

IPCC SIXTH ASSESSMENT REPORT: SYNTHESIS REPORT

BUSINESS BRIEF



Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its Synthesis Report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) on 20 March 2023. The summary report for policymakers can be viewed here.

The Synthesis Report marks the conclusion of the Sixth Assessment Cycle (AR6) and compiles and summarizes scientific evidence gathered since the publication of the first report as part of AR6 in 2018. As the final report of AR6, the Synthesis Report highlights the narrow window of opportunity to prevent global temperatures from exceeding the 1.5°C threshold. It is unequivocal in its warning that the actions implemented in this decade will have impacts now and for thousands of years.

This World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) Business Brief summarizes the key findings of the Synthesis Report for business and identifies key opportunities for private sector action towards a net-zero, nature positive and equitable future. In the final section, it outlines WBCSD projects and initiatives that member companies can engage with to take action and address the issues outlined in the Synthesis Report.

The key message of the authors is one of hope: the world has the technology, finance, tools, and solutions available to act now, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and deliver co-benefits to people and nature.

This report presents a stark picture of the widespread adverse impacts and losses and damages to nature and people inflicted by human-caused climate change. Global GHG emissions are now 54% higher than in 1990. Nearly half the global population, over three billion people, currently live in regions that are considered highly vulnerable to climate change. In the previous decade, deaths from extreme weather events were 15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions. Vital ecosystems have either suffered or face irreversible losses, with hundreds of local losses of species driven by heat extremes. Vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected.

The findings of the report affirm that it is highly likely that global warming will exceed 1.5°C in the near-term, likely in the first half of the 2030s.

It warns that exceeding the 1.5°C limit—the "overshoot"—has dangerous and adverse impacts on humans and ecosystems, likely triggering several irreversible planetary tipping points. It reiterates that limiting warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels requires deep, rapid, and sustained greenhouse gas emissions reductions in all sectors.

However, in line with the best estimates of the remaining global carbon budget, it states that emissions should peak by 2025 at the latest and must be cut by almost half by 2030, if warming is to be limited to 1.5°C.

Unlike previous reports, the Synthesis Report emphasizes the actions and solutions that governments, finance, civil society, and the private sector can take this decade to limit the extent of the overshoot. It encourages the global community to move from climate procrastination to climate activation and focus on enabling "climate resilient development" - integrating measures to adapt to climate change with actions to reduce emissions that provide wider co-benefits for people and nature. It also highlights that there is sufficient global capital to rapidly reduce GHG emissions, but that three to six times the current levels of climate investment are required. Existing barriers to financing climate action can be reduced and governments, through public funding and providing clear signals to investors, play a crucial role in overcoming these barriers.

The Synthesis Report offers governments a strong science-based foundation for policy. It will play a crucial role in setting the benchmark by which the ambition of political processes and decisions will be measured for years to come. This will start with the 2023 Global Stocktake during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at COP28, scheduled to start in November in Dubai, UAE.

The report emphasizes the values of trust, collaboration, and the need for sharing of cost and burden going forward, all the while stressing the importance of a just transition. There are multiple, feasible and effective options for limiting climate change. The critical factor is the effective, quick deployment of these solutions this decade to apply the brakes to global warming and limit the severity of the overshoot.

"This synthesis report underscores the urgency of taking more ambitious action and shows that, if we act now, we can still secure a livable sustainable future for all."

- Hoesung Lee, Chair of the IPCC

"The climate timebomb is ticking. But today's report is a how-to guide to defuse the climate timebomb. It is a survival guide for humanity. As it shows, the 1.5°C limit is achievable."

- António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Three key messages from the Synthesis Report for businesses to pay attention to:

- Ambition: Deep, that is, and sustained mitigation of GHG emissions in this decade would reduce projected losses and damages for humans and ecosystems and deliver many co-benefits, including for air quality and health. In response to the Synthesis Report, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called on governments of developed countries to reach net zero as close to 2040 as possible, urgently accelerate efforts to reduce the use of fossil fuels, and tasked business leaders to support governments in the efforts needed.
- Action: The Synthesis Report is clear the solutions, tools, technology, and finance needed to limit warming and deliver emissions reductions are available. Business has the agility, innovation, and capacity to deploy and scale solutions, including in emerging and developing economies, where vulnerable communities are disproportionately affected by climate change.
- Accountability: Taking the science seriously means putting an end to vague commitments and promises on climate change. As the climate agenda shifts into a sprint for implementation, commitments must be supported by science-based net zero targets, climate transition plans, and measured and disclosed using accurate carbon accounting metrics. A renewed sense of corporate accountability is crucial to ensuring that commitments are executed, and promises are not broken.

The nine transformation drivers for the private sector from the Synthesis Report are:

- Significantly reduce the use of fossil fuels
- Be accountable for climate commitments
- Scale low- and no-carbon energy solutions
- Transform value chains in hard-to-abate sectors
- Redirect global finance towards mitigation and adaptation solutions
- Use climate technology solutions to limit the overshoot
- Protect and restore ecosystems
- Scale climate resilience and adaptation measures
- Ensure an equitable, inclusive and just transition

This Synthesis Report captures the latest findings from across the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report Cycle (AR6) from 2018-2022, including three reports from the Working Groups, and three special reports. Condensing the findings of all three working groups, the Synthesis Report of AR6 will have a crucial role in informing the 2023 Global Stocktake during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at COP28, scheduled to start in November in Dubai, UAE.

PRIORITY AREAS

To inform the action required to drastically limit the global temperature increase, the IPCC has identified key mitigation and adaptation priorities within six areas that hold the most potential:

ENERGY SYSTEMS

Fossil fuel use needs to be reduced significantly and low- or no-carbon energy systems must be established. This must be achieved with widespread investment in renewables and electrification, improved energy efficiency and the use of alternative fuels, such as hydrogen and sustainable biofuels, as well as investing in carbon capture and storage.

INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORT

Reducing industry GHG emissions entails coordinated action throughout value chains to promote all mitigation options. In the transport sector, emissions reduction can be achieved through low-carbon technologies. Electric vehicles show the greatest potential overall, while aviation and shipping require production process improvements and cost reductions.

CITIES, SETTLEMENTS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Key adaptation and mitigation elements in cities include considering climate change impacts and risks in the design and planning of settlements and infrastructure; land use planning; co-location of jobs and housing; supporting public transport and active mobility; and the efficient design, construction, retrofit, and use of buildings.

LAND, OCEAN, FOOD AND WATER

Nature plays a central role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Synergies can be leveraged when investing in the protection and restoration of land, oceans, food, and water to remove carbon. Maintaining the resilience of biodiversity and ecosystem services at a global scale depends on effective and equitable conservation of 30% to 50% of Earth's land, freshwater and ocean areas. Effective adaptation options include cultivar improvements and agroforestry and storage.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Human health will benefit from mitigation and adaptation options that mainstream health into food, infrastructure, social protection, and water policies. Current strategies include strengthening public health programs related to climate-sensitive diseases, reducing exposure of water and sanitation systems to flooding, and improving surveillance and early warning systems.

SOCIETY, LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIES

Climate policies that reflect the needs of society are important to increase resilience. Societal mitigation and adaptation policies include weather and health insurance, social protection and adaptive social safety nets, contingent finance and reserve funds, universal access to early warning systems combined with effective contingency plans and risk spreading for capacity building.

What this means for business

As outlined in WBCSD's <u>Vision 2050</u>, <u>Stockholm Action Agenda</u> and <u>Business of Climate Recovery</u>, the private sector has a critical role in advancing climate action for sustainable development.

The Synthesis Report emphasizes the urgent need for action by all (Figure 1). Based on analysis of the report, WBCSD has identified the following nine transformation drivers for business to increase the likelihood of staying within the 1.5°C trajectory and limiting the extent of the overshoot. These are complemented by recommendations on how business can take collective action in the final section of the Business Brief.

TRANSFORMATION DRIVERS

- Significantly reduce the use of fossil fuels

 Remaining within the 1.5°C limit means phasing out all unabated fossil fuels and reducing emissions by at least 43% by 2030.
 The Synthesis Report highlights that if annual CO₂ emissions between 2020-2030 remain on average at the same level as 2019, the resulting cumulative emissions would almost exhaust the remaining carbon budget for 1.5°C. Urgent action is therefore needed to transition to a clean energy system.
 To ensure a just transition, efforts phase out unabated fossil fuels need to implement inclusive, transparent, and participatory decision-making processes.
- Holding climate commitments to account

 The Synthesis Report focuses on the solutions that can be taken to address climate change. There is no room for greenwashing. Climate commitments must be supported by science-based net zero targets, climate transition plans, and measured and disclosed using accurate carbon accounting metrics.
- Scaling renewable energy, electrification, and efficiency Net zero carbon energy systems entail scaling up renewable energy sources like solar and wind. These are now cheaper than fossil fuels in many regions. Scaling renewable energy and the electrification of buildings, transport and industry is the optimal way to transform the energy system to a low- or no-carbon level, while investing in energy efficiency measures is one of the best ways to reduce emissions and resource use in the current energy system.

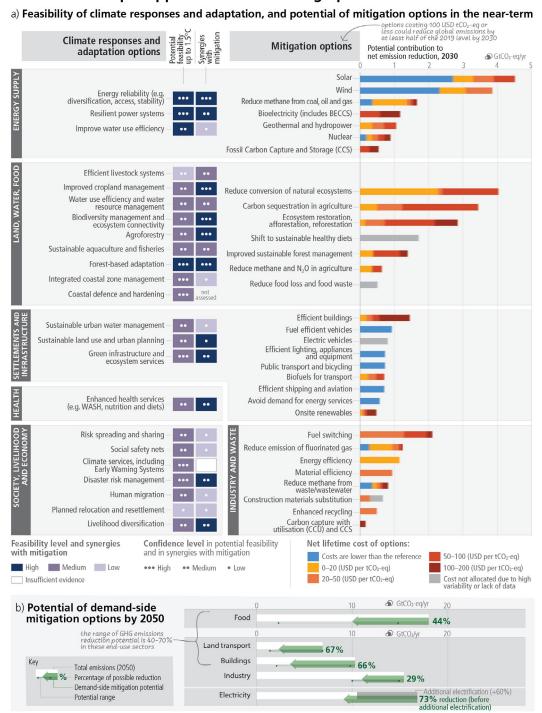
- Transforming value chains in hard-to-abate sectors – Reducing industry GHG emissions in hard-to-abate sectors like cement and steel requires coordinated action throughout value chains to promote all mitigation options. This includes scaling the electrification of industry, circular material flows and implementing transformational changes in production processes.
- Redirecting global climate finance away from fossil fuels to solutions that will decrease mitigation and adaptation gaps

 Currently, public and private finance flows for fossil fuels (e.g. fossil fuel subsidies) are still far greater than those for climate adaptation and mitigation. According to the Synthesis Report, climate finance will need to increase between three and six times by 2030 to achieve the global mitigation goals.
- Climate technologies are available and will need to be part of the solution Carbon dioxide removal (CDR), including Direct Air Capture (DAC), will be necessary to achieve net-negative CO₂ emissions, particularly to limit the likely overshoot beyond 1.5°C and for hard-to-abate industries such as aviation, shipping, and industrial processes. Most modelled pathways involve rapid, deep, and immediate GHG emissions reduction this decade, and the use of CDR should be done in parallel with, not instead of, enhanced mitigation action.
- Protecting and restoring ecosystems –
 The Synthesis Report highlights the role of avoided deforestation and degradation, carbon sequestration in agriculture, ecosystem restoration through afforestation and reforestation and improved sustainable forest management as potential mitigation tools to contribute significantly to net emissions reduction by 2030. Adaptation efforts mentioned are efficient livestock systems, improved crop management, agroforestry, and water-use efficiency.

- Adapting to climate damages Most actions taken to enhance resilience are limited in scope, reactive in nature, and primarily address short-term risks. Regulatory and economic instruments can support climate resilient development if applied widely.
 To scale up adaptation solutions, the IPCC estimates developing countries will need US \$127 billion per year by 2030 and US \$295 billion per year by 2050.
- Mitigation and adaptation measures must ensure a just transition – The shift to a net-zero carbon economy is already having significant social and economic impacts on workers, suppliers, communities, and consumers at both local and global levels.
 The need to transition to a net-zero, nature positive economy is urgent, but it must be a transition that is equitable and inclusive, that drives positive social impacts, and in which everyone can see opportunity.

Figure 1: Multiple opportunities for scaling up climate action. Source: IPCC.

There are multiple opportunities for scaling up climate action



How business can act

UN Secretary-General António Guterres labelled the IPCC Synthesis Report as a "survival guide for humanity". It shows that the 1.5°C limit is achievable, but it will take a quantum leap in action. At the heart of the climate transformation, the global business community can be the driving force, bringing ambition, insight, innovation, and scale to the table. The business case is clear and strong. Business leaders must accelerate the pace of delivery to provide the solutions that the world needs to limit the adverse and severe impacts of climate change for future generations.

WBCSD works with its membership of 220+ of the world's leading multinational businesses to collectively accelerate the systems transformation needed to secure a net zero, nature positive, and more equitable future. Across the key transformation drivers outlined in the previous section of this Business Brief, WBCSD is working with members and partners on the following projects, initiatives, coalitions, and partnerships that are helping to secure a more resilient future for the planet, nature, and people.

· Carbon Accountability: Robust measurement and accountability at the highest level are required to gauge the success of mitigation efforts. WBCSD offers its expertise on emission measurement as the co-convener of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and works with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) to develop recommendations designed to help companies disclose climate-related financial risks and opportunities. In line with the recommendations of the High-Level Expert Group on the Net Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities, WBCSD will be working with member companies and key partners in 2023 to co-develop an aligned easy-to-use system for corporates to measure emissions, set targets, develop transition plans and disclose to stakeholders to drive corporate carbon accountability at scale. WBCSD will also work with the same group of stakeholders to co-develop a mechanism to track progress on corporate decarbonization action against targets and plans, to support a stock take of corporate progress and contributions to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

- Partnership for Carbon Transparency (PACT): PACT is the solution to one of the biggest decarbonization challenges today: Scope 3 emissions. By ensuring every company has access to granular, comparable, and consistent data from its suppliers, PACT enables companies to take targeted action on their value chain emissions and to create accountability on reduction progress. PACT provides a forum for stakeholders to jointly tackle the Scope 3 challenge, uniting businesses from across industries, technology players, industry-focused initiatives, standard-setting bodies, reporting organizations, and regulators in their shared mission. Jointly, this community has defined the necessary methodological and technological basis for emissions data exchange, integrating existing standards and approaches and creating a trusted and holistic foundation. PACT is hosted by WBCSD and supported by its knowledge partner, McKinsey Sustainability, as well as its technology partner, SINE Foundation.
- Avoided Emissions: Company contributions to global mitigation should not be limited to reducing GHG emissions within their value chain. They should also strive to deliver additional solutions that are aligned with the 1.5°C trajectory. This broader contribution of companies to the global net zero target has been defined as "avoided emissions". WBCSD recently launched Guidance on Avoided Emissions to provide greater clarity on how avoided emissions could be leveraged and calculated to support and drive climate-aligned decision-making, innovation and purpose definition, ultimately stimulating incentive-driven policy making.
- SOS 1.5: The SOS 1.5 project supports companies from all sectors to stay within the 1.5°C safe operating space and effectively deploy mitigation instruments. The flagship project makes 'mission possible' 'mission probable' by helping companies identify the barriers to overcome and actions needed to accelerate their transition. Replacing the Low Carbon Technology Partnership Initiative, SOS 1.5 provides sector-specific deep dives and a tailored roadmap for any company to achieve climate mitigation action, regardless of where they are on the journey.

- The Climate Drive: WBCSD in close collaboration with academic partner Oxford Net Zero and over 40 global companies is developing a digital platform aimed at accelerating climate action progress along value chains. The Climate Drive will enable companies to radically collaborate, pool resources, share lessons learned and support each other in this shared goal, recognizing the challenge and amount of work required to set to develop and implement a net zero strategy especially for smaller businesses and the fact that it requires business across the value chain to travel in the same direction.
- Scaling Renewables and Electrification of Heat: The pace of decarbonization in the electricity sector, while still growing to satisfy increased demand, will critically influence the ability to limit global warming to 1.5°C. In 2023, renewables are reliable and cost-competitive, compared to conventional generation sources. WBCSD's REscale project brings together leading companies representing the full renewable energy value chain to accelerate deployment of renewables and the transition to a low-carbon electricity system by developing business guidance for scaling Power Purchase Agreements. WBSCD also helps companies to address their thermal energy consumption via **Heat-as-a-Service** solutions to decarbonize commercial and industrial heat use with third-party capital investments.
- Low-Carbon Hydrogen: Hydrogen offers significant potential as a new technology to unlock deep decarbonization. 34 companies from across the globe and various sectors have pledged to drive growth in the demand for, and supply of, hydrogen in a joint initiative between WBCSD and the Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI). WBCSD has also defined investment guidelines to ensure hydrogen projects align with a net-zero emissions scenario curve. With policy work and effective collaboration between the private and public sectors, WBCSD's guidance will continue to drive investments and action to accelerate the deployment of low-carbon hydrogen.
- Carbon Capture, Storage and Removal: The IPCC Synthesis Report outlines that limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C is almost impossible without the significant deployment of carbon capture and storage (CCS). CCS is a critical transitionary technology for the hard-to-abate industrial sectors, where other technological solutions are not yet economically viable. WBCSD's new project on Carbon Capture, Storage and Removals addresses the technical, financial and industry barriers associated with the

- deployment of CCS to ensure it can be deployed at scale with approximately 7.6Gtpa of CO₂ capture by 2050 (IEA).
- Built Environment Decarbonization:
 WBCSD's Built Environment Pathway
 mobilizes leading global companies along the
 value chain to drive decarbonization.
 It provides guidance and evidence for how
 actors from manufacturing, construction, real
 estate and finance, to end users, can act
 today to achieve a halving of global built
 environment emissions by 2030. WBCSD also
 leads the Market Transformation to Net Zero
 Work Area under the Global Alliance for
 Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC), to
 overcome the systemic barriers along the
 value chain.
- Mobility Decarbonization: WBCSD's Transport and Mobility Pathway mobilizes CEOs for the rapid transition to zero-emission vehicles (ZEV). The objective is to reach 60% of global ZEV market share and scale digital mobility solutions for efficiency to abate road transport emissions to circa 4Gt of CO2, while helping the automotive sector to reduce 50% of GHG emissions by 2030. To accelerate this transition in line with the Paris Agreement, the mobility decarbonization project convenes leading CEOs, public authorities, and investors to collectively design transformative projects that can implement solutions for zero-emission transport at scale.
- Business Commission to Tackle Inequality (BCTI): WBCSD convenes The Business
 Commission to Tackle Inequality, a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coalition of organizations and their leaders who have come together to put addressing inequality at the heart of business' agenda for sustainable growth. The BCTI is working to drive greater levels of business attention, investment, and action in proportion to the scale of the challenge of mounting inequality. In May 2022, the BCTI will publish its flagship report with ten priority areas for business to begin addressing inequality within their operations and value chains.
- Redefining Value: To help transform the global financial system and direct more capital towards companies addressing climate change, nature loss and inequality, WBCSD's Redefining Value offering helps companies measure and manage risk, gain competitive advantage and seize new opportunities by understanding environmental, social and governance (ESG) information. Redefining Value builds collaborations and develops tools, guidance, case studies, engagement, and education

- opportunities to help companies incorporate ESG performance into mainstream business and finance systems. The goal is to improve decision-making and external disclosure, eventually transforming the financial system to reward the most sustainable companies.
- Strengthening Capacity: For companies to take the necessary action to drive fundamental change through their business operations to address the climate crisis, they need to develop the skills and capacity of their employees. WBCSD is strengthening its educational offering to help companies empower their employees to take action on climate, through corporate capacity building programs, skills development and education offerings.
- Climate Risk, Adaptation and Resilience: WBCSD launched the Climate Risk, Adaptation and Resilience workstream in February 2023 to help member companies tackle climate adaptation challenges and build resilience against physical climate risk. WBCSD is providing a roadmap to members with knowledge and resources for businesses to scale-up action on adaptation. WBCSD is also hosting a Masterclass Series on 'Assessing and Managing Physical Risk & Opportunities' and developing a foresight exercise that will transport members to 2035, making visible the impacts of climate change on businesses and society to activate action and help inform present-day decision making. In the second half of the year, members will be invited to participate in two working groups: one focusing on increasing investment and activation through C-suite buy-in and other enablers, and the second focused on supporting companies to sufficiently adapt and build resilience by bringing the corporate perspective to develop a universal framework and metrics on adaptation.
- Natural Climate Solutions Carbon Credits:
 High-quality Natural Climate Solutions (NCS)
 can help to address the twin crises of climate
 change and biodiversity loss by accelerating
 emissions reduction and the removal of CO₂
 from the atmosphere. This can be achieved
 through the mobilization of significant funds
 from businesses to invest in conservation, land
 management and restoration projects and
 programs through the voluntary carbon market.
 - The Natural Climate Solutions Alliance (NCSA), a multi-stakeholder group convened by WBCSD and the World Economic Forum, promotes demand for high-quality NCS carbon credits and supports companies on their procurement journey for high-quality NCS carbon credits. The Guide for C-suite Executives developed by the NCSA recommends the use of high-quality

- NCS carbon credits as a complementary measure to in-value chain decarbonization to counterbalance unabated emissions on an annual basis, while A Buyer's Guide to Natural Climate Solutions Carbon Credits supports businesses in the procurement process for high-quality NCS carbon credits. The NCSA also promotes the companies that have in place the recommended guardrails through the NCS Investment Accelerator.
- Food and Agriculture Systems: 25% of global GHG emissions come from food and agriculture systems. Companies in the food value chain have a critical role to play in driving positive food system transformation and mitigating GHG emissions. This requires major changes along the food value chain in two main areas:
 i) accelerating access to and uptake of healthy, sustainable, affordable diets for all people, and ii) driving transformative agricultural solutions for climate, nature, and people (build thriving and resilient livelihoods for all food system workers).

In order to tackle the first challenge, through Food Reform for Sustainability and Health project (FReSH), WBCSD supports companies in the development of healthier and more sustainable products, product portfolios and offerings, and ways to make these more appealing, accessible and affordable to people. Food and agriculture companies struggle to manage climate risks and business opportunities, set net-zero targets in line with the Paris Agreement, take collective action and publicly disclose progress. WBCSD's Agriculture for 1.5 project accelerates the transition of agri-businesses and food companies to achieve a net-zero emissions and climate resilient future in line with the SOS 1.5 $\,$ project.

Driving investments in sustainable, resilient, and low-carbon food systems will unlock large-scale mitigation opportunities, as well as co-benefits for nature and people, including helping on climate adaptation. WBCSD's Soils Investment Hub connects multiple stakeholders and partners to accelerate and scale investments in soil health. WBCSD hosts the Just Rural Transition (JRT)'s Investment Partnerships Initiative, which is catalyzing finance and collaborations that scale sustainable agricultural production while improving livelihoods, with platforms such as the Sustainable Rice Landscape Initiative and the Good Food Finance Network. The One Planet Business for Biodiversity is also driving progress on regenerative agriculture, diversification of ingredient portfolios and land restoration.

The IPCC offers the most comprehensive assessment of peer-reviewed science, and its reports are a basis of many critical decisions. IPCC chapters and reports feed into the Global Stocktake process and will inform the negotiations of COP28 in Dubai in November. The results will also influence related processes and affect other key meetings at Bonn Climate Conference, UNGA, G7 and G20 in 2023. WBCSD continues to monitor and provide input into how science is translated into policy and assess how business can contribute to solutions that address the interconnected crises of climate, nature, and rising inequality.

CONTACT

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ABOUT THE WORLD BUSINESS COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WBCSD)

WBCSD is the premier global, CEO-led community of over 200 of the world's leading sustainable businesses working collectively to accelerate the system transformations needed for a net zero, nature positive, and more equitable future.

We do this by engaging executives and sustainability leaders from business and elsewhere to share practical insights on the obstacles and opportunities we currently face in tackling the integrated climate, nature and inequality sustainability challenge; by co-developing "how-to" CEO-guides from these insights; by providing science-based target guidance including standards and protocols; and by developing tools and platforms to help leading businesses in sustainability drive integrated actions to tackle climate, nature and inequality challenges across sectors and geographical regions.

Our member companies come from all business sectors and all major economies, representing a combined revenue of more than USD \$8.5 trillion and 19 million employees. Our global network of almost 70 national business councils gives our members unparalleled reach across the globe. Since 1995, WBCSD has been uniquely positioned to work with member companies along and across value chains to deliver impactful business solutions to the most challenging sustainability issues.

Together, we are the leading voice of business for sustainability, united by our vision of creating a world in which 9+ billion people are living well, within planetary boundaries, by mid-century.

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