



FORWARD FASTER

SCALING THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT OF BUSINESS TOWARDS THE SDGs

To accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, the Forward Faster initiative of the United Nations Global Compact **challenges businesses to raise their ambition levels by taking tangible, accountable actions in five areas – living wage, gender equality, climate, water resilience and sustainable finance. These are the five areas where the business sector is best positioned to advance the 2030 Agenda and serve as critical levers to accelerate progress across all 17 SDGs.** Through a principles-based, holistic approach, companies have the opportunity to drive impact on the SDGs and advocate for policies to unlock new opportunities, build resilience and secure long-term prosperity for business, people and the planet.

A PRINCIPLES-BASED APPROACH TO THE SDGs

A principles-based approach is **vital for businesses to make their greatest contribution to sustainable development** and is, therefore, foundational to the Forward Faster initiative. Businesses must adopt a principles-based approach to the SDGs **by aligning their operations with the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact** and assessing their impact across human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Alignment with the Ten Principles **establishes a baseline of doing no harm and of business integrity** – including meeting fundamental responsibilities – **to ensure that companies do not undermine efforts towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** The Forward Faster initiative calls on companies to go beyond this baseline by making additional ambitious commitments.

ACCOUNTABLE COMPANIES

The Forward Faster initiative also aims to increase accountability by calling for companies to publicly declare their commitments and highlight the actions they will undertake to meet the targets. Companies committing to the targets will report on progress annually to the UN Global Compact (see the [Forward Faster Reporting Questionnaire](#) for the indicators) and provide updates on the actions they have taken.

AMBITIOUS BUSINESS TARGETS TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS

GENDER EQUALITY: The empowerment of women and girls is vital to enable progress towards all 17 SDGs, including through the eradication of poverty, climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity protection and sustainable economic growth.

Companies can commit to: (1) Equal pay for work of equal value by 2030. (2) Equal representation, participation and leadership across all levels of management by 2030.

CLIMATE ACTION: Addressing climate change is a fundamental precondition to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **A 1.5°C future is the only livable future for humanity.** To achieve this, we must halve global emissions by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050. At the same time, companies must ensure that their mitigation and adaptation measures **do not deepen inequalities** but contribute to climate justice through a just transition.

Companies can commit to: (1) Set corporate science-based net-zero emissions reductions targets through the Science Based Targets initiative, aligning action with a 1.5°C pathway with the goal of reaching net zero by 2050 at the latest. (2) Contribute to a just transition by taking concrete actions that address social impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, in partnership with actors such as workers, unions, communities and suppliers.

LIVING WAGE: Improving the lives of the most vulnerable among us – including those living in poverty – is an overarching theme across all of the SDGs. Working poverty is a reality worldwide. All workers should receive a wage that ensures them a decent standard of living.

Companies can commit to: (1) 100 per cent of employees across the organization earning a living wage by 2030. (2) Establish a joint action plan(s) with contractors, supply chain partners and other stakeholders to work towards achieving living wages and/or living incomes with measurable and time-bound milestones.

WATER RESILIENCE: The **global water crisis is one of the most urgent challenges of the 21st century, and resilient water systems are critical to the SDGs** – including through supporting food security, human health, biodiversity, gender equality and other priorities.

Companies can commit to: Build water resilience across global operations and supply chains and join hands to achieve collective positive water impact in at least 100 vulnerable prioritized water basins by 2030.

FINANCE & INVESTMENT: The UN has estimated that between **\$3 trillion and \$5 trillion will be needed annually** to meet the SDGs by 2030. **Shifting corporate capital towards these goals will be critical to closing existing financing gaps.**

Companies can commit to: (1) Align corporate investment – to the fullest extent possible – with SDG policies and strategies and set targets, track and report on the amount and proportion of such SDG investments. (2) Establish a corporate financing strategy that is linked to SDG investments and performance, and report on the amount and proportion of such SDG finance.

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1. Why were these five areas selected?

The five areas were identified by the UN Global Compact because they represent critical enablers across all 17 SDGs where the business sector is uniquely positioned to drive progress. In addition, the Forward Faster initiative is comprised of areas that lend themselves to corporate target-setting and that are already embedded in the UN Global Compact through our programming on Labour Rights and Decent Work, Gender (i.e., Target Gender Equality Accelerator), Climate (i.e., Climate Ambition Accelerator and the Science Based Targets initiative), Water Resilience (i.e. CEO Water Mandate and Water Resilience Coalition and finance (CFO Coalition for the SDGs).

2. Why public target setting?

Most companies recognize the importance of aligning their operations with the SDGs to ensure the long-term viability of their business. However, too many companies are making sustainability commitments without having a platform to publicize them to increase transparency or hold themselves accountable. The Forward Faster initiative mobilizes more credible, ambitious and measurable targets from companies that are reported on annually to increase transparency.

3. Does my company need to commit to all the targets to participate?

No, it doesn't. Companies can opt to commit to as few or as many of the business targets as they choose in order to participate in the Forward Faster initiative.

4. Does my company need to be a UN Global Compact participant to join?

Yes, to commit to the Forward Faster initiative, a company must be a UN Global Compact participant. Companies must be participants to access the annual reporting mechanism through the UN Global Compact Dashboard.

Further, the UN Global Compact strongly advocates for companies to adopt a principles-based approach to the SDGs to make their greatest contribution, and this is a foundation of the Forward Faster initiative. Alignment with the Ten Principles establishes a baseline of doing no harm and of business integrity — including meeting fundamental responsibilities such as eliminating forced labour, abolishing child labour and working against bribery — so that companies can ensure they do not undermine efforts towards the 2030 Agenda.

Subsidiaries of parent companies participating in the UN Global Compact are welcome to commit separately to one or more of the Forward Faster initiative targets provided they are also



UN Global Compact Participants in their own right. Learn more about the UN Global Compact subsidiary policy [here](#).

The targets under the Forward Faster initiative are intended for only companies to commit to; therefore, non-business participants of the UN Global Compact cannot sign on. Non-businesses can join the initiative as supporters on an invite-only basis.

5. How does my company submit its commitment?

Companies can commit to the Forward Faster initiative targets with the online form [here](#). Companies must submit their commitment through the [online form](#), even if they are already engaged in other UN Global Compact initiatives, such as Accelerators, Think Labs and Coalitions.

In order to submit the online commitment to the Forward Faster initiative, the company's primary representative will have to sign on to their UN Global Compact account. Only primary representatives (as designated by the 'contact point' role in their UN Global Compact account) may submit the commitment for their company.

You can find out who your company's contact point is by logging into the UN Global Compact Dashboard [here](#). You can update your contact points in the UN Global Compact Dashboard under the "Contacts" section or create a new contact point [here](#).

Is there a deadline?

There is no formal deadline for companies to sign on, as this initiative runs through 2030. However, companies are encouraged to begin taking action by joining the Forward Faster initiative as soon as possible. Companies also have the option to commit to different targets over time. Designated contact points can add additional targets at any time through the Participant Dashboard under the "Moving Forward Faster" tab by clicking on the "Edit Commitments" button.

6. If my company made a commitment through a different programme (i.e., an Accelerator), do I still need to commit through the Forward Faster initiative platform?

Yes, you do. With the exceptions of net-zero commitments made through the Science Based Targets initiative and water resilience commitments made through the CEO Water Mandate, all companies that have engaged in other UN Global Compact programming and wish to join the Forward Faster initiative must sign up through the platform to officially commit.



While we strongly encourage all our participating companies to join the Forward Faster initiative, companies are not required to do so.

7. What resources will be made available to companies that commit to a target?

Implementation guides are available for companies that commit to any of the targets. These guides include many tools and resources to support companies with incorporating best practices into their business to help them achieve the targets by 2030.

The UN Global Compact also has a dedicated Forward Faster Hub in the Academy platform. This is in addition to the array of engagement and learning opportunities available to companies at the UN Global Compact, including Accelerators, Coalitions, Peer Learning Groups and Think Labs.

8. Does my company need to sign up for the net-zero climate commitment through the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)?

Yes, it does. For Climate Action Target 1*, the Forward Faster initiative will accept both net-zero commitments and already validated science-based net-zero emissions reductions targets as long as the commitments/validations have been officially processed by the SBTi. Official SBTi commitments and already validated targets can be found on the SBTi Target Dashboard located on [their website](#).

Companies interested in Climate Action Target 1 can find more information on how to commit to net-zero and how to set a target [here](#).

The UN Global Compact is a founding partner of the SBTi. A net-zero commitment or validated target through the SBTi by a UN Global Compact participant will be noted on the company's profile and on the Forward Faster initiative webpage.

**Climate Action Target 1: Set corporate science-based net-zero emissions reductions targets in line with a 1.5°C pathway, with the goal of halving global emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero by 2050 at the latest*

9. Does my company need to be part of the CEO Water Mandate to sign on to the Water Resilience Target?



Yes, it does. Companies that wish to commit to Water Resilience Target 1 to “Build water resilience across global operations and supply chains and join hands to achieve collective positive water impact in at least 100 vulnerable prioritized water basins by 2030” will automatically join the CEO Water Mandate. The [CEO Water Mandate](#) is a partnership of the UN Global Compact and the Pacific Institute with extensive programming to support corporate water resilience.

10. Does my company need to be a part of the CFO Coalition for the SDGs to be committed to the Forward Faster initiative Finance & Investment targets?

Yes, companies that sign on to one or both of the Forward Faster initiative Finance & Investment targets will automatically be added as a Signatory of the CFO Coalition for the SDGs, the first UN initiative to mobilize CFOs and their corporations to align corporate finance and investments with the SDGs. Signatories to the Coalition help to create a broad community of CFOs and finance leaders committed to the SDGs and scale the impact of the CFO Coalition towards a thriving market for SDG-aligned investments. Signatories have access to local events, guidance and tools for implementing their finance targets. Coalition Signatories are not required to pay a Coalition fee or take on any reporting requirements beyond submitting annual responses to the relevant indicators through the Forward Faster questionnaire.

Interested companies are welcome to move up to the Advanced membership tier of the Coalition, which does incur an additional fee and requirement to submit an Annual Implementation Progress Report (AIPR), but grants companies access and speaking opportunities at exclusive global events and opportunities to exchange insights with peers, collaborate on innovative financial strategies, frameworks, and actionable recommendations to integrate the SDGs into corporate finance. More information is available on the [CFO Coalition for the SDGs webpage](#).

FORWARD FASTER REPORTING

11. When does my company have to report on progress made towards targets?

Companies have a one-year grace period to publicly report after signing on to the initiative. That means all companies that signed on to the Forward Faster initiative before 30 June of the previous calendar year must submit their public report as part of the following reporting period. The reporting period is open annually from 1 April to 31 July in alignment with the UN Global Compact Communication on Progress (CoP) timeline.



Companies who signed on after 30 June of the previous calendar year will still be required to submit a report, however, they will have the option to remain in private mode to allow more time to prepare for public reporting.

The one-year grace period is effective only from the date of the initial sign-on to the initiative. Companies who are beyond the one-year grace period will be required to publicly report on all existing targets they have set as of the end of the prior calendar year, even if they added additional targets in the second half of the year.

12. Who has to submit the Forward Faster report?

The report must be submitted by a contact point or the highest-level executive, in accordance with the Communication on Progress reporting policy. In preparation for the reporting period, please ensure that there is a designated contact point that is able to respond to the Forward Faster indicators, or that additional colleagues who need to report are given access to the UN Global Compact Dashboard. Refer to the [User's Guide](#) to learn how to request credentials.

13. How do companies report?

Forward Faster companies must submit their report through their [Participant Dashboard](#), under the "CoP and Forward Faster Reporting" tab. Participants will find the reporting indicators for the targets they have committed to once they open the reporting platform.

14. What if my company fails to report?

Companies that fail to report on the relevant indicators after the one-year grace period will have their commitment(s) removed from their public profile on the UN Global Compact website. While this 'withdrawn' status will not be indicated directly on a company's public profile, an annual list of withdrawn companies will be made available on the Forward Faster initiative webpage.

Companies that withdraw have the option to recommit to a target and have the commitment relisted on their company profile upon successful submission of the reporting requirement.

15. Where can I find which Forward Faster targets my company is committed to and the reporting indicators my company needs to report on?

Companies can find the targets they have committed to under the 'Moving Forward Faster' tab in their [Participant Dashboard](#) at any time. During the reporting period, the targets that



companies are required to report on will be automatically listed under the “CoP and Forward Faster Reporting” tab.

To review the indicators in advance of the reporting period, please reference the [Forward Faster Reporting Questionnaire](#).

16. How will the information my company submits in the reporting be made publicly available?

Submitted Forward Faster reports will be publicly accessible on companies’ UN Global Compact profile, similar to how previous Communication on Progress submissions are made available. However, for the WR1.2 indicator for Water Resilience Target 1, only aggregated totals of engagements by type will be publicly disclosed.