is part of the solution; and creating value for local communities. In 2016 it identified the SDGs that aligned with these focus areas:

- Supporting the transformation towards a sustainable built environment: SDGs 9, 11 and 12
- Reducing the impacts of climate change, including making the case for concrete: SDGs 11, 12 and 13
- Creating value for local communities: SDG 11.

Read more: [bit.ly/CRHSDGs](https://bit.ly/CRHSDGs)





# 6

## Create a roadmap

It's unlikely you'll be able to make big changes immediately. Creating a roadmap with short-term, medium- and long-term objectives can help you take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the SDGs in a realistic amount of time.

For example, in the short term you could focus on the goals you see as being essential to support – for example, planning for Climate Action (Goal 13), or Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities. But in the medium term, you could look at which other goals you should work towards.

In the medium or long term, you might also want to reframe your existing strategy, or write a new one, and organise it around the goals and targets that you have decided are most important to you. You may decide to introduce some new policies and structures. And you may also choose new **indicators** (see 'The art of the Indicator' on page 15) to help you measure progress.

Collaboration is key – so think about exploring partnerships between your company or other businesses and organisations within and outside your sector.



## UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development

Launched in 2016, the UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD) is a cross-sector network of more than 80 partner organisations committed to working together to progress sustainable development and deliver the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the UK. Bioregional is on the Steering Group and is hosting its co-chair and Network Director.

[ukssd.co.uk](http://ukssd.co.uk)

# 7

## Communicate and embed your plan

Depending on the level of your ambition, make sure you obtain the leadership and operational capacity required to implement it. Embed the SDGs across relevant internal processes, including communications, and confirm roles and responsibilities.

Once you've decided how to respond to the SDGs, tell your clients, suppliers, regulators and peers/competitors what you are doing and invite them to join you on the journey. If the SDGs are going to achieve their ambitious aim – a great leap forward for sustainable development – then as many people and organisations as possible need to get behind them.



# The art of the indicator

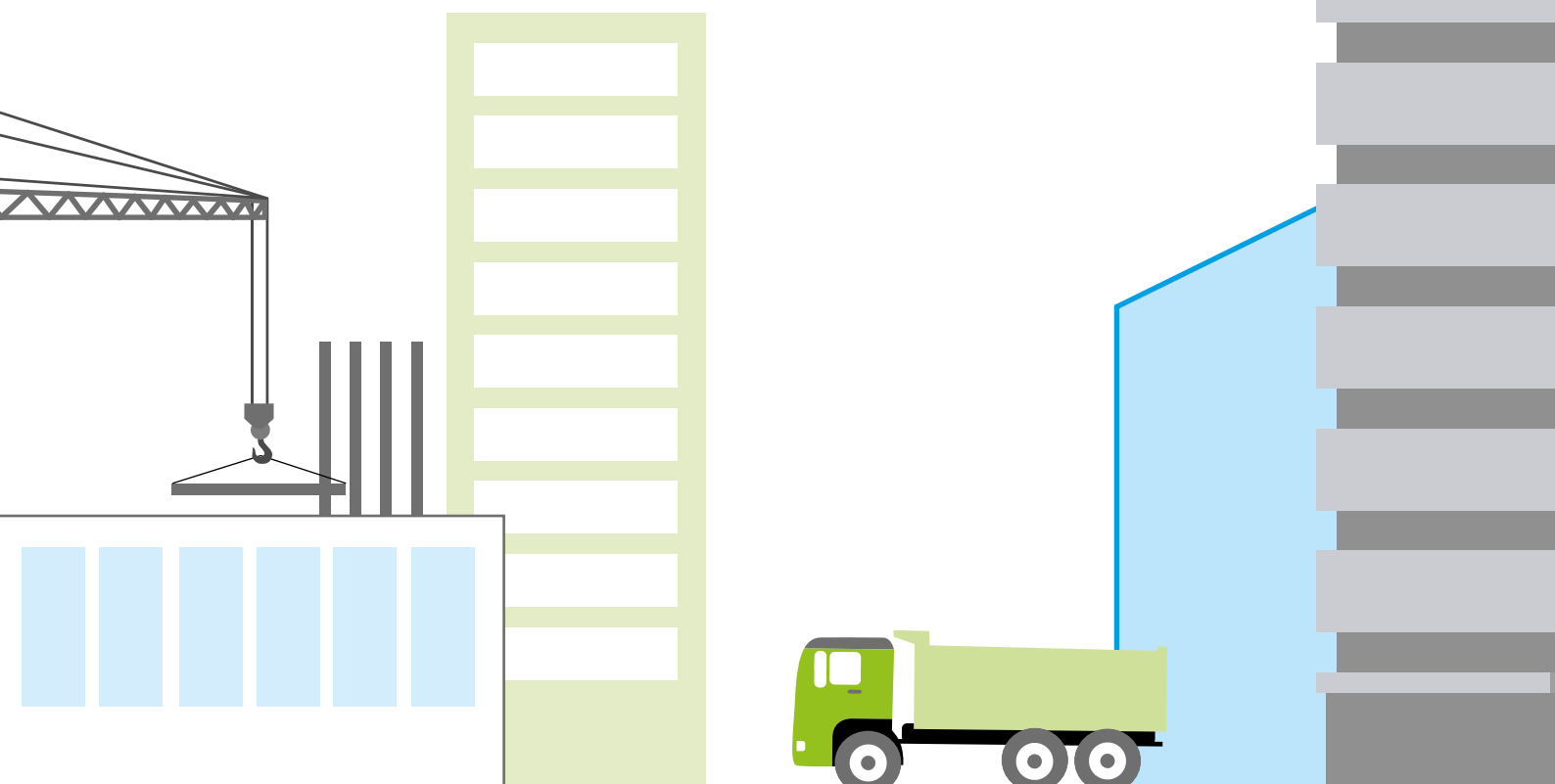
So you've selected your priority goals and targets - how do you measure progress?

The UN has suggested more than 300 different indicators – or metrics – to measure progress on the 169 SDG targets. You can find them at [unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database).

Many of these are relevant for entire countries, but some of them could also be useful for individual businesses. Because many companies use existing reporting frameworks (such as the Global Reporting Initiative), the UN, Global Compact, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WCSN) have jointly created the SDG Compass ([sdgcompass.org/business-indicators](https://sdgcompass.org/business-indicators)) to help businesses select relevant indicators for measuring progress against the SDGs. The SDG Compass includes many indicators that are already proposed through existing reporting frameworks.

In choosing any indicator, the first and most important question is: Is it meaningful – can it illustrate genuine progress towards a target or goal? Ideally your organisation is already collecting the data needed to create its potential indicators. If it isn't, the important questions are – can we collect this data affordably, accurately and sufficiently frequent? At the very least, you'll need to be able to gather it once every five years; once a year is preferable.

Let's take Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities as an example. Our analysis identified six targets which were most relevant for the sector, and proposed six responses. Here we suggest nine potential indicators for a development project.



## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



# Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Target	Bioregional's proposed response	Potential indicator/metric
<b>11.1</b> Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	Create places that provide affordable housing, including for households on low incomes, and foster social inclusion	% of new homes that are low cost/ subsidised or 'affordable' using nationally accepted definitions
<b>11.2</b> Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	Build developments that encourage cycling, walking and use of public transport	Set target for % of journeys from/to the development that are by cycling, walking and public transport, then use post-occupancy travel surveys to measure outcomes
<b>11.3</b> Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries	Engage with and consult local communities when planning a new development, using this to improve it and respond to local culture and heritage	Number of members of the public attending consultation meetings/ events  Number of written responses from the public collected at meetings/online/by post
<b>11.4</b> Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage	Use development to create or enhance green spaces, habitats and biodiversity for wildlife and for people	Baseline ecological/biodiversity surveys, followed by post-completion surveys  % of development which is greenspace, designated mainly for wildlife habitat, for people, or both
<b>11.6</b> Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management	Create places that reduce the burden of air pollution and minimise waste production	Post-occupancy surveys of waste generation, recycling and composting
<b>11.7</b> Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	Use development to create or enhance green spaces, habitats and biodiversity for wildlife and for people	% of homes with gardens  Number of public, accessible green spaces within 400 metres of new homes, on and off site.



# Part Two: Mapping goals, targets and potential responses



We examined each of the 169 targets and have identified 56 of them where companies in the construction and property sector could help achieve the SDGs. We have also identified potential responses to address these targets.

**Note that:**

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- Many of the goals and targets are interrelated, and so in turn, individual actions may impact on more than one target, and more than one goal, and vice versa. We've highlighted this in a few places.
- We have divided potential responses into two: the first column concerns upstream and downstream operations, and the second column covers your own operations.
- This table is by no means definitive, but you could start by using it as a checklist to help you consider where your company could have most impact in implementing the SDGs.



## 1 NO POVERTY



# End poverty in all its forms everywhere

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

**1.2** By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Ensure that suppliers pay their workers a living wage
  - Provide affordable housing and/or support clients to do the same
- See also: Goal 11**

### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Pay a fair or living wage in all countries of operation
- Ensure that your community investment and corporate volunteering programmes support the poor and the vulnerable

## 2 ZERO HUNGER



# End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

**2.4** Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Avoid building on high-quality farmland
- Provide opportunities for community food growing, such as allotments, vegetable-growing planters, fruit trees and 'edible landscaping' on or adjacent to development sites

### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Develop and implement sustainable procurement practices for own premises/offices

### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



## Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

#### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

**3.4** By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing

**3.6** By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents

**3.9** Substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

#### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Provide safe, attractive pedestrian and cycling infrastructure
- Reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution by promoting and facilitating non-fossil fuel transport, prioritising zero combustion heating systems in urban environments
- Ensure that design and fit-outs promote wellbeing (eg through implementing the WELL standard)

#### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Implement workplace initiatives to enhance physical or mental wellbeing of employees
- Promote personal and professional development through training, study leave, sabbaticals and volunteering
- Promote a healthy work-life balance for staff, supported by flexible working arrangements
- Achieve a zero accident rate
- Pursue regular staff representation and engagement

## 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



# Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

**4.2** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

**4.3** Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

**4.4** Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

**4.5** Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

**4.7** Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

**4.8** A Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Build (or refurbish) to provide high-quality, inclusive schools, colleges and universities that are great to learn and teach in
- Build schools that showcase sustainable development

### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Provide lifelong learning, training and career progression opportunities for all employees
- Provide training opportunities for disadvantaged groups and communities
- Engage with schools, colleges and universities to help them provide you with recruits with sustainability skills and values
- Make all employees aware of sustainability and the SDGs, and your company's engagement with them. Encourage employee involvement
- Encourage employability through apprenticeship programmes
- Support quality education through community investment and corporate volunteering programmes

<div><div><div>5</div><div>GENDER EQUALITY</div><div></div></div><div>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</div></div>	
Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)	<div>5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere</div> <div>5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life</div>
Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage with suppliers on measures they can take to improve gender equality and monitor progress</li></ul>
Potential responses – internal business operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure gender pay equality</li><li>• Develop policies to increase the number of women working in areas/professions where they are under-represented, including senior management</li><li>• Support academic programmes that seek greater involvement of women and girls in STEM subjects</li><li>• Make work family-friendly through policies for parental leave, job sharing and part-time working</li><li>• Ensure that responsible office/premises sourcing policy includes gender-related elements</li></ul>

## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



# Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

**6.3** By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimising release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally

**6.4** Substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity

**6.5** Implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate

**6.6** By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Reduce water waste in construction and increase water reuse
- Build places that enable people to use water efficiently, especially in water-stressed catchments
- Create, or contribute to, sustainable urban drainage systems
- Seek opportunities to create, protect or restore freshwater habitats on or adjacent to development sites
- Take responsibility for ensuring duty of care for waste arising
- Carefully manage risks of pollution and spills onsite

### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Increase water efficiency in your offices and track progress over time, and set water use reduction targets
- Review water usage in procurement of office white goods

## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



### Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

#### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

- 7.2** Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix  
**7.3** Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

#### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Incorporate renewable energy power and heating systems into new and existing developments, and/or ensure they are supplied by renewable energy sources off-site
- Create and upgrade buildings and infrastructure to create places with high levels of energy efficiency
- Increase overall energy efficiency of transport of materials and logistics operations
- Source renewable energy during construction processes and operate sites in an energy efficient manner

#### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Monitor Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and carbon intensity and set ambitious targets for GHG emissions reduction based on the science of climate change
- Continuously increase energy efficiency in premises and offices
- Explore a shift towards renewable energy generation across all operations (eg through onsite or offsite installations or green energy contracts)
- Incentivise and communicate with employees to reduce their energy use in premises/office and at home



## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



# Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

- 8.2** Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- 8.3** Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
- 8.4** Improve progressively global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead
- 8.5** Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 8.6** By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
- 8.7** Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
- 8.8** Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
- 8.9** Devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Create places that include attractive, high-quality and diverse workplaces, which enable people to work from home and which help new businesses to be founded and to grow
- Build and refurbish developments that minimise resource consumption during construction and throughout their entire life cycle
- Have procurement and contracting policies that encourage supply from micro enterprises and SMEs
- Have procurement policies that require suppliers and contractors to maximise resource efficiency and sustainability
- Have procurement policies and procedures that require suppliers of products and services to protect labour rights, including freedom of association and no child or forced labour
- Enforce modern slavery policies in the supply of materials and services, paying particular attention to sub-contracted labour providers

### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Create employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups and communities
- Put work programmes in place that support the employment and training of young people in your business and that promote diversity
- Set targets to reduce waste and improve resource efficiency in premises and offices

## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



### Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

#### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

**9.1** Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all

**9.4** Upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities

#### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Build, refurbish and manage developments with energy, water, transport, digital, social and green infrastructure that is resilient to climate change and minimises resource consumption and environmental impacts
- Design and install resource-efficient systems
- Ensure that new infrastructure, or refurbishments of existing infrastructure, represents sustainable development and aligns with the SDGs
- Make logistics and transport of materials as sustainable as possible

#### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Ensure that employees have present-day qualifications that allow them to deliver their projects according to the highest sustainability standards and criteria

## 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



## Reduce inequality within and among countries

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

**10.1** Progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average

**10.2** Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

**10.3** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Ensure overseas suppliers in relevant industries meet minimum standards for employee wellbeing, health, safety and fair pay.
- Ensure that suppliers' employees receive a recognised living wage

### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Pay all employees a recognised living wage
- Monitor the range between lowest, highest and median salaries and set limits, eg a pay ratio between the lowest and highest earners
- Implement policies to recruit and retain staff from diverse groups and communities
- Develop and implement a progressive diversity policy encompassing gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age and disability and promote a culture of inclusion across the business

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



### Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

#### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

- 11.1** Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
- 11.2** Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
- 11.3** Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
- 11.4** Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
- 11.5** By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
- 11.6** Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
- 11.7** Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

#### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Create places that provide affordable housing, including for households on low incomes, and foster social inclusion
- Build developments that encourage cycling, walking and use of public transport
- Engage with and consult local communities when planning a new development, using this to improve it and respond to local culture and heritage
- Use development to create or enhance accessible, safe and green spaces, habitats and biodiversity for people and wildlife
- Create places which reduce air pollution and minimise waste production

#### See also: Goal 9

#### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Develop and implement a waste reduction policy in premises and offices
- Develop and implement a sustainable travel policy for staff and encourage home working
- Dedicate corporate donations and volunteering to supporting sustainable urban communities
- Strive to achieve a zero accident rate from on-the-job road accidents for staff
- Ensure that staff benefit from excellent indoor air quality

## 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



# Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

- 12.1** Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries
- 12.2** Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- 12.4** By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts
- 12.5** Substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse
- 12.6** Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle
- 12.8** Ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Use construction techniques and building materials that minimise waste production and resource consumption
- Design resource-efficient homes and workspaces that encourage and enable people to reduce, recycle and reuse waste materials, including appropriate facilities to support recycling and reuse
- Reduce GHG emissions and other environmental impacts
- Educate and communicate with the people who live and work in your developments about sustainability and the SDGs, and ensure that they know how to use them in ways that maximise their sustainability potential
- Collaborate and support local planning authorities and national government to maintain effective and sustainable planning and policy making
- Explore opportunities in areas such as SMART cities, The Internet Of Things and open data
- Encourage and facilitate sustainable consumption and production practices among building occupants

### See also: Goal 9

### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Deepen company engagement with sustainable development and the SDGs, setting targets, developing indicators, creating policies and reporting regularly and transparently on progress
- Ensure that employees have best-in-class sustainability qualifications and adopt sustainable procurement policies

## 13 CLIMATE ACTION



### Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

#### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

#### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

#### Potential responses – internal business operations

**13.1** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

- Understand projected local and regional climate change impacts, and create places which are resilient to weather extremes – heatwaves, intense rainfall and flooding, drought
- Avoid developments that weaken resilience such as building on floodplains.

**See also: Goal 7**

- Creating climate resilient buildings that can passively respond to emerging trends in changing weather patterns, without increasing demand for active heating or cooling

## 14 LIFE BELOW WATER



### Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources

#### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

#### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

#### Potential responses – internal business operations

**14.1** By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

- Create places using sustainable materials, reducing water pollution and supporting biodiversity

- Reduce on-site plastic bottle use by providing tap water fountains

15 LIFE ON LAND



## Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

**15.1** By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

**15.2** By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

**15.5** Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Build developments that conserve or enhance biodiversity and habitats (on or off-site), avoid developing sites that are high in biodiversity, home to rare or endangered species or that represent threatened and rare habitat
- Source all timber from forests and plantations that are certified for sustainable management

### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Develop and implement sustainable procurement practices for own premises/offices

## 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



## Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

- 16.1** Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.2** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- 16.5** Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
- 16.7** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all times
- 16.10** Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Ensure ethical sourcing of materials, especially in locations where there is a high risk of forced and/or child labour
- Enforce provisions against modern slavery and corruption and promote anti-bribery and equal opportunities across all downstream and upstream operations

#### See also: Goal 6

### Potential responses – internal business operations

- Enforce provisions against modern slavery and corruption, and promote equal opportunities policies across business operations
- Develop and enforce a code of ethics
- Encourage transparent reporting, including sustainability information – and associated risks and opportunities

## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



## Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

### Selected targets for 2030 (or other year where stated)

- 17.17** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

### Potential responses – downstream and upstream operations

- Use partnerships with clients, suppliers, civil society, NGOs, government, peers and competitors to build support for, and awareness of, the SDGs. Extend this to overseas offices and suppliers if applicable.
- Join, or lead, initiatives supporting construction and property sector engagement with the SDGs
- Work with government to continue to ensure that sustainable development is supported by policy, regulation and economic incentives

### Potential responses – internal business operations

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# Resources

## Introducing the SDGs

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UNDP Background to the Goals  
[bit.ly/introducingSDGs1](http://bit.ly/introducingSDGs1)

‘All you need to know about the Goals’ - The Guardian  
[bit.ly/introducingSDGs2](http://bit.ly/introducingSDGs2)

United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda:  
[bit.ly/introducingSDGs3](http://bit.ly/introducingSDGs3)

## Practical tools for business

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SDG Compass – The guide for business action on the SDGs  
[bit.ly/practicaltoolsSDGs1](http://bit.ly/practicaltoolsSDGs1)

SDG Compass Business Tools  
[bit.ly/SDGCompassBusinessTools](http://bit.ly/SDGCompassBusinessTools)

PwC Business Guide: Navigating the SDGs  
[bit.ly/PwCSDGguide](http://bit.ly/PwCSDGguide)

Business reporting on the SDGs – an analysis of the goals and targets  
[bit.ly/practicaltoolsSDGs4](http://bit.ly/practicaltoolsSDGs4)

PwC’s interactive SDG Selector – a tool to help companies prioritise relevant SDGs  
[bit.ly/practicaltoolsSDGs5](http://bit.ly/practicaltoolsSDGs5)

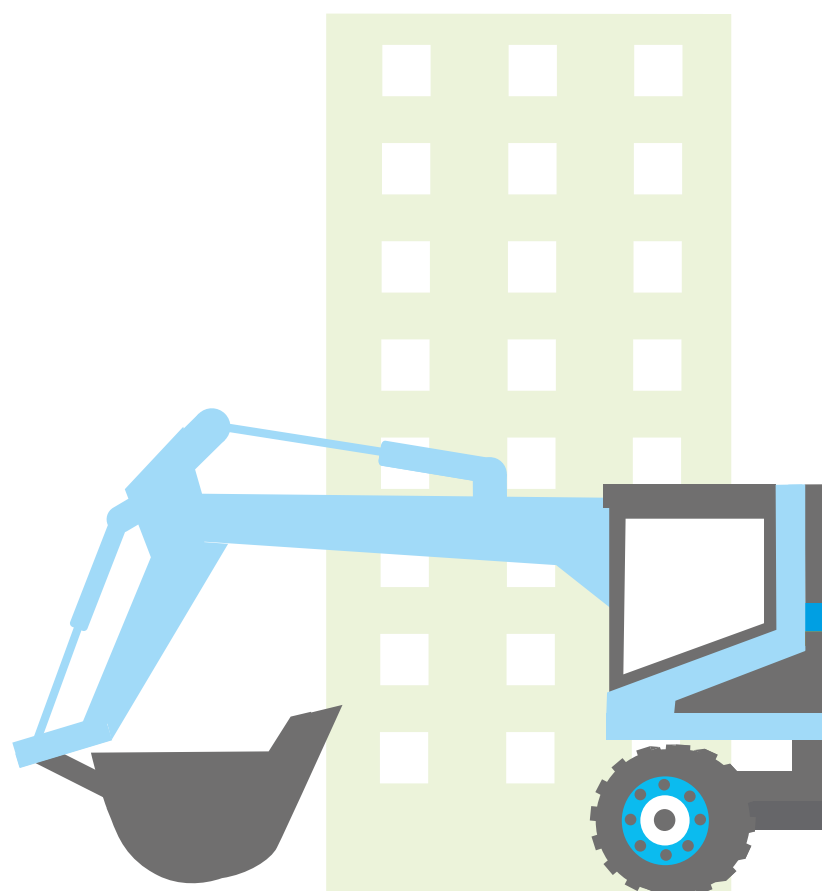
SDG industry matrix – industrial manufacturing:  
[bit.ly/practicaltoolsSDGs6](http://bit.ly/practicaltoolsSDGs6)

## Digging deeper

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Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership: ‘Towards a sustainable economy’  
[bit.ly/diggingdeeperSDGs1](http://bit.ly/diggingdeeperSDGs1)

Business and Sustainable Development Commission: ‘Better Business, Better World’  
[bit.ly/diggingdeeperSDGs2](http://bit.ly/diggingdeeperSDGs2)



## References

- 1 [gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-sector-deals/introduction-to-sector-deals](https://gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-sector-deals/introduction-to-sector-deals)
- 2 Over a quarter of that came from constructing new buildings, with the remainder coming from using existing buildings (including electricity consumption). International Energy Agency, Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, 2017. Global Status Report 2017.
- 3 [truthstudio.com/content/Material\\_Footprint\\_of\\_Global\\_Consumption.pdf](https://truthstudio.com/content/Material_Footprint_of_Global_Consumption.pdf)
- 4 Moore, N, Timbertrends, 2015. Timber Utilisation Statistics 2014 & 2015, Estimates for the Forestry Commission.
- 5 [constructionnews.co.uk/data/industry-barometer/women-in-construction-what-do-the-numbers-say/10017870.article](https://constructionnews.co.uk/data/industry-barometer/women-in-construction-what-do-the-numbers-say/10017870.article)
- 6 [unglobalcompact.org/docs/news\\_events/9.3/better-business-better-world.pdf](https://unglobalcompact.org/docs/news_events/9.3/better-business-better-world.pdf)
- 7 [accenture.com/gb-en/insight-un-global-compact-ceo-study](https://accenture.com/gb-en/insight-un-global-compact-ceo-study). This survey, which has been conducted annually over the past ten years, covers 1,000+ CEOs, in 100+ countries, and 25+ industries.
- 8 [pwc.com/gx/en/services/sustainability/sustainable-development-goals/sdg-reporting-challenge-2017.html](https://pwc.com/gx/en/services/sustainability/sustainable-development-goals/sdg-reporting-challenge-2017.html)
- 9 [pwc.com/gx/en/sustainability/SDG/SDG%20Research\\_FINAL.pdf](https://pwc.com/gx/en/sustainability/SDG/SDG%20Research_FINAL.pdf)
- 10 [archdaily.com/790331/masterplan-by-sla-and-saunders-aims-to-alleviate-flooding-in-copenhagen](https://archdaily.com/790331/masterplan-by-sla-and-saunders-aims-to-alleviate-flooding-in-copenhagen)

## Bioregional can help

We hope you found this brief guide helpful in getting your head around the SDGs.

We'd love to hear from you if you are considering using the SDGs, or are already using them – or if you've heard of another company within the construction and property sector that's doing some work in the area. We want to keep track of how the construction and property sector is taking the goals on board.

We can also advise you on how the goals relate to your business, and help you create – or reframe – a sustainability or CSR strategy that takes the SDGs into account.

## Contact



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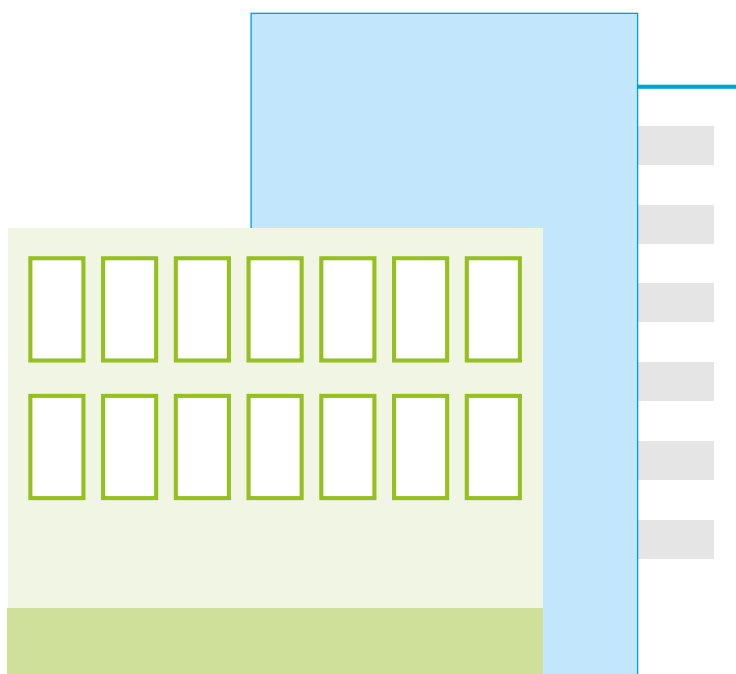
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