



INSIGHTS SUMMARY

HOW BUSINESS CAN UNLOCK THE BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

GLOBAL GOALS / HYBRID WORKSHOP / 19 SEPT 2023

We would like to thank the following opening speakers:

Lisa Manley, Vice President, Sustainability, **Mars Inc**

Priya Kvam, Associate Director, Americas and Global Development, **Forum For the Future**

Victor Dagnelie, Innovation Manager on Better Environment, **IDH – The Sustainable Trade Initiative**

INSIGHT 1: INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STRATEGIES IS NEEDED BUT UNEXPLORED

Forthcoming research from Mars, IDH and Forum for the Future has found that the vast majority of businesses are managing their environmental and social agendas in isolation, and even the examples that have been identified only go so far towards full integration. Amongst those interviewed for the research, there was unanimous consensus that although approaching social and environmental agendas has potential to drive impact and unlock commercial benefits, the approach remains relatively unexplored. There is a significant body of literature on the impact of environmental factors on social outcomes, such as the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on women and historically disadvantaged groups, or the positive effect of reducing air pollution on health inequalities. However, there are fewer examples of arguments that make the case for addressing social inequality in order to drive positive environmental outcomes – and, conversely, how neglecting the social dimensions of environmental action can reduce efficacy and return on investment.

INSIGHT 2: EQUALISE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

During the workshop, participants raised the important question of measuring and reporting and how it could drive more integrated approaches. Currently, environmental data, particularly around carbon emissions, frequently dominates the sustainability narrative in corporate reporting, whilst its counterpart – social data – is still finding its foothold. However, issues such as gender inequality, living income and labour rights all have the potential to be better and more consistently measured. Organisations should elevate their social data collection and analysis to match the rigour given

What we've said in our carbon credit strategy is that it's not good enough to invest in credits that have environmental benefits. We have to ensure that those projects also do no harm socially – and, more importantly, not just do no harm, but looking for projects that have meaningful measurable benefits to people.

Lisa Manley, Vice President, Sustainability,
Mars Inc

to environmental metrics. This balance ensures a comprehensive perspective on both social and environmental concerns, providing a more complete picture and enabling better-informed decisions.

INSIGHT 3: EMBED SOCIAL OBJECTIVES IN EMISSION STRATEGIES

As much as 90% of some companies' emissions lie in their supply chains. These indirect emissions are known as 'scope 3'. While the corporate lens frequently zeros in on direct emissions, a more expansive view is essential. The upstream end of the supply chain is also where the majority of low-income workers are and where social issues are most acute. Therefore, there is a clear rationale for looking more closely at how emissions reduction efforts can also benefit people. For example, how can the adoption of climate-smart agriculture also improve living incomes, or how can farmers be incentivised to participate in afforestation efforts? In essence, marrying social objectives with environmental targets can usher in comprehensive sustainability transformations, especially in complex supply chains.

How can you create roles that are really fostering that connective tissue among departments and saying, "You know what? Actually, I think we need to bring in the experts on livelihoods here. We need to bring in the experts on gender and social inclusion."

Priya Kvam, Associate Director, Americas and Global Development, *Forum For the Future*

Integration of environmental and social goals can impact across the SDGs because there are so many benefits and co-benefits – it can also avoid trade-offs and undoing some of the work elsewhere.

Victor Dagnelie, Innovation Manager on Better Environment, IDH – The Sustainable Trade Initiative

IN SUMMARY

To have an impact on important issues such as climate change and inequality, sustainability actions must be complementary and embedded within business strategies. Such approaches could help accelerate progress towards multiple SDGs and avoid unintentionally sidelining any particular goal. This workshop explored how to start to turn the vision of integration into reality.