Global Compact
Network South Africa

Private Sector Contribution
for South Africa's 2024
Voluntary National Review on
Sustainable Development Goals

VNR 2024 SOUTH AFRICA

2024 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW

Global Compact Network South Africa

CONTRIBUTORS

The Global Compact Network would like to give special thanks to the following organisations that have participated in this private sector review. Without your valued insights this report would not have been possible. A Voluntary National Review is by nature a collaborative process relying on diversity of insights across sector, industry and role.

We hope that you find the report of value on your continued journey, contributing to sustainability, and the attainment of the 2030 Agenda in South Africa, and in our wider world.

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Sponsors:
- Absa
- Anglo American South Africa

Strategic Partners:
- Business Leadership South Africa
- Minerals Council of South Africa
- National Business Initiative

VNR Report Facilitator
- Empanda

Insight Contributors:
- Alexforbes
- Bokashi Bran
- Minerals Council South Africa
- Makwande Group
- Modern Centric
- Unifi
- UMngeni-Uthukela Water

Facilitators:
- Aiden Choles
- Barbara van Heerden
- Boye Gbadebo
- Bronwyn Jones
- Lee Swan
- Mokena Mokapela
- Nobantu Mtimbe
- Thobekile Gambu
- Zakhele Mgobhozi

Writing Team:
- Christy Kirkpatrick
- Chloe Cormack
- Eric Diergaardt
- Edward Mitchell
- Karlien Muller
- Leone Tiemensma
- Rethabile Mbokodi
- Troy Petzer

Company Participants:
- Absa
- African Humanitarian Initiative
- Afrika Burns Creative Projects
- AFSA
- AgriVuno
- Alexforbes
- All About Africa
- Allied Valve Specialists
- Anglo American
- Aspen Pharmacare Holdings Limited
- Assore
- BAOM Eco Solutions
- Basket Ecommerce
- BDO Advisory
- Bidvest
- Big Impact Group
- Bokashi Bran
- Broz Interiors and Exclusive Flooring
- Business Leadership South Africa
- Bushveld Minerals
- Business Leadership South Africa
- C E Envirosol
- Cane Growers
- Centre for New Liberalism
- CHEP
- Cipla
- Citeplan
- Clicks Group
- Daily Maverick
- Unifi
- De Angelus and Angelus Africa
- De Beers
- Deloitte & Touche
- Department of Mineral Resources & Energy
- Digital Girl Africa
- DMRE
- DNA Economics
- DRD Gold Limited
- DTB Legal
- Edge Growth
- Emergent Africa
- Ensekta
- EOH
- Eskom
- ESS
- Exxaro
- Faded Black Innovations
- Fire Storm Business Consulting
- Flamenco guesthouse
- Foskor
- Gillespie and Associates
- Gold Fields
- Goldilocks and The Bear Foundation
- Green Building South Africa
- Kasigreenkid and Project
- Growthpoint Properties
- Harmony Gold
- Hodisang Community Development
- Hollard
- IHS
- Imerys South Africa
- Impala Platinum Holdings Limited
- Informal Economy Development Forum
- Integrate Solutions
- Investec
- JTC Group
- Kleinskuur Aquaponics
- Kropz Elandsfontein Phosphate Mine
- Kudumane Mine
- Leungo Education
- Liberty
- Madima's Property & Investment
- Makwande Group
- Maseno University
- Minerals Council South Africa
- Mintek
- Modern Centric Holdings
- Modern Community Foundation
- Mr Price
- MTN Group
- MTW Investments
- Myezo Environmental Management Services
- Naspers and Prosus
- National Business Institute
- National Seperations
- Nedbank
- Northam Platinum
- NPI Governance Consulting
- Nude Foods
- Old Mutual Limited
- OneWorld Sustainable Investments
- Orion Minerals
- Pan African Resources
- Patch-Up South Africa
- Pick n Pay
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- UMgeni -Uthukela Water
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Forewords

“South Africa’s second Voluntary National Review (VNR) reflects and reaffirms the country’s commitment to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in tandem with South Africa’s Vision 2030 - National Development Plan (NDP) through a collective process involving different levels of government, academia, civil society and private sector.”

South African VNR 2024

Durban, South Africa

IT IS TIME FOR US TO REPORT BACK

PREAMBLE TO THE 2030 AGENDA

"The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognise that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan.

We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda.

They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what these did not achieve. They seek to realise the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental."

HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT AND HIGH REPRESENTATIVES
United Nations Headquarters in New York
25 - 27 September 2015

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City of Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa

FOREWORD BY

UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

During the 78th convening of the General Assembly last year, the UN Secretary General hosted the SDG Summit to accelerate the pace and actions to deliver the 2030 Agenda and the SDG targets. We are now past the midpoint of this journey, we are currently off-track, and the window for action will close in a few years' time.

The UN Secretary General is calling for all member states to deliver a rescue plan for people and planet, and this report represents a contribution to the Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The VNR process allows countries to share and exchange experiences and lessons learned, best practices, approaches, and to collaborate on solutions to common challenges. This can help us to be bold where we have faltered and to correct our course. It is a critical tool for advancing progress on the SDGs.

South Africa's first VNR was in 2019 and its second, five years later, is an important opportunity for South Africa to reflect on achievements to date and to figure out how to collectively charter a course for accelerated action towards the SDGs. Allow me to use this opportunity to congratulate the Global Compact Network South Africa (GCNSA) on the level of engagement and participation achieved in this private sector contribution.

Without a doubt, we still have much work to do. A clear consensus emerged in the run up and around the SDG Summit that a best way forward is to focus on key transitions – or entry points, ***"that can have catalytic and multiplier effects across the SDGs"***. These are: (1) food systems; (2) energy access and affordability; (3) digital connectivity; (4) education; (5) jobs and social protection; and (6) climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. In South Africa, the private sector can play a critical role in these transitions. This will be key to success, given the scope, ambition, and financial requirements of the task at hand.

The renewed commitments of the government of South Africa at the SDG Summit has significant overlaps with the six transitions, by: reaffirming strategies for a transition to a low-carbon economy and ensuring that such a transition is fair and equitable; delivering on climate finance; expanding training and education in the digital economy; and protecting biodiversity and natural resources.

This report illustrates that there are a growing number of companies reporting on the SDGs. This trend has been amplified by a rapid change in expectations of business and its role in society: taking shared responsibility towards people and planet. The UN has long-standing experience with private sector engagement on sustainable development and is here to provide support.

We have a critical role to play in convening actors around the 2030 Agenda, bringing together business, investors, foundations, and wider stakeholders. Our goal is to enable private sector actors to be transformational partners in pursuit of the SDGs.

The contributions that have been made in this report can help us to focus on areas that speak directly to the transitions: economic growth, just transition, social protection and cohesion, and job creation. Indeed, these are areas in which the private sector is well positioned to leverage its expertise, resources, and influence.

Collaboration in South Africa through Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and corporate accountability initiatives, private-public partnerships, and alternative financing mechanisms are important means of implementation through which sustainable development in South Africa can be advanced.

We urge you to engage with the ideas that are presented here, using the VNR process to reinvigorate, collaborate, and reflect on the perspectives and priorities of all stakeholders.

This report offers hope, innovative solutions and policy priorities. It also contains exemplary stories we can share to create awareness of advances, so we can set ambitions and take accountability for achieving sustainable development.

We thank the participants that have engaged in this process and pledge our support to engaging on the next steps of the journey: Together, we can accelerate action towards a more sustainable, just and resilient future for all.

Mr. Nelson Muffuh
Resident Coordinator United Nations
South Africa

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Johannesburg Skyline, Gauteng, South Africa

MESSAGE FROM THE GCNSA CHAIRPERSON

Since the 2019 Voluntary National Review (VNR), the South African private sector has experienced significant developments, advances and challenges, both domestically and globally. Many VNR-participating companies have demonstrated successes, but ultimately, we still have a long way to go in our endeavour to become socially inclusive and we cannot ignore the negative impacts we have on the environment and on our planet.

In this report, we stand united behind our Presidency and present a comprehensive South African sustainability review that spans multiple sectors. Regrettably, our current efforts fall short of the system-level enabling actions required to catalyse future progress. This gap presents a hurdle to achieving the ambitious goals set forth in the United Nation's 2030 Agenda.

Companies face relentless economic pressure from strained market conditions and customer pricing, as well as increasing operational costs amid an ever-competitive marketplace. The rise of artificial intelligence, machine learning and other new technologies presents almost limitless beneficial applications while also accelerating digital inclusion.

But mobilising and scaling technology fast is not easy, and it also often eliminates jobs accessible to the most economically vulnerable. Whilst simultaneously, there is no doubt about the growing recognition and desire to act environmentally, socially and economically responsible.

Addressing these challenges demands a different approach, one where we leverage the strengths of all stakeholders, irrespective of size. We urgently need to align around prioritised opportunities, sharing both the risk and the return.

The purpose of the Global Compact Network South Africa (GCNSA) is to unify and coordinate organisations within and beyond the private sector. It is our ambition to enable a powerful and collaborative platform, with an expanded ability to provide the support, resources and data to fuel advances. All too often we see large companies acting independently, which inadvertently creates a fragmented landscape and a private sector which is not sufficiently coordinated to effect meaningful, impactful change. This disjointed approach precludes the coordinated action, as well as the opportunity to include medium- and smaller-sized enterprises which are crucial to inclusive and jobs-rich growth.

This VNR lays a valuable foundation for future action. We must see it as the beginning of a process. If we are to stand proudly before future generations, having played our part in creating a sustainable, inclusive, diverse, equitable and prosperous South Africa, then we have work to do now, and we need to work together.

We trust you find this VNR report insightful and galvanising. Use it to establish clarity, set priorities and to deeply understand the impact your organisation can achieve as we plan, purposefully, for the future and realise the transformative changes envisioned in the 2030 Agenda.

We encourage you to join us in the next steps.

Mpumi Madisa
Chairperson of the Board
Global Compact Network South Africa

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Three Rondavels at Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga, South Africa

MESSAGE FROM THE GCNSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since May 2023 we have been working to respond to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) request that we co-ordinate the second Private Sector Performance on the SDGs. We were excited by the opportunity to review our national progress since 2019, to understand the contributions that the private sector has been making, and to get positioned for the second half of the journey toward 2030.

The Voluntary National Review is a significant opportunity for the Global Compact Network to fulfil our mandate to support private sector action to deliver on the Global Goals and the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact. This was particularly the case, given that there have been so many challenges and advances impacting the private sector over the last five years, since our first report in 2019.

Overall, we are not on track to meet the Global Goals by 2030. The UN SDG Report for 2023 shows that only 15% of the targets are on track, with weak or insufficient action on more than 50% of the targets and stalled or reversed action on 30% of the SDG targets. It is within this context that we frame this review as an opportunity to take stock of our situation, and to find fresh inspiration that can be shared to keep us focused and energised on the road ahead.

During the process we endeavoured to leave no-one behind. Over 100 companies engaged in the process, with more than 300 individuals providing insights and 76 companies contributing case studies. This is a substantially bigger engagement than in 2019, with more diverse industry representation, and with better inclusion of smaller and medium-sized organisations.

We also collaborated in National Planning Commission (NPC) consultations to gather perspectives from NGOs, organised labour, civil society organisations, and public sector representatives, whose insights into SDG priorities and private sector progress have been included.

Whilst we have engaged more broadly than before, we note that there is still much work to be done to drive private sector awareness of and participation in the 2030 Agenda. Too many companies are not engaged, and it remains difficult to provide integrated statistics and facts to evidence progress.

Despite emerging global and Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) sustainability frameworks and reporting standards, it is difficult to provide an overall view of progress against the critical performance measures we need to see to measure and motivate for action.

In terms of SDG prioritisation, we were not surprised to see SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth retain its position as the highest-ranking private sector global goal. The private sector has faced a multitude of economic challenges over the last five years, with low levels of investment inhibiting our ability to grow, innovate, and achieve sustainability outcomes. This report details both risks and opportunities that can support future progress that we hope can contribute to alignment on what it will take to assure a prosperous future.

The second highest ranking goal was SDG 13: Climate Action, which has risen steeply from 10th place in 2019. This is due to the sustained efforts to drive awareness and commitment at both a local and global level. Participating businesses are responding to emergent agreements including carbon border taxes that will actively penalise carbon products and services. The negative impact of non-compliance is set to become expensive, making a unified response to just energy transition a vital imperative.

Accelerating the availability of sufficient renewable energy will also mitigate the extreme negative impact of loadshedding power outages. This crisis in energy supply, alongside transport and logistical disruption have driven up company operating costs, resulting in inflation that has negatively impacted all stakeholders, but especially women and the most vulnerable. Our poverty gap has ultimately widened, despite accelerated progress with digital inclusion.

SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals was placed in 3rd position by participating companies, up 11 places from 2019, reflecting the very strong view that in order to make progress we need to stand together.

The challenges we need to overcome require highly strategic, co-ordinated responses from a very broad range of stakeholders that need to work together. Our sustainability landscape remains fragmented, we need to align across sectors and industries, we must connect to build synergies locally, nationally, in the context of the pan-African Agenda 2063, and as global citizens. Our hope is that this report will be inspiring and provocative: motivating for increased ambition and refreshed commitment to a sustainable future.

There is a need to demonstrate unity with government by contributing and committing our country's development priorities as framed in the National Development Plan (NDP) and greatly resonated in the SDGs.

A special thank you to the participating companies for your insights and contributions, to the GCNSA Board for their support, to Absa and Anglo American for their sponsorship, and to Empanda, an active member of the Global Compact for acting as our facilitation partner in the development of this report.

At the GCNSA We believe in the power of business to create positive change. Join us and participate.

Dr Achieng Ojwang
Executive Director
Global Compact Network South Africa

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Executive Summary

"South Africa continues to contribute to improving the quality of life for its citizens, particularly the most vulnerable"

South African VNR 2024

The VNR is an opportunity to build an ongoing platform that unifies businesses around the 2030 Agenda. We warmly invite you to join our mission to build solidarity and collaboration on action alongside the National Development Plan, Africa's Agenda 2063, as well as civil society and community initiatives.

Kruger National Park, North East, South Africa

VNR BACKGROUND

PRIVATE SECTOR INPUT TO THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW 2024

In 2019, South Africa presented its first Voluntary National Review report at the High-Level Political Forum under the UN Economic and Social Council. Five years later, in 2024, the Presidency is returning to report on progress once more.

As part of this process, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) requested the Global Compact Network South Africa to be its Private Sector Institutional Partner, supporting the coordination of private sector participation.

The Private Sector Voluntary National Review process then mobilised to identify strategic partners and Subject Matter Experts (SME), with a mobilisation Compact Dialogues session held in May 2023. During this process GCNSA participants were invited to join the initiative, and an invitation was given to subject matter experts, private sector associations and interest groups to step forward as strategic partners.

In August 2023, the VNR was formally launched with visible leadership to sponsor the process from the National Planning Commission, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Business Unity South Africa, Business Leadership South Africa, the National Business Initiative, the Minerals and Mining Council, as well as Absa and Anglo American, the sponsors of the process and more than 50 South African companies United Nations Global Compact participants.

Companies were invited to join the broad-based inputs process to provide statistical insights and success stories, as well as to attend the collaborative process to prioritise the Sustainable Development Goals, review industry progress and attainment of the 2030 Agenda, and strategise how to address the priority topics across the South African private sector.

A series of 16 round tables was run between August and November with in which over 100 companies and organisations and more than 300 participants engaged in this interactive series, capturing more than 3,000 digital insights.

Following this, the private sector writing team joined the National Planning Commission writing team and consultation process, contributing private sector inputs to the overall South African report. This opportunity was used to engage with Africa Monitor, the institutional partner for civil society, as well as contributors from the UNDP. This consultation process included reviews with organised labour and a diverse range of government and cross-sectoral stakeholders.

Throughout the private sector process in assessing progress to deliver Sustainable Development Goals we have been guided to answer following key questions:

- How are companies scaling SDG action?
- Are businesses of all sizes participating?
- How have priorities changed since 2019?
- How are businesses performing on the SDGs?
- Which sustainability frameworks are most used?
- Is performance being disclosed?
- What was the impact of the global pandemic?
- Are public-private sectors collaborating well?
- Are we growing sustainable investments?
- Have we progressed on gender equality?
- What action is being taken on climate impact?

We hope that this report fulfils its mandate in providing insights that answer these critical questions.

Response to the VNR Central Questions

The voluntary national review of the private sector set out to answer a series of central questions. Below are high level responses with links to the relevant sections of the report:

How are companies scaling SDG action?

South African companies are scaling SDG action through strategic integration into business models, increasing investments in sustainable practices, and collaborating with stakeholders. There is a notable focus on high-impact SDGs such as affordable clean energy, decent work, and economic growth. Companies are leveraging technology and innovation to track and measure their progress, ensuring actions align with global standards and local development needs.

To see examples of how company are scaling SDG action, go to the report Summary chapter and the Contributions section, which contains company case studies.

Are businesses of all sizes participating?

Yes, businesses of all sizes in South Africa are participating in SDG initiatives. Large corporations are leading with dedicated resources for sustainability projects, while SMEs are increasingly involved through government-led programmes that promote SDG alignment. Partnerships between larger companies and smaller local businesses are also enhancing the reach and implementation of sustainable practices across various industries.

To see the Participation Profile for the voluntary national review, go to the Methodology chapter and the Industry Participation Profiles.

How have priorities changed since 2019?

Since 2019, South African businesses have shifted their priorities towards more sustainable and resilient business models in response to global economic challenges and the Covid-19 pandemic. There is heightened emphasis on environmental sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and building economic resilience against future shocks, underpinned by a strong digital transformation drive.

To see the shift in SDG priorities since 2019 see the Priorities section and the Industry Priorities section of the report.

How are businesses performing on the SDGs?

Businesses in South Africa show a mixed performance on the SDGs. While there is commendable progress in areas like health, well-being, and sustainable cities, challenges remain in fully achieving goals related to climate action and life below water. Increasing accountability and investment in specific underperforming areas are critical steps being advocated by industry leaders and policy-makers.

To see how business is performing, including challenges and progress, see the Industry Highlights section.

Which sustainability frameworks are most used?

The most extensively used framework that contributions to sustainability remains Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE), however further frameworks are being rapidly adopted as businesses galvanise reporting on their sustainability performance to adhere to both local JSE and international standards and regulations.

To see the company responses on the frameworks that they have adopted, see the Maturity chapter of the report and the Leveraging Sustainability Frameworks priority topic.

Is performance being disclosed?

There is a growing trend towards greater transparency in disclosing performance on sustainability goals. More South African companies are adopting comprehensive sustainability reporting and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics in their annual reports to meet both regulatory requirements and stakeholder expectations. Whilst companies are making best endeavours, substantial system level support is required to enable better disclosure of performance.

To see company recommendations go to the Policy Enablement chapter of the report.

What was the impact of the global pandemic?

The global pandemic significantly impacted South African businesses, accelerating shifts towards remote working, digitalisation, and sustainable business practices. It exposed vulnerabilities in supply chains and highlighted the importance of social and environmental resilience, prompting companies to reevaluate and strengthen their approaches to sustainability and community engagement.

To see the company responses to the Impact and Opportunity Post Pandemic priority topic.

Are the public and private sectors collaborating well?

Collaboration between the public and private sectors in South Africa is strengthening, particularly in sustainable development projects and infrastructure. Government initiatives that foster public-private partnerships are crucial in mobilising resources and expertise for large-scale projects aimed at achieving the SDGs, though there is room for deeper engagement and coordination.

To see company responses to collaboration with the public sector, see the Effective Public-Private Sector Partnerships priority topic.

Are we growing sustainable investments?

South Africa is experiencing limited growth in sustainable investments, despite being driven by a better regulatory environment and shifting investor preferences towards ESG-focused opportunities. Financial markets are seeing a gradual increase in green bonds and sustainable funds, which support projects and companies that contribute positively to the environment and social goals.

To see more information, go to the Growing Sustainable Investment priority topic.

Have we progressed on gender equality?

Progress on gender equality in South Africa is ongoing, with concerted efforts in education, workplace equality, and leadership representation. Legislative frameworks support gender equality, but societal norms and economic barriers still hinder full achievement. Continuous advocacy and policy adjustments are needed to close the gender gap in various sectors. Companies strongly prioritise gender equality because of their ability to make an impact, particularly through offering equitable pay.

To see further information about gender equality, go to the Empowering Women to Achieve Gender Equality priority topic, or to the deep dive into SDG 5: Gender Equality.

What action is being taken on climate impact?

South Africa is taking significant action on climate impact through national policies on emissions reduction, renewable energy projects, and sustainability in urban planning. Much of the impetus driven for renewable energy is driven by the country's energy crisis. The business sector is actively investing in green solutions, adopting sustainable operational practices, and engaging in international climate initiatives to mitigate environmental risks and promote sustainability.

To see further information, go to the SDG 13: Climate Action global goal analysis, the Just Transition to Carbon Neutrality priority topic, and the Solving our Energy Crisis priority topic.

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PRIVATE SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHT REPORT

More than ever, the private sector recognises that strategic alignment with the South African National Development plan is vital. The SDGs continue to provide a mechanism for harnessing synergies and surfacing the initiatives, policies and action that we need to drive together.

"When reviewing SDG priorities, we need to remember that the prioritisation reflects the perspective of participating companies. Too many companies are still unaware of the 2030 Agenda. We still have much work to do to ensure that sustainability is inclusive. We need to raise awareness, and create accessible, simple opportunities to join in. We need to make it easier for smaller, less resourced companies to participate."

Mpumi Madisa
Chairperson of the Board
Global Compact Network South Africa

Unprecedented levels of change have resulted in both advances and challenges for sustainability in the South African private sector.

Since our last report, we have experienced a global pandemic, a consistently weak economy, a volatile international trading environment, sustained energy shortages, a disrupted global supply chain, and an accelerated shift in focus across stakeholders toward a more sustainability-conscious mindset. In this unstable and challenging environment, it has been extremely difficult to attract the investment needed to enable innovation, growth and progress.

Business is benefitting from the end of state capture, but investment has remained low: Participating companies have consistently celebrated the end of state capture, seeing this as a vital enabler for flourishing investment. Further progress is required to fully deliver a private sector environment that is trusted, and to overcome the reputational damage of the past.

Socially conscious investment is resulting in more stringent sustainability reporting: One means of attracting local and global investment is the provision of transparent and credible information. There is increasing pressure for businesses to report against a variety of local and international sustainability frameworks. Some companies are more equipped than others to meet increasingly strenuous and complex requirements. Sustainability compliance is set to become a barrier to business for companies that are not compliant with the growing requirements of socially conscious investors, with many companies not fully aware or prepared for this emerging challenge.

Carbon border taxes will result in business paying a price for coal-based energy: The South African energy crisis is about more than load-shedding. Our coal-based fuel energy supply makes the South African private sector vulnerable to incoming carbon border taxes that will penalise our exports, making doing business with South African businesses reliant on the national grid non-competitive. It is vital that we collectively support a just energy transition to enable clean and affordable energy, and that the Just Energy Transition (JET) milestones are attained.

Just Energy Transition is a very ambitious objective for South Africa: A just transition is about mitigating the negative impact of change on the workforces and communities that rely on the current energy value chain. It entails the accelerated mobilisation of new and sustainable opportunities for people. This is no easy task as it requires multifaceted approaches by diverse stakeholders. A concerted effort will be required to assist with sustainable alternative economic and employment opportunities in impacted communities. Participating companies pointed out that there is a significant skills mismatch between existing roles and emergent roles in green fuel value chains, meaning that future employment should be designed to not only match demand but also existing South African skill profiles.

Climate Action is not the only priority requiring a just transition; automation is eliminating jobs: This is, however, not the only industry with a strong just transition requirement. Companies are reporting extreme concern about the impact that automation and digital advances have started to have on workforces. Whilst there are critical skills and talent shortages in emergent areas of technical expertise, there are also reducing requirements for many traditional manual roles.

Climate Action has noticeably risen as an SDG priority for many of the participating companies.

"The private sector plays a very important role in achieving the SDGs, as government cannot achieve the goals and meet the targets alone. The partnership between public and private sector is a key component in success."

Mr. Nelson Muffuh
United Nations South African Resident Coordinator

Responsible, resourced companies are driving job creation and enterprise development: Companies need to innovate and attain efficiencies if they are to survive, remain competitive, and achieve both sustainability and prosperity outcomes. Many more resourced companies are actively engaged in diversification, mobilisation of circular economy business models, and supplier development to nurture symbiotic employment opportunities within their extended value chains. These activities fruitfully stimulate local employment development.

Companies are not well-positioned to address the impact of jobs that are disappearing: Companies, especially smaller and less resourced businesses aren't accountable or able to take on the responsibility for replacing the roles that are being shed due to automation and process streamlining technologies. Digital innovation is a double-edged sword, often reducing negative impact on environmental sustainability and addressing inequality, whilst at the same time contributing to negative social impact by driving unemployment.

It is vital to create employment opportunities that are aligned with our existing skill profile: The private sector needs an ecosystem-level strategy and collaboration to drive sustainable decent work and employment. Companies are hungry for scarce digital and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)talent, but it is difficult to engage existing employees in learning programmes. Participants advocated for approaches that assess and leverage existing skills availability. Whilst it was noted that encouraging entrepreneurship is invaluable, the urgency of the challenge warrants large-scale, highly collaborative initiatives and partnerships.

The private sector plays a vital role in job creation and economic empowerment needed to alleviate poverty.

Localisation was strongly advocated for throughout the VNR: Local enterprise development is seen as a critical opportunity, with many companies indicating that they struggle to source material and commodities they require locally. Many are keen to move away from a reliance on imported materials and commodities that have become expensive or inconsistently available.

The VNR is advocating for action to assess and communicate demand more effectively, and to attend to strategic partnerships with the competency and capabilities needed to mobilise and scale sustainable business fast.

Companies are urging action to drive localisation to enable more local sourcing.

Companies were passionately supportive of NGO performance: Participants repeatedly emphasised the importance of civil society and community-based organisations as essential partners for landing social sustainability initiatives effectively.

Small and medium companies are struggling with compliance: In this VNR, there was much stronger representation of small and medium-sized businesses than in 2019. These businesses have particularly struggled with the financial impact. They also struggle to comply with regulations and standards, and to deliver quality reporting. Companies advocated for simpler standards and streamlined, automated compliance processes.

Most companies still lack reporting on the measures they want to manage: Progress is still hard for companies to empirically assess, while climate action measures have standardised, multiple new sustainability frameworks are emerging with complex requirements including human rights progress. Companies report they are struggling to embed sustainability strategies into operational performance management frameworks. Whilst wealthier companies can afford advanced technologies, many companies are being left behind.

Pressing innovation and development priorities were set back by Covid-19: Urgent priorities integral to strategies that drive socio-economic progress, as well as overcoming shifting geopolitical dynamics and responding to evolving customer demand have remained unaffordable to many companies. The need for diversification to ensure resilience against future external shocks was particularly highlighted as a progress concern that needs rapid, unified and strategic response.

Youth unemployment and opportunity is a strong focus area: Companies recognise the far-reaching consequences of high unemployment rates among the youth. Skills scarcity and the need for young talent have motivated for firm contribution to youth workplace readiness, education and opportunity creation. A key concern is the need to rapidly innovate curricula, given the fast evolution and changes to skills and experience requirements in the world of work.

Heightened focus on health, wellbeing, and inclusive, flexible work environments: Covid-19 accelerated digital hybrid working for office workers, while testing operational workers' health and wellbeing on the ground. Companies report accelerated progress toward more flexible work, with increased focus on health and wellbeing programmes. The persistent issue of poverty and inequality has required intensification of health and wellbeing action, to combat inflation and increases in the cost of living.

Empowering women to achieve gender equality was the highest-ranking priority topic: Companies strongly prioritised equality, inclusion and the celebration of South African diversity both within private sector operations, and as an outcome delivered by business models and through sustainability initiatives. In particular, equitable pay was seen as a matter that companies can and should address, alongside offering inclusive, flexible, women-friendly work environments, and within representative leadership.

Despite progress, challenges like income inequality, unemployment and environmental degradation persist. We must remain focused and ambitious, continuing to make progress, and to leave no one behind.

Overall Analysis of the Private Sector SDG Priorities

The final prioritisation of the South African private sector SDGs is as follows, based on a balanced view of participating companies' individual priorities, risks, opportunities, and the priority topics arising from the process:

PRIVATE SECTOR SDGs

COMPANY PRIORITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When companies prioritise the action that will be taken by their companies to deliver sustainability outcomes…

1. **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth**
   Companies aim to drive economic prosperity and job creation by fostering innovation and fair opportunities in the marketplace.

2. **SDG 13 - Climate Action**
   Companies are committed to reducing their environmental impact and pioneering operational, produce and service solutions that contribute to sustainable future.

3. **SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals**
   Companies acknowledge that they cannot act alone and that collective efforts amplify impact. This involves engaging in partnerships to tackle sustainability challenges effectively.

LINKS TO PRIORITISATION ANALYSIS:

- Company Priority SDGs
- Priority Topic Priority SDGs
- Risk and Challenge Priority SDGs
- Opportunity Priority SDGs

TOP FOUR PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When the priority topics affecting the South African private sector are reviewed the emerging SDGs include…

1. **SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals**
   All the priority topics reviewed presented complex challenges that require partnerships for success. Topics such as effective public-private sector collaboration and synergies with civil society and communities rely on partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement to enable success.

2. **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth**
   Priority topics like addressing the post-pandemic landscape, empowering women for gender equality and enabling a just energy transition speak to the need for sustained economic resilience, as well as equitable and inclusive work opportunities.

3. **SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**
   Priority topics like growing sustainable investment, ethical transformation governance, and building global supply chain resilience feed into this goal, focusing on enhancing technological capabilities and fostering innovation.

4. **SDG 13 - Climate Action**
   Climate action is prioritised in response to the private sector's commitment to a just transition to carbon neutrality and solving energy crisis.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When companies identify risks that they are facing, the SDGs that challenge risks include…

1. **SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**
   The high costs and logistical challenges associated with upgrading infrastructure to enable sustainability outcomes is a risk.

2. **SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals**
   Challenges include aligning diverse stakeholder agendas, bureaucratic inefficiencies and a lack of coordination. Risks also relate to concerns about anti-corruption and transparency.

3. **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth**
   Stable economic growth and secure employment are vital to mitigate financial and social risks.

4. **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity**
   Promoting sustainable consumption patterns mitigates risks associated with resource depletion and waste.

5. **SDG 4 - Quality Education**
   Investing in education is essential for equipping the workforce with skills to navigate future challenges.

TOP SIX OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When companies prioritise the emergent opportunities they foresee for the private sector, the primary SDGs include…

1. **SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**
   Business opportunities delivering emergent technologies and supporting innovation.

2. **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity**
   Value propositions that enable better use of resources and sustainable practices.

3. **SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong**
   This goal enables data protection, performance reporting and cyber security offerings.

4. **SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy**
   Products and services enable a just transition to affordable, renewable, clean energy, including independent power production.

5. **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth**
   Investment, finance and advisory services to enable decent work and economic growth.

6. **SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities**
   This goal contributes to the development of sustainable cities and communities, including products, services and infrastructure.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR 2024 Analysis.

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How Company Priorities have Changed

SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

The overall shift in company priorities is illustrated below:

As expected, companies continued to prioritise **Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)**, which is the 'powerhouse' goal for the private sector. Beneath this there were significant changes: the 3 biggest increases were climate action, the focus on partnership for the goals and zero hunger. The most significant fall in priority were education, industry innovation and infrastructure and responsible consumption and production. This likely reflects constrained purse strings, action to focus on forthcoming regulations, and an increasingly clear understanding that companies cannot make optimised progress if they work alone.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

Analysis of Movements:

The critical change in prioritisation is that **Climate Action (SDG 13)** has risen from 10th position to second place. This aptly reflects the growing emphasis that is being placed on action to mitigate negative climate impact on both the local and global agendas, and across sectors and industries. Companies report they are very concerned about forthcoming carbon border taxes.

Another seismic mover is **Partnership for the Goals (SDG 17)**. This goal has risen from 11th to 3rd position, reflecting the understanding that successful action to deliver the 2030 Agenda is best done through collaboration.

Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), previously fifth, has advanced to the fourth position by 2024, perhaps reflecting the growing importance of this goal following the attention that it required during and following the global pandemic.

Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) has risen from eighth to fifth, reflecting an increased focus on the importance of rural and urban infrastructure, which is enabling for business, influenced by the growing importance of local sources of supply from within communities, driven by supply chain challenges. Companies report strong interest in improving local sources of supply from within communities, to overcome global and local supply chain challenges.

Quality Education (SDG 4) has shifted from the second position in 2019 to sixth in 2024. Whilst education remains a vital goal, it has potentially been set back as companies focus on immediate challenges to prosperity. Education remains a very high priority at industry sector level for financial services. Overall, there is a slightly increased prioritisation for **Gender Equality (SDG 5)**, which companies see as an addressable goal, especially action to close the pay gap.

Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), initially third, is now ranked seventh. It is possible that action to deliver this goal is seen through the lens of SDG 13: Climate Action, as responsible operations typically reduce carbon footprint and deliver upon climate change as an outcome. This could similarly account for the movement of **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)** from seventh to twelfth. Whilst companies have been critically impacted by loadshedding, many do not have the resources to target this goal, relying on the public sector for the provision of energy.

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9) has moved from fourth to eighth. This indicates shifting priorities, and perhaps reflects the challenges of affording innovation in a low investment, low growth economy where many companies are reporting financial pressure.

Zero Hunger (SDG 2) has significantly improved its ranking, moving up from sixteenth to ninth, showing increased focus on food security, and better-balanced representation of the food value chain in the 2024 VNR process.

Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16), has decreased slightly, with many companies noting positive progress toward the end of state capture.

Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10) has slightly decreased in priority from ninth to tenth, though it remains a key area of focus.

Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6) from sixth to thirteenth, whilst water remains a vital private sector enabler, the 2019 VNR ran immediately in the wake of the Cape Town day Zero which raised the priority of water as a critical issue at that time.

No Poverty (SDG 1), **Life on Land (SDG 15)**, and **Life Below Water (SDG 14)** prioritisations have remained consistent.

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SDG Themes Arising from the Private Sector

Support for localisation, the urgent need to target unemployment and the critical importance of leadership and governance were consistently communicated by participating companies.

Consistent Theme 1:
Localising the SDGs:

A key theme arising through the narrative provided at company level was the strong demand for improved localisation of action to deliver the SDGs. This interest also surfaced with public sector and civil society partners during collaboration to integrate the South Africa level voluntary national review report.

Companies reported that they are often heavily involved in local action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This collaboration contributes to the ability of companies and businesses to successfully operate, **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**, whilst also contributing to **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**. Companies see themselves as an integrated part of their local community ecosystems, relying on prosperous and sustainable local communities both as a customer base and as an environment that gives access to the employees, infrastructure, materials, and resources needed to deliver operations.

Examples and case studies of localised action to deliver the SDGs includes:

- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for Infrastructure Development:** Private sector collaborate with local governments on infrastructure projects to enhance services and create employment opportunities, with a focus on sustainable initiatives like renewable energy projects. Real-world PPPs in South Africa often focus on infrastructure development, including energy, water sanitation and transportation projects. The Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), for instance, has been a successful model, attracting private investment in renewable energy projects across South Africa.

- **Local Procurement Initiatives:** Corporate engagement in local sourcing initiatives bolster the local economy and support sustainable industrialisation. South African companies, especially in mining and manufacturing, have implemented local procurement strategies to comply with government regulations and support local economies. The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) policy encourages businesses to source goods and services from local and black-owned suppliers.

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programmes:** Corporations tailor their CSR activities to align with SDGs, focusing on enhancing local education, health, and economic empowerment. Major corporations in South Africa, such as Sasol and Anglo American, have extensive CSR programmes that address education, health, and environmental sustainability, aligning with various SDGs.

- **Skills Development and Job Creation:** Private sector provides training and employment opportunities in alignment with the DDM's objectives, aiding in unemployment reduction and sustainable economic growth. Companies across sectors invest in skills development and job creation as part of their CSR initiatives or compliance with South African laws, such as the Skills Development Levy. The YES Programme (Youth Employment Service), for example, is an initiative supported by various businesses to enhance youth employability and job creation.

- **Investments in Local Startups and SMEs:** There is increased investment in startups and SMEs focusing on sustainability and innovation, particularly within agriculture and technology sectors. Investment in startups and SMEs, particularly in technology and innovation, has been growing in South Africa. Initiatives like the Innovation Hub and various venture capital funds support local startups, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.

- **Technology and Innovation for SDGs:** Collaborative efforts between tech companies and local governments to devise solutions for local challenges, incorporating clean energy and sustainable agriculture.

Consistent Theme 2:
Targeting Unemployment

Companies consistently reported extreme concern about the level of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. During the round tables it was recommended that country level action should focus on incentivising investment in business models that are labour intensive, require a low level of skill, and for which there is strong customer demand. It was further suggested that these business models could then be further scrutinised for their ability to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, and to scale effectively.

Low skill, labour intensive, high demand business models:
The following business models were initially identified as being labour intensive and requiring low levels of skill: Agriculture, Construction, Building Maintenance, Manufacturing, Assembly, Warehousing, Logistics, Retail, Janitorial and Cleaning Services, Landscaping, Grounds Maintenance, Conservation Work, Mining, Quarrying, Textile Production, Recycling and Waste Management. This list was further analysed for the opportunity to contribute to the SDGs and to scale effectively, aligned to future customer demand. The emerging shortlist from this process included:

- Agriculture, particularly sustainable, local food production
- Manufacturing and assembly of sustainable products
- Green tourism focused hospitality and conservation
- Recycling and waste management circular economies.

Consistent Theme 3:
Improving Governance

Companies report that they are steadily incorporating sustainability into governance committee structures, agendas, roles and reporting. This is enabling more sustainability aligned business strategies for core business operations. This is enhancing contribution to global sustainability goals whilst also ensuring long-term value creation. This approach is in line with King IV, a key set of South African voluntary principles and good practices of corporate governance.

Company board level actions included the following:

1. **Audit Committee:** Beyond overseeing financial reporting and audits, this committee should play a critical role in ensuring the integration of sustainability reporting within financial statements, providing transparency on ESG matters.

2. **Risk Governance Committee:** This committee's responsibility should extend to the identification and assessment of sustainability risks, such as climate change, resource scarcity, and social inequality, ensuring the organisation's resilience and adaptability. This approach supports SDG 13 (Climate Action) by facilitating strategic responses to climate-related risks and opportunities.

3. **Remuneration Committee:** Charged with linking executive remuneration to performance, this committee should be tasked with aligning incentives with long-term sustainability goals, including ethical leadership and environmental stewardship. Such alignment delivers value to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by encouraging practices that foster sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth.

4. **Social and Ethics Committee:** This committee should oversee the organisation's commitments to social and ethical conduct, including human rights, fair labour practices and environmental stewardship, ensuring adherence to the principles of sustainable development. It contributes to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by promoting transparent, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

5. **Nomination Committee:** Responsible for ensuring the board's composition supports effective Decision-making on sustainability issues, this committee should focus on diversity, expertise in sustainability and ethical leadership. This facilitates progress towards SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by promoting diversity and inclusion within leadership roles and Decision-making processes.

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How Companies are Contributing to Unified South African Action

Companies reported that they have sustained and evolved their efforts, playing a crucial role and taking ownership of their contributions to the SDGs. The purpose of the the Voluntary National Review is to assess and measure SDG progress with the view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The 'SDG Acceleration Mechanisms' defined in the South African VNR can introduce a new layer of coordination to the private sector's contributions:

SOUTH AFRICAN VNR 2024 SDG ACCELERATION MECHANISMS

A UNIFIED SOUTH AFRICAN AMBITION:

The South African 'SDG Acceleration Mechanisms' can enable collaboration on progress: The private sector VNR collaborated with the cross-sectoral National Planning Commission team to identify four mechanisms that could accelerate progress. These six mechanisms can offer a means of co-ordination that enables multi-level focus on challenges and opportunities across sectors.

Mechanism 1:
Prioritise human wellbeing and enhanced capabilities through sustainable development
Focus on improving the quality of life and enhancing the capabilities of all South Africans, particularly the most vulnerable, through improved social infrastructure investment – enabling access to quality health services, education, water and sanitation.

Mechanism 2:
Invest in young people for participation in fields with a high job growth potential, such as the green and digital economy
Empower young people to contribute to and participate in fields with a high job growth potential, such as the green and digital economies, through targeted vocational and skills development and entrepreneurship support.

Mechanism 6:
Mobilise means for implementation
Optimise domestic resource mobilisation – tax collection, reduce illicit financial flows, call for appropriate technology transfer, and expand technical and financial cooperation, which are required to accelerate South Africa's progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Mechanism 3:
Create economic growth and opportunities by increasing sustainable energy sources
Urgently address South Africa's immediate energy security needs, while shifting to renewables to enhance future energy security, reduce carbon emissions and create economic opportunities.

Mechanism 5:
Rebuild trust through effective and responsive institutions
Rebuild public trust by effectively combating corruption and increasing efficiency in the public service. Build strong local and global partnerships to help accelerate progress. Scale up successful and innovative interventions.

Mechanism 4:
Unblock infrastructure constraints and invest in green and resilient infrastructure
Address infrastructure constraints: invest in network industries and target key infrastructure investments that support a diversified and competitive economy in an environmentally sustainable manner, contributing to labour market activation and social infrastructure development.

SOURCE: The South African Voluntary National Review 2024.

COMPANY CONTRIBUTION APPROACHES:

The primary ways that companies are contributing to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda include:

- **Integrating SDGs into business strategy:** Companies increasingly incorporate SDG targets into their core business strategies, recognising that sustainable practices can drive growth, innovation and competitive advantage. This integration ensures that business operations contribute positively to achieving the SDGs, while addressing shareholder and stakeholder expectations;
- **Investing in sustainable solutions:** The private sector invests in research and development of sustainable products, services and technologies that address global challenges such as ensuring clean energy, water conservation and sustainable agriculture. By focusing on innovation that aligns with the SDGs, businesses can open new markets and create value chains that are both profitable and sustainable;
- **Collaborating and partnering:** Collaboration between businesses, governments, NGOs and civil society is essential for achieving the SDGs. The private sector often leads or participates in multi-stakeholder partnerships that leverage collective expertise, resources and networks to tackle complex sustainability challenges more effectively;
- **Reporting and transparency:** Companies enhance transparency by reporting their sustainability performance and SDG-related activities. This accountability mechanism demonstrates their commitment to sustainable development and allows for tracking progress, identifying areas for improvement and sharing best practices;
- **Engaging in policy development:** The private sector plays a significant role in advocating for sustainable development policies. By engaging in dialogue with policymakers and contributing to formulating SDG-aligned policies, businesses can help create an enabling environment for sustainable development;
- **Empowering communities:** Companies are investing in community development projects that align with the SDGs, helping to uplift communities, ensure social inclusion and build local capacities. These initiatives can range from improving education and healthcare access to supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and fostering economic empowerment;
- **Sustainability in the supply chain:** Businesses increasingly require their suppliers to adhere to sustainability standards that align with the SDGs. This creates a ripple effect, encouraging responsible business practices throughout the supply chain and ensuring that operations contribute positively to achieving the SDGs;
- **Building awareness and advocacy:** The private sector contributes to public awareness of the SDGs through marketing, advocacy and educational initiatives. By promoting sustainability and raising awareness of global challenges, businesses are promoting civil society, consumers, employees and other stakeholders to take action to engage in value propositions that best support the attainment of the SDGs.

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The UN Global Compact Forward Faster Drivers for Motivating Company Progress

The United Nations Global Compact's Forward Faster initiative spurs businesses to accelerate global progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. It defines five strategic areas in which private sector companies can prioritise pivotal action to advance the 2030 Agenda.

The 'Forward Faster' areas take a principles-based approach, encouraging businesses to align their operations with the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles, which focus on human rights, labour standards, environmental sustainability, and anti-corruption. This alignment forms the baseline of ethical business practices that support the SDGs. The five areas are:

1. **FINANCE AND INVESTMENT**
   South African companies are urged to align their corporate investments with their SDG policies and strategies, working towards the overarching aim of the UN Global Compact to direct trillions in corporate investments towards sustainable goals. The Forward Faster initiative underlines the importance of coherent, ambitious targets, pushing companies to progressively increase the share of SDG-aligned investments with a view to eventually reaching 100 percent. In setting internal targets, businesses are encouraged to follow best practices that include establishing a clear pathway towards maximum alignment over time, benchmarking against industry peers, and publishing yearly improvements. This strategy is in line with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Coalition for the SDGs, striving for transparency and accountability in finance and investment to support a sustainable future.

2. **LIVING WAGE**
   South African companies should champion the provision of a living wage, recognising it as a crucial step towards fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensuring no one is left behind. With many workers, including small-scale farmers, earning less than needed for a decent living standard, addressing this gap is key to poverty eradication and economic inclusivity. Firms must adopt and report on tangible, equitable wage strategies that align with rising living costs and support broader economic stability, ultimately contributing to a people-centred approach to sustainability and societal development.

3. **GENDER EQUALITY**
   South African companies should accelerate gender equality by eradicating pay disparities and enhancing female leadership. Striving for equality not only fulfils a human rights imperative but is key to sustainable development, as per the UN's SDGs. Though challenges persist, like the significant pay gap reported by Equileap in 2022, firms must set measurable, ambitious targets for gender parity. Such commitments can drive economic growth and forge a fairer society, leveraging the untapped potential of women as pivotal change agents.

4. **CLIMATE AMBITION**
   South African companies should proactively address climate change by setting science-based net-zero emissions targets consistent with a 1.5°C pathway. This approach emphasises the need for deep decarbonisation, with goals of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieving net-zero by 2050. South African companies are encouraged to develop detailed transition plans and to report transparently on progress, ensuring their strategies are validated through the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

5. **WATER RESILIENCE**
   South African companies are called to join the Forward Faster Water Resilience Target, part of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Water Mandate, to address the acute global water crisis through responsible stewardship and improve water-stressed basins. As the planet faces a projected 40 percent gap between water supply and demand by 2030, and with freshwater ecosystems in rapid decline, corporate action is crucial. Companies are encouraged to manage water sustainably within their operations and supply chains, invest in efficient water solutions, and foster collaboration across sectors. By doing so, they not only safeguard their long-term prosperity but also contribute to vital SDG goals like food security, human health, and biodiversity.

THE FIVE FORWARD FASTER DRIVERS

SOURCE: More information about the UNGC Fast Forward Drivers can be found here: https://forwardfaster.unglobalcompact.org/home

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Applying a Global Lens by leveraging the “6 SDG Transformations”

The global sustainability dialogue is focusing on how to accelerate action through the six SDG transformations, supported by measurable scorecards that promote international visibility of progress and enable delivery of the SDGs. These transformations create a simplified, prioritised and organised view of the SDGs and targets, intended to accelerate global SDG enablement.

The ‘Transformations’ are a series of 6 scorecards to track SDG implementation:
The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has developed a view of six interrelated long-term transformations. These are intended to enable long-term directed change and the international investment plans needed to enable the success of nations in delivering the Global Goals. The 6 Transformations are:

1. **Universal quality education and innovation-based economy**
2. **Universal health coverage**
3. **Zero-carbon energy systems**
4. **Sustainable ecosystems, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience**
5. **Sustainable cities and communities**
6. **Transformation to universal digital access and services**

THE RATIONALE FOR THE SDG TRANSFORMATIONS:

Collaborating in the international sphere on technology and investment:
Each of the transformations requires large-scale public and private investments until 2050, or circa mid-century. Each requires a technological transformation and a financing strategy to underpin the investment plans and monitoring systems. None can be solved by the private sector alone. Governments are being motivated to take the lead in all six areas to design policy and financial frameworks within which businesses can profitably invest and innovate.

Each scorecard consists of a collection of headline policy and investment measures:
This has been done to enable clear tracking of SDG implementation. The scorecards are then aligned to the SDSN SDG Index, which is based on outcome data (for example, on poverty rates, life expectancy, and CO_2 emissions). These measures are consistently evaluated globally each year, presenting a strong framework for comparative SDG tracking.

Note: The Sustainable Development Solutions Network has been leveraged as the source of South African SDG progress in this report because of its level of consistent international coverage. This provides the benefit of being able to compare performance consistently with most other countries.

Enabling a comparative and collaborative international approach:
At international level, measures of outcome are vulnerable to time lags and may not immediately reflect the impact of transformative policies and investments that governments have introduced. For this reason, the scorecards focus on enabling legal, regulatory and investment conditions needed to achieve the SDGs and the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement. This puts the 6 transformations on the front foot, by pressing for an enabling environment that sets countries up for success. Additionally, the framework provides a consistent sub-set of the 169 targets that under pin the 17 sustainable development goals, enabling a simplified view of progress.

THE 6 SDG TRANSFORMATIONS

“Technical and financial cooperation are required to enhance sustainable management of natural resources, address climate change impacts, enhance disaster preparedness, introduce clean technologies and promote a just energy transition.”

South African VNR 2024

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Companies Advocated for Pan-African Collaboration

Companies operating in a pan-African context emphasised the importance of regional collaboration. They highlighted that, within and beyond Africa, engagement with other trading communities significantly enhances prospects for achieving prosperity and sustainability outcomes.

Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP)
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Strengths

Population and demographic profile: In 2018, the total population size was estimated at 344.8 million inhabitants across the 16 Member States, accounting for 32% of the sub-Saharan African population and 4.5% of the world population (according to the World Bank in 2019). At its current growth rate, the population is projected to reach 947.3 million persons by 2065 (according to the UN in 2017).

Rich cultural heritage: The SADC region has a rich natural and cultural heritage, with some of the world's best World Heritage Sites such as the Victoria Falls and the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. These sites offer a variety of options for socio-economic growth for the region, including tourism and infrastructure development. In addition to the natural heritage sites, the region boasts diverse cultural traditions.

Natural resource base: This is of strategic importance and includes ocean and river fish, oil and natural gas, minerals and metals, productive agricultural land, ample renewable energy resources such as hydro, solar, geothermal, wind, etc.; in a world concerned with global warming and climate change, these resources have the potential to play an even bigger role in SADC's quest for industrial development.

Established and functional regional organs and institutions: The presence and ability of these is critical as they, alongside the Member States, have been the driving forces of the progress and advances made in pursuit of the regional integration agenda since the establishment of the Community. This means the region is well placed to leverage the experience, sectoral expertise, and institutional memory that are required in future.

Agriculture: This is the mainstay of the SADC economy, contributing 35% to its GDP; about 70% of the SADC population depend on agriculture for food, income, and employment; and it contributes about 13% to total export earnings and about 66% to the value of intra-regional trade. The agricultural sector is important as a source of feedstock as the region strives to transform itself into an industrialised community.

Free movement of goods and services: Member State commitment and political will aim to achieve these, along with shared economic development and regional integration is another important enabler. While movement towards the dream of economic development and integration, as stated in the SADC Treaty, has been slower than desired, Member States, as an individual bloc, as well as part of the broader African Union (AU) community of nations, remain committed to the ideals of regional development and integration.

Political stability: The region continues to be relatively stable despite some instances of intra-state conflict. This is partly a function of the bilateral and multi-lateral mechanisms established in the region, such as the primary institutional mechanism, the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation. Peace and stability are the accepted sine qua non for the successful delivery of industrial and infrastructure development initiatives to benefit the citizens of SADC.

Weaknesses

Slow ratification and domestication of certain protocols: Member States face different barriers regarding the consideration and adoption of some Protocols and Action Plans and often, even where approval has been secured, operational implementation lags behind.

Limited financial resources to implement regional and national programmes: This challenge is carried over from previous Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDPs) and is compounded by the region's dependence on Integrated Care Pathways (ICPs). It is likely that these financial resource constraints will only worsen as the full ramifications of Covid-19 filter through to local, regional, continental, and global economic spheres.

Limited capacity to coordinate the execution of regional and national programmes: At Member State level, weak or inadequate national coordination structures reportedly account for a lot of Member States' limited progress in implementing agreed programmes.

Lack of/inadequate/poorly maintained infrastructure: The lack of infrastructure and/or poorly maintained infrastructure is a weakness of strategic importance. Realisation of the objectives of the SADC Treaty and the RISDP, such as the movement of goods and people, depends on the quality of infrastructure available to make this a reality, such as roads, airports, railway lines, sea and water ports, and inland ports of entry.

Lack of reliable and quality data: The non-availability to critical regional stakeholders of reports and analysis from monitoring and evaluation, as well as lack of MandE systems on all change initiatives and programmes being implemented, is a weakness of strategic importance, as is the relative lack of reliable and quality data to anchor evidence-based planning and reporting at national and regional levels.

Barriers to ease of doing business: Many Member States do not have business regulations and environments in place that promote and facilitate the establishment and growth of businesses and attract investment. These compromise both the growth potential for the affected Member States and regional integration prospects for the region at large.

Macroeconomic instabilities: Some countries are also battling with these, as manifested in low and volatile rates of economic growth, low levels of capital formation, low levels of public capital spending due to lack of public savings, and inefficient utilisation of foreign capital inflows (and large levels of capital outflows). High inflation rates have long plagued some Member States, and the region as a whole will be negatively impacted by the increased macroeconomic instability caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Severe and persistent droughts: These have plagued the region in recent years and are associated with negative impacts on livelihoods, food shortages, and strained local economies. Extensive efforts have been made in the past to improve responses to periods of extensive drought and limit their impact.

Limited visibility of SADC: This has been cited as one of the main challenges for achieving ownership of regional programmes and projects by citizens of the region. It has been noted that SADC, as an institution and its various programmes, are usually only known by the officials who are directly involved in their implementation. The majority of the citizens do not know much about the work done by SADC.

Opportunities

Population structure: As mentioned above, SADC's large population is an important potential market for goods and services; its age structure creates a window of opportunity provided the economically active population continues to outstrip the non-active.

Approved agreements, protocols, and action plans: While further harmonisation of policies, standards, and guidelines is an opportunity for continued progress, the areas that have been finalised show that the region has taken the first few steps and does not have to start from scratch. Where progress has already been registered, the experience of the respective Member States provides an opportunity for others to learn accordingly.

Natural resource base: This offers a vast opportunity for the region to implement interventions that will improve food security, create employment, and grow the region's economies. These opportunities must, however, still be looked at through the lens of demand patterns for products and services post-Covid-19, as commodity prices and demand going forward will be suppressed, given the likely global recession.

Global and continental initiatives: Vast opportunities exist with respect to initiatives that are being rolled out in support of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Developments in technology: These provide yet-to-be harvested opportunities to ramp up productive capacity and service delivery in learning, communication, or automation of production processes. The deployment of innovative 4IR and artificial intelligence (AI)-related technologies is an opportunity that also speaks to the need for appropriate skills, including digital literacy across the region.

Further diversification and attracting foreign direct investment: In the traditional sense, SADC's growing economy brings opportunities for both of these to activate some of the initiatives and infrastructure development endeavours. Perhaps, as with all the other opportunities cited, the trajectory of the global economy post-Covid-19 will mostly influence the extent to which these opportunities can be realised.

Domestic resources mobilisation: This provides another opportunity that the region will seek to exploit going forward. Mobilising domestic resources, from both the public and private sectors, is central to the success of both the region and the continent in achieving the priorities of the RISDP, Agenda 2063, and the SDGs. Remittances from the region's diaspora citizens and African pension funds are resources that could be tapped in an innovative and sustainable manner to advance Member State development.

Threats

Differences in levels of development: This has been one of the main threats to efforts to fast-track the implementation of SADC programmes and projects, as some Member States have felt that they will be disadvantaged if the principle of differential symmetry is not applied in terms of contributions and safety nets.

Multiple memberships in Regional Economic Communities (REC): A number of countries belong to more than one REC, some of which have conflicting integration targets and milestones.

Potential for intra-state conflicts: This is a key threat with potential for a ripple effect on economic activity and migration. Peace, security, and stability are the necessary preconditions for state, regional, and global development. The SADC Vision recognises that violent conflicts lead to instability and crumbling of state structures, capacities, and resources, which results in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment and local, regional, and international insecurity and instability.

Poverty, unemployment, and inequality: These constitute a major threat because poor service delivery, unemployment, and poverty may easily morph into violent demonstrations, igniting instability.

Disease outbreaks and endemic health issues: The Covid-19 pandemic and HIV/AIDS (which is now under control in most of SADC) as well as Ebola have shown that adequate preparation for future communicable disease outbreaks is of great strategic importance.

Global-scale macroeconomic disruptions: These are also a clear threat to the implementation of RISDP 2020–2030. The financial meltdown of 2008 had long-lasting effects, and some sectors and Member States never completely rebounded to pre-crisis growth. Covid-19 has the potential to be equally, if not more, damaging to economies.

Impact of economic growth on the environment: Over the last few decades, rapid uneven economic growth has visited an insurmountable toll upon the planet's environment and natural resource base, and the need to avoid the acute impacts of global warming is increasingly pressing. The impacts of climate change are already evident in the region, with recurrent droughts, floods, and cyclones adversely affecting economic performance, food security, and the livelihoods of SADC citizens.

Weak institutions in the management of governance and corruption: These have also been identified as threats of strategic importance.

Rising geopolitical tensions: These represent an important external threat that needs to be taken cognisance of, particularly in light of the negative impacts the region may experience should tensions escalate uncontrollably. Two of the key developments fuelling the rise in geopolitical tensions across the globe are trade wars, as nations compete for market dominance and prestige, and the rise in nationalistic sentiments that has fuelled increasingly inward-looking policies. These are likely to result in international supply chain disruption, falls in prices of commodities, and lower demand for SADC products in international markets.

SOURCE: SADC RISDP 2020–2030
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis

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PARTCIPATING COMPANY INSIGHTS INTO SDG LEADERSHIP

This section reports back from South African company leaders on the business change priorities they are implementing to drive the sustainability agenda, including a comparison with global CEOs surveyed by Accenture and the United Nations Global Compact.

"Institutions aimed at identifying and prosecuting corruption have been strengthened significantly"

South African VNR 2024

Companies advocated for more visible and accountable business leadership acting to drive the 2030 Agenda. Action is needed to transform sustainability goals into actionable strategies for global progress.

Within the Voluntary National Review process, companies were asked to consult with their CEO and leadership teams to establish a South African baseline matching the global "Reimagining the Agenda" CEO Survey conducted by Accenture and the United Nations Global Compact. This provided a perspective on how company leadership is acting to progress the 2030 Agenda.

A focus on SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy and SDG 13: Climate Action was demonstrated, with 76% of CEOs in the Operations domain investing in renewable energy sources, a figure 27% above the global average. This effort highlights a strategic commitment towards energy sustainability and climate action, addressing both global environmental concerns and local energy challenges like loadshedding.

In the Strategy and Governance domains, questions related to SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure and SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals, revealed that 68% and 80% of CEOs, respectively, are innovating with new sustainable products and forming long-term strategic partnerships. These rates exceed global averages, showcasing a pursuit of resilience through innovation and collaborative action aimed at overcoming economic instability and promoting sustainable infrastructure. Additionally, 94% of CEOs prioritise digitisation and automation, significantly higher than the global norm, with 71% focusing on cybersecurity. This underscores a proactive approach to leveraging technology for sustainable development, especially in overcoming infrastructural and connectivity hurdles.

A focus on SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being showed an impressive 82% of CEOs prioritising employee wellbeing resources, significantly higher than the global response. This dedication signifies not only a recognition of the importance of health and wellbeing in achieving overall sustainability goals, but also a response to the specific socio-economic and historical challenges facing South African employees.

Finally, a focus on SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production was demonstrated by 54% of company leaders reporting that they are working to enhance transparency around social impacts within their value chains, with a further 39% diversifying their sustainability strategies. Although only slightly ahead of its global counterparts, these figures indicate a response to South Africa's distinct socio-economic landscape, emphasising ethical management and sustainable resource use.

The leadership survey findings showed both commitment and strategic direction that recognised the extent to which embracing sustainability principles can help South African businesses to be competitive and successful in overcoming the challenges prevalent in the South African business environment.

Leadership Insights

South African companies vary to global counterparts:

The VNR leadership survey with companies indicates that South African business leaders are placing a greater emphasis on sustainability actions than their global counterparts. This focus reflects the need for adaptation to South Africa's specific challenges, including its unique socio-economic landscape, energy constraints and a pressing need for transparency and trust.

INTRODUCTION TO THE APPROACH:
In a recent CEO Survey conducted as part of the 'Reimagining the Agenda' report by Accenture and the United Nations Global Compact, CEOs were questioned about the changes they were making in response to sustainability challenges. The survey was structured around six critical domains: strategy, governance, workforce, value chain, technology and operations, with the findings indicated a decisive shift towards sustainability.

As part of the Voluntary National Review of action to deliver the 2030 Agenda within the private sector, we asked participating companies to respond to the same questions to provide a South African leadership perspective on the progress being made by companies.

Read the full report: Reimagining the Agenda

DOMAIN HIGHLIGHTS:

The key differences in leadership perspectives included the following:

Strategy: The review indicated that 68% of South African CEOs are committed to sustainability by launching new products and services, a figure that surpasses the global average by 5%.

Governance: Reporting companies indicated that 80% of South African CEOs value long-term strategic partnerships as a means of attaining sustainability outcomes, substantially higher than the 66% global average.

Workforce: The survey revealed that 82% of South African leaders recognise the critical importance of employee wellbeing, including physical and mental health resources, scoring 26% higher than their global counterparts.

Value Chain: 54% of reporting companies expressed an intention to enhance transparency around the social impacts within their value chains, with 39% intending to diversify their sustainability strategies within these chains.

Technology: An impressive 94% of South African companies are working to digitise and automate business processes, 22% higher than their global counterparts, with 71% focusing on cybersecurity.

Operations: 76% of South African company leaders intend to invest in renewable energy, which is 27% higher than the global average, with 65% moving to apply circular business models.

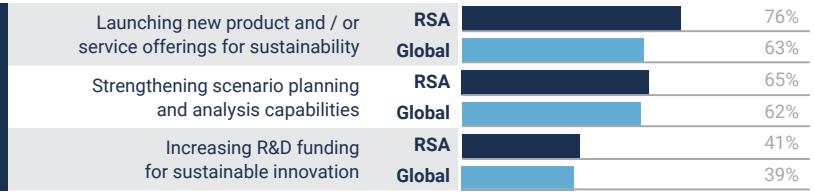
Notes: Whilst effort was made to keep questions and the method consistent, the detailed approaches used for collecting data survey varied between the two surveys.

STRATEGY: Inquiry into the introduction of sustainable products and services to meet market trends and drive innovation.

68% of South African CEOs are looking to launch new sustainable products and services, compared with the global average of 63%. This 5% variance clearly indicates that South African business leaders are tapping into sustainability as a differentiator and as a pathway to innovation—addressing issues such as energy shortages and social inequality, which demand urgent, innovative solutions. Similarly, the intention around scenario planning and analysis is stronger among South African CEOs, with 66% prioritising this, compared with 62% globally. This 4% shows a higher level of engagement with the complex, multifaceted risks inherent to the South African environment.

41% of South African CEOs are showing a commitment to research and development investment for sustainable innovation, compared to 39% globally. There's a notable 2% difference highlighting a growing emphasis on long-term innovation to address local challenges like resource management and foster resilient, forward-thinking business models.

STRATEGY



Governance: Examination of efforts to forge sustainable strategic partnerships, realign company purposes with sustainability, and link executive pay to sustainable outcomes.

A notable 80% of South African CEOs are seeking long-term strategic partnerships, in stark contrast to the 66% observed globally, illustrating a trend within South Africa towards collective action. This approach may be indicative of a collaborative strategy aimed at achieving resilience amid challenges such as economic instability and corruption. Furthermore, 71% of these leaders intend to link leadership remuneration to sustainability targets, which is nearly twice the global figure of 34%, emphasising a commitment to ethical and sustainable business practices.

There is a pronounced focus on board diversity, with 65% of South African CEOs prioritising this effort, compared with only 31% of CEOs globally. This 34% disparity points to an acute recognition in South Africa of the value that diverse leadership brings to navigating a complex and multifaceted business landscape. Similarly, a greater emphasis on transparency is evident, with over half of South African CEOs considering the disclosure of climate risks in financial statements significant, significantly outstripping the global average of 24%.

GOVERNANCE

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Workforce: Questions on initiatives to future-proof the workforce through upskilling, reskilling, wellness programmes and enhancing diversity.

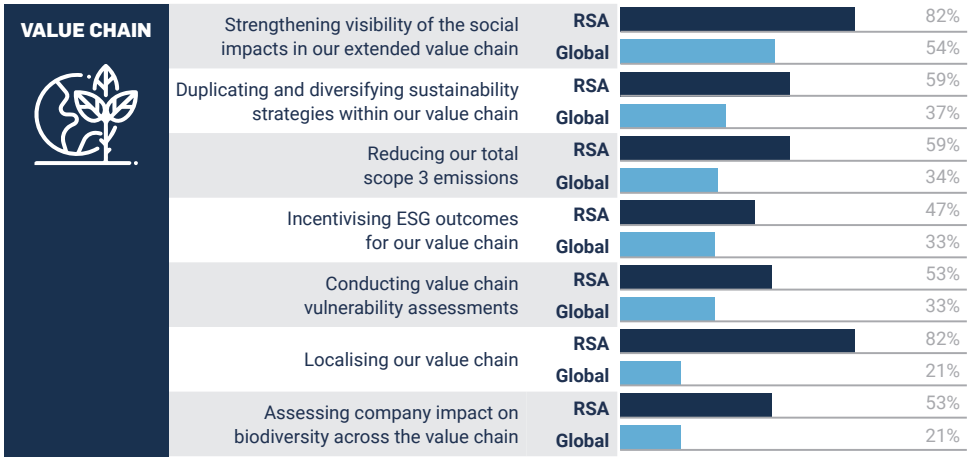
74% of South African CEOs emphasise upskilling or reskilling their workforce for the future labour market, closely aligning with the global response of 72%. This suggests a global consensus on the importance of workforce development as critical to future-proofing businesses. In South Africa, this may reflect a strategic response to specific local educational and skills gaps, positioning continuous learning and development as essential for maintaining competitiveness and innovation.

82% of South African CEOs recognise the importance of providing resources for physical and mental wellbeing, compared with a lower global average of 56%. This 26% discrepancy indicates a robust commitment within South Africa to workforce wellbeing, potentially as a response to a workforce more susceptible to high stress and health challenges due to historical disadvantages. For increasing workforce diversity, South African CEOs are aligned with the global figure, at 62% compared to 60%, reflecting a strong and growing acknowledgement of the value that diversity brings to driving business success.

Value Chain: Investigation into measures taken to improve the transparency of social impacts, emissions, and assess vulnerabilities within the value chain for more ethical management.

54% of South African leaders are focused on societal impacts within the supply chain, only 2% ahead of their global counterparts. This suggests a heightened awareness of social responsibility, reflective of South Africa's unique socio-economic context. Additionally, 39% of South African leaders were focused on diversifying sustainability, higher than the global 34%, signalling deliberate efforts to enhance supply chain resilience in response to local and global challenges.

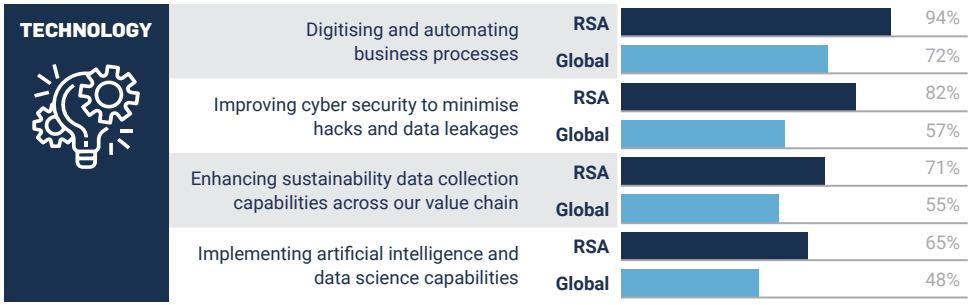
33% of South African CEOs prioritise reducing scope 3 emissions, slightly ahead of the global figure of 30%, indicative of a proactive approach. Meanwhile, 27% of South African leaders are looking to localise their value chains, exceeding the global average of 21%, which points towards a strategic move to strengthen local economies and mitigate supply chain risks. Additionally, the impact of biodiversity on the value chain is recognised by 21% of South African CEOs, aligning with the global perspective.



Technology: Exploration of investments in sustainable technologies, including digital process optimisation, cyber security, data collection, and the use of AI for managing risks.

94% of South African CEOs are prioritising the digitisation and automation of business processes, which is 22% higher than the global average of 72%. This substantial difference indicates the importance that South African leaders place on modernising and streamlining operations, a strategic move to counter the region's unique infrastructure and connectivity challenges. Furthermore, 71% of South African CEOs are focused on improving cybersecurity, compared to 57% globally, highlighting a possibly more pronounced need to secure digital assets.

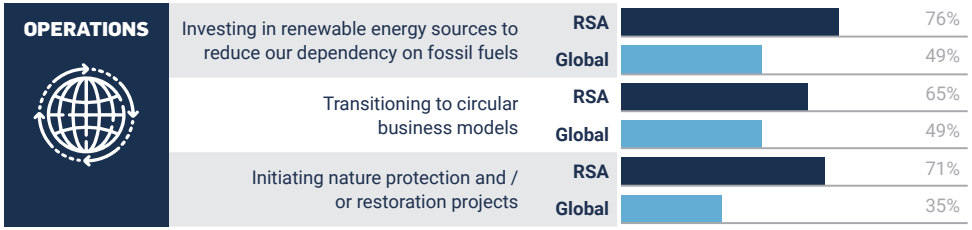
71% of South African leaders are enhancing sustainability data collection compared to 56% globally. This points to a proactive stance on harnessing data for sustainability reporting, showing the growing importance of measuring and reporting on sustainable practices. Similarly, 62% of South African CEOs are implementing AI and data science capabilities, significantly ahead of the 48% global response, indicating a keen interest in leveraging advanced technologies to drive innovation and maintain a competitive edge in a fast-evolving business landscape.



Operations: Progress on the adoption of renewable energy sources, shifts towards circular business models, and conservation efforts as part of operational sustainability strategies.

In South Africa, 76% of CEOs prioritised investment in renewable energy, a figure substantially higher than the global average of 49%. This considerable 27% difference underscores a strategic push among South African leaders towards energy sustainability, likely driven by the need to manage loadshedding, planned power cuts to manage energy supply, and the imperative to transition away from high-carbon energy sources due to impending global regulatory penalties.

65% of South African CEOs have indicated an intention to move towards circular business models, which is 16% more than the global figure of 49%. This shift reflects a robust move towards more sustainable resource use in a region where environmental and resource management is becoming increasingly critical. Equally notable is the commitment to nature conservation, with 71% of South African CEOs engaged in protection or restoration projects, closely aligning with the global average of 68%. This demonstrates a shared recognition, both globally and locally, of the value of ecological stewardship and its impact on long-term operational sustainability.



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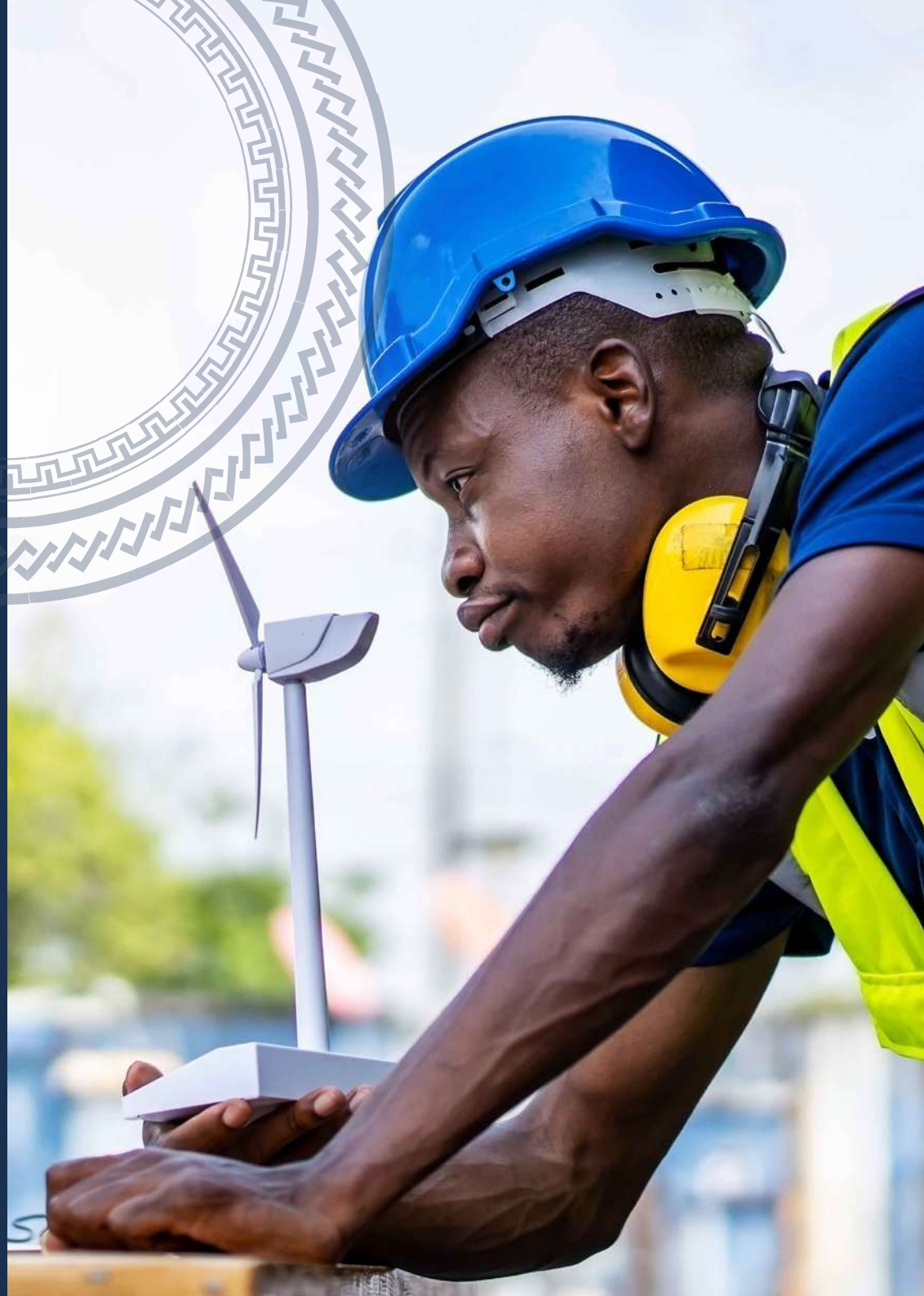
3 Policy Enablement

"Despite the adoption of advanced sustainability frameworks, South Africans' material footprint remains high and there is a slow uptake of sustainable practices."

South African VNR 2024



SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS: POLICY ENABLEMENT

MAKE IT SIMPLE:
Overall, it is vital that there is action to streamline the policy and procedural aspects of sustainability if we are going to accelerate action to attain the 2030 Agenda. Companies were clear that currently the bureaucratic hurdles that are necessary to attain certifications, permissions and access to incentives are a barrier to progress. Companies stressed that the current level of complexity is well beyond the competency of most businesses to successfully cope with, placing huge importance on shorter, clearer and more accessible guidelines.

MAKE IT 'ONE STOP SHOP':
Companies advocated for a 'one stop shop' approach to government related processes. There was a strong call to action for digital portals offering user-friendly navigation and guidance through simple requirements. Although companies generally applauded progress on an end to state capture, some felt that more automated processes would not only be faster, but also less vulnerable to corruption. Companies appealed for a unified approach to compliance, with more structure, and with fewer overlaps.

MAKE IT CONSISTENT:
Some companies asked for better harmonisation between local, regional and national policies to ensure consistency across different South African jurisdictions. This coupled with companies reporting they struggle to apply multiple sustainability frameworks, and sometimes varied methods for calculating measures resulting in difficulty understanding comparative performance between companies and between frameworks.

CHECK IT'S WORKING:
There was also a recommendation that policies be reviewed more transparently to gather business feedback on efficacy. This view included the idea that this kind of review could spotlight both local and global policies that have been particularly effective, enabling a meritocratic view of what works that could support policy evolution and future best practice.

LESS COMPLIANCE, MORE SHARED VALUE:
A final trend across the policy enablement space was that value creation should be a stronger focus within the policy sphere. Companies were vibrantly interested in policy focused on growing sustainable economic opportunities and policies focused on enabling collaboration. Whilst compliance is important, companies argued that a better balance can be achieved on the policy enablement agenda, with more focus placed in a policy mindset that motivates for incentives and the sharing and scaling of success stories.

A CHALLENGING TECHNOLOGY EXAMPLE:

Automating Business Compliance:

The Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) is an agency of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition in South Africa established by the Companies Act, 2008. The CIPC is vital to the private sector attainment of **SDG 16: Peace Justice and Strong Institutions**, because it is responsible for company registrations, maintenance, disclosures, intellectual property, and company compliance with legislative and financial reporting standards.

The Challenge:
This critical system has been regularly experiencing downtime as new and additional requirements are introduced. In March 2024, the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) put out a press release confirming that had been inundated with communications relating to problems with customer verification, beneficial ownership verification, Department of Home Affairs verifications and director amendments. Problems included system downtime, requests for re-submission, and new, complex process flows causing frustration. These issues have exacerbated companies' ability to file annual returns, resulting in company non-compliance and penalties. Further to this, there was negative impact on finance functions, accountancies and other financial resources, causing repeated re-work and additional expense. Given these challenges, it became unclear which companies were truly financially incompetent or non-compliant, and which were just negatively impacted by system challenges.

The Recommendations:
This is an important case study, given that companies have given a strong call to action for streamlined, simple, integrated and effective digital platforms. System implementations are often expensive, complex and challenging, with many examples of project failure in both the public and the private sector, in South Africa and globally. As such, critical success factors are readily available, and should be strongly prioritised. These include:

- Ensure absolute accountability from top executive leadership
- Ensure excellent internal project leadership
- Ensure a very high-quality ICT implementation partner
- Ensure a crystal clear, detailed solution requirement
- Ensure excellent programme oversight and governance
- Ensure that systems and data are properly tested

There is a high level of system transformation and automation required to enable effective public sector processes for both the private sector and for civil society. **Given this, there is a strong recommendation that the public sector be empowered with a very high-quality digital enablement capability.**

POLICY ENABLEMENT
Company Playback:

Companies were very vocal about the need for enabling policy to support delivery of the 2030 Agenda. The specific policy requirements of each industry are identified and explored in the industry reviews contained within this report. However, there were several consistent patterns that apply across industries. These included taking a comprehensive, integrated and a systematic approach to accelerating automation of paper-based processes, streamlining processes, simplifying standards and requirements, increased awareness, introducing a more incentive orientated policy mindset, integrating regulations, and accelerating the policy updates that are needed in areas experiencing rapid transformational change.

Companies advocated strongly for the following policy enablement options that would support company attainment of the SDGs:

1. **Automation of Compliance and Reporting Systems:**
   Develop and deploy digital platforms to automate reporting and compliance processes, making it easier for businesses, especially smaller companies, to demonstrate that they are meeting sustainability regulatory requirements without excessive effort. This would reduce red tape and make achieving compliance easier and less resource intensive. This would also increase transparency, making access to sustainability attainment easier to reference for stakeholders such as investors, customers and business partners.

2. **Simplify and Integrate Sustainability Standards and Regulations:**
   Develop basic compliance standards that offer a unified set of criteria that businesses can adopt easily. This can set an accessible foundation that prevents or reduces 'green washing', enabling entry level sustainability reporting for non-listed, smaller companies seeking to differentiate themselves in the sustainability space. Companies also urged country level and global policy enablement stakeholders to work to align emerging sustainability frameworks, particularly global companies needing to report or operate across different legal jurisdictions.

3. **Increase National Sustainability Awareness:**
   Country level sustainability engagement campaigns should offer a more consistent, integrated narrative to inform civil society, business and public sector stakeholders alike of key sustainability facts and trends. Companies advocate that communication campaigns are needed to inform and evolve a 'sustainability conscious mindset' across civil society. This should include awareness and policy debate, motivating for broad-based, cross sector engagement in policy formulation. Company participants positioned that awareness of the importance of sustainability is vital to influencing customer and employee demand for sustainability orientated policies, products and services. Participants motivated for national public sector and independent press campaigns to address the rising 'fake news' issue by providing credible, simple, factual information, as well as specific case studies that articulate the rationale for sustainability.

4. **Increase Awareness of Forthcoming Sustainability Policies:**
   Private sector level policy awareness campaigns are needed to consolidate and co-ordinate industry level insights into a stronger policy narrative and to inform of policy challenges, opportunities, incentives that are forthcoming. Many participating companies voiced concern that companies that are less involved in sustainability initiatives are unaware of forthcoming regulations. This raises a risk that many companies, especially smaller ones, will not be ready to adopt future regulations. This will negatively impact South African economic performance, as businesses struggle to remain price competitive or face penalties when trading internationally. There were also policy examples, such as the National Health Insurance bill, where participants had adamantly different understandings and interpretations of how policies with critical impact on business would procedurally work. This underscores the importance of mechanical and procedural clarity for companies.

5. **Improve the Availability of Sustainability Policy Information:**
   Better private sector information platforms with integrated, accurate, up to date, free information are vital. Companies complained that whilst rich, quality information exists, it is dispersed across a very large number of different platforms in a way that makes it hard to access a universal perspective. Additionally, much information can only be accessed via paid memberships, excluding companies that are unable to afford fees. Companies would like better access to more integrated information including market analysis, investor perspectives, customer insights, industry best practices, sustainability science and emerging technology. One example of this was that, whilst many companies were aware that Just Energy Transition policy roadmaps have been developed, very few had been able to source a trusted, simple view of the outcome.

6. **Simple, Free Sustainability Compliance Training Resources:**
   Better Training and educational materials providing clear guidance on sustainability compliance, standards and regulations should be more readily available. Some companies argued for training and enablement to be free at the point of delivery, or even incentivised. The training scope discussed went wider than policy and compliance enablement, including access to implementation and sustainability innovation methods. Companies were concerned that training needs regular updates given the level of change taking place. This raised questions and ideas relating to how training material funding models could work better to ensure regular updates, more integrated training libraries and more inclusive access.

7. **Sustainability Financial and Non-Financial Incentives**
   Policies that reward and recognise positive action by companies that are delivering on sustainability outcomes were strongly championed by companies. Throughout the reporting process companies cited examples such as tax breaks, grants and subsidies for businesses working on compliance and innovation.
   Companies also pointed out that incentives are not necessarily financial. Public recognition, the attainment of visible quality standards, and preferential treatment in public procurement processes were regularly offered as motivational incentives that could improve business adoption of sustainable practices. Companies pointed out that incentives can be a vital enabler assisting the affordability of sustainability practice for financially constrained companies competing to survive under poor economic conditions.

8. **Accelerating Policy Formulation to Assure Relevance**
   An agile, intelligent and rapid approach is needed if South African policies that relate to sustainability are going to evolve in advance of potential negative future impact. Companies cited multiple scenarios where technological advancements, economic conditions and societal expectations are changing or creating new and uncertain risks that require regulation review. Whilst many major companies were heavily engaged in policy formulation, other companies felt that the opportunity to input was not easily accessible or open. Participants were generally in favour of highly collaborative policy formulation processes; they also bemoaned the negative impact that high levels of collaboration have on legislative approval timelines.

   Companies generally advocated for fostering public-private partnership with cross industry representation to co-create solutions for complex challenges, such as renewable energy adoption, water conservation and waste management. Some companies pressed for the involvement of senior business leadership, whilst other participants advocated for leaner policy formulation teams that prioritised subject matter experts. Often, however, company participants were not aware of the work being done by organisations such as the National Business Initiative (NBI) or Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), suggesting that there is an opportunity for better communication of policy formulation opportunities for companies.

Companies stressed that they do not expect the Public Sector to act alone. Accelerating policy enablement will require a multi-level stakeholder approach.

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Policy Needs Analysis

Financial Services and FinTech

The policies, regulations and standards that participating companies advocated for innovation, reform and support on included:

FinTech Regulation and Innovation:
Goals: SDG 9 | SDG 17
Adaptation of regulations to accommodate the rapid growth and innovation of the FinTech sector, to ensure emerging technologies and business models are effectively regulated without stifling innovation.

Climate Change and Environmental Policy:
Goals: SDG 7 | SDG 13 | SDG 15
Policies need to be modernised to standardise sustainability and ESG reporting, including financing mechanisms and incentives for the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Small Business Support and Formalisation:
Goals: SDG 8 | SDG 10
Policies that simplify the process of formalisation for small businesses, making it easier to access financial services and credit.

Protection of Personal Information (POPIA):
Goals: SDG 9 | SDG 16
Update and refinement of guidelines to address evolving artificial intelligence and automation technologies in the evolving digital landscape.

Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism:
Goals: SDG 16 | SDG 17
Modernisation of policies to address new threats and leverage technological advancements for more effective monitoring and enforcement.

Cybersecurity and Digital Banking:
Goals: SDG 9 | SDG 16
Policies to strengthen further cybersecurity within the financial sector, protecting consumers and institutions from digital threats.

Interoperability and Payments Systems:
Goals: SDG 10 | SDG 16 | SDG 17
Updating regulations to promote interoperability among different financial services providers, including traditional banks and FinTech companies.

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

The policies, regulations and standards that participating companies advocated for innovation, reform and support on included:

Modernisation and Innovation Policies:
Goals: SDG 9 | SDG 13 | SDG 12
Addressing the dual challenge of job creation and loss due to automation and technological advancements. Modernisation is key to enhancing efficiency, safety, and environmental sustainability in mining practices.

Pricing and Investment Attraction:
Goals: SDG 8 | SDG 17
Policies to ensure critical minerals are sold at market-related prices to maximise value creation and attract investment. This includes domestic pricing policy to support reinvestment in local communities, R&D, and sustainability with private-public collaboration, considering incentives and support vital to attracting new market entrants.

Energy and Logistics Infrastructure:
Goals: SDG 7 | SDG 9 | SDG 13 | SDG 17
Addressing electricity supply issues and improving rail and port logistics are crucial for supporting the mining sector's growth and its ability to meet global demand for critical minerals.

Human-centred Practices and Labour Policies:
Goals: SDG 3 | SDG 8 | SDG 10 | SDG 15
Emphasising safety, productivity, and environmental sustainability through human-centred practices.

Gender Equality and Inclusion:
Goals: SDG 5 | SDG 11
Advancing diversity, inclusion, and equality in the mining sector by enabling female representation at all levels of employment, from leadership to operational roles.

Sustainable Community Development:
Goals: SDG 3 | SDG 5 | SDG 11 | SDG 17
Strengthening Social and Labour Plans to ensure the mining sector's contributions to host communities are sustained and impactful.

Global Demand for Critical Minerals:
Goals: SDG 8 | SDG 17
Developing strategic policies that respond to the global scramble for critical minerals, ensuring sustainable exploitation and positioning South Africa as a leader in the green economy.

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

The policies, regulations and standards that participating companies advocated for innovation, reform and support on included:

Sustainable Agricultural Practices:
Goals: SDG 2 | SDG 12 | SDG 15
Promote policies that incentivise sustainable farming, precision agriculture, and water management techniques.

Renewable Energy Integration:
Goals: SDG 7 | SDG 13
Develop regulations to support the integration of renewable energy in food production, reducing carbon emissions and driving energy-efficient practices.

Food Traceability and Safety Standards:
Goals: SDG 2 | SDG 12
Update food safety and traceability regulations to ensure accountability and transparency in the food supply chain, enhancing consumer trust and supporting ethical practices.

Support for Local Food Economies:
Goals: SDG 8 | SDG 11
Enact policies that bolster local food networks, promote urban agriculture, and support community-driven initiatives.

Circular Economy in Food Waste Management:
Goals: SDG 12
Incentivise initiatives that focus on waste reduction and sustainable packaging, encouraging a shift towards circular economic models within the food industry.

Advancement of Food Retail Technologies:
Goals: SDG 9
Create frameworks that encourage innovation in food retail, including e-commerce and AI, to enhance market access and consumer choice while considering the impact on jobs.

Development of Eco-tourism in Agriculture:
Goals: SDG 8 | SDG 15
Foster policies that integrate eco-tourism with sustainable agricultural practices, leveraging South Africa's biodiversity to enhance tourism and support rural economies.

Food Industry Skill Development:
Goals: SDG 4 | SDG 8
Promote vocational and technological education to prepare the workforce for emerging roles in sustainable agriculture, food processing, and retail, addressing skills gaps.

Digital Food Security Initiatives:
Goals: SDG 2 | SDG 9
Encourage the development of digital solutions for food security, from blockchain-enabled supply chains to apps that facilitate access to nutritious foods.

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Policy Needs Analysis

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

The policies, regulations and standards that participating companies advocated for innovation, reform and support on included:

Renewable Energy Development:
Goals: SDG 7 | SDG 13
Promote policies that support the development and integration of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, and storage solutions.

Renewable Energy and Smart Grid Implementation:
Goals: SDG 7 | SDG 9
Create frameworks that facilitate the adoption of smart grid technologies for dynamic energy management, enhancing the resilience and efficiency of the electricity network. Encourage innovative financing and investment models to support the scale-up of renewable energy projects, water sustainability initiatives, and sustainable urban development.

Investment and Efficiency in Utilities Distribution:
Goals: SDG 6 | SDG 7
Support initiatives aimed at upgrading utility infrastructure for efficient distribution and reduced waste in both the energy and water sectors, aligning with broader sustainability goals.

Water Resource Management Innovation:
Goals: SDG 6 | SDG 11
Develop comprehensive regulations for efficient water use, recycling, and innovative water treatment technologies, ensuring sustainable water supply and quality.

Transportation and Mobility Innovation:
Goals: SDG 9 | SDG 11
The development and adoption of clean transportation technologies to improve mobility for businesses and individuals whilst reducing environmental impact.

Accelerate Sustainable Construction Practices:
Goals: SDG 11 | SDG 12
Encourage the use of sustainable materials and construction practices through incentives and standards, driving the industry towards greener, more efficient building methods.

Real Estate Sustainability Acceleration:
Goals: SDG 11 | SDG 13
Foster regulations and incentives that promote smart home technologies and sustainable urban planning, contributing to environmentally friendly and energy-efficient buildings.

Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure:
Goals: SDG 17
Cultivate partnerships between government and private sector to invest in and develop sustainable infrastructure projects, leveraging mutual strengths for societal benefit.

Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

The policies, regulations and standards that participating companies advocated for innovation, reform and support on included:

Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity:
Goals: SDG 9 | SDG 10 | SDG 16
Ensure policies are aligned with 5G, quantum computing, LEO satellite network and spectrum management, maximising access to digital services including digital governance and e-Civic engagement through technology.

Telecommunications and Media Regulations:
Goals: SDG 8 | SDG 16
Updating regulations to facilitate rapid deployment of new technologies and ensure fair competition, innovation and convergence in the telecom sector including integration of digital currencies into the financial system. Address the rise of fake news and promote quality media information, including a sustainability mindset and culture.

Education and Skill Development:
Goals: SDG 4 | SDG 5 | SDG 8
Update policies to promote immersive, STEM and technology skills development and enterprise development, promoting gender diversity and inclusion. To incentivise research into the future of work and the impact of automation on employment.

Digital Economic Development:
Goals: SDG 8 | SDG 9
Action to incentivise and promote an ecosystem of startups and existing business entrants into emerging technologies, enabling access to software and hardware for learners and business enterprises to drive a gig economy. To address employment regulation of remote work and emerging gig economy employment practices.

Green ICT Policy:
Goals: SDG 8 | SDG 12
Promote and incentivise local low carbon ICT production and circular economies to recycle and repurpose ICT equipment and mobilise sustainable ICT waste practices.

Incentivise Digital Healthcare:
Goals: SDG 3 | SDG 9
Refresh telehealth regulations and healthcare policies to incorporate telemedicine and digital health services, ensuring they are accessible and regulated.

Data Protection, Privacy and Cyber Currency:
Goals: SDG 4 | SDG 16
Incentivise entry into the cyber protection marketplace including research into data protection and quantum computing. To develop cyber talent pools. To develop regulatory frameworks for blockchain applications.

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

The policies, regulations and standards that participating companies advocated for innovation, reform and support on included:

Precision Healthcare and AI Integration:
Goals: SDG 3
Promote policies that support the integration of AI and genetic research in healthcare to facilitate precision medicine development, partnerships and adoption.

Circular Economy and Waste Reduction:
Goals: SDG 12
Develop regulatory frameworks that incentivise circular economy practices and support innovation across industries to minimise waste and enhance resource efficiency.

Digital Health Expansion:
Goals: SDG 3
Create policies that expand access to telehealth and remote monitoring services, targeting equitable healthcare delivery, enhancing digital infrastructure, and strengthening data protection measures.

Green Manufacturing and Sustainability Incentives:
Goals: SDG 9 | SDG 12
Encourage green manufacturing technology adoption through tax incentives, grants, and support programmes. Promote standards and certifications for eco-friendly products and practices within the sector.

Renewable Energy for Manufacturing and Healthcare:
Goals: SDG 7 | SDG 13
Support the integration of renewable energy sources within manufacturing and healthcare sectors with incentives and streamlined regulatory processes.

Supply Chain Digitalisation and Transparency:
Goals: SDG 9 | SDG 12
Advocate for policies promoting supply chain digitalisation to enhance efficiency and transparency to enable ethical procurement and supply chain management.

E-commerce Infrastructure Development:
Goals: SDG 9
Invest in digital infrastructure to support e-commerce growth, ensuring businesses have access to online marketplaces and logistic networks.

Innovation in Sustainable Materials:
Goals: SDG 9 | SDG 12
Support and incentivise research and development in sustainable materials, such as low-carbon alloys and recycled metals.

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4

Reporting and SDG Maturity

"Despite the adoption of advanced sustainability frameworks South Africans' material footprint remains high and there is a slow uptake of sustainable practices."

South African VNR 2024

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MATURITY OF COMPANY SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

This section of the report examines the maturity of business sustainability reporting in South Africa, including the degree to which the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated into company performance reports.

The overall Voluntary National Review of progress is undermined by a local and global deficit of the aggregated information needed to visibly track business performance against the SDGs.

Despite being halfway to 2030, substantial efforts are required to improve the data and methodologies that support the SDG indicator framework. The resolution 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,' adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015, emphasised the necessity of meticulous progress monitoring from the beginning.

There is a lack of consistent and aggregated information from the private sector: This gap obstructs quality tracking of advancements toward the SDGs. While government plays a pivotal role in monitoring and reviewing progress at various levels, the integral role of businesses in this process is underscored by the resolution's call for broader measures of progress beyond GDP. The comprehensive monitoring framework for the SDGS, comprising 231 indicators, with data for 219 indicators available as of October 2022, are hampered by gaps, particularly those relating directly to business.

South Africa has been actively engaged in developing new methodologies: The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, presented in South Africa at the inaugural United Nations World Data Forum in January 2017 and adopted by the UN Statistical Commission, laid out a strategic vision to reinforce data systems tailored for Agenda 2030. This included seeking new sources to segment the indicators by key population groups such as gender and generating indicators to track local advancements.

The participating companies were 51% small to medium enterprises: When reviewing the responses in this section, it should be noted that the results are naturally influenced by the reporting companies' sizes. Only 30% of the participating companies were listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), and 49% of the participants were large corporates, which are more likely to adopt mandated international frameworks, or those highly recommended for listed companies, such as the JSE Climate and Sustainability Disclosures and King IV. SMEs, which account for 51% of the analysis, may lack the resources or face less regulatory pressure to adopt comprehensive frameworks like the GRI or CDP, potentially leading to lower reported adoption rates.

This maturity assessment is indicative of sustainability-oriented companies: Many companies involved in the survey assessing frameworks and reporting maturity are members of the Global Compact Network South Africa. This affiliation, along with other participants' commitment to activities like the Voluntary National Review, has likely influenced the report's findings, suggesting a higher level of reporting maturity than would be seen in a holistic private sector assessment. It is probable that these participating companies are more advanced in their adoption of sustainability frameworks and their associated reporting.

Consolidated information about companies is not readily available online: South African business reporting is comprehensive, with inputs to the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC), and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Companies submit tax returns and financial statements to SARS, annual returns and company information to the CIPC, and training and skills development data to SETAs. However, this information is not available in a consolidated format for understanding overall performance and progress. Better access to this information would benefit multiple stakeholders, including investors, regulatory bodies, government agencies, financial analysts, researchers, business competitors, credit rating agencies, media, labour unions, NGOs, suppliers, and customers, enabling them to make informed decisions and promote transparency.

Company Status on Sustainability Framework Reporting

During the Voluntary National Review, we asked companies which sustainability frameworks they had adopted, and what they intended to adopt soon.

Overall, South African companies show a strong inclination towards frameworks that align with national priorities and international financial reporting. There is also a growing interest in frameworks focusing on climate and sustainability reporting, indicating a shift towards more environmentally conscious business operations. However, some global standards like ESRS and IFS Performance Standards have not yet gained traction within the South African context.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **92,9%** of participating companies reported they have adopted Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
- **46,7%** of companies reported intention to adopt the Carbon Disclosure Project
- **37,7%** of companies are reporting on JSE frameworks, with 18,8% intending to adopt in the future

	SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK	% OF COMPANIES WHO HAVE ADOPTED	% FUTURE INTENTION TO ADOPT	NO CURRENT PLANS TO ADOPT
1	B-BBEE – Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment	92,9%	0,0%	7,10%
2	SDGs – UN Sustainable Development Goals	80,0%	20,0%	0,0%
3	King IV – Responsibilities of Governing Bodies	62,5%	12,5%	25,0%
4	IFRS – International Finance Regulatory Standards	60,0%	0,0%	40,0%
5	TCFD – Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures	50,0%	0,0%	50,0%
6	The Ten Principles – UN Global Compact	46,7%	40,0%	13,3%
7	SASB – Sustainability Accounting Standards Board	46,7%	13,3%	40,0%
8	CDP – Carbon Disclosure Project	46,7%	6,7%	46,7%
9	GRI – Global Reporting Initiative	40,0%	13,3%	46,7%
10	JSE – Climate and Sustainability Disclosures	37,5%	18,8%	43,8%
11	US Securities and Exchange Commission	33,3%	0,0%	66,7%
12	ISSB – International Sustainability Standards	26,7%	26,7%	46,7%
13	SEE – The JSE Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative	18,8%	12,5%	68,8%
14	PRI – Principles of Responsible Investment	13,3%	6,7%	80,0%
15	CDSP – The Climate Disclosure Standards Board	12,5%	6,3%	81,3%
16	EP – The Equator Principles	6,7%	0,0%	93,3%
17	ESRS – European Sustainability Reporting Standards	6,3%	18,8%	75,0%
18	UNCTAD – Investment Policy Framework	6,3%	6,3%	87,5%
19	ISO 26000 – Social Responsibility Guidance Standard	0,0%	18,8%	81,3%

SOURCE: Private Sector Voluntary National Review Analysis of Participating Company Contributions.

ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK ADOPTION:

- **B-BBEE (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment):** This is the most adopted framework, with 92.9% of companies currently using it, indicating a strong alignment with national efforts to redress economic imbalances.
- **SDGs (UN Sustainable Development Goals):** With an 80% adoption rate, there's a high commitment to global sustainability goals, showing that South African companies are significantly focused on broader developmental impacts.
- **King IV (King Report on Governance for South Africa):** 62.5% adoption suggests a majority of companies are committed to governance principles that promote ethical leadership and corporate citizenship.
- **IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards):** Adopted by 60% of companies, demonstrating a commitment to international accounting and financial transparency.
- **TCFD (Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures) and The Ten Principles - UN Global Compact:** Both have a 50% current adoption rate, but notably, the UN Global Compact has a 40% future adoption indication, suggesting growing interest in corporate responsibility and sustainable development.
- **SASB (Sustainability Accounting Standards Board), CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project), and GRI (Global Reporting Initiative):** These have a 46.7% current adoption, with GRI seeing a 13.3% intent to adopt in the future, reflecting an emphasis on environmental reporting and sustainability metrics.
- **JSE (JSE Climate and Sustainability Disclosures):** Lower current usage at 37.5% but with 18.8% of companies planning to adopt it, indicating a potential increase in response to local market expectations.

Frameworks with lower current adoption rates but future interest include ISSB (International Sustainability Standards Board), PREI (Principles of Responsible Investment), and ESRS (European Sustainability Reporting Standards).

Frameworks with minimal or no future adoption intentions include the CDP, IFS Performance Standards, and UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), which might suggest these are less relevant or known among the surveyed companies.

Notably low adoption and low intent to adopt: The Equator Principles, ESRS, UNCTAD, and ISO 26000, suggest either a lack of relevance, awareness, or applicability to South African companies at present.

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Company Progress on Adoption of the UNGC "Ten Principles"

Whilst companies are evidencing strong participation at a basic level, only 14% of South African United Nations Global Compact signatories have progressed to Advanced Level reporting.

The assessment of South African companies regarding the adoption of the United Nations Global Compact's (UNGC) ten principles indicated strong commitment to sustainable and ethical business practices. Notably, 85% of companies report actively measuring the outcomes of their initiatives related to the ten principles, indicating a proactive approach to monitoring and improving their impact.

Ten Principles Adoption: % of South African GCNSA participant companies:

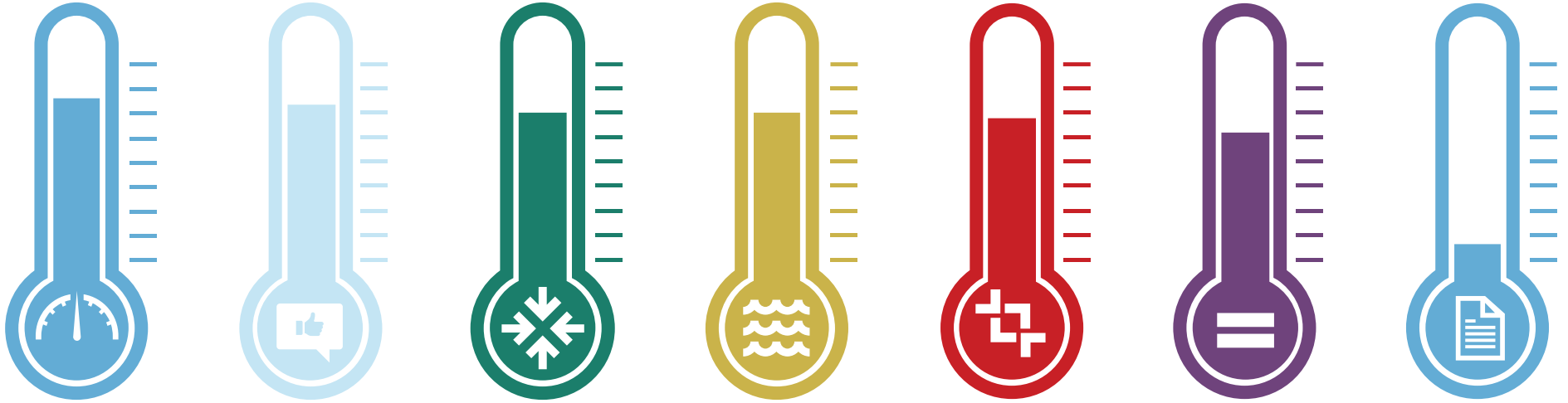
- **83%** of companies have a CEO Statement of Support for the Ten Principles of the UNGC
- **78%** of companies report that Human Rights Policies and Actions are in place
- **80%** of companies report that Labour Rights Policies and Actions are in place
- **80%** of companies report that Environment Policies and Actions are in place
- **80%** of companies report that Anti-Corruption Policies and Actions are in place
- **85%** of companies report that Measures Outcomes on Ten Principles are in place
- **14%** of companies have UNGC Advanced Level Reporting

Enabling a simple starting point:

Participating companies highlighted the importance of having a basic and entry-level option within sustainability frameworks. This encourages broad participation by enabling businesses of all sizes to get started, despite resource constraints and a lack of expertise. An accessible entry point allows companies to build reporting competencies and foster a sustainability culture that can develop incrementally.

Entry-level reporting enables companies to start their journey with manageable expectations, familiarising themselves with the process, and demonstrating their commitment to stakeholders. Over time, as companies grow in their sustainability efforts, this approach can evolve into more advanced reporting practices, ensuring that businesses at all levels can contribute to and support the global sustainability agenda.

Over time, basic participation can lead to more advanced reporting practices as companies mature in their sustainability efforts, ensuring that all businesses can contribute to and support the global sustainability agenda.



85%
of companies report they measure the outcomes of Ten Principles delivery

83%
of companies have a CEO Statement of Support for the UNGC Ten Principles

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of companies report that Anti-Corruption Policies and Actions are in place

78%
of companies report that Human Rights Policies and Actions are in place

14%
of companies have UNGC Advanced Level Reporting

SOURCE: Analysis of South African UNGC Communication of Progress Reports. For more information about the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact see the Methodology chapter.

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Company Progress on Embedding the SDGs

Companies committed to the SDGs are generally making progress in embedding sustainability into their business strategy and operations. Those leading the field are calling for clearer, simpler standards with which they can align.

At the outset of the Voluntary National Review process, annual Communications of Progress reports from UNGC participating companies were analysed to develop a collective perspective on the extent to which the Sustainable Development Goals are embedded within business operations.

The results indicated that, for Global Compact Network South Africa participants:

- **60%** of companies had prioritised the SDGs
- **62%** of companies had linked the SDGs to identified opportunities
- **55%** of companies had defined target KPIs for their SDG priorities
- **63%** of companies had integrated the SDGs into a sustainability model
- **45%** of companies had defined SDG outcomes
- **37%** of companies had prioritised the SDGs in collaboration with stakeholders

During the process, companies that had already aligned with the SDGs reported finding the framework useful. It was, however, not as widely adopted as hoped. Companies suggested that more universal adoption of the Global Goals could galvanise opportunities that have yet to be realised, unifying the private sector.

The rationale for aligning with the SDGs as given by participating companies included:

Improved strategic positioning on sustainability:

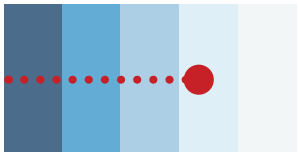
- The SDGs provide a framework for companies to direct their sustainability efforts and strategic planning.
- Commitment to the SDGs sets companies apart from competitors, showcasing their dedication to sustainability.
- Investors are drawn to companies with SDG-aligned strategies, finding them to be more sustainable investments.

A useful framework for driving operational and financial sustainability benefits:

- The SDGs help companies identify and mitigate environmental, social and governance risks.
- Pursuing SDG-related improvements leads to cost savings, resulting in efficiencies and reduced resource consumption.
- The SDGs often align with emerging regulatory trends, preparing companies for future compliance demands.
- The SDGs encourage the creation of more sustainable supply chains, which can improve resilience and stability.

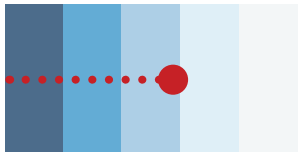
A solid mechanism for enriching social and human capital sustainability commitments:

- Association with the SDGs can enhance brand perception and customer loyalty.
- A commitment to the SDGs resonates with employees and potential hires, aligning with their values and aspirations.
- The SDGs foster stronger community ties and stakeholder relationships through shared goals and objectives.



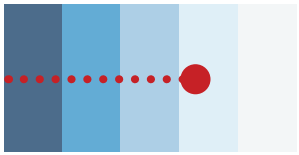
63%

of companies reported having SDGs integrated to a sustainability model



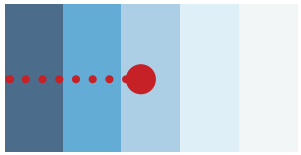
55%

of companies reported having target KPIs for SDG priorities



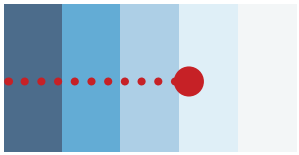
62%

of companies had linked the SDGs to identified opportunities



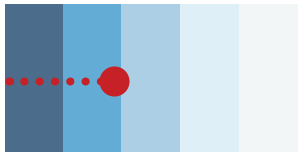
45%

of companies reported having SDG outcomes defined



60%

of companies reported having SDGs prioritised



37%

of companies reported having prioritised SDGs in collaboration with stakeholders

SOURCE: Analysis of South African UNGC Communication of Progress Reports. For more information about the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact see the Methodology chapter.

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5 Opportunities

“Ambitious commitments supported by substantial financing are driving the just energy transition in South Africa.”

South African VNR 2024

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INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE REVIEW OF PROGRESS

This section contains an analysis of the top nine opportunities that were identified and prioritised for each industry by participating companies during the private sector Voluntary National Review.

TOP SIX OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

Multi-level stakeholder co-ordination is needed to maximise the material sustainability opportunities that could enable the South African private sector.

The analysis from the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the South African private sector yielded a powerful range of opportunities. These were aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to highlight areas for potential growth and development:

Technological Innovations:
A significant opportunity lies in adopting new technologies that drive efficiency and sustainability. This includes the deployment of smart grids and renewable energy systems in the energy sector, precision agriculture technologies in food production, and advanced digital health solutions in the healthcare industry. These innovations not only enhance operational efficiency, but also align with environmental and health standards, contributing to broader sustainability goals.

Financial Instruments and Services:
There is a growing opportunity for the development of green financing and inclusive financial products that support sustainable development. Financial services are evolving to include sustainability-focused investment portfolios, insurance products that encourage risk management in the face of climate change, and FinTech solutions that offer accessible financial services to underserved populations, driving economic inclusion and environmental stewardship.

Capacity Building and Education:
Enhancing skills and knowledge across industries is crucial, with opportunities arising in educational programmes tailored to modern technology and sustainability. Initiatives include upskilling workers in renewable energy techniques, providing training in sustainable agricultural practices, and developing curricula that integrate sustainability into core educational frameworks.

Infrastructure and Community Development:
Opportunities in sustainable infrastructure development are vast, encompassing green building projects, sustainable urban planning, and infrastructure that supports electric vehicles and renewable energy. These projects not only improve the quality of life, but also foster community development and resilience.

The Number of Industry Opportunities Arising per SDG

The industry opportunities were aligned to the SDGs and then counted. This provides a view of the 'opportunity density' per sustainable development goal. This was used to identify the top three opportunities across the private sector.

TOP SIX OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

- **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SDG 7):** Opportunities are identified in advancing renewable energy systems, smart grid technologies and energy efficiency measures. This also ties into SDG 13 (Climate Action), with a focus on green financing for energy and transition initiatives.
- **Sustainable Urban Development (SDG 11):** There's a focus on sustainable transport infrastructure, green building solutions, and smart home technologies that contribute to the development of sustainable cities and communities.
- **Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture (SDG 2):** Innovation in food production, leveraging precision agriculture technologies, and promoting sustainable food practices are emphasised to enhance food security.
- **Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12):** Circular economy initiatives, sustainable product development, and advanced food preservation technologies are highlighted to foster responsible consumption patterns and reduce waste.
- **Health and Well-being (SDG 3):** There are opportunities in advancing tele-health services, precision medicine, and the development of healthcare solutions that are cost-effective and accessible.
- **Inclusive Economic Growth (SDG 8):** Initiatives that create job opportunities, particularly in the digital and FinTech sectors, aim to foster inclusive economic growth.
- **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG 9):** The private sector seeks to drive industrial innovation with a special emphasis on sustainable infrastructure and advanced manufacturing technologies.
- **Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10):** Diversity within financial services and leveraging digital advancement to include underserved and marginalised populations are priorities.
- **Climate Action (SDG 13):** Initiatives to embed climate risk assessments and manage the environmental impact of operations align with climate action goals.
- **Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6):** Investment in water infrastructure, recycling systems, and conservation initiatives underlines the focus on water sustainability.
- **Life on Land (SDG 15):** The mining sector emphasizes biodiversity and land conservation, aiming to create value in harmony with environmental stewardship.
- **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16):** There is a drive for improved cybersecurity, data protection and transparent integrated reporting.
- **Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17):** Collaboration across sectors, including partnerships for local community development, is identified as vital for progress towards the SDGs.

	Primary Risk SDG(s)	Opportuniry: Analysis	Benefit	Ease	Value	Appel	SDG1	SDG2	SDG3	SDG4	SDG5	SDG6	SDG7	SDG8	SDG9	SDG10	SDG11	SDG12	SDG13	SDG14	SDG15	SDG16	SDG17
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	SDG 2 | 12	44,9	7,7	5,8	7,6	7,6	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	SDG 11	50,2	7,8	6,4	7,3	8	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Financial Services and FinTech	SDG 16	54,9	7,9	6,9	7,6	8,4	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	SDG 3 | 9	35,1	7,6	4,7	7,0	8,1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	SDG 12	45,6	7,6	6,0	7,2	7,2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	SDG 9	53,4	7,4	7,2	6,9	7,7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

Source: VNR 2024 Industry Round Table Series Analysis, 2024

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Summary of Industry Opportunity SDGs

Companies contributed opportunities and initiatives at company, private sector and national level that were then consolidated into an industry perspective.

These 96 risks were then reviewed and rated within the industry round table series and subsequently clustered into a private sector perspective of risks and challenges arising for the private sector in 2024:

PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail:

Opportunities in this sector are geared towards leveraging precision agriculture technologies to enhance crop yield and optimising resource management. The sector also sees potential in renewable energy solutions, sustainable food production with traceability, and innovative sustainable food products, like plant-based proteins. Investment in circular economy and food waste reduction, along with advanced food preservation and safety technologies, were also prioritised.

PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate:

This sector identified opportunities to revolutionise transport with clean technology, smart grid and renewable technologies, and integrated renewable energy systems. They focus on implementing water efficiency and recycling systems, upgrading urban water management, and building with sustainable construction materials. There's a drive towards developing smart home technologies, green construction initiatives and consulting on green building solutions.

PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

Financial Services and FinTech:

Priorities here include embedding climate risk assessment and management, enabling green financing, and advancing inclusive finance products and services. The sector also aims to promote investment in sustainable FinTech, support digital advances in integrated reporting, and improve cybersecurity and data protection. Diversity within financial services and mitigating negative economic impacts for clients are also critical. Sustainable financing for local communities emerged as a significant opportunity.

PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health:

Opportunities in these sectors emphasise the mobilisation of telehealth and remote monitoring services to expand healthcare access, improving patient outcomes and facilitating early treatment. Optimising supply chain management technologies is crucial for enhancing procurement efficiency and transparency. The sector also benefits from delivering e-commerce optimisation services, enabling a seamless marketplace where supply meets demand. There is a strong focus on green manufacturing consulting and circular economy offerings to improve production processes and reduce waste. The production of sustainable materials, such as low-carbon alloys and recycled metals, caters to the growing demand for eco-friendly manufacturing. Advanced drug development and precision medicine services offer cost-effective, accessible healthcare solutions, tailoring treatments to individual needs and enabling early intervention for chronic conditions.

PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources:

Opportunities in these sectors include attracting strategic partners to enhance local education, healthcare, and infrastructure, thus accelerating job creation. Biodiversity and land conservation initiatives are essential for promoting restoration and involving partners in tourism and agriculture. Improving water management efficiencies through technology can reduce consumption and costs. Circular economy opportunities in mineral and metal processing focus on recycling and reusing materials, creating jobs, and introducing product-as-a-service models. Prioritising independent green energy production can power operations and reclaim energy and carbon credits. Investing in sustainable prospecting and mining technologies supports responsible mineral and metal extraction. Automation and digitalisation in mining enhance safety and productivity. Advancing carbon capture technologies and developing green petrochemicals and critical mineral products support sustainability and new revenue streams.

PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media:

Opportunities in these sectors include enabling digital solutions to support sustainability outcomes and deploying universal internet access through 5G and low-cost satellite connections. Developing personalised digital learning experiences across all educational stages is crucial. Engaging in youth recruitment and workforce readiness accelerates partnerships, training, and onboarding young talent. Promoting quality media and access to information ensures trusted, accessible content and applications. Specialising in AI, analytics, and automation improves business processes and product quality. Partnering to support local ICT equipment production and recycling fosters local industry growth. Enhancing data sovereignty and cyber protection involves developing blockchain, quantum, and cybersecurity solutions. Mobilising immersive content creation capabilities focuses on cultural, educational, and entertainment applications.

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Industry Opportunities

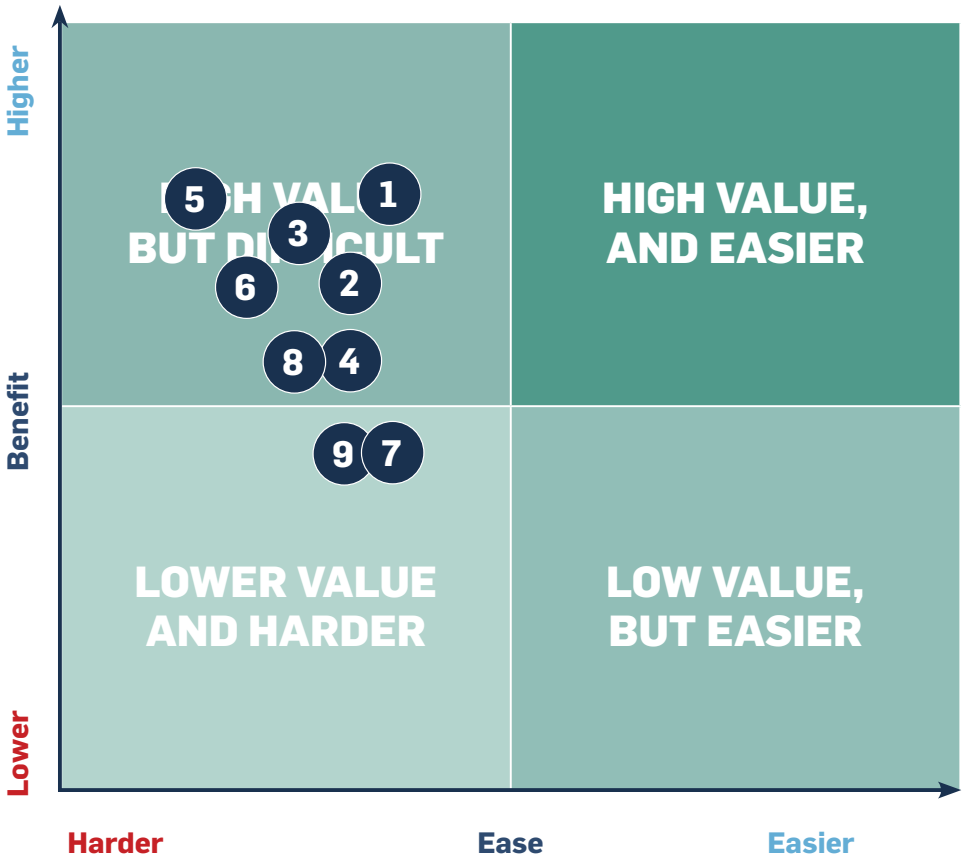
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

Companies in the food value chain have identified opportunities that emphasise SDG 2: Zero Hunger and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production as essential to advancing sustainable food security.

Sustainable Innovation in Focus:
An emergent trend places emphasis on SDG 2: Zero Hunger and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. This trend sees the food industry prioritising food security and sustainable practices through the integration of smart agricultural technologies and eco-conscious food systems.

Revolutionising Food through Technology:
The food industry's pivot towards precision agriculture and renewable energy heralds a transformative era. This shift aims to bolster productivity, champion sustainability, and fortify the food supply chain, heralding a potential shift from traditional farming to a greener economy with new skilled jobs.

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail



TOP 9 OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

The opportunities that surfaced and were prioritised during the industry round table were:

#	Opportunity	Description	Total	Scoring	
1	Leverage Precision Agriculture Technologies	Utilise advanced analytics from drones, IoT, and AI to enhance crop yield, optimise resource management, and strengthen sustainable agricultural practices for heightened food security. **Primary Goal:** SDG 2	54,9	Benefit	8,7
				Ease	6,3
2	Deliver Renewable Energy Solutions for the Food Industry	Integrate solar and wind power solutions to slash carbon emissions and energy costs in food production, driving forward South Africa's commitment to climate goals and economic benefit. **Primary Goal:** SDG 7	48,0	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	6,0
3	Promote Sustainable Food Production and Traceability	Enhance transparency with traceable, ethical food production, tapping into consumer demand for sustainability through innovations that transform food from source to table. **Primary Goal:** SDG 12	47,2	Benefit	8,3
				Ease	5,7
4	Produce Innovative Sustainable Food Products	Revolutionise the food market with eco-friendly plant-based proteins and lab-grown alternatives, meeting the surge in consumer demand for sustainable and ethical food choices. **Primary Goal:** SDG 3	44	Benefit	7,3
				Ease	6,0
5	Establish Community Based Food Networks	Foster resilient local food economies by linking small-scale producers directly with markets, enhancing product freshness and supporting community-based sustainable growth. **Primary Goal:** SDG 11	43,3	Benefit	8,7
				Ease	5,0
6	Invest in Circular Economy and Food Waste Reduction Initiatives	Implement recycling and waste reduction strategies to diminish environmental footprint and promote a circular economy within the food industry. **Primary Goal:** SDG 12	42,7	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	5,3
7	Deliver E-commerce and Automation in Food Retail	Advance retail convenience with AI-driven platforms, automating supply chain processes for seamless consumer experiences, reducing food prices for the most vulnerable. **Primary Goal:** SDG 8	42,2	Benefit	6,7
				Ease	6,3
8	Invest in Eco-tourism and Agri-tourism	Develop eco-tourism that protects and showcases South Africa's rich biodiversity and agricultural heritage, driving sustainable economic development and community upliftment **Primary Goal:** SDG 15	41,6	Benefit	7,3
				Ease	5,7
9	Deliver Advanced Food Preservation and Safety Technologies	Deploy cutting-edge preservation and blockchain-based safety technologies across the food chain to elevate quality standards, extend shelf-life, and reduce food waste. **Primary Goal:** SDG 2	40,0	Benefit	6,7
				Ease	6,0

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Industry Opportunities

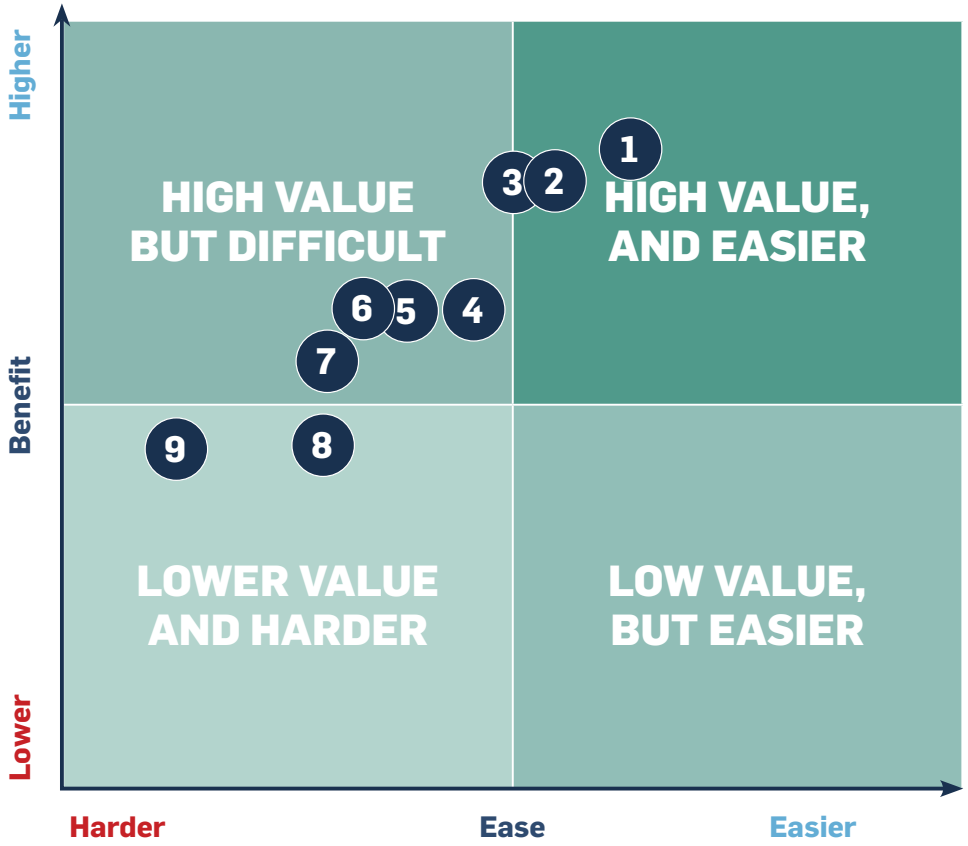
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

The top opportunities point to SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, pushing to advance energy availability and sustainable urban development.

Enabling future energy and water availability offer substantial business opportunities:
Both prosperity and sustainability outcomes are available in the utility space as South Africa works to build future fit, renewable energy and a smarter grid that enables localised, independent power production. There are also water opportunities in efficiency, recycling and next generation infrastructure.

Opportunities also sit in green construction, smart building and transport technology:
Transport infrastructure and mobility solutions for both business and people will also be required, alongside demand for sustainable and eco-friendly buildings that offer a higher quality of living and better integrated spatial planning that can contribute to more sustainable cities and communities.

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate



TOP 9 OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

The opportunities that surfaced and were prioritised during the industry round table were:

#	Opportunity	Description	Total	Scoring	
1	Revolutionise Transport with Clean Technology	Revolutionise public and freight transport systems with clean technology to enhance efficiency and reduce environmental impact. **Primary Goal:** SDG 9	69,0	Benefit Ease	9,0 7,7
2	Deliver Smart Grid and Renewable Technologies	Deliver technologies that enhance smart grids, enabling dynamic power management and integration of renewable sources for a responsive, resilient energy market. **Primary Goal:** SDG 7	63,6	Benefit Ease	8,7 7,3
3	Expand Integrated Renewable Energy Systems	Expand the integration of renewable energy systems to support a transition towards a cleaner and more sustainable energy landscape. **Primary Goal:** SDG 7	60,7	Benefit Ease	8,7 7,0
4	Implement Water Efficiency and Recycling Systems	Implement systems that optimise water treatment and recycling processes, significantly improving water sustainability and security. **Primary Goal:** SDG 6	51,1	Benefit Ease	7,7 6,7
5	Upgrade Urban Water Management Solutions	Upgrade urban water systems with innovative management solutions to ensure sustainable usage and reduce water wastage. **Primary Goal:** SDG 6	48,6	Benefit Ease	7,7 6,3
6	Build with Sustainable Construction Materials	Build using eco-friendly materials to reduce environmental impact and drive the construction industry towards sustainability. **Primary Goal:** SDG 11	46,0	Benefit Ease	7,7 6,0
7	Develop Smart Home Technologies	Develop technologies for smart homes and buildings to promote energy efficiency, improve living standards, and support environmental conservation. **Primary Goal:** SDG 11	41,6	Benefit Ease	7,3 5,7
8	Facilitate Green Construction Initiative Partnerships	Mobilise and facilitate investment into initiatives that develop and implement green construction projects to promote sustainable urban development. **Primary Goal:** SDG 11	40,0	Benefit Ease	6,7 6,0
9	Consult on Green Building Solutions	Provide expertise and advisory services relating to green building practices, from design to materials, to advance towards more sustainable real estate practices. **Primary Goal:** SDG 13	31,1	Benefit Ease	6,7 4,7

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Industry Opportunities

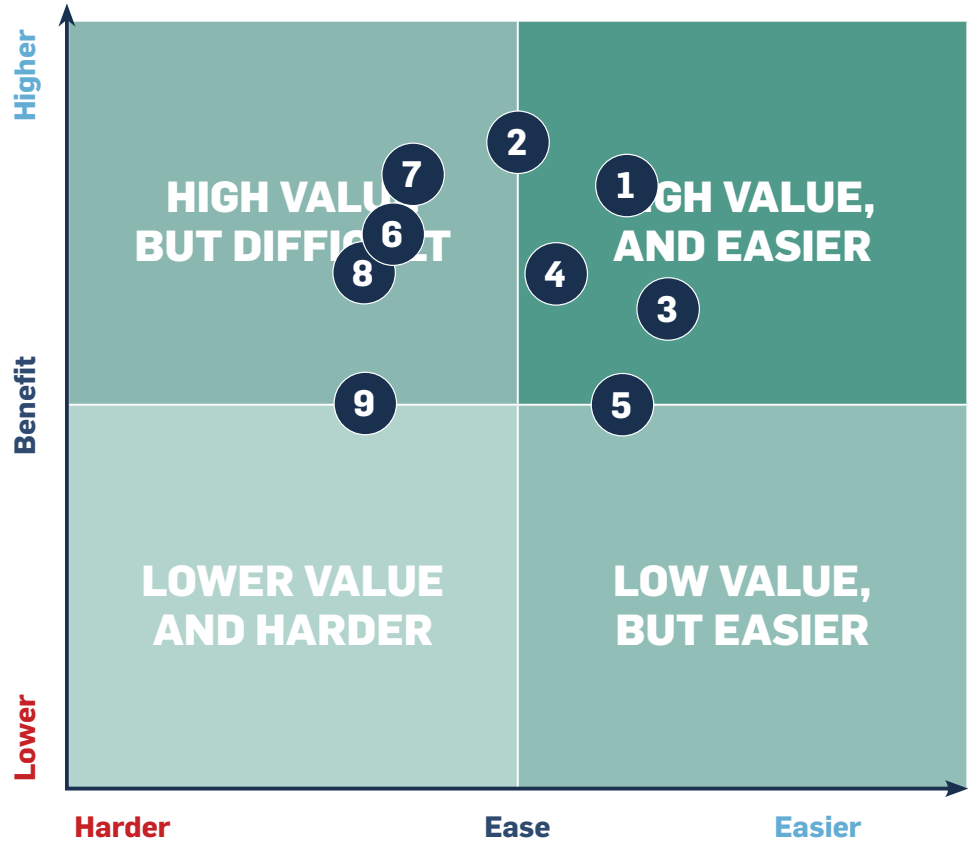
Financial Services and FinTech

There is a very strong focus on opportunities that move forward SDG 13: Climate Action with embedding climate risk assessment and enabling green financing and just transition in leading position.

Leveraging Digital Advancement: FinTech innovation, cyber and data protection, inclusive digital products and services present the financial services industry with opportunities for increased impact on sustainability that will also drive strong business returns. Artificial intelligence and digital capabilities to improve performance insights that will promote credibility and trust.

A Social and Local Focus: Demand is high for sustainable financing that supports a sustainable and prosperous socio-economic environment, with strong opportunities that can advance future fit financial talent, mitigate the impact of economic pressure on people and businesses, and facilitate financing and partnerships that promote sustainable local development and growth.

Financial Services and FinTech



TOP 9 OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

The opportunities that surfaced and were prioritised during the industry round table were:

#	Opportunity	Description	Total	Scoring	
1	Embed Climate Risk Assessment and Management	Conduct portfolio climate risk assessments to identify and mitigate exposure to climate related risks investments and lending activity, enabling climate aware investment decisions. **Primary Goal: SDG 13**	66,4	Benefit	8,7
				Ease	7,7
2	Enable Green Financing for Energy and Just Transition Initiatives	Promote green finance initiatives by offering sustainable financing solutions for renewable energy, clean technology and environmentally responsible, just transition enabling projects. **Primary Goal: SDG 7**	63,0	Benefit	9,0
				Ease	7,0
3	Advance Inclusive Finance Products and Services	Advance financial inclusion by innovating financial products and services to ensure more affordable, accessible inclusion of under-served and marginalised people and businesses. **Primary Goal: SDG 10**	61,3	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	8,0
4	Promote Investment in Sustainable FinTech	Invest in and support FinTech solutions that advance sustainability principles to foster financial services capabilities that address sustainability challenges and decent work. **Primary Goal: SDG 8**	58,7	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	7,3
5	Support Digital Advances in Integrated Reporting	Implement, promote and support automated, standardised, simple and integrated reporting across extended value chains to enable transparent, trusted, seamless information and performance insights. **Primary Goal: SDG 16**	53,7	Benefit	7,0
				Ease	7,7
6	Advance Cyber Security and Data Protection Capabilities	Evolve cyber protection technologies and capabilities to protect financial service operations, customers and client organisations from cyber threats, enabling safe and protected data, services, and people that are resilient to cybercrime. **Primary Goal: SDG 16**	52,8	Benefit	8,3
				Ease	6,3
7	Diversity and Equality within Financial Service Operations	Promote diversity and inclusion within financial services organisations and leadership, ensuring equal pay and an inclusive work environment and practices to enable gender equality, enabling a highly capacitated, future-fit talent base. **Primary Goal: SDG 5**	50,7	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	6,3
8	Mitigate Negative Economic Impact for Clients and Customers	Provide responsible financial support for business and individuals experiencing financial pressure via financial literacy, education, offering products and services that sustainably protect and provide relief. **Primary Goal: SDG 1**	46,0	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	6,0
9	Sustainable Financing for Local Communities	Engage to support sustainable financing across sectors for local community enterprise, development and social responsibility initiatives, including job creation, education, healthcare, infrastructure, services and food security. **Primary Goal: SDG 17**	42,0	Benefit	7,0
				Ease	6,0

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Industry Opportunities

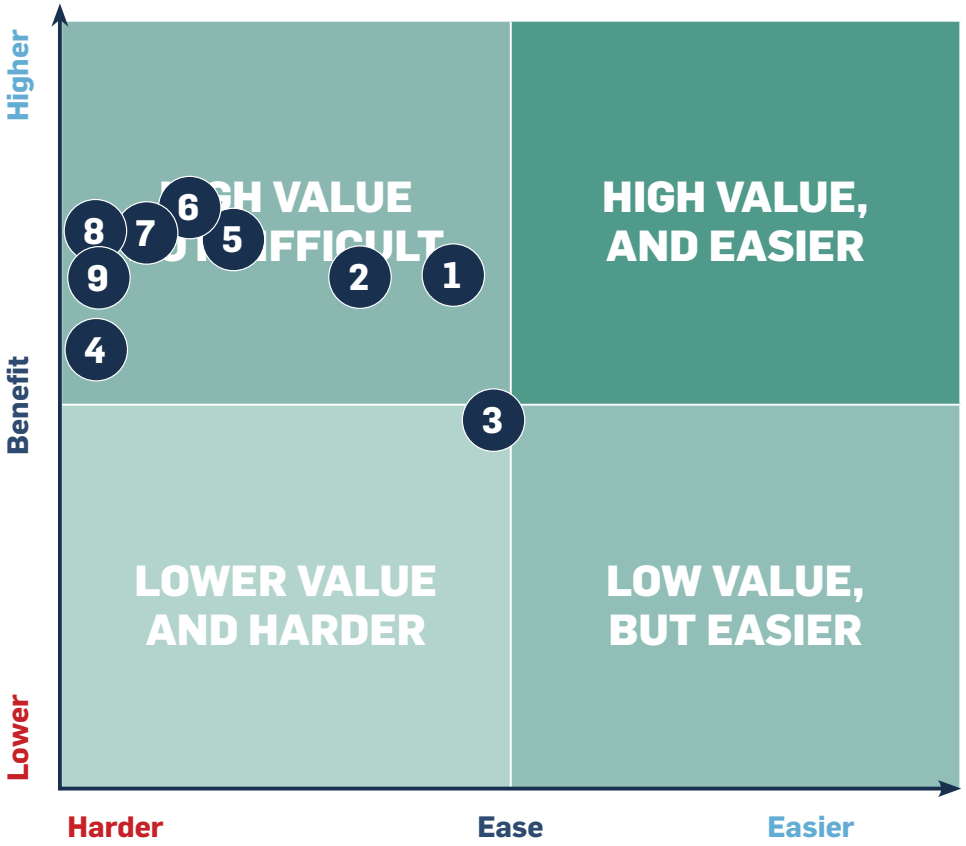
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

The primary global goals are SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, pointing toward SDG 13: Climate Action.

Strong opportunity to improve health and wellbeing: Precision healthcare and online or tele-health services are highly relevant to South Africa, with the potential to revolutionise access to cost-effective health services. Through the right public, private, and NGO partnerships, it is possible to alleviate systemic pressures and effectively target SDG 3 - Good Health and Wellbeing.

Opportunity for a Green Industrial Revolution: South Africa's manufacturing sector has the potential to leverage smart emergent technologies and circular economy principles. A shift towards eco-friendly practices and digitalisation can enhance efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and sustain a competitive edge, whilst shaping and growing job opportunities.

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health



TOP 9 OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

The opportunities that surfaced and were prioritised during the industry round table were:

#	Opportunity	Description	Total	Scoring	
1	Deliver Tele-health and Remote Monitoring Services	Mobilise platforms that expand healthcare access through telehealth and online solutions, cost-effectively deployed to improve patient outcomes and facilitate early treatment. **Primary Goal: SDG 3**	46,0	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	6,0
2	Optimise Manufacturing Supply Chains	Design, configure, and implement supply chain management technologies and processes that ensure procurement and supply chain transparency and efficiency. **Primary Goal: SDG 12**	40,9	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	5,3
3	Deliver eCommerce Optimisation Services	Enable the online presence of companies delivering manufacturing and health products and services to enable a vibrant marketplace where supply can easily meet demand. **Primary Goal: SDG 9**	40,1	Benefit	6,3
				Ease	6,3
4	Provide Green Manufacturing Consulting	Offer production line equipment and manufacturing processes that enable efficient, low-carbon, advanced manufacturing technologies and techniques. **Primary Goal: SDG 13**	39,7	Benefit	7,0
				Ease	5,7
5	Mobilise Circular Economy Offerings	Offer and implement circular economy technologies and processes to optimise manufacturing and product supply chains, creating value, enabling efficiencies, and reducing waste. **Primary Goal: SDG 12**	34,7	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	4,3
6	Produce Advanced Materials for Sustainable Products	Expand into the production of sustainable materials, such as low-carbon alloys and recycled metals, to meet the growing demand for environmentally responsible manufacturing. **Primary Goal: SDG 9**	33,3	Benefit	8,3
				Ease	4,0
7	Provide Green Manufacturing Solutions	Offer expertise in integrating green technologies and practices in manufacturing processes, specialising in eco-friendly solutions that reduce emissions and waste. **Primary Goal: SDG 13**	29,3	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	3,7
8	Provide AI-Enhanced Drug Development	Develop and deliver AI-enhanced pharmaceutical and healthcare products and services to benefit from accelerated drug discovery, enabling more cost-effective, accessible healthcare. **Primary Goal: SDG 3**	26,7	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	3,3
9	Invest in Precision Medicine Services	Deliver precision healthcare solutions tailored to individual patient profiles, including genetics, environment, and lifestyle, to enable personalised, early treatment for chronic conditions. **Primary Goal: SDG 3**	25,6	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	3,3

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Industry Opportunities

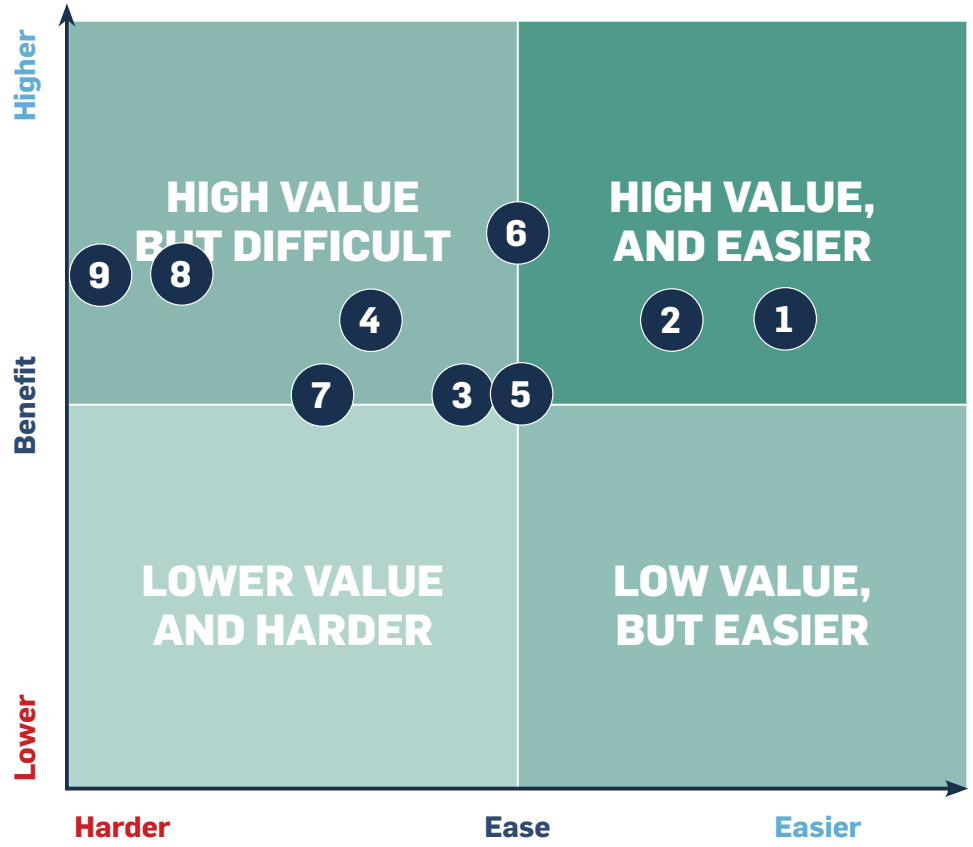
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

The dominant opportunities deliver positive impact for host communities and the environment, relying on SDG 11: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, improved investment and strategic partnerships.

High levels of long-term, risky investment: Sustainable mining requires expensive capital investment in modern technology, as well as in prospecting and new product development. Whilst returns can be very high in these areas over the long-term, there are risks that need to be faced, which makes finding courageous investors a challenge.

Strategic partnerships beyond mining: Several opportunities in the mining industry do not have incumbent players, with others requiring the attraction, involvement and partnership with other industries and sectors. New business models and opportunities depend on emergent technologies, skills and processes.

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources



TOP 9 OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

The opportunities that surfaced and were prioritised during the industry round table were:

#	Opportunity	Description	Total	Scoring	
1	Attract Strategic Partners into Host Community Opportunities	Attract strategic partners into local host communities to leverage the education, healthcare, and infrastructure built to enable mines, accelerating diversification of job opportunities. **Primary Goal:** SDG 11	66,4	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	8,7
2	Enable Biodiversity and Land Conservation Initiatives	Invest in land conservation and restoration to protect, build and leverage land value and biodiversity, nurturing value creation partners in the tourism, agricultural and forestry industries. **Primary Goal:** SDG 15	61,3	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	8,0
3	Use Technology to Attain Water Management Efficiencies	Leverage water recycling and purification technologies to improve water efficiency, reducing consumption, costs and environmental impact both in internal operations and in water infrastructure collaborations, contributing to water resilience. **Primary Goal:** SDG 6	46,7	Benefit	7,0
				Ease	6,7
4	Expand Mineral and Metal Circular Economy Opportunities	Apply recycling and modular design principles to process metal and mineral waste, creating jobs recovering, recycling and re-using materials, and in product-as-a-service business models. **Primary Goal:** SDG 12	46,0	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	6,0
5	Lead on Independent Green Energy Production	Implement independent renewable energy solutions to produce low cost, clean energy to power operations, reclaim energy and reduce carbon footprints, earning revenue from clean energy. **Primary Goal:** SDG 7	44,3	Benefit	7,0
				Ease	6,3
6	Invest in Sustainable Prospecting and Mine Technology and Incentives	Advocate for investment in land and marine prospecting and sustainable mining technology market players, incentivising sustainable continuity of minerals and metal supply. **Primary Goal:** SDG 8	41,7	Benefit	8,3
				Ease	5,0
7	Leverage Automation, Digitalisation to Modernised Mining	Investing in advanced digital technologies and automation can optimise mining and petrochemical processes, enhancing safety and sustainability whilst reducing operational costs. **Primary Goal:** SDG 12	39,7	Benefit	7,0
				Ease	5,7
8	Invest in Carbon Capture Technologies	Invest in advanced carbon capture and utilisation technologies, support a reduced carbon footprint, better use of captured carbon in products, and carbon credit and trading revenues. **Primary Goal:** SDG 13	37,3	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	4,7
9	Develop Green Petrochemicals and Critical Mineral Products	Develop and enable application of environmentally-friendly petrochemical products, such as bioplastics and biofuels, to create new and sustainable revenue and job opportunities. **Primary Goal:** SDG 9	26,7	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	3,3

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Industry Opportunities

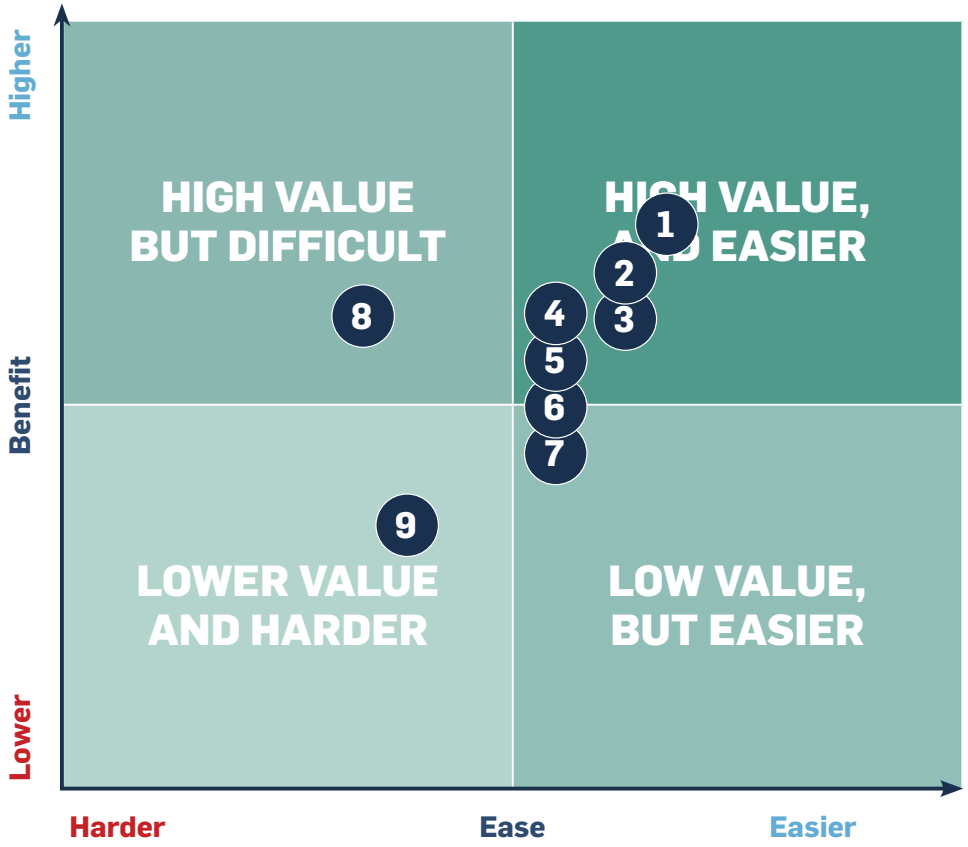
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

There is a strong focus on digital opportunity, surfacing SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure as a priority. Digital inclusion is a critical outcome, requiring a focus on learning and future job readiness.

Anticipating Disruption and Impact: The rise of digitally advanced solutions present significant opportunity, but are accompanied by negative impact on traditional roles and businesses with value propositions that are not able to adapt. New niches such as the deployment of 5G access and local ICT production are vital to the generation of replacement job and business opportunities.

Inclusion will bring Change: Digital inclusion will enable a voice for people who have previously been unable to engage. New demographics entering the marketplace will enable engagement and participation that will inform and change business demand as businesses seek to align to the opportunities that new participants present as a valued and growing customer segment.

Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media



TOP 9 OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

The opportunities that surfaced and were prioritised during the industry round table were:

#	Opportunity	Description	Total	Scoring	
1	Enable Digital Solutions that Deliver Sustainability Outcomes	Specialise in analytical and process technology solutions that support efficient, low carbon operations and extended supply chains delivering trusted, standardised reporting insights. **Primary Goal: SDG 12**	66,7	Benefit	8,3
				Ease	8,0
2	Deploying Universal Access to the Internet	Implementing 5G and low earth satellite affordable internet access solutions to increase digital inclusion by specialising in both high speed, low latency, low-cost internet connection. **Primary Goal: SDG 9**	61,3	Benefit	8,0
				Ease	7,7
3	Deliver Digitally Advanced Learning Experiences	Develop and deliver next generation, personalised digital learning experiences at each stage of the learning lifecycle including childhood, school, tertiary, youth and adult learners. **Primary Goal: SDG 4**	58,8	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	7,7
4	Engage in Youth Recruitment and Workforce Readiness	Accelerate partnerships preparing, training, recruiting and onboarding youth and talent into the world of work in connection with businesses struggling to find scarce skills. **Primary Goal: SDG 8**	56,2	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	7,3
5	Promote Quality Media and Access to Information and Applications	Invest in media and information content development and platforms with trusted, accessible information and applications that enable access to services and civil engagement. **Primary Goal: SDG 10**	53,8	Benefit	7,3
				Ease	7,3
6	Specialise in AI, Analytics and Automation Implementation	Invest in business capabilities that deliver ICT solutions leveraging AI and machine learning to automate and enable business processes performance and quality analytics. **Primary Goal: SDG 8**	51,3	Benefit	7,0
				Ease	7,3
7	Partner to Supply Local ICT Equipment Production and Recycling	Establish partnerships that can incubate South African production and recycling of ICT equipment and devices, leveraging domestic minerals and metals and workforces. **Primary Goal: SDG 13**	48,9	Benefit	6,7
				Ease	7,3
8	Enable Data Sovereignty and Cyber Protection	Develop and implement blockchain, quantum and cyber protection technologies to enhance business data protection capabilities, engaging in emerging financial services solutions including cryptocurrency. **Primary Goal: SDG 9**	46,0	Benefit	7,7
				Ease	6,0
9	Mobilise Immersive Content Creation Capabilities	Develop virtual and augmented content development skills and product experiences for health, culture, entertainment, learning, sales and other applications. **Primary Goal: SDG 9**	38,0	Benefit	6,0
				Ease	6,3

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Opportunity Rating Criteria and Evaluation Model

Several best-practice opportunity evaluation models were reviewed and integrated to develop a rating scale for the private sector. This scale assisted participants in prioritising opportunities that are beneficial as well as feasible and sustainable, ensuring alignment with strategic aims and capacities while managing risks effectively.

The Opportunity Prioritisation Process:

The steps that were followed to develop the opportunities were:

1. Conduct Research with Strategic Partners
2. Baseline Opportunities for each Industry Segment
3. Review with VNR Participants for Additional Ideas
4. Conduct Priority Ranking out of 10 for Priority Opportunities
5. Review Opportunities out of 10 against Benefit and Ease Criteria
6. Consolidate Ease and Benefit results and align SDGs
7. Consult and Sign off with Private Sector VNR Stakeholders

Benefit and Ease Criteria

The rating scale is divided into two main categories, 'Benefit' and 'Ease', each comprising distinct criteria to evaluate opportunities identified in the private sector's Voluntary National Review.

'Benefit' is defined as the overall advantage, encompassing appeal to investors and customers, economic value, and contribution to sustainability.

- **Appeal:** Assesses the attractiveness of the opportunity to investors and customers, indicating potential demand and financial backing.
- **Value:** Evaluates the economic impact and business value of the opportunity, considering potential revenue generation and cost-effectiveness.
- **Sustainable:** Gauges the contribution of the opportunity to sustainability for people and the planet.

'Ease' is defined as the practicability of an opportunity, accounting for the required investment, alignment with local capabilities, and the associated risk level.

- **Effort:** Reflects on the investment, cost, and development needed to capitalise on the opportunity, indicating the resource commitment required.
- **Fit:** Analyses the alignment of the opportunity with local skills, resources, and capabilities, showing how well it aligns with existing business operations.
- **Risk:** Examines the level of competition, complexity, and challenges tied to the opportunity, evaluating potential hurdles to success.

OPPORTUNITY CRITERIA 1: BENEFIT		
1	APPEAL	The attractiveness to investors and customers
2	VALUE	Impact and business value of the opportunity
3	SUSTAINABLE	Contribution to sustainability for people and planet
OPPORTUNITY CRITERIA 2: EASE		
4	EFFORT	The investment, cost and development needed
5	FIT	The match to local skills, resources and capabilities
6	RISK	The level of competition, complexity and challenges

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6

Risks and Challenges

"Despite areas of progress, challenges remain: High unemployment rates and high inequality persist. The skills mismatch between education and industry needs requires focused attention from all stakeholders. South Africans experience regular power outages and rising electricity costs, which impact negatively on quality of life and economic productivity. Infrastructure bottlenecks, especially related to exporting goods and services, are hampering economic growth."

South African VNR 2024

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SUMMARY OF PRIVATE SECTOR RISKS AND CHALLENGES

In this chapter, we present the top ten challenges identified by the participating companies within the private sector Voluntary National Review. Note that the industry level risks are detailed in the Industry chapter of this report.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

Leaders, government and communities must collaborate transparently to forge robust, unified risk management strategies for South Africa's sustainable future.

The risks, or challenges, identified highlight a landscape in the South African private sector where security, energy management, environmental stewardship, regulatory compliance and economic viability are deeply intertwined. Addressing these challenges is vital to enabling the private sector in its role of delivering the 2030 Agenda. Companies participating in the Voluntary National Review were clear in their call for a better-coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach to more robust, integrated risk management.

Participating companies made the following recommendations intended to foster a better-coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach for robust, integrated risk management across South Africa's private sector:

- **Improve Multi-Stakeholder Platforms:** More formalised and integrated platforms could bring together government officials, business leaders, NGOs and community representatives to discuss and align on risk management strategies. These platforms could facilitate regular interaction and collaborative decision-making.
- **Develop Clearer Communication Channels:** Companies recommended dedicated communication channels to ensure continuous information flow between risk stakeholders. This would help to synchronise efforts and align strategies across different sectors and levels.
- **Joint Training Programs:** Many of the risks speak to a deficit in skills and competencies, companies called for joint training and capacity-building initiatives to focus on themes such as sustainability practices and regulatory compliance. This collaborative educational effort could ensure better availability of necessary skills.
- **Shared Risk Assessment Tools:** Companies reported they were often managing their risks at company level, without access to standardised and shared tools for risk assessment and monitoring. This hinders formation of an objective overview of risks, and of mitigation actions that could be scaled and shared across stakeholders.
- **Integrated Policy Development:** More integrated policy development, centred on a unified view of sustainability risks, could lead to better prioritised and more cohesive policies. A unified understanding of specific risks could also ensure better inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, making regulations not only business-friendly but also beneficial to societal welfare and environmental sustainability.
- **Improve Leadership, Transparency and Accountability:** Companies were adamant that leadership is vital, and that the nomination of transparently appointed leaders to address specific risk themes would support improved accountability. They also strongly championed regular risk audits and reports, made accessible to all stakeholders, to facilitate better trust and more effective collaboration.

The Approach to Identification of Risks and Challenges

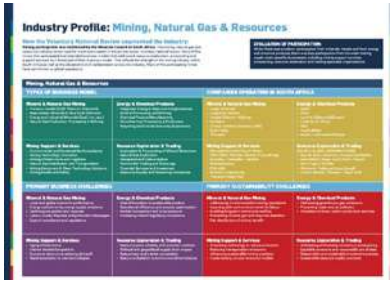
The process that was used to surface company risks and create a private sector view of which SDGs present the most challenge to the South African private sector.

Companies contributed risks at company, private sector and national level that were then consolidated into an industry perspective. These 96 risks were then reviewed and rated within the industry round table series and subsequently clustered into a private sector perspective of risks and challenges arising for the private sector in 2024:

Guide to risks were identified, rated and clustered:

Industry information was gathered and analysed as follows:

COMPANY CHALLENGE SUMMARIES:
The participating companies contributed the top sustainability risks they were experiencing, or had identified at company, private sector and country level within their contribution workbooks.

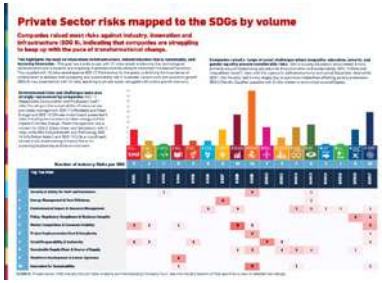


INDUSTRY PROFILING:
An industry risk and challenge profile was then consolidated and fed into the industry round table series to obtain a participating company priority rating for both prosperity and sustainability challenges at industry level.

RISK RATING SCALE:
The risks were then reviewed against the rating scale and aligned to the SDGs to enable consolidation and prioritisation.

INDUSTRY RISK ANALYSIS:
Risks and challenges identified by participating companies were rated during the round table series and then integrated into the top ten risks to the private sector, featuring in the 'Challenges' section of this report.

INDUSTRY PROFILING:
The industry profile was baselined to confirm and adapt the industry segmentation to ensure representation of all participating companies. The round table then reviewed and rated emergent prosperity and sustainability challenges.



INDUSTRY PROFILING:
The industry profile was baselined to confirm and adapt the industry segmentation to ensure representation of all participating companies. The round table then reviewed and rated emergent prosperity and sustainability challenges.

Where to find further information about the private sector VNR methodology:

Industry Risks: Further detailed information relating to the industry level risks can be found in the Industry Chapter of this report.

Qualification: Note that the risks identified and rated in this report are based on company level insights. Whilst efforts have been made to ensure a holistic view, the ratings presented represent the qualitative views of the participating companies.

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The Number of Industry Risks Arising per SDG

This section contains the top 5 Risk SDGs per sector. This model was created by establishing a risk density metric for each sustainable development goal. This was done by aligning the industry risks per SDG and then calculating them.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

1. **SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (21 risks)** – Due to the high costs and logistical challenges associated with upgrading infrastructure, especially in rural or underdeveloped areas. The lack of reliable infrastructure hinders operational efficiency and the deployment of innovative technologies. Additionally, there are risks related to obtaining sufficient investment for infrastructure projects and innovation.

2. **SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals (12 risks)** – Due to difficulties in establishing and maintaining effective partnerships. Challenges include aligning diverse stakeholder agendas, bureaucratic inefficiencies and a lack of coordination. Risk also relates to concerns about the transparency and accountability of partnerships, as well as the potential for corruption.

3. **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth (13 risks)** – Due to the high unemployment rate and the scarcity of skilled labour, which directly impacts ability to achieve decent work and economic growth. Issues such as wage inequality, and job insecurity also pose significant challenges. Moreover, companies may be concerned about the slow economic growth rates and the need for more inclusive economic policies that can drive sustainable development.

4. **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity (9 risks)** – Due to the extensive costs and logistical challenges of transitioning to sustainable production practices, especially in underdeveloped areas, achieving responsible consumption and production is hindered. Operational inefficiencies and the slow deployment of green technologies pose significant risks. Additionally, there is a challenge in securing adequate investment.

5. **SDG 4 - Quality Education (8 risks)** – Due to challenges with effectiveness of educational programs and the high level of change required in skills and competencies. Additionally, there are challenges enabling customer and workforce education due to the extent of the digital divide.

	Primary Risk SDG(s)	Total Risk: Analysis	Total Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Probability	SDG1	SDG2	SDG3	SDG4	SDG5	SDG6	SDG7	SDG8	SDG9	SDG10	SDG11	SDG12	SDG13	SDG14	SDG15	SDG16	SDG17
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	SDG 12	51,6	7,4	7,2	7,6	7,0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	1	0	2	4	1	0	0	1	1
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	SDG 17	54,0	7,8	7,6	7,9	6,9	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	4
Financial Services and FinTech	SDG 17	62,3	8,0	8,1	7,8	7,8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	SDG 9	47,4	7,1	7,4	6,8	6,7	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	4	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	2
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	SDG 9	55,1	7,5	7,4	7,6	7,3	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	6	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	0
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	SDG 4	58,9	7,7	7,9	7,4	7,7	2	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1

Source: VNR 2024 Industry Round Table Series Analysis, 2024

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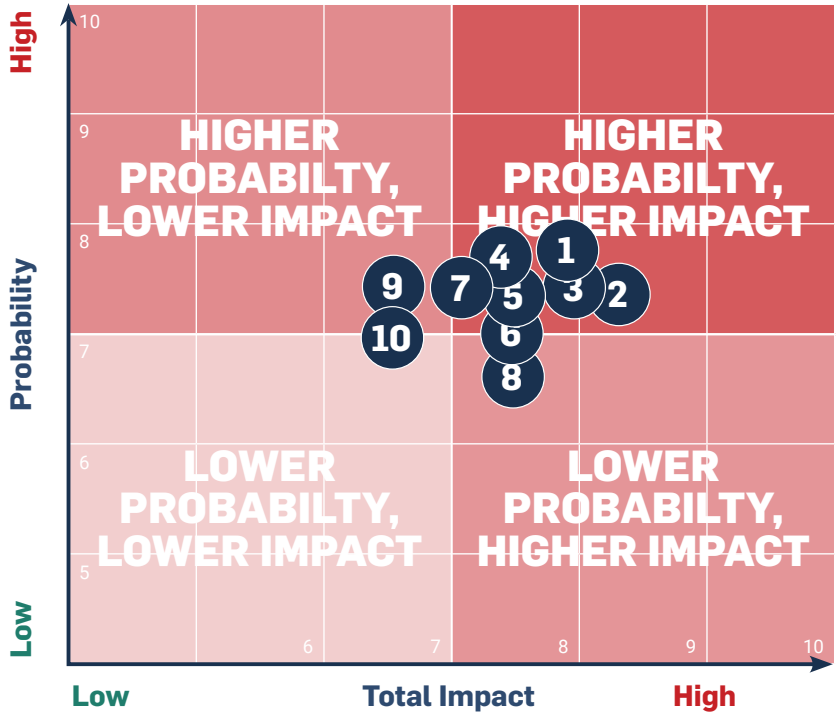
Understanding the Probability and Impact of the Top 10 Risks

The industry risks raised during the round table series have been grouped into 10 Top Risks to enable a prioritised view of the challenges and concerns identified and experienced by companies. The risks, in priority order emerging are:

#	Top Ten Risks	Impact	Probability
1	Security and Safety for Staff and Customers	7,9	7,7
2	Energy Management and Cost Efficiency	8,1	7,3
3	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	8,0	7,4
4	Policy, Regulatory Compliance and Business Integrity	7,7	7,4
5	Market Competition and Economic Stability	7,4	7,7
6	Project Implementation Cost and Complexity	7,6	7,0
7	Social Responsibility and Inclusivity	7,4	7,1
8	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	7,6	6,8
9	Workforce Development and Labour Dynamics	7,3	6,8
10	Innovation for Sustainability	7,0	6,8

TOP 10 RISKS: IMPACT VS PROBABILITY



RISK ANALYSIS:

1. **Security and Safety for Staff and Customers:** This risk, linked primarily to SDG 9, SDG 3 and SDG 16, has the highest total risk score of 60.7. It indicates company concerns around ensuring the security and safety of individuals in the workplace and beyond, a critical aspect as industries advance, health challenges arise and climate risks increase.
2. **Energy Management and Cost Efficiency:** With a score of 59.3, this risk is predominantly associated with SDG 7 and SDG 12. It underscores the challenges related to managing energy effectively and the economic implications of transitioning to clean and affordable energy sources while combating climate change.
3. **Environmental Impact and Resource Management:** Scoring 58.8, this category relates to SDG 8, SDG 12, SDG 3, SDG 14 and SDG 15. It highlights the risks in managing environmental impacts, which is a central aspect of sustainable development, including resource management, waste reduction, and mitigating climate-related issues.
4. **Policy, Regulatory Compliance and Business Integrity:** This carries a risk score of 57.5 and is linked to SDG 16 and SDG 17. It addresses the complexities and risks involved in maintaining business integrity, ensuring compliance with policies and the wider implications for partnerships and institutional trust.
5. **Market Competition and Economic Stability:** With a score of 56.8, associated with SDG 8, SDG 17, SDG 1 and SDG 4, this risk category focuses on the volatility and competitive nature of markets, which has direct effects on economic stability, poverty levels and education.
6. **Project Implementation Cost and Complexity:** This category has a total risk score of 53.1, related to SDG 9 and SDG 17. It deals with the financial and operational complexities of implementing projects, particularly those that are aimed at infrastructure and industry innovation within the framework of global partnerships.
7. **Social Responsibility and Inclusivity:** At a score of 52.5, the risks here pertain to SDG 10, SDG 1, SDG 5 and SDG 11, focusing on the social aspects of sustainable development such as reducing inequalities, eradicating poverty and building inclusive communities.
8. **Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply:** This risk scores 52.1 and is connected to SDG 9, SDG 12, SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG 16 and SDG 8. It encompasses a wide array of SDGs reflecting the complexity of establishing and maintaining sustainable supply chains that support environmental and social goals, as well as economic growth.
9. **Workforce Development and Labour Dynamics:** With a score of 49.5, this risk is linked to SDG 4, highlighting the challenges in developing a skilled workforce capable of adapting to changing labour dynamics and the significance of education in achieving this.
10. **Innovation for Sustainability:** Finally, with a total score of 48.0 and associated with SDG 9, SDG 4, SDG 12 and SDG 17, this risk underscores the challenges in fostering innovation that supports sustainability goals, education and global partnerships.

Source: Private Sector VNR Industry Round Table Analysis

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Risk 1: Security and Safety for Staff and Customers

South African companies face a unique and challenging landscape that necessitates a strong focus on mitigating risks in several key areas, including cybersecurity, employee health and wellbeing, occupational health and safety, customer rights and protection, and disaster and climate impact mitigation. These priorities reflect both global concerns and those specific to the South African context.

Cybersecurity, Data, and Privacy Challenges: South Africa (according to IT Web and Daily Maverick) has one of the highest rates of cybercrime in the world. The increase in digital transformation efforts across industries has exposed companies to heightened cybersecurity risks. Data breaches increasingly not only result in financial losses but can also damage a company's reputation and erode customer trust.

Employee Health and Well-being: South African companies operate in a high-stress environment with factors like economic volatility and social disparities impacting employee wellbeing. Prioritising health and wellness is an ongoing challenge for companies seeking to maintain productivity and retain talent.

Occupational Health and Safety at Work: The diverse industrial sector in South Africa, including mining and manufacturing, involves high-risk activities that necessitates ongoing efforts to innovate and implement stringent health and safety measures to protect workers from accidents and occupational diseases.

Customer Rights and Protection: In a competitive market, safeguarding customer rights are an increasing priority for businesses to ensure loyalty and trust. South Africa's consumer protection laws require innovation if companies are to protect standards of customer service and product quality in line with the sustainability agenda.

Disaster and Climate Impact Mitigation: The country is increasingly vulnerable to various natural disasters and the effects of climate change, such as droughts, floods and wildfires. These environmental risks not only threaten operations, but also impact supply chains, necessitating companies to focus further on sustainable practices and disaster resilience.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 3 - Good Health And Wellbeing
SDG 5 - Gender Equality
SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Risk 2: Energy Management and Cost Efficiency

South African companies are acutely aware of the need to navigate a complex set of risks that directly impact their operations, competitiveness and compliance with international standards. These risks range from loadshedding disruptions to the challenges of adopting renewable energy solutions, alongside the backdrop of escalating energy costs and the looming threat of international carbon penalties.

Loadshedding Disruption for Operations and Staff: The frequent and unpredictable power outages, known as loadshedding, have become a significant operational challenge for businesses in South Africa. These disruptions affect not only the day-to-day operations, but also the overall productivity and wellbeing of staff, necessitating innovative solutions and contingency planning to minimise impact.

Cost and Complexity of Renewable Energy Solutions: While transitioning to renewable energy sources is recognised as a crucial step towards sustainability and energy security, the initial cost and complexity of implementing these solutions pose substantial challenges. Companies must navigate these barriers to leverage renewable energy effectively, balancing long-term benefits against short-term hurdles.

Escalating Energy Costs: The rising cost of energy is a universal concern that particularly affects South African businesses due to the country's energy supply issues and economic factors. Escalating energy costs are squeezing margins and pushing companies to seek more efficient energy use and alternative energy sources to remain competitive.

Forthcoming International Carbon Penalties: With the global shift towards reducing carbon emissions, South African companies are escalating the need to prepare for international carbon penalties. This involves a national and multi-stakeholder effort to reduce South Africa's carbon footprint and enable compliance with evolving global standards to avoid penalties that could impact the ability of the private sector in South Africa to remain competitive.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy
SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity

Risk 3: Environmental Impact and Resource Management

South African companies are confronting a series of environmental and sustainability risks. These risks encompass concerns including greenhouse gas emissions, resource efficiency in business operations, the minimisation of waste, managing scarce resources, and addressing the challenges of establishing circular economies.

Reducing Emissions and Achieving Resource Efficiencies: Addressing greenhouse gas emissions and water and energy efficiencies presents a challenge due to the need for significant operational changes, reliance on new technologies, and the high costs associated with these adaptations.

Challenges Reducing Waste and Pollution, including Plastics: The drive to reduce waste and pollution, and plastic use is complex due to the need to developing and implementing advanced waste management practices and seeking sustainable alternatives to plastic packaging. Efforts need to balance sustainability with the practical needs for product protection and cost-efficiency. It further demands operational adjustments and the availability of alternatives.

Lack of Critical Mass Landing Circular Economies: Transitioning to a circular economy, where waste is minimised, and materials are reused, is being held back by challenges in scaling successful initiatives. Systemic change and collaboration across industries and sectors are required to drive progress.

Challenges Mitigating Negative Impact on Biodiversity: Biodiversity loss is a pressing environmental issue. Companies in sectors like mining and agriculture, prevalent in South Africa, are facing challenges universally protecting local ecosystems, despite many success stories.

Declining Resources and Ore Quality: Resource-intensive industries, escalated that declining ore quality and the depletion of natural resources present significant future operational and financial challenges, requiring a better multi-stakeholder response.

Achieving Transparency on Impact When Investing: Investors and stakeholders are increasingly demanding transparency regarding the environmental impact of their investments. This necessitates robust environmental impact assessments and clear reporting from companies that requires a better system level response.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity
SDG 13 - Climate Action
SDG 14 - Life Below Water
SDG 15 - Life On Land

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Risk 4: Policy, Regulatory Compliance and Business Integrity

South African companies have underscored the necessity of addressing a spectrum of governance and ethical risks that significantly impact their operations and reputation. These encompass:

Corruption in Procurement Processes: The prevalence of corruption within procurement processes is a substantial risk, compromising fairness and efficiency. It undermines trust and can lead to significant financial and reputational losses, necessitating rigorous internal controls and transparency.

Policy and Regulatory Uncertainty: Fluctuating policies and regulations introduce uncertainty, complicating strategic planning and operational efficiency. Companies are challenged to remain adaptable and informed to navigate this ever-changing landscape effectively.

Complexity and Cost of Compliance with Regulations: The intricate nature and the financial burden of compliance demand considerable resources. Businesses must invest in compliance mechanisms and expertise to avoid penalties and ensure smooth operations.

Outdated Policy, Regulations, and Standards: Dealing with obsolete regulatory frameworks can stifle innovation and competitiveness. Companies advocate for regulatory reform to align with current realities and technological advancements.

Lack of Consequences for Unjust Practices: The absence of stringent penalties for unethical practices emboldens wrongful conduct within the industry, creating an uneven playing field. There's a call for more robust enforcement of laws and regulations to deter such practices.

Prevalence of 'Greenwashing' in Business: Greenwashing, the practice of making misleading claims about the environmental benefits of products, services, or practices, poses risks to consumer trust and company credibility. Companies are pushed to substantiate their environmental claims with transparent and verifiable information.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals

Risk 5: Market Competition and Economic Stability

In the dynamic and often uncertain landscape of South Africa's business environment, companies are actively seeking strategies to mitigate a broad spectrum of risks that impact their operational stability, growth potential, and sustainability commitments. These risks span from financial challenges and competitive pressures to evolving consumer expectations and sustainability alignments.

Accessing Sustainable Finance: Securing finance that supports growth while aligning with sustainability goals is challenging, underscoring the necessity for innovative financial products and partnerships. Building trust in a cautious investor market demands transparent operations. Scrutiny of ethical standards among business partners and investment opportunities is essential to avoid reputational damage and legal complications.

Navigating Aggressive Competition and E-commerce Disruption: The rise in e-commerce and rapid digital transformation has heightened competitive pressures, prompting businesses to innovate constantly. Globalisation and market liberalisation expose companies to intense competition, demanding differentiation and value creation to stay ahead.

Market Volatility and a Low Growth Economy: The climate of economic uncertainty and fluctuating markets presents significant risks for businesses. Poor economic conditions, characterised by challenges such as inflation and unemployment, heighten these risks, impacting both consumer spending and business investment. Resilient risk management and adaptable business models are essential.

Low Cash Flow Following the Pandemic: The aftermath of the pandemic has left many businesses with strained liquidity, highlighting the importance of efficient cash flow management.

Adapting to Changing Customer Needs and Values: Shifting consumer preferences, notably towards sustainability and ethics, pose challenges for businesses, requiring them to adapt quickly. Economic pressures on consumers demand innovative pricing, product development and market segmentation strategies to stimulate demand.

Ensuring Customer and Consumer Alignment to Sustainability: The growing consumer emphasis on sustainability necessitates that companies integrate environmental and social governance (ESG) principles into their core operations.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 1 - No Poverty
SDG 4 - Quality Education
SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals

Risk 6: Project Implementation Cost and Complexity

In navigating the complex and rapidly evolving business landscape, companies have pinpointed a series of risks inherent to innovation and transformation efforts that are essential for maintaining market relevance and driving growth. These challenges are multifaceted, ranging from financial constraints to the intricacies of project management and technological adoption.

Cost of Innovation and Transformation Projects: The financial investment required for innovation and transformation projects is substantial, with companies needing to allocate significant resources towards research and development, technology acquisition, and process redesign. These investments are crucial for staying ahead in competitive markets but pose a risk of resource strain.

Challenges with Project Delivery and Execution: Successfully executing complex projects within budget and on schedule is a perennial challenge. These difficulties are exacerbated by the ambitious scope of transformation projects, which often involve integrating new technologies, processes, and business models.

Challenges with Rapid Digital Transformation: The pace at which digital transformation is occurring demands rapid adaptation and learning. Companies must swiftly adopt new technologies and digital practices, a process fraught with operational and strategic risks.

Cost and Availability of Technology and Software: The financial outlay for new technology and software, coupled with the challenge of sourcing the right tools that align with company objectives, represents a significant hurdle. Moreover, the rapid pace of technological advancement can render investments obsolete at an accelerated rate.

Access to Expensive and Scarce Project Skills: The digital transformation and innovation drive have heightened the demand for skilled professionals capable of leading and implementing complex projects. The scarcity of such talent makes it a costly resource, complicating project planning and execution.

Challenges with Collaboration on Complex Projects: Collaborating effectively on complex projects, especially when they involve multiple stakeholders or cross-functional teams, can be challenging. Differences in vision, objectives, and working styles can impede progress and lead to project inefficiencies.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals

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Risk 7: Social Responsibility and Inclusivity

In the face of a rapidly changing business and social landscape, companies have pinpointed several critical areas where risks must be mitigated to foster sustainable growth and robust community engagement. These areas encompass the development and provision of sustainable products and services, ensuring these innovations are accessible to all segments of the population, especially vulnerable customers, and the nurturing of positive relationships within the communities they operate.

Evolving Sustainable Products and Services: Transitioning to sustainable products and services poses challenges, from R&D to market viability. Companies are striving to innovate in this area while managing the risks associated with new product development and market introduction.

Enabling Equitable Access for Vulnerable Customers: Addressing affordability, awareness and accessibility is complex. Fluctuating interest rates affect costs and affordability. Companies must navigate these to support vulnerable stakeholders.

Building Quality Community Relationships: Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with local communities is essential for long-term business sustainability. This requires transparent communication, community engagement initiatives, and a commitment to addressing community needs and concerns.

Continuity of Local Employment and Decent Work: Amidst globalisation and technological advancements, ensuring local employment continuity and decent work standards pose significant risks. Companies must balance operational efficiency with social responsibility to support local economies. This requires strategic planning and investment in employee development.

Exclusion Due to the Digital Divide: The digital divide exacerbates social and economic inequalities, leaving those without digital access at a disadvantage. Companies are increasingly aware of the need to address this gap, whether through technology access initiatives or by offering alternative means of engagement.

Affording Distribution of Benefits: The distribution of economic benefits, such as dividends, bonuses and profit-sharing, must be managed carefully to ensure long-term sustainability. Companies face the challenge of equitably distributing benefits among stakeholders while ensuring the financial health of the business.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 1 - No Poverty
SDG 5 - Gender Equality
SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities
SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities

Risk 8: Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply

In today's global economy, companies are increasingly recognising the critical need to mitigate a wide array of supply chain risks, from ensuring transparency and traceability to navigating disruptions and regulatory challenges. These concerns highlight the complex nature of modern supply chains and the importance of strategic risk management.

Achieving Transparent and Traceable Supply Chains: Lack of transparency and traceability in supply chains poses risks in quality control, ethical sourcing and regulatory compliance. Investing in technologies like blockchain carries uncertainties in implementation.

Global Supply Chain Disruption, Delays, and Costs: Covid-19 exposed global supply chain risks, prompting strategy reassessment. Logistical challenges, from transport bottlenecks to infrastructure limitations, significantly impact supply chain efficiency.

Escalating Supply Chain Costs and Regulations: Rising costs and an increasingly complex regulatory landscape compel companies to streamline operations and ensure compliance through enhanced due diligence and regulatory technology solutions.

Challenges Developing Local Sources of Supply: Localising supply chains reduces reliance on international suppliers, mitigating disruption risks. However, developing reliable local sources faces challenges like quality standards and production capacity.

Access to Affordable Sustainable Materials: As demand for eco-friendly products grows, securing affordable, sustainable materials becomes crucial. Innovation in materials science and strategic partnerships are needed to address limited availability and ensure a stable supply.

Availability of Low Carbon Transport Options: Limited access to low carbon transport options threatens sustainable supply chain management. Companies seek solutions like electric vehicles and biofuels but encounter challenges in adoption and availability, impacting emission mitigation efforts.

Challenges Optimising Supply Chain Technology: Implementing advanced technologies for supply chain efficiency and resilience is complex and costly. Companies need to integrate new tech with existing systems for maximum ROI.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities
SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity
SDG 13 - Climate Action
SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Risk 9: Workforce Development and Labour Dynamics

In the contemporary business landscape, companies are increasingly cognisant of the multifaceted risks associated with workforce management and development, which are crucial for maintaining competitiveness and fostering innovation. These challenges encompass a broad spectrum, from managing labour relations under economic strain to addressing the evolving skills required in the digital age.

Economic Pressure Driving Labour Relations Unrest: Economic uncertainties and pressures, especially those exacerbated by inflation, are leading to unrest in labour relations. Companies are finding it necessary to engage in more proactive and transparent communication and negotiation with their workforce to maintain harmony and productivity.

Critical Skills Shortages and Difficulty Sourcing Talent: The rapid pace of technological advancement and changing business models are creating a gap between the skills available in the labour market and those needed by companies. This shortage is particularly acute in areas such as ICT, digital marketing and data analysis, where demand far outstrips supply.

Increasing Labour Costs Due to Inflation: Inflationary pressures are driving up wages and operational costs, impacting overall business profitability. Companies must navigate these increasing costs while striving to remain competitive, often through efficiency improvements and strategic planning.

Educational Curricula Not Keeping Up with Future Needs: There is a growing concern that educational institutions are not evolving fast enough to meet the needs of the future workforce. This disconnect means companies often must invest significantly in training and development to bridge the skills gap.

Limited Availability of Emerging ICT Skills: As digital transformation accelerates, the demand for emerging ICT skills is skyrocketing, leading to intense competition for talent with these capabilities. This situation is pushing companies to look for innovative solutions, such as partnerships with educational institutions, to develop the talent pipeline.

Impact of Automation on Sustainable Jobs: Automation and AI redefine work, posing risks to job sustainability in certain sectors. Companies face the challenge of balancing efficiency gains with workforce sustainability. Retraining employees for digital roles is essential, but carries uncertainties in effectiveness and adaptation.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 3 - Good Health And Wellbeing
SDG 4 - Quality Education
SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth

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Risk 10: Innovation for Sustainability

In the current business environment, the drive towards sustainability is not just an ethical imperative, but also a strategic one. Companies are recognising the importance of innovation in products, services and practices to enhance sustainability. This approach not only positions businesses as leaders in environmental stewardship, but also opens up new market opportunities and competitive advantages. However, this path is fraught with industry-specific risks that require careful navigation.

Navigating the Cost and Availability of Sustainable Innovation: Developing sustainable products demands substantial upfront investment in research, development and process redesign. These costs, especially challenging for SMEs lacking capital, can hinder progress. Accessing cost-effective innovation partners is crucial, spreading financial and operational risks.

Access to Green Technology Know-How and Expertise: The gap in specialised knowledge about green technologies poses a challenge. Companies must either develop this expertise in-house or source it externally, which can be costly and time-consuming.

Lack of Practical Experience for Emergent Technology: As new technologies emerge, there's often a lack of practical experience in applying these technologies effectively. This gap can hinder the adoption and integration of innovative solutions into existing business models.

Access to Country Level Project Roles and Funding: Securing funding and roles in country-level projects that focus on sustainability can be competitive. These projects often require demonstrating a clear commitment to sustainability and the potential for impactful outcomes.

Speed of Innovation Resulting in Obsolete Technology: The rapid pace of technological advancement means that today's innovative solutions may quickly become tomorrow's obsolete technologies. Companies need to stay agile and adaptable to keep up with these changes.

Competitor Dynamics as a Barrier to Collaboration: While collaboration can accelerate sustainability efforts, competitive dynamics often act as a barrier. Companies may hesitate to share insights and innovations with potential competitors, even when such collaboration could lead to broader industry-wide benefits.

Mapping to Global Goals:

SDG 4 - Quality Education
SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity
SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals

Risk Rating Scales and Definitions

The challenges identified by participants assessed as risks:

During the Industry Round Table Series participating companies assigned a priority to both sustainability and business risks. Participants for each industry round table used Mentimeter to evaluate risks. These were then consolidated and analysed to enrich the 'participant rating' by applying an impact and a probability leveraging the following definitions:

Defining Sustainability and Business Impact.

Defining Sustainability Impact:
Sustainability Impact, on the other hand, is concerned with the long-term effects of activities (not limited to businesses) on the environment, society and economic systems. It's about ensuring that current needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In a business context, sustainability impact looks at how a company's operations affect the environment (like carbon footprint and resource use), social welfare (such as community development and fair labor practices), and economic sustainability (including sustainable business practices and creating long-term economic value). It's a more holistic approach that considers the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit. Sustainability impact often involves practices that go beyond compliance and contribute positively to global challenges like climate change, social inequality and resource depletion.

Defining Business Impact:
Business Impact refers to the effects or outcomes that business activities have on its various aspects, including financial performance, market position and operational effectiveness. It encompasses a range of consequences, from profitability and revenue growth to brand reputation and competitive advantage. Business impact is often measured in terms of financial metrics such as return on investment (ROI), market share, or cost savings, and it can also include broader aspects like employee satisfaction, innovation and customer loyalty. Essentially, business impact is about how business decisions and operations affect the company's overall success and viability.

Impact Rating	Description
Low Impact (1-3):	The risk has minimal impact on the business. It may cause minor disruptions, but overall, the business can continue normal operations with little or no significant consequences.
Moderate Impact (4-6):	The risk has a noticeable impact on certain aspects of the business. It may lead to moderate disruptions, affect productivity, or result in some financial loss. Management attention is required to address and mitigate the risk.
Significant Impact (7-8):	The risk has a significant impact on the business, affecting multiple areas. It can cause substantial disruptions, lead to financial losses, and may require a considerable amount of resources to address. Immediate management intervention and mitigation strategies are necessary.
High Impact (9-10):	The risk has a severe and potentially catastrophic impact on the business. It can lead to a halt in operations, significant financial loss, damage to the company's reputation, or even legal consequences. Urgent and comprehensive measures are required to mitigate and manage the risk.

Probability Rating	Description
Low Probability (1-3):	The event is unlikely to occur. There's a very low chance of the risk materialising.
Moderate Probability (4-5):	The event has a reasonable chance of occurring. It's not highly likely, but there's a noticeable possibility.
High Probability (6-8):	The event is likely to occur, with some instances in evidence. There's a significant chance of the risk happening.
Certain (9-10):	The event is already occurring and is widespread. There's an extremely high chance of the risk materialising.

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The Company Top 10 Risks Defined

The Approach to Risk Identification:

The industry risks raised at the round tables were based on individual company contribution workbooks which were then reviewed and consolidated with strategic partners. The baselined industry risks were then rated at the industry round tables. Following the round table series, the risks were clustered to consolidate the Top 10 Risks. The industry specific risks identified can be reviewed in the industry analysis section of this report.

Mapping the risks to the SDGs: The risks have been mapped to the SDG that can most effectively be leveraged to mitigate the risk. See each SDG to see the risk and challenge mitigations aligned to it.

#	Top Ten Risks	Risk Description	Risk Mitigation Enablers	Primary Mitigation SDGs	Total Risk Score	Total Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Probability	# Risks
1	**Security and Safety for Staff and Customers**	Companies identified the critical need to mitigate risks in several key areas, including the challenges of cybersecurity, data, and privacy; ensuring the health and well-being of employees; maintaining occupational health and safety at work; safeguarding customer rights and protection; and fortifying the protection of people from disaster and climate impacts. **Industry risks included:** • Cybersecurity, data and privacy challenges • Employee health and well-being • Occupational health and safety at work • Customer rights and protection • Disaster and climate impact mitigation	To address these critical risks, support from civil society, the private sector, public entities, academia, and NGOs could include sharing cybersecurity best practices, providing well-being programs for employees, offering safety training resources, advocating for consumer rights, and facilitating access to climate resilience research. This collaborative approach would empower companies to enhance their security protocols, workplace health, customer protection measures, and disaster preparedness, fostering a holistic environment of safety and sustainability.	**SDG 3 - Good Health And Wellbeing** – Human resource and business practices that protect and enable employee and customer wellbeing and safety. **SDG 5 - Gender Equality** – Initiatives that promote and enable the safety and security of women in communities, workforces and the customer base. **SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure** – Innovation to enable cybersecurity and ethical, trusted data practices. **SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** – Business practices that protect labour and human rights for customers and for employees.	60,7	7,9	7,8	8,0	7,7	6
2	**Energy Management and Cost Efficiency**	Companies identified the critical need to mitigate risks including the disruption caused by loadshedding for operations and staff, addressing the cost and complexity of implementing renewable energy solutions. Companies are responding to escalating energy costs, and raised the risk that the private sector is not prepared for forthcoming international carbon penalties. **Industry risks included:** • Loadshedding disruption for operations and staff • Cost and complexity of renewable energy solutions • Escalating energy costs • Forthcoming international carbon penalties	To mitigate risks from loadshedding, escalating energy costs, the complexity of renewable energy solutions, and impending international carbon penalties, support could encompass providing expertise and financial assistance for renewable energy adoption, sharing strategies to enhance energy efficiency, offering training on carbon footprint reduction, and advocating for policies that support sustainable energy transitions. This aid would assist companies in navigating energy challenges, adopting greener technologies, and preparing for carbon regulation, promoting operational resilience and environmental stewardship.	**SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy** – Enablement of renewable energy solutions and business support for a just transition for high carbon industries. **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity** – Enablement of energy efficient solutions for business, reducing electricity costs and carbon footprint.	59,3	8,1	8,3	8,0	7,3	7

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The Company Top 10 Risks Defined

#	Top Ten Risks	Risk Description	Risk Mitigation Enablers	Primary Mitigation SDGs	Total Risk Score	Total Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Probability	# Risks
3	**Environmental Impact and Resource Management**	Companies identified a critical need to mitigate risks, including challenges in lowering Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the cost and complexity involved in achieving water efficiencies, the necessity of reducing waste, pollution, and the use of plastics in packaging. The immaturity of circular economies was highlighted, alongside challenges in achieving trusted assessments of environmental impacts for investment purposes. Concerns were also raised about declining resources and ore quality. **Industry risks included:** • Challenges lowering Greenhouse Gas Emissions • Cost and complexity in achieving water efficiencies • Challenges mitigating negative impact on biodiversity • Challenges reducing waste and pollution • Challenges reducing use of plastics • Declining Resources and Ore Quality • Achieving transparency on impact when investing • Lack of critical mass landing circular economies	To address risks such as lowering greenhouse gas emissions, achieving water efficiencies, reducing waste, pollution and plastic use, alongside the challenges posed by declining resources, ore quality, and the nascent stage of circular economies, support could involve offering expertise in sustainable practices, facilitating access to innovative recycling technologies, providing financial incentives for eco-friendly initiatives, and advocating for transparent, reliable environmental impact assessments. This assistance would enable companies to adopt more sustainable practices, move towards circular economies, and make informed, environmentally responsible investment decisions, thereby contributing to global sustainability efforts.	**SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth** – Business opportunities and support for mobilising circular economies. **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity** – Processes, technologies and skills that enable efficient resource consumption capabilities for companies. **SDG 13 - Climate Action** – Improved risk assessment and transparency on climate and environmental impact to enable sustainable investment decisions. **SDG 14 - Life Below Water** – Effective methods and capabilities to prevent pollution of water and the ocean. **SDG 15 - Life On Land** – More effective action to protect South African biodiversity and to enable conservation.	**58,8**	**8,0**	**7,4**	**8,5**	**7,4**	**10**
4	**Policy, Regulatory Compliance and Business Integrity**	Companies identified the critical need to mitigate risks including the prevalence of corruption in procurement processes, the challenges presented by policy and regulatory uncertainty, and the complexity and cost of compliance with regulations. Concerns were also expressed about outdated policies, regulations and standards, along with a lack of consequences for unjust practices. Additionally, the issue of 'greenwashing' in business practices were raised. **Industry risks included:** • Corruption in procurement processes • Policy and regulatory uncertainty • Complexity and cost of compliance with regulations • Outdated policy, regulations and standards • Lack of consequences for unjust practices • Prevalence of 'greenwashing' in business	To mitigate risks such as corruption in procurement, policy and regulatory uncertainty, compliance complexity, outdated regulations, the absence of consequences for unjust practices, and the prevalence of 'greenwashing,' support could include providing training on ethical procurement practices, facilitating dialogue between businesses and regulators for clearer and updated policies, offering compliance assistance programs, and advocating for stronger enforcement of ethical standards. Additionally, fostering transparency and accountability in environmental claims would help combat 'greenwashing,' ensuring that companies adhere to genuine sustainability practices. This comprehensive approach would enable businesses to navigate regulatory landscapes more effectively and uphold high standards of integrity and sustainability.	**SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals** – Partnership has been identified as crucial for ongoing success, learning and acceleration within the private sector. **SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** – Compliance and integrity are fundamental to building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production** – Ensuring businesses adhere to regulatory compliance and maintaining integrity also aligns with promoting responsible consumption and production.	**57,5**	**7,7**	**8,0**	**7,4**	**7,4**	**9**

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The Company Top 10 Risks Defined

#	Top Ten Risks	Risk Description	Risk Mitigation Enablers	Primary Mitigation SDGs	Total Risk Score	Total Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Probability	# Risks
5	**Market Competition and Economic Stability**	Companies identified the critical need to mitigate risks including difficulties in building trust and attracting investors, the risk of investment in low integrity businesses, and navigating aggressive competition along with ecommerce disruption. They also face fierce domestic and international competition, market volatility coupled with a low growth economy, and poor economic conditions that have introduced heightened risks. Following the pandemic, low cash flow has become a significant concern, alongside adapting to changing customer needs and values, addressing financially constrained customers and low demand, and ensuring customer and consumer alignment to sustainability. **Industry risks included:** • Challenges accessing sustainable finance • Difficulties building trust and attracting investors • Risk of investment in low integrity businesses • Aggressive competition and ecommerce disruption • Fierce domestic and international competition • Market volatility and a low growth economy • Poor economic conditions with heightened risks • Low cash flow following the pandemic • Changing customer needs and values • Financially constrained customers and low demand • Customer and consumer alignment to sustainability	To mitigate risks such as accessing sustainable finance, building trust with investors, navigating aggressive competition, including e-commerce disruption, and adapting to changing customer needs and sustainability demands, support could include facilitating access to ethical investment funds, providing transparency and integrity certification programs, offering digital transformation guidance for competitive advantage, and sharing insights on market trends and customer values. Additionally, assistance in developing sustainability strategies and financial resilience planning would help address the economic challenges and align with evolving consumer expectations. This support network would empower companies to attract ethical investments, adapt to market changes, and foster customer loyalty through sustainability alignment.	**SDG 1 - No Poverty** – Collaborative action to address unemployment and the impact of a low growth economy on the most vulnerable. **SDG 4 - Quality Education** – Targeted action to enable customer and workforce education and awareness. **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth** – Multi-stakeholder action to promote and grow a prosperous and sustainable South African economic climate. **SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals** – Efforts to communicate, co-ordinate and connect cross sector initiatives at company level.	**56,8**	**7,4**	**8,0**	**6,9**	**7,7**	**20**
6	**Project Implementation Cost and Complexity**	Companies identified the critical need to mitigate risks related to the cost of innovation and transformation projects, alongside challenges with project delivery and execution. They are also grappling with the demands of rapid digital transformation, the cost and availability of technology and software, and access to expensive and scarce project skills. Additionally, challenges with collaboration on complex projects has been underscored as a significant concern, necessitating innovative approaches and solutions to maintain competitiveness and achieve strategic objectives. **Industry risks included:** • Cost of innovation and transformation projects • Challenges with project delivery and execution • Challenges with rapid digital transformation • Cost and availability of technology and software • Access to expensive and scarce project skills • Challenges with collaboration on complex projects	To mitigate risks related to the cost of innovation and transformation, project delivery challenges, rapid digital transformation, and collaboration on complex projects, support could include providing grants or financial incentives for innovation, facilitating partnerships with academic and research institutions for cutting-edge technology and skills development, offering platforms for project management and collaboration tools, and creating networks for sharing best practices and lessons learned. Additionally, offering access to affordable technology solutions and training programs would help companies navigate the cost and complexity of digital transformation, ensuring they remain competitive and can effectively execute their strategic projects.	**SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure** – Project delivery capabilities that support technology and digital transformation projects and programmes to run to time, cost, quality and successful, sustainable outcome. **SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals** – Improved collaboration at company level and beyond, to share project competencies, capabilities and know how.	**53,1**	**7,6**	**7,8**	**7,3**	**7,0**	**6**

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The Company Top 10 Risks Defined

#	Top Ten Risks	Risk Description	Risk Mitigation Enablers	Primary Mitigation SDGs	Total Risk Score	Total Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Probability	# Risks
7	**Social Responsibility and Inclusivity**	Companies identified the critical need to mitigate risks associated with evolving sustainable products and services and enabling equitable access for vulnerable customers. They also face difficulty in building quality community relationships, ensuring the continuity of local employment and decent work, and balancing growth with job continuity. Challenges such as exclusion due to the digital divide, the ability to afford distribution of benefits, and the impact of interest rates on staff and customers are also significant concerns that require strategic attention and action to support sustainable business practices and community engagement. **Industry risks included:** • Challenges evolving sustainable products and services • Enabling equitable access to for vulnerable customers • Difficulty building quality community relationships • Continuity of local employment and decent work • Challenges balancing growth with job continuity • Exclusion due to the digital divided • Ability to afford distribution of benefits • Impact of interest rates on staff and customers	To mitigate risks related to evolving sustainable products and services, equitable access for vulnerable customers, building community relationships, ensuring local employment, and addressing the digital divide, support could include collaborating with local communities and NGOs to understand and address specific needs, offering financial and technical assistance to develop accessible and affordable sustainable products, and creating initiatives to bridge the digital divide. Moreover, fostering partnerships with educational institutions could enhance skills and job continuity. Financial strategies to mitigate the impact of interest rates on staff and customers, alongside transparent communication and engagement strategies, would further ensure the company's growth is inclusive, supporting sustainable business practices and robust community engagement.	**SDG 1 - No Poverty** – Corporate Social Responsibility programmes to contribute to communities and the most vulnerable. **SDG 5 - Gender Equality** – Business value propositions and initiatives that protect, enable and empower women, girls and the disadvantaged. **SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities** – Business value propositions and initiatives that address inequity and enable inclusion and access to prosperity outcomes. **SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities** – Business value propositions and initiatives that deliver on affordable, integrated and sustainable cities and communities.	52,5	7,4	7,0	7,8	7,1	9
8	**Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply**	Companies identified the critical need to mitigate risks such as achieving transparent and traceable supply chains amidst global supply chain disruptions, delays, and escalating costs. They face supply chain transport and infrastructure issues, along with rising costs and regulations. Developing local sources of supply poses challenges, as does access to affordable sustainable materials and the limited availability of eco-friendly materials. Additionally, the availability of low carbon transport options and challenges in optimising supply chain technology are significant concerns. **Industry risks included:** • Achieving transparent and traceable supply chains • Global supply chain disruption, delays and costs • Supply chain transport and infrastructure issues • Escalating supply chain costs and regulations • Challenges developing local sources of supply • Access to affordable sustainable materials • Limited availability of ecofriendly materials • Availability of low carbon transport options • Challenges optimising supply chain technology	To mitigate risks related to achieving transparent and traceable supply chains, global disruptions, transport and infrastructure issues, and the quest for sustainable materials, support could encompass partnerships with technology firms to enhance supply chain visibility and efficiency through digital solutions. Initiatives to develop local sourcing and eco-friendly materials markets, alongside collaborations with governments and NGOs to streamline regulations and secure funding for sustainable practices, would be vital. Additionally, fostering innovation in low carbon transport options and supporting the development and adoption of supply chain optimisation technologies could address these challenges, ensuring resilient, sustainable, and efficient supply chains.	**SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth** – Multi-stakeholder action to enable both global and local supply chain health and performance. **SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure** – Development of transport and logistical infrastructure and technology systems. **SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities** – Action to accelerate and enable local community sources of supply and production, aligned to market demand. **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity** – Capabilities that enable low carbon, efficient, cost-effective supply chains that are traceable and transparent. **SDG 13 - Climate Action** – Action to reduce greenhouse emissions incurred by supply chains. **SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** – Action to enable standards and regulatory compliance with emergent supply chain sustainability requirements.	52,1	7,6	7,7	7,6	6,8	12

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The Company Top 10 Risks Defined

#	Top Ten Risks	Risk Description	Risk Mitigation Enablers	Primary Mitigation SDGs	Total Risk Score	Total Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Probability	# Risks
9	**Workforce Development and Labour Dynamics**	Companies have identified the critical need to mitigate risks, including critical skills shortages, which complicate the sourcing of talent. Concerns were raised about educational curricula not keeping pace with future needs and the limited availability of emerging ICT skills, presenting significant challenges. This situation is compounded by the negative impact of automation on job sustainability, necessitating ecosystem-level attention to balance technological advancements with workforce sustainability. Additionally, increasing labour costs due to inflation is exacerbating pressures on labour relations. **Industry risks included:** • Economic pressure driving labour relations unrest • Critical skills shortages and difficulty sourcing talent • Increasing labour costs due to inflation • Educational curricula not keeping up with future needs • Limited availability of emerging ICT skills • Impact of automation on sustainable jobs	To mitigate risks such as critical skills shortages, increasing labour costs, and the impact of automation on job sustainability, support could include partnerships with educational institutions to update curricula and include future-relevant skills, especially in ICT. Initiatives for re-skilling and up-skilling the existing workforce to adapt to automation and emerging technologies, alongside strategies to manage labour costs and inflation pressures, are essential. Engaging in dialogue with labour representatives to foster positive labour relations and creating ecosystem-level solutions that balance technological advancements with workforce sustainability would address these critical concerns, ensuring a resilient and skilled talent pool aligned with future business needs.	**SDG 3 - Good Health And Wellbeing** – A healthy and well-balanced workforce is crucial to sustainable development. **SDG 4 - Quality Education** – To combat the skills shortage is one of the key ways to upskill and stay on track with technological developments. **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth** – Important to find the balance between decent work and keeping the economy growing.	49,5	7,3	7,5	7,0	6,8	6
10	**Innovation for Sustainability**	Encourages the pursuit of innovation in products, services, and practices that enhance sustainability. It showcases how businesses can lead in environmental stewardship through innovative solutions, contributing to sustainability goals while also pursuing new market opportunities and competitive advantages. **Industry risks included:** • Cost of innovation toward sustainable products • Availability of cost-effective innovation partners • Access to green technology know-how and expertise • Lack of practical experience in emergent technology • Access to country level project roles and funding • Speed of innovation resulting in obsolete technology • Competitor dynamics are a barrier to collaboration	To mitigate risks associated with pursuing innovation in sustainability, such as the cost of innovation, finding cost-effective partners, and accessing green technology expertise, support could include creating innovation hubs and networks that foster collaboration among businesses, academia, and technology experts to share knowledge and resources. Financial incentives and funding from government or international bodies for sustainable projects can alleviate cost concerns and support access to emerging technologies. To address the speed of innovation and competitor dynamics, promoting open innovation platforms and facilitating public-private partnerships would encourage knowledge exchange and co-development of sustainable solutions, ensuring companies remain at the forefront of technology while contributing to environmental stewardship and gaining competitive advantages.	**SDG 4 - Quality Education** – Enabling the workforce and improving on education is crucial to maintain innovation to enhance sustainability. **SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure** – The ongoing innovation and improvement through sustainable methods will drive the attainment of the goals. **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity** – Innovation in managing the way products are consumed and understanding the long term effects is important to balance the risks. **SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals** – important to supporting open innovation platforms.	48,0	7,0	6,8	7,3	6,8	11

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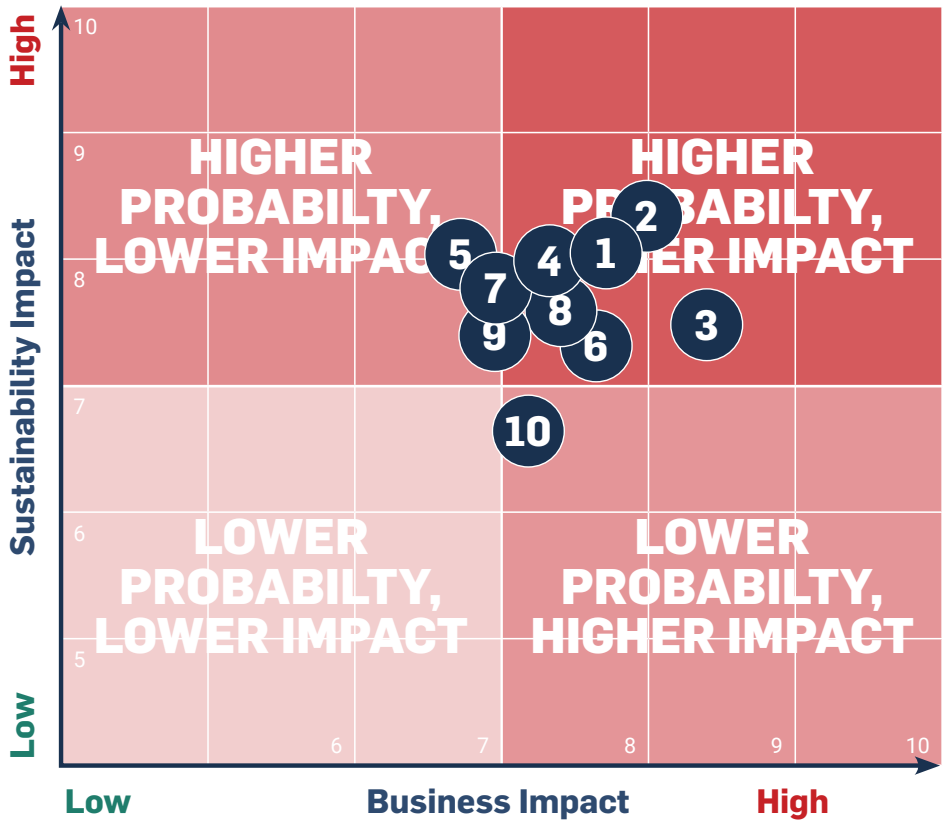
How Company Sustainability and Prosperity Risks Intersect

The analysis of risks demonstrates how sustainability risks compromise business prosperity. This clearly communicates how companies can benefit from taking an integrated approach to sustainability and prosperity.

TOP 10 RISKS: SUSTAINABILITY VS BUSINESS IMPACT



Sustainability risks such as environmental degradation, social inequality and economic volatility can adversely affect the long-term viability of businesses. Companies in South Africa that acknowledge and integrate sustainable practices into their business models are finding that such measures not only mitigate risks, but also enhance their brand reputation, open up new markets and drive innovation. By adopting an integrated approach to sustainability, they are not only contributing to the country's developmental goals, but are also positioning themselves for enduring prosperity. This is particularly relevant in South Africa, where social and environmental issues are intertwined with economic performance and where the private sector plays a pivotal role in driving sustainable growth.

#	Top Ten Risks	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact
1	Security and Safety for Staff and Customers	7,8	8,0
2	Energy Management and Cost Efficiency	8,3	8,0
3	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	7,4	8,5
4	Policy, Regulatory Compliance and Business Integrity	8,0	7,4
5	Market Competition and Economic Stability	8,0	6,9
6	Project Implementation Cost and Complexity	7,8	7,3
7	Social Responsibility and Inclusivity	7,0	7,8
8	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	7,7	7,6
9	Workforce Development and Labour Dynamics	7,5	7,0
10	Innovation for Sustainability	6,8	7,3

Source: Private Sector VNR Industry Round Table Analysis

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Global Goals

7

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL PROGRESS REPORT

"When reviewing SDG priorities, we need to remember that the prioritisation reflects the perspective of participating companies. Too many companies are still unaware of the 2030 Agenda. We still have much work to do to ensure that sustainability is inclusive. We need to raise awareness, and create accessible, simple opportunities to join in. We need to make it easier for smaller, less resourced companies to participate."

Mpumi Madisa
Chairperson of the Board
Global Compact Network South Africa

More South African companies need to participate in the attainment of the 2030 Agenda if we are to successfully navigate toward an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous future for all.

South Africa's commitment to sustainable development and attaining the SDGs is widely demonstrated within the integrated reporting of South African business. However, whilst companies are prioritizing the SDGs, it is still challenging to report based on a data driven foundation. Leading companies have created sustainability frameworks that align SDG priorities with company key performance measures. Other companies are fresh to SDGs, with further work to do to embed strategy into operations and the wider supply chain. Despite a strong commitment to inclusivity, many organisations are still unaware of the 2030 Agenda. More work must be done to ensure that private sector stakeholders are not left behind.

South African Private Sector VNR Priorities 2024

During the Voluntary National Review, participating companies prioritised the SDGs as follows:

14th **SDG 1 - No Poverty:** The private sector faces challenges due to socio-economic conditions impacting customer affordability, economic pressure on job creation, and low profit margins constraining transformation budgets, yet progress is seen in designing accessible products and engaging in B-BBEE programmes for economic empowerment.

9th **SDG 2 - Zero Hunger:** Challenges include significant food inflation, impact of loadshedding on the food value chain, and difficulty in funding green technologies, while progress involves investing in local food production, reducing food waste, and adopting green agricultural technologies.

4th **SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being:** The sector struggles with workforce health and safety, economic constraints on managing disease burden, and the need for healthcare innovation, but advances in worker and community health initiatives, and growth in the pharmaceutical sector are evident.

6th **SDG 4 - Quality Education:** Challenges include a lack of access to relevant skills and knowledge, and the need for intergenerational knowledge sharing, with progress seen in vocational training programmes, participation in B-BBEE Skills Development, and collaboration on educational initiatives.

11th **SDG 5 - Gender Equality:** The sector faces issues with pay and leadership gaps, providing women-friendly environments, and combating sexual harassment, yet there's progress in developing gender-empowering products and leadership on gender equality.

13th **SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation:** Companies tackle challenges in water management, finding sustainable water sources, and maintaining infrastructure, but progress is made through private sector water management services, collaboration on infrastructure, and cross-industry water resource management.

12th **SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy:** Challenges include the high cost of renewable energy investment and operational disruptions due to loadshedding, but progress is noted in just energy transition initiatives, renewable energy generation, and investment in green economy fuels.

1st **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth:** The sector confronts low investment, supply chain disruptions, and evolving customer demands, with progress in job creation, cross-sector collaboration on investment, and supporting strategic local supply sources.

8th **SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** Financing and integrating sustainable technology are major challenges, as well as the threat of job security from automation, yet there is progress in sustainable infrastructure projects and innovative business models.

10th **SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities:** Addressing economic disparities, promoting workplace diversity, and protecting the informal sector poses challenges, with advancements in equitable product and service offerings, equitable treatment across the supply chain and enterprise development.

5th **SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Challenges include sourcing local production, safe and affordable worker transport, and engaging in public sector tendering, with progress in local economic development initiatives, improving transport services and sustainable development partnerships.

7th **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production:** The sector struggles with implementing sustainable production methods, promoting sustainable consumption, and developing circular economies, but is making strides in responsible consumption and production innovations, waste reduction and sustainability awareness.

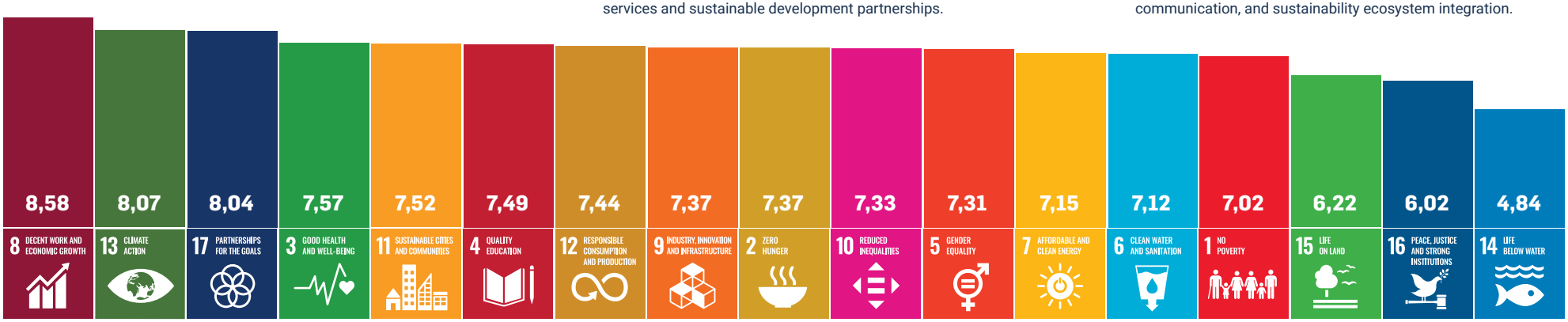
2nd **SDG 13 - Climate Action:** Challenges include reliance on coal, slow adoption of sustainability standards, and economic prioritisation over climate goals, with progress in defining just energy transition strategies, investment in climate action, and simplification of reporting frameworks.

17th **SDG 14 - Life Below Water:** Overfishing, marine pollution and lack of unified sustainability strategy are key challenges, with progress in protecting marine ecosystems, reducing pollution risk, and developing marine opportunities.

15th **SDG 15 - Life on Land:** The sector faces neglected sustainable land management, untapped ecotourism opportunities, and the impact of climate change on land, with progress in sustainable land succession planning, eco-tourism investment and climate impact anticipation.

16th **SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** Challenges include a lack of consequences for corruption, the need for policy innovation, and simplifying compliance processes, with progress in enhancing leadership integrity, policy innovation and compliance optimisation.

3rd **SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals:** Matching investment supply and demand, lack of partnership awareness, and a fragmented sustainability landscape are challenges, with progress in investor collaboration, sustainable investment communication, and sustainability ecosystem integration.



Source: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

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1 NO POVERTY

Eradicating poverty through sustainable business practices

SDG 1 aims to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. This includes targets to ensure equal access to resources, basic services and opportunities for the most vulnerable populations, promoting economic empowerment and social inclusion.

SDG Attainment:	**Major challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Stagnating**

Since 2019 the private sector has endured challenging socio-economic conditions that have resulted in negative impact on SDG 1 - No Poverty. Companies are deeply concerned about South Africa's poverty gap which has a negative impact on the wellbeing of staff, as well as the customer:

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Customer inability to afford price inflation on products and services:** Inflation is driving price increases for companies that are necessarily transferred to customers, the most vulnerable of whom are less able to afford the basic cost of living.
2. **Economic pressure limiting job creation:** Low growth, rising cost of operation, robust sell price competition and constraining price increases are limiting company ability to protect existing jobs and to create new employment opportunities.
3. **Low profit margins constraining transformation budgets:** Companies impacted by the pandemic and reduced profit margins are less able to budget for and deliver upon B-BBEE transformational strategies and plans.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 1 – No Poverty	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Poverty headcount ratio at $2.15/day (2017 PPP, %)	21.6	2023	●	→
Poverty headcount ratio at $3.65/day (2017 PPP, %)	34.4	2023	●	→

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies are mindful of the high level of poverty, acting to design products and services that are accessible to the most vulnerable, enable opportunities to earn through employment, and to engage with the B-BBEE transformation programme for the broad-based economic empowerment of historically disadvantaged groups.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Collaborating for inclusive community development:** Partnering to develop and promote skills enhancement programmes tailored to uplift individuals in marginalised communities.
  Exemplary Story: Collaborating with partners such as Belgium Campus and iOCO Digital, EOH invested R24,590,199 in learning and development to empower unemployed youth with job skills and entrepreneurial training.
- **Act to create accessible jobs for the vulnerable:** Engage in the creation of secure and decent jobs, especially in communities with vulnerable populations and where existing business activities are facing future continuity risk.
  Exemplary Story: In FY2023, DRD GOLD allocated R55.2 million to socio-economic development, targeting poverty alleviation, skills enhancement, and community empowerment. Collaborating with Umsizi Sustainable Social Solutions, their Broad-based Livelihoods Programme empowered around 8,000 participants with skills and infrastructure for sustainable livelihoods.
- **Prioritise the education and skills development of underprivileged youth:** Aim to empower them for future opportunities and economic participation.
  Exemplary Story: Alexforbes prioritised the youth in underprivileged communities, directing R3.7 million via the Alexander Forbes Community Trust. This support came in the form of educational bursaries and skills development opportunities.

- **Deliver on the Socio-Economic aspect of B-BBEE:** Contribution to the socio-economic aspect of the B-BBEE scorecard economically empowers disadvantaged groups through community development projects including education, healthcare and infrastructure.
  Exemplary Story: The B-BBEE Commission Analysis of Major B-BBEE Transactions Final Report 2022-23 reported that Socio-Economic spend was the highest performing category of the scorecard, with all industries except one achieving a 100% contribution.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 1: No Poverty included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Financial Services and FinTech	Responsible Lending and Credit Practices	Provide responsible financial support for business and individuals experiencing financial pressure via financial literacy, education, offering products and services that sustainably protect and provide relief.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

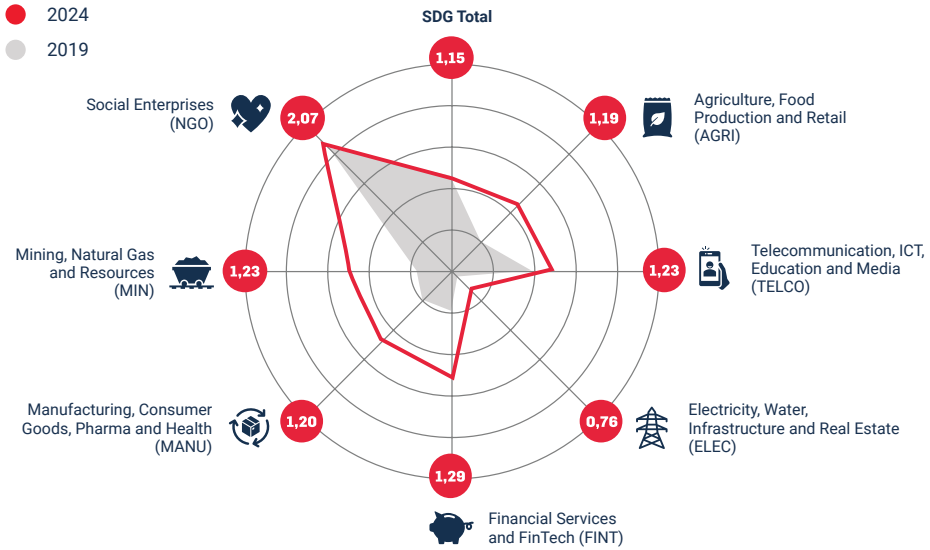
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 1: No Poverty included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Market Competition and Economic Stability	Customer inability to afford prices
Financial Services and FinTech		Poor Economic Conditions
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Consumer is financially constrained and not spending
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Financially constrained customers and economic impact
Financial Services and FinTech	Social Responsibility and Inclusivity	Access to inclusive banking, insurance and lending
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Difficulty creating inclusive and accessible offerings

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 1 - No Poverty

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources (MIN) are the primary industries that prioritise poverty directly. Between 2019 and 2024, the priority given to SDG 1 - No Poverty saw substantial shifts within different industries. The Electricity, water and Infrastructure sector (ELEC) demonstrated the largest leap, with its priority surging by 660% (coming off a low base), suggesting a newfound focus on energy access in poverty alleviation. The mining (MIN) doubled and financial technology (FINT) over one-and-a-half times increased their emphasis on SDG 1, while manufacturing (MANU) followed closely. The overall priority for SDG 1 across industries rose by 1.77%, indicating a heightened, albeit modest, collective focus on eradicating poverty.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,13	0,50	0,97	0,10	0,49	0,49	0,41	2,07
2024	1,15	1,19	1,23	0,76	1,29	1,20	1,23	1,21

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 1: No Poverty was prioritised in 14th position, the same position as in 2019.
The participating companies prioritised goals that were more directly linked to their business objectives. Addressing poverty is primarily the responsibility of government and NGOs, which can be seen by the 2.07 prioritisation given by Social Enterprises. Companies tended to allocate resources to areas promising immediate returns, and to pressing business issues like education and employment. This took precedence over direct poverty eradication efforts, which are difficult to measure and attribute, making them less relevant to direct corporate investment. Companies tend to prioritise poverty indirectly.

2019: 14th Place
2024: 14th Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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2 ZERO HUNGER

Contributing to food security and end to hunger

SDG 2 aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

SDG Attainment:	**Major challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Stagnating**

Since 2019 the private sector has experienced significant food inflation, for example, vegetables and fruits showed an annual inflation rate of 23,6% in October 2023, the highest since December 2007. This is due to the following challenges to SDG 2 - Zero Hunger.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Impact of Loadshedding on the Food Value Chain:** From agriculture, through to food manufacturing and grocery retail, sustained power outages have caused increased energy, staffing, storage and staffing costs, impacting on affordable food.
2. **Inflated cost of food transport and supply chain disruption:** Transport and delivery of food have been challenged by the rising cost of fuel, and poor road and rail infrastructure. This has impacted the cost of local and import materials required to produce competitively priced food.
3. **Difficulty Funding Green Technologies:** Agricultural and food production companies are struggling to finance investment in sustainable, green technologies and sustainable practices when grappling with more immediate cost impacts compromising future food security and sustainability objectives.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 2 – Zero Hunger	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Prevalence of undernourishment (%)	6.9	2020	●	→
Prevalence of stunting in children under 5 years of age (%)	22.8	2022	●	↓
Prevalence of wasting in children under 5 years of age (%)	3.8	2017	●	●
Prevalence of obesity, BMI ≥ 30 (% of adult population)	28.3	2016	●	↓
Human Trophic Level (best 2–3 worst)	2.3	2017	●	→
Cereal yield (tonnes per hectare of harvested land)	5.1	2021	●	↑
Cereal yield (tonnes per hectare of harvested land)	0.8	2018	●	↗
Exports of hazardous pesticides (tonnes per million population)	95.6	2020	●	●

COMPANY ACTION:

The South African food production value chain and financial services companies are acting to mitigate immediate hunger driven by inflating food prices, and to ensure longer term food security by investing in local food production that is more sustainable and cost effective.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Stimulate local food production:** Invest in local circular economies and small-scale farmers for food manufacturing, distribution and retail to contribute to ending malnutrition and hunger in all communities surrounding company operations.
  Exemplary Story: Tiger Brands' Smallholder Farmer Programme bolstered small-scale farmers in South Africa through financial support, enhanced agricultural methods, and market connectivity, resulting in sustainable yield and income improvements.
- **Collaboration to reduce food waste:** Business takes action to combat malnutrition and hunger arising in local communities, by eliminating food waste and loss by collaborating with local NGOs and communities.
  Exemplary Story: Bokashi Bran collaborated with thirty prominent hotel groups in South Africa to divert food waste from landfills. Commercial composting facilities were established to manage the substantial volume of food waste generated by these hotels, resulting in impressive outcomes such as 100% food waste diversion and reduction in waste collection costs.
- **Accelerate adoption of green agricultural technologies:** Support farmers to increase yields and incomes from sustainable, small-scale agriculture, promoting emergent green and sustainable agricultural technologies and practices.
  Exemplary Story: NUDE Foods promoted zero-waste shopping, aligning with sustainable agriculture. Through regenerative farming and ethical production, they offered eco-friendly food choices, minimized environmental impact, and addressed food security through ethical consumption.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 2: Zero Hunger included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Leverage Precision Agriculture Technologies	Utilise advanced analytics from drones, IoT and AI to enhance crop yield, optimise resource management, and strengthen sustainable agricultural practices for heightened food security.
	Deliver Advanced Food Preservation and Safety Technologies	Deploy cutting-edge preservation and blockchain-based safety technologies across the food chain to elevate quality standards, extend shelf-life and reduce food waste.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

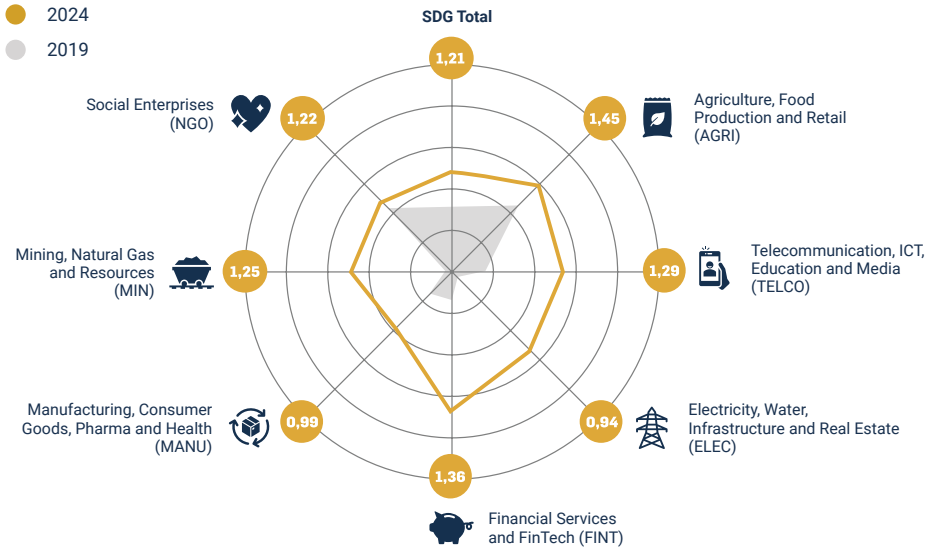
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 2: Zero Hunger included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Market Competition and Economic Stability	Consumer is financially constrained and not spending
Financial Services and FinTech	Social Responsibility and Inclusivity	High interest rates exacerbate inequality

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 2 - Zero Hunger

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail (AGRI) are the primary industries that prioritise hunger directly. Between 2019 and 2024, Electricity (ELEC) saw an increase in prioritisation, moving up by massive percentage points (again coming off a small base). Agriculture (AGRI), closely tied to hunger alleviation, also increased by 37%. The Telecommunications sector (TELCO) experienced a notable increase of just over 250%. Financial technology (FINT) and manufacturing (MANU) also saw substantial growth, growing by 1.33 and 0.6 respectively. The overall priority for SDG 2 across all industries increased by 59.21%, highlighting an intensified cross-industry focus on combating hunger.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	0,76	1,06	0,35	0,05	0,33	0,39	0,12	1,09
2024	1,21	1,45	1,29	0,94	1,36	0,99	1,25	1,22

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 2 - Zero Hunger was prioritised in 9th position, 7 places up from its 2019 position.
Contributing companies pioneered significant shifts in emphasis on SDG 2 - Zero Hunger over the last 5 years. The mining (MIN) industry made the biggest improvement in performance, jumping from 0.12 to 1.25. The electricity (ELEC) industry experienced a similar increase moving up by 0.89 suggesting an increase in awareness around food security in the industry. Financial Services (FINT) and Telecommunication (TELE) increased by 1.03 and 1.04 respectively, indicating a collective increase in focus on hunger within all respective sectors. This is evident through a steady increase across all industries.

2019: 16th Place
2024: 9th Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Promoting health for all as a core value

SDG 3 aims to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages. It targets various health issues, including reducing maternal and child mortality, combating communicable diseases, and promoting mental health and wellbeing.

SDG Attainment:	**Major challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Moderately improving**

In the pursuit of SDG 3 - Good Health and Wellbeing, the private sector in South Africa faces significant challenges in the post-pandemic era:

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Workforce health, safety, and wellbeing:** Businesses have faced increasing challenges ensuring the health and safety of their workforce, both within and beyond the workplace in communities. Companies are reporting a rise in anxiety and mental health issues, as well as ongoing challenges addressing women's health needs.

2. **Economic constraints managing the disease burden:** The private sector, particularly smaller businesses, struggle with financial constraints, exacerbated by the pandemic, limiting the ability to invest in health-related initiatives. The high burden of diseases in South Africa, including HIV/AIDs and tuberculosis often impact low-income workers and their dependents.

3. **Healthcare technology and innovation:** There is a pressing need for investment and regulatory innovation in the pharmaceutical and healthcare services sector. Strategic partnerships across sectors are needed to enable private sector success contributing to equitable access to rapidly emerging technological healthcare and medical solutions.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	126.8	2020	●	↗
Neonatal mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	11.0	2021	●	→
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	32.8	2021	●	↗
Incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000 population)	513.0	2021	●	↑
New HIV infections (per 1,000 uninfected population)	4.2	2021	●	↑
Age-standardised death rate due to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease in adults aged 30–70 years (%)	24.1	2019	●	↑
Age-standardised death rate attributable to household air pollution and ambient air pollution (per 100,000 population)	74.9	2019	●	●
Traffic deaths (per 100,000 population)	22.2	2019	●	→
Life expectancy at birth (years)	65.3	2019	●	↗
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19)	43.9	2019	●	↑
Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	96.7	2016	●	●
Surviving infants who received 2 WHO recommended vaccines (%)	86	2021	●	↗
Universal health coverage (UHC) index of service coverage (worst 0–100 best)	67	2019	●	↗
Universal health coverage (UHC) index of service coverage (worst 0–100 best)	5.6	2021	●	↑

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies are taking sustained action to comply with advanced health and safety outcomes in the world of work, with an increasing focus on mental wellbeing. There is also heavy private action to reach into local communities to contribute to health and wellbeing programmes. There is huge pressure for growth and innovation in the pharmaceutical, health and wellbeing industry sector to provide human health care needs:

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Enabling worker and community health and wellbeing:** Uplift local communities through free health screening sessions for HIV and TB, prioritising holistic well-being and community health, even amidst post-pandemic adversities.
  Exemplary Story: De Beers Group's Venetia mine hosted free health screening sessions, collaborating with partners like SABCOHA and EOH to detect early signs of health risks in mining communities. With a focus on HIV and TB prevention and treatment, the initiative aimed for zero new infections and deaths while focusing on community wellbeing through comprehensive screenings and micro-enterprise training.

- **Pushing the button on period poverty in SA:** Empower disadvantaged women through access to menstrual hygiene products and career guidance, fostering holistic well-being and socioeconomic advancement in local communities, even in the face of post-pandemic challenges.
  Exemplary Story: In partnership with Modern Centric Holdings, the Zakhele's reusable pads initiative addressed period poverty in South African schoolgirls, distributing sanitary products, hosting workshops and providing career guidance. Despite funding challenges initially, partnerships facilitated the donation of over 100,000 pads, improving school attendance and empowering disadvantaged women.

- **Champion fire safety in disadvantaged homes:** Protect underprivileged homes through fire detection devices complemented by insurance cover.
  Exemplary Story: Hollard collaborated with Lumkani to offer affordable fire detection devices for informal settlements, complemented by insurance cover. This initiative aimed to protect underprivileged homes and their belongings, addressing the issue of uninsured dwellings.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 3: Good Health And Wellbeing included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Produce Innovative Sustainable Food Products	Revolutionise the food market with eco-friendly plant-based proteins and lab-grown alternatives, meeting the surge in consumer demand for sustainable and ethical food choices.
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Deliver Tele-health and Remote Monitoring Services	Mobilise platforms that expand healthcare access through telehealth and online solutions, cost-effectively deployed to improve patient outcomes and facilitate early treatment.
	Provide AI-Enhanced Drug Development	Develop and deliver AI-enhanced pharmaceutical and healthcare products and services to benefit from accelerated drug discovery, enabling more cost-effective, accessible healthcare.
	Invest in Precision Medicine Services	Deliver precision healthcare solutions tailored to individual patient profiles, including genetics, environment, and lifestyle, to enable personalised, early treatment for chronic conditions.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

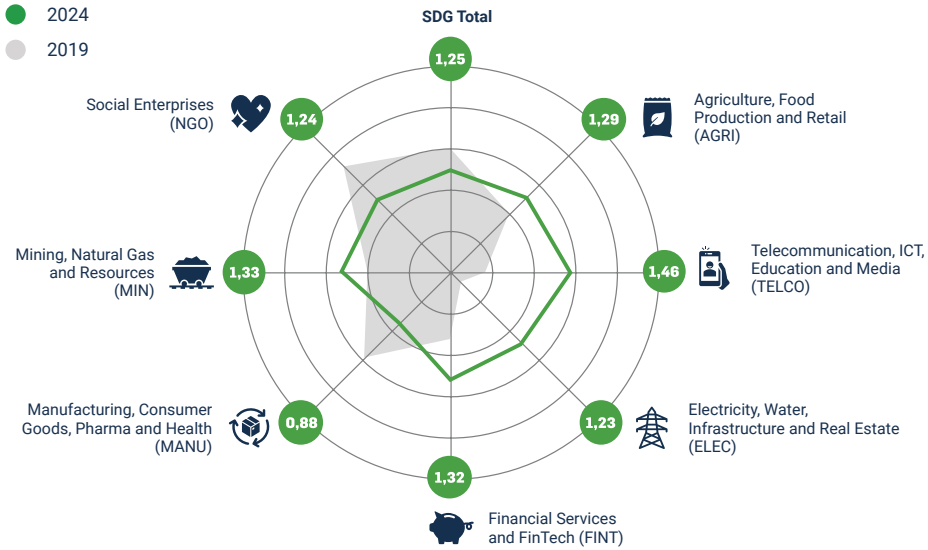
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 3: Good Health And Wellbeing included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Security and Safety for Staff and Customers	Assuring Safe Working Environments

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 3 - Good Health And Wellbeing

Telecommunication, ICT, Edu and Media (TECLO) are the primary industries that prioritises good health and wellbeing directly. Between 2019 and 2024, the emphasis on SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being saw significant changes across industries. The telecommunications (TELCO) and electricity (ELEC) industries demonstrated the largest increases with both rising by 1,04 and 1,05, respectively. Agriculture (AGRI) and mining (MIN) sectors maintained their focus, while manufacturing (MANU) experienced a decline, dropping by 0.59. Overall, the commitment to SDG 3 increased by 31.58%, reflecting a continued dedication to improving health and wellbeing.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	0,95	0,99	0,42	0,18	0,81	1,47	0,99	1,82
2024	1,25	1,29	1,46	1,23	1,32	0,88	1,33	1,24

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 3 - Good Health And Wellbeing was prioritised in 4th position, 1 place above its 2019 position. Contributing companies consistently prioritised SDG 3 - Good Health and Wellbeing due to its direct impact on workforce productivity and overall business sustainability. With telecommunication (TELCO) emerging as the top priority, followed closely by mining, financial services and agriculture, companies recognised the importance of investing in health initiatives to ensure the wellbeing of employees and communities. This focus aligned with the immediate returns associated with promoting good health and long-term benefits of a healthier workforce.

▲	**2019:** 5th Place **2024:** 4th Place	**Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation**

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4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Investing in education to enable future work readiness

SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. It seeks to promote lifelong learning opportunities, focusing on enhancing literacy, numeracy and essential skills to foster sustainable development.

SDG Attainment:	**Significant challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Decreasing**

Since 2019 the private sector has experienced challenges sustaining contribution to SDG 4 - Quality Education due to trade offs funding other critical priorities. Companies are also reporting a rapid need to evolve curriculums to address emergent skill requirements.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Lack of access to talent and emergent skills:** The private sector is struggling to source employees with the relevant skills, education and experience, with companies reporting across industries that curriculums and skills competency frameworks are not evolving fast enough to align to rapid innovation and advancements.

2. **Access to emergent knowledge and know how:** Companies are facing difficulty updating curriculums, educational resources, and affordable, quality experts for new and emerging business practices, with smaller businesses lacking the financial capacity to invest in educational technologies or partnerships with educational institutions.

3. **Enabling intergenerational knowledge sharing:** Companies are reporting that incoming generations of workers are bringing new values and cultures into the workplace. Often young workers are very socially conscious, bringing change to organisational culture and a need for inclusive intergenerational knowledge sharing and relationship building approaches.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 4 – Quality Education	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Participation rate in pre-primary organized learning (% of children aged 4 to 6)	73.1	2020	●	→
Net primary enrollment rate (%)	88.3	2020	●	↓
Lower secondary completion rate (%)	80.4	2019	●	↓
Literacy rate (% of population aged 15 to 24)	98.4	2019	●	→

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies are experiencing extreme learning curves in the face of aggressive digital and technological innovation. There is a shift in labour and skill requirements as successful company operations innovate. Many companies report difficulty sourcing both new and well-established roles and challenges sourcing relevant learning programmes. The South African private sector delivers comparatively high levels of training due to alignment with the B-BBEE Skills Development requirement.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Delivery of vocational training programmes to underprivileged communities:** Invest in holistic community development by revitalising the Thusong Centre in Hopefield.
  Exemplary Story: Kropz Elandsfontein Mine's ongoing transformation of the Hopefield Thusong Centre exemplified its commitment to fostering holistic community development.

- **Shaping academic experiences for children from disadvantaged backgrounds:** Support disadvantaged students through the provision of educational support tools like PPE and devices, prioritising academic growth and equitable access to learning resources, despite post-pandemic challenges.
  Exemplary Story: KMR partnered with the Department of Education, providing 120 tablets to Grade 12 students and allocating 58 tablets and 10 laptops to teachers. They invested over R1 million in PPE and hospital linen to support Covid-19 response efforts.

- **Delivery of digital skills training aimed at empowering the next generation for economic opportunities:** Engage in youth development, and delivery learning platforms, products and services that improve access to digital education and learning outcomes.
  Exemplary Story: Vodacom empowered local communities through digital skills training at 92 community centres, benefiting 2,600 female farmers and 1,333 youth.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 4: Quality Education included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	Deliver Digitally Advanced Learning Experiences	Develop and deliver next generation, personalised digital learning experiences at each stage of the learning lifecycle including childhood, school, tertiary, youth and adult learners.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

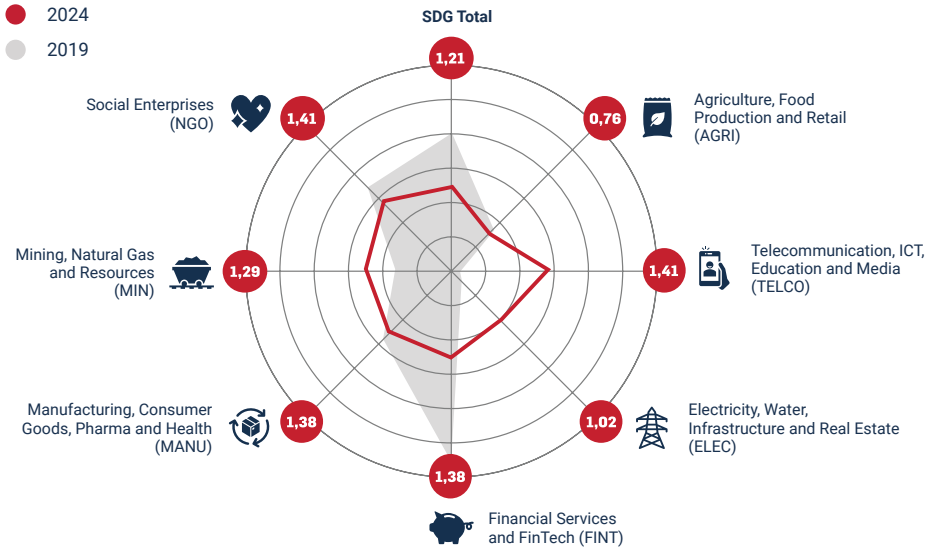
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 4: Quality Education included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Workforce Development and Labour Dynamics	Labour challenges and skills shortage
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate		Skill and labour shortages and unrest
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Ability to source talent and labour challenges
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources		Labour Cost, Supply and Relations
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Talent shortages and challenges
		The digital divide and ICT skills

Industry Perspective

Comparative Analysis for SDG 4 - Quality Education

Telecommunication, ICT, Edu and Media (TECLO) and Social Enterprises (NGO) are the primary industries that prioritise quality education directly. Between 2019 and 2024, the emphasis on SDG 4 - Quality Education experienced significant shifts across industries. Both the NGO and telecommunications (TELCO) industries led the prioritisation ratings, each scoring 1.4. This was closely followed by financial services (FINT) and manufacturing (MANU). Although scoring decently at 1.38, FINT experienced a significant drop from 2.7 in 2019, indicating a noteworthy drop. The overall commitment to SDG 3 declined by 0.77, reflecting a change in focus across industries in the last 5 years.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,98	0,87	1,11	0,20	2,76	1,38	0,82	1,70
2024	1,21	0,76	1,41	1,02	1,38	1,38	1,29	1,41

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 4 - Quality Education was prioritised in 5th position, 3 places below its 2019 position.
The participating companies increasingly relied on external partnerships or collaborations with various stakeholders, such as governments, NGOs, or educational institutions, to address education-related challenges. In such cases, the responsibility for driving progress on SDG 4 was often shared or delegated to these partners, reducing the need for direct corporate involvement. However, this was not applicable across all industries, with sectors like Telecommunications (Telco) and Mining (MIN) seeing increases in prioritisation of quality education with Electricity (ELEC) making a massive jump from 0.2 to 1.02.

2019: 2nd Place
2024: 5th Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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5 GENDER EQUALITY

Empowering women through equitable opportunity in the world of work and communities

SDG 5 aims to achieve substantive gender equality by empowering all women and girls. This includes addressing discriminatory norms, ensuring equal access to education and healthcare, and promoting women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels.

SDG Attainment:	**Challenges remain**
SDG Progress:	**Moderately improving**

Since 2019 the private sector has experienced extreme work-life change with the rapid acceleration of digital, remote, hybrid and flexible working. These changes have predominantly benefited women in higher paid or office-based roles. The gender equality divide has therefore likely widened for SDG 5 - Gender Equality.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Workplace gender pay and leadership gaps:** The private sector continues to grapple with a pay gap between male and female employees. Underrepresentation of women in leadership roles continues to undermine the proven value that inclusion can bring to company decisions, performance and safety outcomes.

2. **Challenges providing women-friendly environments and flexible work:** Companies reported white collar improvements in flexible and hybrid working environments supportive of parental responsibility, which falls disproportionately upon women. However, more operational roles often still lack inclusive facilities such as childcare or wellbeing initiatives to fully support women-friendly work environments.

3. **Inadequate progress to eliminate sexual harassment and violence:** Gender based violence and sexual harassment at work and within communities where companies operate is still high, with women workers often facing danger whilst commuting to work, at work or within communities and home life.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 5 – Gender Equality	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods (% of females aged 15 to 49)	79.7	2016	🟡	↑
Ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received (%)	79.5	2021	🟠	↓
Ratio of female-to-male labour force participation rate (%)	79.6	2022	🟢	↑
Ratio of female-to-male labour force participation rate (%)	46.6	2021	🟢	↑

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies are catering to the needs of women, and the challenges they face. Companies have reported that the most effective means of ensuring strong gender equality initiatives is women representation within senior leadership, which accelerates a transition at further levels of the organisation. It is also reported that collaboration with community-based organisations can be highly effective in driving progress.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Develop gender empowering entrepreneurial initiatives:** Offer products, services and marketing strategies that enable and empower female entrepreneurs.
  Exemplary Story: AgriVuno's Women in Agri Accelerator Challenge empowered female entrepreneurs in agriculture, fostering sustainability, gender equality and economic development. Through strategic partnerships and comprehensive support, it drove positive change, shaping an inclusive and equitable agricultural landscape.

- **Pioneering female leadership throughout the organisation:** Prioritising training and support for female leadership in management positions.
  Exemplary Story: South Deep Gold Mine, a Gold Fields subsidiary, prioritised gender equality realising a 100% increase in female representation in management. Through targeted recruitment and training, they empowered women in leadership, contributing to diversity and inclusivity.

- **Acting to mitigate gender-based violence within communities:** Collaborate with communities and NGOs to prevent gender-based discrimination across the workplace, marketplace and communities.
  Exemplary Story: Sibanye-Stillwater initiated comprehensive training programmes in 2022 targeting GBV and substance abuse, recognising their impact on vulnerable groups. Anti-sexual harassment campaigns and reporting centres were established, promoting workplace safety.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 5: Gender Equality included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Financial Services and FinTech	Diversity and Inclusion within Financial Services	Promote diversity and inclusion within financial services organisations and leadership, ensuring equal pay and an inclusive work environment and practices to enable gender equality, enabling a highly capacitated, future-fit talent base.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 5: Gender Equality included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	Social Responsibility and Inclusivity	Equitable access for vulnerable customers and learners
		Balancing growth with equity and rights

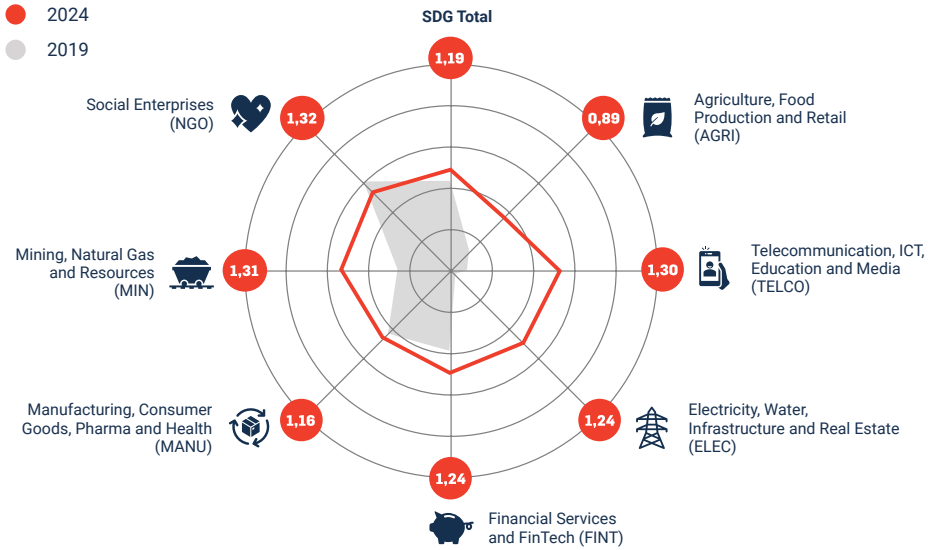
“The level of violent crime, in particular against women, remains very high.”

South African VNR 2024

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 5 - Gender Equality

Social Enterprises (NGO) are the primary industries that prioritises gender equality directly. Between 2019 and 2024, the priority given to SDG 5 - Gender Equality witnessed significant movements across sectors resulting in a steady increase of 0.13 during that time. NGO companies slightly decreased their focus resulting in a decline of 0.14. Electricity (ELEC) experienced the biggest increase of 1.17 in priority, while agriculture (AGRI) and telecommunications (TELCO) saw substantial increases of 0,58 and 1,11, respectively. Financial technology (FINT) and manufacturing (MANU) sectors showed a moderate rise with mining (MIN) growing by 0.67.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,06	0,31	0,21	0,07	0,98	1,08	0,64	1,46
2024	1,19	0,89	1,30	1,24	1,24	1,16	1,31	1,32

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 5 - Gender Equality was prioritised in 11th position, one place above its 2019 position.
Contributing companies maintained a strong focus on reducing gender equalities across industries, resulting in an increase in prioritisation from 1.06 to 1.19. Prioritising B-BBEE and the wellbeing of women in the workforce contributed to long-term operational success, by fostering a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable corporate culture while also aligning with public equality standards. With increases evident across 6 out of the 7 industries, SDG 5 - Gender Equality experienced consistent prioritisation over the last 5 years.

▲	**2019:** 12th Place **2024:** 11th Place	**Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation**

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6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Enabling sufficient clean water for sustainable living

SDG 6 addressed clean water and sanitation and is aimed at ensuring universal access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities.

SDG Attainment:	**Significant challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Moderately improving**

Since 2019 South African companies have continued to overcome water management inefficiencies, sometimes challenged by water scarcity and rising water costs. Water providers face issues with aged water infrastructure impacted by loadshedding. For companies that consume water in operations, the efforts to implement modern water technologies can be resource demanding as they strive to deliver upon SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation:

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Cost of water resource management and efficiency innovation:** Companies, especially in manufacturing, mining and farming, are finding the introduction of modern water management technologies and practices expensive to implement. Sustainable water use practices are crucial for minimising water wastage and mitigating the risk of water pollution.
2. **Sufficient, sustainable sources of clean, affordable water:** Companies based in water scarce regions find it financially challenging to invest in and maintain private water infrastructure where municipal water and sanitation infrastructure is compromised.
3. **Maintaining wastewater treatment and water infrastructure:** Companies in the water management industry have struggled to manage the escalating cost of maintenance for water infrastructure, which is regularly damaged and impacted by loadshedding, which also disrupts water treatment processes when backup generators have insufficient capacity.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Population using at least basic drinking water services (%)	93.9	2020	●	↗
Population using at least basic sanitation services (%)	78.5	2020	●	↗
Freshwater withdrawal (% of available freshwater resources)	63.6	2019	●	●
Anthropogenic wastewater that receives treatment (%)	21.7	2020	●	●
Scarce water consumption embodied in imports (m^3 H_2O eq/capita)	455.1	2018	●	●

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies have continued to innovate water management processes to effect efficient and sustainable use of water, with many collaborating with municipal and community-based initiatives that deliver upon SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation:

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Offer private sector water management services:** Companies can offer holistic water management value propositions, including the implementation of modern, automated water efficiency technologies and processes.
  Exemplary Story: Sappi's innovative water recovery project at Stanger Mill demonstrates a commitment to sustainable resource management, reclaiming 2,000 m3 of water per day. This initiative enhanced operational efficiency while prioritising responsible water use.

  Developing responsible water infrastructure across operations: Ensure responsible water use across operations.
  Exemplary Story: Umgeni-Uthukela Water's prioritisation of Environmental Sustainability influenced its corporate strategy. Projects like the Mooi-Moeni Transfer Scheme aimed to harness wasted energy, while efforts to manage alien invasive plants ensured water resource sustainability and created job opportunities. Over 700 hectares were cleared.
- **Pioneering water treatment for sustainable use:** Develop and implement holistic water strategies that are socially equitable, environmentally sustainable, and economically beneficial in watersheds around company and supply chain operations.
  Exemplary Story: South Deep's water treatment processes, including reverse osmosis, ensure compliance with South African Drinking Water standards. RO plants directly supply potable water to the Twin and South Shaft complexes, securing reliable access.

- The Northern Cape Mines Leadership Forum engaged with the Department of Water and Sanitation and Bloem Water, the custodian of the VGWSS, to initiate sustainable solutions for assets and the next phases of the upgrade. The mining industry consumes about 48% of the water it is authorised to extract from the system instead of its 59% allocation. This means more water is available to supplement the balance of water allocated for municipalities catering for communities, agriculture, private businesses, government departments and entities, and water user associations.

- **Collaboration on water resource management:** Enable cross industry and sector best practices and tools to enable water resource management, helping to restore water-based ecosystems around business operations. **Exemplary Story:** The Minerals Council South Africa has developed a Water Self-Assessment Reporting Tool (WSART) to assist in the operational implementation and tracking of water management strategy supporting the identification of initiatives, assessment of water requirements, opportunity to improve water reuse and recycling, reduced treatment cost and clear management reporting. This is improving the consistency of approaches, calculations, and better reporting on progress.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Implement Water Efficiency and Recycling Systems	Implement systems that optimise water treatment and recycling processes, significantly improving water sustainability and security.
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Upgrade Urban Water Management Solutions	Upgrade urban water systems with innovative management solutions to ensure sustainable usage and reduce water wastage.
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Use Technology to Attain Water Management Efficiencies	Leverage water recycling and purification technologies to improve water efficiency, reducing consumption, costs and environmental impact both in internal operations and in water infrastructure collaborations, contributing to water resilience.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

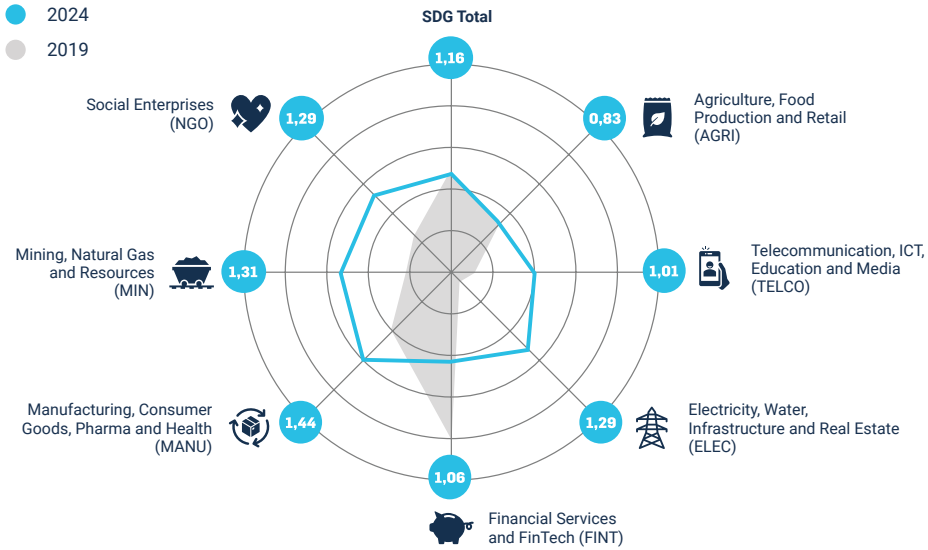
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	Challenges implementing water efficiencies
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Challenges reducing waste and pollution

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health (MANU) are the primary industries that prioritises quality education directly. During the last 5 years, most industries maintained a consistent focus on SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation. Although experiencing a slight drop, this was largely due to financial services (FINT) dropping from 1.95 to 1.06. Contrary to this, all other industries experienced growth with telecommunication (TELE) and electricity (ELEC) booming by 0.73 and 1.12, respectively. Overall, there was a slight decrease across industry prioritisation of 2.5%, but closer examination suggests steady growth with manufacturing (MANU) pioneering with a rating of 1.44.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,19	0,81	0,28	0,17	1,95	0,98	0,53	0,61
2024	1,16	0,83	1,01	1,29	1,06	1,44	1,31	1,29

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation was prioritised in 13th position, 7 places below its 2019 position. With water scarcity a growing issue in various regions of South Africa, the majority of contributing companies positioned SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation as a consistent priority over the last 5 years. Companies across industries incorporated water-saving measures and technologies into their operations, recycling and reusing principles including wastewater treatment. This resulted in stronger water-related risk management across supply chains, evident through manufacturing (MANU) and mining (MIN) growth in prioritisation.

2019: 6th Place
2024: 13th Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

A just transition toward affordable, green energy

SDG 7 seeks to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy by 2030. This goal emphasises expanding electricity access, boosting the use of renewable energy, and enhancing energy efficiency to promote global sustainability and eradicate energy poverty.

SDG Attainment:	**Significant challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Stagnating**

Since 2019 the private sector has been highly impacted by Loadshedding which has increased the cost of energy, disrupted business operations, and resulted in companies resorting to expensive and high carbon diesel generators where cleaner solutions have been too expensive to implement. Many companies have invested in renewable solar energy solutions to enable continuity, paradoxically accelerating delivery on SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **New Tax Regimes:** Many companies are not aware of or will not be able to easily afford forthcoming tax penalties for high carbon energy consumption.
2. **High cost of investment in renewable energy:** Companies have faced significant costs as they have worked around Loadshedding, with differing abilities to afford long term and sustainable solutions. Some have paid for the transition to renewable energy and started independent power production placing future focus on options to contribute power to the national grid. Less resourced, often smaller companies are simply enduring negative impact, while other companies have struggled with the availability and price of renewable energy equipment.
3. **Loadshedding damage to equipment and higher electrical usage:** Many companies have reported damage to equipment and infrastructure resulting from loadshedding, with high capital costs to repair or replace machinery. Additionally, restarting operating processes can result in higher electrical consumption.
4. **Disruption to operational and staffing schedules:** Companies have struggled to deal with higher stages of loadshedding which can result in operational processes needing to stop. This has resulted in higher cost of operations and disrupted staffing schedules that are challenging to afford and manage.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Population with access to electricity (%)	84.4	2020	●	↓
Population with access to clean fuels and technology for cooking (%)	86.8	2020	●	↑
CO^2 emissions from fuel combustion per total electricity output ($MtCO^2$/TWh)	2.1	2019	●	→
Renewable energy share in total final energy consumption (%)	5.6	2019	●	→

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies and private sector organisations have taken both independent and collective action to mitigate the impact of loadshedding. There are a number of promising just energy transition initiatives underway including power generation and green economy fuels. The renewable energy products and services industry is booming.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Accelerate 'Just Energy Transition':** Deliver sustainable energy transition pathways by working across sectors and industries.
  Exemplary Story: Eskom led South Africa's energy transition with smart grid technology, renewables and strategic collaboration, aiming for efficiency, reliability and sustainability, while fostering economic growth and social equity.
- **Participate in renewable energy generation:** Invest in independent renewable energy production to supply operations and other local energy consumers whilst delivering energy efficiencies.
  Exemplary Story: Clicks Group advances sustainability with rooftop PV solar panels, generating 631MWh last year. A R28M investment aims to increase renewable energy to 4500MWh by 2023, aligning with carbon neutrality targets and climate action initiatives.
- **Invest in energy efficiency and an emissions free future:** Substantially reduce emissions associated with own and supply chain operations.
  Exemplary Story: Vodacom went beyond connectivity, prioritising sustainability by setting ambitious targets to cut emissions and transition to renewable energy by 2025. They invested in energy efficiency and renewables, collaborating with independent power producers to drive sustainability.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Deliver Renewable Energy Solutions for the Food Industry	Integrate solar and wind power solutions to slash carbon emissions and energy costs in food production, driving forward South Africa's commitment to climate goals and economic benefit.
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Deliver Smart Grid and Renewable Technologies	Deliver technologies that enhance smart grids, enabling dynamic power management and integration of renewable sources for a responsive, resilient energy market.
	Expand Integrated Renewable Energy Systems	Expand the integration of renewable energy systems to support a transition towards a cleaner and more sustainable energy landscape.
Financial Services and FinTech	Green Finance and Sustainable Investment	Promote green finance initiatives by offering sustainable financing solutions for renewable energy, clean technology and environmentally responsible, just transition enabling projects.
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Lead on Independent Green Energy Production	Implement independent renewable energy solutions to produce low cost, clean energy to power operations, reclaim energy and reducing carbon footprints, earning revenue from clean energy.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

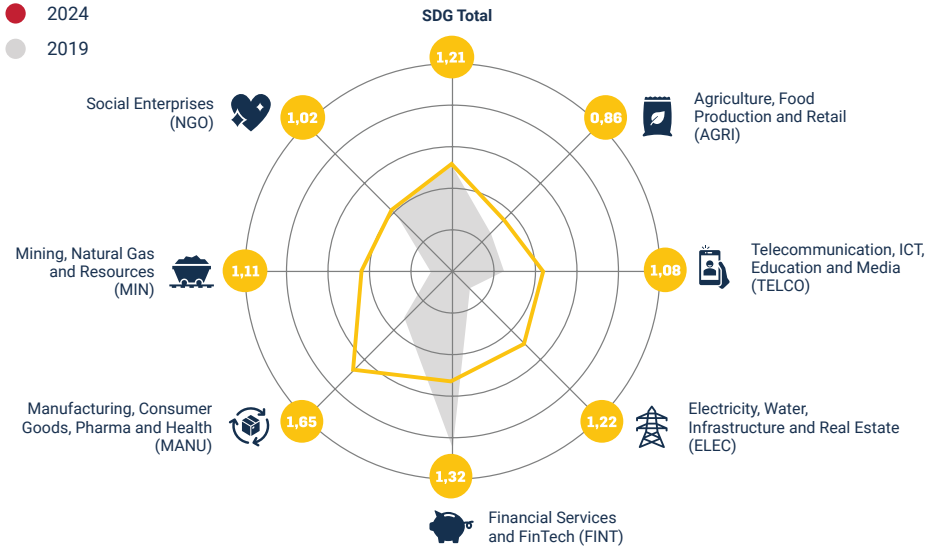
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Energy Management and Cost Efficiency	Impact of loadshedding and cost of energy
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate		Loadshedding and energy cost
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Difficulty transitioning to clean energy
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources		Loadshedding disruption and cost of energy
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Energy cost and sustainable supply
		Energy cost and loadshedding

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health (MANU) are the primary industries that prioritise affordable and clean energy directly. Between 2019 and 2024, there was a consistent focus on SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy across majority of the industries. The electricity (ELEC) industry saw the largest increase in prioritisation, jumping from 0.29 to 1.22, indicating big potential within the sector. Manufacturing (MANU) and mining (MIN) experienced similar progress, growing by 0.86 and 0.88, respectively. Agriculture (AGRI), telecommunication (TELCO) and NGOs also experienced growth, but the opposite was true for financial services (FINT) which ultimately lowered their priority ranking from 2.11 to 1.32. Overall, there was a slight decrease in the total industry priority by 4%.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,26	0,62	0,62	0,29	2,11	0,79	0,23	0,97
2024	1,21	0,86	1,08	1,22	1,32	1,65	1,11	1,02

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy was prioritised in 12th position, 5 places below its 2019 position. Participating companies in the financial services and fintech sectors reported a big change in prioritisation since 2009. SDG 7 energy access and renewable energy initiatives are perceived as less immediately relevant to their operations compared to other SDGs. With steady progress in all other industries, the change in prioritisation from electricity (ELEC) and mining (MIN) had a big impact on the progress of the goal.

2019: 7th Place
2024: 12th Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Creating sustainable, decent work and contributing to economic growth

SDG 8 aims to promote sustained, inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. This involves addressing unemployment challenges, improving working conditions, and fostering economic opportunities to enhance overall wellbeing.

SDG Attainment:	**Major Challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Moderately improving**

Since 2019 the private sector has struggled with low investment, risky markets and rising costs. This has challenged prosperous and sustainable businesses and the ability of businesses to both provide jobs and drive economic growth.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Forthcoming European Human Rights regulations:** Companies unable to comply with regulations could face tax penalties of up to 20%. Companies report that there is insufficient awareness or readiness to report against these future requirements.
2. **Low investment, low growth, low spending, high inflation:** Companies have reported that investment has been extremely low given the high level of economic risk and volatility. Customer spending has also been low, impacting revenue, and inflation of costs is making it difficult to provide wage increases in line with inflation and to sustain job opportunities.
3. **A disrupted supply chain and market volatility:** Companies have struggled with rising import and local costs of production, often facing volatile commodity prices. There have been material delays across the supply chain and reduced availability of materials. This has placed pressure on the bottom line. Companies are in favour of locally produced products and services, but are struggling to identify local producers.
4. **Changing customer demand and diverse customer needs:** Companies are facing rapid changes in customer demand and intense competition. This is prompting them to continuously adapt their product and service offerings. The widespread adoption of process automation is expected to pose ongoing challenges to ensuring future employment opportunities are inclusive and equitable. This is likely to present challenge to marginalised and vulnerable groups.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Adjusted GDP growth (%)	-4.0	2021	🔴	⚪
Victims of modern slavery (per 1,000 population)	2.8	2018	🟢	⚪
Adults with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider (% of population aged 15 or over)	85.4	2021	🟢	↑
Unemployment rate (% of total labour force, ages 15+)	29.9	2023	🔴	↓
Fundamental labour rights are effectively guaranteed (worst 0–1 best)	0.7	2021	🟡	↑
Fatal work-related accidents embodied in imports (per 100,000 population)	0.0	2018	🟢	↑
Victims of modern slavery embodied in imports (per 100,000 population)	15.7	2018	🟢	⚪

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies are working to evolve business models to ensure both prosperity and sustainability. This activity is coupled with intensive cross sector effort to enable workforce readiness for future sustainable roles. There has also been significant effort toward enabling local economic development that supports critically required local suppliers. Progress ending state capture has enabled first steps toward rebuilding investor trust, with much work still to be done to attract investment in South African business:

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Job creation and workforce readiness:** Create decent formal-sector jobs in labour-intensive sectors, supported by education and training for emerging skills to enable workforce readiness.
- **Cross sector collaboration on attracting investment:** Identify and prioritise private sector business opportunities that offer both prosperity and sustainability benefits and value creation opportunity.
  Exemplary Story: Through collaborative efforts with leading hotel groups, Bokashi Bran successfully diverts food waste, realising 100% diversion rates and substantial cost savings while fostering sustainability and promoting behavioural shifts in waste management practices.
- **Prioritising and supporting strategic local sources of supply:** Galvanise finance and support for local suppliers able to produce critical required materials.
  Exemplary Story: The Prieska Copper Zinc Mine (PCZM) hosts a community Task Team, in collaboration with Orion Minerals. They developed a framework to enhance community participation, focusing on employment and procurement opportunities in the Siyathemba Local Municipality and Vanwyksvlei areas.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Deliver E-commerce and Automation in Food Retail	Advance retail convenience with AI-driven platforms, automating supply chain processes for seamless consumer experiences, reducing food prices for the most vulnerable.
Financial Services and FinTech	Promote Investment in Sustainable Innovation	Invest in and support FinTech solutions that advance sustainability principles to foster financial services capabilities that address sustainability challenges and decent work.
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Invest in Sustainable Prospecting and Mine Technology and Incentives	Advocate for investment in land and marine prospecting and sustainable mining technology market players, incentivising sustainable continuity of minerals and metal supply.
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	Engage in Youth Recruitment and Workforce Readiness	Accelerate partnerships preparing, training, recruiting and onboarding youth and talent into the world of work in connection with businesses struggling to find scarce skills.
	Specialise in AI, Analytics and Automation Implementation	Invest in business capabilities that deliver ICT solutions leveraging AI and machine learning to automate and enable business processes performance and quality analytics.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

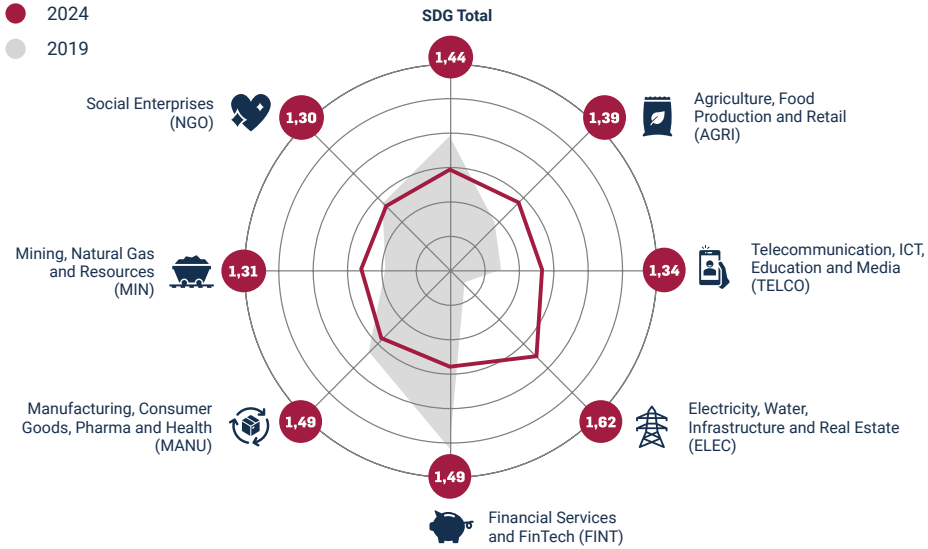
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	Lack of critical mass landing circular economies
Financial Services and FinTech		Difficulty in Risk Assessment
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Market Competition and Economic Stability	Aggressive competition and e-commerce disruption
		Evolving diverse customer needs
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate		Property market instability
Financial Services and FinTech		Market Volatility
		Risky and volatile investment environment
		Heightened risks and hazards
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Fierce domestic and international competition
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources		Poor Economy and Volatile Markets
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Extreme competition and changing needs and values
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	Cost of production and supply chain

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate (ELEC) are the primary industries that prioritise decent work and economic growth directly. Between 2019 and 2024, SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth remained a consistent priority across most industries. The electricity (ELEC) sector increased its focus by 1.35. The mining sector (MIN) increased by 0.37, signifying a focus on safety in mines. Telecommunications (TELCO) and agriculture (AGRI) saw a notable change from 0.76 to 1.34 and 0.93 to 1.39 respectively. Although prioritisation surged in most industries, there was a decrease in the total industry priority, moving from 1.91 down to 1.44.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,91	0,93	0,76	0,27	2,60	1,67	0,94	1,34
2024	1,44	1,39	1,34	1,62	1,49	1,49	1,31	1,30

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth was prioritised in 1st position, the same position as in 2019. Despite experiencing a slight drop over the past five years, fostering Decent Work and Economic Growth remained paramount across all sustainable development goals, again ranking 1st, 5 years after doing so in 2019. This emphasis underscored its foundational role in driving social and economic progress. Fostering a conducive environment for employee productivity contributes to innovation and overall organisational success.

2019: 1st Place
2024: 1st Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Leading on innovation and resilient infrastructure

SDG 9 focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation. It aims to enhance access to information and communication technology, support industrial diversification, and increase scientific research and technological capabilities, with the ultimate goal of fostering sustainable economic growth and development.

SDG Attainment: Significant challenges
SDG Progress: Moderately improving

Since 2019 the private sector has been challenged in keeping up with extreme innovation demands that lead toward long term goals due to challenging operating environments. Those that have made progress point out that SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure is resource intensive, challenging work.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Financing and overseeing infrastructure development is hard:** A significant challenge for the South African private sector is the condition of infrastructure including transport, energy, water, telecommunications, waste management, health and education. Developing resilient and sustainable infrastructure involves large-scale, complex projects that are hard to fund and oversee.

2. **Embracing and integrating sustainable, innovative technology is difficult:** Companies are reporting that it is challenging to adopt and integrate sustainable, modern technologies into business models. Rapid technological advancements can mean that recent innovations become outdated fast, there are substantial costs of implementation, and adoption and change management efforts for staff are intensive.

3. **The rise of automated processes threatens job security:** Transitioning to sustainable industrial practices often involves modernising and automating traditional labour-intensive processes. Many more environmentally friendly and efficient production methods result in reduced future labour requirements and require a just transition, as well as a strategic, collective mindset working beyond the role of individual companies.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Rural population with access to all-season roads (%)	94.6	2022	●	●
Population using the internet (%)	72.3	2021	●	↑
Mobile broadband subscriptions (per 100 population)	115.7	2021	●	↑
Logistics Performance Index: Quality of trade and transport-related infrastructure (worst 1–5 best)	3.2	2018	●	→
The Times Higher Education Universities Ranking: Average score of top 3 universities (worst 0–100 best)	51.1	2022	●	●
Articles published in academic journals (per 1,000 population)	0.5	2021	●	↑
Expenditure on research and development (% of GDP)	0.6	2019	●	↓

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies have demonstrated extremely high levels of innovation and digital transformation including automation of business process, and significant improvement of management reporting, often leveraging AI. Whilst there is a strong imperative for ongoing innovation, companies are regularly pointing to the very real consequence: fewer people are needed to operate innovative business models.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Job creation and workforce readiness:** Create decent formal-sector jobs in labour-intensive sectors, supported by education and training for emerging skills to enable workforce readiness.
  Exemplary Story: A collaboration between BMW, Sasol and Anglo America is piloting the launch of a fleet of hydrogen vehicles. This is advancing the process of bringing hydrogen fuel cells and electric vehicles to South Africa.

- **Cross sector collaboration on attracting investment:** To identify and prioritise private sector business opportunities that offer both prosperity and sustainability benefits and value creation opportunity.
  Exemplary Story: Naspers prioritised ethical AI, fostering innovation and creating jobs. Their operational approach embedded ethical AI practices, spurring job growth in AI-related fields, working with over 4,000 technical staff utilising PlusOne AI on a regular basis.

- **Prioritising and supporting strategic local sources of supply:** Galvanise finance and support for local suppliers able to produce critical required materials.
  Exemplary Story: Xperien prioritised sustainable IT practices through their IT Asset Disposal (ITAD) services, ensuring adherence to circular principles by implementing eco-friendly hardware disposal methods to reduce e-waste.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

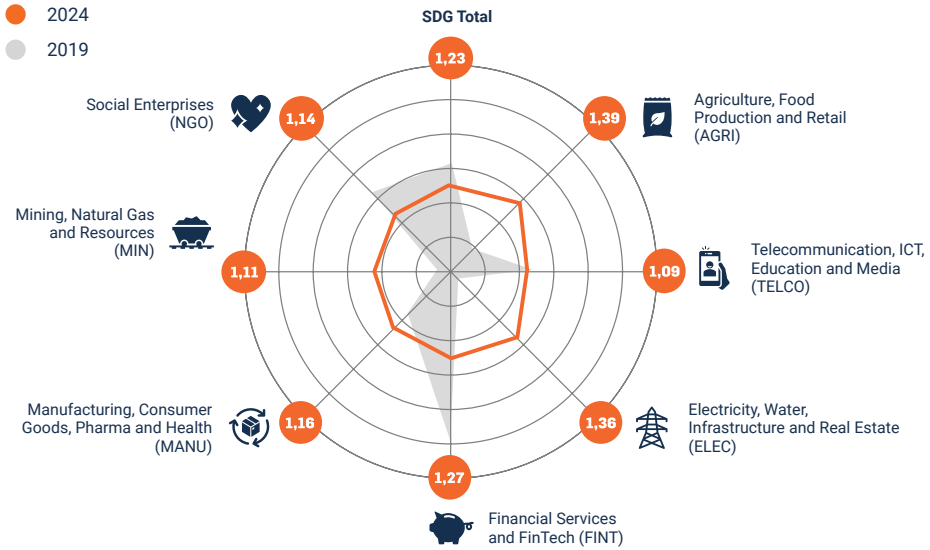
The opportunities mapped to SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Revolutionise Transport with Clean Technology	Revolutionise public and freight transport systems with clean technology to enhance efficiency and reduce environmental impact.
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Deliver e-commerce Optimisation Services	Enable the online presence of companies delivering manufacturing and health products and services, creating a vibrant marketplace where supply can easily meet demand.
	Produce Advanced Materials for Sustainable Products	Expand into the production of sustainable materials, such as low-carbon alloys and recycled metals, to meet the growing demand for environmentally responsible manufacturing.
	Provide Green Manufacturing Solutions	Offer expertise in integrating green technologies and practices in manufacturing processes, specialising in eco-friendly solutions that reduce emissions and waste.
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Develop Green Petrochemicals and Critical Mineral Products To Enable Just Transition	Develop and enable application of environmentally friendly petrochemical products, such as bioplastics and biofuels to create new and sustainable revenue and job opportunities.
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	Deploying Universal Access to the Internet	Implementing 5G and low earth satellite affordable internet access solutions to increase digital inclusion by specialising in both high speed, low latency, low-cost internet connection.
	Enable Data Sovereignty and Cyber Protection	Develop and implement blockchain, quantum and cyber protection technologies to enhance business data protection capabilities, engaging in emerging financial services solutions including cryptocurrency.
	Mobilise Immersive Content Creation Capabilities	Develop virtual and augmented content development skills and product experiences for health, culture, entertainment, learning, sales and other applications.

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail (AGRI) are the primary industries that prioritises Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. Between 2019 and 2024, there were significant shifts in the focus on SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. The electricity sector (ELEC) exhibited the most substantial increase, with a remarkable surge from 0.15 to 1.36. The agriculture sector (AGRI) also experienced a significant rise, increasing by 0.82, while the mining sector (MIN) soared by 0.93. Manufacturing (MANU) saw a moderate increase of 32%. NGOs reduced focus significantly, telecommunications (TELCO) saw a decline of 8% while financial services (FINT) experienced the biggest drop, falling from a once leading 2.44 to 1.27.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,53	0,43	1,18	0,15	2,44	0,88	0,18	1,58
2024	1,23	1,39	1,09	1,36	1,27	1,16	1,11	1,14

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure was prioritised in 9th position, 5 places below its 2019 position. Contributing companies reported a decrease in the prioritisation of SDG 9, particularly within the financial services industry. This is attributed to shifting business strategies and market conditions that divert attention and resources away from initiatives related to Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure development.

2019: 4th Place
2024: 9th Place

Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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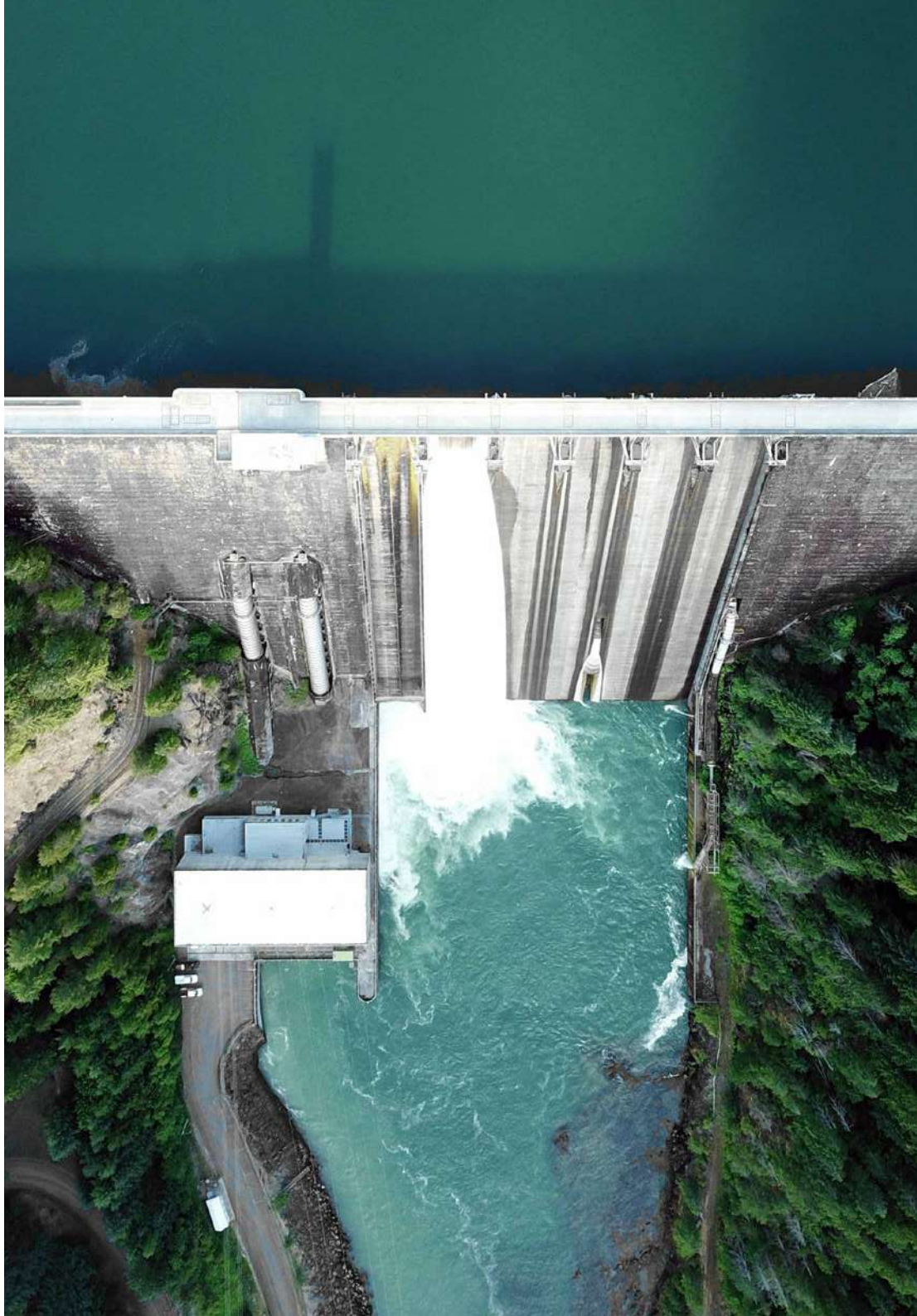
SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Innovation for Sustainability	Cost of innovation
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate		Rapidly evolving technology
		Access to best practice on green technologies
Financial Services and FinTech		Rapid Digital Transformation
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Low availability of sustainable innovation
		Challenging innovating to emerging sustainable products
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources		Speed of Technology Innovation
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Sustainable strategies to deal with digital change
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Market Competition and Economic Stability	Changing customer demand hard to meet
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Project Implementation Cost and Complexity	Challenges with project delivery and execution
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Cost of innovation and transformation
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources		Cost of Transition to Sustainable Operations
		Execution of Transition to Sustainable Products
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Rising cost of digital transformation
Financial Services and FinTech	Security and Safety for Staff and Customers	Cybersecurity Challenges
		Data security and cyber crime issues
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources		Data Privacy and Availability of Analytics
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Data security, privacy and cyber crime
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	Supply Chain and Infrastructure Issues
		Evolving Sustainable Supply Chains
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Sustainable ICT sourcing and supply chain



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10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Contributing to reduced inequality and improved inclusion

SDG 10 aims to address social, economic and political disparities within and among countries. Focusing on policies that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities, the goal strives to reduce income inequality, ensure fair representation, and empower marginalised groups to foster sustainable development.

SDG Attainment:	**Major Challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Information unavailable**

Since 2019 the private sector has continued to confront a legacy of historical disadvantage that compromises both the workforce and the customer. Economic pressure and inflation have a negative impact on SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Addressing economic disparities impacting the customer:** A significant challenge for South African companies is addressing the wide economic disparities prevalent within the country. Beyond employment, product and services design struggle to deliver value propositions that are universally affordable, especially in the face of inflation where price increases cannot be avoided.

2. **Promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace:** Many businesses in South Africa are still struggling to embed diversity and inclusion within organisational culture. This encompasses not just hiring practices, but also ensuring equal career advancement opportunities and an inclusive workplace environment for all employees, irrespective of their background.

3. **Limited protection and regulation within the informal sector:** Private sector participation within the Voluntary National Review process was largely by formal sector participants, many of whom noted that the sizable informal sector within South Africa is often more material in less urbanised, or economically disadvantaged areas. This sector is less regulated and offers less protection from socio-economic challenge impact.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities	63.0	2014		
Palma ratio	6,9	2017		

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies have demonstrated strong progress in the development of products and services that address inequality and enable affordable access for the disadvantaged. There has also been ongoing work to ensure company and wider supply chain employment practices that are fair and inclusive. There is also extensive activity that encourages enterprise economic development, offering support to entrepreneurs seeking to enter the formal sector.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Offering products and services that address inequality:** Design and implement products, services and business models that explicitly target the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised populations.
  Exemplary Story: Vodacom spearheaded initiatives in South Africa, such as Get-a-Gig and job seeker support packages, aimed at addressing youth unemployment. Through partnerships and innovations, they also drove financial inclusion with VodaLend and VodaTrade, empowering local SMEs.

- **Assuring equitable treatment of people across the supply chain:** Implement policies and practices to support equality of opportunity, and fair treatment within business operations and wider supply chain operations.
  Exemplary Story: Patch-Up empowered youth and transformed communities by providing over 40 young individuals with valuable work experience, combatting unemployment and fostering holistic development. The stakeholders benefiting from this success include unemployed individuals and their families, local communities, sponsors and the South African government.

- **Progressing enterprise development objectives:** Supporting entry into the formal sector by emergent informal sector enterprises.
  Exemplary Story: SAB Foundation and SocioNext collaborated to host transformative five-day workshops in rural areas, empowering unemployed participants with essential entrepreneurial skills.
  With ongoing engagement, the initiative fostered inclusivity and empowerment, leading to significant economic resilience and community development.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Financial Services and FinTech	Innovate to Advance Financial Inclusion	Advance financial inclusion by innovating financial products and services to ensure more affordable, accessible inclusion of under-served and marginalised people and businesses.
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	Promote Quality Media and Access to Information and Applications	Invest in media and information content development and platforms with trusted, accessible information and applications that enable access to services and civil engagement.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

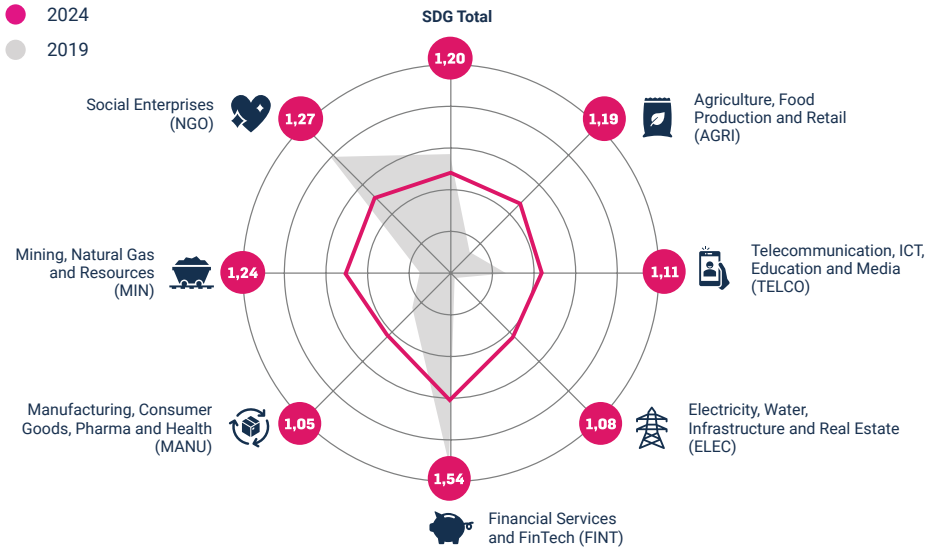
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Financial Services and FinTech	Social Responsibility and Inclusivity	High interest rates exacerbate inequality
		Access to inclusive banking, insurance and lending
		Exclusion due to the digital divide
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Difficulty creating inclusive and accessible offerings
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources		Fair Distribution of Mining Benefits
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Equitable access for vulnerable customers and learners
		Balancing growth with equity and rights

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities

Financial Services and FinTech (FINT) are the primary industries that prioritise Reduced Inequalities directly. In the past 5 years, SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities saw significant prioritisation changes across industries. The electricity sector (ELEC) displayed the biggest increase in prioritisation, jumping from 0.08 to 1.08 while agriculture (AGRI), manufacturing (MANU), mining (MIN) and telecommunications (TELCO) experienced moderate progression. In contrast, financial technology (FINT) experienced a change in focus, dropping by a significant 0.74. NGOs decreased their focus by a further 0.67. The overall focus on SDG 10 did, however, increase since 2019.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	0,90	0,37	0,69	0,08	2,28	0,59	0,35	1,94
2024	1,21	1,19	1,11	1,08	1,54	1,05	1,24	1,27

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities was prioritised in 10th position, 1 place below its 2019 position. Companies reported varied results for their prioritisation of the goal. Although there were low performers, certain industries managed to improve their efforts in reducing inequalities. Main blockers in the prioritisation include the nature of business operations that don't directly align with initiatives aimed at reducing inequality. SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) dropped one place on the private sector prioritisation ranking, showing room for a refreshed approach in various industries.

2019: 9th Place
2024: 10th Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Participating in thriving rural and urban communities

SDG 11 aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It focuses on ensuring access to basic services, adequate housing, transportation and green spaces, while addressing the environmental impact of urbanisation to create livable and equitable communities.

SDG Attainment:	**Significant challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Stagnating**

Since 2019 the private sector has increasingly felt the need for local suppliers able to produce critical materials needed for production processes. Whilst South Africa has many of the raw materials required, local enterprises have a long way to go before they can meet growing demand. The lack of reliable, affordable transport for workers contributes to the challenges in the delivery of SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Enabling spaces for cost effective local production:** Companies are struggling to source relevant local suppliers close to operations. There is limited visibility and communication of collective business sourcing requirements that could inform local economic development and spatial planning activity.

2. **Safe, efficient, and affordable transport for workers:** Companies report that their workers are struggling with steep transport price increases and unreliable public transport and taxi solutions. Workers, especially women, do not feel safe and transport solutions are often disrupted causing time, attendance and productivity issues that that are beyond the control of workers.

3. **Engagement in public sector tendering processes:** Companies engaging in urban and community development projects struggle to engage effectively with complicated, slow and bureaucratic tendering processes. While these processes are endeavouring to meet quality standards, there is scope for automation, efficiency and optimised supplier selection.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Proportion of urban population living in slums (%)	24.2	2020	●	→
Annual mean concentration of particulate matter of less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5) (µg/m³)	24.3	2019	●	→
Access to improved water source, piped (% of urban population)	98.2	2020	●	→
Satisfaction with public transport (%)	66.0	2021	●	↑

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies are highly active investors and incubators of local enterprises. This action is motivated by the B-BBEE supplier and enterprise development initiative which motivates for private sector involvement. Public-private sector collaboration projects are also strongly in evidence for transportation services and spatial development projects.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Collaboration on sustainable local economic development:** Business and community local economic development initiatives focused on accelerating provision of relevant and sustainable local services and products.
  Exemplary Story: The Prieska Copper Zinc Mine (PCZM) hosts a community Task Team, in collaboration with Orion Minerals. They developed a framework to enhance host community participation and boost community involvement.

- **Minimising Environmental Impact by Building Green:** Initiatives in sustainable construction and community development aim to accelerate the delivery of environmentally friendly services and products, promoting local economic growth and resilience.
  Exemplary Story: Six projects in South Africa attained the esteemed 6-Star Green Star rating, showcasing the Green Building Council's dedication to sustainability. These projects showcased eco-conscious design, innovative features and community engagement, fostering vibrant urban environments.

- **Collaborate to increase economic potential of local youth:** Efforts to enhance skill development among local youth prioritise the delivery of tailored training and opportunities, equipping young individuals with the tools for sustainable employment and fostering community advancement.
  Exemplary Story: Redefine, with Maponya Mall, established a Community Hub for local youth, NPOs and SMMEs. Programmes like the Youth Accelerator and workshops spurred economic activity and capacity-building for lasting social impact.

- **Enabling fast, efficient, clean participation in sustainable development:** Public-private partnerships to finance and develop urban and rural communities by providing sustainable green buildings, green spaces, utilities, and infrastructure.
  Exemplary Story: The South African government has been continuously working on enhancing its procurement processes, including updates to the Central Supplier Database (CSD), to improve efficiency, transparency, and to combat fraud and corruption within public sector procurement.
  Exemplary Story: Growthpoint Properties focuses on developing and integrating environmentally friendly, sustainable, and resilient solutions for buildings, transportation, and urban planning, enhancing the sustainability and liveability of communities.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Establish Community Based Food Networks	Foster resilient local food economies by linking small-scale producers directly with markets, enhancing product freshness and supporting community-based sustainable growth.
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Build with Sustainable Construction Materials	Build using eco-friendly materials to reduce environmental impact and drive the construction industry towards sustainability.
	Develop Smart Home Technologies	Develop technologies for smart homes and buildings to promote energy efficiency, improve living standards, and support environmental conservation.
	Facilitate Green Construction Initiative Partnerships	Mobilise and facilitate investment into initiatives that develop and implement green construction projects to promote sustainable urban development.
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Attract Strategic Partners into Host Community Opportunities	Attract strategic partners into local host communities to leverage the education, healthcare and infrastructure built to enable mines, accelerating diversification of job opportunities.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

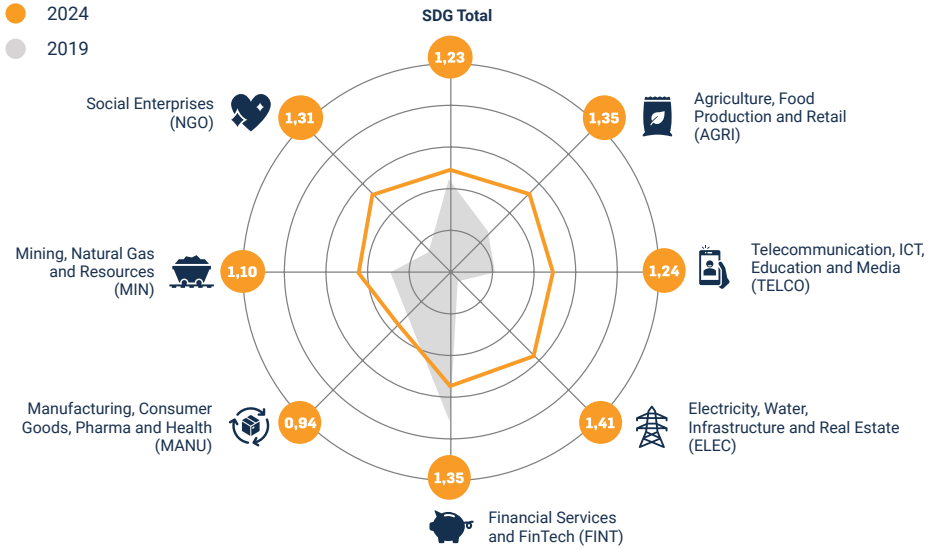
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Social Responsibility and Inclusivity	Engaging for Sustainable Communities
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	Difficulty sourcing local suppliers
		Challenges building up local supply base

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate (ELEC) are the primary industries that prioritises Sustainable Cities and Communities directly. Electricity, water, infrastructure and real estate (ELEC) developed a strong commitment to SDG 11 since 2019, with an increase in rating of 1.28. Financial services (FINT) experienced a decrease in prioritisation by 0.44, the only industry lowering in performance. Manufacturing (MANU), mining (MIN), telecommunications (TELCO) and agriculture (AGRI) experienced moderate growth, indicating a balanced consistency across the majority of industries.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,10	0,68	0,55	0,13	1,79	0,69	0,70	0,36
2024	1,23	1,35	1,24	1,41	1,35	0,94	1,10	1,31

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities was prioritised in 5th position, 3 places above its 2019 position. Over the past 5 years, there has been a consistent focus on prioritising Sustainable Cities and Communities. Participating companies prioritised the development of rural areas, notably through host community campaigns within the mining sector and rural centric support programmes across the different industries. With a strong focus across the board, SDG 11 jumped 3 places up to occupy 5th on the private sector prioritisation rankings.

2019: 8th Place
2024: 5th Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Taking responsible steps forward to ensure efficient business operations

SDG 12 aims to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. It calls for efficient use of resources, reduction of waste, and the adoption of sustainable practices to minimise the environmental impact of consumption and production processes.

SDG Attainment:	**Significant challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Moderately improving**

Since 2019 the private sector has struggled to afford the implementation of responsible production technologies, slowing progress. There is a clear imperative to land credentials and standards for responsible production that are visible to investors, consumers and business leadership teams to advance progress on SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Challenges implementing sustainable production methods:** The adoption of sustainable production technologies and methods has been slower than it would have been under positive economic conditions. Companies report that transitioning operations to environmentally friendly processes that reduce waste and emissions, use resources more efficiently in the longer term, but are complex to implement.

2. **Challenges promoting healthy, sustainable consumption:** Encouraging sustainable consumption patterns among business and civil society consumers in South Africa is a long term and complex initiative. Media and communication services often don't have the budget or resources needed to invest in the motivation and education of customers on the sustainability agenda. This process lacks simple credentials that can reliably inform consumers of green standards attained, mitigating 'green washing'.

3. **Slow rise of plastic and waste management circular economies:** Effectively managing and reducing waste remains a pressing challenge. Emergent circular economy collaborations are surfacing but struggling to scale under challenging economic circumstances.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Municipal solid waste (kg/capita/day)	1.0	2011	●	●
Electronic waste (kg/capita)	7.1	2019	●	●
Production-based SO^2 emissions (kg/capita)	38.7	2018	●	●
SO^2 emissions embodied in imports (kg/capita)	1.3	2018	●	●
Production-based nitrogen emissions (kg/capita)	38.0	2018	●	→
Nitrogen emissions embodied in imports (kg/capita)	4.5	2018	●	↑
Exports of plastic waste (kg/capita)	0.1	2021	●	↑

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies are making tangible advances on responsible consumption and production, especially where this supports cost efficiencies. There are also emergent circular economy players that need support to grow. Advancing SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production needs the consumer to be onboard. This requires simple clear credentials and an awareness narrative to be championed:

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Innovating and tracking Responsible Consumption and Production:** Implementing and sharing efficient production technologies include technologies for reporting on efficiencies and the traceability of materials across end-to-end supply chains.
  Exemplary Story: NUDE Foods promotes zero-waste shopping, aligning with sustainable agriculture. Through regenerative farming and ethical production, they offer eco-friendly food choices, minimize environmental impact, and address food security through ethical consumption.

- **Accelerating circular economies to reduce waste:** Design, invest and adopt responsible circular business models that recycle, upcycle and leverage production by-products to reduce waste.
  Exemplary Story: Ensekta repurposes waste into resources, fostering economic growth, environmental conservation, and healthier food options through collaboration and partnerships.
  Exemplary Story: AVS implemented cradle-to-grave sustainability by identifying supplier and customer ecosystems, aligning sustainability goals, and co-creating business cases. Achievements include open dialogue, equitable partnerships, and improved production efficiencies, resource utilisation and employee safety.

- **Improve sustainability credentials and awareness campaigns:** Investing in educating and informing consumers to create awareness of the sustainability standards attained by traceable products and services. **Exemplary Story:** The Daily Maverick, a South African online news platform, has significantly raised public awareness of climate change through its committed investigative journalism and multimedia storytelling. Focusing on in-depth reporting, including expert opinions and visual elements like photography and interactive tools, the platform has effectively connected the global crisis to local impacts. By hosting public forums, leveraging social media campaigns, and rigorously analysing environmental policies, the Daily Maverick has not only educated the public, but also influenced policy change. Despite challenges like misinformation and engagement fatigue, its sustained efforts in narrative storytelling and emphasising local context have kept climate change a persistent topic in public discourse, showcasing the impactful role media can play in addressing environmental issues.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

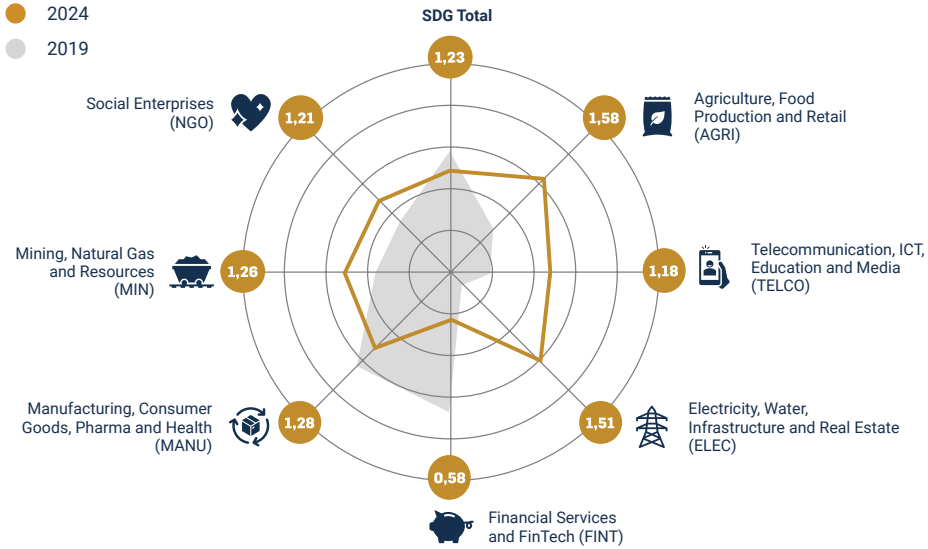
The opportunities mapped to SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Promote Sustainable Food Production and Traceability	Enhance transparency with traceable, ethical food production, tapping into consumer demand for sustainability through innovations that transform food from source to table.
	Invest in Circular Economy and Food Waste Reduction Initiatives	Implement recycling and waste reduction strategies to diminish environmental footprint and promote a circular economy within the food industry.
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Optimise Manufacturing Supply Chains	Design, configure and implement supply chain management technologies and processes that ensure procurement and supply chain transparency and efficiency.
	Mobilise Circular Economy Offerings	Offer and implement circular economy technologies and processes to optimise manufacturing and product supply chains, creating value, enabling efficiencies and reducing waste.
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Expand Mineral and Metal Circular Economy Opportunities	Promote the expansion of opportunities within the mineral and metal circular economy by implementing recycling and modular design principles. This involves processes aimed at recovering, recycling, and reusing metal and mineral waste, thereby creating employment opportunities. Additionally, explore innovative product-as-a-service business models to enhance sustainability and circularity in the industry.
	Leverage Automation, Digitalisation to Modernised Mining	Investing in advanced digital technologies and automation can optimise mining and petrochemical processes, enhancing safety and sustainability whilst reducing operational costs.
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	Enable Digital Solutions that Deliver Sustainability Outcomes	Specialise in analytical and process technology solutions that support efficient, low carbon operations and extended supply chains delivering trusted, standardised reporting insights.

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail (AGRI) are the primary industries that prioritises Responsible Consumption and Production directly. Since 2019, the prioritisation of SDG 12 experienced diverse shifts among industries. Electricity (ELEC) demonstrated another improvement in performance, with a notable increase of 1.29. Conversely, financial services (FINT) and manufacturing (MANU) showed decreases of 1.05 and 0.29 respectively, contrasting with the moderate growth experienced by mining (MIN), telecommunication (TELCO), and agriculture (AGRI). Overall, the total prioritisation decreased slightly by 0.20, indicating consistency across sectors.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,43	0,74	0,49	0,22	1,63	1,57	0,88	0,85
2024	1,23	1,58	1,18	1,51	0,58	1,28	1,26	1,21

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity was prioritised in 7th position, 4 places below its 2019 position. Mining companies reported a strong prioritisation of Responsible Consumption and Production, focusing on eco-friendly operations to minimise environmental impact. Other industries not directly involved in consumption or production, such as telecommunications and NGOs, managed to improve their performance demonstrating a strong prioritisation of SDG 12 across unrelated industries. SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production dropped four places on the private sector prioritisation ranking, suggesting the necessity of a revitalised approach across diverse industries.

2019: 3rd Place
2024: 7th Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Productivity included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	Challenges reducing waste and use of plastics
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	Declining Resources and Ore Quality
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	Delivery of Responsible, Sustainable Production
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Innovation for Sustainability	Challenge transitioning to sustainable packaging
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	Inflating cost of production and supply chain
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	Challenges landing sustainable supply chain logistics
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	Access to affordable sustainable materials

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13 CLIMATE ACTION

Leaving no-one behind on action to mitigate climate impact

SDG 13 aims to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. This includes enhancing resilience and adaptive capacity, promoting climate-related policies, and mobilising global efforts to address the challenges posed by climate change.

SDG Attainment:	**Significant challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Moderately improving**

Since 2019 the private sector has been collaborating to define a just energy transition with cross industry and sector stakeholders. The challenges are extreme, given the current coal-based energy generation methods used by Eskom and the intensity of coal-based industries within South Africa, challenging the delivery path for SDG 13 - Climate Action.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Heavy reliance on coal and energy intensive industry:** The South African private sector is currently heavily dependent on coal-based energy, with several coal intensive industries. This does not bode well for incoming carbon border taxes that, applied to South African exports, will render the prices of South African exports uncompetitive. A just transition toward carbon neutrality is forecast to be extremely challenging despite vocal commitment.

2. **Slow adoption of emergent sustainability standards:** Many South African businesses have still not integrated climate resilience into their long-term strategies despite increasing JSE requirements and international sustainability frameworks, including European regulations set to come into force in 2026. There are a multitude of reporting requirements that are difficult to comply with leaving behind many unlisted, medium, or small companies that are less able to afford compliance.

3. **Economic prioritisation over sustainability goals:** Actively participating in climate policy development and taking concrete actions to combat climate change is expensive. Businesses often do not have the financial resources or skills needed to efficiently prioritise and adopt sustainability goals despite growing demand in socially and environmentally conscious stakeholders.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 13 – Climate Action	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
CO^2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion and cement production (tCO^2/capita)	7.4	2021	🔴	→
CO^2 emissions embodied in imports (tCO^2/capita)	0.4	2018	🟢	↑
CO^2 emissions embodied in fossil fuel exports (kg/capita)	2.5223	2021	🟡	⚪

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies have played a part in the progress toward defining strategies to enable a just energy transition. This includes several exciting collaborations by incumbent players on future opportunities. Broad-based participation by companies in climate reporting and action is hampered by the cost of operational change and the complexity of reporting.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Accelerating a Just Energy Transition:** Cross-sector collaboration on renewable energy is needed, as well as a responsible, just, move away from coal-based industries, services and products, including investment in green economy opportunity.
  Exemplary Story: Sanlam Investments demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainable investing, notably through the Sustainable Infrastructure Fund and ventures like the Bokpoort Concentrated Solar Power plant, which contributed to South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme. Investments in social housing and local businesses supported job creation and local economies, reducing inequality.

- **Enabling financing and investment in action to address climate impact:** Promote investment, funding and support for climate conscious business and opportunities to mitigate the negative impact of the transition of incumbent companies.
  Exemplary Story: In 2022, Old Mutual Investment Group conducted climate-related engagements with 53 investee companies, primarily targeting sectors with the highest climate-related risk. These engagements, based on proprietary ESG scoring, continue.
  Exemplary Story: Absa's climate strategy focused on financed emissions targets, green business opportunities, climate risk processes, and external engagement, aligning with their ambition for net-zero emissions. Notable successes included promoting renewable adoption, increasing small-scale embedded generation value by 33%, providing training to township SMEs, and supporting agricultural innovation and resilience.

- **Simplification and standardisation of reporting frameworks:** Promote climate conscious business and the adoption of sustainability reporting frameworks. Enable an awareness of climate science to support adoption and action to reduce emission in business operations and wider supply chains.
  Exemplary Story: Unifi has developed a platform called Fulcrum which enables companies to enter their numbers once and then present the results in the format required by different reporting frameworks. This helps companies to manage a single repository of relevant sustainability data.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 13 - Climate Action included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Consult on Green Building Solutions	Provide expertise and advisory services relating to green building practices, from design to materials, to advance towards more sustainable real estate practices.
Financial Services and FinTech	Climate Risk Assessment and Management	Conduct portfolio climate risk assessments to identify and mitigate exposure to climate related risks investments and lending activity, enabling climate aware investment decisions.
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Provide Green Manufacturing Consulting	Offer production line equipment and manufacturing processes that enable efficient, low-carbon, advanced manufacturing technologies and techniques.
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Mature the Carbon Capture Technologies, Products and Marketplace	Invest in advanced carbon capture and utilisation technologies, support a reduced carbon footprint, better use of captured carbon in products, and carbon credit and trading revenues.
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	Partner to Supply Local ICT Equipment Production and Recycling	Establish partnerships that can incubate South African production and recycling of ICT equipment and devices, leveraging domestic minerals and metals and workforces.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

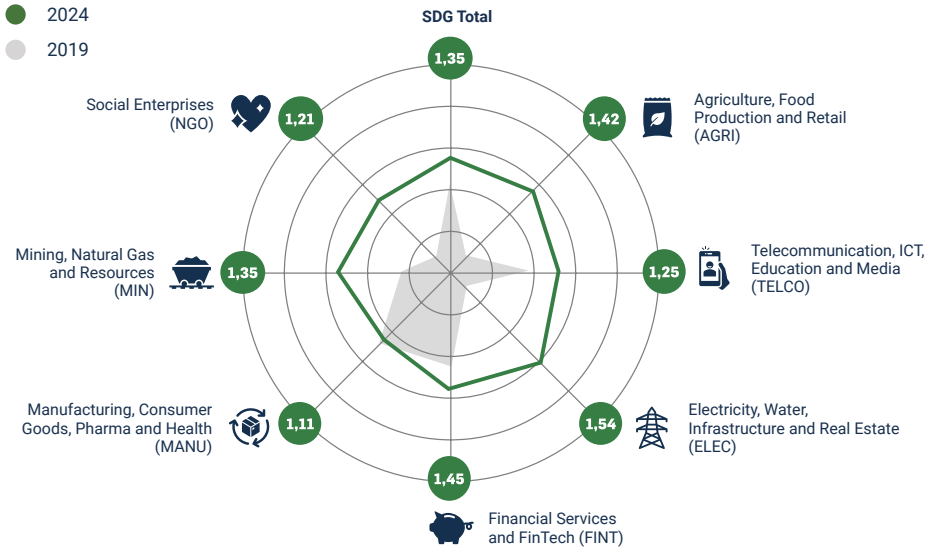
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 13 - Climate Action included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	Challenges mitigating environmental impact
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources		Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Security and Safety for Staff and Customers	Disaster and Climate Impacts
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	Availability of low carbon transport options
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Limited eco friendly sources of supply

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 13 - Climate Action

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate (ELEC) are the primary industries that prioritises Climate Action directly. Between 2019 and 2024, there have been notable changes in the prioritisation of SDG 13 across the different industries. Electricity (ELEC) demonstrated a substantial commitment, with a significant increase of 1.29, while telecommunication (TELCO), NGOs and mining (MIN) saw moderate growth, with increases of 0.35, 0.97 and 0.76, respectively. Financial services (FINT) experienced a slight decrease in prioritisation, dropping from 1.18 to 1.11. Overall, while the total prioritisation increased by 0.33, agriculture (AGRI) and manufacturing (MANU) observed moderate increases, indicating widespread industry improvement.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,02	0,25	0,90	0,25	1,14	1,18	0,59	0,24
2024	1,35	1,42	1,25	1,54	1,45	1,11	1,35	1,21

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 13 - Climate Action was prioritised in 2nd position, 8 places above its 2019 position. There was a notable surge in the prioritisation of SDG 13 among participating companies, particularly with a shift towards offering products and services with minimal environmental impact. This was prominently observed in the electricity industry, where there was a strong emphasis on reducing emissions throughout their operations lifecycle. These achievements cemented Climate Action as one of the biggest climbers since 2019, jumping from 10th to 2nd on the overall SDG private sector prioritisation rankings.

▲	**2019: 10th Place** **2024: 2nd Place**	**Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation**

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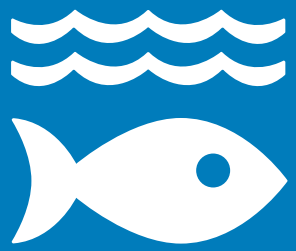
14 LIFE BELOW WATER



Protecting and preparing for sustainable oceanic opportunity

SDG 14 aims to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. It targets the prevention and significant reduction of marine pollution, protection of marine and coastal ecosystems, and the sustainable management of fisheries to ensure the wellbeing of both marine life and coastal communities.

SDG Attainment:	**Major Challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Moderately improving**

Since 2019 the private sector has continued to see SDG 14 - Life Below Water as the lowest priority global goal. This overlooks the incredible potential of the ocean to contribute to food security, a better flow of goods through the supply chain and tourism. Stakeholders remain unaware of the extent of the ocean's opportunity.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Overfishing, poaching and unsustainable fishing:** Companies need to improve practices that avoid overfishing, preserve marine biodiversity, and ensure the long-term sustainability and protection of ocean-based industries, such as fisheries and tourism, from unsustainable fishing and the consequences of poaching.

2. **Marine pollution and risk from oil and gas exploration:** Tackling marine pollution from land-based sources remains a challenge. Manufacturing and waste management companies need to better prevent pollutants from entering the marine ecosystem. Oil and gas exploration companies need to minimise risks that seismic surveys disrupt marine life and protect against spills that could negatively impact marine ecosystems.

3. **Lack of unified strategy for coastal and marine sustainability:** The opportunity presented by South African oceans is not being fully realised within a unified strategy. Coastal development, marine aquaculture, shipping and maritime industries all benefit from investment and effective conservation.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 14 – Life Below Water	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Mean area that is protected in marine sites important to biodiversity (%)	52.7	2022	●	→
Ocean Health Index: Clean Waters score (worst 0–100 best)	60.6	2022	●	→
Fish caught from overexploited or collapsed stocks (% of total catch)	20.8	2018	●	↑
Fish caught by trawling or dredging (%)	21.9	2019	●	↗
Fish caught that are then discarded (%)	4.4	2019	●	↑
Marine biodiversity threats embodied in imports (per million population)	0.1	2018	●	●

COMPANY ACTION:

South African organisations are making progress in understanding how to protect marine ecosystems and to mitigate future risk. There has also been work done to understand future sustainable oceanic investment.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Cross sector collaboration on protection of marine ecosystems:** Implementing policies and practices to protect ocean ecosystems. Investigating and supporting alignment of marine businesses with sustainability and conservation strategies.
  Exemplary Story: South African Biodiversity Institute's contribution to policies to minimise the impact of company activities on marine ecosystems, including efforts to protect critical habitats.

- **Accelerate methods to reduce pollution risk:** Researching and deploying products and services that can negate impacts and protect ecosystems from risk, contributing to oceanic ecosystem restoration, reduce pollution risk.
  Exemplary Story: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)'s innovation lab focuses on developing solutions to reduce negative impacts on ocean ecosystems and facilitate their recovery.

- **Galvanise strategies and finance for marine opportunities:** Collaboration to protect and develop ocean ecosystems and water system flows provides opportunities, as well as engaging to build stakeholder awareness of sustainable ocean opportunity.
  Exemplary Story: Investec's creation of a fund dedicated to investing in projects and technologies that protect and restore the health and biodiversity of ocean ecosystems.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

There were no opportunities mapped to SDG 14 - Life Below Water by participating companies: This is not because there isn't extensive sustainability opportunity arising from the South African oceans, but rather due to the lack of marine representation in the process.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

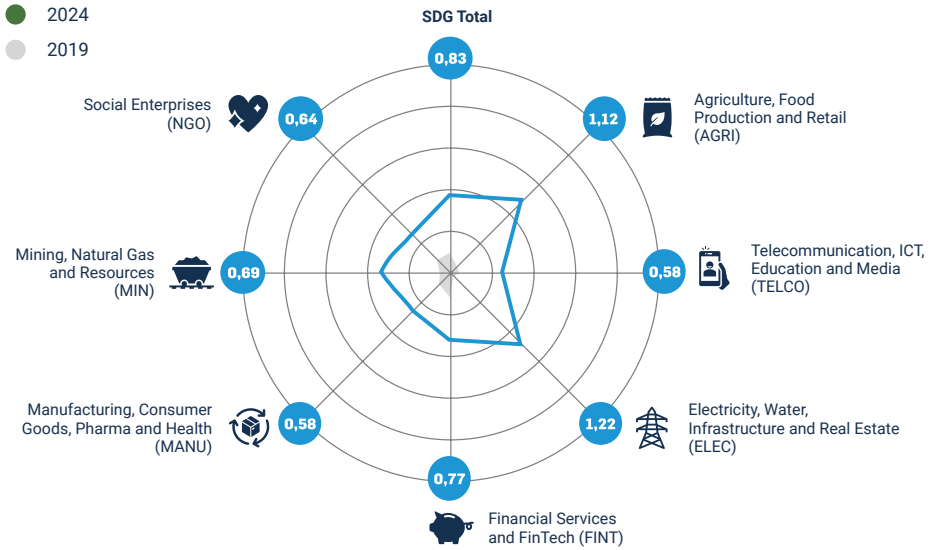
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 14: Life Below Water included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	Challenges reducing waste and pollution

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 14 - Life Below Water

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate (ELEC) are the primary industries that prioritises Life Below Water directly. Over the period from 2019 to 2024, there was a substantial increase in the prioritisation of SDG 14 - Life Below Water across all sectors. The electricity (ELEC) industry exhibited the most significant rise, with a substantial increase of 1.20, while agriculture (AGRI) also saw an increase of 1.06. Telecommunications (TELCO) and financial services (FINT) experienced notable increases of 0.51 and 0.61, respectively, while there were increases across the board, the manufacturing (MANU) sector showed a comparatively smaller rise of 0.48.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	0,13	0,06	0,07	0,02	0,16	0,10	0,06	0,12
2024	0,83	1,12	0,58	1,22	0,77	0,58	0,69	0,64

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 14 - Life Below Water was prioritised in 17th position, the same position as in 2019. Since 2019, SDG 14 witnessed a consistent rise in prioritisation across all sectors, indicating a collective commitment to preserving marine ecosystems. Notably, financial services demonstrated significant growth, reflecting increased support for ocean conservation initiatives. This surge in prioritisation underscores a shared recognition of the importance of protecting oceanic biodiversity and ensuring sustainable marine resource management. Despite these significant improvements, the goal still sits at 17th place on the SDG private sector prioritisation ranking.

	2019: **17th Place**	**Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation**
	2024: **17th Place**	

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15 LIFE ON LAND

Protecting our biodiversity for future generations

SDG 15 aims to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. It addresses issues such as deforestation, land degradation and biodiversity loss, striving to ensure the conservation of land resources and halt the loss of biodiversity by 2030.

SDG Attainment: Major Challenges
SDG Progress: Stagnating

Since 2019 the tourism and conservation industries have suffered significant negative impact due to the global pandemic which disrupted the flow of tourists. This challenge is now swiftly turning to opportunity to deliver upon SDG 15 - Life on Land, which can also benefit from cross-sector and industry collaboration on effective land use, potentially mitigating the anticipated long-term impact on land due to climate change.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Neglected sustainable land and resource management opportunities:** South African companies are struggling to collaborate across industries and sectors to enable more strategic and sustainable management of land and natural resources. For example, industries such as mining can better prevent overexploitation and pollution by landing early succession plans with industries such as forestry and agricultures who can inherit land after mine closure.

2. **Untapped opportunities for blended conservation and ecotourism:** Exciting eco-tourism collaborations that were initiated pre-pandemic were set back during global lockdowns when the tourist industry was heavily impacted. Investment and strategic partnerships are needed to mobilise multi-stakeholder initiatives that blend protecting South African biodiversity with the creation of job opportunities.

3. **Addressing the impact of climate change on land:** Dealing with current and future impacts of climate change on land, such as increased desertification, water scarcity and land degradation mean that rural operations need to increase efforts to mitigate impact by adopting innovative, long-term approaches to land use and water management.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 15 – Life on Land	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Mean area that is protected in terrestrial sites important to biodiversity (%)	36.5	2022	●	→
Mean area that is protected in freshwater sites important to biodiversity (%)	35.8	2022	●	→
Red List Index of species survival (worst 0–1 best)	0.77	2023	●	↓
Permanent deforestation (% of forest area, 3-year average)	0.2	2021	●	→
Terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity threats embodied in imports (per million population)	0.8	2018	●	●

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies have participated in a range of innovative and collaborative initiatives that have the potential to be developed, scaled, expanded, and replicated. The ecotourism industry is making a remarkable comeback following the impact of the pandemic.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Cross sector collaboration on sustainable land succession:** Collaboration and strategic partnerships to plan and implement land use solutions that respect and protect natural capital.
  Exemplary Story: South Deep Gold Mine's procurement initiative focused on safeguarding local ecosystems by engaging in sustainable land management with suppliers. It empowered historically disadvantaged persons, nurtured twenty-eight local enterprises, and raised awareness for biodiversity conservation.

- **Collaboration and investment in eco-tourism opportunities:** Galvanising finance and development support for tourists, NGOs and community-based organisations get involved in eco-tourism.
  Exemplary Story: The Uthando, SEED and Natural Building Collective collaboration to integrate eco-tourism with sustainable community-based activity.

- **Anticipation of exacerbated impact of climate change on land:** Forecast long term climate impact on regions to define policies, practices and local multi-stakeholder initiatives that can protect natural ecosystems from the degradation and impact.
  Exemplary Story: De Beers Group faced an elephant overpopulation challenge at Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve. Collaborating with Peace Parks Foundation, they translocated over 100 elephants to Zinave National Park in Mozambique to restore balance and protect biodiversity.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 15 - Life On Land included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Invest in Eco-tourism and Agri-tourism	Develop eco-tourism that protects and showcases South Africa's rich biodiversity and agricultural heritage, driving sustainable economic development and community upliftment.
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Enable Biodiversity and Land Conservation Initiatives	Invest in land conservation and restoration to protect, build and leverage land value and biodiversity, nurturing value creation partners in the tourism, agricultural and forestry industries.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

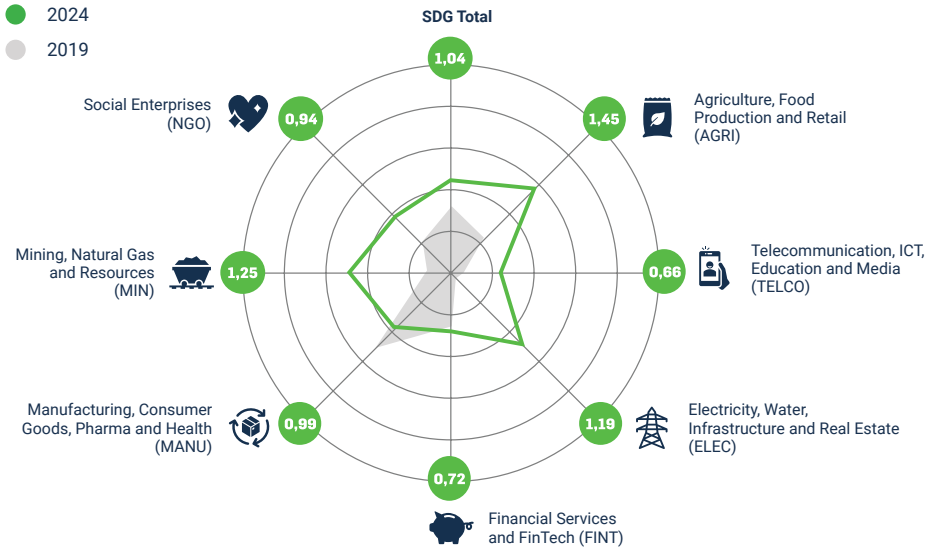
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 15 - Life On Land included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	Challenges reducing waste and pollution

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 15 - Life On Land

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail (AGRI) are the primary industries that prioritises Life on Land directly. Between 2019 and 2024, the prioritisation of SDG 15 - Life on Land witnessed varied movements across sectors. Agriculture (AGRI) experienced a significant increase, soaring from 0.56 to 1.45, indicating a strong focus on land conservation and biodiversity. Similarly, the mining sector (MIN) saw a notable rise, climbing from 0.29 to 1.25, demonstrating increased efforts towards protect biodiversity. Telecommunications (TELCO), financial services (FINT), NGOs and electricity (ELEC) experienced increased prioritisation of Life on Land while manufacturing (MANU) slightly dropped from 1.28 to 0.99.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	0,77	0,56	0,14	0,03	0,65	1,28	0,29	0,49
2024	1,04	1,45	0,66	1,19	0,72	0,99	1,25	0,94

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 15 - Life On Land was prioritised in 15th position, the same position as in 2019. Contributing companies maintained a steadfast focus on SDG 15 - Life on Land across industries, with only one sector experiencing a slight drop. In the mining sector, initiatives safeguarding biodiversity through sustainable land management were successfully realised, showcasing a strong commitment in the industry. Overall, SDG 15 saw an increase in prioritisation by 0.27, securing its position at 15th on the overall SDG private sector prioritisation list.

2019: 15th Place
2024: 15th Place
Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation

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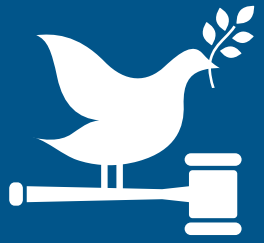
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Contributing to a trusted, peaceful and just private sector

SDG 16 focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensuring access to justice, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. It aims to reduce violence, prevent conflict, and strengthen the rule of law to create a foundation for sustainable and equitable development.

SDG Attainment:	**Major Challenges**
SDG Progress:	**Stagnating**

Since 2019 the private sector has generally seen a progressive end to state capture within both public and private sector organisations, indicating progress on SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. That said, there is an urgent need to innovate policies on a range of topics due to accelerated change.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **A lack of material consequences for perpetrators of crime and corruption:** Whilst companies are getting better at enhancing transparency and combating corruption within their operations, participants have reported that they are not seeing effective legal consequences or penalties being applied effectively to deter malpractice.

2. **Urgent need to accelerate policy innovation and sustainability standards:** Companies across industries raised a multitude of policy requirements and reform needs. Many policies relating to the private sector are no longer relevant and effective in achieving their objectives which are often to protect stakeholders. Additionally, new sustainability credentials are required to differentiate companies that are performing on sustainability from those that are not, to better inform stakeholders of progress.

3. **Need to simplify policies and compliance processes:** Companies reported significant concern about the complexity of policies and the often-manual process of achieving company compliance. There was strong demand for integration, process and standard simplification and automation to make the attainment of compliance more accessible, particularly for smaller, less resourced businesses.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Homicides (per 100,000 population)	41.9	2021	🔴	↓
Unsentenced detainees (% of prison population)	34.0	2021	🟡	↓
Population who feel safe walking alone at night in the city/area where they live (%)	32	2021	🔴	↓
Birth registrations with civil authority (% of children under age 5)	88.6	2017	🟡	●
Corruption Perceptions Index (worst 0–100 best)	43	2022	🟠	↓
Children involved in child labour (% of population aged 5 to 14)	3.6	2015	🟡	●
Exports of major conventional weapons (TIV constant million USD per 100,000 population)	0.2	2021	🟢	●
Press Freedom Index (worst 0–100 best)	78.6	2023	🟢	↑
Access to and affordability of justice (worst 0–1 best)	0.5	2021	🟠	↗
Timeliness of administrative proceedings (worst 0–1 best)	0.5	2021	🟠	↗
Expropriations are lawful and adequately compensated (worst 0–1 best)	0.6	2021	🟡	↓

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies have witnessed extreme attrition and change at senior leadership level in the post pandemic landscape due to a variety of reasons. Generally, the performance standard expected of leaders is perceived to be improving, with strong levels of private sector collaboration on public policy in place.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Demanding responsible, high integrity private sector leadership:** Hold leadership to account for ethical, high integrity behaviour that demonstrates a high level of competence, in line with frameworks such King IV.
  Exemplary Story: Bidvest's 2020 initiative established an ESG Framework, aligning sustainability goals with measurable targets. Achievements include gender parity, reduced carbon footprint, and increased local procurement, integrating ESG into performance metrics for accountability.

- **Accelerate policy innovation and integrated sustainability standards:** Champion collaboration to update and innovate policies whilst driving for integration and simplification of clear, accessible standards.
  Exemplary Story: BDO helps companies to identify sustainability factors, determine suitable frameworks and improve information quality. They enable better sustainability assessment and risk management by delivering comprehensive sustainability assessments, helping boards to proactively adopt sustainability, whilst educating key decision makers.

- **Supporting automation and optimisation in private sector compliance:** Work to make policy and standard compliance simple and accessible without compromising quality standards.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Financial Services and FinTech	ESG Integration and Reporting	Implement, promote and support automated, standardised, simple and integrated reporting across extended value chains to enable transparent, trusted, seamless information and performance insights.
	Advance Cyber Security and Data Privacy	Evolve cyber protection technologies and capabilities to protect financial service operations, customers and client organisations from cyber threats, enabling safe and protected data, services and people that are resilient to cybercrime.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

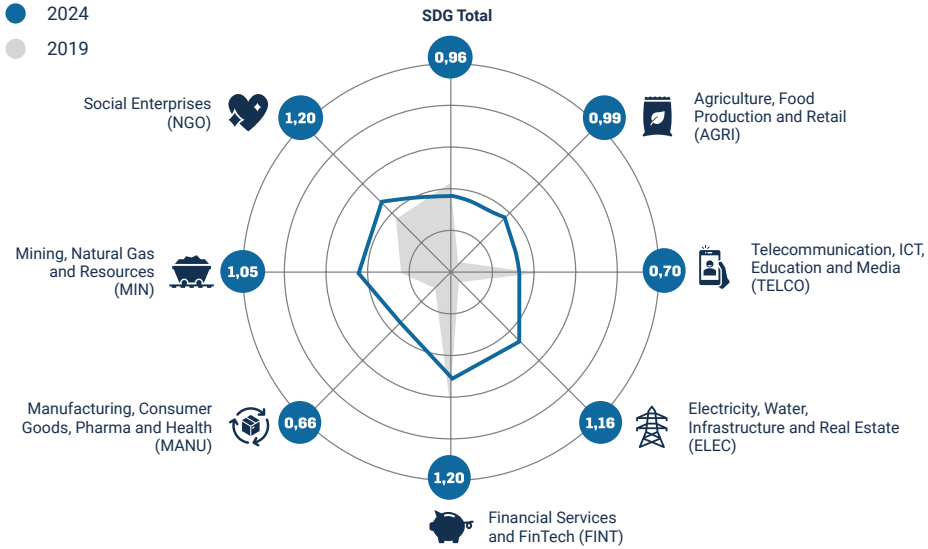
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Policy, Regulatory Compliance and Business Integrity	Corruption in procurement processes
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources		Regulatory Compliance and Challenges
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Corruption and challenges to justice
		Regulatory challenges
		Promoting justice, and ethical, responsible practice
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply	Challenges establishing transparency and traceability

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Financial Services and FinTech (FINT) are the primary industries that prioritises Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions directly. Between 2019 and 2024, there were movements in the prioritisation of SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions across sectors. Agriculture (AGRI) experienced a moderate increase of 0.87, while telecommunications (TELCO) saw a slight decrease of 0.13. The electricity sector (ELEC) showed a substantial rise of 1.04. Manufacturing (MANU) experienced a slightly more significant increase of 0.46 while the mining sector surged by 0.58. NGOs also witnessed a significant increase of 0.47, suggesting a strong focus across industries.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	0,84	0,12	0,83	0,12	1,30	0,20	0,47	0,73
2024	0,96	0,99	0,70	1,16	1,20	0,66	1,05	1,20

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions was prioritised in 16th position, 3 places below its 2019 position. Within the financial services industry, companies like BDO spearheaded initiatives to bolster sustainability assessment and reporting. Through their efforts, they facilitated better risk management by delivering comprehensive sustainability assessments. Despite increased prioritisation of SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, the goal slipped from 13th to 16th position on the overall SDG private sector prioritisation.

▼	**2019: 13th Place** **2024: 16th Place**	**Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation**

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17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Collaboration and partnership to accelerate the 2030 Agenda

SDG 17 focuses on strengthening global partnerships to support the achievement of all other SDGs. It emphasises the importance of collaboration among countries, businesses and stakeholders to promote sustainable development, technology transfer, and capacity-building for a more interconnected and resilient world.

SDG Attainment: Challenges remain
SDG Progress: Moderately improving

Since 2019 the private sector has evidenced heavy participation in strategic partnerships, however the complexity of the strategic partnership landscape is confusing and inaccessible to many company stakeholders who struggle to navigate toward potential strategic partnerships compromising attainment of SDG 17 - Partnership for the Goals.

COMPANY TOP CHALLENGES

During the review process companies reported:

1. **Challenges matching investment supply and demand:** Companies have reported difficulty accessing sources of investment and funding, whilst investors are reporting fear of investment in compromised business with undisclosed negative impact or risk. More needs to be done to enable high integrity connection between investment supply and demand, both locally and globally. Many companies suggested better collaborative marketing of prioritised South African investment opportunities.

2. **Lack of awareness and transparency of key partnerships:** Companies are often unaware of critical organisations, strategic partnerships and sustainability platforms or initiatives. Better awareness and communication of partnerships is needed including investment, policy advocacy, research and knowledge sharing, strategic initiatives and programmes.

3. **Fragmented and disconnected sustainability landscape:** The action to drive sustainability across sectors and industries is fragmented with multiple organisations targeting duplicate agendas. This challenge can be an inherent feature of a complex multi-sector landscape. However, companies report that action is inefficient and poorly organised with much effort diluted or wasted due to a lack of overarching co-ordination.

GOAL PERFORMANCE:

SDG17 – Partnerships for the Goals	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Government spending on health and education (% of GDP)	11.9	2021	●	↑
For high-income and all OECD DAC countries: International concessional public finance, including official development assistance (% of GNI)	NA	NA	●	●
Other countries: Government revenue excluding grants (% of GDP)	27.9	2020	●	↓
Corporate Tax Haven Score (best 0–100 worst)	49	2021	●	●
Statistical Performance Index (worst 0–100 best)	82.4	2022	●	↑

COMPANY ACTION:

South African companies have moved firmly into the 4th industrial revolution era. This has brought forward a 'gig-based economy' with a healthy proliferation of collaborations and partnerships.

The private sector Voluntary National Review has identified the following key interventions being taken by companies:

- **Improved investor collaboration to target opportunities:** Develop transparent, consistent investment criteria through partnerships between investors. Define and target sustainability investment offerings and solutions.
  Exemplary Story: EOH invested more than R24m in learning and development with a focus on unemployed youth through job skills and entrepreneurial training, collaborating with partners like Belgium Campus and iOCO Digital

- **Better private sector communication of sustainable investment opportunities:** Identifying, prioritising, verifying and marketing responsible investment opportunities in high integrity ventures that offer best prosperity and sustainability potential.
  Exemplary Story: Redefine, in collaboration with Maponya Mall, established a Community Hub to address the skill development and collaboration needs of youth, NPOs and SMMEs. Initiatives like the Youth Accelerator Programme and partnership workshops fostered economic activity and capacity-building, promoting sustainable partnerships for long-term social change.

- **Co-ordination of a more integrated sustainability ecosystem:** Facilitating integration of platforms, partnerships, and stakeholders to communicate programmes, initiatives, results, technologies, research, expertise and resources.
  Exemplary Story: Makwande Group participated in the NCPC-SA Industrial Symbiosis Programme, which fostered resource exchange among companies, aiming for mutual benefits. It promoted new business opportunities, revenue streams, asset utilisation, GHG emission reduction, resource efficiency and knowledge transfer.

SDG Opportunities Arising from Industry Round Tables:

The opportunities mapped to SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals included:

Industry	Opportunity	Description
Financial Services and FinTech	Community and Social Engagement	Engage to support sustainable financing across sectors for local community enterprise, development and social responsibility initiatives, including job creation, education, healthcare, infrastructure and services.

SDG Risks and Challenges Arising from Industry Round Tables:

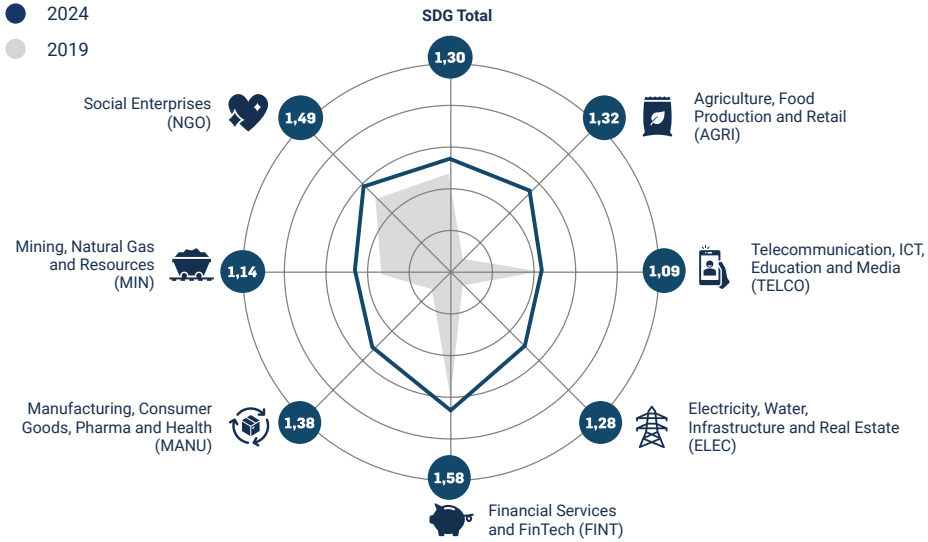
The risks and challenges mapped to SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals included:

Industry	Top 10 Risk	Risk
Financial Services and FinTech	Environmental Impact and Resource Management	Investments that cause environmental impact
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Innovation for Sustainability	Availability of strategic partners to lead on innovation
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Market Competition and Economic Stability	Difficulties with funding and investment
		Attracting investors and funding
Financial Services and FinTech		Investor or Customer Trust
		Access to Funding
		Investment in low integrity businesses
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Policy, Regulatory Compliance and Business Integrity	Policy and regulatory challenges and uncertainty
Financial Services and FinTech		Regulatory Compliance and Challenges
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health		Challenges with regulation and policy
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media		Evolving future fit, fair, sustainable regulations and policy
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Project Implementation Cost and Complexity	Challenges aligning and collaborating on action
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Social Responsibility and Inclusivity	Challenges accelerating partnerships and communities

Industry Perspective

Comparative analysis for SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals

Financial Services and FinTech (FINT) are the primary industries that prioritises Partnership For The Goals directly. Notable progress in prioritisation was observed across all sectors regarding SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals. While total prioritisation increased marginally by 0.14, reflecting a steadfast commitment to collaboration and sustainable development, significant achievements were evident across most industries. The financial services (FINT), agriculture (AGRI), and electricity (ELEC) sectors saw substantial increases. The most noteworthy surge in prioritisation was observed in manufacturing (MANU), which increased from 0.29 to 1.38. Telecommunication (TELCO), financial services (FINT) and the NGO sector experienced moderate increases, suggesting an industry-wide increase in prioritisation.



	Total	AGRI	TELCO	ELEC	FINT	MANU	MIN	NGO
2019	1,16	0,19	1,04	0,23	1,46	0,29	0,76	1,22
2024	1,30	1,32	1,09	1,28	1,58	1,38	1,14	1,49

Overall SDG Prioritisation:

SDG 17 - Partnership For The Goals was prioritised in 3rd position, 8 places below its 2019 position. Cross-sector collaboration between companies signified a strong push in SDG 17's prioritisation. With a substantial increase in prioritisation, the goal surged 8 spots from 11th to 3rd position on the Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation. This shift highlights the mining sector's heightened commitment to fostering partnerships for sustainable development, showcasing its pivotal role in driving collective action towards improving SDG prioritisation.

▲	**2019: 11th Place** **2024: 3rd Place**	**Overall SDG Private Sector Prioritisation**

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Priority Topics

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INTRODUCING THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRIVATE SECTOR TEN PRIORITY TOPICS

This section contains the priority topics that were addressed during the private sector Voluntary National Review. Each priority topic has a framing question, a recommended delivery pathway and a "Challenge", a "Vision" and an "Ambition".

"The 10-priority topics round table series, part of the private sector's Voluntary National Review, unified the views of 164 participating companies, with over 280 individuals contributing 1,896 insights. It was a highly collaborative process that ran for two months."

Private Sector VNR Writing Team

TOP FOUR PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The Private Sectors VNR Process identified ten priority topics that were defined with strategic partners to align South Africa with the 2030 Agenda, aiming to integrate sustainability into corporate strategies for unified progress.

During the private sector Voluntary National Review (VNR) process, 10 priority topics were collaboratively defined with strategic partners to accelerate South Africa's alignment with the 2030 Agenda. These topics, ranging from sustainable finance to the energy crisis and women's empowerment, represent key areas where South African companies focus their efforts. This chapter aims to align these efforts with national and global sustainability objectives, enhancing the integration of sustainability into business strategies and promoting cohesive advancement towards these goals.

The common themes arising from the priority topic review were:

1. **A strong requirement for strategic partnership and cross-sector collaboration:** Companies participating in the South African private sector emphasised an urgent need for multi-stakeholder collaboration and support to achieve strategic, sustainable transformation. The ideas and recommendations emerging from the review depend on system-level change and enabling support.

2. **Many of the sustainable finance themes related to enabling sustainable, renewable energy:** Companies called for clearer investment channels, government-backed incentives, and international support to bolster sustainable investment (Priority Topic 1). They applied significant pressure for swift action towards carbon neutrality, advocating for enhanced government incentives to surmount the technological and financial barriers of a green transition (Priority Topic 2). Energy resilience and independence emerged as critical themes, with demands for more robust policy support to address the energy crisis (Priority Topic 3).

3. **Sustainability frameworks, transparent reporting and ethical governance were a high priority:** Companies are at very varied stages of implementing frameworks that ensure transparency and accountability (Priority Topic 4). Public-private sector collaboration is deemed essential, with a push for regular dialogue platforms to streamline sustainable initiatives (Priority Topic 5).

4. **Gender Equality, synergies with communities and the erosion of traditional jobs was a concern:** Participating companies emphasised the importance of equitable, inclusive, healthy and safe work environments. They expressed concerns about the evolving job market and the need for strategic workforce re-skilling and upskilling to mitigate the impacts of automation and digital transformation. Companies called for equal pay and targeted career support for women.

5. **Companies are struggling to keep up with accelerated digital and transformational change:** Participating companies indicated that implementation projects often faced challenges. There was a call for better support mechanisms to enable more affordable access to expertise, supporting the innovation of business operations.

6. **Supply chain resilience (Priority Topic 7) is another focal point, with an emphasis on localisation:** Companies called for diversification and better regionalisation to mitigate global disruptions (Priority Topic 8). There was strong support for efforts to identify and scale small and medium-sized companies and organisations that have demonstrated successful performance.

Introducing the Ten Priority Topics

A series of interactive round tables moving from 'upfront framing questions' to refine a 'Challenge', a 'Vision' and an 'Ambition' for each topic, coupled with a recommended 'Priority Topic Delivery Pathway'.

The Priority Topics that follow include the following.

PRIORITY TOPIC 1:
Growing Sustainable Investment
This topic focuses on enhancing access to sustainable investment and financing. South African companies strive to attract both local and international capital by showcasing strong sustainability practices and governance. Despite global interest, actual investment flow remains low, indicating a need for improved sustainability communication and demonstration. Participating companies advocated that clearer, more consistent sustainability reporting standards would help bridge the investment gap. They see the key contribution of companies as being their ability to innovate and implement effective sustainability strategies that attract investment. The key enablers from other role players included governmental incentives and international partnerships that enhance financial accessibility.

- SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals

PRIORITY TOPIC 2:
A Just Transition to Carbon Neutrality
The emphasis here is on transitioning to a low-carbon economy, leveraging renewable energy and energy efficiency to contribute to global climate action and drive economic growth. Progress has been varied, with some sectors advancing significantly, while others lag due to technological and financial constraints. Participating companies advocated that more governmental incentives are crucial to accelerate the transition across all industries. They see the key contribution of companies as being the adoption of green technologies and reduction of carbon footprints. The key enablers from other role players included policy frameworks and subsidies that support renewable energy initiatives.

- SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy
- SDG 13 - Climate Action
- SDG 15 - Life on Land

PRIORITY TOPIC 1
GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT
How do we increase investor confidence in the private sector?

PRIORITY TOPIC 2
A JUST TRANSITION TO CARBON NEUTRALITY
How do we achieve net zero emissions by 2050?

PRIORITY TOPIC 3
SOLVING OUR ENERGY CRISIS
How do we enable sufficient electrical supply?

PRIORITY TOPIC 4
ETHICAL TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE
How do we assure high integrity business without corruption?

PRIORITY TOPIC 5
EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS
How do we accelerate sustainability through partnerships?

PRIORITY TOPIC 6
SYNERGIES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY
How does business collaborate best with the power of the South African people?

PRIORITY TOPIC 7
IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITY POST PANDEMIC
How do we adapt to changes in the post Covid landscape?

PRIORITY TOPIC 8
BUILDING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE
How do we best show up in our global trading environment?

PRIORITY TOPIC 9
EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY
How do we accelerate equity and diversity?

PRIORITY TOPIC 10
LEVERAGING SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS
How do we leverage new and existing frameworks?

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The Voluntary National Review Priority Topics (continued)

PRIORITY TOPIC 3:
Solving Our Energy Crisis
This topic addresses the ongoing energy crisis by promoting energy independence through on-site renewable energy production and other sustainable energy solutions. While there have been innovative individual company successes, the overall sector needs more cohesive policy support and infrastructure development. Participating companies advocated that streamlined regulations and increased government support for renewable projects would mitigate many current challenges. They see the key contribution of companies as being the development of independent energy solutions and enhancing energy efficiency. The key enablers from other role players included regulatory bodies and energy agencies providing clear guidelines and support.

- SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy
- SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- SDG 13 - Climate Action

PRIORITY TOPIC 4:
Ethical Transformation Governance
Focusing on promoting ethical governance and high integrity within businesses, this topic involves implementing frameworks that enhance transparency, accountability and responsible decision making. The private sector has made notable improvements, though challenges remain in consistently applying these practices across all levels. Participating companies advocated that continuous education and training on ethical standards are essential for maintaining governance integrity. They see the key contribution of companies as being their commitment to ethical practices and transparency in operations. The key enablers from other role players included industry associations and watchdog organisations that monitor and promote ethical standards.

- SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
- SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals

PRIORITY TOPIC 5:
Effective Public-Private Sector Collaboration
This topic highlights the potential for collaboration between the public and private sectors, especially in driving sustainability initiatives, aligning operations with societal needs, and leveraging public resources. Although there have been successful partnerships, frequent policy shifts and bureaucratic inefficiencies sometimes hinder sustained collaboration. Participating companies advocated that a dedicated platform for regular dialogue between public and private sectors could enhance collaboration effectiveness. They see the key contribution of companies as being their agility and innovative capacity to support public sector initiatives. The key enablers from other role players included governmental agencies and non-profits facilitating and mediating these collaborations.

- SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals
- SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities

PRIORITY TOPIC 6:
Synergies with Civil Society and Communities
This topic explores the collaboration between businesses, communities, and civil society, focusing on initiatives that address social, economic and environmental challenges. There has been significant engagement, but the impact is often localised, suggesting a need for scaling successful models. Participating companies advocated that stronger community engagement and transparent communication can foster deeper trust and more impactful collaborations. They see the key contribution of companies as being their ability to build and nurture community relationships and implement grassroots initiatives. The key enablers from other role players included local governments and community leaders who facilitate partnerships and dialogue.

- SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals
- SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

PRIORITY TOPIC 7:
Impact and Opportunity Post Pandemic
This topic discusses the long-term impacts and opportunities arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, including innovation, resilience, and adaptation strategies to mitigate negative impacts and leverage emerging opportunities. The private sector has shown resilience, but recovery is uneven, with some industries bouncing back faster than others. Participating companies advocated that ongoing support mechanisms and adaptable business models are vital for navigating post-pandemic recovery. They see the key contribution of companies as being their resilience and capacity to innovate under pressure. The key enablers from other role players included health authorities and economic development agencies providing guidance and recovery support.

- SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities

PRIORITY TOPIC 8:
Building Global Supply Chain Resilience
This topic concerns strengthening the resilience of global supply chains amidst disruptions like the Covid-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions, focusing on sustainability and reducing vulnerability to external shocks. Efforts have been made, but ongoing global uncertainties continue to challenge supply chain stability. Participating companies advocated that investing in local supply chains and diversifying suppliers are critical steps towards greater resilience. They see the key contribution of companies as being their strategic management of supply chains and proactive risk assessment. The key enablers from other role players included international trade organisations and logistics companies that support efficient and secure supply chain operations.

- SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13 - Climate Action

PRIORITY TOPIC 9:
Empowering Women to Achieve Gender Equality
This topic aims to drive systemic change to promote gender equality and women's empowerment within the workplace and through collaborations with government and civil society, enhancing social well-being and reducing inequalities. While awareness and policy implementation have improved, actual workplace equality and empowerment are progressing slowly. Participating companies advocated that enforcing stricter policies and providing targeted support for women's career advancement are necessary for true equality. They see the key contribution of companies as being their leadership in promoting diversity and inclusive practices. The key enablers from other role players included gender equality advocacy groups and policy-makers who create supportive legislative frameworks.

- SDG 5 - Gender Equality
- SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities

PRIORITY TOPIC 10:
Leveraging Sustainability Frameworks
This topic addresses the complexity of navigating and leveraging various sustainability frameworks to enhance reporting, performance management, and integration of sustainability into business strategies and operations. Many companies have embraced these frameworks, though integration depth and reporting quality vary widely across sectors. Participating companies advocated that a unified approach to sustainability frameworks would simplify compliance and enhance overall sustainability performance. They see the key contribution of companies as being their commitment to transparency and accountability through rigorous sustainability reporting and adherence to international standards. The key enablers from other role players included standard-setting bodies and international environmental agencies that develop and promote these frameworks.

- SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13 - Climate Action
- SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals

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Company Needs Analysis

The company needs arising from the priority topic review have been consolidated into a view of private sector transformational needs. If enabled, this summary of needs can support companies in fulfilling their roles in delivering sustainability and growth objectives.

PRIVATE SECTOR TRANSFORMATION: Needs Analysis

PRIORITY TOPIC 1

GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

Companies are seeking stronger frameworks and policies to encourage sustainable investment. They need mechanisms to mitigate risks that deter investors, such as regulatory instability or environmental challenges, and strategies to enhance their reputational and brand value.

PRIORITY TOPIC 2

A JUST TRANSITION TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

Companies require support for initiatives leading to carbon neutrality, including investments in clean technologies and energy efficiency. They need clear policies and incentives to facilitate this transition smoothly and sustainably.

PRIORITY TOPIC 3

SOLVING OUR ENERGY CRISIS

Businesses are looking for reliable energy solutions to mitigate frequent disruptions caused by energy shortages. They need governmental support and infrastructure investments to develop stable and renewable energy sources.

PRIORITY TOPIC 4

ETHICAL TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Companies want frameworks that promote ethical governance and accountability. They need regulatory support to implement these frameworks effectively and uphold high standards of corporate governance.

PRIORITY TOPIC 5

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Businesses seek enhanced collaboration with government entities to foster public-private partnerships that can drive sustainable development goals. They need streamlined processes and mutual trust to make these collaborations effective.

PRIORITY TOPIC 6

SYNERGIES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

Companies aim to build stronger relationships with civil society and local communities to drive grassroots sustainability initiatives. They need support in engaging these groups effectively to ensure their strategies are inclusive and community-oriented.

PRIORITY TOPIC 7

IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITY POST PANDEMIC

Companies want to capitalise on the lessons learnt during the pandemic to improve resilience and innovation. They need policies that support business recovery and promote technological and operational adaptability.

PRIORITY TOPIC 8

BUILDING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE

Businesses seek to strengthen their supply chains against global disruptions. They need international cooperation and strategies that enhance logistical and operational flexibility to manage and mitigate supply chain risks.

PRIORITY TOPIC 9

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

Companies are committed to promoting gender equality within their operations. They need supportive practices and policies that empower women, ensuring equal opportunities for leadership and professional growth.

PRIORITY TOPIC 10

LEVERAGING SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS

Companies want to better integrate sustainability frameworks into their business operations to enhance their environmental, social and governance (ESG) impacts. They need guidance and tools to align these frameworks with their business strategies effectively.

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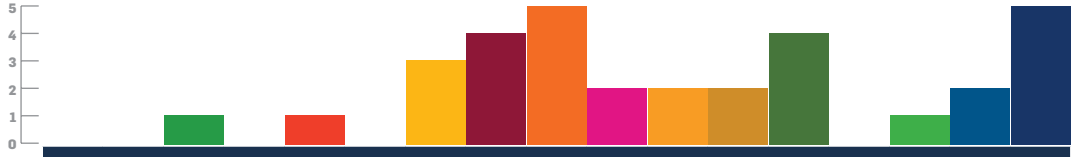
The Priority Topic Alignment to the SDGs

When aligned to the SDGs, the priority topics clearly point to partnerships for the goals, decent work and economic growth, climate action, and industry, innovation and infrastructure as the most pressing priorities for the private sector.

TOP FOUR PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:



PRORITY TOPIC ALIGNMENT TO THE SDGs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	4	5	2	2	2	5	0	1	2	5
PRIORITY TOPIC 1: Growing Sustainable Investment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
PRIORITY TOPIC 2: A Just Transition to Carbon Neutrality	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
PRIORITY TOPIC 3: Solving Our Energy Crisis	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
PRIORITY TOPIC 4: Ethical Transformation Governance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	●	●
PRIORITY TOPIC 5: Effective Public- Private Sector Collaboration	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	●
PRIORITY TOPIC 6: Synergies with Civil Society and Communities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	●
PRIORITY TOPIC 7: Impact and Opportunity Post Pandemic	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
PRIORITY TOPIC 8: Building Global Supply Chain Resilience	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	○
PRIORITY TOPIC 9: Empowering Women to Achieve Gender Equality	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
PRIORITY TOPIC 10: Leveraging Sustainability Frameworks	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	●

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The Priority Topic Method

A series of interactive round tables moving from 'upfront framing questions' to refine a 'Challenge', a 'Vision' and an 'Ambition' for each topic, coupled with a recommended 'Priority Topic Delivery Pathway'.

The Priority Topic approach followed six steps:

STEP 1:
A starting point was defined with 5 upfront, framing questions presented for each Priority Topic:
Each priority topic was carefully developed with input from participants, defining five critical questions or challenges that needed to be addressed. These questions were circulated and as part of a Participant Synopsis to attract company and subject matter expert participation in a Priority Topic Round Table for each of the topics arising.

STEP 2:
The topics were prioritised by companies, who selected best representatives:
As companies registered to participate in the Voluntary National Review, they prioritised the priority topics in their registration from, and selected which round tables they wanted to participate in, nominating subject matter experts to attend from within their organisation. Further participants were recommended and invited by VNR strategic partners to ensure a cross sector perspectives.

STEP 3:
The framing questions were then developed into a draft 'Challenge', 'Vision' and 'Ambition':
Company feedback on the Participant Synopsis was incorporated into a draft 'Challenge' in preparation for each topic round table. The challenge was then converted into a draft 'Vision' defining what South Africa would look like if the challenge was completely resolved. This was coupled with a draft 'Ambition', or objective that would close the gap between the 'Challenge' and the 'Vision'.

STEP 4:
The 'Challenge', 'Vision' and 'Ambition were reviewed by the VNR participants:
Each Priority Topic Challenge, Vision and Ambition was reviewed during a 3-hour topic round table. This was done by dividing the VNR participants at the round table into five syndicates, each tackling one of the five framing questions relating to 'Challenges' and its associated 'Vision' and 'Ambition'. Participants were invited to question, review, critique and enrich the Priority Topic definition. Commentary was both directly entered by participants into Mentimeter, as well as captured by syndicate facilitators. Each syndicate then gave a 'playback' in plenary to the wider round table audience.

STEP 5:
A delivery pathway was then brain-stormed for each priority topic.
The round table participants then returned to their syndicates to plan a delivery pathway for the priority topic 'Ambition'. This step in the process invited the participants to identify specific milestones, deliverables, enablers and measures that should feature in a plan to overcome the challenge and deliver the priority topic vision.

STEP 6:
Priority topics were then refined based on the contributions of the participants.
The Zoom recordings, Read.ai transcripts and Mentimeter results were then extracted, analysed and incorporated into the Priority Topics. This information was used to develop the Priority Topic Delivery Pathway emerging from each session. There was an average of 16 companies, 28 participants, and 190 insights per priority topic round table session.

Guide to Reading the Priority Topics:

The Priority Topics are laid out as follows:

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTION
Each priority topic has an introduction containing the original '**Challenge**' and five '**Framing Questions**' posed during the round table series. This page also contains the participating companies engaged in this priority topic. These framing questions remain as they were at the beginning of the priority topic process.

DELIVERY PATHWAY
The final slide in the series shows the "**Delivery Pathway**", which is the recommended set of milestones that the participants collaborated to produce, providing a recommendation for how the private sector and companies can collaborate with other sectors to address the challenge. The delivery pathway is mapped to three priority SDGs.

CHALLENGE, VISION, AMBITION
Following the delivery pathway is a table with the priority topic detail as worked refined by the participants: It contains the '**Challenge**' and five framing questions in the first row. This is followed by the '**Vision**', which is the outcome would be delivered if the challenge was addressed. In the final row is the '**Ambition**', which is the objective defined by the participants needed to close the gap between today and the outcome defined in the 'Vision'.

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Company Evaluation of Priority Topics

Empowering women, quality reporting, and community engagement

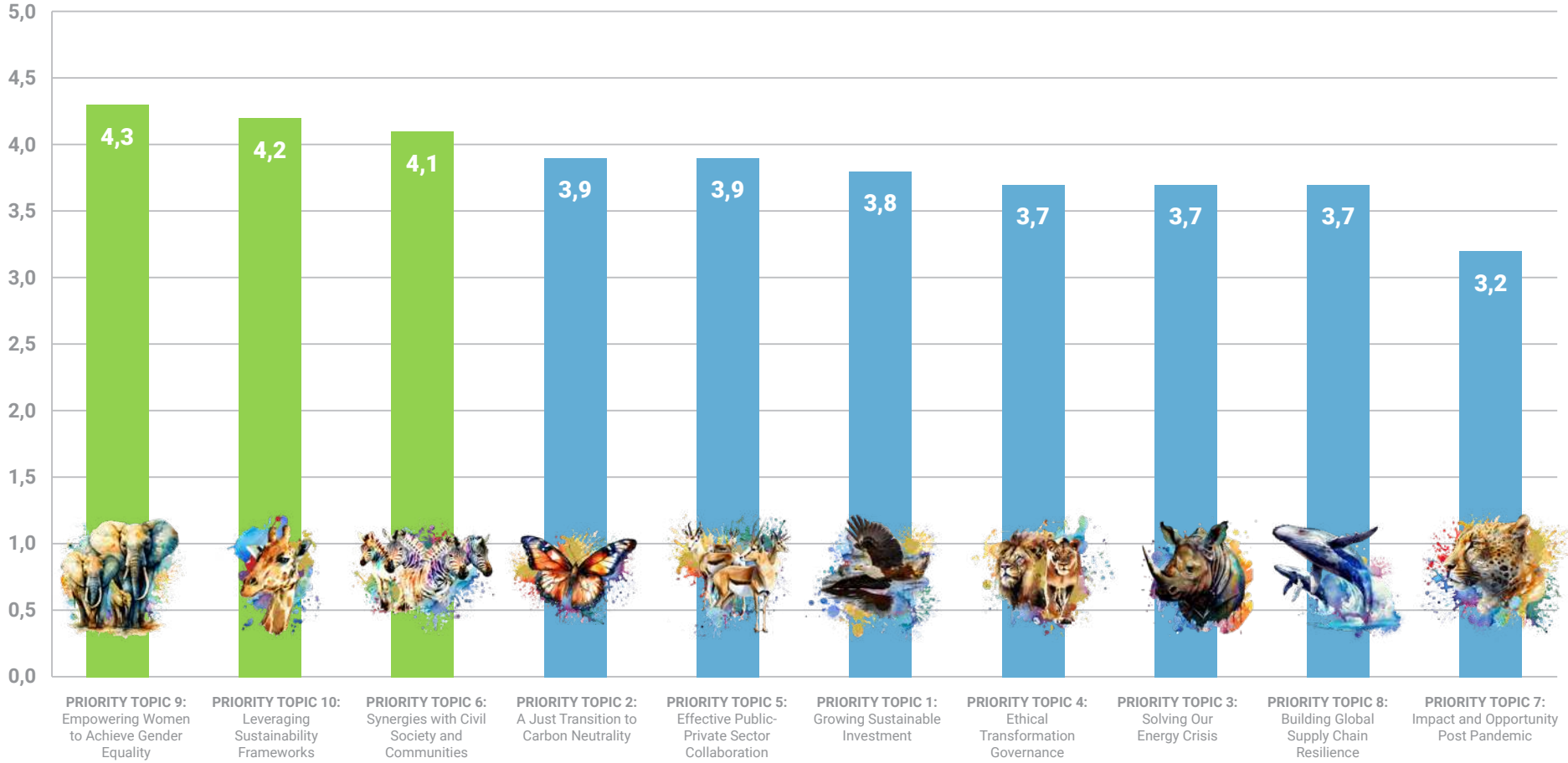
The company prioritisation of the priority topics given prior to the development of the implementation pathways was as follows:

Priority Topic 9: **Empowering Women to Achieve Gender Equality** was the highest-ranked priority, with an overall score of 4,3. Companies saw progress on gender equality as a key priority for workforce, customer and community empowerment. One of key reasons for this is that SDG 5 - Gender Equality is an SDG that companies can directly address.

Priority Topic 10: **Leveraging Sustainability Frameworks** ranked as the second highest priority, with a score of 4.2. Companies indicated this is because of the existing and future challenges with sustainability frameworks, which are complicated, difficult to implement, and often in the process of changing to align to emergent sustainability regulations.

Priority Topic 6: **Synergies with Civil Society and Communities** was the third highest priority, with a score of 4.1. Companies spoke to their interdependence with, and commitment to communities. Healthy communities are vital to providing a capacitated workforce, as well as a customer base. Companies saw their communities as being strongly in need of support.

4.5+	Highest Priority
4.0 - 3.9	Strong Priority
3.0 - 3.9	Priority
<3	Lesser Priority



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Industry Evaluation of Priority Topics

The industries tended to prioritise topics that were 'Achilles Heels', or opportunities for most progress.

For example, Financial Services awarded their lowest priority as 'Growing Sustainable Investment', an area of industry competence: From the industry prioritisation perspective, Sustainability Frameworks stand out as the top priority, achieving the highest ranking across three industries, indicating a significant focus on sustainability reporting. Synergies with Civil Society and Community Synergies followed, receiving the highest prioritisation from two industry sectors, followed by Gender Equality, Sustainable Investment, Public Sector Collaboration, and Governance.

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail: Gave most priority to **Sustainability Frameworks** and prioritised **Opportunity Post Pandemic** the least.
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media: Gave most priority to **Sustainability Frameworks** and prioritised **Opportunity Post Pandemic** the least.
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate: Gave most priority to **Gender Equality, Sustainable Investment**, and Governance and prioritised **Community Synergies** the least.
Financial Services and FinTech: Gave most priority to **Community Synergies** and prioritised **Sustainable Investment** the least.
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health: Gave most priority to **Public Sector Collaboration** and prioritised **Opportunity Post Pandemic** the least.
Mining Natural Gas and Resources: Gave most priority to **Sustainability Frameworks** and prioritised **Public Sector Collaboration** the least.
Social Enterprises: Gave most priority to **Community Synergies** and prioritised the **Energy Crisis** the least.

4.5+	Highest Priority
4.0 - 3.9	Strong Priority
3.0 - 3.9	Priority
<3	Lesser Priority

SOUTH AFRICAN PRIORITY TOPIC PRIVATE SECTOR PRIORITISATION	Overall Priority Topic Prioritisation	Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Financial Services and FinTech	Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Mining Natural Gas and Resources	Social Enterprises
PRIORITY TOPIC 1: Growing Sustainable Investment	3,8	3,9	3,9	4,8	2,9	4,2	2,9	4,1
PRIORITY TOPIC 2: A Just Transition to Carbon Neutrality	3,9	4,2	4,5	3,3	3,3	4,0	4,3	3,7
PRIORITY TOPIC 3: Solving Our Energy Crisis	3,7	4,2	4,4	3,3	3,3	4,2	3,8	2,8
PRIORITY TOPIC 4: Ethical Transformation Governance	3,7	3,3	3,1	4,8	2,9	4,2	4,0	3,8
PRIORITY TOPIC 5: Effective Public-Private Sector Collaboration	3,9	4,2	3,9	4,2	3,8	4,5	2,6	4,1
PRIORITY TOPIC 6: Synergies with Civil Society and Communities	4,1	3,3	4,1	3,1	5,0	4,3	4,2	4,8
PRIORITY TOPIC 7: Impact and Opportunity Post Pandemic	3,2	3,1	2,5	3,6	2,9	2,6	4,0	3,5
PRIORITY TOPIC 8: Building Global Supply Chain Resilience	3,7	4,4	3,5	3,3	3,8	3,1	4,3	3,1
PRIORITY TOPIC 9: Empowering Women to Achieve Gender Equality	4,3	3,6	4,1	4,8	4,6	4,3	4,4	4,4
PRIORITY TOPIC 10: Leveraging Sustainability Frameworks	4,2	4,7	4,6	4,3	3,8	3,8	4,5	3,9

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PRIORITY TOPIC 1

GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

How do we increase investor confidence in the private sector?

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GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

How do we increase investor confidence in the private sector?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Aluminum Federation of South Africa
Alexforbes
Bokashi Bran
Busa
Cane Growers
Eskom
Fire Storm Business Consulting
Foskor
Gillespie and Associates
Hollard
JTC Group
Kleinskuur Aquaponics
Leungo Education
Minerals Council South Africa
Modern Centric Holdings
Modern Community Foundation
National Business Institute
Nedbank
Sanlam
Sappi Southern Africa
Sustainability Institute
Sustainability Projects
Umgeni-Uthukela Water

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

Companies reported that to achieve the SDGs, they need better access to both sustainable investment and to sustainable financing. Investors are increasingly allocating capital to companies and projects that demonstrate strong sustainability practices, positive social impact and responsible governance. However, companies report they are struggling to access sustainable investment and financing, and that overall investment remains low.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:

The priority topic process started by framing 5 questions for discussion during the priority topic industry series. These questions were:

1. **Enhancing Reputation and Stakeholder Trust:**
   How do we overcome reputational challenges to enhance the brand value of "South Africa", and attract socially conscious investors?

2. **Collaborating on Business Opportunity:**
   How do we open doors to global demand for sustainable products and services and in alignment with sustainability principles?

3. **Driving Innovation and Operational Efficiency:**
   What can accelerate innovative and sustainable operational practices that promote efficiency, reduce waste, optimise operations, and yield cost savings, productivity and competitive advantage?

4. **Mitigating Environmental Risks:**
   How do we face off against environmental challenges, such as water scarcity, pollution, shortage of renewable energy, waste management and climate change?

5. **Attracting and Applying Talent:**
   How do we absorb a younger workforce that increasingly prioritises companies with a commitment to sustainability and responsible practice?

PRIORITY AVATAR:

The African Fish Eagle, with its majestic presence and sharp focus on hunting for sustenance, embodies the essence of sustainable investment, both locally and internationally. Just as these eagle-eyed icons meticulously select their prey from the waters, sustainable investment analysts meticulously choose projects and opportunities that contribute to long-term environmental, social, and economic wellbeing, ensuring a prosperous future for all.

TOPIC CHALLENGE EXPLORED:
GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

How can South African Businesses innovate to achieve net zero, stay ahead of regulations, satisfy stakeholders, and secure financing for a responsible transition across supply chains.

South African companies face several challenges in attracting sustainable investment and sustainable financing, despite the country's significant potential for green and sustainable projects, especially in renewable energy, water conservation and social development areas.

Priority Topic Challenges:

Companies reported that to achieve the SDGs, they need better access to both sustainable investment and to sustainable financing. The primary drivers for these challenges are as follows:

Economic and Political Instability: South Africa has faced economic challenges, including slow growth, high unemployment, and inflation, alongside political instability and governance issues. These factors have deterred investors, who seek stability and predictability in investment destinations.

Regulatory and Policy Uncertainty: Despite some progress, there has been a degree of regulatory and policy uncertainty in South Africa, particularly in sectors crucial for sustainable development like energy and mining. Many companies are not aware of forthcoming regulations, such as carbon-border taxes, and are concerned how to meet emergent clean energy requirements that are not directly controllable.

Infrastructure Constraints: Infrastructure limitations, particularly those related to energy supply and reliable, cost-effective transport, have made business operations more challenging and expensive. These constraints have reduced the attractiveness of investments in business initiatives that are critical for sustainable development.

Financial Market Development: While South Africa's financial markets are among the most developed in Africa, there are still gaps in the availability of financial products and services that specifically target sustainable investments. This has limited options for both investors and companies seeking sustainable financing.

Perception of High Risk: The perception of high risk associated with investing in South Africa, due to factors like crime, corruption and social unrest, have deterred investors, especially those from abroad. Sustainable investments often require long-term commitments, and perceived high risks can raise concerns over the security and profitability.

Limited Awareness and Capacity: Limited understanding of the benefits of sustainable investment and financing between South African businesses, financial institutions and potential investors is coupled with a limited view of the businesses with the technical capacity to develop and manage sustainable projects, hindering the formation of partnerships and uptake of sustainable finance.

Energy Dependency: South Africa's dependency on coal for its energy needs has been a significant barrier to transitioning towards more sustainable energy sources. The country's energy sector's slow transition to renewables can be a deterrent for investors looking for green opportunities.

The Company Level Response:

Companies note that they are experiencing increased expectation from both local and offshore investors that businesses take greater responsibility for operating in a sustainable manner. However, many of the challenges are not directly controlled or managed at company organisational level.

Promoting a 'multi-level' approach: VNR participants pointed out that addressing the challenges requires coordinated and concerted effort at different organisational levels, from actors such as the government, private sector and international community. The organisational levels identified included:

- Level 0: Employee
- Level 1: Individual Company
- Level 2: Industry Level
- Level 3: Private Sector
- Level 4: South African (Cross Sector)
- Level 5: Regional (Pan African)
- Level 6: Global

Company level sustainable finance priorities: During the VNR process, companies articulated a need for improvements in governance, policy and infrastructure, to improve the investment environment. Companies also sought increased awareness of how to engage with large scale, funded sustainability projects, sources of investment, and of financing options. Overall, companies were interested in better multi-level coordination to promote South African business opportunities and attract further sustainable investment, whilst also evolving sustainable financing mechanisms, incentives and options.

Companies are interested in understanding the evolving criteria influence investment for equity, and how to access emerging sources of sustainability financing if seeking to grow by taking on debt.

Country level sustainable finance priorities: Companies are also seeking wider action to address challenges and opportunities at industry, private sector and country level.

Critical questions requiring further attention that surfaced included:

- How is the South African economy best de-risked?
- How is sustainable financing best enabled?
- How is South Africa's emerging market developed?

PRIORITY TOPIC 1

GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

How do we increase investor confidence in the private sector?

DEFINING SUSTAINABLE FINANCE:

Sustainable investment and sustainable financing falls under the broad umbrella of sustainable finance, which aims to integrate Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria into financial services.

Sustainable Investment
Sustainable investment refers to investment strategies that consider not only the financial return, but also the social and environmental impact of the investments. This approach aims to support economic growth while reducing pressures on the environment, considering social equity and ensuring effective governance. Sustainable investments are made in companies or projects that are seen as contributing to advancements in environmental and social practices, such as renewable energy projects, water conservation schemes, or companies with strong records in employee welfare and corporate governance.

Sustainable Financing
Sustainable financing focuses on the financial processes, products and services that are designed to encourage sustainable economic activities. It involves allocating capital in ways that are expected to achieve long-term prosperity for all stakeholders and the planet, rather than solely focusing on short-term gains. This can include green bonds, which are specifically aimed at funding projects that have positive environmental effects, or sustainability-linked loans, where the terms of the loan are connected to the borrower's achievement of predetermined sustainability objectives.

This priority topic 'Growing Sustainable Investment' speaks to both the need to attract investors to invest into South African companies, as well as to the provision of financing for companies with sustainable value propositions that are seeking financing through loans or other financing mechanisms.

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A "Multi-Level" Environment

Sustainable investment and financing requires action a variety of role players

The focus of the private sector Voluntary National Review is the private sector. Individual companies are primarily effective and influential when working with their employees, as an individual business, and when engaging at industry level. Larger companies can support industry level association, influence supply chains and customer awareness, with only some achieving private sector and national level influence.

During the process, companies called for better multi-level co-ordination and collaboration to land targeted strategies to improve sustainable investment and financing for prioritised business opportunities.

PRIORITY TOPIC 1

GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

How do we increase investor confidence in the private sector?

LEVEL	ORGANISATIONS AND ENTITIES	INTEREST AND AGENDA	ROLE
Level 6: Global	International Organisations and NGOs Global Financial Institutions	Global environmental sustainability; addressing global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss; promoting global economic stability and prosperity.	• Setting international standards and agreements for sustainability • Facilitating global sustainable finance flows • Fostering international cooperation and partnerships.
Level 5: Regional (Pan African)	Regional Economic Communities Pan African Financial Institutions	Regional stability and prosperity; addressing cross-border environmental and social challenges; leveraging regional strengths for sustainable development.	• Promoting regional cooperation and integration • Developing regional sustainable finance markets • Coordinating on regional sustainability standards and policies.
Level 4: South African (Cross Sector)	Government Departments Public-Private Partnerships	National development that is sustainable, inclusive, and equitable; enhancing international competitiveness; meeting national and international sustainability commitments.	• Coordinating across sectors to align sustainability efforts • Facilitating investments in national sustainability priorities • Engaging in dialogue to shape a supportive policy environment.
Level 3: Private Sector	Business Councils Private Sector Foundations and Initiatives	Driving economic growth while ensuring environmental stewardship and social responsibility; influencing policy and regulatory frameworks for sustainability.	• Advocating for supportive policies and regulations • Sharing knowledge and technologies that promote sustainability • Engaging in public-private partnerships for sustainable development.
Level 2: Industry Level	Industry Associations Sustainability Consultancies	Setting industry standards for sustainability; reducing environmental impact across the sector; enhancing overall industry reputation and competitiveness.	• Developing and promoting best practices and standards • Facilitating industry-wide initiatives for sustainable development • Fostering collaboration to tackle shared challenges.
Level 1: Company	Global Corporates with South African Operations South Africa Domiciled Corporates Large and Medium Sized Companies Entrepreneurs and Start Ups	Maximising financial performance while achieving sustainability goals; attracting sustainable investment; improving reputation and market position through sustainability.	• Implementing sustainable business practices • Finding sustainable financing options like green bonds or sustainability-linked loans • Reporting transparently on sustainability performance.
Level 0: Employee	C-Level Leadership Teams Sustainability, Investment and Finance Roles Project and Operational Roles Organised Labour, Employees	Personal and professional development within a sustainable work environment; contributing to company sustainability goals; alignment of personal values with corporate actions.	• Advocating for and participating in workplace sustainability initiatives • Making daily decisions that reflect sustainability principles (e.g. reducing waste, promoting energy efficiency) • Influencing corporate culture towards sustainability awareness and action.

Note: Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a crucial and multifaceted role across all levels of the model, acting as a bridge, watchdog, innovator, and mobiliser for sustainable investment and financing. At a global level this can include networks and campaigns, at a regional level co-operation and advocacy, across national sectors CSOs support dialogue and policy shaping, contributing across levels to influencing standards and best practices, as well as contributing to partnerships and accountability for impact.

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A “Multi-Level” Response (1/2):

Companies can influence the growth of sustainable investment by taking the following actions:

The private sector Voluntary National Review feedback from participating companies provided insights into the role, benefits, highlights and lowlights for sustainable financing levels of action, providing recommended actions for companies seeking to address this priority topic:

PRIORITY TOPIC 1

GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

How do we increase investor confidence in the private sector?

PRIORITY TOPIC FOCUS:

This priority topic centres on the critical question, what can private sector companies do to unify this diverse range of stakeholders to address the sustainable investment and financing challenge to enable a better sustainable financing environment for companies with intention to contribute to the sustainable development goals towards a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable society?

Level 0: Employees

THE ROLE:
Employees play a pivotal role in shaping the sustainability and investment attractiveness of their companies. By actively participating in and advocating for sustainability within their organisations, they can significantly influence corporate culture and operational practices.

THE BENEFIT:
The benefit of this engagement is twofold: it not only enhances the company’s environmental, social and governance (ESG) profile, making it more attractive to investors focused on sustainable practices, but it also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among the workforce, leading to higher motivation and productivity. While employees may have a more indirect role in enabling sustainable investment and financing compared to higher organisational levels, their collective actions can lead to substantial changes within a company.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS:
Achievements at this level often include the initiation of sustainability projects, reduction in waste, and improvements in energy efficiency, showcasing the potential for impact through grassroots efforts. However, main failings include a lack of engagement or awareness regarding the importance of attracting investments, and the limited direct influence on strategic investment decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMPANIES:
To support future success, companies can implement comprehensive training and awareness programmes that focus on the importance of investment and financing, encouraging innovation and internal initiatives. This approach not only educates employees on how their roles contribute to the company’s investment attractiveness, but also empowers them to be active participants in the company’s sustainability journey.

Level 1: Companies

THE ROLE:
Companies are directly responsible for implementing sustainability practices and seeking out sustainable financing options, making them crucial players in attracting investment.

THE BENEFIT:
The benefit of such efforts is clear: by improving operational efficiencies, sustainability and innovation, companies not only enhance their attractiveness to investors, but also secure a competitive edge in the market. Their ability to impact investment and financing is substantial, given that strategic decisions made at this level directly influence the company’s financial health and growth prospects.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS:
Achievements include successful cases of green financing, adoption of ESG criteria, and recognition through sustainability awards. However, failings often involve inadequate communication of these efforts to potential investors and a lack of frameworks to effectively attract or manage investments.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMPANIES:
To support future success, companies should focus on developing clear value propositions and investing in financial transparency and sustainability certifications, which can significantly improve their appeal to a broader range of investors.

Level 2: Industry

THE ROLE:
Industry level players and companies within the same sector collaborating to set sustainability standards and practices, enhancing the industry’s overall investment appeal.

THE BENEFIT:
The benefit of such collaboration is the establishment of a unified front that can address sector-specific challenges, attract targeted investments, and elevate the industry’s reputation.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS:
The level of impact varies across industries, with those adopting cohesive and ambitious sustainability frameworks seeing more significant investment inflows. Achievements at this level often include the development of industry-wide ESG benchmarks and successful collective initiatives for sustainability. However, main failings stem from insufficient collaboration and variability in standards adherence, which can deter investment.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMPANIES:
To support future success, individual companies can lead or actively participate in industry associations, advocating for the adoption of best practices and sharing success stories to attract investment.

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A “Multi-Level” Response (2/2):

Companies can influence the growth of sustainable investment by taking the following actions:

The private sector Voluntary National Review feedback from participating companies provided insights into the key role players across organisational levels.

Level 3: Private Sector

THE ROLE:
The overall private sector, encompassing all businesses and industries, plays a key role at Level 3 by driving economic growth and advocating for sustainable practices.

THE BENEFIT:
The collective action and advocacy for business-friendly policies and sustainable growth can significantly enhance the investment climate, attracting both local and international financing. The sector’s broad reach means its ability to impact investment and financing is extensive, affecting not just individual companies, but the economy at large.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS:
Achievements include initiatives to improve transparency, governance and collective lobbying for regulatory changes. The main failings, however, lie in the lack of cohesion and a shared vision for attracting investments, leading to missed opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMPANIES:
To support future success, companies within the private sector can engage more actively in coalitions and business councils to promote a unified approach to investment attraction and sustainable development.

Level 4: South Africa

THE ROLE:
At Level 4, the South African cross-sectoral landscape involves cooperation between different sectors and the government to create a conducive environment for sustainable investment and financing.

THE BENEFIT:
The benefits of such an approach include coordinated efforts to tackle national challenges, improved regulatory frameworks and enhanced international competitiveness. The ability to impact investment at this level is significant, as policies and incentives can directly influence the flow of both domestic and foreign investments.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS:
Achievements include policy reforms, infrastructural developments, and successful public-private partnerships. However, the main failings revolve around regulatory hurdles and occasional policy inconsistencies that create investment uncertainties.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMPANIES:
To support future success, individual companies can collaborate with government and other sectors in initiatives aimed at streamlining regulations and promoting South Africa as an attractive investment destination.

Level 5: Pan-African

THE ROLE:
At the regional or Pan African level, the focus is on fostering economic integration and creating a unified investment zone across the continent.

THE BENEFIT:
The benefit of regional collaboration is the enhancement of cross-border investments, standardisation of regulations, and addressing of infrastructural challenges, making the region more attractive to investors. The ability to impact at this level is considerable, as regional initiatives can open new opportunities and mitigate risks associated with cross-border activities.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS:
Achievements at this level include the establishment of regional trade agreements and investment in cross-border infrastructure projects. However, the main failings are seen in the slow progress of regulatory harmonisation and persistent infrastructural gaps.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMPANIES:
To support future success, companies can advocate for and engage in regional initiatives that aim to streamline investment processes and promote sustainable economic development across Africa.

Level 6: Global

THE ROLE:
On the global stage, Level 6 encompasses international organisations, global partnerships and financial institutions that set worldwide standards and facilitate investment flows across borders.

THE BENEFIT:
The key benefit of global engagement is access to a vast network of potential investors and adherence to internationally recognised sustainability standards, enhancing a company’s or country’s attractiveness. The ability to impact at this level is immense, as global trends and standards can influence investment decisions worldwide.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS:
Achievements include international sustainability accreditations and participation in global forums that open new financing opportunities. However, challenges include navigating the complex landscape of global finance and the need for alignment with international sustainability standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMPANIES:
To support future success, companies should seek global certifications, align with international best practices, and participate actively in international networks to attract global investors and financing.

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DELIVERY PATHWAY 01:
GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

The delivery pathway for growing sustainable investment is a multi-stakeholder initiative comprising five strategic steps: creating a unified risk framework, enhancing reputational trust, opening market access, cultivating skilled talent, and driving technological advancement for sustainable prosperity.

THE CHALLENGE:

Private sector stakeholders, including government bodies, customers, investors and civil society, have increasingly high expectations for businesses to take responsibility for operating in a sustainable manner. How can we align with these expectations and contribute to a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable society?

THE AMBITION:

To mitigate the risks that deter investors from investing in South Africa, we aim to build trust in the private sector by cultivating a reputation through a fact-based, collective investment narrative directed at nationally prioritised opportunities. These opportunities combine prosperity and sustainability, backed by talent, innovation, and efficient, responsible operations.

Step 1:
Establish a Unified Environmental Risk Management Framework
Engage to develop and adopt a standardised environmental risk assessment tool. Share best practices and resources to ensure widespread adoption and understanding.

Step 2: Execute a Reputation Enhancement Programme
Develop and implement a multi-faceted reputation enhancement strategy to build trust and attract socially conscious investors. Use success stories and case studies to demonstrate commitment to sustainable business practices.

Step 3:
Open Markets and Develop Unified Marketing Strategies
Take collaborative action to analyse local and global demand and then prioritise enabling and marketing South African private sector offerings that align with sustainability principles.

Step 4:
Develop Talent for the Future
Collaborate across educational organisations and businesses to accelerate the development of curricula and learning initiatives that enable talent outcomes for emergent and sustainable business opportunities.

Step 5: Drive Technological Innovation and Operational Efficiencies
Foster multi-stakeholder engagements to enable more affordable and sustainable technological transitions.
Integrate and advertise platforms that offer trusted best practices and opportunities for accessing expertise.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Percentage of companies adopting the Unified Environmental Risk Assessment.
- Investor Confidence Index, benchmarked annually to track reputation strategies.
- Annual growth of the number of sustainable products and services at market.
- Number of new hires and current employees completing relevant learning programmes.
- Percentage increases in operational efficiency.
- Number of sustainable technology implementations by companies.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

Global and local investors are competing for the opportunity to invest in the South African private sector, which stands as a 'beacon' and 'poster child' for sustainable investments that socially conscious investors trust will yield excellent returns, while simultaneously enabling prosperity for people and the planet.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

SDGs 8, 9, and 17 are prioritised as they drive economic growth, foster innovation and infrastructure, and underpin partnerships vital for sustainable investment in South Africa.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

DELIVERY PATHWAY: GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

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DELIVERY PATHWAY 01:
GROWING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

Companies advocated for a strategic approach to sustainable investment, focusing on transparency in environmental risk, reputation enhancement, talent development, and the emergence of sustainable value propositions, crucial for attracting investment and gaining a competitive edge.

	MITIGATING THE RISKS THAT DETER INVESTORS:	ENHANCING REPUTATION AND STAKEHOLDER TRUST:	ACCESSING MARKETS AND BEST OPPORTUNITIES:	ATTRACTING, DEVELOPING AND APPLYING TALENT:	DRIVING INNOVATION AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES:
THE CHALLENGE: Private sector stakeholders, including government bodies, customers, investors and civil society, increasingly expect that businesses take responsibility for operating in a sustainable manner. How do we align with these expectations and contribute to a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable society?	How do we face off against business environment challenges that deter investors investing in economy, such as water scarcity, pollution, shortage of renewable energy, waste management and climate change?	How do we overcome reputational challenges to enhance the brand value of 'South Africa', and attract socially conscious investors?	How do we open doors to global demand for sustainable products and services and in alignment with sustainability principles?	How do we absorb a younger workforce that increasingly prioritises companies with a commitment to sustainability and responsible practice?	What can the investment community do to accelerate innovative and sustainable operational practices that promote efficiency, reduce waste, optimise operations, and yield cost savings, productivity and competitive advantage?
THE AMBITION: To mitigate the risks that deter investors from investing in South Africa, we must build trust in the private sector. This involves cultivating a reputation through a fact-based, collective investment narrative, directed at nationally prioritised opportunities. These opportunities should combine prosperity and sustainability and be backed by talent, innovation, and efficient, responsible operations.	**Ambition 1:** **Design and Mobilise a Simple, Standard Environmental Risk Assessment** Multi-stakeholder engagement to enable a simple, consistent, environmental risk assessment that companies can easily adopt and contribute to that is linked to impact mitigation support, best practices and resources. Connect this to a standardised risk rating that recognises low risk, sustainable business.	**Ambition 2:** **Implement a Reputation Enhancement Strategy for the South African private sector** Multi-stakeholder engagement to deliver a cohesive plan to bolster the private sector's reputation. Address challenging perceptions and build trust, attracting socially conscious investors by showcasing success case studies and demonstrating South African opportunities for sustainable business growth.	**Ambition 3:** **Develop Unified South African Private Sector Marketing Strategies** Multi-stakeholder action to analyse local and global demand and then prioritise and enable relevant South African private sector opportunities. To then engage in unified and targeted promotion of sustainable, eco-friendly and socially responsible products and service value propositions.	**Ambition 4:** **Cultivate a Future-Fit Workforce that can deliver on Future Business Opportunity** Cross sector educational organisations and businesses collaborate on the accelerated development of refreshed curricula and learning initiatives that deliver on educational outcomes that enable talent availability for emergent and existing sustainable business opportunities.	**Ambition 5:** **Enable Technological Transformation for Attaining Sustainability Efficiencies** Multi-stakeholder engagement to enable more affordable and better supported transition to sustainable technologies. Integrate and advertise platforms that offer trusted best practices, blueprints, partnership opportunities and access to scarce areas of expertise.
THE VISION: Global and local investors are competing for opportunities to invest in the South African private sector, which stands as a 'beacon' and 'poster child' for sustainable investments. The socially conscious investor trusts these will grow and provide excellent returns while simultaneously enabling prosperity for people and the planet.	**Vision:** **South African Companies are Trusted to manage Risks Transparently** South African businesses can complete a standard and simple Environment Risk Assessment to get a trusted rating that is recognised by stakeholders and coupled with support for mitigating any risks arising.	**Vision:** **The South African Private Sector has a Good Reputation for Sustainability** Socially conscious investors believe in the ability of South African companies to deliver reliably to time, cost and quality on sustainable value propositions within a respected and trusted private sector operating environment.	**Vision:** **South African Private Sector Sustainability Offerings are Visible to Marketplaces** Local and global marketplaces are aware of and have easy access to an attractive range of credible and trusted South African business value propositions that align to their needs and sustainability requirements.	**Vision:** **Companies have Future Fit Talent for Sustainable Jobs** Companies can easily source talent with the skills and competencies and sustainability motivated mindset needed to deliver on emergent and existing business opportunities that drive sustainability and prosperity outcomes.	**Vision:** **Companies Sustainably Leverage Resources** Companies can easily access and afford trusted technologies and best practices that enable operational sustainability, benefiting from more efficient resource consumption and better sustainability ratings.

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PRIORITY TOPICS

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PRIORITY TOPIC 2

A JUST TRANSITION TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

How do we achieve net zero emissions by 2050?

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A JUST TRANSITION TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

How do we achieve net zero emissions by 2050?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Afrikaburn
Alexforbes
Allied Valve Specialists
Deloitte and Touche
Eskom
Greenkid
Integrate Solutions
Makwande Group
Minerals Council South Africa
Mr Price
National Business Institute
Pan African Resources
Pick n Pay
SA Harvest
Sanlam
South African Sugar Association
Sustainability Institute
Umgeni-Uthukela Water

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

The critical challenge for South Africa's private sector is to orchestrate a strategic shift towards carbon neutrality by 2050, a move that promises not only to align with global climate action, but also to catalyse new business ventures and demonstrate environmental leadership, all while grappling with the nation's heightened vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change and grappling with the power supply challenges.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:

The priority topic process started by framing 5 questions for discussion during the priority topic industry series. These questions were:

1. **Innovation and Business Opportunities:**
   How can we access the opportunities arising as we transition to a net zero emissions economy, including the innovation and implementation of new technologies, products and services?

2. **Staying Ahead of Regulatory Change:**
   Governments, including ours, are implementing policies and regulations to address climate change. How do businesses align early, to maintain competitive edge and reduce the risk of future non-compliance, or the impact of carbon taxes and emerging carbon border taxes?

3. **Investor and Consumer Expectations:**
   How can we build and accelerate the benefits net zero can bring to business and country brand reputation, attracting socially conscious support from our stakeholders? How does business best leverage emerging scorecards for carbon emissions and solar programmes?

4. **Access to Funding and Financing:**
   What are the financing opportunities, carbon trading, transition funding, grants and subsidies that are increasingly available for projects aligning to net zero emissions targets?

5. **Sustainable Supply Chains:**
   Achieving net zero emissions requires collaboration along the entire supply chain. How does business most effectively work with suppliers and partners to achieve carbon neutrality?

PRIORITY AVATAR:

The Monarch butterfly, with its remarkable transformation from a humble and voracious caterpillar into a stunning and graceful butterfly, serves as a powerful symbol of a fair and just transition to carbon neutrality in the realm of climate action. Much like the Monarch's metamorphosis, this transition represents the profound and positive changes we can achieve when we embrace sustainability, reduce carbon emissions, and ensure a future where both our environment and society can thrive harmoniously.

VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 02: A JUST TRANSITION TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

Integrated strategy needed to achieve carbon neutrality.

A coordinated public and private sector strategy facilitates the path to carbon neutrality.
The participants of the VNR contributed actions to the following delivery pathway: Initially, public and private sector innovation for carbon neutrality is integrated, aligning with global and local standards. The next step in the process is to pool expertise and funding for value chains, which will enhance low-carbon, efficient operational ecosystems. By 2028, carbon taxes will be clearly communicated, and support strategies for carbon mitigation will be in place

THE CHALLENGE:

How do we land the business innovation opportunities needed to transition to net zero so that South African business can stay ahead of regulatory changes, and meet investor and consumer expectations? How do we ensure funding and finance the transition and ensure responsibility is taken across extended supply chains?

THE AMBITION:

A comprehensive net zero business innovation strategy aligns to public sector and civil society initiatives, facilitating a just transition to carbon neutrality, targeting global and local standards. Diverse funding and financing initiatives enable transformation across extended value chains, led by consumer and investor commitment to the plan.

Initiate and integrate:
Launch a sector wide innovation programme, establish international standard reporting and investment frameworks, and kickstart business education campaigns on carbon taxes and regulatory changes.

2026 Expertise Coordination and Funding Initiatives:
Pool transformational expertise and funding for value chains, enhancing low-carbon, efficient operational ecosystems. Intensify awareness programmes on emission reduction benefits and create platforms for collaborative resource sharing and expertise.

2028 Proactive Carbon Tax Adaptation:
This will involve transparent communication about frameworks to ensure that all sectors are informed and can align their practices accordingly. Foster a collective drive, encouraging co-operation across industries.

2029 Awareness and Reporting Frameworks:
Implement new technologies and optimise existing systems, provide management focused sustainability training and ensure proactive business compliance through clear regulatory communication, enhancing awareness of sustainability benefits.

2030 Collaborative Financing for Net Zero Targets:
Create financing for private net zero goals, promote broad co-operation and standardise practices. Expand proven net zero methods, enforce inclusive policies and set definitive benchmarks to maintain engagement.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Adoption rate of international standard reporting and investment frameworks.
- Funds allocated to and successfully deployed for low carbon projects in value chains.
- Percentage of industries showing compliance with new carbon tax frameworks.
- Number of business actively using standardised reporting frameworks.
- Total amount of financing secured for net zero initiatives and projects.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

In a flourishing South Africa, seamless business innovation opportunities powered a just transition to carbon neutrality, mitigating negative impacts. Businesses stayed ahead of regulatory changes and met investor and consumer expectations. Funding and financing enabled shifts across multiple extended value chains: we are net zero.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The priority SDGs aligned to this delivery pathway.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

DELIVERY PATHWAY: A JUST TRANSITION TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

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VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 02: A JUST TRANSITION TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

Achieving net zero will require a collaborative effort.

Collaboration across supply chain will ensure carbon neutrality.
Staying ahead of regulatory change, attracting socially conscious investors, and building sustainable supply chains were some of the challenges addressed in this Priority Topic. Businesses also need access to funding and financing to support the just transition to carbon neutrality. The ambition is for finance and investment organisations to collaborate to develop accessible financing and funding solutions. Collaboration across the supply chain will also be key to ensuring the achievement of carbon neutrality.

	INNOVATION AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES:	STAYING AHEAD OF REGULATORY CHANGE:	INVESTOR AND CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS:	ATTRACTING, DEVELOPING AND APPLYING TALENT:	SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS:
THE CHALLENGE: How do we land the business innovation opportunities needed to transition to net zero so that South African business can stay ahead of regulatory changes, and meet investor and consumer expectations? How do we ensure funding and finance the transition and ensure responsibility is taken across extended supply chains?	How can we access the opportunities arising as we transition to a net-zero emissions economy, including the innovation and implementation of new technologies, products and services? How do we support transformation opportunities for carbon-dense ecosystems?	Governments, including South Africa, are implementing policies and regulations to address climate change. How do businesses align early to maintain a competitive edge and reduce the risk of future non-compliance or the impact of emerging carbon border taxes?	How can we build and accelerate the benefits net zero can bring to business and country brand reputation, attracting socially conscious support from our stakeholders? How does business best leverage emerging scorecards for carbon emissions and solar programmes?	What are the financing opportunities, carbon trading, transition funding, grants and subsidies that are increasingly available for projects aligning with net-zero emissions targets?	Achieving net-zero emissions requires collaboration along the entire supply chain. How does business most effectively work with suppliers and partners to achieve carbon neutrality?
THE AMBITION: A comprehensive net zero business innovation strategy aligns to public sector and civil society initiatives, facilitating a just transition to carbon neutrality, targeting global and local standards. Diverse funding and financing initiatives enable transformation across extended value chains, led by consumer and investor commitment to the plan.	**Ambition 1: Coordinate Diverse Expertise for Low-Carbon Transformation** Innovating a diverse range of transformational, technology, process, and business expertise is coordinated to enable interconnected transformation toward low-carbon, operationally efficient ecosystems. This is coupled with a standard, accessible, unified investment strategy.	**Ambition 2: Communicate Carbon Taxes and Regulatory Standards Clearly** Incoming carbon taxes and regulatory standards are clearly communicated to motivate proactive and collective coordinated action. Partnerships and strategies that offset and mitigate carbon are supported and accelerated, with support enabled to baseline and track performance improvement.	**Ambition 3: Promote Awareness of Carbon Emissions Reduction** Enable private sector awareness of the business and sustainability benefits of addressing carbon emissions in operations and adapting to clean energy sources. Support the development of unified, consistent reporting frameworks trusted by socially conscious customers and investors.	**Ambition 4: Collaborate on Financing Solutions for Net Zero Initiatives** Finance and investment organisations collaborate to develop an accessible suite of financing and funding solutions for private sector initiatives working to deliver net zero emissions targets aligned with universally understood criteria.	**Ambition 5: Facilitate Collaborative Action Across Supply Chains** Platforms for collaboration enable collective planning of action to address the carbon neutrality agenda across extended supply chains. Organisations with interdependencies collaborate to enable a just transition, supporting action through the collective use of resources, sharing requirements and dependencies.
THE VISION: In a flourishing South Africa, seamless business innovation opportunities powered a just transition to carbon neutrality, mitigating negative impacts. Businesses stayed ahead of regulatory changes and met investor and consumer expectations. Funding and financing enabled shifts across multiple extended value chains: we are net zero.	New and existing renewable ventures have transformed energy infrastructure, enabling low-carbon energy to support private sector operations. A thriving economy exists for initiatives that offset carbon, highly supported by both investors and customers alike.	Business is compliant with global and local standards and regulations that address climate change. This has resulted in a competitive edge that avoids carbon taxes. Doing business in the South African private sector is therefore cost-effective as well as transparently sustainable.	South African investor collaboration and support have enabled private sector action to ensure trusted and transparent insight into current and projected carbon neutrality. Frameworks and standards help investors and customers prioritise businesses, products and services that are sustainable.	Businesses that mobilise to take action on the carbon-neutral agenda are benefiting from prosperity and sustainability outcomes that benefit all stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors and local communities.	Highly transparent and mutually supportive business ecosystems exchange information, collaborating on strategy and execution of plans. Businesses are benefiting from shared value creation. Connection has accelerated innovation, prosperity and sustainability outcomes.

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PRIORITY TOPIC 3

SOLVING OUR ENERGY CRISIS

How do we enable sufficient electrical supply?

VNR 2024 SOUTH AFRICA

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SOLVING OUR ENERGY CRISIS

How do we enable sufficient electrical supply?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Absa
Aluminium Federation of South Africa
Allied Valve Specialists
Assore
CHEP
Eskom
GBCSA
Hollard
Kudumane Manganese Resources
National Business Institute
Northam Platinum
OneWorld Sustainable Investments
Pick n Pay
Redefine Properties
Sanlam
SoapboxSA
Umgeni -Uthukela Water
Xperien

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

The private sector's challenge lies in rapidly enhancing energy efficiency and adopting renewable solutions, while identifying collaboration platforms for energy access, securing financing, and advocating for supportive policies to adapt operations and employee practices for optimal efficiency and sustainability.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:
The priority topic process started by framing 5 questions for discussion during the priority topic industry series. These questions were:

1. **Energy Efficiency Measures:**
   How can we accelerate energy-saving initiatives within operations, such as energy-efficient appliances, equipment and lighting systems? What smart energy management systems are we adopting?

2. **Backup Power and Renewable Adoption:**
   What are the most reliable backup power solutions, energy storage solutions, or fresh opportunities to integrate with renewable or off-grid energy solutions, and how are companies selecting and funding solutions?

3. **Collaboration on Energy Solutions:**
   Which industry associations, chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders are working to collectively address Loadshedding to engage in dialogues that advocate for reliable and sustainable solutions?

4. **Employee Flexibility and Enablement:**
   How are businesses working to educate employees, manage schedules, and create flexible work arrangements or resilient workspaces that address power outages? How are companies reducing demand during peak periods to alleviate strain on the grid?

5. **Linking Energy Efficiency to Sustainability:**
   Are companies connecting the dots between sustainability and electrical continuity objectives and using energy audits to identify areas of energy waste and inefficiency as an opportunity to spring forward?

PRIORITY AVATAR:

The Rhinoceros, a rare and majestic creature on the brink of survival, parallels the urgent need to address South Africa's energy and loadshedding crisis, emphasising the importance of embracing sustainable and carbon-free electricity solutions to secure our future.

VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 03: SOLVING OUR ENERGY CRISIS

Sector-wide collaboration is essential to solving energy crisis.

Enabling initiatives and success stories must be highlighted.
The participants of the VNR contributed actions to the following delivery pathway: To begin with, sector-wide collaboration should be fostered to integrate energy production and consumption. Success stories and enabling initiatives should be celebrated and shared. Next, energy transition standards need to be developed and benchmarked. By 2028, sectors should collaborate on developing interim and long-term energy solutions and communicate progress on ending loadshedding.

THE CHALLENGE:

How do we accelerate energy efficiency, backup power, and renewable energy adoption initiatives? What are the most effective collaboration platforms for accessing energy solutions, financing, and policy advocacy? How can we best adapt operations and employee practices to maximise both efficiency and sustainability outcomes.

THE AMBITION:

To collaborate across sectors and industries to integrate the South African energy production and consumption landscape. To highlight initiatives, success stories, best practices, and expertise that accelerate and enable financing, procurement, reporting, implementation, and operation of low-energy solutions for the short and long term.

2024 Cross-Sector Energy Integration:
Foster sector-wide collaboration to integrate energy production and consumption; highlight enabling initiatives and successes. Further ensuring efficiency and renewable adoption, backed by shared best practices and success stories for a streamlined energy landscape.

2026 Energy Transition Standards Development:
Create standards for energy transition fostering confidence and consistency, while encouraging the adoption of these standards through shared benchmarking for strategic company performance and sustainability.

2028 Collaborative Loadshedding Solutions:
Work together to develop innovative solutions to Loadshedding that balance immediate needs with long term sustainability and efficiency strategies involving a wide range of stakeholders. Communicate progress on ending loadshedding.

2029 Unified Guidance for Energy Solutions:
Establish platforms for trusted guidance and expertise on cost effective energy solutions; facilitate marketplaces for sourcing necessary technology and knowledge to drive energy efficiency.

2030 Cross-Sector Advocacy for Energy Policy:
Unite sectors to advocate for energy transition policies to a sustainable energy model; coordinate initiatives for a transformative, inclusive approach to the energy trajectory.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Increase in percentage of energy projects that involve multi-sector collaboration year on year.
- Number of organisations adopting the newly developed energy transition standards.
- Reduction in frequency and duration of loadshedding incidents per year.
- Number of entities utilising the guidance platform and implementing recommended solutions annually.
- Number of policy changes or new policies enacted as a result of advocacy efforts.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

A next-generation transmission network integrates public and independent power production to provide sufficient renewable energy. Loadshedding is history, and South African businesses and communities are passionately and transparently energy-efficient, demonstrating global best practices in operations and ways of working.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The priority SDGs aligned to this delivery pathway.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

DELIVERY PATHWAY: SOLVING OUR ENERGY CRISIS

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VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 03: SOLVING OUR ENERGY CRISIS

Urgent, coordinated action is needed to stop Loadshedding.

Best practices must be shared and implemented.
How to ensure collaboration on energy solutions and linking energy efficiency to sustainability were some of the challenges discussed in this Priority Topic. Harnessing renewable energy generation capabilities is essential to a future without Loadshedding. None of this can be achieved without a unified public-private sector that has access to expertise and intelligent financing. Best practices in the private sector must be shared and communicated to ensure widespread adoption.

	ENERGY EFFICIENCY TO SUSTAINABILITY:	BACKUP POWER AND RENEWABLE ADOPTION:	COLLABORATION ON ENERGY SOLUTIONS:	EMPLOYEE FLEXIBILITY AND ENABLEMENT:	LINK ENERGY EFFICIENCY TO SUSTAINABILITY:
THE CHALLENGE: How do we accelerate energy efficiency, backup power, and renewable energy adoption initiatives? What are the most effective collaboration platforms for accessing energy solutions, financing and policy advocacy? How can we best adapt operations and employee practices to maximise both efficiency and sustainability outcomes?	How can we accelerate and share best practice energy-saving initiatives within operations, such as energy-efficient appliances, equipment, and lighting systems? What smart energy management systems are we adopting? How can we make implementation of energy saving easier?	What are the most reliable backup power solutions, energy storage solutions, or fresh opportunities to integrate with renewable or off-grid energy solutions, and how are companies selecting and funding solutions? What are the timelines for the future transmission networks?	Which industry associations, chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders are working to collectively address loadshedding to engage in dialogues that advocate for reliable and sustainable solutions?	How are businesses working to educate employees, manage schedules, and create flexible work arrangements or resilient workspaces that address power outages? How are companies reducing demand during peak periods to alleviate strain on the grid?	Are companies connecting the dots between sustainability and electrical continuity objectives and using energy audits to identify areas of energy waste and inefficiency as an opportunity to spring forward?
THE AMBITION: To collaborate across sectors and industries to integrate the South African energy production and consumption landscape. To highlight initiatives, success stories, best practices, and expertise that accelerate and enable financing, procurement, reporting, implementation, and operation of low-energy solutions for the short and long term.	**Ambition 1: Establish Standards for Energy Transition** Develop standards that build confidence and consistency, surfacing and scaling initiatives with proven track records for enabling energy transition. Share benchmark standards to enable company strategies and targets for future performance, linked to blended cost and sustainability KPIs and outcomes.	**Ambition 2: Collaborate on Ending Loadshedding** Collaborate on awareness of progress and action to end loadshedding with clear timeframes. Share roles and initiatives that enable a wide range of stakeholders to join in, accelerating progress on next-generation energy. Balance interim solutions with well-planned long-term roadmaps for blended sustainability and efficiency outcomes.	**Ambition 3: Mobilise Platforms for Cost-Effective Implementation** Draw together unified platforms of trusted and practical guidance and expertise to enable and accelerate cost-effective implementation of energy solutions. Mobilise marketplaces that enable the sourcing and production of the technology and equipment needed to implement innovative solutions.	**Ambition 4: Share Success Stories and Educational Programmes** Surface narratives from companies that have successfully addressed Loadshedding pressures on operations. Share solutions that combine continuity and decent work outcomes. Share educational and people programmes that have successfully nurtured work cultures and practices that land energy efficiencies.	**Ambition 5: Coordinate Cross-Sector Advocacy for Energy Transition** Bring together and coordinate cross-sector initiatives that advocate for policy, strategy, and implementation of energy transition plans. Enable transformation of the energy landscape on a just, intentional, and well-coordinated trajectory supported across sectors and industries.
THE VISION: A next-generation transmission network integrates public and independent power production to provide sufficient renewable energy. Loadshedding is history, and South African businesses and communities are passionately and transparently energy-efficient, demonstrating globally best practices in operations and ways of working.	Best practices for energy saving can be seen across the private sector. Energy automation, tracking, and efficient equipment are commonplace, giving transparency that enables both efficiencies that reduce cost, as well as clear easy reporting of low energy use that impresses social conscious investors and customers.	The national transmission network connects solar, wind and other renewable energy generation capabilities to the grid. Loadshedding is over, and the national grid is less carbon intense. Many private sector off grid generation capabilities contribute to this network, offsetting original power solution implementation costs.	Industry associations and public sector entities have aligned around unified collaboration platforms that share implementation blueprints, access to expertise, intelligent financing and access to procurement economies of scale for best practice low energy operational solutions including hydrogen and more.	Employees are passionate about energy efficiency. Clear reporting on energy targets motivate staff to ever improve on targets, evolving new and innovative ways of working. Tracking and insights have combined with ways of working expertise to enable flexible schedules, decent work and low energy use outcomes.	The public, private and civil society sectors are aligned around a national energy generation strategy and model that is supported by broad-based societal awareness. South Africa is globally recognised as a country that is passionately committed to highly effective energy management.

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PRIORITY TOPIC 4

ETHICAL TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE

How do we assure high integrity business without corruption?

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ETHICAL TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE

How do we assure high integrity business without corruption?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Absa
Alexforbes
Bidvest
Citeplan
Eskom
Greenkid
National Business Institute
Northam Platinum
Postbank
Sanlam
Santam
School Central
Sustainability Strategist
Umgeni-Uthukela Water
Vodacom

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

Companies face the significant challenge of integrating ethical transformational governance, a critical endeavour requiring enhanced integrity, transparency and accountability. This alignment is essential for rebuilding trust and ensuring that Decisionmaking processes support the nation's objectives for progress business evolution.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:

The priority topic process started by framing 5 questions for discussion during the priority topic industry series. These questions were:

1. **Rebuilding Trust and Nurturing Resilience:**
   South Africa has faced several high-profile cases of corporate corruption and unethical behaviour. Are businesses implementing ethical transformational governance frameworks to restore confidence and future proof business practices?

2. **B-BBEE Transformational Compliance:**
   How are South African businesses aligning to and prioritising the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act? What are the emerging best practices? Has the transformation agenda been disrupted by the impact of the global pandemic?

3. **Whistleblowing and Corruption Detection:**
   What are the best practices for developing robust systems for detecting, preventing, and addressing unethical conduct and for rooting out corruption?

4. **Building Ethical Culture and Reputation:**
   What approaches are company leadership teams taking to assure responsible leadership, Decisionmaking and brand? How do we both attract and motivate for ethical behavioural standards, and deter employee, supplier and customer malpractice?

5. **Meeting Global Stakeholder Expectations:**
   How can the South African private sector best collaborate with the public sector to restore reputational damage and deliver an ethical and transformed South Africa?

PRIORITY AVATAR:

The African lion represents strength and leadership, symbolising our vital mission to rooting out business corruption through ethical and transformational governance. Just as the lion embodies courage and wisdom, we must courageously and competently foster transparency and representative accountability, ensuring a reputation for governance that betters the future for all our stakeholders and our planet.

VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 04: ETHICAL TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE

The delivery pathway for ethical transformational governance is predicated on a cohesive alignment of stakeholders to champion and motivate responsible leadership, ensuring governance is underpinned by transparency, accountability and unwavering ethical standards.

THE CHALLENGE:

How do we rebuild trust and build resilience to corruption in business? How well is the B-BBEE transformational agenda enabling representative, diverse governance? What are the operational capabilities needed for responsible, good business? What are the governance criteria for ethical, sustainable private sector leadership?

THE AMBITION:

Stakeholders align across sectors and industries with a shared value for, and culture of, transparent, ethical, responsible, sustainable business. People are motivated to take action to deliver high-caliber responsible leadership, acting to end corruption. Governance frameworks, technology, processes and roles are widely optimised.

Step 1:
2024 Stakeholder Alignment for Sustainable Business
Unite stakeholders for transparent, ethical business; motivate responsible leadership and optimise governance frameworks to achieve sustainable excellence and robust integrity across all business operations and sectors.

Step 2:
2026 Governance Toolkits and Technological Transparency
Distribute governance toolkits; utilise blockchain, AI for meeting transparency and stakeholder empowerment, fostering an environment for ethical business conduct and decision making efficacy.

Step 3:
2028 B-BBEE Progress and Success Sharing:
Review B-BBEE progress; share successful company strategies and programmes with clear, actionable guidance advancing accountability and inclusivity in the South African business landscape.

Step 4:
2029 Technological Enablement for Transactional Integrity
Share technologies for standardised transactions; develop platforms for clean operations and transactional integrity promoting operational excellence in our business ecosystems.

Step 5:
2030 Leadership and Governance Education
Implement education programmes for governance; share best practices and facts to promote representative and effective leadership thereby enhancing leadership capabilities across the South African corporate sphere.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Quantify organisational adoption of prescribed governance protocols
- Analyse progressive enhancements in B-BBEE accreditation.
- Measure completion rates of mandated ethics education
- Catalog and evaluate whistleblower disclosures
- Gauge satisfaction via methodical stakeholder feedback
- Assess the granularity and regularity of governance disclosures

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

The South African transformation story is a global case study for representative, responsible business. Corruption scandals are a thing of the past. Governance capabilities are viewed as transparent and ethical by stakeholders. Future-proof technologies and processes enable quality private sector leadership that drives sustainability.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The priority SDGs aligned to this delivery pathway.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

DELIVERY PATHWAY: ETHICAL TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE

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VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 04: SOLVING OUR ENERGY CRISIS

Rebuilding trust is key to transformation.

Governance and risk management frameworks should be widely shared and adopted.
Whistleblowing and corruption detection, building an ethical culture and reputation and above all rebuilding trust and nurturing resilience in business were some of the challenges discussed in this Priority Topic. Solutions to these challenges include the widespread adoption of enabling innovative new technologies such as blockchain and AI to facilitate greater transparency, participation and scrutiny in business transactions.

	REBUILDING TRUST AND NURTURING RESILIENCE:	B-BBEE PERFORMANCE ON TRANSFORMATION:	WHISTLEBLOWING AND CORRUPTION DETECTION:	BUILDING ETHICAL CULTURE AND REPUTATION:	MEETING STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS:
THE CHALLENGE: How do we rebuild trust and build resilience to corruption in business? How well is the B-BBEE transformational agenda enabling representative, diverse governance? What are the operational capabilities needed for responsible, good business? What are the governance criteria for ethical, sustainable private sector leadership?	South Africa has faced several high-profile cases of corporate corruption and unethical behaviour. Are businesses implementing ethical transformational governance frameworks to restore confidence and future proof business practices?	How are South African businesses aligning to and prioritising the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act? What are the emerging best practices? Has the transformation agenda been disrupted by the impact of the global pandemic?	What are the best practices for developing robust systems for detecting, preventing and addressing unethical conduct and for rooting out corruption? What are the lessons learned, and how are they best shared across sectors and industries? What processes and technologies can support resilience?	What approaches are company leadership teams taking to assure responsible leadership, Decisionmaking and brand? How do we both attract and motivate for ethical behavioural standards, and deter employee, supplier and customer malpractice in hearts and minds?	How can the South African private sector best collaborate with the public sector to restore reputational damage and deliver? What do local and global investors and other stakeholders look for from Boards, in terms of composition, structure and governance best practices for optimised, transformed governance?
THE AMBITION: Stakeholders align across sectors and industries with a shared value for, and culture of, transparent, ethical, responsible, sustainable business. People are motivated to take action to deliver high-caliber responsible leadership, acting to end corruption. Governance frameworks, technology, processes, and roles are widely optimised.	**Ambition 1:** **Provide Governance Toolkits and Expertise** Harness innovative technologies like blockchain and AI-supported documentation to enhance governance transparency, enabling participation and scrutiny by all stakeholders. Make governance toolkits and expertise readily accessible, fostering transformational governance.	**Ambition 2:** **Review Progress on B-BBEE Attainment** Regularly review progress on attainment to identify quantifiable gaps and establish updated targets, sharing success stories from companies that have succeeded. Provide clear guidance on effective strategies, plans, initiatives to achieve ethical transformational governance.	**Ambition 3:** **Share Innovative Technologies for Simplified Processes** Leverage innovative technologies for simplified, standardised, and auditable transactional processes. Promote systems that foster inter-organisational integrity. Encourage platforms to share expertise for ethical, corruption-free operations.	**Ambition 4:** **Guideline 4: Implement Education and Awareness Programmes** Implement educational initiatives to foster resilience and establish standardised procedures for stakeholders to manage risks effectively. Promote best practices in leadership and governance to achieve ethical transformational governance.	**Ambition 5:** **Foster Responsible and Sustainable Leadership** Identify and disseminate responsible, ethical and sustainable leadership qualities among stakeholders. Present data and evidence that demonstrate how representative leadership effectively aligns and motivates to advocate for actions that meet expectations.
THE VISION: The South African transformation story is a global case study for representative, responsible business. Corruption scandals are a thing of the past. Governance capabilities are viewed as transparent and ethical by stakeholders. Future-proof technologies and processes enable quality private sector leadership that drives sustainability.	Leadership should adopt frameworks like King IV and maintain rigorous financial systems for sustainable business practices. Governance must be transparent and communicated to stakeholders, building trust and resilience to achieve ethical transformational governance aligned with corporate and societal goals.	South Africa must ensure the continual empowerment of black individuals, establishing a flourishing and sustainable model of inclusivity. It is imperative that the objectives of the B-BBEE transformation process are regularly reviewed to demonstrate unequivocally that business practices are equitable and representative.	Business operations are futureproof, resilient, and compliant, ensuring clean, corruption-free environments. Advanced technology facilitates rapid, trusted transactions, making tendering malpractice culturally and practically infeasible.	Business stakeholders have a universal and shared value for clean, responsible, ethical and sustainable business. Employees demonstrate ethical followership, self-policing operations to ensure optimised use of resources. Audits consistently yield a clean bill of health across industries and public-private sector partnerships.	Business stakeholders universally value ethical, sustainable conduct. Workers self-regulate, ensuring resource efficiency. Audits across sectors consistently confirm the health of our public-private partnerships.

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PRIORITY TOPIC 5

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

How do we accelerate sustainability through partnerships?

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EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR COLLABORATION

How do we accelerate sustainability through partnerships?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Absa
BDO
Bidvest
Bokashi Bran
Eskom
Hollard
Integrate Solutions
National Business Institute
Patchup
Sanlam
Trialogue
Umgeni-Uthukela Water
Vodacom
In-Bev

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

We seek to understand how effectively the public and private sector are collaborating, and what emergent areas require an improved dialogue if we are to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:

The priority topic process started by framing 5 questions for discussion during the priority topic industry series. These questions were:

1. **Engaging on Policy and Regulation Development:**
   How do businesses most effectively participate in public sector activities to define policies, regulations and standards that govern business operations? Which policies are most important to evolve in order to enable and support private sector sustainability outcomes?

2. **Which Market Opportunities are Top Priority:**
   Public-private collaboration can open new market opportunities for business. Which South African projects, initiatives and industry sectors offer the biggest opportunities for business growth and expansion?

3. **Future Proofing and Resilience:**
   South Africa, like other countries, is facing rapid, disruptive change. What new and emergent risks are arising for business and for our people? What should the public and private sectors be collaborating on to anticipate, prepare and protect?

4. **Collaboration within Communities:**
   How can businesses participate in inclusive decision making processes to collaborate with the public sector to build a social license to operate and build positive relationships with communities?

5. **Access to Public Sector Resources and Expertise:**
   How do businesses properly access public sector resources, data and expertise to support sustainability initiatives? What collaboration opportunities are there to drive innovation and solve complex problems?

PRIORITY AVATAR:

The Springbok, our national symbol of sporting achievement and resilience, perfectly represents the critical role of public-private sector collaboration in achieving sustainability goals as a united team. Just as the Springbok leaps over and through challenges, we can blend our strengths across sectors, for forward momentum toward a more sustainable and prosperous future for all.

VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 05: EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Effective policies will strengthen partnerships.

The 2030 goal is unified action for prosperity and sustainability.
The VNR participants contributed actions to the following delivery pathway: The initial milestone is to enhance policy advocacy and regulation so that approval processes are streamlined. The next milestone is to ensure that policy experts' contributions are coordinated across all platforms, simplifying communication, automating compliance, and incentivising regulation adherence. By 2028, the public and private sectors should be aligned to prioritise B-BBEE market opportunities.

THE CHALLENGE:

How does the private sector collaborate most effectively with the public sector? How do we engage to evolve the policies and economic opportunities we need to accelerate prosperity and sustainability? How do we prioritise and future proof for resilience, access resources, pool expertise and partner to empower communities?

THE AMBITION:

To improve policy and regulation advocacy, quality, design, consultation, partnerships and execution initiatives to enable faster, better designed regulations. To make alignment to prosperity and sustainability outcomes easier for the private sector. To align and accelerate positive impact with inclusive incentives and pools of expertise.

2024 Policy Improvement and Regulation Advocacy:
Implement a dynamic, participatory policy making process with a dedicated joint policy lab, leveraging AI and blockchain for transparent regulation tracking and real time adjustments, fostering adaptable and effective public private regulatory collaborations.

2026 Policy Expert Coordination:
Establish a cross sectoral expert committee and digital platform for policy criteria development and simulation exercises, ensuring market opportunities align with sustainable growth and knowledge is shared seamlessly.

2028 B-BBEE Progress and Success Sharing:
Launch an integrated B-BBEE tracking system, share success stories at annual summits, and broaden programmes to encourage private sector engagement in community development, emphasising transparency and impact.

2029 Innovative Policy Development:
Leverage predictive analytics for innovative policy making, hosting collaborative workshops and sandbox testing to develop forward looking regulations that are risk aware and impact drivers.

2030 Unified Action for Prosperity and Sustainability:
Form a sustainability alliance to unite sectors, creating a collective action framework that promotes resource sharing, with recognition for impactful collaborations towards prosperity and sustainability.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Percentage of private sector recommendations incorporated into public policies.
- Number of joint initiatives launched because of the cross-sector committees policy simulations and criteria development.
- Increase in B-BBEE scorecards of participating companies indicating improvements in community development and empowerment.
- Number of innovative policies developed from workshops and sandbox environments that are later adopted.
- Growth In number of collaborations and partnerships under the sustainability alliance framework leading to tangible sustainability projects.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

South African policy leadership is world recognised. Powerful cross sector partnerships are innovative, agile, visible and responsible: capitalising on opportunity for all stakeholders via well designed incentives that offer funding, resources and expertise for highly effective initiatives. Efficient regulations are quick and simple.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The priority SDGs aligned to this delivery pathway.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

DELIVERY PATHWAY: EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

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VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 05: EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

A clear and aligned strategy will enable strong partnerships.

A long-term view is essential to mitigate risk and forecast challenges.
Building policy that is future-proof and resilient and effective collaboration within communities were some of the challenges discussed in this Priority Topic. The vision is to have policies and regulations that measurably drive a focused National Development Plan. These policies and regulations need to have input from stakeholders in both the private and public sector. Sharing community engagement success stories will assist in communicating opportunities for future public-private sector engagement with communities.

	BETTER, SIMPLER POLICY AND REGULATIONS:	PRIORITISED ACTION ON MARKET OPPORTUNITIES:	POLICY THAT IS FUTURE PROOF AND RESILIENT:	COLLABORATION WITHIN COMMUNITIES:	ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE:
THE CHALLENGE: How does the private sector collaborate most effectively with the public sector? How do we engage to evolve the policies and economic opportunities we need to accelerate prosperity and sustainability? How do we prioritise and future proof for resilience, access resources, pool expertise and partner to empower communities?	How do businesses most effectively participate in public sector activities to define policies, regulations and standards that govern business operations? Which policies are most important to evolve in order to enable and support private sector sustainability outcomes?	Collaboration can open new market opportunities for business. Which South African projects, initiatives and industry sectors offer the biggest opportunities for business growth and expansion?	South Africa, like other countries, is facing rapid, disruptive change. What new and emergent risks are arising for business and for our people? What should the public and private sectors be collaborating on to anticipate, prepare and protect?	How can businesses participate in inclusive Decisionmaking processes to collaborate with the public sector to build a social license to operate and build positive relationships with communities?	How do businesses properly access public sector resources, data and expertise to support sustainability initiatives? What collaboration opportunities are there to drive innovation and solve complex problems?
THE AMBITION: To improve policy and regulation advocacy, quality, design, consultation, partnerships and execution initiatives to enable faster, better designed regulations. To make alignment to prosperity and sustainability outcomes easier for the private sector. To align and accelerate positive impact with inclusive incentives and pools of expertise.	**Ambition 1: Provide Governance Toolkits and Expertise** Make governance toolkits and implementation expertise widely available for implementation. Utilise innovative technologies such as blockchain and AI-supported minutes and meeting records to enable transparency, participation, and scrutiny by all empowered stakeholders.	**Ambition 2: Align Market Opportunities with Criteria** Align public and private sector experts to prioritise market opportunities against clear criteria assessing demand, supply, and the capabilities needed to deliver. Ensure policy and regulation aligns with integrated, resourced and well-led initiatives capacitated to mobilise action to deliver on opportunities.	**Ambition 3: Combine Challenges with Forecast Intelligence** Combine current challenges and success stories with a broad range of forecast intelligence related to future trends, assessing system dynamics, socio-economic and business behaviour drivers. Define and share priority risks, incentives and deterrents to enable policy and regulation innovation based on impact and behaviour.	**Ambition 4: Share Community Engagement Success Stories** Share community engagement success stories and widen their scope to better communicate and integrate opportunities for blended public-private sector engagement within communities. Ensure balanced approaches to immediate impact relief and sustainable, longer-term prosperity and sustainability outcomes.	**Ambition 5: Integrate Expertise and Resources** Take action to bring together, unify and integrate expertise, resources and best practices. Coordinate action to ensure holistic, accessible and shareable resources. Establish strong initiatives to build engagement between platforms, sectors and industries, aligned with a collective action plan to deliver on prosperity and sustainability strategies.
THE VISION: South African policy leadership is world recognised. Powerful cross sector partnerships are innovative, agile, visible and responsible: capitalising on opportunity for all stakeholders via well designed incentives that offer funding, resources and expertise for highly effective initiatives. Efficient regulations are quick and simple.	Policies and regulations are intelligent, future proof and measurably drive a focused National Development Plan, that is aligned across sectors and industries. Public and Private Partnerships have highly visible leadership, clear strategies and high performing action plans. Regulation is fast, easy, simple and works.	The public and private sectors have clear and aligned strategies to land prioritised economic opportunities. Cross-industry strategies are holistically planned, with policies, incentives, resources and expertise widely available. Prioritised opportunities are measurably being realised, with clear benefits to all stakeholders.	A long-term view is central to private and public sector collaboration. There is deep understanding of existing and forecast challenges, emergent technology, global market dynamics and evolving civil society values and behaviours. Excellent risk and opportunity identification capabilities motivate stakeholders to partner for universally agreed outcomes.	Community-led strategies and initiatives are amplified and accelerated via integrated, planned, resourced initiatives that combine public and private sector roles. Performance is visibly tracked, and opportunities to contribute to shared value creation are clearly communicated and incentivised, aligning socio economic benefit realisation.	Resources and expertise from public and private sector sources have been integrated onto platforms that are simple and easy to access. Support to the private sector is trusted, respected, cutting edge, well communicated, simple to consume, and freely available.

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PRIORITY TOPIC 6

SYNERGIES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

How does business collaborate best with the power of the South African people?

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SYNERGIES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

How do we collaborate best with the power of the South African people?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Absa
Afrikaburn
Centre of new Liberalism
De Beers Group
Eskom
Makwande Group
Minerals Council South Africa
National Business Institute
Trialogue
Umgeni-Uthukela Water
VS Landbou

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

Businesses must strategically engage with communities and civil society, understanding their unique contexts to amplify sustainability, social responsibility and economic growth, and to expand the reach of impactful NGO collaborations.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:

The priority topic process started by framing 5 questions for discussion during the priority topic industry series. These questions were:

1. **NGO Partnerships and Alliances:**
   What are the best models for business collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs)? Which scalable partnerships and alliances are making most impact in the alleviation of poverty, food security, education, conservation and community development?

2. **Community Needs Assessment:**
   What are the best approaches for business to engage with civil society and communities to hold a structured stakeholder dialogue and engagement that enables understanding and prioritisation of needs and measure success?

3. **Social Responsibility Initiative Insights:**
   Which South African businesses have highly effective Corporate Social Responsibility examples that have successfully uplifted communities or addressed social and environmental challenges?

4. **Local Economic Development:**
   What are the best examples of collaboration with local communities to promote economic development? How are companies working within communities on social enterprise models, or to source goods and services, support small business, or provide workforce skills and training?

5. **Community Investment and Philanthropy:**
   How are companies making community investment in philanthropic initiatives aimed at improving well-being, from donations, grants, sponsorships, to support for community-driven projects?

PRIORITY AVATAR:

Collaboration between the private sector, civil society and local communities, recognises that we are all ultimately part of one South African community, akin to a herd of zebras working to nurture a sustainable world for future generations. Together, we possess the collective power to steward and shape a brighter future with plentiful opportunity for the wellbeing of our children and generations to come.

VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 06: SYNERGIES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

Involve all stakeholders to achieve sustainable results.

Effective communication will ensure stakeholder involvement.
The VNR participants contributed actions to the following delivery pathway: As a first step in the process, it will be necessary to cultivate awareness of successful initiatives for local development, ensuring effective stakeholder engagement and involvement. Next, NGO, public and private sector collaboration should be encouraged through platforms, enhancing transparency and operational efficiency. By 2029, successes in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives should be shared and scaled for rapid socio-economic impact.

THE CHALLENGE:

How does business best understand and act on community and civil society challenges, opportunities and preferences? How can sustainability, social responsibility and local economic development outcomes be accelerated? How do we scale the impact of effective NGOs, collaborations and initiatives?

THE AMBITION:

To surface initiatives that are working, enabling civil society and local community awareness of options and ideas for local socio-economic development. Transparent access, processes, and performance enable stakeholder communication, participation, investment, and contribution to the initiatives that are yielding results.

2024 Initiative Awareness and Stakeholder Engagement:
Develop a comprehensive awareness campaign to highlight active initiatives and facilitate engagement across Stakeholder groups. Establish a multi channel communications strategy that ensures transparency and encourages active participation from all community segments.

2026 Platform Integration and NGO Collaboration:
Launch integrated platforms to streamline collaboration among NGO's, businesses and civil society, promoting resource sharing and joint action. This will include a digital hub for collective planning, initiative tracking, and sharing of best practices to bolster NGO efforts.

2028 Needs Assessment Innovation:
Invest in innovative tools for robust needs assessments, involving stakeholders in a participative manner to tailor initiatives closely to community preferences and insights. Leverage technology to adapt governance and engagement models for greater society inclusion.

2029 Scaling Corporate Social Responsibility:
Expand successful CSR programmes, establishing partnerships to diversify funding and support mechanisms. Create a scalable framework that other corporations and SME's can adopt to replicate effective social responsibility initiatives, enhancing socio-economic impacts.

2030 Opportunity Analysis and Activation Planning:
Conduct a thorough analysis of sustainable, profitable business opportunities that serve community needs, translating them into actionable plans. Engage NGO's, educational bodies and communities in executing these plans.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Number of stakeholders actively engaging with initiatives monthly.
- Number of NGO's and business entities registered and active on the integration platform, collaborating on shared projects.
- Increase in the percentage of community driven initiatives developed using the new needs assessment tools, measured annually.
- Percentage growth year on year of businesses adopting the scalable CSR framework and the consequent socio-economic impact in target communities.
- Number of sustainable and profitable business opportunities identified and activated with full execution plans, in collaboration with NGO's and community groups.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

Communities and civil society are socially conscious, empowered, and engaged in driving the sustainability and prosperity agenda. Power sits with the people. Vibrant, diverse, and representative collaborations flourish across peaceful, prosperous communities that are enjoying the benefits of socio-economic health and growth.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The priority SDGs aligned to this delivery pathway.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

DELIVERY PATHWAY: SYNERGIES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

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VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 06: SYNERGIES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

Empowered communities are at the heart of our vision.

Building alliances and removing siloes should be prioritised.
Business collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and how to maximise corporate social responsibility initiative successes were some of the challenges discussed in this Priority Topic. Empowered communities are at the heart of the vision which sees poverty, hunger and inequality being systematically addressed through collaboration across civil society and the public and private sector. Sharing successful Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives will create opportunities for collaboration.

	NGO PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES:	COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT:	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE INSIGHTS:	LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:	COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND PHILANTHROPY:
THE CHALLENGE: How does business best understand and act on community and civil society challenges, opportunities and preferences? How can sustainability, social responsibility and local economic development outcomes be accelerated? How do we scale the impact of effective NGOs, collaborations and initiatives?	What are the best models for business collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs)? Which scalable partnerships and alliances are making most impact in the alleviation of poverty, food security, education, conservation and community development?	What are the best approaches for business to engage with civil society and communities to hold a structured stakeholder dialogue and engagement that enables understanding and prioritisation of needs and measure success?	Which South African businesses have highly effective Corporate Social Responsibility examples that have successfully uplifted communities or addressed social and environmental challenges?	What are the best examples of collaboration with local communities to promote economic development? How are companies working within communities on social enterprise models, or to source goods and services, support small business, or provide workforce skills and training?	How are companies making community investment in philanthropic initiatives aimed at improving wellbeing, from donations, grants and sponsorships, to support for community-driven projects?
THE AMBITION: To surface initiatives that are working, enabling civil society and local community awareness of options and ideas for local socio-economic development. Transparent access, processes and performance enable stakeholder communication, participation, investment, and contribution to the initiatives that are yielding results.	**Ambition 1: Transparent Communication and Collaboration Platforms** Establish platforms that transparently communicate the NGO and Alliance landscape, with concerted effort to remove siloes and enable integration and collaboration on unified and collective agendas. Enable role players to play to strengths and gain operational efficiencies. Implement simple transparent reporting and narrative on the effectiveness of initiatives.	**Ambition 2: Support Needs Assessment and Innovation** Support public and private sector needs assessment capabilities to innovate technical, process, governance and engagement approaches. Utilise a range of media and communication methods to inspire and motivate civil society and community engagement on needs, preferences, ideas and feedback on options and solutions.	**Ambition 3: Scale Successful Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives** Big businesses should open successful corporate social responsibility initiatives to other businesses and wider stakeholders, offering a range of defined roles and options for contributing resources and budget. Rapidly scale and replicate successful programmes to accelerate positive socio-economic impact in cities and communities.	**Ambition 4: Analyse Sustainable and Profitable Business Opportunities** Analyse economic and business opportunities that are both sustainable and profitable to understand needs. Translate future business requirements into activation plans that can be taken up by NGOs, educational organisations and communities to engage in targeted decent work and entrepreneurial opportunities.	**Ambition 5: Respect and Champion Social and Environmental Values** Respect and champion socially and environmentally conscious, philanthropic and Ubuntu value systems by role models and organisations, celebrating positive impact. Support and coordinate community storytelling to motivate awareness, sponsorship and investment in community-led initiatives that deliver positive outcomes.
THE VISION: Communities and civil society are socially conscious, empowered and engaged in driving the sustainability and prosperity agenda. Power sits with the people. Vibrant, diverse and representative collaborations flourish across peaceful, prosperous communities that are enjoying the benefits of socio-economic health and growth.	Sustainable and robust NGOs, partnership and alliances thrive across local communities and civil society accelerating education, socio-economic development and climate impact. Poverty, hunger and inequality have been systemically addressed, resulting in peaceful, healthy, empowered cities and communities.	City and community local agendas, effectively surface risks, issues and opportunities via simple, accessible, trusted and visible channels, platforms and media. Public and private sector contributors are aligned with NGOs and civil society organisations to action needs and track progress and success transparently.	Corporate Social Responsibility success stories create opportunity for businesses to align and unify on action to scale the most effective sustainability impact models. Larger corporates coordinate the participation of a wide range of businesses across initiatives that enable partnership on mutual value creation between sectors.	National and local economic development strategies are aligned to business opportunities for prosperity and sustainability outcomes. The best opportunities for long term job creation and for new business are linked to talent and educational initiatives that enable people to participate fruitfully in decent work and economic growth.	Wellbeing, sports, arts, conservation and cultural programmes are sustainably funded. The needs of the most vulnerable are met, across diverse programmes that inspire, uplift and motivate local communities. Ubuntu is worldwide recognised for enabling the power of community, respect, compassion and humanity toward others.

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PRIORITY TOPIC 7

IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITY POST PANDEMIC

How do we adapt to changes in the post Covid landscape?

VNR 2024 SOUTH AFRICA

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IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITY POST PANDEMIC

How do we adapt to changes in the post Covid landscape?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Absa
Bidvest
Clicks Group Limited
Makwande Group
Minerals Council South Africa
Nedbank
Sanlam
Sibanye Stillwater
Umgeni-Uthukela Water
Vodacom
Xperien

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

South African businesses confront intricate challenges like economic inequality, high unemployment and systemic barriers. Addressing these demands, strategic innovation, sustainable practices and cross-sector collaboration to cultivate resilience and foster growth in a dynamic landscape are needed.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:

The priority topic process started by framing 5 questions for discussion during the priority topic industry series. These questions were:

1. **Economic Resilience and Recovery:**
   Which industry sectors were worst impacted by lockdowns and impact on cash reserves? What was the damage, and how far have businesses recovered? Where are the biggest needs for support, recovery and future resilience?

2. **Accelerating Digital Transformation:**
   The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies. How can we identify, accelerate and share the advances that are crucial for the innovation of sustainable business practices?

3. **Focus on Mental Wellbeing and Health:**
   The pandemic highlighted the importance of health and safety in business operations. What initiatives have been created that successfully address the impact on employee mental health and wellbeing?

4. **Hybrid, Remote Work and Flexibility:**
   Remote work has become a norm, creating opportunity to embrace flexible work arrangements that attract top talent, and reduce commutes and carbon footprints. What are the best practice remote or hybrid work policies that give flexibility, while retaining connection and productivity?

5. **Enhanced Connectivity and ICT Literacy:**
   The pandemic thrust employees forward into a world of virtual collaboration, improving connectivity. How far have we advanced, and who has been left behind? What new gaps have emerged alongside our advances?

PRIORITY AVATAR:

In the wake of the post-pandemic landscape, where we've been profoundly impacted and have swiftly pivoted, the cheetah's agility and speed in navigating challenges mirror our approach to seizing sustainability opportunities with utmost urgency. Just as the cheetah capitalises swiftly on emerging opportunities, we are determined to harness this momentum, driving sustainable change with swift and resolute actions that promise a brighter and more resilient future in South Africa and beyond.

VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 07: IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITY POST PANDEMIC

Focus on workforce challenges in post-pandemic landscape.

Businesses must integrate the workforce into digital transformation initiatives.
The VNR participants contributed actions to the following delivery pathway: The first part of this process is to identify post-pandemic socio-economic trends and attempt to bridge the digital divide with connectivity solutions. The next step is to communicate future business impacts and opportunities. By 2028, technology entities will be supported in their growth by analysing and sharing evolving tech, skills and processes. The end goal of this pathway is employee health, wellbeing and digital inclusion.

THE CHALLENGE:

What is the status on business impact and recovery, and what support is needed? What are the digital technologies and innovations that have accelerated? How did the pandemic influence mental health, wellbeing and culture? How did businesses evolve ways of working, and what did this mean for the digital divide and inclusion?

THE AMBITION:

To identify emergent trends and socio-economic shifts, sharing innovation options. To assess the impact of change, surfacing transition solutions for business models and ways of working that are unsustainable or outdated. To support human evolution, resolving the digital divide via access to connectivity and digital resources.

2024: Establish Foundation and Set Clear Targets:
Initiate targeted research to identify key digital inclusion sectors; establish precise goals for digital literacy and tech integration in business.

2026 Develop Infrastructure and Foster Partnerships:
Embark on a large-scale development of digital infrastructure, ensuring high-speed internet access in urban and rural areas. Establish strategic partnerships with private sector and international tech companies to fund and drive these initiatives.

2028: Empower Communities and Enhance Skills:
Implement wide-scale digital literacy programmes and tailor education curricula to include digital competency. Launch initiatives to support technology entrepreneurship, focusing on innovation in automation, AI and circular economies.

2029: Implement and Refine Hybrid Work Models:
Promote adoption of hybrid work models for a balanced office and remote mix, with policies enhancing flexibility, mental health and workforce resilience.

2030: Evaluate Progress and Scale Successful Initiatives:
Assess strides made since 2024, amplify triumphs for broader impact, and bolster continuous betterment and inclusivity. Cement the community-first ethos, leaving no soul behind and evolve models with cutting-edge tech.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Number of key digital inclusion sectors identified and % completion of targets for literacy and technology integration among businesses.
- Increase in % of urban and rural areas with high-speed internet access and number of strategic partnerships formed with tech companies.
- Increase in participants and educational curricula that have digital literacy programmes.
- Increase in business using hybrid models and improved employee mental health.
- Increase in digital inclusion metrics and scaled initiatives based on success metrics.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

The digital divide is closed, and the South African world of business leads with advanced ways of working. Global and local businesses seek opportunities to leverage high-tech operations and innovative partnering models. Healthy, motivated, skilled workforces value sustainability and showcase learning agility, flexibility and resilience.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The priority SDGs aligned to this delivery pathway.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

DELIVERY PATHWAY: IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITY POST PANDEMIC

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VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 07: IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITY POST PANDEMIC

Bridging the digital divide vital for post-pandemic recovery.

Economic resilience post-pandemic depends on ICT literacy and digital connectivity.
Recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and the transition to a post-Covid world were the focus of the discussions around this Priority Topic. The transition to hybrid and remote working, while prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of employees, are some of the challenges that are being faced. The advances made in the adoption of digital technologies to facilitate business practices mean that ICT literacy and digital connectivity for the workforce must be prioritised.

	ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY:	ACCELERATING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION:	FOCUS ON MENTAL WELLBEING AND HEALTH:	HYBRID, REMOTE WORK AND FLEXIBILITY:	DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY AND ICT LITERACY:
THE CHALLENGE: What is the status on business impact and recovery, and what support is needed? What are the digital technologies and innovations that have accelerated? How did the pandemic influence mental health, wellbeing and culture? How did businesses evolve ways of working, and what did this mean for the digital divide and inclusion?	Which industry sectors were worst impacted by lockdowns and impact on cash reserves? What was the damage, and how far have businesses recovered? Where are the biggest needs for support, recovery and future resilience?	The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies. How can we identify, accelerate and share the advances that are crucial for the innovation of sustainable business practices?	The pandemic highlighted the importance of health and safety in business operations. What initiatives have been created that successfully address the impact on employee mental health and wellbeing?	Remote work has become a norm, creating opportunity to embrace flexible work arrangements that attract top talent, and reduce commutes and carbon footprints. What are the best practice remote or hybrid work policies that give flexibility, while retaining connection and productivity?	The pandemic thrust employees forward into a world of virtual collaboration, improving connectivity. How far have we advanced, and who has been left behind? What new gaps have emerged alongside our advances?
THE AMBITION: To identify emergent trends and socio-economic shifts, sharing innovation options. To assess the impact of change, surfacing transition solutions for business models and ways of working that are unsustainable or outdated. To support human evolution, resolving the digital divide via access to connectivity and digital resources.	**Ambition 1: Anticipate Trends and Prosperity Opportunities** Propel SA's growth by anticipating market trends, fostering inclusive development, and transitioning to sustainable business practices. Consolidate around prosperity opportunities, facilitating transition pathways and emergent needs.	**Ambition 2: Support Technology Growth and Collaboration** Catalyse tech-led economic expansion in SA, blending new collaborations with thorough analysis for sustainable growth and innovation. Rigorous analysis and dissemination of emerging technologies, skills and processes require expertise and engender broad-based engagement.	**Ambition 3: Prioritise Health and Safety Collaboration** Champion understanding of mental and physical health and wellbeing needs. Identify and share existing and emergent health and safety risks. Invest in effective solutions and initiatives that enable protection and resilience. Collaborate across sectors on new risks and existing challenges to wellbeing.	**Ambition 4: Foster Flexible Ways of Working** Celebrate, support, and refine emerging hybrid and flexible ways of working. Share emerging human resource policies, procedures and approaches for evolving the world of work to combine value creation with productivity. Share success stories for aligning talent preferences with business requirements.	**Ambition 5: Accelerate Digital Inclusion** Accelerate the availability of access and inclusion in digital technology and connection. Collaborate across sectors to land funded, sustainable initiatives that ensure awareness, education, and the availability of infrastructure, devices, software and content resources.
THE VISION: The digital divide is closed, and the South African world of business leads with advanced ways of working. Global and local businesses seek opportunities to leverage high-tech operations and innovative partnering models. Healthy, motivated, skilled workforces value sustainability and showcase learning agility, flexibility and resilience.	Private sector is urged to strategically capitalise on pandemic-induced shifts by proactively adopting sustainable practices, ensuring enduring relevance, prosperity and economic resilience for the future.	SA should ambitiously cultivate an all-encompassing digital competency and culture, prioritising groundbreaking tech solutions that bolster both local and international economic advancements and sustainability.	The evolution must align with civil society's values, driving robust value creation and diverse work opportunities that steadfastly champion mental and physical wellbeing alongside environmental sustainability.	Businesses are encouraged to further refine hybrid working models, fostering equitable, performance-enhancing workplaces that uphold connectivity, flexibility and balance in every sector.	The commitment to digital inclusivity must ensure widespread, equitable access to connectivity, empowering communities with comprehensive digital literacy and leaving no individual or community behind.

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PRIORITY TOPIC 8

BUILDING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE

How do we best show up in the global trading environment?

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BUILDING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE

How do we best show up in the global trading environment?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Cipla
Eskom
Makwande Group
Minerals Council SA
National Business Institute
Nedbank
Pick n Pay
Salubata Official
Sanlam
Sasol
Sibanye Stillwater
Xperien

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

Organisations face challenges from pandemic recovery and climate related disruptions. Solutions include digital innovation, sustainable practice, and strengthen local supply chain to resilience and adaptability in the global market. Strategically, they need localisation of supply chains, green practices, cyber resilience to survive agile adaptation to global trade dynamics.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:

The priority topic process started by framing 5 questions for discussion during the priority topic industry series. These questions were:

1. **Ensuring a Sustainable Supply Chain:**
   How can companies best ensure that sustainability principles are respected within their extended supply chain? What are approaches to supporting supplier sustainability?

2. **Anticipating Further Geopolitical Tension:**
   How does the private sector collaborate with the public sector to enable international cooperation and interdependence? What trade links can enable resilience for both imports and exports?

3. **Domestic Self Sufficiency in Material Supply:**
   What does it take to enable South African self-sufficiency? What are the priority materials and lead times for protecting core commodities required by our economy? How can sustainability goals align with strengthening domestic production?

4. **Protection from Cyber Criminals:**
   Supply chains are becoming increasingly vulnerable to infiltration, damage and theft by cybercriminals. What are the innovative new technologies, such as Blockchain that can be shared to protect businesses?

5. **Adapting to Shifts in Global Manufacturing:**
   How can South African businesses benefit from global demand from businesses that are re-evaluating their manufacturing footprint to optimise on cost efficiencies, sustainable and traceable sources of supply?

PRIORITY AVATAR:

In the context of sustainability in South Africa, a resilient global supply chain, akin to the adaptability of migrating whales, is essential for efficiently distributing environmentally conscious products and practices, contributing to a more sustainable future for the nation and the global community.

VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 08: BUILDING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE

Demand for sustainable supply chains will boost resilience.

Promoting awareness of the value of sustainable supply chains is the key to building resilience.
The VNR participants contributed actions to the following delivery pathway: The first and second milestones focus on driving the demand for sustainable supply chains and developing and establishing universal standards for supply chains. A national assessment of trade risks should then be conducted, with focus placed on improving sector-wide dialogue for better import-export visibility. By 2030, the goal is to share resilient and sustainable supply chain technologies to facilitate safer transactions.

THE CHALLENGE:

South Africa is part of a global world with uncertain, volatile markets and regular geopolitical crisis. How do we optimise global relationships and build resilience to disruption? How do we best nurture domestic sources of supply and adapt to global manufacturing trends? What is the business's role in assuring sustainable value chains?

THE AMBITION:

To create demand for responsible, sustainable supply chain practices, including policies, technologies, labour, and process best practices. To advance simple, accessible standards that enable traceability, efficiency and sustainability. To collaborate on diversified, valuable trading relationships and local sources of supply.

2024 - Establishing Foundations:
Initiate comprehensive audits to benchmark current supply chain practices and identify areas for improvement. Establish clear, universally accepted sustainability standards that will guide future enhancements.

2026 - Strengthening Implementation:
Fully implement the sustainability standards developed, focusing on enhancing the resilience of local supply chains and integrating risk management frameworks to address potential disruptions.

2028 - Enhancing Operational Efficiency:
Use insights from earlier audits to optimise supply chain operations, with a strong focus on local sourcing and improving adaptability to geopolitical changes.

2029 - Expanding Technological Integration:
Advance the integration of technology to enhance supply chain transparency and efficiency, especially in tracking and managing sustainable and ethical sourcing practices.

2030 - Achieving Global Competitiveness:
Consolidate the advancements in sustainability, resilience, and technology integration to position South African businesses as leaders in globally competitive, sustainable supply chain practices.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Completion rate of audits across supply chain entities and improvement identified.
- Increase of local supply chains implementing sustainability standards, reduction of disruption incidents as a result.
- Increase in local sourcing and adaptability improvement rates of supply chain in response to geopolitical changes.
- Increase in technology integration measured by percentage of supply chain activities with enhanced transparency and sustainable sourcing tracking.
- Position of South African businesses in global sustainability rankings, indicating leadership in sustainable supply chain practices.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

South African business benefits from resilient and valuable pan-African and global trading relationships. The industry imports and exports easily, and increasingly uses locally produced products and services. Efficient, low-cost, low-carbon, high-integrity supply chains transparently evidence sustainable, ethical and crime-free trading.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The priority SDGs aligned to this delivery pathway.

DELIVERY PATHWAY: BUILDING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE

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VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 08: BUILDING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE

Sustainable practices essential for supply chain resilience.

Socially conscious supply chain management is crucial for long-term sustainability.
Responsible and ethical trading across extended value chains and building resilient global trading partnerships were some of the challenges discussed in this Priority Topic. The ambition is to define and promote universal, accessible and integrated standards for the supply chain that are inclusive of sustainability criteria and to improve access to, inclusion in, and visibility of trading dialogues across sectors, industries and countries.

	ENSURING SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS:	ANTICIPATING FURTHER GEOPOLITICAL TENSION:	ENSURING SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS:	DOMESTIC SUFFICIENCY IN MATERIAL SUPPLY:	ADAPTING TO GLOBAL MANUFACTURING SHIFTS:
THE CHALLENGE: South Africa is part of a global world with uncertain, volatile markets and regular geopolitical crisis. How do we optimise global relationships and build resilience to disruption? How do we best nurture domestic sources of supply and adapt to global manufacturing trends? What is the business's role in assuring sustainable value chains?	How can companies best ensure that sustainability principles are respected within their extended supply chain? What are approaches to supporting supplier sustainability?	How does the private sector collaborate with the public sector to enable international cooperation and interdependence? What trade links can enable resilience for both imports and exports?	How can companies best ensure that sustainability principles are respected within their extended supply chain? What are approaches to supporting supplier sustainability?	What does it take to enable South African self-sufficiency? What are the priority materials and lead times for protecting core commodities required by our economy? How can sustainability goals align with strengthening domestic production?	How can South African business benefit from global demand from businesses that are re-evaluating their manufacturing footprint to optimise on cost efficiencies, sustainable and traceable sources of supply?
THE AMBITION: To create demand for responsible, sustainable supply chain practices, including policies, technologies, labour, and process best practices. To advance simple, accessible standards that enable traceability, efficiency and sustainability. To collaborate on diversified, valuable trading relationships and local sources of supply.	**Ambition 1: Promote Sustainable Value Chains** Promote sustainable value chains through heightened sector-wide awareness, establishing universal standards, and fostering robust supplier relationships for integrated supply chain resilience.	**Ambition 2: Assess National Risks and Opportunities** Conduct and share a national risk and opportunity assessment of current issues and future risks to South African imports and exports. Analyse and share future private and public sector demand. Improve access to, inclusion in, and visibility of trading dialogues across sectors, industries and countries.	**Ambition 3: Mobilise Local Source of Supply** Coordinate the view of source of supply challenges and collaborate across sectors and industries to mobilise local source of supply. Understand current shortages and disruptions alongside forecast source of supply issues to target local production for both local and international supply.	**Ambition 4: Enhance Supply Chain Resilience** Identify and share technologies and processes for supply chain resilience and sustainability. Unify around agreed interfaces that enable easier and safer transactions and reporting between companies. Provide cost-effective access to software and digital innovation expertise.	**Ambition 5: Foster Responsible Manufacturing Practices** Prioritise research, development, and sharing of sustainable, eco-friendly, and responsible manufacturing best practices. Support local and international awareness of emergent opportunities. Promote sustainable investment and collaboration on future-fit, shared value creation.
THE VISION: South African business benefits from resilient and valuable pan-African and global trading relationships. The industry imports and exports easily, and increasingly uses locally produced products and services. Efficient, low-cost, low-carbon, high-integrity supply chains transparently evidence sustainable, ethical and crime-free trading.	Adopt and champion supply chain management that reflects social consciousness and ethical engagement. South African businesses should lead in low-carbon, eco-friendly practices, demonstrating verifiable sustainable development and strict adherence to human and labour rights for a traceably ethical business landscape.	Public-private partnerships must cultivate varied and robust global trade links across Africa and beyond. Strategic risk management is imperative to bolster supply chain continuity and resilience against new disruptions.	The private sector should clearly articulate demand, spurring growth in local South African supply and production sectors. Support and scale emergent local suppliers within supply chains to enhance cost-effective, sustainable offerings.	Enhance supply chain management through applications boosting logistical and eco-efficiency. Ensure transactions align with standards, automate financial auditing, simplify sustainability criteria, and fortify against cybercrime and corruption to maintain integrity.	The South African private sector leads socially conscious manufacturing trends, displaying modern and innovative methods of production that are respected and sought after internationally. Strongly supported research and development flourishes both locally and collaboratively on international platforms.

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PRIORITY TOPIC 9

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

How do we accelerate equity and diversity?

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EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

How do we accelerate equity and diversity?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Absa
Afrikaburn
Alexforbes
Allied Valve Specialist
Anglo American
EOH
Eskom
Exxaro
Fire Storm Business Consulting
Growthpoint Properties
Hodisang Community Development
Hollard
Investec
Makwande Group
Minerals Council South Africa
National Business Institute
Nedbank
Northam Platinum
Orion Minerals
Sanlam
Sasol
Sibanye Stillwater
South African Sugar Association
Umgeni-Uthukela Water
Xperien

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

The pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment remains a pivotal challenge in South Africa and globally. Strategic and systemic change is imperative, leveraging effective advocacy and proven strategies to advance social wellbeing. Such equality is crucial not only as a human right, but also as a cornerstone of economic vitality.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:

The priority topic process started by framing 5 questions for discussion during the priority topic industry series. These questions were:

1. **Equal Pay and Workplace Gender Equity:**
   How have leading companies managed to transition to equal pay for equal work? How have disparities in hiring, promotions and leadership positions been successfully addressed? How have businesses tackled unconscious biases to enable career progression for women?

2. **Gender-Based Violence and Harassment:**
   How have companies succeeded in landing zero-tolerance for gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace? What are the incident reporting and support approaches that both address and prevent issues, enabling a culture that is safe and respectful?

3. **Work-Life Balance and Flexible Work:**
   What are the benchmark policies and practices that support work-life balance for women, such as flexible work hours, remote work options and family-friendly policies? What are the tactics that companies have used to create an inclusive and supportive work environment that recognises the needs of women employees?

4. **Access to Education, Skills and Wellbeing:**
   How can education and skills development for women be promoted alongside policies and initiatives to address women specific needs such as reproductive health and maternity at different life stages?

5. **Gender Equality Across the Value Chain:**
   How do businesses ensure gender equality and empowerment throughout the supply chain, encouraging diversity friendly procurement practices?

PRIORITY AVATAR:

In the pursuit of sustainability in South Africa, empowering women to achieve gender equality, much like the wise and powerful elephant, who stands as the ultimate matriarch and leader in the animal kingdom, is crucial, as diversity in our ranks not only elevates our creativity, but also enhances our collective empowerment and performance, ensuring a more equitable and prosperous future for the nation.

VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 09: EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

Fostering transparency is key to achieving gender equality.

Open reporting, shared information, and transparent remuneration practices are needed.
The VNR participants contributed actions to the following delivery pathway: The first step in this process is to encourage transparency in inclusivity and equitable HR processes through reporting and information exchange among organisations. The next step is to promote understanding of the repercussions of violence, harassment, bias and inequity to encourage a cultural shift towards valuing and embracing diversity. By 2029, a remuneration transparency programme will aim to ensure equitable pay.

THE CHALLENGE:

How have companies transitioned to equal pay for equal work? What work practices have successfully addressed harassment and violence? Which initiatives, skills, and wellbeing programmes have enabled cultures that appreciate diversity? What is the private sector's role in addressing gender equality across supply chains and sectors?

THE AMBITION:

To promote transparency of diversity and equity through reporting and information sharing. To drive awareness of the negative impacts of violence, harassment, bias and inequity to shift values and build appreciation for diversity and equity. To enable and scale effective public, private and NGO initiatives.

2024 Establish Transparency:
Implement open salary data and anti-discrimination policies to ensure equitable pay and opportunities, regardless of gender.

2026 Expand Education and Skills:
Create and support educational programmes aimed at developing gender-specific skills, enhancing leadership roles within organisations for women.

2028 Enhance Work-Life Integration:
Introduce and institutionalise flexible work arrangements to support a balance between professional duties and personal responsibilities for all genders.

2029 Strengthen Support Networks:
Form mentorship programmes and support groups that provide career guidance and help navigate professional growth paths for women.

2030 Institutionalise Gender Equality:
Solidify gender equality in corporate governance structures, ensuring the sustainability and legacy of equality achievements across the board.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Increase in % of women enrolled in gender-specific skills development and leadership programmes within organisations by X% annually.
- Achieve a target X% of all employees utilising flexible work arrangements with an emphasis on equitable usage across genders.
- Establish X number of new mentorship and support programmes specifically for women with a yearly increase in participant satisfaction scores by Y%.
- X% of senior management and board positions are held by women in all major organisations with policies reviewed and adjusted annually to improve this ratio.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

South Africa values and demonstrates gender equality. Equitable pay is the norm, gender bias is gone, and women are safe and well-represented across sectors and vocations. Parents easily balance work and family responsibilities. Health, wellbeing and diversity support are freely accessible to both businesses and individuals.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The priority SDGs aligned to this delivery pathway.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

DELIVERY PATHWAY: EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

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VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 09: EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

Fostering transparency is key to achieving gender equality.

Pay equity and combatting harassment are essential to achieve gender equality.
Equal pay for equal work, disparity in recruitment and promotion practices, as well as stopping workplace sexual harassment were some of the challenges discussed in this Priority Topic. It will take a united effort to achieve the vision of a business world where women are equitably remunerated, and diverse leadership is enabling exceptional performance. Achieving gender equality across organisations includes setting up workplace practices to cater for family and parental responsibilities.

	EQUAL PAY AND GENDER EQUITY AT WORK:	STOPPING HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE:	WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND FLEXIBLE WORK:	ACCESS TO EDUCATION, SKILLS AND WELLBEING:	GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS ORGANISATIONS:
THE CHALLENGE: How have companies transitioned to equal pay for equal work? What work practices have successfully addressed harassment and violence? Which initiatives, skills, and wellbeing programmes have enabled cultures that appreciate diversity? What is the private sector's role in addressing gender equality across supply chains and sectors?	How have leading companies managed to transition to equal pay for equal work? How have disparities in hiring, promotions, and leadership positions been successfully addressed? How have businesses tackled unconscious biases to enable career progression for women?	How have companies succeeded in landing zero-tolerance for gender-based violence and sexual harassment? What are the incident reporting and support approaches that both address and prevent issues, enabling a culture that is safe and respectful?	What are the benchmark policies and practices that support work-life balance for women, such as flexible work hours, remote work options, and family-friendly policies? What tactics have companies used to create inclusive and supportive work environments that recognise the needs of women employees?	How can education and skills development for women be promoted alongside policies and initiatives to address women specific needs such as reproductive health and maternity at different life stages? What do women need to embrace an empowered and equitable identity?	How do businesses ensure gender equality and empowerment throughout company supply chains and sectors, including civil society? How do we enable diversity friendly procurement practices? How do we share cultural values that prize diversity and representation?
THE AMBITION: To promote transparency of diversity and equity through reporting and information sharing. To drive awareness of the negative impacts of violence, harassment, bias and inequity to shift values and build appreciation for diversity and equity. To enable and scale effective public, private and NGO initiatives.	**Ambition 1: Promote Remuneration Transparency** Foster pay transparency and endorse equitable Human Resource processes which provide incentives for businesses that demonstrate gender equity and exceptional gender representation.	**Ambition 2: Combat Gender Bias and Harassment** Instill a comprehensive understanding of gender bias; expand accessibility to educational programmes; fostered to peaceful and diverse work culture which strengthen support systems for those impacted by harassment and violence.	**Ambition 3: Implement Flexible Work Practices** Advocate for flexible, family-friendly policies and cross-sector collaboration, offering robust support to working parents, thereby enriching performance and cultivating inclusive, nurturing work environments that benefit all stakeholders.	**Ambition 4: Enhance Diversity and Wellbeing Programmes** Improve the availability of and access to diversity, health, and wellbeing programmes. Reinforce high-performing NGOs for sustainable funding and scalability. Increase collaboration with communities by offering highly effective programmes.	**Ambition 5: Advancing Equity and Diversity in Business** Promote business equity and diversity by disseminating success metrics and narratives of diverse organisations outperforming the norm. Simplify equity and diversity reporting and actively involve stakeholders in understanding the significance and benefits of diverse and equitable business practices.
THE VISION: South Africa values and demonstrates gender equality. Equitable pay is the norm, gender bias is gone, and women are safe and well-represented across sectors and vocations. Parents easily balance work and family responsibilities. Health, wellbeing and diversity support are freely accessible to both businesses and individuals.	Women are demonstrably and equitably remunerated. South African business has diverse representation of both genders across sectors, industries and differing points of organisational seniority. Roles, professions and vocations attract genders equitably. Diverse leadership is enabling performance edge in business and beyond.	Public and private sector workplaces, organisations and communities are free of gender-based violence and harassment. Women are safe at work and able to move and operate freely in public spaces. Gender equity is a culturally accepted norm, supported by a society wide appreciation of diversity.	Workplace practices are set up to enable family and parental responsibilities and duties from maternity through the full childcare lifecycle. Women and men are supported by flexible work and working environments that enable work life balance and the ability to play strong value creation roles both at work and at home.	Corporate and governmental human resource strategies are skillfully crafted to foster skills development, diversity, and well-being, ensuring easy access for businesses. Offerings from the public sector and NGOs are streamlined and efficacious, meeting the health, reproductive, diversity and well-being imperatives of individuals and enterprises.	South African enterprises favour suppliers and partners who exemplify diversity and equity, underpinned by a culture valuing these principles. Such partnerships are empirically shown to enhance productivity, motivation, prosperity and sustainability in business operations.

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PRIORITY TOPIC 10

LEVERAGING SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS

How do we leverage new and existing frameworks?

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LEVERAGING SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS

How do we leverage new and existing frameworks?

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

Absa
Allied Valve Specialists
Bidvest
Bushveld Minerals
Cipla
Clicks Group
DBK Advisory
Green Building South Africa
IHS
In-Bev
Makwande Group
National Business Institute
Nedbank
Northam Platinum
Old Mutual
OneWorld Sustainable Investments
Pick n Pay
Redefine Properties
Samancor Chrome
Sanlam
Sasol
Sustainability Institute
Trialogue
Umgeni-Uthukela Water
Vodacom
Xperien
Young African Entrepreneurs Institute

THE STARTING POINT:

THE CHALLENGE:

To define the private sector's advancements and roles in establishing equal pay, eradicating workplace harassment, and fostering diverse cultures, while ensuring gender equality throughout supply chains.

UPFRONT FRAMING QUESTIONS:
Our synopsis cites the following sustainability reporting regulatory standards and frameworks that will be investigated, along with other frameworks that may arise, for their domain of focus, regional application, similarities, differences, and for alignment with each other:

- The Ten Principles – UN Global Compact
- SDGs – UN Sustainable Development Goals
- UNCTAD – Investment Policy Framework
- SEE – The JSE Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative
- JSE – Climate Disclosures
- JSE – Sustainability Disclosures
- King IV – Responsibilities of Governing Bodies
- GRI – Global Reporting Initiative
- SASB – Sustainability Accounting Standards Board
- CDP – Carbon Disclosure Project
- ISO 26000 – Social Responsibility Guidance Standard
- PRI – Principles of Responsible Investment
- ISSB – International Sustainability Standards
- IFRS – International Finance Regulatory Standards
- ESRS – European Sustainability Reporting Standards
- EP – The Equator Principles
- CDSP – The Climate Disclosure Standards Board
- TCFD – Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures

PRIORITY AVATAR:

In the realm of South African sustainability, embracing and understanding sustainability frameworks is akin to the towering giraffe, whose long neck enables it to see across great distances; similarly, by adopting these frameworks, we gain the vantage point needed to provide transparent insights that guide progress and delivery on the sustainability agenda, showcasing our achievements, nurturing our reputation, and collectively steering towards a more sustainable and prosperous future.

VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 10: LEVERAGING SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS

Collaboration is needed for global goal alignment success.

Stakeholders agree on a process to leverage sustainability frameworks effectively.
The VNR participants contributed actions to the following delivery pathway: Initially, businesses align strategies with global goals through integrated frameworks, streamlining reporting for universal accessibility. Focus intensifies on SDG integration through awareness campaigns and collaboration. By 2029, technology will enhance reporting accuracy via AI, automation and technology standards. By 2030, there are future-ready frameworks that emphasise holistic KPI development.

THE CHALLENGE:

How can companies align ESG data and reporting requirements with core business strategy to meet compliance standards and drive positive impact to address environmental and social concerns? Which frameworks balance short- and long-term profitability and sustainability best, including embedding them into operations?

THE AMBITION:

To take action to enable a broad-based understanding of the growing importance of quality sustainability reporting. To enable the simplification and adoption of consistent reporting that is aligned with a well-defined, unified strategy. To share and pool expertise and capabilities to ensure that companies are not left behind.

2024 Framework Alignment and Adoption:
Incorporate SDG's into national sustainability agenda with clear benchmarks and motivate all sectors through awareness campaigns to adopt these frameworks, ensuring alignment of goals and reporting practices across different sectors.

2026 Streamlined Reporting Processes:
Facilitate sharing of sustainability models and reporting frameworks, standardise reporting procedures, and offer incentives for companies to adopt these practices, making sustainability reporting more streamlined and universally accessible.

2028 SDG Integration and Awareness:
Integrate and elevate SDG related KPI's with corporate performance platforms broadening SDG awareness and encouraging unified action through comparative performance assessments that inspire engagement and collaboration towards common sustainability targets.

2029 Technology-Enabled Reporting:
Define and implement technology and KPI standards that support system integration and verification, ensuring that sustainability reporting is both technologically advanced and user friendly, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

2030 Future-Ready Frameworks:
Analyse and align different sustainability frameworks to sector specific KPI's and communicate forward looking reporting requirements. Provide ongoing support for collaborative reporting to ensure that organisations are well-equipped to meet future sustainability challenges and opportunities.

Potential Success KPIs:

- Percentage of businesses and public sector entities that have integrated the national sustainability agenda and SDG benchmarks into their strategic plans.
- Reduction in the time spent on sustainability reporting by entities after adopting the streamlined processes, compared to the baseline year 2024.
- Number of collaborative projects initiated because of shared SDG related KPI's across platforms, demonstrating increased cross sector engagement.
- The proportion of companies using the established technological platforms for sustainability reporting, indicating the effectiveness of the tech enabled infrastructure.
- The level of alignment across different sectors frameworks measured to standards.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VISION:

South African sustainability performance is well understood across sectors and industries. Stakeholders are motivated by visible, shared KPI performance against well-communicated goals and targets. Reporting is accessible, cost-effective, simple and highly automated. Stakeholders easily find the information they need to inform action.

PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

The priority SDGs aligned to this delivery pathway.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

DELIVERY PATHWAY: LEVERAGING SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS

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VNR 2024 PRIORITY TOPIC 10: LEVERAGING SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS

SDGs guide path to 2030 Agenda.

Companies express a need for stronger frameworks and policies to encourage sustainable investment.
They want mechanisms that can effectively mitigate risks deterring investors, such as regulatory instability or environmental challenges, to enhance the attractiveness of investing in South Africa. Companies also seek to boost their reputational and brand value, to not only attract, but also retain socially conscious investors and partners.

	HOW TO LEVERAGE THE SDGs EFFECTIVELY:	HOW DO WE IMPROVE REPORTING ADOPTION:	HOW TO ALIGN AND UNIFY ON TARGETS AND GOALS:	HOW CAN TECHNOLOGY ENABLE REPORTING:	FUTURE EVOLUTION AND FRAMEWORK TRENDS:
THE CHALLENGE: How have companies transitioned to equal pay for equal work? What work practices have successfully addressed harassment and violence? Which initiatives, skills, and wellbeing programmes have enabled cultures that appreciate diversity? What is the private sector's role in addressing gender equality across supply chains and sectors?	Can the SDGs be adopted more widely, as a 'North Star' that can offer unified leadership and brand value at company, industry, sector and national levels? How do we use this global sustainability framework to best effect in efforts to collaborate, prioritise and motivate for collective action on sustainability?	How do we make reporting simpler and less time consuming for companies of all sizes and budgets? How can we best share sustainability reporting expertise, reducing duplication of effort to increase access to and inclusion in the sustainability agenda? How can we mitigate costs of reporting and incentivise adoption?	How can companies balance the need for compliance to regulatory or industry frameworks with internal ambition and address local environmental and social challenges? How can we best advocate for best standards, benchmarks, targets, and disclosures to policies that are best for South African sustainability priorities?	How do we best represent one version of the truth across differing reporting frameworks? How can we automate fast and accurate individual company reports, integrating to collective KPIs and targets to create an improved view of goal attainment and progress for collective plans across sectors, supply chains and industries?	Which existing and emergent frameworks offer best transparency? Which frameworks can unlock collaborative synergies? How can frameworks be enabled by digital platforms to enable 'friction free', reporting that offers confidence in data. What should be anticipating, and how can we align to optimise the impact of KPIs?
THE AMBITION: To promote transparency of diversity and equity through reporting and information sharing. To drive awareness of the negative impacts of violence, harassment, bias and inequity to shift values and build appreciation for diversity and equity. To enable and scale effective public, private and NGO initiatives.	**Ambition 1: Align SDGs with Unified Sustainability Agenda** Align the SDGs to a unified South African sustainability agenda for holistic priorities. Increase SDG awareness by setting clear benchmarks and targets. Engage community, civil society, and public sector stakeholders for visible motivation toward goals.	**Ambition 2: Share Sustainability Models and Reporting Frameworks** Share sustainability models, reporting frameworks, and expertise. Pool reporting capabilities to provide access to resources across companies. Actively enable consistent and practical reporting approaches. Provide incentives and support for reporting adoption.	**Ambition 3: Adopt Integrated Performance KPI Platforms** Adopt platforms that integrate performance KPIs. Communicate progress on unified targets with quantitative results and success stories. Define sustainability landscape to understand collective goals. Enable comparative reporting on initiative performance.	**Ambition 4: Define Technology and KPI Reporting Standards** Define technology and KPI reporting standards for consistent use. Enable verification and system integrations. Encourage accessible, open-source and uniform standards. Facilitate integration between digital platforms for trusted results.	**Ambition 5: Analyse and Share Framework Alignment** Analyse and share alignment of different frameworks on key KPIs. Create holistic suites of KPIs aligned to sector strategies. Communicate future reporting requirements, incentives and penalties. Provide support for collaborative reporting adoption.
THE VISION: South Africa values and demonstrates gender equality. Equitable pay is the norm, gender bias is gone, and women are safe and well-represented across sectors and vocations. Parents easily balance work and family responsibilities. Health, wellbeing and diversity support are freely accessible to both businesses and individuals.	The SDGs are a 'North Star', giving a lens that aligns the private sector with the NDP 2030. The Global Goals have been used to ensure a prioritised and integrated approach to South African and Pan-African sustainability. Organisations across sectors are targeting the 2030 Agenda together, using the SDGs to unify on action.	Companies share reporting capabilities and best practices. Standards are simple and easy to align on, calibrated for industry, sector and company size. Simple accreditations are available for sustainability performance. Transparent reporting on sustainability has become normal and is simple, cost effective and practical to undertake.	Individual company and organisation KPIs point to collective goals and clear universal frameworks. Performance on targets seamlessly integrates a view of progress on shared sustainability goals. Results drive policy refinement. Initiatives that are landing impact can be seen, motivating for high levels of participation on action.	Digital platforms, AI and automation help companies to share and integrate information into internal scorecards that inform operations. Consistent sustainability data is also shared and trusted real time between organisations. Visibility has driven a next generation culture of collaboration and support on performance against goals.	New and emerging frameworks have been widely adopted. South African companies acted early and systematically track sustainability progress, winning on incentives and avoiding penalties. Results can be seen across multiple framework lenses easily. KPI results and data are trusted by stakeholders, who take performance seriously.

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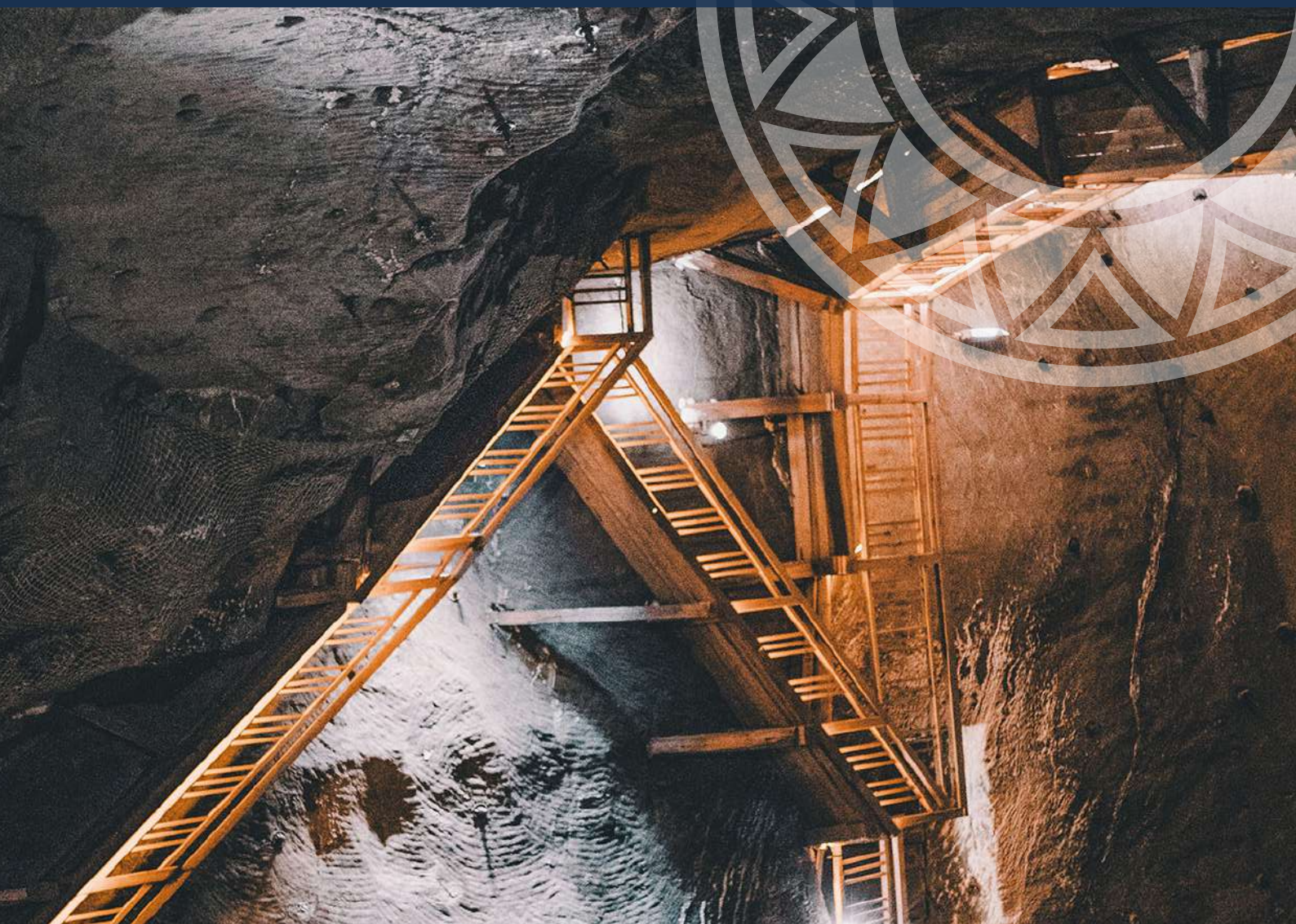
Industries



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INDUSTRY SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

This section contains the South African industry sector playback on progress to deliver the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Each industry sector surfaces highlight points relating to progress and challenges and a timeline of events leading toward the current sustainability landscape.

Questions we investigated included:

- How has the industry performed against the SDGs?
- What are the primary sustainability risks and challenges?
- What are the emerging innovations and opportunities?
- What are the industry best practices and benchmarks?
- What are the opportunities for value across sectors?
- What public sector support, enablers or policies are needed?
- What partnerships and initiatives are needed for progress?
- How can the SDGs provide a framework for success?

The South African private sector demonstrates a proactive and evolving stance towards sustainable development, underscored by innovation, inclusivity, and resilience.

In the following chapter, progress within the private sector is reported industry by industry. Despite challenges, this progress is characterised by the integration of sustainable energy practices, the embrace of economic empowerment, and the championing of technological innovation.

Introduction:

Through the Voluntary National Review process, we investigated 6 industries for detailed insights into sustainability trends, challenges and opportunities.

In the Industry Insights Round Table Series, we brought together companies, trade associations and industry subject matter experts to evaluate progress, challenges and opportunities arising within key South African industries:

Participating companies provided keynote speakers who offered industry insight sessions and shared sustainability frameworks. Other participating companies submitted case studies and completed the broad-based survey to give insights. Companies also prioritised the SDGs.

1. **Performance Against the SDGs:** The private sector has seen varied progress against the SDGs. Some sectors, such as renewable energy, have made significant strides, particularly in SDG 7, while others, like manufacturing, face ongoing challenges in meeting SDG 12.

2. **Primary Sustainability Risks and Challenges:** Key risks include energy insecurity, regulatory compliance, water scarcity, and social inequality. Challenges mainly involve embedding sustainability into business models and adapting to fast-evolving environmental regulations.

3. **Emerging Innovations and Opportunities:** Innovation is thriving in areas like sustainable agriculture, low-carbon technology, and Social Enterprises. Opportunities are emerging in circular economy practices, waste-to-energy projects, and sustainable supply chain management.

4. **Industry Best Practices and Benchmarks:** Best practices involve transparent reporting, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable resource management. Benchmarks are often set by leading companies in sustainability indices and reflect adherence to international standards and protocols.

5. **Opportunities for Value Across Sectors:** Cross-sector collaboration offers value, particularly in sustainable water and waste management as well as Agri-tech and green construction.

6. **Public Sector Support, Enablers or Policies Needed:** This should include tax incentives for green investments, renewable energy subsidies, and legislation supporting CSI. Educational and training policies in sustainability are vital.

7. **Partnerships and Initiatives Needed for Progress:** Strategic partnerships between private and public sectors, academia, and civil society can catalyse progress. Initiatives could include joint ventures in R&D for sustainability, community engagement projects, and public awareness campaigns.

8. **How the SDGs Provide a Framework for Success:** The SDGs offer a comprehensive framework for aligning business goals with global sustainability objectives. By adopting this framework, companies can address systemic issues, create sustainable value, and report on progress in a structured manner.

Key Industry Themes Arising: Company progress showcases innovation, inclusion and resilience.

The common themes arising across the South African industry highlight reports included:

1. **Sustainable Practices and Energy Efficiency:** Sustainable practices, particularly the push towards renewable energy, are a significant theme. With loadshedding impacting sectors such as Agriculture and Manufacturing, there is a concerted effort to transition towards energy efficiency and renewable options, echoing global movements towards sustainability and climate change mitigation.

2. **Economic Empowerment and Inclusion:** Economic empowerment, particularly of disadvantaged groups like women in Agriculture and the youth in Real Estate, is a common focus. This includes efforts towards financial inclusion in the Financial Services sector, illustrating a commitment to broadening economic participation and reducing inequalities.

3. **Innovation and Technological Advancement:** Technological advancement is a recurring theme, with sectors such as Telecommunication and Manufacturing looking to leverage digital solutions to improve efficiency, production and service delivery. In the Financial sector, FinTech solutions are improving access to banking, illustrating the sector's agility in adopting new technologies.

4. **Labour Dynamics and Skills Development:** Automation and the subsequent shift in labour requirements are highlighted across several sectors. The transition to more automated and efficient systems is creating new skill gaps, necessitating a focus on training and upskilling, especially in Manufacturing and Mining.

5. **Environmental Stewardship:** The imperative of environmental protection is prominent, with efforts to promote responsible consumption and production in Agriculture and reduce emissions in Electricity and Water sectors. This is in line with SDG targets and reflects a global trend of integrating environmental concerns into business models.

6. **Circular Economy and Waste Management:** Circular economy principles and effective waste management are being adopted, although progress is noted to be slow in sectors like Manufacturing. The drive to minimise waste, as seen in Agriculture with initiatives like Bokashi Bran, highlights a growing awareness of resource efficiency and lifecycle management.

7. **Supply Chain Resilience and Localisation:** The localisation of supply chains is a focus in sectors impacted by global supply chain disruptions, such as Manufacturing and Agriculture. There is an emphasis on building domestic resilience and reducing reliance on international markets, also reflecting a response to global trade tensions and pandemic-related disruptions.

8. **Social and Community Investment:** Investment in community wellbeing and social impact initiatives is significant in sectors like Pharma and Real Estate. Corporate Social Investment (CSI) and adherence to Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) showcase a commitment to social upliftment and addressing historical inequalities.

9. **Regulatory Compliance and Governance:** Complex regulations and the need for transparent compliance and governance are noted across sectors. This is particularly true in Financial Services, where ethical conduct and corporate governance are under scrutiny, and in Manufacturing, where there is a need for clearer standards to prevent 'greenwashing'.

10. **Health and Wellbeing:** The focus on health and wellbeing, particularly evident in the Pharma sector, also finds resonance in the commitments of other sectors to support health initiatives and ensure the safety of workers, as highlighted in the Mining sector's investment in worker health.

Universal theme 1: Gender Equality

Gender equality was a critical theme across industry sectors, with a specific emphasis on enhancing opportunities for women and promoting equal participation in the workforce. Initiatives to bolster gender equality are particularly prevalent in sectors like Agriculture and Financial Services, where there is a concerted effort to incorporate women into all levels of operation and leadership. This reflects a broader commitment to SDG 5 (Gender Equality), demonstrating a nationwide drive towards creating inclusive workplaces that not only champion gender diversity, but also leverage it as a catalyst for innovation and growth.

Universal theme 2: Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment was also addressed across all sectors with targeted strategies to integrate young people into the workforce, thereby providing them with opportunities for employment and career development. Sectors such as Manufacturing and Telecommunications are focusing on equipping the youth with relevant skills through training and development programmes, reflecting a commitment to reducing youth unemployment rates. This approach is in line with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and underscores the importance of nurturing a skilled youth workforce ready to meet the evolving demands of South Africa's industrial and technological landscape.

Companies consistently called for renewable energy, streamlined regulations, skills enhancement and stronger local supply.

The common recommendations arising across the South African industry highlight reports included:

1. **Investment in Renewable Energy and Infrastructure:** Encourage public and private sectors to invest in robust, sustainable energy solutions to mitigate the effects of loadshedding and energy unreliability.

2. **Simplification of Regulatory Frameworks:** Streamline regulatory processes to make compliance more straightforward and less costly. This should reduce the cost and complexity of compliance and transparent sustainability reporting.

3. **Development of Skills Training Programs:** Collaborate with educational institutions and private companies to develop training programmes that are directly aligned with the needs of industries. Focus on digital literacy, technical skills and green jobs training.

4. **Recognition of Environmental Sustainability:** Implement stricter environmental regulations and support industries in adopting sustainable practices. These should include tax breaks and incentives for companies reducing waste, utilising sustainable materials, and achieving lower emission targets.

5. **Strengthened Local Supply Chains:** Develop policies that encourage the localisation of supply chains, reducing the reliance on international sources. Support local businesses through subsidies, grants, or partnerships that help them scale.

6. **Enhanced Labour Market Flexibility:** Create policies that encourage workforce flexibility and mobility, including support for transitional employment and re-skilling for workers affected by automation.

7. **Expanded Digital Infrastructure:** Invest in expanding digital infrastructure to ensure that all areas, particularly rural and underserved communities, have access to reliable internet.

8. **Foster Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Encourage PPPs that focus on sustainability projects. These partnerships can leverage the strengths of both sectors to achieve more significant impacts in sustainability and enable access to sustainable finance.

9. **Simplified Sustainability Reporting Frameworks:** Establish clear metrics and regular reporting mechanisms to track the progress of industries towards sustainability goals.

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The Industry Analysis Approach

Participating companies registered for the private sector Voluntary National Review and completed a participant 'Contribution Workbook.' This workbook was used to baseline industry information. It was then reviewed in a series of interactive industry sector round tables. The report content was subsequently reviewed and re-rated in a further series of industry consultation workshops.

Guide to how industry perspectives and insights were captured:

Industry information was gathered and analysed as follows:

CONTRIBUTION WORKBOOKS:
Contribution workbooks confirmed prioritisation information and gathered industry insights that were used to baseline the content for the industry round table series.

INDUSTRY PROFILING:
The industry profile was baselined to confirm and adapt the industry segmentation to ensure representation of all participating companies. The round table then reviewed and rated emergent prosperity and sustainability challenges.

HIGHLIGHTS AND TIMELINE:
Participating companies reviewed and further contributed to the industry timelines and gave insights to inform progress against the SDGs including achievement and challenges to delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

INDUSTRY RISK ANALYSIS:
Risks and challenges identified by participating companies were rated during the round table series and then integrated into the top ten risks to the private sector, featuring in the 'Challenges' section of this report.

INDUSTRY FUTUROLOGY:
During the industry round tables, the participating companies contributed to the future trends that are expected to drive transformational change by 2030, identifying implications for South Africa.

INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES:
During the industry round tables, the opportunities identified in participating Company Contribution Workbooks were reviewed, rated and discussed to frame key industry opportunities.

SDG PRIORITISATION:
Participating company SDG prioritisations were completed in the registration form were validated by companies and consolidated to create an industry level and private sector prioritisation.

Where to find further information about the private sector VNR methodology:

Note: Further detailed information relating industry and company participation is available in the **Industry Segmentation and Participation Summary** section and in the **Methodology** chapter of this report. The Methodology chapter also details how the participating Company Contribution Workbooks were structured to gather information.

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Industry Focus:

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

1st Priority 2nd Priority 3rd Priority

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail have advanced toward sustainability despite challenges

With 17.3% of South Africans affected by food insecurity prior to the pandemic, the need for the food industry to prioritise sustainability is evident. Despite challenges in labour equity, supply chain complexities and environmental issues, the industry is making headway towards a more sustainable and resilient food system, poised to benefit both society and the environment.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Consumer sustainability adoption is hindered by the poverty gap
2. Agriculture is still struggling with labour equity challenges
3. $3.2bn of agricultural imports through a challenged global supply chain
4. Loadshedding is propelling the food value chain toward renewable energy options
5. Companies are progressing water resource management despite challenges
6. Companies are tackling the sustainable packaging challenge
7. 10 million tonnes of food wasted annually in SA
8. Progress on protecting biodiversity and reducing agricultural pollution
9. Support is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate impact
10. The pandemic 'reset' has highlighted eco-tourism's role in biodiversity conservation

Consumer sustainability adoption is hindered by the poverty gap:
In South Africa, amidst economic challenges and widespread food affordability issues, the food industry's move towards sustainability stands out. Efforts to educate consumers about sustainable diets are key, with entities like NUDE Foods at the forefront of advocating for zero-waste shopping and ethical production. Despite a few companies dominating retail and the difficulty in changing entrenched consumer habits, initiatives like Pick n Pay's collaboration with Farmer Angus underscore progress in ethical sourcing and sustainable supply chains. The struggle to close the knowledge gap on sustainable choices, highlighting the need for extensive educational campaigns and collaborations, fosters eco-friendly consumer preferences. Innovative, sustainable food sources like Ensekta's cricket farming offer a promising start.

Agriculture is still struggling with labour equity challenges:
The pandemic underscored the need for equitable labour practices in agriculture, heavily reliant on seasonal and informal labour, compromising fair wages and safe conditions amidst increasing automation use. Statistics South Africa's Q2 2020 Labour Force Survey spotlighted a jump in unemployment from 23.3% to 30.8% in Q3, illustrating the pandemic's significant impact and workers' vulnerability, especially in informal setups. Furthermore, despite the National Minimum Wage Act of 2019 setting the minimum wage at R20 per hour, agriculture has seen struggles in implementation, largely due to informal work structures.

$3.2bn of agricultural imports through a challenged global supply chain: With $3.2 billion in consumer-oriented agricultural product imports in 2022, as reported by the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa, and five companies commanding 80% of the food market, South Africa confronts substantial sustainability hurdles in its food sector. Dependence on imports magnifies our carbon footprint due to long-distance transport, missing the opportunity to enhance local food production. Fortifying local production and supply chains is crucial for developing food systems that are both ecologically sustainable and supportive of national economic and food security needs.

Loadshedding is propelling the food value chain toward renewable energy options. The food industry is sharpening its focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption to counteract the adverse effects of loadshedding and elevated energy costs. This strategic pivot is vital for reducing the sector's carbon footprint. Alternative energy sources have become a necessity, as operational disruptions and increased energy costs have significantly challenged companies and employees. Companies are swiftly transitioning to more sustainable energy practices to ensure basic operational and service continuity.

Companies are progressing water resource management despite challenges: Participating companies report an urgent shift towards water-efficient practices, driven by rising costs and the necessity for a clean, sustainable water supply. Energy interruptions complicate clean water access, adding complexity to integrating these practices while upholding food safety and quality. Though innovative water-saving technologies, particularly advanced irrigation for agriculture, are accessible, progress is constrained by high costs and a lack of expertise. In food processing and manufacturing, progress in responsible water use has been enabled by digital monitoring and robust water recycling systems.

Companies are tackling the sustainable packaging challenge: Participating retail and supermarket companies report strides in promoting eco-friendly packaging within their supply chains. However, they face hurdles in transitioning to sustainable packaging due to economic pressures, change costs and consumer convenience demands. The incorporation of biodegradable or reusable materials is impeded by limited local supply sources. Several companies have initiated strategic partnerships to accelerate packaging innovation, aiming to ensure that packaging solutions align with sustainability and regulatory standards as well as customer expectations.

10 million tonnes of food wasted annually in SA: StatsSA reports that up to one-third of annual food production is wasted, including 1.3 billion tonnes of edible food. Amidst growing hunger concerns, this underscores the vital importance of food waste management. These statistics highlight the pressing need for supporting waste management initiatives, including enabling entities like Bokashi Bran, mentioned in this report, to expand.

Progress on protecting biodiversity and reducing agricultural pollution: Participating companies recognise the importance of sustainable pesticide and fertiliser use in protecting soil health and minimising environmental impacts. Despite advancements in developing comprehensive Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems, high implementation costs remain a barrier. Farms face obstacles such as scarce access to guidance and research, a lack of affordable local suppliers, dependency on imports and inflating prices.

Support is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and act to address climate impact: Companies reported an urgent need for support reducing greenhouse gas emissions and acting to mitigate climate impact, seeking financing, expertise and infrastructural support. The entire value chain, from farm to fork, seeks enhanced policies, increased collaboration, and investment in sustainable technologies to effectively reduce climate impact.

The pandemic 'reset' has highlighted eco-tourism's role in biodiversity conservation: Companies are merging conservation, agriculture and tourism into eco-tourism initiatives that serve sustainability goals for both people and the planet. This strategy integrates biodiversity preservation through sustainable tourism with symbiotic opportunities for job creation and economic growth.

Tackling food loss and waste to deliver food security relies on the joint effort of various stakeholders.

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Industry Timeline

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

Sustained, determined steps forward, through increasing impact and challenge. Over 25 years, South Africa's agriculture has transformed, addressing inequalities and embracing sustainability. Developments include regenerative practices, precision agriculture and e-commerce. However, challenges like rising livestock diseases, notably avian influenza, test resilience. Efforts towards food security and equitable participation in the food value chain continue.

1994 Onwards: Post-apartheid era initiates major policy shifts to transform agricultural and food distribution systems, addressing historical inequalities, alongside the broader recognition and adoption of regenerative agriculture and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) promoting black ownership in the food value chain.

2001: The implementation of Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development boosts cooperatives and transfers land to previously disadvantaged individuals, marking a pivotal shift in land ownership and agricultural development.

2010 Onwards: The rise of e-commerce in food retail, exemplified by platforms like Mr. Delivery, begins reshaping the food retail landscape, signalling a shift towards digital consumer engagement.

2012 – 2013: The National Development Plan (NDP) catalyses sustainability and food security enhancements, closely followed by the Integrated Growth and Development Plan (IGDP) launched by the Department of Agriculture, focusing on food security, job creation, and sustainable natural resource management.

2014 – 2016: Adoption of precision agriculture technologies sees an uptick among farmers for improved yield and sustainability, complemented by the government's launch of the Agri-Parks initiative to support smallholder farmers with essential infrastructure and market access.

2017 – 2018: The Cape Town Water Crisis emphasises the urgent need for water efficiency and conservation strategies across the food value chain, from agriculture to retail, highlighting the critical balance between resource management and sustainability.

2018 – 2019: Growth in the farm-to-table movement strengthens local food systems, while 2019 sees the introduction of regulations for organic farming and a pre-pandemic report indicating severe food insecurity affecting 17.3% of the South African population.

2020 – 2021: The Covid-19 pandemic dramatically impacts food value chain operations, accelerating the shift towards local and sustainable consumer values and driving the rapid expansion of online grocery and food delivery services as companies and consumers adapt to new realities.

2021 – 2022: Introduction of waste management regulations to reduce food waste in the retail and hospitality sectors, alongside a report by the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa highlighting $3.2 billion in agricultural imports, points to significant sustainability and supply chain challenges. This period also marks a growing focus on climate-smart agricultural practices amidst escalating global hunger concerns.

Ongoing Challenges and Opportunities: The ongoing impact of climate change on food production, the necessity of innovative solutions for water management, and the critical role of sustainable practices across the entire food value chain continue to define the landscape of sustainability efforts in South Africa.

Overall Analysis: Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

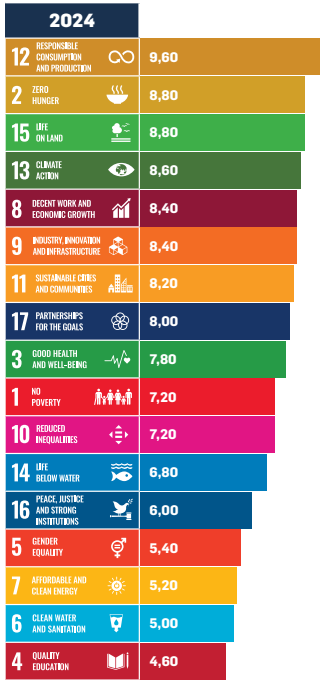
The final prioritisation of the Agriculture, Food Production and Retail SDGs is as follows, based on a balanced view of participating companies' individual priorities, risks, opportunities, and the priority topics arising from the process:

AGRICULTURE, FOOD PRODUCTION AND RETAIL SDGs

COMPANY PRIORITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Agriculture, Food Production and Retail companies prioritise the action that will be taken to deliver sustainability outcomes...



SOURCE: Private Sector VNR 2024 Analysis.

TOP FOUR PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When the priority topics affecting Agriculture, Food Production and Retail are reviewed the emerging SDGs include...

In the Agriculture, Food Production, and Retail sector, the top priority is growing sustainable investment, focusing on increasing funding for sustainable practices. Solving the energy crisis ranks next, addressing energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption. Effective public-private sector collaboration is crucial for achieving sustainability goals. Synergies with civil society and communities foster local engagement and support. Empowering women to achieve gender equality is essential for a diverse workforce. Leveraging sustainability frameworks promotes responsible practices. Addressing climate action and ethical transformation governance ensures long-term sustainability. Finally, building global supply chain resilience is vital for maintaining stability in production and distribution.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Agriculture, Food Production and Retail companies identify risks that they are facing, the SDGs that challenge risks include...

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail confronts severe operational disruptions due to persistent load-shedding, leading to increased operational costs and a shift towards renewable energy investments. Food waste emerges as a critical environmental and social issue, with efforts geared towards efficient management and reduction strategies. Additionally, the sector faces market access challenges and gender disparities, pointing towards a need for more inclusive growth strategies and sustainable practices.

TOP SIX OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Agriculture, Food Production and Retail companies prioritise the emergent opportunities they foresee for the private sector, the primary SDGs include...

Opportunities in this sector are geared towards leveraging precision agriculture technologies to enhance crop yield and optimising resource management. The sector also sees potential in renewable energy solutions, sustainable food production with traceability, and innovative sustainable food products, like plant-based proteins. Investment in circular economy and food waste reduction, along with advanced food preservation and safety technologies, were also prioritised.

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Case Studies

Summary of Success Stories:

The Agriculture, Food Production and Retail exemplary stories detailed within this report include the following case studies:

AgriVuno

Business Action: Empowering Female Entrepreneurs in Agriculture

Goal(s): SDG 5 | SDG 8 | SDG 12

Summary: AgriVuno's Women in Agri Accelerator Challenge empowers female entrepreneurs in agriculture, fostering sustainability, gender equality and economic development. Through strategic partnerships and comprehensive support, it drives positive change, shaping an inclusive and equitable agricultural landscape.

Bokashi Bran

Business Action: Collaborative Waste Management

Goal(s): SDG 8 | SDG 11 | SDG 12

Summary: Through collaborative efforts with leading hotel groups, Bokashi Bran successfully diverts food waste, realising 100% diversion rates and substantial cost savings while fostering sustainability and promoting behavioural shifts in waste management practices.

Pick n Pay | Farmer Angus

Business Action: Waste Diversion and Emission Reduction Initiative

Goal(s): SDG 17 | SDG 11 | SDG 12

Summary: Pick n Pay implements a circular economy model with Farmer Angus to divert food waste, reducing emissions and fostering local partnerships. This initiative showcases sustainable practices while benefiting stakeholders and serving as a blueprint for regional waste diversion projects.

Ensekta

Business Action: Waste Diversion and Emission Reduction Initiative

Goal(s): SDG 2 | SDG 3 | SDG 7 | SDG 12

Summary: Ensekta pioneers sustainable solutions by repurposing waste into valuable resources, promoting economic growth, environmental conservation and healthier food options. Through cross-industry collaboration and strategic partnerships, Ensekta champions innovation while addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges.

NUDE Foods

Business Action: Investing in sustainable agriculture through eco-friendly shopping.

Goal(s): SDG 12 | SDG 13

Summary: NUDE Foods promotes zero-waste shopping, aligning with sustainable agriculture. Through regenerative farming and ethical production, they offer eco-friendly food choices, minimize environmental impact, and address food security through ethical consumption.

Unlimited Group

Business Action: Supporting job creation through local partnerships.

Goal(s): SDG 9 | SDG 17

Summary: The Unlimited Group's local suppliers joined SA's food waste agreement, focusing on SDG 9. Supporting them stimulates job creation, reduces costs, and enhances product freshness, fostering sustainability and economic growth.

Evolving Consumer Demand:

Empowering Consumers to Making Sustainable Food Choice

Companies in the private sector need to act together to nurture a sustainable consumer mindset: Participating companies urged that, to address the challenge of sustainable consumer adoption in South Africa, educational initiatives must be sensitive to the realities of food insecurity and affordability. Campaigns should highlight the immediate benefits of sustainable practices like waste reduction, support for local food systems, and the adoption of nutritious, sustainable diets.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD CHOICES

1. **Environmental Impact of Food Choices:** Educating consumers about how their food choices affect the environment, including the carbon footprint of meat production versus plant-based diets.
   - ***Choose Earth-Friendly Food:*** Pick foods that are better for our planet, like veggies and fruits, to help look after nature
2. **Benefits of Sustainable Diets:** Promoting awareness of the health and environmental benefits of adopting more sustainable, plant-based diets and reducing food waste
   - ***Eat for Health and Earth:*** Foods that are good for you and the planet help waste less and keep you healthy.
3. **Understanding Food Labels:** Helping consumers understand food labels related to sustainability, organic certification, and fair trade, enabling them to make informed choices.
   - ***Understand What You Buy:*** Learn what the labels on your food mean, like 'organic', so you can buy stuff that's good for everyone.
4. **Reducing Food Waste:** Highlighting strategies for reducing food waste at the consumer level, such as meal planning, proper storage, and understanding 'best before' versus 'use by' dates.
   - ***Waste Less Food:*** Plan your meals and get to know what food expiry dates mean to throw away less.
5. **Importance of Local and Seasonal Food:** Educating on the benefits of buying local and seasonal produce to support local economies and reduce transportation emissions.
   - ***Buy Local Food:*** Eating food grown near you helps your community and cuts down on pollution from transporting food far.
6. **Impacts of Overfishing and Sustainable Seafood Choices:** Raising awareness about the impacts of overfishing and how to choose sustainable seafood options.
   - ***Pick the Right Seafood:*** Learn about which fish are okay to eat so we don't run out and harm the sea.
7. **Water Usage and Conservation:** Informing consumers about the water footprint associated with different foods and promoting water-saving practices in food preparation and consumption.
   - ***Save Water:*** Know how much water goes into your food and try to use less.
8. **Impact of Packaging and Single-Use Plastics:** Educating on the environmental impact of packaging, particularly single-use plastics, and encouraging the use of reusable or sustainable packaging options.
   - ***Say No to Throw-Away Plastics:*** Choose reusable stuff instead of things you use once and toss out, like plastic bags.
9. **Energy Consumption in Food Production:** Promoting awareness of the energy consumption involved in food production and storage, and the benefits of choosing energy-efficient options.
   - ***Save Energy with Your Food:*** Think about how much energy it takes to make your food and choose stuff that uses less.
10. **Sustainable Agriculture Practices:** Highlighting the importance of supporting farming practices that maintain soil health, reduce pesticide use, and conserve biodiversity.
    - ***Support Good Farming:*** Help farmers who look after the soil and don't use too many chemicals to keep our land healthy.

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Industry Focus:

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

1st Priority: 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
2nd Priority: 13 CLIMATE ACTION
3rd Priority: 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate are advancing towards the 2030 Agenda amidst serious challenges

With South Africa's GDP growth hinging on ending loadshedding, the imperative is vitally clear. Despite grappling with an energy crisis, water scarcity, and infrastructural challenges, significant strides are being made towards more sustainable and resilient utilities, infrastructure, and property sectors. Technological advancements in renewable energy, water technology, and green construction are gaining traction.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Companies fear future penalties for missing forthcoming emissions regulations
2. Loadshedding continues to impact businesses and employees significantly
3. Contribution of 9.7 GW towards renewable energy by companies
4. Increased self-generated renewable energy solutions by companies
5. Companies urge for smart grid adoption to enhance national grid contributions
6. Loadshedding worsens water challenges amid water scarcity concerns
7. Progress on water management innovation technology is costly
8. Transport industry faces hurdles in sustainable progress amid rising costs
9. Progress on sustainable infrastructure certifications, despite skills shortages
10. Real estate companies are contributing to inclusive sustainable communities

Companies fear future penalties for missing forthcoming emissions regulations:
Companies express deep concerns over potential penalties if South Africa does not achieve the Just Energy Transition Implementation Plan (JET IP) targets of reducing emissions to 420 Mt CO_2e (million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) by 2030. They are wary of regulatory sanctions, heightened scrutiny from ESG-focused investors, and the imposition of carbon tariffs through the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). These challenges threaten operational costs, market access, and reputational integrity.

Loadshedding continues to impact businesses and employees significantly:
The regular occurrence of Stage 4 Loadshedding, resulting in 4.5-6 hours of daily power outages, has notably affected business productivity and employee wellbeing. Cited by The State of South African Energy 2023 Report, 2022 saw a loss of 205 days due to power outages, driving businesses, particularly SMEs, towards costly alternative power sources and heightening operational costs and stress. In response, there is a growing trend towards renewable energy investments and improvements in efficiency.

Contribution of 9.7 GW towards renewable energy by companies:
Through the Renewable Independent Power Producer Programme (REIPPPP), companies have significantly contributed 9.7 GW towards South Africa's renewable energy capacity. This effort represents a key stride towards fulfilling the Just Energy Transition (JET) initiative's 17.8 GW target, with the private sector playing a crucial role in achieving nearly 55% of this goal and working to bridge the remaining 8.1 GW gap. This collective action underlines the private sector's commitment to a sustainable energy future in harmony with governmental and communal objectives.

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Increased self-generated renewable energy solutions by companies: In a proactive step to counteract the effects of loadshedding and align with JET targets, companies across various sectors are increasingly investing in self-generated renewable energy solutions, notably solar power. Investec reported that the first half of 2023 saw a remarkable surge in solar panel imports from China, with South Africa installing 4.4GW of solar capacity at an investment of approximately R20 billion per GW. This initiative not only bolsters energy independence for companies, but also alleviates pressure on the national grid, marking a significant advance in the country's renewable energy journey.

Companies urge for smart grid adoption to enhance national grid contributions: Amidst energy challenges, companies are advocating for the swift adoption of smart grid technologies and the expansion of the transmission network. This move is essential for enabling more efficient integration of renewable energy into the national grid, optimising energy distribution, and supporting the country's transition towards a more sustainable energy landscape. These advancements are viewed as critical for improving grid resilience, reducing dependency on fossil fuels, and facilitating a more substantial contribution from companies to South Africa's energy

Loadshedding worsens water challenges amid water scarcity concerns: South African water infrastructure companies are raising alarms over the detrimental effects of loadshedding on water management and processing. Frequent power outages disrupt water treatment facilities and pumping stations, leading to delays in water processing and increased risk of water scarcity. Companies report that these interruptions exacerbate the existing drought challenges, making the implementation of water conservation methods even more urgent. They advocate for robust, resilient water systems that can withstand the additional strain from power shortages, ensuring a continuous and safe water supply despite the nation's energy instability.

Progress on water management innovation technology is costly: The Blue Drop Report of 2023 evaluated all 958 water supply systems across the country, revealing efforts and challenges in managing water resources amidst deteriorating infrastructure. Private sector water companies are actively seeking to address this challenge with efficient usage and technological innovation in managing South Africa's water resources. They report that while there is a concerted effort towards modernising water management, the prevailing economic landscape significantly hampers the rapid adoption of advanced technologies and practices. The challenges arise from financial limitations due to slow investment. This is a concern, given the need to address water scarcity and ensure a sustainable water supply for all.

Transport industry faces hurdles in sustainable progress amid rising costs: Companies report significant challenges in achieving sustainable outcomes due to the state of South Africa's transport sector. Infrastructure issues and volatile fuel prices are impacting company logistics and employees alike. Despite efforts to modernise and secure transportation infrastructure, transport and logistics providers are struggling with the rising cost of fuel. This is hindering the affordability of implementing of green logistical practices. This situation is critical as it affects the attainment of sustainability goals by other businesses.

Progress on sustainable infrastructure certifications, despite skills shortages: Companies expressed that sustainability is becoming integral to building infrastructure and development. This was highlighting by the Green Building Council South Africa's certification of 933 buildings by 2022. It was, however, noted that progression is impeded by a shortage of professionals with expertise in green technologies. Despite these challenges, significant headway is evidenced by the six projects awarded the prestigious 6-Star Green Star rating, showcasing the sector's commitment to advanced eco-friendly practices.

Real estate companies are contributing to inclusive sustainable communities: Real estate companies are fostering sustainable community development, as shown by initiatives like Redefine Properties' Maponya Mall Community Hub and the Green Star-rated Waterfall City. These projects demonstrate a commitment to creating inclusive environments that offer skill development opportunities and stimulate economic growth in urban and rural settings. Despite the ambition for widespread sustainability in all real estate ventures, companies report challenges attracting investment within the current low-investment economic climate.

Companies reported an unprecedented level of co-operation between public and private entities to address the loadshedding challenge.

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Industry Timeline

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

Persistently forging ahead, navigating escalating challenges with unwavering determination. This timeline outlines major milestones in South Africa's water and electricity industries from the mid-1990s to 2023, highlighting the transition towards sustainable practices, the impact of global agreements like the Paris Agreement, and the role of private sector investment in shaping resilient infrastructure amidst increasing challenges.

Mid – 1990s: South Africa begins restructuring its electricity sector, transitioning Eskom from a state-owned monopoly to increased private sector participation to enhance sustainability and efficiency.

1998: The National Water Act is enacted to reform water management, promoting sustainable use and private sector involvement in water services.

2003: Introduction of the Renewable Energy White Paper, encouraging private investment in renewable energy to diversify electricity sources beyond traditional coal.

2008: South Africa faces significant electricity shortages, leading to widespread loadshedding; highlights the need for investment in sustainable and reliable energy sources.

2010: South Africa hosts the FIFA World Cup, significantly improving water and energy infrastructure, showcasing the potential for large-scale sustainable projects.

2011: The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) updates, focusing on increasing renewable energy capacity in the electricity sector through private sector involvement.

2014 – 2015: Eskom struggles with operational and financial inefficiencies, leading to more severe loadshedding; sparks debate over the sustainability of current electricity production methods.

2016: South Africa ratifies the Paris Agreement, committing to sustainable development goals, which increase focus on reducing carbon emissions and enhancing private sector contributions to water and energy sustainability.

2020: The Covid-19 pandemic exposes vulnerabilities in water and electricity supply chains but accelerates innovation in sustainable practices and resilience planning in the private sector.

2023: The government enhances support for private investment in green energy and water conservation projects through incentives and regulatory frameworks, promoting sustainability amidst growing climate change impacts.

Overall Analysis: Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

The final prioritisation of the Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate SDGs is as follows, based on a balanced view of participating companies' individual priorities, risks, opportunities, and the priority topics arising from the process:

ELECTRICITY, WATER, INFRASTRUCTURE AND REAL ESTATE SDGs

COMPANY PRIORITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate companies prioritise the action that will be taken to deliver sustainability outcomes...

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR 2024 Analysis.

TOP FOUR PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When the priority topics affecting Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate are reviewed the emerging SDGs include...

In the Electricity, Water, Infrastructure, and Real Estate sector, the highest priority is a just transition to carbon neutrality, focusing on reducing emissions and adopting clean energy. Effective public-private sector collaboration is essential for achieving sustainability goals through partnerships. Leveraging sustainability frameworks ensures responsible practices across the industry. Solving the energy crisis addresses energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption. Growing sustainable investment is crucial for funding sustainable initiatives. Synergies with civil society and communities foster local engagement. Empowering women to achieve gender equality promotes diversity. Addressing climate action and ethical transformation governance ensures long-term sustainability.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate companies identify risks that they are facing, the SDGs that challenge risks include...

The Electricity, Water Infrastructure and Real Estate sector is notably affected by the ongoing energy crisis. Challenges include the financial and logistical viability of solar expansions, certification requirements for green buildings, and the overarching need for strategic alignment in environmental initiatives.

TOP SIX OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate companies prioritise the emergent opportunities they foresee for the private sector, the primary SDGs include...

This sector identified opportunities to revolutionise transport with clean technology, smart grid and renewable technologies, and integrated renewable energy systems. They focus on implementing water efficiency and recycling systems, upgrading urban water management, and building with sustainable construction materials. There's a drive towards developing smart home technologies, green construction initiatives and consulting on green building solutions.

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Successes and Policy Enablement

Summary of Success Stories:

The electricity, water, infrastructure and real estate industry exemplary stories detailed within this report include the following case studies:

Redefine Properties

Business Action: Investing in Youth is Investing in the Future
Goal(s): SDG 10 | SDG 11 | SDG 17
Summary: Redefine, in collaboration with Maponya Mall, established a Community Hub to address the skill development and collaboration needs of youth, NPOs and SMMEs. Initiatives like the Youth Accelerator Programme and partnership workshops fostered economic activity and capacity-building, promoting sustainable partnerships for long-term social change.

AVS

Business Action: Implementing cradle-to-grave sustainability practices throughout supplier and customer ecosystems.
Goal(s): SDG 12 | SDG 17
Summary: AVS implemented cradle-to-grave sustainability by identifying supplier and customer ecosystems, aligning sustainability goals, and co-creating business cases. Achievements include open dialogue, equitable partnerships, and improved production efficiencies, resource utilisation and employee safety.

Eskom

Business Action: Investing in Smart Grids and Sustainable Energy Initiatives.
Goal(s): SDG 7 | SDG 17
Summary: Eskom led South Africa's energy transition with smart grid technology, renewables and strategic collaboration, aiming for efficiency, reliability and sustainability, while fostering economic growth and social equity.

Green Building Council

Business Action: Minimalising Environmental Impact by Building Green.
Goal(s): SDG 11 | SDG 13 | SDG 17
Summary: Six collaborative projects across South Africa achieved the prestigious 6-Star Green Star rating, highlighting GBC's sustainability commitment. They exemplified eco-conscious design, innovative features and community support, creating vibrant urban environments.

Umgeni-Uthukela Water

Business Action: Diversifying Energy Sources While Protecting Water-based Ecosystems.
Goal(s): SDG 6 | SDG 13 | SDG 17
Summary: UUW's core value of Environmental Sustainability drove integration of sustainability into corporate strategy, tackling challenges like financial constraints and supply chain issues. Key initiatives include biodiversity management and renewable energy integration, facing hurdles like power purchase agreements and partnerships. Hydropower projects like the Mooi-Moeni Transfer Scheme aimed to harness wasted energy, while efforts to manage alien invasive plants not only ensured water resource sustainability, but also created job opportunities, with over 700 hectares cleared and partnerships with various organisations.

A Just Energy Transition (JET):

The JET integrated Plan sets the stage for collaboration

Companies will be vital role players in the delivery of renewable energy projects:
The Just Energy Transition Implementation Plan (JET IP) is a strategic framework developed to guide South Africa's shift from a high-carbon, fossil fuel-based energy system to a more sustainable, low-carbon and renewable energy-driven economy. This plan is designed to balance the need for economic growth and job creation with the imperative of addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It emphasises ensuring that the transition is "just" by protecting vulnerable communities and workers who might be adversely affected by changes in the energy sector, such as those employed in coal mining and coal-fired power generation.

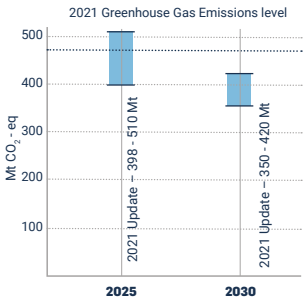
Companies play a crucial role in delivering the Just Energy Transition (JET) by delivering on renewable energy projects, adopting sustainable practices, and innovating in green technologies, as well as creating job opportunity for people who are released from existing roles during the transition.

SOUTH AFRICA'S JUST ENERGY TRANSITION INVESTMENT PLAN (JET IP) 2023 - 2027

Building a pathway towards a low carbon and climate resilient society

To decarbonise the economy to within the target range by 2030

350 - 420 Mt CO_2 eq



requires initial funding of

~ ZAR 1.5 trillion over five years 2023 - 2027

from multiple sources

- Developed countries
- Private sector investors
- Development Finance Institutions
- Government
- Philanthropies
- Multilateral Development Banks

in three priority sectors

- Electricity
- New Energy Vehicles
- Green Hydrogen

and two cross-cutting areas

- Skills development
- Municipalities

through a Just Energy Transition that

- Protects vulnerable workers and communities
- Drives innovation
- Builds energy security
- Develops sustainable livelihoods
- Expands energy access
- Enables economic diversification
- Promotes industrial development
- Spurs inclusive economic growth

In alignment with South Africa's

- National Development Plan
- Just Transition Framework

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Industry Focus:

Financial Services and FinTech

1st Priority: 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
2nd Priority: 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
3rd Priority: 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Financial services have been essential to mitigating the negative impact of Covid-19 and economic hard times.

South African banks have had to contend with a stagnant and weak domestic economy. A forecast 0,2% gross domestic product (GDP) growth for South Africa in 2023 has increased the cost of living and stressed households and businesses. Financial services are working to help those facing hardship.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience
2. Financial Inclusion and Empowerment
3. Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security
4. Green Financing Mechanisms
5. Corporate Governance and Ethical Conduct
6. Sustainability Reporting and Performance Disclosure
7. Community Engagement and Social Impact
8. Responsible Investment and Asset Management
9. Renewable Energy and Clean Technology
10. Consumer Protection and Financial Education

Renewable Energy and Clean Technology: The South African financial sector has seen a substantial increase in financing renewable energy projects, with the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) opening in April 2022. The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and other banks are engaging in financing and implementing renewable energy projects and independent power production projects to address the South African energy shortfall, contributing to SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy.

Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience: It is increasingly agreed that financial services sector action is crucial to combating climate change (SDG 13) alongside (SDG 15) and (SDG 6) as an inclusive approach. Whilst the pace of change remains slow, South African insurers are increasingly factoring climate risks, with banks increasingly considering climate as part of lending criteria. Insurance Companies are actively assessing climate risks in their insurance underwriting and are implementing initiatives to try to reduce the impact of the results of climate change, example fire and flooding, and major financial institutions are integrating climate risk assessments into business strategies. There is a focused drive by the industry for social initiatives and partnering with ANCA and various bodies to assist their clients in this regard.

Financial Inclusion and Empowerment: The rise of mobile banking and FinTech solutions in South Africa has been faster than in many other countries. Since 2015, access to financial services has improved significantly for many previously unbanked people: 81% of South Africans now have access to a bank account1. Ensuring inclusive and equitable access to financial services remains an unmet priority with companies offering innovative payment and insurance products and financial literacy programmes.

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Rapid innovation presents regulatory hurdles and new emerging risks.

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security: Financial institutions have launched targeted loan programmes for sustainable farming practices, contributing to a rise in investment in sustainable agriculture. Sustainable lending practices have supported the adoption of eco-friendly and sustainable farming methods, contributing to future food as the country continues to address water scarcity, issues with land use and increasingly erratic weather patterns.

Green Financing Mechanisms: The JSE was one of the first emerging market exchanges to create a segment for Green, Social, Sustainability, Transition and Sustainability-Linked bonds, and become a founding partner of the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative. These bonds facilitate fundraising for beneficial projects and initiatives that drive progress across SDGs. South African entities such as the City of Johannesburg are leveraging green bonds to finance sustainable infrastructure.

Corporate Governance and Ethical Conduct: Despite ongoing corruption scandals with both the public and private sector, there is an ever-stronger regulatory focus on corporate governance within the financial sector, with firms adopting codes of conduct that include ESG principles. The King Report on Corporate Governance (King IV) and the Institute of Directors in Southern Africa (IoDSA) have played an ongoing, critical role in guiding companies towards improved governance and ethical conduct.

Consumer Protection and Financial Education: There are an estimated 230 acts of legislation1 across the banking industry, designed to protect and educate consumers, many of which enable sustainable choices. Advances in consumer protection continued with the grace period for the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) ending in July 2021. Companies are working on compliance, many with financial education initiatives to promote transparency and consumer rights. This said, companies are reporting higher risk of cyber fraud and scams, especially within digital financial services, with challenges educating customers on safe financial practice in the digital age.

Responsible Investment and Asset Management: Asset managers in South Africa have been actively incorporating ESG factors into investment decisions. Participating companies have indicating growing effort to influence responsible consumption and production patterns and practices, emphasising the importance of transparent, quality reporting and traceability across supply chains. The broad shift toward responsible investment in the asset management and investment industry point to the lack of standardisation in ESG metrics, or formal regulations or policies, which make responsible investment challenging.

Community Engagement and Social Impact: Banks and financial services providers employ circa 180,000 people and have engaged in community development programmes, including financial literacy initiatives and support for small businesses in local communities. The Banking Association South Africa (BASA) and its members have led efforts to foster community engagement and social impact, underscoring the financial sector's role in societal development, with an estimated R279 billion in empowerment financing in 2021.

Sustainability Reporting and Performance Disclosure: There has been a notable improvement in sustainability reporting among South African companies, driven by increased investor demand for disclosures. Transparency and accountability are key to tracking progress, however holistic information is still in short supply, with investors taking on a more activist role.

In 2022 banks reported R157 billion spend on supplier development, and R155 billion on enterprise development.

Note: Figures in this section are from the Banking Association of South Africa Annual Report 2022

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Industry Timeline

Financial Services

Since 1994, the financial services industry has gradually integrated SDG's into its core operations, aiming to align economic growth with environmental sustainability and social equity. By the early **2000s**, institutions began to adopt more transparent, responsible lending practices and investment policies, reflecting a growing awareness of their role in achieving sustainable development. The period leading up to **2022** saw an acceleration of this trend, with the industry emphasising green finance, inclusive banking services, and support for projects that directly contribute to the **SDGs**.

1994 – 2016: Corporate Social Responsibility (**CSR**) and Environmental, Social and Governance (**ESG**) investing starts to rise **post-King Reports**, embedding sustainability in corporate South Africa.

2003 – 2007: The Financial Sector Charter and National Credit Act target economic disparities and credit regulation. The JSE launch the Socially Responsible Index (SRI), one of the first sustainability indices on a stock exchange.

2008 – 2009: Global Financial Crisis sees measures to stabilise the financial system, setting back the first wave of green bond finance products.

2010: Rise of the FinTech Ecosystem sees numerous digital banking start ups, combined with cellphone penetration enabling broad-based FinTech adoption.

2013: the Protection of Personal Information Act was signed into law, coming into further effect in 2020 – 2021. **New Insurance Regulatory Framework (2018)** enhances customer protection.

2015: the JSE refreshes the sustainability segment with the introduction of ESG disclosure guidance for listed companies, introducing the green bond segment in 2017 for green initiatives and projects.

2015 – 2020: Economic challenges reduce South Africa's credit rating to sub-investment through a series of **downgrades** that reflect concerns about economic growth and fiscal strength.

2020 – 2021: Covid-19 pandemic requires wide-spread relief for individuals and business struggling with the economic downturn including payment holidays, loan restructuring and support.

2022: the Pension Funds Act Regulation 28 mandates Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) consideration, a sign of increased emphasis on responsible and sustainable practices. The South African Green Taxonomy provides an instrument to validate the integrity of green bond work.

2022: the Ukraine-Russia crisis causes widespread international repercussions, market volatility and investment uncertainty, negatively impacting the South African economy.

Overall Analysis: Financial Services and FinTech

The final prioritisation of the Financial Services and FinTech SDGs is as follows, based on a balanced view of participating companies' individual priorities, risks, opportunities, and the priority topics arising from the process:

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND FINTECH SDGs

COMPANY PRIORITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Financial Services and FinTech companies prioritise the action that will be taken to deliver sustainability outcomes...

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR 2024 Analysis.

TOP FOUR PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When the priority topics affecting Financial Services and FinTech are reviewed the emerging SDGs include...

In the Financial Services and FinTech sector, the highest priority is effective public-private sector collaboration, focusing on partnerships to achieve sustainability goals. Empowering women to achieve gender equality promotes diversity and inclusion. Leveraging sustainability frameworks ensures responsible practices across the industry. Growing sustainable investment is crucial for funding green initiatives. Solving the energy crisis addresses energy efficiency and the adoption of renewable sources. A just transition to carbon neutrality focuses on reducing carbon footprints. Synergies with civil society and communities foster local engagement. Addressing climate action and ethical transformation governance ensures long-term sustainability.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Financial Services and FinTech companies identify risks that they are facing, the SDGs that challenge risks include...

In the Financial Services and FinTech sector, there is a significant focus on sourcing and supply chain integrity, particularly in adhering to Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) standards. This sector also grapples with regulatory compliance and ethical practices concerning worker compensation and product certifications, highlighting the ongoing struggle with maintaining ethical standards amid economic pressures.

TOP SIX OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

en Financial Services and FinTech companies prioritise the emergent opportunities they foresee for the private sector, the primary SDGs include...

Priorities here include embedding climate risk assessment and management, enabling green financing, and advancing inclusive finance products and services. The sector also aims to promote investment in sustainable FinTech, support digital advances in integrated reporting, and improve cybersecurity and data protection. Diversity within financial services and mitigating negative economic impacts for clients are also critical. Sustainable financing for local communities emerged as a significant opportunity.

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Case Studies

Summary of Success Stories:

The Financial Services and FinTech industry exemplary stories detailed within this report include the following case studies:

Absa
Business Action: Climate Responsive Business
Goal(s): SDG 7 | SDG 9 | SDG 13
Summary: Absa's climate strategy focused on financed emissions targets, green business opportunities, climate risk processes, and external engagement, aligning with their ambition for net-zero emissions. Notable successes included promoting renewable adoption, increasing small-scale embedded generation value by 33%, providing training to township SMEs, and supporting agricultural innovation and resilience.

Alexforbes
Business Action: Our Community Commitment
Goal(s): SDG 4 | SDG 1 | SDG 3 | SDG 9
Summary: Alexforbes prioritised underprivileged communities, directing R3.7 million via the Alexander Forbes Community Trust. They supported youth education through bursaries and skills development opportunities.

Investec | Pele Energy Group
Business Action: Financial Empowerment and Strategic Collaboration
Goal(s): SDG 7 | SDG 8 | SDG 9 | SDG 13 | SDG 17
Summary: Pele Energy Group, a Black-owned energy and development company, partnered with Investec to raise growth and working capital, enabling project development for wind and solar projects. Investec's support enhances Pele's long-term renewable energy aspirations.

Nedbank
Business Action: Promoting Diversity at the Board Level
Goal(s): SDG 5 | SDG 10
Summary: Nedbank emphasises diversity at the board level, spanning various dimensions including race, ethnicity, language, and gender. Notably, significant strides have been made in increasing women's representation from 20% in 2021 to 29% in 2022.

Old Mutual
Business Action: Cultivating Climate-Conscious Partnerships.
Goal(s): SDG 17 | SDG 13
Summary: In 2022, Old Mutual Investment Group conducted climate-related engagements with 53 investee companies, primarily targeting sectors with the highest climate-related risk. These engagements, based on proprietary ESG scoring, continue.

Bidvest
Business Action: Pioneering Our Comprehensive ESG Framework
Goal(s): SDG 16 | SDG 8 | SDG 5 | SDG 9
Summary: Bidvest's 2020 initiative established an ESG Framework, aligning sustainability goals with measurable targets. Achievements include gender parity, reduced carbon footprint, and increased local procurement, integrating ESG into performance metrics for accountability.

Hollard | Lumkani
Business Action: Protecting underprivileged homes with fire detection devices complemented by insurance cover
Goal(s): SDG 3 | SDG 9 | SDG 10
Summary: Hollard collaborated with Lumkani to offer affordable fire detection devices for informal settlements, complemented by insurance cover. This initiative aimed to protect underprivileged homes and their belongings, addressing the issue of uninsured dwellings.

Sanlam
Business Action: Venturing Into Sustainable Energy and Social Housing
Goal(s): SDG 13 | SDG 10 | SDG 7
Summary: Sanlam Investments demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainable investing, notably through the Sustainable Infrastructure Fund and ventures like the Bokpoort Concentrated Solar Power plant, which contributed to South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme. Investments in social housing and local businesses supported job creation and local economies, reducing inequality.

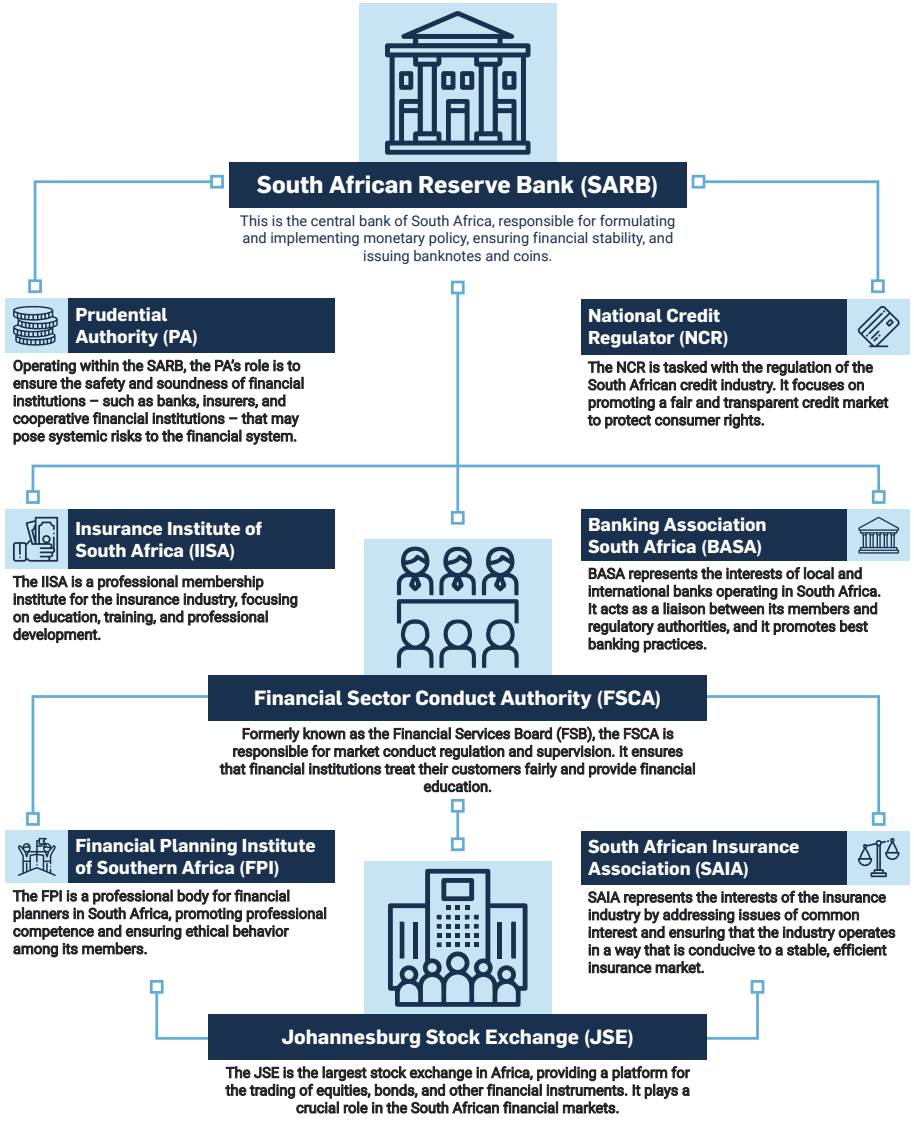
BDO
Business Action: Supporting Standardised Sustainability At Board Level
Goal(s): SDG 16 | SDG 17
Summary: Enabling better sustainability assessment and risk management by delivering comprehensive sustainability assessments, helping boards to proactively adopt sustainability, whilst educating key decision makers. BDO helps companies to identify sustainability factors, determine suitable frameworks, and improve information quality.

Edge Growth
Business Action: Investing in Sustainable Start Ups
Goal(s): SDG 10 | SDG 17 | SDG 1
Summary: Edge Growth Ventures leads in advancing inclusive finance, managing six SME funds worth R215 million. The Edge Action Fund focuses on marginalised groups and empowers black-owned businesses.

Financial Services Ecosystem

Financial Services and FinTech

South Africa benefited from modernisation following truth and reconciliation.
After 1994 significant work was done with local and global experts to understand financial services best practice, policies and regulations. Integrated financial frameworks, institutions and policies were framed to ensure the protection of previously disadvantaged and excluded South African people and businesses with limited financial acumen. The resulting ecosystem has evolved and is illustrated below:



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Industry Focus:

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

1st Priority | 2nd Priority | 3rd Priority

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Healthcare have made progress despite negative impact.

South Africa's manufacturing sector has navigated through reduced spending power, worsened by Covid-19, extensive loadshedding, and global supply chain disruptions. The sector is slowly pivoting towards localisation in order to bolster domestic resilience, while endeavouring to sustain and exceed sustainability goals.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Extreme energy challenges are motivating for efficiency
2. Local and global supply chains are compromised
3. Complex regulations and bureaucratic compliance are costly
4. The cost of transitioning operations to sustainable approaches is high
5. Automation is eliminating low-skill roles, whilst new skill gaps arise
6. Circular economy opportunities are slow to gain critical mass
7. An above-average contribution to CSI, B-BBEE, and Wellbeing
8. Digital solutions are enabling responsible consumption and production
9. Significant private sector contributions to medical and healthcare
10. Fostering collaboration on localisation of supply to address gaps

Extreme energy challenges are motivating for efficiency: The negative impact of Loadshedding has been profound. Electrical costs have outpaced inflation for over a decade, with the Department of Energy reporting in 2019 that 52% of national energy demand is consumed by manufacturing alone. In today's prices, this represents a cost of circa R30 billion a year. Blackouts have led to production losses, rising costs, reduced competitiveness, staff disruption and low investment. With over 80% of energy being coal-based, there is a huge demand for delivery on SDG 7: Clean and Affordable Energy and to drive energy efficiencies.

Local and global supply chains are compromised: The industry has faced significant, ongoing local and global supply chain issues. Transport and energy crisis have increased logistical costs, exacerbated by the pandemic and geopolitical tensions affecting international trade networks. Delays and scarcity of materials have combined with evolving, varied import and export regulations. Pharma, especially, has faced slowed market access and significant adjustments to standards. Supply chain vulnerability requires a strategic, flexible response, with innovation and collaboration between the government and private sector to fortify future production. Many companies have called for improved local sources of supply.

Customer demand is volatile, depressed and rapidly evolving: Inflation and a weak economy have suppressed customer demand, increasing competition in saturated markets. Companies are reporting pressure to differentiate value propositions as a result.

There is a strong, growing demand for local sourcing, with critical gaps in supply.

Businesses are, therefore, responding to socially conscious customer and investor demands for sustainably, responsibly and ethically produced, environmentally friendly products and packaging. There is also considerable and growing demand for local sourcing.

Complex regulations and bureaucratic compliance are costly: Ensuring compliance with complex regulatory environments is critical for local and global market access and growth, especially in pharma and healthcare. Companies report that complex and often manual processes need to be simpler and more automated. They also advise that simple standards can prevent 'greenwashing', a growing issue as companies are not guided on clear criteria for differentiating sustainable projects for customers.

The cost of changing operations to sustainable approaches is high: Some companies want to invest in sustainable practices and technologies, balancing initial costs against long-term business and environmental benefits. Others are hindered by low revenues, the high capital cost of transition, and struggles with access to practical know-how.

Automation is eliminating low skill roles, whilst new skill gaps arise: More sustainable ways of working often result in the automation of existing roles. Some companies are mitigating the impact of job efficiencies by investing in circular models for waste management and capabilities that operations require, contributing to local enterprise development. Workforces in this industry often do not have a quality foundational education, with low potential to develop many of the scarce skills required. Companies are acknowledging the need for support in acquiring skills and expertise and in mitigating negative labour impacts inherent in future change.

Circular economy opportunities are slow to gain critical mass: Companies often do not have the funds to invest in the sometimes-indirect benefit of circular economies. Additionally, circular models often benefit when they can scale across businesses that are often in competition with each other.

Given these models can result in employment opportunities and local economic development, collaboration can accelerate remanufacturing in consumer electronics and automotive parts, waste management, circular textiles design, chemical leasing, industrial symbiosis of waste heat, additive manufacturing, production of eco-construction materials, and other applications.

An above average contribution to CSI, B-BBEE and Wellbeing: The investment of 4.8% of NPAT in Corporate Social Investment (CSI) activities in the Pharma industry exemplifies the commitment of this industry, exceeding B-BBEE guidelines and making significant contributions to societal wellbeing within and beyond workforces, with the healthcare industry playing a vital role in delivering SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing.

Digital solutions are enabling responsible consumption and production: Despite the expense the industry is becoming more efficient, responsible and sustainable in operations, leveraging digital technologies to reduce costs, and improve service delivery. The emphasis on environmental protection supports is resulting in products that better support agriculture and conservation practices.

Significant private sector contributions to medical and healthcare: Digital solutions are enabling responsible consumption and production: Despite the expense, the industry is becoming more efficient, responsible and sustainable in operations, leveraging digital technologies to reduce costs and improve service delivery. The emphasis on environmental protection supports products that better support agriculture and conservation practices.

Fostering collaboration on localisation of supply to address gaps: Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are already instrumental in driving local enterprise development, with the private sector making material investments in emerging enterprises. However, companies are voicing a strong demand for a strategic and integrated approach to improved local sources of supply to ensure resilient and sustainable future production.

The impact of automation and innovation on jobs needs to be urgently addressed.

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Industry Timeline

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

Sustained transformational effort has been made and sustained, despite challenges: In an environment with ongoing economic volatility, energy crisis and health system pressures, South Africa has made significant strides, leveraging advancements in technology and sustainability to navigate these hurdles and drive forward progress. This resilience underscores the nation's ability to transform adversity into opportunity, reinforcing its industrial and healthcare sectors' growth and innovation.

Early 2000s: Automotive Sector Growth: This period saw substantial growth in South Africa's automotive industry, attracting foreign investment and significantly contributing to the manufacturing sector's development, bolstered by the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP) initiated in 2001.

2000s: Rise of e-commerce: The advent of e-Commerce significantly transformed the consumer goods sector by enhancing customer ability to discover and select products online, empowering demand and driving competition and innovation in retail and distribution.

2001: National Health Insurance (NHI) Proposal: Aimed at providing universal healthcare access, this proposal had profound implications for the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors, emphasising the need for robust healthcare infrastructure and services.

2003: B-BBEE Act Implementation: The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act promoted diversity and inclusion across all sectors, including manufacturing, consumer goods, and healthcare, driving socio-economic transformation.

2007 – 2012: Enhancing Manufacturing Competitiveness: The launch of the National Cleaner Production Centre (NCPC) in 2007 and the Manufacturing Competitiveness Enhancement Programme (MCEP) in 2012 aimed at boosting the manufacturing sector's competitiveness through technology and skills development, aligning with the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) established in 2009.

2010s: Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Adoption: The adoption of 4IR technologies revolutionised South African industries by transforming production processes, introducing automation, and shifting workforce skills, further supported by the government's 4IR strategy announcement in 2017.

2014 – 2021: Focus on Healthcare and Innovation: Hosting the International AIDS Conference in 2014 spotlighted pharmaceutical efforts in treatment and research. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2021 underscored the critical role of pharmaceutical research, telehealth, and the EVDS in managing vaccine rollout, highlighting ongoing investment in vaccine manufacturing.

Ongoing: Labour and Regulatory Evolution: Evolving labour dynamics and stringent consumer goods safety and labelling regulations have influenced employment patterns and product standards across sectors, reflecting changing labour regulations and consumer expectations.

Ongoing: Sustainable and Renewable Initiatives: The transition to renewable energy sources and emphasis on circular economy models signify a shift towards sustainable energy practices and environmental preservation, including significant private sector contributions to medical research and healthcare infrastructure.

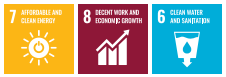
2024: National Treasury's Budget Review: This review outlines plans to enhance the manufacturing sector's resilience through infrastructure improvements and renewable energy investments, aiming for a more sustainable and competitive industrial landscape.

Overall Analysis: Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

The final prioritisation of the Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health SDGs is as follows, based on a balanced view of participating companies' individual priorities, risks, opportunities, and the priority topics arising from the process:

MANUFACTURING, CONSUMER GOODS, PHARMA AND HEALTH SDGs

COMPANY PRIORITY SDGs:



PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health companies prioritise the action that will be taken to deliver sustainability outcomes...

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR 2024 Analysis.

TOP FOUR PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When the priority topics affecting Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health are reviewed the emerging SDGs include...

In the Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma, and Health sector, the top priority is effective public-private sector collaboration, focusing on partnerships to achieve sustainability goals. Empowering women to achieve gender equality promotes diversity and inclusion. Leveraging sustainability frameworks ensures responsible practices across the industry. Growing sustainable investment is crucial for funding green initiatives. Solving the energy crisis addresses energy efficiency and the adoption of renewable sources. Synergies with civil society and communities foster local engagement. Addressing climate action and ethical transformation governance ensures long-term sustainability.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health companies identify risks that they are facing, the SDGs that challenge risks include...

In the Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health sectors, load shedding severely disrupts production, escalating downtime and compounding the impact of global supply chain fragilities, which leads to higher material costs and availability issues. Financial strains on consumers prevent the absorption of rising costs, thereby stifling revenue and amplifying competition. Furthermore, an uncertain economic climate, exacerbated by the pandemic's aftermath, curtails vital investments needed for innovation in sustainable, responsible production, posing significant challenges to growth and competitiveness in these sectors.

TOP SIX OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health companies prioritise the emergent opportunities they foresee for the private sector, the primary SDGs include...

Opportunities in these sectors emphasise the mobilisation of telehealth and remote monitoring services to expand healthcare access, improving patient outcomes and facilitating early treatment. Optimising supply chain management technologies is crucial for enhancing procurement efficiency and transparency. The sector also benefits from delivering e-commerce optimisation services, enabling a seamless marketplace where supply meets demand. There is a strong focus on green manufacturing consulting and circular economy offerings to improve production processes and reduce waste. The production of sustainable materials, such as low-carbon alloys and recycled metals, caters to the growing demand for eco-friendly manufacturing. Advanced drug development and precision medicine services offer cost-effective, accessible healthcare solutions, tailoring treatments to individual needs and enabling early intervention for chronic conditions.

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Case Studies

Summary of Success Stories:

The manufacturing, consumer goods, pharma and health industry exemplary stories detailed within this report include the following case studies:

Sappi

Business Action: Sustainable water management at Stanger Mill
Goal(s): SDG 6 | SDG 9 | SDG 12
Summary: Sappi's innovative water recovery project at Stanger Mill demonstrates a commitment to sustainable resource management, reclaiming 2,000 m3/day of water and aligning with SDG 6 for responsible water usage. This initiative not only enhances operational efficiency, but also sets a new standard for environmental stewardship in the industry.

Clicks Group

Business Action: Enhancing energy efficiency through solar
Goal(s): SDG 7 | SDG 13
Summary: Clicks Group advances sustainability with rooftop PV solar panels, generating 631MWh last year. A R28M investment aims to increase renewable energy to 4500MWh by 2023, aligning with carbon neutrality targets and climate action initiatives.

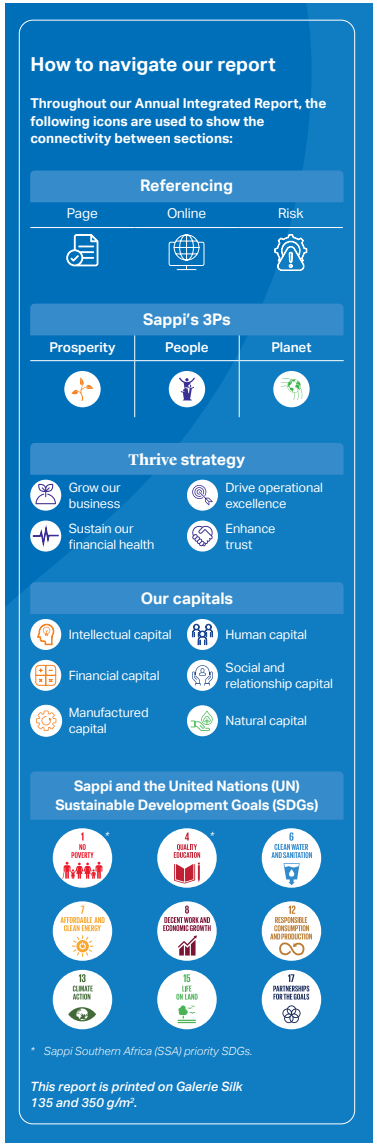
The South African Breweries

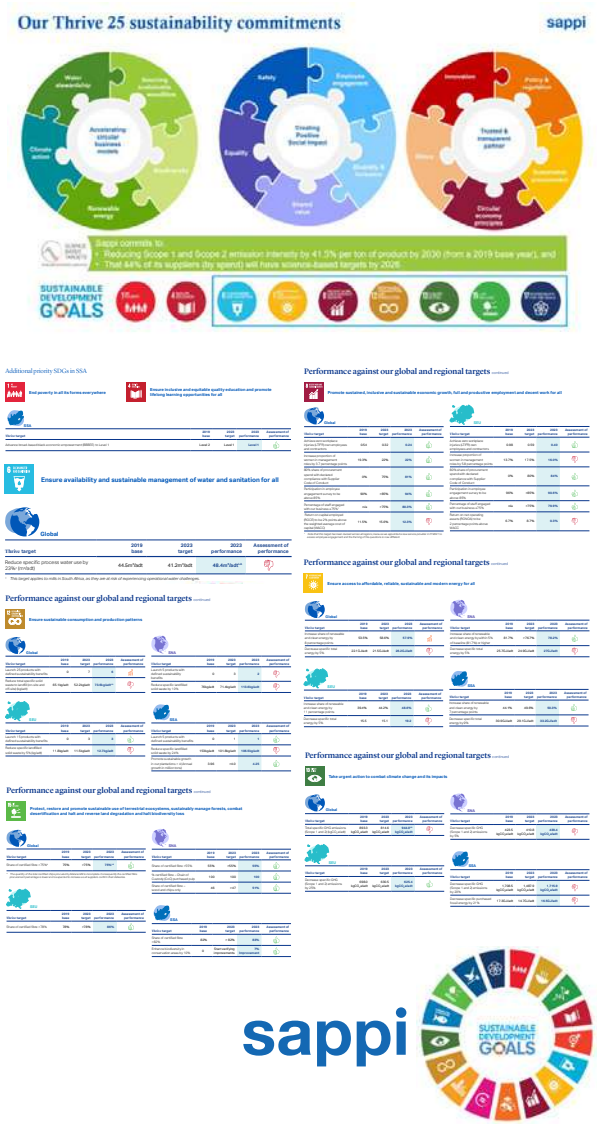
Business Action: Generating Business Growth For Rural Entrepreneurs
Goal(s): SDG 10 | SDG 17
Summary: SAB Foundation and SocioNext collaborated to host transformative five-day workshops in rural areas, empowering unemployed participants with essential entrepreneurial skills. With ongoing engagement, the initiative fostered inclusivity and empowerment, leading to significant economic resilience and community development.

SDG Integration Best Practice

Sappi has fully embedded the SDGs into it's "Thrive" sustainability commitments

During the industry roundtable series, Sappi presented its integrated sustainability model, which provides a best practice framework for sustainability performance management. The full 2023 Integrated Report can be viewed here.





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Industry Focus:

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

1st Priority 2nd Priority 3rd Priority

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources has made progress, and is a vital strategic player for positive impact.

South Africa stands out as a global leader in mineral production, excelling in key minerals such as platinum group metals, gold, coal, iron ore, diamonds, manganese, chrome, and titanium. Despite challenges, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the mining industry has demonstrated resilience, contributing significantly to the country's economic performance.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Value of mineral production is at a record high.
2. Challenges are preventing value creation.
3. The 'critical minerals' scramble needs a better response.
4. Market-related pricing would maximise value creation.
5. Navigating the low investment challenge is vital.
6. Human-centred practices have become a cornerstone.
7. Modernisation will both eliminate and create jobs.
8. Modernisation is bringing forward diversity, inclusion, and equality.
9. Collaboration on innovation within the mining industry is working.
10. Social and Labour Plans are vital to sustainable communities.

Value of mineral production is at a record high. In 2022, South Africa's mineral production value reached a record high of R1.18 trillion, marking a notable increase from the previous year's R1.1 trillion and surpassing the trillion-rand milestone for the first time. This surge was primarily attributed to robust commodity prices. However, fixed prices, high mining input costs, power shortages, and logistical bottlenecks have limited improvements in production levels and broader economic benefits, such as employment opportunities and higher wages.

Challenges are preventing value creation. Despite high production, challenges in domestic pricing rules, rail and port logistics, and electricity supply hinder progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Addressing these issues is vital for unlocking the industry's potential to modernise and meet global demand for critical minerals.

The global 'critical minerals' scramble needs a better response. Fresh strategic policies are needed to ensure sustainable exploitation of Africa's resources. Modernisation will propel and position the mining industry as a beacon for sustainability, economic growth, and community well-being. Lessons learned must be implemented for green economy mineral innovation opportunities, like green hydrogen fuels, to contribute to a sustainable and prosperous South Africa.

Market-related pricing would maximise value creation. Selling high-demand critical minerals below market value limits the mines' abilities to invest in communities and their sustainability, encourage local development and skills development, pay more taxes and royalties, provide shareholders a return, and invest in research and development or exploration and new mines.

Navigating the low investment challenge is vital. The mining sector relies on material investment by stakeholders willing to take on material risk over long terms; given the high cost, complexity, and risk inherent in mineral and metal exploration, and embracing green economy innovations. This is a long-term business model best delivered by private sector players with a high level of supporting public sector collaboration. Collaboration between sectors is exemplified by countries like Australia and Canada.

Human-centred practices have become a cornerstone. South Africa's mining industry, supported by cross-industry organisations like the Minerals Council, consistently emphasises safety, productivity, and environmental sustainability. The industry's commitment to a triple bottom line approach (considering 1. profit, 2. social impact, and 3. environmental responsibility) has reshaped values, with SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing taking top priority.

Modernisation will both eliminate and create jobs. While mining currently employs less than 3% of the national workforce, it has the potential to drive sustainable job creation. Modernisation is critical to evolving existing jobs and translating emergent employment opportunities. Projections indicate a potential loss of 200,000 jobs in the next decade, with a higher negative impact if innovation is slow. This makes SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure vital.

Modernisation is bringing forward diversity, inclusion, and equality. Modernised roles in mining coupled with action to enable female representation in leadership teams, training, and a safe and enabling working environments with ablution and childcare facilities can open further avenues to increased representation in mining from circa 12% to representative levels. This contributes to SDG 5: Gender Equality by targeting SDG 4: Quality Education. Results indicate that gender-inclusive mining contributes to a safer working environment too.

Collaboration on innovation within the mining industry is working. Initiatives like the Mining Phakisa and the SAMERDI strategy align with SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. The Mandela Mining Precinct, established in 2016, is also contributing by serving as a hub for innovation, manufacturing, and sustainable development. Innovation can extend the life of mines and enable SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production and SDG 13: Climate Action.

Social and Labour Plans are vital to sustainable communities. The mining sector's Social and Labour Plans underscore its dedication to improving host communities' lives and creating livelihoods, ensuring a sustained impact beyond the operational lifespan of mining activities. One opportunity is better identification of strategic partnerships that draw in industries like forestry and agriculture to leverage land, infrastructure, and facilities built by mines that become available to communities upon mine closure.

The rise of modernisation began in the early 2000s and is accelerating:

Modernisation Initiatives Take Root in Early 2000s: In the early 2000s, South Africa's mining industry embarked on modernisation, emphasising health and safety, productivity, and cost reduction. The move from traditional mining methods to mechanised operations marked a significant change, with the introduction of remote drilling and blasting to enhance efficiency and safety. A people-centred approach emerged, prioritising the retraining of miners to operate machinery remotely and fostering a skilled workforce that included a growing number of women.

Regulatory Milestones in Early 2000s to 2015: The Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) of 2002 regulated the mineral industry, setting the groundwork for mining rights and environmental management. By 2004, the Mining Charter began addressing inequality and economic empowerment. The 2015 NEMA Financial Provision Regulations and the Mining Phakisa initiative signalled a robust regulatory environment and a collective effort to preserve and create employment while promoting industry growth.

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Industry Timeline

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

The 1996 South African Constitution enshrined the right to an environment that safeguards citizen health and well-being. Subsequently, in 1998, the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) outlined environmental principles for mining, aligning with the constitutional mandate for ecological sustainability. That year also saw the White Paper on Minerals and Mining affirming the need for new mining legislation, rooted in integrated environmental management.

2004 South African Mining Charter Implementation addresses historical inequality and promotes black economic empowerment by promoting equitable access to natural minerals, socio-economic empowerment and sustainable development and growth in the mining sector.

From 2010 Accelerating Innovation and Research Development: The Mandela Mining Precinct, established in 2016, a hub for innovation and sustainable development that accelerates mining R&D, the formation of MEMSA bolsters local equipment manufacturing.

2012 Marikana Massacre underscores labour and social challenges leading to increased scrutiny of safety and labour working conditions elevating the importance of sustainability within mining host communities.

The 2015 Paris Agreement triggers global effort to combat climate change, with an ambition to limit global warming to less than 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, driving mines to reduce carbon emissions, adopt sustainable practices and invest in renewable energy.

From 2015 Volatile Commodity Prices and Low Investment impact the affordability of prospecting, modernisation, responsible consumption, green economy technology and sustainability initiatives.

2018 The Electric Vehicle (EV) boom starts after Artisan Vehicle Systems launching the Z40, their first battery powered underground haul truck and is acquired by Sandvik.

The 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic disrupts mining operations, brings workforce challenges, supply chain disruption and market volatility, emphasising the importance of health, safety, and supply chain resilience.

From 2020 Accelerated Digital Innovation mines increasingly adopt emerging digital practices to minimise environmental impact including real-time information management.

A 2021 Post Pandemic Focus on Community: Ever stronger mining focus on host community engagement and development to encourage local community resilience through diversification of local economic activities.

By 2022 the rise of the Critical Mineral Agenda: An ongoing rise of demand for critical minerals for emergent green economy applications.

Overall Analysis: Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

The final prioritisation of the Mining, Natural Gas and Resources SDGs is as follows, based on a balanced view of participating companies' individual priorities, risks, opportunities, and the priority topics arising from the process:

MINING, NATURAL GAS AND RESOURCES SDGs

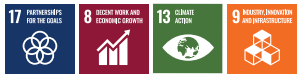
COMPANY PRIORITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Mining, Natural Gas and Resources companies prioritise the action that will be taken to deliver sustainability outcomes...

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR 2024 Analysis.

TOP FOUR PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:



PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When the priority topics affecting Mining, Natural Gas and Resources are reviewed the emerging SDGs include...

In the Mining Natural Gas and Resources sector, the top priority is a just transition to carbon neutrality, focusing on reducing emissions and adopting clean energy. Synergies with civil society and communities foster local engagement and support. Empowering women to achieve gender equality promotes diversity and inclusion. Effective public-private sector collaboration is crucial for achieving sustainability goals. Leveraging sustainability frameworks ensures responsible practices across the industry. Growing sustainable investment is essential for funding green initiatives. Solving the energy crisis addresses energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption. Addressing climate action and ethical transformation governance ensures long-term sustainability.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Mining, Natural Gas and Resources companies identify risks that they are facing, the SDGs that challenge risks include...

In Mining, Natural Gas and Resources, the uncertainty surrounding energy policies and the necessity for private energy solutions highlight the sector's vulnerability to infrastructural and regulatory changes. The sector is also under intense scrutiny for its environmental and social governance (ESG) practices, necessitating stringent compliance to evolving standards and heightened stakeholder expectations.

TOP SIX OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Mining, Natural Gas and Resources companies prioritise the emergent opportunities they foresee for the private sector, the primary SDGs include...

Opportunities in these sectors include attracting strategic partners to enhance local education, healthcare, and infrastructure, thus accelerating job creation. Biodiversity and land conservation initiatives are essential for promoting restoration and involving partners in tourism and agriculture. Improving water management efficiencies through technology can reduce consumption and costs. Circular economy opportunities in mineral and metal processing focus on recycling and reusing materials, creating jobs, and introducing product-as-a-service models. Prioritising independent green energy production can power operations and reclaim energy and carbon credits. Investing in sustainable prospecting and mining technologies supports responsible mineral and metal extraction. Automation and digitalisation in mining enhance safety and productivity. Advancing carbon capture technologies and developing green petrochemicals and critical mineral products support sustainability and new revenue streams.

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Success Stories and Case Studies

Summary of Success Stories:

The mining and minerals industry exemplary stories detailed within this report include the following case studies:

Orion Minerals
Business Action: Orion Minerals' Inclusive Development Journey
Goal(s): SDG 8 | SDG 11
Summary: The Prieska Copper Zinc Mine (PCZM) host community Task Team, in collaboration with Orion Minerals, developed a framework to enhance community participation, focusing on employment and procurement opportunities in the Siyathemba Local Municipality and Vanwyksvlei areas.

Kropz
Business Action: Revitalising the Thusong Centre in Hopefield
Goal(s): SDG 4 | SDG 8 | SDG 10 | SDG 11
Summary: Kropz Elandsfontein Mine's ongoing transformation of the Hopefield Thusong Centre exemplified its commitment to fostering holistic community development. With a focus on education, social empowerment, and economic growth, the initiative aimed to bridge gaps, empower individuals, and build a resilient community fabric.

Sibanye Stillwater
Business Action: Sibanye-Stillwater's GBV Prevention Journey
Goal(s): SDG 5 | SDG 10 | SDG 16
Summary: In 2022, Sibanye-Stillwater initiated comprehensive training programmes targeting GBV and substance abuse, recognising their impact on vulnerable groups. Over 71 churches participated, empowering faith-based leaders to address social challenges. Additionally, anti-sexual harassment campaigns and reporting centres were established, promoting workplace safety.

Sasol
Business Action: Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme
Goal(s): SDG 11 | SDG 6 | SDG 12
Summary: Sasol's community-focused initiatives in Govan Mbeki and Metsimaholo municipalities include educational campaigns, school-based environmental education, tree planting, recyclable waste collection, illegal dumpsite transformation, and water-saving projects.

Anglo American | Sasol | BMW South Africa
Business Action: Green Economy Innovation
Goal(s): SDG 9 | SDG 17
Summary: A collaboration between BMW, Sasol and Anglo American is piloting the launch of a fleet of hydrogen vehicles. This is advancing the process of bringing hydrogen fuel cells and electric vehicles to South Africa.

De Beers Group
Business Action: Preserving our wildlife through translocation initiatives
Goal(s): SDG 15 | SDG 17
Summary: De Beers Group faced an elephant overpopulation challenge at Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve. Collaborating with Peace Parks Foundation, we translocated over 100 elephants to Zinave National Park in Mozambique to restore balance and protect biodiversity.

De Beers Group
Business Action: Advancing women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
Goal(s): SDG 5 | SDG 8 | SDG 10
Summary: De Beers led initiatives fostering gender equality and diversity in STEM, achieving gender parity in leadership and renewing commitments to the UN Women HeForShe Alliance. Strategic partnerships with WomEng and educational institutions empowered women through mentorship, training, and fellowship programmes, catalysing innovation and entrepreneurship in STEM fields.

De Beers Group
Business Action: Preserving our wildlife through translocation initiatives
Goal(s): SDG 3 | SDG 17 | SDG 10
Summary: De Beers Group's Venetia mine hosted free health screening sessions, collaborating with partners like SABCOHA and EOH to detect early signs of health risks in mining communities. With a focus on HIV and TB prevention and treatment, the initiative aimed for zero new infections and deaths while fostering community well-being through comprehensive screenings and micro-enterprise training.

Minerals Council SA
Business Action: Revolutionizing the mining industry through sustainable initiatives
Goal(s): SDG 5 | SDG 3 | SDG 12
Summary: MCSA's initiatives transformed the mining sector, promoting gender equality, health improvement, and water sustainability. The WiM programme led gender transformation, while Masoyise tackled health challenges, and the WC/WDM tool ensured water efficiency, driving sustainable development.

DRDGOLD Limited
Business Action: Empowering communities through collaboration
Goal(s): SDG 1 | SDG 3 | SDG 8 | SDG 11 | SDG 17
Summary: In FY2023, R55.2 million was allocated to socio-economic development, targeting poverty alleviation, skills enhancement, and community empowerment. Collaborating with Umsizi Sustainable Social Solutions, our Broad-based Livelihoods Programme has empowered around 8,000 participants with skills and infrastructure for sustainable livelihoods.

Exxaro
Business Action: Pioneering socio-economic empowerment of entrepreneurs
Goal(s): SDG 10 | SDG 8 | SDG 1
Summary: Exxaro's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) program allocated R842.3 million among 121 beneficiaries over 2018 to 2022, empowering black-owned suppliers and entrepreneurs. Through a holistic approach, the programme promotes economic transformation, supplier diversity, socio-economic impact, and financial sustainability, driving lasting change in communities.

Gold Fields
Business Action: Safeguarding biodiversity at South Deep
Goal(s): SDG 15 | SDG 11 | SDG 10
Summary: South Deep Gold Mine's procurement initiative focused on safeguarding local ecosystems by engaging in sustainable land management with suppliers. It empowered historically disadvantaged persons, nurtured twenty-eight local enterprises, and raised awareness for biodiversity conservation.

Gold Fields
Business Action: South Deep's diversity success
Goal(s): SDG 5 | SDG 10 | SDG 4
Summary: South Deep Gold Mine, a Gold Fields subsidiary, prioritised gender equality realising a 100% increase in female representation in management. Through targeted recruitment and training, they empowered women in leadership, contributing to diversity and inclusivity.

Gold Fields
Business Action: Creating sustainable mines through solar energy
Goal(s): SDG 11 | SDG 7
Summary: In 2022, South Deep completed a R750 million, 50MW solar plant, pioneering Goldfield's renewable energy integration. The initiative provided 24% of the mine's power needs and benefited stakeholders across sectors.

Imerys South Africa
Business Action: Minimising gh gas to boost decarbonisation
Goal(s): SDG 13 | SDG 12
Summary: In 2023, Imerys achieved a significant 24% cut in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 2021, aligning with a 1.5°C trajectory by 2030. With validated targets since 2017, their focus on advanced carbon capture technologies ensures a greener future.

Harmony
Business Action: Transforming solar energy in the Free State
Goal(s): SDG 7 | SDG 9 | SDG 13
Summary: Harmony strategically invested in renewable energy, exemplified by the commissioning of 30 MW solar photovoltaic plants in the Free State, reducing approximately 65,000 tonnes of CO_2 emissions and anticipated to save an estimated R425 million per year in electricity costs upon completion.

Impala Platinum
Business Action: Creating local jobs through recycling initiatives
Goal(s): SDG 10 | SDG 8
Summary: Impala's Rustenburg and Marula mines engaged local communities in waste management, providing employment and supporting livelihoods. Waste was sorted and sold to recyclers, promoting a circular economy.

Kudumane Mine
Business Action: Filling technology and healthcare gaps In South African schools
Goal(s): SDG 11 | SDG 4 | SDG 10
Summary: KMR partnered with the Department of Education, providing 120 tablets to Grade 12 students and allocating 58 tablets and 10 laptops to teachers. They invested over R1 million in PPE and hospital linen to support Covid-19 response efforts. These initiatives demonstrate KMR's commitment to education and healthcare.

Northam Platinum
Business Action: Investing in worker health inside and outside of the mine.
Goal(s): SDG 3 | SDG 8
Summary: Investing in digital tech and automation, Northam Platinum prioritised safety with a three-pillar approach: enabling environments, empowering people, and implementing fit-for-purpose systems, including initiatives like the "I am important" campaign.

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Addressing Climate Change

Minerals Council Climate Change Framework

The mining, minerals and natural gas sector is aligning around a climate action framework. A less carbon-intensive future requires a comprehensive response from across the industry and in strategic partnership with cross-sector stakeholders. This table outlines each of the areas that need to be addressed. The following components are critical for a comprehensive climate change response in the mining industry:

Area	Core Activities	Examples
MITIGATION	Reduce direct emissions	Decarbonising haul fleets with battery technology, hydrogen fuel cells and trialling green ammonia; participating in carbon markets and credit schemes, carbon offsets, adoption of low emissions mining practices; improved combustion technologies, fugitive emissions technologies R&D.
	Reduce Scope 2 emissions	Includes management of energy usage (eg integration of renewables into mining operations, smart energy optimisation systems, energy harvesting) and resource efficiency and process optimisation (eg material transport alternatives, pre-processing and sorting, reprocessing).
	Reduce Scope 3 emissions	Collaborate with stakeholders in the value chain to support industry to develop technologies and pathways for emissions intensity reduction.
ADAPTATION	Risk mapping	Climate proof mining operations, incorporate climate scenarios into project design and mine closure planning, establish how climate change will affect demand, supply, and implied pricing for portfolio of commodities, including host communities in climate risk and resilience planning.
	Planning for increased variability and intensity in weather patterns	Disaster preparedness planning for unpredictable and high intensity weather events, water stress (drought and flooding) planning; preparing workforce and infrastructure for increased average temperatures.
	Shifting portfolio to adapt to changing demand for minerals	Waste valorisation, mining critical minerals of the future.
JET Just Energy Transition	Minimise impact of energy transition on employees	Creating green jobs, managing the impacts of labour dislocation, and reducing economic over-dependence on the mining sector.
	Community engagement and public awareness ensuring procedural justice is achieved	Developing tools and guidance for vulnerability assessments and adaptation activities for host communities; empowering workers, communities, and small businesses to define their own development pathway in the transition.
	Refine mine closure planning to account for the impacts of the energy transition	Understand the required equilibrium between the closure landscape and the existing landscape; accounting for impacts on economic development, including economic diversification and entrepreneurship development, aligning to social performance and SLP programmes, planning compensation allowances for early closures.

Note: Further information on this framework can be found in the Minerals Council Climate Change Fact Sheet, published in February 2023.

MINING AT A GLANCE

Snapshot 2023[1]:

Value of production	Direct GDP contribution[2]	Percentage contribution to GDP	Total primary sales	Minerals exports	Employment[3]
R1.1 trillion	R425.6 billion	6.2%	R786.2 billion	R781.6 billion	477,000
(2022: R1.2 trillion)	(2022: R483.3 billion)	(2022: 7.3%)	(2022: R883.5 billion)	(2022: R882.8 billion)	(2022: 469,353)

Employee earnings	PAYE by mining employees	VAT (net outflows)	Company tax paid	Royalties[4]
R186.5 billion	R31.3 billion	R37.2 billion	R89.9 billion	R14.1 billion
(2022: R174.2 billion)	(2022: R27.1 billion)	(2022: R28.9 billion)	(2022: R73.6 billion)	(2022: R25.3 billion)

[1] *Estimates are based on the most recent data available up to the date of this publication.*
[2] *Based on current market prices.*
[3] *Full year employment estimate based on most recent data available up to the third quarter of 2023.*
[4] *Based on National Treasury's estimates as in the Statement of National Revenue, Expenditure and Borrowing from April 2023 to October 2023.*

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Industry Focus:

Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

1st Priority: 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
2nd Priority: 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
3rd Priority: 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Telecommunications, ICT, Education and Media digital access has improved, but further progress remains vital.

Digital, information and educational access and competency are critical enablers to an inclusive and prosperous South Africa. The private sector has made phenomenal progress, offering solutions that both mitigate inequality and offer growth opportunities, but there is still a long way to go.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Network coverage is nearly universal at 99.9% for 3G
2. Internet access had expanded to 72.3%
3. Telecommunications entities are expanding inclusive services
4. Telcos are increasingly offering financial services
5. Aggressive ICT innovation is leaving many companies behind
6. Cyber security and data protection are rising challenges
7. Progress on educational and youth employment is insufficient
8. Growing misinformation and fake news is a growing concern
9. Access to affordable hardware and software has been compromised
10. Loadshedding has caused disruption, impacting ESG goal attainment

Network coverage is nearly universal: South African public private investments have delivered near universal 3G (99.9%) and 4G/LTE (97.7%) digital coverage, enhancing internet access with a notable emphasis on mobile internet use. The rollout of fibre optic cables and mobile has been slower, with penetration to homes sitting at just 5%, well behind the global average. In 2021, 5G had attained a 7.5% coverage, vital to speeds that enable many emerging applications. Expansion of digital access is driving economic growth by enabling new services and creating jobs.

Internet access has improved to 72.3%: In 2023 the 'Toward a Gigabit South Africa' report indicated that South Africa had 43.48 million internet users of it's 60.14 million, citing South Africans as among the most active internet users in the world, with an average of 9.5 hours online per day in 2022. This said, the high cost of data, and digital literacy remain challenges that companies report consistently tackling. Innovative solutions that are not data driven, including, SMS, IVR, web addresses (URL) and USSD-based platforms are being evolved to minimise the requirement for data.

Telecommunications entities are expanding inclusive services: There has been hyper-acceleration of solutions drive digital inclusion, with telecommunications companies developing products and services to enable demographics where smartphone penetration is still low. This enables more equitable access to essential internet services across education, healthcare, finance, government, social support, job search, communication, agriculture, entrepreneurship, and cultural activities.

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Digital innovation is massively fast, driving the Digital Divide wider as opportunities arise.

Telcos are increasingly offering financial services: Solutions for both individuals and businesses including payments, lending, insurance and trading platforms. This is enabling millions of people that were previously unbanked to access to financial services, often through offerings that do not have the same stringent credit record requirements or regulations applied by traditional financial services. Whilst this trend is highly inclusive, in some instances policies, rules and regulations are outdated.

Aggressive ICT innovation is leaving many companies behind: Within the digital economy, companies of all sizes are reporting challenges with the high cost and complexity of adopting future fit, cloud-based technologies. The workforce skills gap is being worsened by the rise of AI and automation, with growing concern about outdated curriculums that fail to address emerging needs. Larger companies are struggling with entrenched legacy systems and the cultural pivot towards evolving operating models. Companies report that advisory services and resources are expensive and limited, and that projects often initially fail due to insufficient change management to address workforce resilience and confidence with emerging technologies.

Cyber security and data protection are rising challenges. Although the adoption of blockchain technology can enhance security, promoting trust and transparency in reporting, companies are citing cybersecurity as a growing concern. There are increasing difficulties for companies in offering data protection and privacy. Bigger companies are working to ethically leverage big data for prosperity and sustainability goals, whilst assuring the protection of individual privacy rights. Blockchain and quantum security principles are not yet fully addressed in policies, regulations and clear ICT standards. Whilst larger companies are struggling with stringent compliance across varying jurisdictions, many smaller companies are being left behind.

Strong progress on educational and youth employment is insufficient. Digital platform initiatives responded very positively during the Covid-19 pandemic, improving access to quality education for all, including marginalised groups.

Educational organisations and companies have continued to deliver on skills development aspects of the B-BBEE initiatives and are reporting vibrant growth in the number of local and global partnerships and collaborations that have been enabled through digital education. A primary challenge arising is addressing workplace readiness to address the material youth unemployment issue. There is a strong focus on making education more accessible, inclusive, and on adapting curricula to be future fit. Another challenge reported is retaining learners dropping out due to financial pressure caused by inflation.

Growing misinformation and fake news is compromising media and advertising. The advertising and media industry is struggling with responsible advertising, green-washing, and the availability of traceability, therefore compromising supply of the quality sustainability information need to motivate for attainment of the 2030 Agenda. Budgets for driving awareness of sustainability issues are small, with both digital and print paid media reporting they are struggling to combat misinformation and the freedom of the press due to low revenues in competition with social media and a rise in fake news compromising access to ethical journalism. This includes a gap in information for public health and to address rising problems with excessive screen time, digital addiction and digital wellbeing.

Access to affordable hardware and software has been compromised. The South African private sector is facing formidable challenges in procuring ICT hardware and software, due to the global supply chain crisis, ongoing superconductor shortage, inflation and the depreciating rand. Escalated ICT costs hinder access to technology essential to successful digital operations, especially for smaller companies. This reduces competitive edge and slows progress toward a more digitally inclusive society. Companies are urging for action to enable robust local supply chains and local hardware production.

Loadshedding has caused disruption, impacting ESG goal attainment. Sustained power outages have disrupted operations and increased both operating costs and the carbon footprint of companies without access to low carbon backup solutions.

Note: Figures in this section are from the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) State of the ICT Sector Report of South Africa 2022, unless otherwise stated.

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Industry Timeline

Telecommunications, Education and ICT

The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-2021 accelerated changes that require a rapid response. Over the past two decades, South African has significantly enabled digital inclusion, however, accelerated digital innovation mean that industry strategic initiatives and regulatory frameworks now need to rapidly evolve. Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) are vital in responding to the ongoing evolution of the skills development needs of the economy and workforce.

2000s Cellular phone adoption starts to increase in South Africa with initiatives to increase network coverage and provide internet initiating action to enable digital inclusion.

2001: The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) is established, enabling regulation of the emergent telecommunication and broadcasting sectors.

2003: The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) and the Skills Development Levies Act introduce a levy-grant scheme to fund skills development initiatives through SETAs. The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act is enacted, incorporating Skills Development to promote the training of historically disadvantaged South Africans.

2004: The South African Council for Educators (SACE) is established to professionalise the teaching profession and ensure qualified educators adhering to a code of ethics.

2006 – 2007: Amazon Web Services launches, marking a significant development in cloud computing. In 2007 the iPhone launches, accelerating mobile application development, whilst SAP launches it's first cloud-based ERP application for mid market companies (ByDesign).

2013: The SA Connect project launches, targeting high-speed internet access for 100% of the population by 2030, aiming to enhance digital inclusion.

2016: The Fees Must Fall movement leads to policy changes offering more affordable higher education, with the 2017 B-BBEE skills development levy being updated to focus on internships, apprenticeships and learnerships due to changing workforce needs.

2020 Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) to South Africa, following on from the European GDPR data protection regulations. This couples with increased cybercrime enabled by artificial intelligence.

2020: The Covid-19 pandemic accelerates the shift towards remote work and learning, highlighting the importance of ICT infrastructure, whilst the growing semiconductor shortage and other factors start to impact availability and price of ICT equipment for businesses and individuals.

2021 Onwards: Aggressive digital innovation and inclusion drives higher internet use and penetration with 3G coverage achieving 99.9%, digital products, services and digital ways of working rapidly evolve.

Overall Analysis: Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

The final prioritisation of the Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media SDGs is as follows, based on a balanced view of participating companies' individual priorities, risks, opportunities, and the priority topics arising from the process:

TELECOMMUNICATION, ICT, EDUCATION AND MEDIA SDGs

COMPANY PRIORITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media companies prioritise the action that will be taken to deliver sustainability outcomes...

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR 2024 Analysis.

TOP FOUR PRIORITY TOPIC SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When the priority topics affecting Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media are reviewed the emerging SDGs include...

In the Telecommunication, ICT, Education, and Media sector, the highest priority is a just transition to carbon neutrality, focusing on reducing carbon footprints and adopting renewable energy. Effective public-private sector collaboration is crucial for achieving sustainability goals through partnerships. Empowering women to achieve gender equality promotes diversity and inclusion. Leveraging sustainability frameworks ensures responsible practices across the industry. Solving the energy crisis addresses energy efficiency and the adoption of renewable sources. Growing sustainable investment is essential for funding green initiatives. Synergies with civil society and communities foster local engagement. Addressing climate action and ethical transformation governance ensures long-term sustainability.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media companies identify risks that they are facing, the SDGs that challenge risks include...

The Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media sector faces pressures from high inflation and policy instability, exacerbated by rapid technological changes and skills shortages. These factors contribute to infrastructural and operational vulnerabilities, stressing the need for robust regulatory frameworks and investment in human capital.

TOP SIX OPPORTUNITY SDGs:

PRORITISATION RATIONALE

When Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media companies prioritise the emergent opportunities they foresee for the private sector, the primary SDGs include...

Opportunities in these sectors include enabling digital solutions to support sustainability outcomes and deploying universal internet access through 5G and low-cost satellite connections. Developing personalised digital learning experiences across all educational stages is crucial. Engaging in youth recruitment and workforce readiness accelerates partnerships, training, and onboarding young talent. Promoting quality media and access to information ensures trusted, accessible content and applications. Specialising in AI, analytics, and automation improves business processes and product quality. Partnering to support local ICT equipment production and recycling fosters local industry growth. Enhancing data sovereignty and cyber protection involves developing blockchain, quantum, and cybersecurity solutions. Mobilising immersive content creation capabilities focuses on cultural, educational, and entertainment applications.

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Case Studies

Summary of Success Stories:

The telecommunication, ICT, education and media industry exemplary stories detailed within this report include the following case studies:

Vodacom
Business Action: Empowering our communities through digital education
Goal(s): SDG 4 | SDG 5 | SDG 10
Summary: Vodacom empowered South African communities through digital skills training at 92 community centres, benefiting 2,600 female farmers and 1,333 youth. Initiatives like #CodeLikeAGirl promoted inclusivity, while partnerships ensured free internet access for education.

Vodacom
Business Action: Tackling youth unemployment across SA
Goal(s): SDG 8 | SDG 4 | SDG 10
Summary: Vodacom spearheaded initiatives in South Africa, such as Get-a-Gig and job seeker support packages, aimed at addressing youth unemployment. Through partnerships and innovations, they also drove financial inclusion with VodaLend and VodaTrade, empowering local SMEs.

Vodacom
Business Action: Transitioning towards renewable energy
Goal(s): SDG 7 | SDG 13 | SDG 17
Summary: Vodacom went beyond connectivity, prioritising sustainability by setting ambitious targets to cut emissions and transition to renewable energy by 2025. They invested in energy efficiency and renewables, collaborating with independent power producers to drive sustainability.

Naspers
Business Action: Leveraging Ai to create employment opportunities
Goal(s): SDG 9 | SDG 8 | SDG 10
Summary: Naspers prioritised ethical AI, fostering innovation and creating jobs. Their operational approach embedded ethical AI practices, spurring job growth in AI-related fields, working with over 4,000 technical staff utilising PlusOne AI on a regular basis.

EOH
Business Action: Partnering to empower the next generation
Goal(s): SDG 4 | SDG 8 | SDG 17
Summary: EOH invested more than R24m in learning and development with a focus on unemployed youth through job skills and entrepreneurial training, collaborating with partners like Belgium Campus and iOCO Digital.

Xperien
Business Action: Transforming the IT industry through eco-friendly hardware disposal.
Goal(s): SDG 9 | SDG 13
Summary: Xperien prioritised sustainable IT practices through their IT Asset Disposal (ITAD) services, ensuring adherence to circular principles by implementing eco-friendly hardware disposal methods to reduce e-waste.

Big Impact Group | LLC Academy
Business Action: Supporting underprivileged communities while developing leaders
Goal(s): SDG 4 | SDG 10 | SDG 17
Summary: The Big Impact Group established the LLC Academy (LLCA) to develop leadership skills across different tiers, impacting thousands through training programs. Additionally, their support extended to underprivileged schools, reflecting a commitment to both professional development and community upliftment.

Digital Girl Africa
Business Action: Empowering women through digital innovation
Goal(s): SDG 5 | SDG 4 | SDG 8
Summary: Digital Girl Africa bridged the gap between education and employment for African women. With digital literacy, community support, and advocacy, it empowered women across nine African countries.

MTN
Business Action: Preparing local communities for the future through data literacy
Goal(s): SDG 4 | SDG 8
Summary: MTN prioritised digital literacy, focusing on initiatives like their 'Data Literacy for All' programme to empower local communities through digital skills development. Through similar targeted programmes, they equipped their own staff with digital skills of the 'future'.

The YES Ecosystem

Empowering South African Youth Entry to the Job Market

Empowering Youth for a Brighter Future: Over 42% Employed, 14% in Entrepreneurship.
Since inception, the Youth Employment Service (YES) has created 104,322 high-quality youth work experiences up to March 2023. In 2023 alone, YES delivered 32,578 quality work experiences, a 29% increase from the previous year, delivering 952 client programmes. This initiative has provided vital employment opportunities and fostered entrepreneurial talent, with 42% of YES alumni finding employment and an additional 14% embarking on entrepreneurial ventures post-program.

YES has streamlined costs to just 4.1% of the youth benefit, collaborating with 1,479 sponsoring businesses, making demonstrating how the South African private sector is contributing to social impact across diverse sectors, including early childhood development, agriculture, healthcare, and ICT. YES showcases an effective model for addressing youth unemployment through broad sector engagement and private sector partnerships.

Safripol
Recognised for its leadership role in the plastics sector and driving a sustainable circular industry. Safripol supports the "Step Up 2 A Green Start Up" initiative, encouraging South African youth to become ecopreneurs in the green economy, creating 593 work opportunities for YES Youth at various host employers as of March 2023.

Nedbank
In partnership with YES, Nedbank has created work opportunities for close to 10,000 South African youth over three years. More than 360 of Nedbank's YES candidates have been placed in the bank's business units, and pleasingly, more than 1,100 YES Youth have been absorbed permanently into Nedbank or one of their implementation partners over the years of Nedbank's investment in YES.

Shoprite
As South Africa's largest retail group and the biggest private sector employer, Shoprite has invested R145 million in FY22 for the employment, training, and development of unemployed youth, providing 1,900 unemployed youth with workplace experience through YES. Shoprite's efforts are focused on addressing youth unemployment as a key element of their social investment, contributing to economic growth through salaries and tax paid by employees.

MultiChoice
Through its partnership with YES, MultiChoice has created almost 1,000 work opportunities, investing R52.8 million in YES Youth salaries. MultiChoice's learnerships and internships focus on a variety of skills including business analysis, telecommunications systems development, and social work, reflecting the company's commitment to supporting and investing in youth programs.

BMW
Created 1,464 work opportunities since their sign-up with YES, demonstrating a commitment to youth employment and transformation. BMW Group South Africa's engagement in the YES programme has provided aspiring individuals like David Omar, an aspiring data analyst, with meaningful work experience, enhancing employability and self-confidence.

Pizza Hut
Initiated the LeadHERship program in partnership with YES to give job opportunities to young women, addressing workplace gender gaps. Since the program's launch, 162 opportunities have been provided to young black women, equating to R761,400.00 in youth salaries, showcasing Pizza Hut's effort to capacitate young women into roles that would ordinarily be prioritised for young men.

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Industry Focus:
Social Enterprises

1st Priority: 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
2nd Priority: 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
3rd Priority: 5 GENDER EQUALITY

Social Enterprises received outstanding feedback from participating companies.

Since 2019, Social Enterprises in South Africa have faced a trifecta of challenges: the Covid-19 pandemic, persistent loadshedding and a stagnant economy. These factors have reshaped operational capacities, funding streams, and service demands within the sector. These organisations have been recognised for outstanding resilience under duress and for the quality of collaborative relationships within communities.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Increased demand for services amidst operational disruptions
2. Loadshedding complicated service delivery and increased costs
3. Economic stagnation has pressured funding and escalated service needs
4. Adaptation through digital platforms and innovative service models
5. Shifts in focus towards health, food security and immediate aid
6. Collaboration and partnership efforts intensify to maximise impact
7. Financial sustainability concerns prompt sustainability strategy considerations

Increased demand for services amidst operational disruptions:
Participating NGOs reported that the pandemic's onset dramatically heightened the need for NGO services, particularly in health, food security and emergency support. However, operational challenges due to lockdowns and social distancing have hindered service delivery, necessitating rapid adaptation to continue reaching vulnerable communities.

Loadshedding complicated service delivery and increased costs:
Frequent power outages have disrupted day-to-day operations, making it difficult for NGOs to provide consistent services. This has led to additional expenditures on alternative power solutions, straining already limited budgets.

Economic stagnation has pressured funding and escalated service needs:
South Africa's pre-existing economic difficulties were exacerbated by the pandemic, leading to higher unemployment and greater dependence on NGO services. Concurrently, funding has become more precarious, with donors reallocating resources to pandemic-specific responses and facing their own economic challenges.

Adaptation through digital platforms and innovative service models:
To overcome barriers imposed by the pandemic and loadshedding, NGOs are increasingly turning to digital solutions for fundraising, service delivery, and stakeholder engagement, though this shift requires new skills and infrastructure.

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Shifts in focus towards health, food security, and immediate aid: Organisations have reported a need to realign priorities to address the most pressing needs, such as health care and food assistance, sometimes at the expense of long-term programmes and initiatives that could offer more sustainable benefit. Many report that projects that were in the pipeline have not attained the funding needed to mobilise, whilst existing project have sometimes needed to put on hold.

Collaboration and partnership efforts intensify to maximise impact: The sector has seen a push towards even greater collaboration between NGOs, government entities, and the private sector to pool resources, share expertise, and extend their reach, proving essential for addressing the compounded challenges. Companies have reported that NGOs often represent the best collaboration partner within communities. This is due to valuable relationships and experience with operating conditions on the ground.

Financial sustainability concerns prompt strategy revaluations: With the future of funding uncertain, NGOs are rethinking their strategies to ensure financial viability, including diversifying income sources, enhancing efficiency, and demonstrating impact to attract and retain support. During the Voluntary National Review process several participants raised the need to investigate more robust and sustainable funding models, coupled with oversight to ensure efficacy.

Scaling proven initiatives for greater impact: Companies spoke to the strong case for expanding successful programmes. Focusing on scaling initiatives that have shown real results enables NGOs to maximise impact and use resources efficiently. This strategy ensures investments go towards effective interventions; meeting community needs more adeptly. Emphasising evidence-based expansion can attract more funding, as donors prefer projects with a clear impact. This approach supports strategic resource reallocation within the sector, ensuring funds are used to make a significant difference in the lives of South Africans more efficiently.

Boosting conservation and community through tourism: NGOs connecting local communities with biodiversity, conservation and community projects are key in driving job creation in the tourism sector. By merging conservation with local tourism, these organisations not only help preserve South Africa's biodiversity, but also create sustainable economic opportunities for locals.

This model promotes ecotourism and community-based tourism, enhancing environmental stewardship and cultural heritage while empowering communities. Such initiatives strengthen the tourism industry and ensure equitable benefits, aligning conservation with community development. This integrated approach fosters sustainable development, benefiting both the environment and local economies.

Policy Enablement:

The policies that participating companies advocated innovation and reform for include:

Strengthened NGO Funding Mechanisms:

Goals: SDG 17

Develop policies to ensure stable, diversified funding streams for NGOs, including government grants, tax incentives for donors and public funding platforms. Encourage long-term financial commitments to support operational sustainability.

Infrastructure Support and Energy Solutions:

Goals: SDG 7 | SDG 9

Provide subsidies or grants for NGOs to invest in renewable energy sources and backup power systems to mitigate loadshedding impacts. Support the development of infrastructure that enables NGOs to operate effectively, including digital and physical assets.

Capacity Building and Skills Development:

Goals: SDG 4

Invest in training and development programmes for NGO staff and volunteers, focusing on digital literacy, project management and sector-specific skills. This will enhance service delivery and operational efficiency.

Digital Transformation and Innovation Grants:

Goals: SDG 9

Offer grants and support for NGOs to adopt digital technologies for service delivery, fundraising and data management. Encourage innovation through partnerships with tech companies and research institutions.

Regulatory Simplification and Support:

Goals: SDG 16

Simplify regulatory requirements for NGOs, reducing bureaucratic burdens and facilitating easier access to funding and operational approvals. Provide legal and advisory services to assist NGOs in compliance and governance.

Partnership and Collaboration Platforms:

Goals: SDG 17

Create platforms and forums to enhance collaboration between NGOs, government agencies, private sector entities and international organisations. Foster partnerships that leverage collective expertise and resources for greater impact.

Enhanced Public Awareness and Engagement:

Goals: SDG 17

Implement public awareness campaigns to highlight the role and impact of NGOs, encouraging community support, volunteerism and donations. Strengthen the public's engagement with NGOs through educational initiatives and events.

Social Enterprise Development Support:

Goals: SDG 8

Encourage NGOs to develop social enterprises as sustainable funding sources through business development support, mentoring, and access to start-up capital. Promote policies that facilitate the growth and scalability of social enterprises within the NGO sector.

Incentives for Job Creation and Economic Empowerment Projects:

Goals: SDG 8

Offer incentives for NGOs that implement projects focused on job creation, economic empowerment and skills training, particularly in underprivileged communities. Support initiatives that align with national economic development strategies.

Summary of Success Stories:

The Social Enterprises case study stories included in this report are:

Goldilocks and The Bear Foundation

Business Action: Empowering the Next Generation
Goal(s): SDG 3 | SDG 4 | SDG 17
Summary: Goldilocks and The Bear Foundation collaborates with schools and volunteers to provide tailored support for children, fostering academic success and wellbeing. Through interventions like visual therapy and educational assessments, the Foundation facilitates positive transformations, exemplifying its commitment to holistic child development.

Patch-up SA

Business Action: Combating unemployment by providing valuable work experience.
Goal(s): SDG 10 | SDG 8 | SDG 17
Summary: Patch-Up empowered youth and transformed communities by providing over 40 young individuals with valuable work experience, combatting unemployment and fostering holistic development. The stakeholders benefiting from this success include unemployed individuals and their families, local communities, sponsors and the South African government.

Makwande Group

Business Action: Partnering within the industry for sustainable business practices
Goal(s): SDG 17 | SDG 13 | SDG 16
Summary: Makwande Group participated in the NCPC-SA Industrial Symbiosis Programme, which fostered resource exchange among companies, aiming for mutual benefits. It promoted new business opportunities, revenue streams, asset utilisation, GHG emission reduction, resource efficiency and knowledge transfer.

Modern Centric Holdings

Business Action: Pushing the button on period poverty in SA.
Goal(s): SDG 3 | SDG 5 | SDG 10
Summary: The Zakhele's reusable pads initiative addressed period poverty in South African schoolgirls, distributing sanitary products, hosting workshops and providing career guidance. Despite funding challenges initially, partnerships facilitated the donation of over 100,000 pads, improving school attendance and empowering disadvantaged women.

SEED

Business Action: Providing education and training to individuals from marginalised communities.
Goal(s): SDG 1 | SDG 4 | SDG 16
Summary: Seed, an AgriSETA accredited education and training provider, empowers individuals from marginalised communities by equipping them with wellbeing and livelihood skills. Their education systems and programmes focus on enhancing self-sufficiency, problem-solving and fostering peace within communities. Seed's efforts have been effective in promoting holistic development, with potential for replication in other regions.

SEED

Business Action: Implementing the Outdoor Classroom Programme
Goal(s): SDG 2 | SDG 4 | SDG 13
Summary: Seed's Outdoor Classroom Programme integrates Outcomes Based Education in 12 Cape Flats Primary Schools, fostering sustainable practices and empowering students. Partnership with Nedbank GREEN TRUST highlights national potential in addressing food security.

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SEED
Business Action: National scaling of the Sustainable Schools Programme.
Goal(s): SDG 4 | SDG 11 | SDG 13
Summary: Seed's partnership enabled scaling of the Sustainable Schools Programme to 34 primary schools across six South African provinces. The initiative, supported by the National Lottery, DG Murray Trust and Murray and Roberts, implemented the Outdoor Classroom Programme, promoting quality education, sustainable communities and resilience to climate change.

SEED
Business Action: Implementing Seeding Futures, a 10-week accredited vocational youth training programme.
Goal(s): SDG 4 | SDG 8 | SDG 13
Summary: Seed's Seeding Futures programme offers accredited vocational training to youth, fostering resilience and catalysing work opportunities in the local green economy through three modules. This initiative contributes to quality education, decent work and economic growth, and climate action, aligning with multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

SEED
Business Action: Establishing The Green Army, an alumni network for graduates of the Seeding Futures training programme.
Goal(s): SDG 8 | SDG 10 | SDG 13
Summary: Seed's initiative, The Green Army, connects alumni of the Seeding Futures training programme, offering support and opportunities for continued growth and development. This network fosters community engagement, economic empowerment and climate action, contributing to Sustainable Development Goals related to decent work, reduced inequalities and climate resilience.

SEED
Business Action: Alumni Ignite, a programme aimed at fostering work opportunities for alumni and maximising their impact potential.
Goal(s): SDG 8 | SDG 10 | SDG 17
Summary: Seed's Alumni Ignite programme empowers alumni to generate work opportunities and maximise their impact potential. By providing support and tracking the reach of alumni initiatives, Seed promotes economic empowerment, reduced inequalities, and partnerships for the goals, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals related to decent work, reduced inequalities, and partnerships for sustainable development.

SEED
Business Action: Neighbourhood Regeneration, an initiative focused on revitalising neighbourhoods in Cape Town.
Goal(s): SDG 11 | SDG 17
Summary: Seed's Neighbourhood Regeneration initiative aims to revitalise communities in Cape Town, promoting sustainable development and fostering partnerships for the goals. By addressing urban challenges and promoting community resilience, Seed contributes to Sustainable Development Goals related to sustainable cities and communities and partnerships for sustainable development.

Natural Building Collective
Business Action: Enabling the creation of a more sustainable built environment through utilising ancient building techniques combined with modern materials generated from upcycling waste material.
Goal(s): SDG 11 | SDG 4 | SDG 12
Summary: The Natural Building Collective (NBC) operates at the intersection of ancient wisdom and modern innovation, fostering sustainability in construction practices. By repurposing waste materials and integrating traditional building methods, NBC contributes to a range of Sustainable Development Goals.

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INDUSTRY SECTOR GLOBAL GOAL PRIORTISATION

This section explores the industry sector SDG priorities, including shifts and changes in prioritisation, comparing the priorities given in 2023 with the priorities identified in the first South African Voluntary National Review in 2019.

PRIVATE SECTOR PRIORITY SDGs:

In South Africa, industry SDG prioritisation factors are interwoven with how the country's unique socio-economic challenges, environmental issues and development objectives require distinctive approaches to sustainable development.

The top three SDG priorities for each of the industry sectors were as follows:

The **Agriculture, Food Production and Retail** sector placed its highest priority on Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), Zero Hunger (SDG 2), and then Life on Land (SDG 15). This was due to the critical role that companies in the industry play in enabling food security, noting the importance of cost efficient and sustainable farming practices and food production, and the importance of conservation and the protection of South African biodiversity for both agriculture and the hospitality industry.

Conversely, the **Financial Services and FinTech** sector shows a distinct shift towards Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), and Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8). This reflects the sector's role in promoting inclusive economic growth by enabling sustainable finance, and the role that retail banking plays enabling both business and civil society. Financial services are often critical role players in enabling and brokering deals, placing a natural focus on the importance of trust and quality strategic partnerships.

The **Mining, Natural Gas and Resources** sector prioritised Climate Action (SDG 13), Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3) and Gender Equality (SDG 5). This highlights a strong focus on the mitigation of the environmental impact of mining, alongside awareness of its social responsibilities. The industry is strongly focused on modernised operations that are both safe and inclusive.

In contrast, the **Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate** sector ranks Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Climate Action (SDG 13) and Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) as top priorities, which may be attributed to the infrastructural challenges and the drive for sustainable urban development in South Africa.

The **Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health** sector focuses on Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), and Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), emphasising the importance of sustainable energy, economic opportunities, and health considerations in manufacturing and healthcare.

Lastly, the **Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media** sector prioritises Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4) and Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8). This reflects the sector's crucial role in improving access to information, healthcare, and education through technological advancements.

Industry Top Three SDG Priorities

South African companies are prioritising decent work and economic growth, with a strong focus on taking action to address climate impact. There is strong recognition that partnerships will be vital to the attainment of the Global Goals.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

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Industry SDG Priorities

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

In the agriculture, food, and retail industry, there's been a seismic shift in priorities. Quality Education (SDG 4) has tumbled from fourth to seventeenth place, indicating a significant change in focus within the sector. Conversely, **Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)** has made a remarkable leap from sixth to first place, underlining a profound commitment to sustainable practices and resource management in agricultural and retail operations. This shift reflects a growing awareness of the importance of ethical sourcing and environmental sustainability in the industry.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

Analysis of Movements:

In the agricultural sector, significant changes are observed among SDGs. **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)** has moved from first to second place, while **Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3)** shifted from second to ninth place, indicating evolving priorities within agricultural sustainability.

Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) slid from 3rd to 5th place, signalling a shift, while **Quality Education (SDG 4)** plummeted to 17th, underscoring immense hurdles in securing educational access. This drastic drop in SDG 4 accentuates the critical need for addressing educational disparities.

After these shifts, **Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)** dropped drastically from 5th to 16th place, signalling a setback, while **Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)** surged impressively from 6th to 1st, showing a strong prioritisation of sustainability.

While **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)** remains unchanged at 7th place, there's a notable drop for **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)**, falling from 8th to 15th, indicating challenges in this area. However, there are positive counter-improvements, as **Life on Land (SDG 15)** surged from 9th to 3rd place, suggesting progress in biodiversity conservation.

No Poverty (SDG 1) remains steady at 10th place, while Industry, **Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG 9)** showed improvement, rising from 11th to 6th. Additionally, **Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)** have moved up one place from 12th to 13th, demonstrating positive advancements alongside certain challenges.

With **Gender Equality (SDG 5)** experiencing a slight decline from 13th to 14th place, there's notable progress for **Climate Action (SDG 13)**, rising significantly from 14th to 4th. Moreover, **Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17)** have shown strong improvement, moving up from 15th to 8th place, highlighting positive advancements.

There's been remarkable progress with **Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions (SDG 16)** rising from 16th to 13th place, reflecting intensified efforts in governance. Additionally, **Life Below Water (SDG 14)** has surged from 17th to 12th place, underscoring a heightened focus on marine conservation. These strides are noteworthy given their rankings in 2019, showcasing dedicated efforts toward these goals.

"Addressing climate change and water scarcity requires a united effort to implement water-efficient practices and waste reduction strategies across the board. By working together towards a circular economy, we can achieve responsible consumption and production, reducing our collective environmental impact while enhancing the industry's sustainability and profitability."

Name
Role
Company

"To truly transform our food value chain, we must collectively invest in precision agriculture and renewable energy. This is not just about improving our individual companies but about securing our nation's food future and leading a global shift towards sustainability. It's time for our industry to embrace these innovations, create skilled jobs, and drive economic prosperity in a greener economy."

Name
Role
Company

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SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

In the dynamic realm of electricity, water, infrastructure, and real estate, significant shifts in priorities are reshaping the landscape. Notably, **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)** has experienced a descent from first to tenth place, while **Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)** has surged to claim the top spot. This evolution underscores a renewed focus on economic prosperity and inclusive employment practices within the sector, reflecting heightened commitments to environmental sustainability.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

Analysis of Movements:

In the energy sector, priorities are shifting. **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)** has dropped from 1st to 10th place, while **Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)** has risen to the top spot from 2nd place. This reflects a renewed focus on economic prosperity and inclusive employment practices within the industry.

Climate Action (SDG 13) has moved up to 2nd, indicating heightened awareness and commitment to environmental sustainability. Concurrently, **Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)** has surged from 12th to 3rd, underlining a significant shift towards sustainable practices. However, **Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17)** has slipped from 4th to 7th place, suggesting a need for renewed collaborative efforts.

Quality Education (SDG 4) has witnessed a significant decline, dropping from 6th to 15th place, indicating challenges in ensuring educational access. Concurrently, the focus on **Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3)** has shifted slightly, moving from 7th to 9th place, reflecting ongoing efforts to prioritize safety and wellness. **Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)** has demonstrated improvement, rising from 8th to 6th place, suggesting progress in addressing water-related challenges.

Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG 9) has notably dropped from 9th to 5th place, while **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)** has surged from 10th to 4th. Additionally, **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)** has improved, climbing from 11th to 13th place. These changes underscore evolving priorities and challenges in sustainable development efforts.

Poverty Eradication (SDG 1) has plummeted from 12th to 17th place, signalling challenges in addressing poverty. Similarly, **Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)** slipped from 13th to 14th place. However, **Gender Equality (SDG 5)** has significantly improved, climbing from 14th to 8th place, showcasing progress in promoting gender equity.

Efforts to address **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)** have resulted in a drop from 15th to 16th place. Meanwhile, progress in biodiversity conservation **Life on Land (SDG 15)** is evident with a rise from 16th to 12th place. Furthermore, significant improvements in marine conservation Life **Below Water (SDG 14)** are notable as it climbed from 17th to 11th place.

"The real estate sector must rise to the challenge of sustainability. We need to push beyond current standards and make sustainable design and construction the norm, not the exception. It's critical that we build spaces that last and live in harmony with our environment."

Name
Role
Company

"Advancing the energy transition is a collective responsibility. We must forge partnerships that bridge public and private efforts, ensuring that every player contributes to a grid that is not only green but also robust and capable of fuelling our economy sustainably and equitably."

Name
Role
Company

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SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

Financial Services and FinTech

Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17) has moved into first position, up 9 places since 2019. This reflects the growing importance of collaboration, and the special role that financial services play in mobilising and overseeing the governance of partnerships. In second place, **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities** communicates the disproportionate impact that the pandemic and weak economy have on the vulnerable. Financial services has been on the frontline of action to prevent impact on households and businesses alike.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

Analysis of Movements:

Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) holds onto 3rd place, down one place since 2019. This embodies the critical role financial services place in investment and sustainable economic growth.

Climate Action (SDG 13) has demonstrated a colossal risk to 4th place, from 11th in 2019, indicating an escalated concern for climate change and the role financial players are taking in both investment and financing of just energy transition, which perhaps accounts for the drop of **SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy**, **SDG 15: Life on Land** and **Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)** which often result in climate action outcomes.

While **Quality Education (SDG 4)** remains a top-five priority, it has dropped from 1st place in 2019. Companies report that financial literacy and staff training to enable the protection of customers are vital.

Like **SDG 11**, **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)** and **No Poverty (SDG 1)** have also risen considerably, with banks reporting that customers are struggling, debt and loan repayment, and inflation. This also reflects the growing priority placed on future food security, rising food prices and the investments being made in sustainable agriculture, with a rise in **Life Below Water (SDG 14)** which offers food security outcomes.

The sustained high prioritisation of **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)** which is linked to both infrastructure projects and growing need for local enterprise development investment to address supply chain and transport challenges.

Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3) has increased significantly to 8th position, up from 13th place, this can be following the impact of the pandemic and the role that insurance players take in ensuring value propositions that deliver healthcare solutions.

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9) has fallen from 3rd place to 11th position possibly indicating prioritisation of innovation through the lens of other specific goals. Whilst **Gender Equality (SDG 5)** remained constant, with gender equality being generally more advanced in finance services than some other industries.

Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions (SDG 16) has fallen, perhaps following the end of state capture, just as **Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)** is down 8 places perhaps following the end of the water crisis.

"Since 24 February 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine, the dark clouds of war have overshadowed the international economy, inevitably reaching South Africa. The war heightened geo-political tensions and disrupted global supply chains inconsequential ways, as seen in the prices of key commodities, like oil, gas and grain. This translated into a spike in global inflation that led to central banks in developed and emerging economies to embark on aggressive interest rate hikes. This in turn weakened emerging market currencies and economies, including those in sub-Saharan Africa."

Lungisa Fuzile
Chairman
The Banking Association South Africa

"Absa is sponsoring the VNR initiative as a way of underscoring its unwavering commitment to the SDGs. This is because VNRs can play a critical role in accelerating progress by propelling all role players forward, whilst ensuring that our steps align with our collective aspirations. "

Punki Modise
Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer
Absa Group

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SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

Over the past five years, significant shifts have occurred in Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health. Notably, **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 7)** surged from 10th to 1st place, reflecting substantial progress, while **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 11)** faced challenges, dropping from 11th to 14th place. These changes highlight the dynamic nature of sustainable development efforts.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

Analysis of Movements:

In Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health, notable shifts occurred. **Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)** experienced a slight drop, moving from 1st to 2nd place. Additionally, **Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)** saw a decline, slipping from 2nd to 6th. Conversely, **Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3)** plummeted significantly, falling from 3rd to 15th place. These changes reflect evolving priorities and challenges within sustainable development endeavours.

Quality Education (SDG 4) maintained its position at 4th, reflecting a consistent focus on educational advancement. However, **Life on Land (SDG 15)** experienced a slight decline, moving from 5th to 13th place, signalling challenges in biodiversity conservation efforts. Additionally, **Climate Action (SDG 13)** dropped from 6th to 10th, highlighting the pressing need for intensified efforts to mitigate climate change impacts.

In recent evaluations, sustainable development priorities have shifted. **Gender Equality (SDG 5)** slightly dropped to 8th place, while **Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)** soared to 3rd, reflecting increased focus. Meanwhile, **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG 9)** remained steady at 9th.

Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 7) experienced a remarkable ascent, leaping from 10th to 1st place, reflecting heightened attention to urban sustainability. Conversely, **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 11)** declined to 14th, signalling challenges in fostering peaceful societies. Meanwhile, **Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)** saw a slight improvement, moving from 12th to 11th, indicating ongoing efforts to address societal disparities.

No Poverty (SDG 1) made a significant leap, ascending from 13th to 7th place, marking a substantial improvement. Similarly, **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)** rose from 14th to 12th, reflecting increased efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition. Additionally, **Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17)** experienced a remarkable surge, climbing from 15th to 5th, indicating enhanced collaboration towards achieving sustainable development objectives.

Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16) maintained its position at 16th, signalling stability in this area. Similarly, remained at 17th place, suggesting consistent focus despite no significant movement.

> **"Innovation in sustainability within manufacturing and pharma means rethinking how and what we produce. Let's lead the way in eco-friendly manufacturing processes and sustainable healthcare solutions, setting a benchmark for others to follow."**
>
> Name
> Role
> Company

> **"For manufacturing to align with the 2030 agenda, we must embrace circular economy models and renewable energy, reducing waste and emissions. It's time for bold steps towards a sustainable industrial future."**
>
> Name
> Role
> Company

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SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Climate Action (SDG 13) has risen to priority one, up 8 places since 2019. This reflects an alignment within the industry, pointing to the importance of progress to ensure responsible, modern and sustainable mining. This prioritisation has shifted **Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3)** into second place, still an intense priority as mines continue work to ensure safety first, with attainment of the best safety record achieved so far, combined with efforts to ensure workplace and host community wellbeing.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

Analysis of Movements:

Gender Equality (SDG 5) has risen significantly to 3rd place, reflecting the opportunities for women in mining. While currently only 12% of the workforce is female, evidence shows that women make mining safer, with rapidly evolving roles levelling the playing field as mines adapt working environments and facilities to enable gender equality.

Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) sits in 4th position, high due to the expected mining focus on investment and sustainable growth in a rapidly modernising and evolving industry that is vital to the supply of minerals that are critical to the future green economy.

Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), previously ranked ninth has risen to 5th place in 2024. This reflects ongoing mining industry effort to monitor and manage water sustainably, leveraging technologies and transparent reporting to manage improvement in often water scarce natural environments.

Quality Education (SDG 4) while falling two places, remains a very high priority as mines focus on nurturing new skills and investing in learning that empowers host communities over the long term.

Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) has dropped 4 places, despite strong focus, likely due to a shift in lens, as action for this goal often also drive **Climate Action (SDG 13)**. This outcome-based mindset can also be seen in the rise of **Life on Land (SDG 15)**, up five places, showing an emphasis on environmental stewardship and the protection of biodiversity from environmental impact.

Consistent with other industries, **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)** has risen 7 places to 9th, alongside a rise in priority for **Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)**, while **No Poverty (SDG 1)** holds steady. These three goals have been stress-tested by the pandemic and a weak economy, driving challenges in host communities that mines are working to mitigate.

Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17) and **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)** have dropped, likely due to priority placed on other goals.

Slight rises for **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)** and Industry, **Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9)** are likely due to action to mitigate impact, combined with the heavy needs of mining modernisation. That **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)** has fallen could reflect the heavy demands of other priorities, as does the sustained low position for **Life Below Water (SDG 14)** which is connected to significant future opportunity.

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SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3) has rocketed 12 places upward into first position since 2019. This reflects a natural response to the Covid-19 pandemic which directly compromised the health and wellbeing of workers and raised health concerns as a priority for customers and consumers. **Quality Education (SDG 4)** retained second position, as it is the core business of educational organisations, and vital to enablement for telecommunications and ICT industry workers and customers alike.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

Analysis of Movements:

Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) is up 4 places reflecting industry ability to grow, make economic impact and create employment opportunity, with a similarly significant rise for **Gender Equality (SDG 5)** up 11 places since 2019, communicating an emphasis on both educational and ICT strategies that can directly and powerfully target gender equity.

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), the top priority in 2019, has fallen sharply to eleventh in 2024, with **Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17)** and **Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions (SDG 16)** also seeing a considerable falls to 13th and 15th place.

These three unexpected drops are due to the increased priority given to **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)** and **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)** which are up 8 and 3 places respectively. This is consistent with other industries, who are concerned about food inflation, and who are interested in the localisation agenda, and reflecting the interests of the greater number of schools participating in the process.

Responsible **Consumption and Production (SDG 12)** has moved up to ninth in 2024, balancing against **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)** which has moved down slightly. This could reflect how companies in this sector are addressing the impact of load-shedding, where efficient consumption is a more practical recourse than energy production.

The industry opportunity to directly contribute to climate action is lighter in this industry sector than those with large scale operations, explaining a slight drop in **Climate Action (SDG 13)** which has risen exponentially in other industries.

Similarly, **No Poverty (SDG 1)** and **Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)** have moved downward slightly, reflecting the priority placed on SDGs where more direct impact can be delivered through company business models.

Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), **Life on Land (SDG 15)** and **Life Below Water (SDG 14)** have remained consistently positioned with lower priority, perhaps due to the lower impact industry operations have directly on the environment.

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SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

Social Enterprises

Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) has soared to the 15th position to 3rd position in 2024. This leap underscores a significant shift in focus towards creating more sustainable urban environments and enhancing community resilience. **Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)** has surged to 6th position from 13th. This highlights an emphasis on improving access to clean water and sanitation facilities, essential for promoting good health and wellbeing. **Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17)** surged from 8th to 1st position. This significant rise underscores the importance of fostering collaboration and mobilising resources for collective efforts towards achieving sustainable development goals.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS:

No Poverty (SDG 1) has moved from 1st place to 10th place, and could suggest a shift in funding priorities, changes in political landscapes or alterations in the socio-economic context of the communities served may also contribute to the decline in focus on poverty alleviation efforts. **Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)** has moved from 2nd to 7th place, indicating progress in addressing inequalities.

Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3) have moved from 3rd place to 8th place, highlighting the need for renewed emphasis on global health initiatives and community wellbeing. Industry, **Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9)** have dropped significantly from 5th place to 14th place. It could indicate evolving needs or emerging challenges that have led organisations to allocate resources differently.

Gender Equality (SDG 5) has risen from 6th place to 3rd place. This upward movement reflects an increased commitment within the sector to address systemic gender equality not only as a fundamental human right, but as a critical factor in achieving sustainable development goals. **Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)** have improved from 7th place to 5th place and signifies ongoing efforts to prioritise economic growth and employment opportunities.

Zero Hunger (SDG 2) has maintained its position in 9th place, suggestion ongoing efforts to address food insecurity and sustained dedication to combating hunger. **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)** experienced a decline from 10th to 15th position. This could indicate the need for renewed efforts or innovative approaches to address energy access and sustainability issues effectively.

Responsible **Consumption and Production (SDG 12)** maintained its position in 11th place. Consistent ranking suggest continued attention to minimise environmental impact and promotion responsible resource use. **Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions (SDG 16)** has seen a slight decline from 12th to 13th place. This indicates a need for continued focus on enhancing institutional capacity, promoting transparency and accountability, and strengthening legal frameworks.

Life on Land (SDG 15) moved from 14th to 15th place and **Life Below Water (SDG 14)** remain in last place. This highlight the need for continued focus on marine and terrestrial conversation efforts within the sector.

Climate Action (SDG 13) moved from 16th to 12th place. This upward movement indicates a heightened recognition of the importance of climate action initiatives.

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2024 VNR SDG Prioritisation

SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

Improved priority definition, with more inclusive participation

Higher number of participants, and a more diverse range of companies. The 2024 Voluntary National Review process is based on the detailed input of 73 participating companies. The quality of participation has improved, with better balanced representation within each industry sector. In addition, the rating scale for prioritisation was evolved to better define the extent to which each goal is a priority. This has enabled more consistent company input. In addition, there was improved representation of medium and small companies in the process.

	OVERALL PRIVATE SECTOR PRIORITIES	AGRICULTURE FOOD PRODUCTION AND RETAIL	ELECTRICITY, WATER, INFRASTRUCTURE AND REAL ESTATE	FINANCIAL SERVICES AND FINTECH	MANUFACTURING AND CONSUMER GOODS, PHARMA AND HEALTH	MINING, NATURAL GAS AND RESOURCES	TELECOMMUNICATION, ICT, EDUCATION AND MEDIA	SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
1	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	13 CLIMATE ACTION	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
2	13 CLIMATE ACTION	2 ZERO HUNGER	13 CLIMATE ACTION	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	4 QUALITY EDUCATION
3	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	15 LIFE ON LAND	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	5 GENDER EQUALITY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	5 GENDER EQUALITY
4	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	13 CLIMATE ACTION	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	13 CLIMATE ACTION	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	5 GENDER EQUALITY	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
5	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	2 ZERO HUNGER	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
6	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	2 ZERO HUNGER	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	1 NO POVERTY	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
8	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	5 GENDER EQUALITY	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	5 GENDER EQUALITY	15 LIFE ON LAND	1 NO POVERTY	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
9	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	2 ZERO HUNGER	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	2 ZERO HUNGER
10	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	1 NO POVERTY	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	1 NO POVERTY	13 CLIMATE ACTION	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	1 NO POVERTY
11	5 GENDER EQUALITY	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	1 NO POVERTY	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
12	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	15 LIFE ON LAND	5 GENDER EQUALITY	2 ZERO HUNGER	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	13 CLIMATE ACTION
13	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	15 LIFE ON LAND	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
14	1 NO POVERTY	5 GENDER EQUALITY	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
15	15 LIFE ON LAND	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
16	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	2 ZERO HUNGER	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	15 LIFE ON LAND	15 LIFE ON LAND
17	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	1 NO POVERTY	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER

METHODOLOGY: Companies prioritised the SDGs on a scale between 1 and 10, giving a rating for the relative level to which action by the company is impacting the goal, and for the extent to which the company business model and strategy has alignment with the SDG. This rating was then averaged into a total across the industries, with each of the 6 industry sectors contributing equality to the total priority overall.

Industry sectors were kept consistent with the 2019 segmentation. More information about this industry segmentation is in the industry section of this report.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

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2019 VNR SDG Prioritisation

In 2019 a baseline SDG prioritisation was set

A smaller group of participating companies, and a binary approach. The 2019 Voluntary National Review was the first time that the private sector had reported back on action to deliver the 2030 Agenda. At that time only 20 companies engaged in the process, with each company providing detailed insights and case studies. Financial Services and Mining were the most active industry sectors, partly due to strong sustainability reporting requirements and stakeholder interest. In addition, the majority of companies participating were large, corporate players, able to dedicate time and resources to the process.

	OVERALL PRIVATE SECTOR PRIORITIES	AGRICULTURE FOOD PRODUCTION AND RETAIL	ELECTRICITY, WATER, INFRASTRUCTURE AND REAL ESTATE	FINANCIAL SERVICES AND FINTECH	MANUFACTURING AND CONSUMER GOODS, PHARMA AND HEALTH	MINING, NATURAL GAS AND RESOURCES	TELECOMMUNICATION, ICT, EDUCATION AND MEDIA	SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
1	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	2 ZERO HUNGER	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	1 NO POVERTY
2	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
3	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	13 CLIMATE ACTION	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	1 NO POVERTY	4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	15 LIFE ON LAND	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	13 CLIMATE ACTION	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
6	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	5 GENDER EQUALITY
7	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	5 GENDER EQUALITY	5 GENDER EQUALITY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
8	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
9	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	15 LIFE ON LAND	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	2 ZERO HUNGER
10	13 CLIMATE ACTION	1 NO POVERTY	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
11	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	13 CLIMATE ACTION	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	1 NO POVERTY	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
12	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	1 NO POVERTY	5 GENDER EQUALITY	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
13	5 GENDER EQUALITY	5 GENDER EQUALITY	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	1 NO POVERTY	15 LIFE ON LAND	2 ZERO HUNGER	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
14	1 NO POVERTY	13 CLIMATE ACTION	5 GENDER EQUALITY	15 LIFE ON LAND	2 ZERO HUNGER	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	15 LIFE ON LAND
15	15 LIFE ON LAND	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	2 ZERO HUNGER	1 NO POVERTY	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	5 GENDER EQUALITY	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
16	2 ZERO HUNGER	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	15 LIFE ON LAND	2 ZERO HUNGER	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	2 ZERO HUNGER	15 LIFE ON LAND	13 CLIMATE ACTION
17	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER

METHODOLOGY: Companies either prioritised an SDG or did not, giving a binary result. Results were then counted for each industry sector and converted into a priority ranking. The overall private sector ranking was then weighted against the contribution of that industry to gross domestic product to weight contribution to the overall total SDG prioritisation.

Further information and analysis for the 2019 results can be seen in the Private Sector Contribution to the Voluntary National Review Report of 2019.

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

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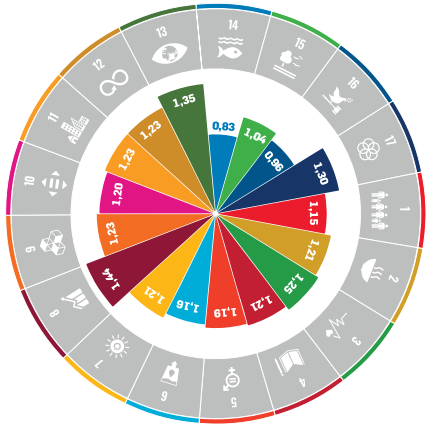
South African Industry Priorities in 2024

SDG Comparison: 2019-2024

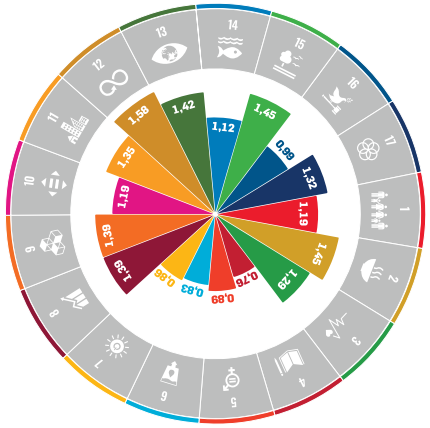
Industry priorities reflect the goals that can most effectively be addressed.

Priorities reflect how the Global Goals are interconnected, with action on one SDG leading to impact on another.
This can lead to insights as to what is directly controllable, and where there are requirements for strategic partnerships to collaborate on action. One example of this is **SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy**. Many companies are not able to directly provide energy, so they priorities either **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production** because they are able to address the efficient use of electricity as a primary means of addressing the impact of loadshedding, and in order to contribute to **SDG 13: Climate Action**.

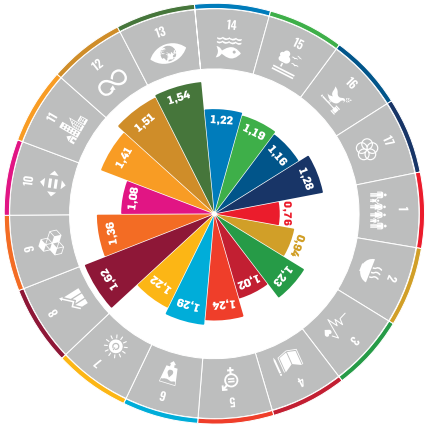
2024 PRIVATE SECTOR OVERALL



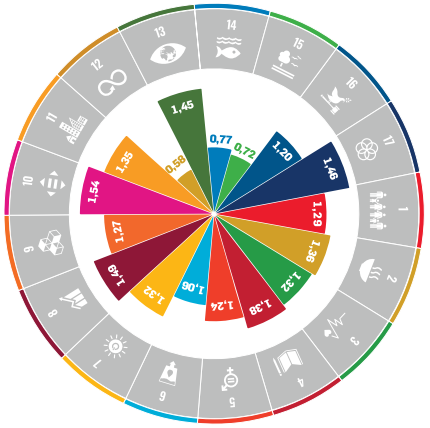
AGRICULTURE, FOOD PRODUCTION AND RETAIL



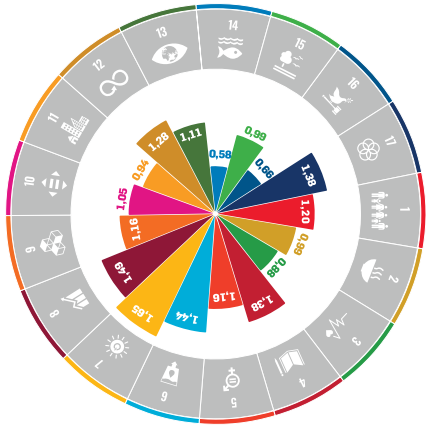
ELECTRICITY, WATER, INFRASTRUCTURE AND REAL ESTATE



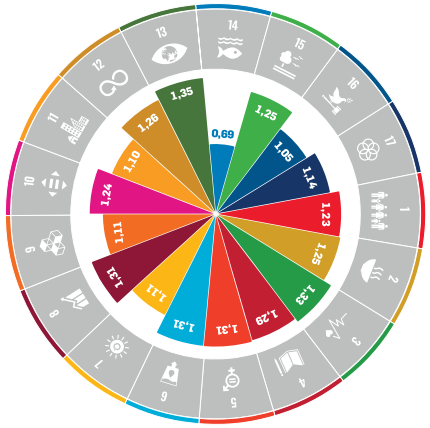
FINANCIAL SERVICES AND FINTECH



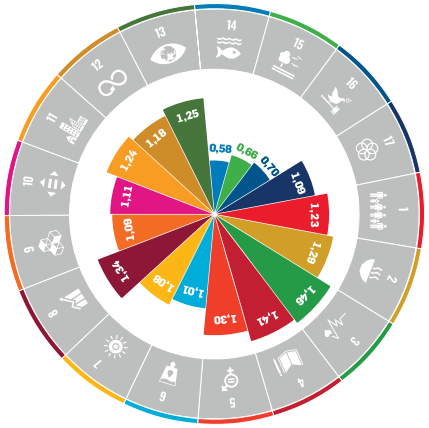
MANUFACTURING, CONSUMER GOODS, PHARMA AND HEALTH



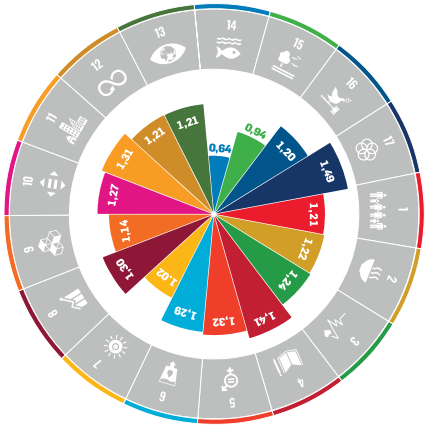
MINING, NATURAL GAS AND RESOURCES



TELECOMMUNICATION, ICT, EDUCATION AND MEDIA



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP



SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks.

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Prioritisation Weighted Index

The SDG prioritisations for 2019 and 2024 were weighted to enable comparison between the five years.

These weighted index prioritisations are used in the Global Goal deep dive to enable comparison between the 2019 and 2024 industry prioritisations.

	SOUTH AFRICAN SECTOR PRIORITIES INDEX	Overall	Agriculture, Food Production and Retail	Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media	Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate	Financial Services and FinTech	Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health	Mining, Natural Gas and Resources	Social Enterprises
2019	01. No Poverty	1,13	0,50	0,97	0,10	0,49	0,49	0,41	2,07
2024	01. No Poverty	1,15	1,19	1,23	0,76	1,29	1,20	1,23	1,21
2019	02. Zero Hunger	0,76	1,06	0,35	0,05	0,33	0,39	0,12	1,09
2024	02. Zero Hunger	1,21	1,45	1,29	0,94	1,36	0,99	1,25	1,22
2019	03. Good Health and Wellbeing	1,50	0,99	0,42	0,18	0,81	1,47	0,99	1,82
2024	03. Good Health and Wellbeing	1,25	1,29	1,46	1,23	1,32	0,88	1,33	1,24
2019	04. Quality Education	1,98	0,87	1,11	0,20	2,76	1,38	0,82	1,70
2024	04. Quality Education	1,21	0,76	1,41	1,02	1,38	1,38	1,29	1,41
2019	05. Gender Equality	1,06	0,31	0,21	0,07	0,98	1,08	0,64	1,46
2024	05. Gender Equality	1,19	0,89	1,30	1,24	1,24	1,16	1,31	1,32
2019	06. Clean Water and Sanitation	1,19	0,81	0,28	0,17	1,95	0,98	0,53	0,61
2024	06. Clean Water and Sanitation	1,16	0,83	1,01	1,29	1,06	1,44	1,31	1,29
2019	07. Affordable and Clean Energy	1,26	0,62	0,62	0,29	2,11	0,79	0,23	0,97
2024	07. Affordable and Clean Energy	1,21	0,86	1,08	1,22	1,32	1,65	1,11	1,02
2019	08. Decent Work and Economic Growth	1,91	0,93	0,76	0,27	2,60	1,67	0,94	1,34
2024	08. Decent Work and Economic Growth	1,44	1,39	1,34	1,62	1,49	1,49	1,31	1,30
2019	09. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	1,53	0,43	1,18	0,15	2,44	0,88	0,18	1,58
2024	09. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	1,23	1,39	1,09	1,36	1,27	1,16	1,11	1,14
2019	10. Reduced Inequalities	1,42	0,37	0,69	0,08	2,28	0,59	0,35	1,94
2024	10. Reduced Inequalities	1,20	1,19	1,11	1,08	1,54	1,05	1,24	1,27
2019	11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	1,10	0,68	0,55	0,13	1,79	0,69	0,70	0,36
2024	11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	1,23	1,35	1,24	1,41	1,35	0,94	1,10	1,31
2019	12. Responsible Consumption and Production	1,43	0,74	0,49	0,22	1,63	1,57	0,88	0,85
2024	12. Responsible Consumption and Production	1,23	1,58	1,18	1,51	0,58	1,28	1,26	1,21
2019	13. Climate Action	1,02	0,25	0,90	0,25	1,14	1,18	0,59	0,24
2024	13. Climate Action	1,35	1,42	1,25	1,54	1,45	1,11	1,35	1,21
2019	14. Life Below Water	0,13	0,06	0,07	0,02	0,16	0,1	0,06	0,12
2024	14. Life Below Water	0,83	1,12	0,58	1,22	0,77	0,58	0,69	0,64
2019	15. Life on Land	0,77	0,56	0,14	0,03	0,65	1,28	0,29	0,49
2024	15. Life on Land	1,04	1,45	0,66	1,19	0,72	0,99	1,25	0,94
2019	16. Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions	0,84	0,12	0,83	0,12	1,30	0,20	0,47	0,73
2024	16. Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions	0,96	0,99	0,70	1,16	1,20	0,66	1,05	1,20
2019	17. Partnerships for the Goals	1,16	0,19	1,04	0,23	1,46	0,29	0,76	1,22
2024	17. Partnerships for the Goals	1,30	1,32	1,09	1,28	1,58	1,38	1,14	1,49

SOURCE: Private Sector VNR Participant Survey and Contribution Workbooks for VNR 2024 and the GCSNA VNR 2019 Analysis.

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SDG Priority Rating Scale

A consistent scale for defining the prioritisation level assigned to an SDG:

Participating companies used the following rating scale. This included assessing the extent to which the company's actions would impact the delivery of the Global Goal, and the degree of alignment between the company's business model and strategy with the delivery of the goal. Note that the rating scale does not speak to the scale of contribution, to enable an inclusive approach; thus, a small company with limited resources is able to assign the same level of priority as a larger corporation.

Rating	Company SDG Prioritisation Guide
Rating: 1	**Minimal Priority:** Our activities have little to no impact on this SDG. There is no clear intention to target impact on this goal, and it is not aligned with our business strategy.
Rating: 2	**Low Priority:** We acknowledge the importance of this SDG, but operational activities have light focus on it, strategy is not specifically linked to it, and it is not of vital importance to our stakeholders.
Rating: 3	**Moderate Priority:** We recognise the significance of this SDG and have initiated some steps to incorporate it into our operations. There are moderate efforts to target impact, but alignment with our business strategy is partial.
Rating: 4	**Adequate Priority:** We demonstrate a growing commitment to this SDG by integrating it into various aspects of our business model. Efforts to target impact are visible, and there is an adequate alignment with our business strategy.
Rating: 5	**Balanced Priority:** We actively incorporate this SDG into our core strategies, operations and goals. There are balanced efforts to target impact, and alignment with our business strategy is well maintained.
Rating: 6	**High Priority:** We place a strong emphasis on this SDG and have integrated it deeply into our business culture. We consistently target impact and maintain a high alignment with our business strategy.
Rating: 7	**Very High Priority:** We go beyond the basics, showcasing an exceptional commitment to this SDG. We consistently target substantial impact and maintain a very high alignment with our business strategy.
Rating: 8	**Exemplary Priority:** We lead in targeting impact on this SDG. We set ambitious targets and seamlessly integrate this high priority goal within our business strategy, setting an example for others.
Rating: 9	**Outstanding Priority:** Our dedication to targeting impact on this SDG is exceptional and extends beyond our own operations. Our business strategy is intricately woven with this high priority goal, and we actively influence others.
Rating: 10	**Unparalleled Priority:** We set ourselves unprecedented standards for targeting impact on this SDG. We our culture is centred around this goal, which sits at the very core of our business strategy, our goals and our targets. This goal is of extreme importance to our stakeholders.

The material variances in the prioritisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by different industry sectors in South Africa are driven by the diverse challenges and opportunities each sector faces.

The variation in industry prioritisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in South Africa can be influenced by a range of factors:

1. **Sector-Specific Operations:** Each industry has core activities that align with SDGs. For instance, South Africa's mining sector prioritises SDGs related to health and wellbeing due to the importance of safety in the industry, whilst financial services companies prioritised reduced inequalities (SDG 10) due to the retail banking alignment with opportunities for financial inclusion.
2. **Potential for Impact:** Industries focus on SDGs where they can make the most significant impact. For example, the highly digital telecommunications, ICT and education sector targets quality education (SDG 4) not only because it includes the education industry, but also because of the huge potential to drive education as an outcome through digital products and services.
3. **Regulatory Context:** South Africa's legal and regulatory frameworks can shape industry priorities. With the country's focus on environmental sustainability, industries might prioritise SDGs related to climate action due to JSE frameworks that now features sustainability related indices for listed companies.
4. **Stakeholder Influence:** The expectations of customers, investors and local communities can drive an industry's prioritisation of SDGs. For example, consumer goods and retail companies in South Africa have reported that they are responding to consumer demand for eco-friendly products.
5. **Risk Mitigation:** Industry priorities also reflect SDGs that help mitigate risks pertinent to companies in the sector. For example, water scarcity and cost motivates water-intensive industries within manufacturing and consumer goods to prioritise clean water and sanitation (SDG 6).
6. **Resource Constraints:** Availability of financial and natural resources can dictate which SDGs an industry can address effectively. For example, in South Africa, renewable energy initiatives might be driven by the availability of natural resources like solar and wind.
7. **Geographical Considerations:** The location of industries within South Africa affects their SDG focus. Coastal industries may prioritise marine life (SDG 14), while urban industries might concentrate on sustainable cities (SDG 11).
8. **Market Drivers:** Market opportunities for sustainable practices can guide industry prioritisation, which can offer competitive edges or access to new markets within the South African context.
9. **Longevity and Viability:** Industries consider the sustainability of their operations in the long term, leading to a focus on SDGs that ensure viability, such as those related to energy, climate and partnerships.
10. **Cultural and Social Dynamics:** The cultural and social milieu in South Africa can impact which SDGs are prioritised. Industries might address SDGs that resonate with the country's societal challenges and cultural imperatives.

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THE INNOVATION THAT INDUSTRY IS ANTICIPATING BY 2030

This section captures the future trends and developments that the participating companies anticipate will drive innovation and opportunity, as well as risks, over the second half of the journey toward 2030.

Companies were asked to envision 2030 and suggest the emergent technologies and innovations that will drive industry evolution.

This section of the report focuses on futurology, envisaging the application of future technologies and capabilities within South Africa's context. Many captured concepts are nascent, requiring further research and development. Some concepts will develop faster than others, and most opportunities will necessitate collaboration and systematic hard work for full realisation.

The future is uncertain, but can be better managed through bold forecasting. Companies predict an extremely accelerated transformation, bringing both risks and opportunities. The trends in industry innovation forecasted for 2030 suggest a very high level of change across the six sectors, with common themes emerging as follows:

1. **Technological Integration and Automation:**
   All sectors are anticipating increased automation and the use of advanced technologies such as AI, robotics and IoT to enhance efficiency and safety. This includes precision agriculture in the food sector, autonomous mining operations, and intelligent traffic management in transportation.

2. **Sustainability and Renewable Energy:**
   There is a strong focus on adopting sustainable practices and renewable energy solutions to decrease carbon footprints and address environmental concerns. This theme is evident in sectors like agriculture, real estate and mining, where there's a push for green technologies and circular economy models.

3. **Digital Transformation and Data Utilisation:**
   Sectors highlight the digital evolution as key to their innovation, with data-driven services and blockchain technology playing crucial roles in sectors like financial services and mining for transparency and traceability.

4. **Enhanced Connectivity and Accessibility:**
   With advancements in internet technology, such as 5G and LEO satellites, there is a drive towards universal connectivity that will enable more inclusive access to digital economies and empower remote education and telemedicine.

5. **Personalisation and Inclusivity:**
   The trend towards personalisation is notable in virtual learning and healthcare, aiming to cater to individual needs and bridge the rural-urban divide. Financial services are also moving towards personalised digital solutions to increase inclusivity.

6. **Cyber Security and Data Protection:**
   As industries become more connected and reliant on technology, cyber security is a critical focal point. Sectors like ICT and financial services are particularly invested in quantum cyber security and data sovereignty to protect against sophisticated cyber threats.

7. **Community and Economic Development:**
   Cross-sector collaborations are aimed at creating sustainable communities and local economic opportunities. This is seen in the promotion of eco-tourism in the food sector and community engagement initiatives in mining.

VNR 2024 SOUTH AFRICA

Industry Innovation Trends and Futurology

Transformation can bring both exciting opportunities for unprecedented acceleration in addressing some of South Africa's most serious challenges. However, it also introduces new risks that need to be forecasted and systematically managed.

These trends, applied across the South African private sector landscape, could offer each of the six industries a blend of technological innovation, sustainability and inclusion benefits:

Agriculture Food Production and Retail:

Trends: The integration of precision agriculture, adoption of renewable energy, and a move towards a circular economy signal a shift to sustainable and efficient food systems, with a focus on reducing waste and embracing eco-tourism.

By 2030 we could see:

- Enhanced food security through precision agriculture.
- Sustainable food production mainstreamed.
- Revolutionised accessibility in food retail.
- Circular economies driving waste reduction.
- Renewable energy fuelling greener food processes.
- Eco-tourism fostering sustainable community growth.

Electricity Water Infrastructure and Real Estate:

Trends: The sector is expected to revolutionise with smart grid technology, advanced water systems, and sustainable real estate practices, underlining a commitment to environmental stewardship and resilient infrastructure.

By 2030 we could see:

- Widespread renewable energy adoption and an end to loadshedding.
- A smarter electricity grid enabled by independent renewable energy sources.
- Cleaner, safer, and more abundant water leading to reduced water pollution.
- Cleaner, cheaper, more sustainable and reliable transport.
- More eco-friendly building materials and more green construction jobs.
- More environmentally friendly buildings offering improved quality of life.

Financial Services and FinTech:

Trends: Financial services are pivoting towards blockchain and AI to offer more secure, transparent services, with digital innovation driving decentralised finance and personalisation in investment and banking services.

By 2030 we could see:

- More South Africans with access to financial services and products.
- More personalised, more digitised financial services.
- More new entrants delivering digital financial service value propositions.
- More traceable and transparent financial and non-financial information.
- More aggressive and advanced cyber security landscape.
- More agile financial services transactions and partnerships.

How to read the futurology:

Futurology in business reporting is inherently ambitious, aiming to inspire by projecting possible futures. This section should be approached as a visionary exploration, not as literal predictions. It offers strategic insights into emerging trends and technologies, encouraging companies to think innovatively about long-term opportunities and challenges. As you read, let it spark ideas and discussions about potential growth areas and prepare your organisation to adapt creatively to the unknowns of the future.

Manufacturing Consumer Goods Pharma and Health:

Trends: Precision healthcare, green manufacturing and digitisation are at the forefront, indicating a push for tailored medical treatments and sustainable production methods, bolstered by e-commerce growth.

By 2030 we could see:

- Faster, more accessible early healthcare and treatment options.
- Circular economies that reduce waste and provide job opportunity.
- E-commerce with unprecedented access to local and global markets.
- Green technologies offering cleaner production and eco-innovation jobs.
- Clean, independent renewable energy enabling lower carbon emissions.
- Digital, transparent supply chains enabling fluid ethical procurement.

Mining Natural Gas and Resources:

Trends: This sector is embracing automation, advanced green mining technologies, and a shift towards ethical sourcing and sustainability, focusing on minimising environmental impact and enhancing community welfare.

By 2030 we could see:

- Mining that is safer due to advanced technology.
- Mining that is more ethical due to better traceability.
- Mining that is greener due to more responsible consumption.
- Mining that has created value with minerals used in green technology.
- Mining that is more efficient and automated, producing less waste.
- Mining that is better at enabling host community sustainability.

Telecommunication ICT Education and Media:

Trends: Digital inclusion, immersive content and enhanced cyber security stand out, with rapid advancements in connectivity expected to bridge the digital divide and foster more equitable access to information and services.

By 2030 we could see:

- More inclusion and digital diversity in South African society.
- Personalised virtual learning yielding better educational outcomes.
- Immersive digital content giving content creation growth and work opportunities.
- Easier, quicker ICT development advancing digital applications.
- Stronger data protection and cyber capabilities underpinning ethics and trust.
- Faster, cheaper, more universal access to the global digital economy.

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By 2030: Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

The industry innovation that is forecast includes:

The food value chain is rapidly evolving. Imagine a future where: Agriculture and food retail in South Africa have dramatically transformed, revolutionising food security and sustainability. Reflecting on a future where precision agriculture and sustainable food sources are the cornerstone of food security, drastically reducing hunger and advancing environmental sustainability. South Africa, previously facing challenges in food accessibility and sustainability, now leads with cutting-edge technologies, fostering a vibrant economy rich in opportunities. Digital solutions have reshaped food retail, making nutritious food widely accessible and driving down costs. Furthermore, the embrace of renewable energy in food processing and the growth of eco-tourism highlight a commitment to environmental stewardship and community well-being. This new era, defined by sustainable practices and technological advancements, has not only alleviated poverty, but also propelled the nation into prosperity and resilience, establishing a global benchmark for sustainable development in the food sector.

BY 2030 WE EXPECT TO SEE:

1. Enhanced food security through precision agriculture
2. Sustainable food production mainstreamed
3. Revolutionised accessibility in food retail
4. Circular economies driving waste reduction
5. Renewable energy fuelling greener food processes
6. Eco-tourism fostering sustainable community growth

6 PRIMARY INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS EXPECTED BY 2030

1

More Precise Agriculture:
Precision agriculture using drones, IoT and AI will enhance food security and optimise resource use, increasing yields. Advanced irrigation systems will combat water scarcity, bolstering agricultural productivity. This can reduce hunger, but support for scaling solutions is needed if smallholders are to close the poverty gap.

2

More Sustainable Food Options:
The rise of plant-based proteins, lab-grown foods, and sustainable ocean food options supported by traceability tech will bring a shift towards sustainable and ethical food choices. This approach aims to minimise environmental impacts and potentially create job opportunities in new food sectors, driving economic growth and addressing food insecurity in South Africa.

3

Digital Evolution in Food Retail:
Transformation will bring cashier-less stores and automated supply chains through AI and RFID technologies, revolutionising food accessibility in South Africa. This digital shift has the potential to reduce food prices, contributing to hunger reduction and poverty alleviation. However, it must be navigated carefully to address the potential negative impact on employment.

4

Circular Economies Reduce Waste:
Sustainable packaging and circular economy initiatives in the food industry will aim to significantly reduce waste and environmental impact. By contributing to food security and fostering new job opportunities in waste management and recycling sectors, these efforts will support South Africa's battle against poverty and hunger.

5

More Renewable Energy:
More renewable energy will be fuelling food production and processing, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and operational costs. This transition will support South African climate goals and offer economic benefits by lowering food prices and fostering job creation in green technologies.

6

More Eco-tourism and Agri-tourism:
Growth in eco-tourism and agri-tourism will harness South Africa's rich biodiversity and agricultural heritage, contributing to sustainable economic and community development. These sectors will offer more employment opportunities, stimulate local economies, and reinforce the connection between communities and their environment, playing a critical role in reducing poverty and enhancing food security through sustainable practices.

SOURCE: Empanda, 2023

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By 2030: Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

The industry innovation that is forecast includes:

The future of utilities and infrastructure is on the cusp of a sustainability revolution: Envision a landscape where South Africa benefits from renewable energy solutions, smart grids and water technologies, redefining efficiency and sustainability. Advances in solar, wind and water treatment technologies promise a future where clean energy and water security are accessible to all, significantly reducing environmental impacts. The integration of smart home technologies and innovative construction materials is set to revolutionise urban development, fostering healthier, more sustainable living spaces. This shift towards a greener, more resilient infrastructure underscores South Africa's commitment to pioneering sustainable solutions, laying the groundwork for a prosperous and environmentally conscious future

BY 2030 WE EXPECT TO SEE:

1. Widespread renewable energy adoption and an end to loadshedding
2. A smarter electricity grid enabled by independent renewable energy sources
3. Cleaner, safer and more abundant water leading to reduced water pollution
4. Cleaner, cheaper, more sustainable and reliable transport
5. More eco-friendly building materials and more green construction jobs
6. More environmentally friendly buildings offering improved quality of life

6 PRIMARY INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS EXPECTED BY 2030

1

More Renewable Energy Options:

Innovation in batteries, solar, wind, and other renewable technologies will have made independent energy generation more accessible and affordable. This empowerment of companies and individuals to create their own sustainable power supplies reduces dependency on the national grid. Implementing these solutions can create job opportunities.

2

More Advanced Water Technology:

Improved water treatment, recycling, desalination, and wastewater management technologies will support the efficient use of water and assure water quality. These advancements could ensure a plentiful supply of water and reduce pollution affecting land and ocean environments. By enabling water access across urban and rural areas, these technologies can improve public health, strengthen resilience to climate change, and create new jobs in the water industry.

3

Smart Grid Evolution:

Smart grid technology will have advanced, enabling a modernised national energy network fed by energy from independent producers. This could contribute to ending loadshedding. Advanced grid technology will enable better transportation and sourcing of electricity, improving access to energy and the resolution of electrical faults in the network.

4

Innovative Green Construction Materials:

The construction sector will leverage emerging technologies, such as 3D printing and new green building materials, enabling more affordable and eco-friendly urban development. If South African companies produce new materials locally, construction can become more sustainable, making buildings more enjoyable, healthy and environmentally friendly.

5

Transport Tech Advancement:

Smart devices and technologies for smart traffic management, real-time passenger information, and mobile apps for public transportation access and efficiency will be readily available. This will improve transport for company logistics, public transportation and traffic management, enhancing commuter experiences and opening new avenues for employment and innovation in technology-driven transport solutions.

6

Smarter Real Estate and Properties:

Smart home technologies such as light automation, smart thermostats, security systems, home assistants, energy management tools and home entertainment systems will have flourished. This will lead to more sustainable buildings and homes that are cheaper, more accessible, and improve living standards. These technologies will also create business opportunities and provide jobs.

SOURCE: Empanda, 2023

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By 2030: Financial Services and FinTech

The industry innovation that is forecast includes:

Financial services and FinTech are experiencing accelerated change in how money works. Artificial intelligence is enabling far more efficient use of big data, supporting accelerated advances in reporting that enables fast, informed decisions. In South Africa, the deep use of cellular technology offers intense opportunity for non-financial services sector players to enter the marketplace. Previously unbanked customers are being rapidly acquired and included by diverse and sometimes unregulated players. Investors that were wary of investments due to a lack of high integrity, credible reporting information are becoming more able to validate investment criteria as transparency and traceability increases. A cyber protection gap is fast rising as both criminal activity evolves, leaving many private sector behind in their ability to protect. Rapid evolution of digital financial mechanisms are creating new ways to invest, with ever more ability for potential partners to find each other and collaborate

BY 2030 WE EXPECT TO SEE:

1. More South Africans with access to financial services and products
2. More personalised, more digitised financial services
3. More new entrants delivering digital financial service value propositions
4. More traceable and transparent financial and non-financial information
5. More aggressive and advanced cyber security landscape
6. More agile financial services transactions and partnerships

6 PRIMARY INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS EXPECTED BY 2030

1

More Digital, Data Driven Service:
Financial Services will have made great headway in the digital availability of services moving away from the bricks and mortar. There will still be a way to go to achieve the move towards predominantly digital due to the digital divide and cost of data. Cellular banking inclusion will have advanced, with artificial intelligence enabling highly personalised products and services and decisions that are tailored around individual customer information and parameters.

2

Traceable Sustainability and ESG:
Sustainability reporting will be more detailed due to further regulations and compliance. It will be transparent with more automated and trusted transactional detail available to ever most socially conscious and activist investors and stakeholders informed with a better line of sight across extended value chains. Responsible investment will be informed by more easily accessible, more automated, more accurate information, mitigating 'green-washing'.

3

Widely Decentralised Finance:
Blockchain-enabled platforms will have disrupted financial services by offering secure, decentralised options for lending, borrowing, and trading. This innovation will grant wider, more affordable access to various products and necessitate a shift in traditional banking models. Existing institutions may face challenges adapting to these controls, but many are incorporating fintech through acquisitions to diversify their offerings.

4

Innovated Investment Landscape:
Central banks will introduce digital assets, products, currencies and cryptocurrencies alongside advanced green bond technologies and evolved investment products, giving new means of structuring money supply. More agile, faster, secure cross border transactions will be enabling financing for innovation and sustainability initiatives and partnering across sectors.

5

Rise of Quantum Cyber Security:
Cyber security and data privacy will have been heavily invested in to protect data and ensure integrity of financial transactions, quantum security technology will have advanced to meet the growing competency of cyber criminals, with both protection and invasion using the power of artificial intelligence.

6

Diverse Cyber Partnerships:
Investments in sustainability initiatives in enterprises and local communities will be more visible and well communicated enabling diverse participation by stakeholders that are less reliant on geographical proximity. Like-minded partners will be more able to find each other and collaborate virtually on real world value creation.

SOURCE: Empanda, 2023

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By 2030: Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

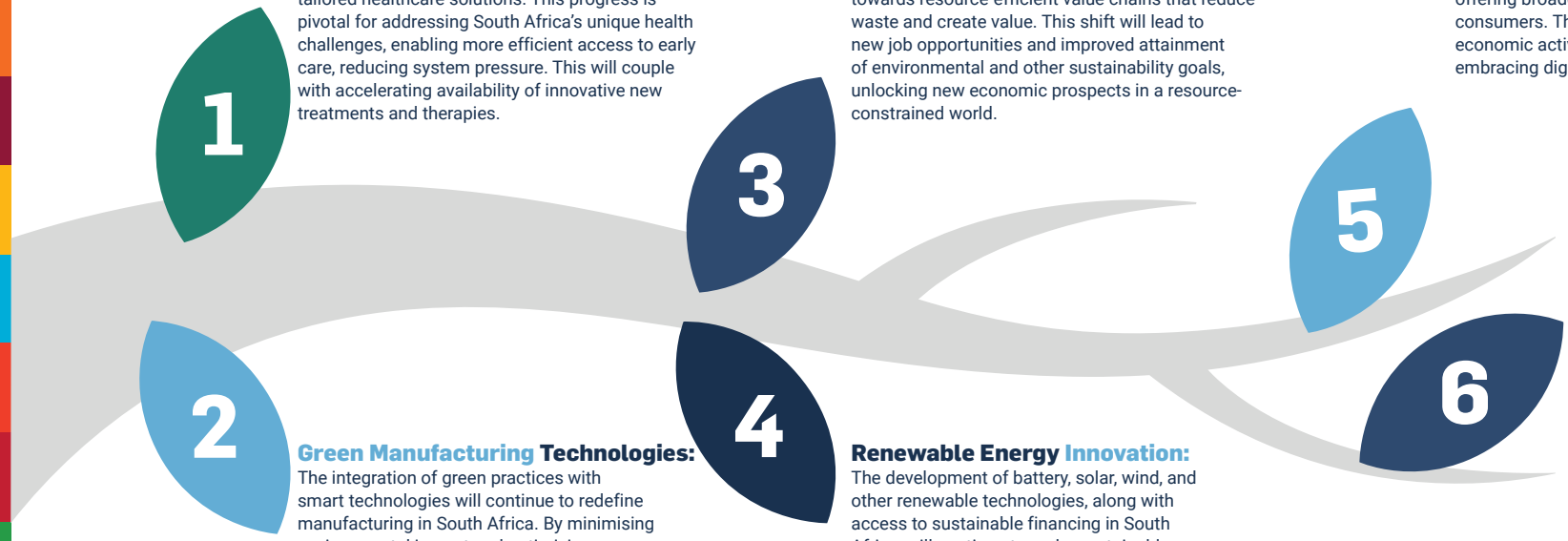
The industry innovation that is forecast includes:

Manufacturing, product development and LifeTech are set to innovate toward sustainable options: The trajectory of South Africa's manufacturing, pharmaceutical, healthcare and FMCG sectors is steering towards an integrated future of sustainability and digital innovation. Advances in precision medicine, powered by AI, are set to transform healthcare delivery, offering customised treatments that reduce the burden on healthcare systems. Simultaneously, the manufacturing and FMCG sectors are embracing circular economy practices and green technologies, aiming to minimise environmental impact and maximise efficiency. This shift is complemented by the growth of e-commerce, expanding market access and driving economic vitality. The integration of smart technologies across these sectors promises not only to enhance operational efficiency, but also to ensure resilience against global supply chain disruptions. Together, these advancements underscore a commitment to sustainable growth, positioning South Africa at the forefront of environmental consciousness and technological progress in the coming era.

BY 2030 WE EXPECT TO SEE:

1. Faster, more accessible early healthcare and treatment options
2. Circular economies that reduce waste and provide job opportunity
3. E-commerce with unprecedented access to local and global markets
4. Green technologies offering cleaner production and eco-innovation jobs
5. Clean, independent renewable energy enabling lower carbon emissions
6. Digital, transparent supply chains enabling fluid, ethical procurement

6 PRIMARY INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS EXPECTED BY 2030



1

Progress on Precision Healthcare:

Advances in genetic medicine and AI will revolutionise patient treatment, offering more tailored healthcare solutions. This progress is pivotal for addressing South Africa's unique health challenges, enabling more efficient access to early care, reducing system pressure. This will couple with accelerating availability of innovative new treatments and therapies.

2

Green Manufacturing Technologies:

The integration of green practices with smart technologies will continue to redefine manufacturing in South Africa. By minimising environmental impact and optimising resource use, companies aiming for sustainability goals will remain competitive, sustain job opportunities in emergent technologies, and contribute to economic growth.

3

Circular Economy Transformation:

Emerging circular economy technologies and expertise will offer more options for shifting towards resource-efficient value chains that reduce waste and create value. This shift will lead to new job opportunities and improved attainment of environmental and other sustainability goals, unlocking new economic prospects in a resource-constrained world.

4

Renewable Energy Innovation:

The development of battery, solar, wind, and other renewable technologies, along with access to sustainable financing in South Africa, will continue to make sustainable power generation more viable. This shift will empower both companies and individuals to lessen their reliance on the national grid, whilst fostering job creation in the renewable sector.

5

E-commerce Growth:

The evolution of online platforms will transform the visibility of the South African market landscape, offering broader access to local and international consumers. This growth is crucial for driving economic activity, supporting local enterprises, and embracing digital commerce opportunities.

6

Supply Chain Digitisation:

The adoption of IoT, AI and machine learning will further evolve South Africa's supply chains, enhancing both efficiency and transparency. This modernisation is crucial for maintaining industry resilience against global supply fluctuations, ensuring continuity and competitiveness in a digital landscape. Additionally, technological advancements will support improved demand forecasting and more fluid procurement processes.

SOURCE: Empanda, 2023

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By 2030: Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

The industry innovation that is forecast includes:

Mining is rapidly innovating, and attention needs to be paid to both positive and negative impact. South Africa has rich primary resources which make up some of the critical minerals that are vital to future innovation and are in high demand. There are significant opportunities to invest in both future, sustainable prospecting, and in emergent green and sustainable industries. These investment opportunities need to be prioritised for urgent action. At the same time, many of the innovations that we can expect to see progress on by 2030 will result in automation of traditional mining roles. Whilst there will be new roles that arise, attention needs to be paid to the employment opportunities that will be lost. There is huge opportunity to invest in sustainable host communities in the areas where mines operate. This opportunity requires better cross sector and industry collaboration to prepare for seamless transitions as mines close at the end of their lifecycle.

BY 2030 WE EXPECT TO SEE:

1. Mining that is safer, due to advanced technology
2. Mining that is more sustainable due to better traceability.
3. Mining that is greener, due to more responsible consumption
4. Mining that has created value, with minerals used in green technology
5. Mining that is more efficient and automated, producing less waste
6. Mining that is better at enabling host community sustainability

6 PRIMARY INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS EXPECTED BY 2030

1

More Automation and Better Robotics:
Autonomous vehicles, drones and robotics will increase safety with automated drill, haulage and ore sorting systems. This will include enabling ocean mining and prospecting that is safer with fewer accidents or processes that could damage marine ecosystems.

2

Better Data Analytics and AI:
Mining will harness big data, artificial intelligence and analytics to optimise operations, this will improve responsible consumption and production by giving better operational reports that drive energy, waste and production efficiencies. There will be better, safer predictive maintenance using real-time data. Better decisions will be possible about ore quality and volume throughout the lifecycle of a mine.

3

Advanced Green Mining Technology:
Cleaner energy sources, more circular economies, minimised water and energy consumption using technologies such as carbon capture will reduce mining's carbon footprint.

4

More Sustainable Communities:
Cross-sector collaboration and community engagement may diversify mining community job options, with education, healthcare and infrastructure being leveraged by initiatives that see host communities as a local economic development opportunity.

5

Better Transparency and Traceability:
Blockchain can ensure responsible and traceable sourcing of minerals and metals, this will address conflict about unethical labour and environmental practices. Illegal and unregulated mining will become harder, whilst transparency will enable socially-conscious investors and consumers to make informed decisions about the carbon footprint of their source of mineral and metal supply.

6

Advanced Green Petrochemicals:
Innovated and advanced products will be more environmentally friendly, progress toward carbon neutrality will be enabled.

SOURCE: Empanda, 2023

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By 2030: Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

The industry innovation that is forecast includes:

The digital and telecommunications economy is a hotbed of opportunity for the intrepid. The technological advancements anticipated by 2030 and beyond can significantly advance sustainability in South Africa across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Leveraging these technologies can achieve a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future. Enhancing connectivity enables economic growth for all industries, whilst also empowering South African civil society. Digital inclusion is one of the most effective ways to advance social inclusion and equity, enabling previously underserved communities with opportunities for education, employment, and participation in the digital economy. Immersive technologies will revolutionise education helping to prepare people to join the future job market. Sustainability outcomes can be advanced through adoption of technologies that enable sustainable business practices and performance management, ultimately combating climate change. Critical benefits are also enabled for access to healthcare, government and civic engagement platforms.

BY 2030 WE EXPECT TO SEE:

1. More inclusion digital inclusion yields more South African diversity
2. More personalised virtual learning yields better educational outcomes
3. More immersive digital content that gives content creation growth and work
4. Easier, quicker ICT development that advances digital applications
5. Stronger data protection and cyber capabilities enable ethics and trust
6. Faster, cheaper, more universal access to global digital economies

6 PRIMARY INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS EXPECTED BY 2030

1

More Included, More Diverse:
Previously unbanked and digitally excluded groups will be leveraging a convergence of digital products, services and information better to be more effectively heard. This will add new customers with purchasing power to marketplaces, informing and evolving values, culture, politics, religion, philosophy, the arts and more, influencing national identity and social fabric.

2

More Immersive Digital Content:
Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) applications enable, entertainment, customer and learning experiences giving birth to new genres of interactive media and opportunity to transcend geographic and financial limitations to adventures, games and explorations. From remote offices, to healthcare interactions, virtual prototyping and showrooms, there will be a new creative economy for artists, engineers and content creators.

3

More Personalised, Virtual Learning:
Digitally-empowered education systems will bridge the divide between rural and urban learning opportunity with personalised learning experiences catering for individual needs, languages and learning styles. Real time analytics will support educator coaching and support of learners, with better focus on soft skills including critical thinking, creativity and emotional intelligence.

4

More Automated ICT Industry:
Innovation and integration will be more enabled by artificial intelligence. This will have altered the role and opportunities for programmers and developers who will be focused on sophisticated, intuitive software solutions powered by machine learning and quantum computing. Technology will be an indistinguishable part of day-to-day life. Hardware will be more sustainable, powerful and integrated into real world environments.

5

More Quantum Cyber Security:
Digital security will have matured use of blockchain and secure quantum communication with people more mindfully asserting their data sovereignty. Data protection, identity management and secure IT transactions will be supported by advanced technologies with stringent controls over data location, use of biometrics, advanced encryption designed to prevent cybercrime and espionage. Priority will be placed on trust, privacy and security as a foundation for ethical practice.

6

Faster, More Universal Internet:
The widespread adoption of 5G and low earth orbit (LEO) networks such as Star Link with have dramatically increased the availability and speed of internet connectivity and reducing the cost of data. Networks will be more robust, complete and secure with more democratised access. This will reduce the digital divide currently experienced by rural and underserved areas, enabling more inclusive participation in the global digital economy.

SOURCE: Empanda, 2023

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INDUSTRY RISKS AND CHALLENGES TO PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

This section outlines the risks to both sustainability and prosperity that were raised during the private sector Voluntary National Review industry round table series. The risks raised in this section were then clustered to provide the top ten risks facing the private sector, featured in the 'Challenges' section of this report.

TOP FIVE RISK SDGs:

Leaders from across sectors need to unite to drive sustainable risk management solutions. We will require both strategic vision and resilience to overcome the shared challenges facing the private sector.

The South African private sector is navigating a complex landscape of risks, dominated by severe energy challenges, stringent regulatory compliance, and pressing social equity issues. These sectors are further strained by economic instability, which exacerbates operational costs and complicates investments in sustainability. Collectively, these risks demand strategic and innovative solutions to ensure resilience and sustainable growth across industries.

Energy and Infrastructure Challenges are a central theme, with persistent load-shedding affecting sectors from agriculture to telecommunications and real estate. This ongoing energy crisis not only increases operational costs, but also compels businesses to invest heavily in alternative energy sources like solar power, though challenges such as installation space and financial viability remain. The necessity for self-sufficiency in energy underscores a broader need for robust infrastructure that can support sustainable development.

Regulatory Compliance and Ethical Practices emerge as another key theme, particularly evident in the Financial Services, Mining and Waste Management sectors. These industries face stringent regulatory demands that are constantly evolving, particularly in relation to environmental and social governance standards (ESG). Compliance challenges are further complicated by ethical considerations in sourcing, labor practices, and stakeholder expectations, highlighting a need for transparent and responsible business practices.

Social Equity and Inclusion issues are pervasive, impacting sectors from agriculture to ICT. Challenges include gender disparities in agriculture, youth unemployment in FinTech, and the male dominance in Telecommunications. These issues reflect broader societal inequalities that businesses must address to foster inclusive growth and social cohesion.

Economic Pressures are acutely felt across all sectors, exacerbated by high inflation and socio-political instability. These pressures manifest in increased costs of doing business, which can lead to reduced investment, operational cutbacks, and even business closures. The interconnected nature of economic stability and sectoral health suggests a need for economic policies that mitigate these pressures and promote sustainable growth.

Environmental Sustainability is a recurring concern, particularly in how businesses manage their impact on natural resources. From the mining sector's impact on the environment to the agriculture sector's efforts to combat food waste, the drive for sustainability is clear. However, achieving these goals often clashes with infrastructural limitations and economic realities, necessitating innovative solutions that align environmental stewardship with business objectives.

Summary of Industry Risks SDGs

Companies contributed risks at company, private sector and national level that were then consolidated into an industry perspective.

Note that Social Enterprises did not have a discrete industry sector, however, participating NGOs report that the NGO, Public Sector Development and Civil Society sector deals with critical issues of funding and resource scarcity which hamper sustainability and growth. The stigma associated with mental health further complicates community engagement and support. Furthermore, unclear roles and mandates within governmental bodies exacerbate resource inefficiencies and inter-departmental conflicts.

The priority risks for each industry sector were:

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail:

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail confronts severe operational disruptions due to persistent load-shedding, leading to increased operational costs and a shift towards renewable energy investments. Food waste emerges as a critical environmental and social issue, with efforts geared towards efficient management and reduction strategies. Additionally, the sector faces market access challenges and gender disparities, pointing towards a need for more inclusive growth strategies and sustainable practices.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate:

The Electricity, Water Infrastructure and Real Estate sector is notably affected by the ongoing energy crisis. Challenges include the financial and logistical viability of solar expansions, certification requirements for green buildings, and the overarching need for strategic alignment in environmental initiatives.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

Financial Services and FinTech:

In the Financial Services and FinTech sector, there is a significant focus on sourcing and supply chain integrity, particularly in adhering to Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) standards. This sector also grapples with regulatory compliance and ethical practices concerning worker compensation and product certifications, highlighting the ongoing struggle with maintaining ethical standards amid economic pressures.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health:

In the Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health sectors, Loadshedding severely disrupts production, escalating downtime and compounding the impact of global supply chain fragilities, which leads to higher material costs and availability issues. Financial strains on consumers prevent the absorption of rising costs, thereby stifling revenue and amplifying competition. Furthermore, an uncertain economic climate, exacerbated by the pandemic's aftermath, curtails vital investments needed for innovation in sustainable, responsible production, posing significant challenges to growth and competitiveness in these sectors.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources:

In Mining, Natural Gas and Resources, the uncertainty surrounding energy policies and the necessity for private energy solutions highlight the sector's vulnerability to infrastructural and regulatory changes. The sector is also under intense scrutiny for its environmental and social governance (ESG) practices, necessitating stringent compliance to evolving standards and heightened stakeholder expectations.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media:

The Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media sector faces pressures from high inflation and policy instability, exacerbated by rapid technological changes and skills shortages. These factors contribute to infrastructural and operational vulnerabilities, stressing the need for robust regulatory frameworks and investment in human capital.

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Industry Risks and Challenges:

Efforts to protect and enable food production from 'farm to fork' are vital.

Inflation, driven by a variety of factors, is risking food value chain stability and exacerbating hunger challenges:
The agriculture, food production and retail sectors are confronting significant hurdles: Loadshedding and rising production costs, exacerbated by supply chain disruptions, are straining the industry. Post-pandemic shifts in consumer values have intensified competition, further complicating the sector's landscape. Despite a robust demand for sustainably sourced food, local sourcing remains a persistent challenge, underscoring the urgent need for supportive measures to stimulate local production and adopt circular economies.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

IMPACT OF CHALLENGES:

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

Challenge Type	Industry Critical Challenges	Selected SDG Linkage	Participant Priority	Challenge Rating	Challenge Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Challenge Probability
Challenges to **Prosperity:**	Impact of loadshedding and cost of energy	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	4,6	76,5	8,5	9,0	8,0	9,0
	Aggressive competition and ecommerce disruption	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	2,5	64,0	8,0	9,0	7,0	8,0
	Disaster and Climate Impacts	SDG 13: Climate Action	3,4	59,5	8,5	8,0	9,0	7,0
	Inflating cost of production and supply chain	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	3,8	52,5	7,5	8,0	7,0	7,0
	Difficulty sourcing local suppliers	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	2,6	49,0	7,0	7,0	7,0	7,0
	Labour challenges and skills shortage	SDG 4: Quality Education	2,8	45,0	7,5	7,0	8,0	6,0
	Evolving diverse customer needs	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	2,8	42,0	6,0	6,0	6,0	7,0
	Cost of innovation	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,3	39,0	6,5	7,0	6,0	6,0
Challenges to **Sustainability:**	Challenges establishing transparency and traceability	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	3,5	64,0	8,0	7,0	9,0	8,0
	Lack of critical mass landing circular economies	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	3,3	60,0	7,5	6,0	9,0	8,0
	Challenges landing sustainable supply chain logistics	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	3,2	56,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	7,0
	Challenges reducing waste and use of plastics	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	4,2	52,5	7,5	7,0	8,0	7,0
	Challenges implementing water efficiencies	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	3,5	52,5	7,5	7,0	8,0	7,0
	Challenges building up local supply base	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	2,7	45,0	7,5	7,0	8,0	6,0
	Challenges accelerating partnerships and communities	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,3	39,0	6,5	6,0	7,0	6,0
	Access to innovative methods and practical know how	SDG 4: Quality Education	3,1	36,0	6,0	6,0	6,0	6,0

Method and Definitions: The industry challenges were researched leveraging VNR strategic partner research and then prioritised in the VNR Industry Round Table series by participating companies. Stakeholder input was then used to assess the challenges and risks for impact and probability to determine a final priority rating. This final priority rating averages the two impact ratings and is then multiplied with the probability (a standard risk assessment calculation).

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Industry Risks and Challenges:

Loadshedding both stalls economic growth and jeopardises sustainability.

Failing to address loadshedding and achieve the Just Energy Transition (JET) is the most significant risk for this industry:
Addressing the persistent issue of loadshedding remains crucial to mitigate its cascading effects on operating and capital expenditures, as well as to prevent costly infrastructure damage. Overcoming the historical challenges posed by corrupt procurement and tendering processes is equally important. These factors have compounded the difficulty in securing funds for essential capital projects, leading to price surges for consumers and disruptions in the delivery of basic services. Facilitating access to affordable, locally-sourced sustainable materials is not only a cost-effective strategy, but also a catalyst for local economic development.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

IMPACT OF CHALLENGES:

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

Challenge Type	Industry Critical Challenges	Selected SDG Linkage	Participant Priority	Challenge Rating	Challenge Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Challenge Probability
Challenges to **Prosperity:**	Corruption in procurement processes	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	3,8	72,0	9,0	9,0	9,0	8,0
	Loadshedding and energy cost	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	4,3	63,0	9,0	9,0	9,0	7,0
	Difficulties with funding and investment	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,5	60,0	7,5	7,0	8,0	8,0
	Policy and regulatory challenges and uncertainty	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,4	59,5	8,5	9,0	8,0	7,0
	Challenges with project delivery and execution	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,7	56,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	7,0
	Customer inability to afford prices	SDG 1: No Poverty	4,0	52,5	7,5	7,0	8,0	7,0
	Skill and labour shortages and unrest	SDG 4: Quality Education	3,5	52,0	6,5	6,0	7,0	8,0
	Property market instability	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	3,3	42,0	7,0	7,0	7,0	6,0
Challenges to **Sustainability:**	Difficulty transitioning to clean energy	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	3,5	60,0	7,5	7,0	8,0	8,0
	Challenges mitigating environmental impact	SDG 13: Climate Action	3,8	59,5	8,5	8,0	9,0	7,0
	Attracting investors and funding	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,2	56,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	7,0
	Availability of low carbon transport options	SDG 13: Climate Action	3,9	51,0	8,5	9,0	8,0	6,0
	Access to affordable sustainable materials	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	3,5	48,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	6,0
	Rapidly evolving technology	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,4	45,5	6,5	6,0	7,0	7,0
	Access to best practice on green technologies	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,6	45,0	7,5	7,0	8,0	6,0
	Challenges aligning and collaborating on action	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,6	42,0	7,0	7,0	7,0	6,0

Method and Definitions: The industry challenges were researched leveraging VNR strategic partner research and then prioritised in the VNR Industry Round Table series by participating companies. Stakeholder input was then used to assess the challenges and risks for impact and probability to determine a final priority rating. This final priority rating averages the two impact ratings and is then multiplied with the probability (a standard risk assessment calculation).

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Industry Risks and Challenges:

Radical digital transformation is forging new risks.

A civil society impacted by financial pressure amidst cyber risk and service innovation.
The Financial Services and Fintech industry is highly regulated to protect the customer, however rapid digital evolution is bringing new data and cybersecurity risks that policies and regulations were not designed to police. New digital solutions are being brought to market by other industry sectors with fewer controls. Additionally, markets are volatile and risky, impacting the investment environment. Inflation and high interest rates coupled with rising business and living cost are challenging business and civil society customers alike.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

IMPACT OF CHALLENGES:

Financial Services and FinTech

Challenge Type	Industry Critical Challenges	Selected SDG Linkage	Participant Priority	Challenge Rating	Challenge Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Challenge Probability
Challenges to **Prosperity:**	Cybersecurity Challenges	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	2,7	76,5	8,5	9,0	8,0	9,0
	Rapid Digital Transformation	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	2,3	68,0	8,5	9,0	8,0	8,0
	Poor Economic Conditions	SDG 1: No Poverty	4,7	64,0	8,0	9,0	7,0	8,0
	Market Volatility	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	3,2	60,0	7,5	8,0	7,0	8,0
	Investor or Customer Trust	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,7	56,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	7,0
	Access to Funding	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,0	52,5	7,5	8,0	7,0	7,0
	Regulatory Compliance and Challenges	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,2	49,0	7,0	7,0	7,0	7,0
	Difficulty in Risk Assessment	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	4,0	45,5	6,5	7,0	6,0	7,0
Challenges to **Sustainability:**	Data security and cyber crime issues	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,1	81,0	9,0	9,0	9,0	9,0
	Investment in low integrity businesses	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	2,3	76,5	8,5	9,0	8,0	9,0
	Risky and volatile investment environment	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	2,7	72,0	8,0	9,0	7,0	9,0
	Heightened risks and hazards	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	3,4	68,0	8,5	9,0	8,0	8,0
	Investments that cause environmental impact	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	2,8	64,0	8,0	7,0	9,0	8,0
	High interest rates exacerbate inequality	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	3,4	59,5	8,5	8,0	9,0	7,0
	Access to inclusive banking, insurance and lending	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	3,2	56,0	8,0	7,0	9,0	7,0
	Exclusion due to the digital divide	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	2,6	52,5	7,5	7,0	8,0	7,0

Method and Definitions: The industry challenges were researched leveraging VNR strategic partner research and then prioritised in the VNR Industry Round Table series by participating companies. Stakeholder input was then used to assess the challenges and risks for impact and probability to determine a final priority rating. This final priority rating averages the two impact ratings and is then multiplied with the probability (a standard risk assessment calculation).

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Industry Risks and Challenges:

Rising costs across supply chains, inflation and the energy crisis.

Business and civil society are under financial strain, affecting revenue.
Loadshedding and its associated downtime adversely affect production processes, with increased local and global supply chain costs leading to higher material costs and availability issues. Financially burdened customers are finding it difficult to accommodate rising sale prices, further impacting revenue and intensifying competition. The uncertain economic climate and the aftermath of the pandemic restrict investment availability, crucial for innovating sustainable, responsible, and low-carbon production processes, products, and services.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

IMPACT OF CHALLENGES:

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

Challenge Type	Industry Critical Challenges	Selected SDG Linkage	Participant Priority	Challenge Rating	Challenge Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Challenge Probability
Challenges to **Prosperity:**	Loadshedding disruption and cost of energy	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	4,8	56,0	8,0	9,0	7,0	7,0
	Fierce domestic and international competition	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	3,4	52,0	6,5	9,0	4,0	8,0
	Challenges with regulation and policy	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	4,1	48,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	6,0
	Consumer is financially constrained and not spending	SDG 1: No Poverty	4,0	45,5	6,5	8,0	5,0	7,0
	Cost of innovation and transformation	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	4,0	45,0	7,5	8,0	7,0	6,0
	Changing customer demand hard to meet	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,1	44,0	5,5	6,0	5,0	8,0
	Ability to source talent and labour challenges	SDG 4: Quality Education	3,5	42,0	7,0	8,0	6,0	6,0
	Cost of production and supply chain	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	4,3	30,0	6,0	7,0	5,0	5,0
Challenges to **Sustainability:**	Limited eco-friendly sources of supply	SDG 13: Climate Action	3,3	56,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	7,0
	Low availability of sustainable innovation	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,1	52,5	7,5	7,0	8,0	7,0
	Challenges transitioning to low carbon operations	SDG 13: Climate Action	3,6	51,0	8,5	9,0	8,0	6,0
	Challenging innovating to emerging sustainable products	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,1	49,0	7,0	6,0	8,0	7,0
	Challenges reducing waste and pollution	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	3,3	48,0	8,0	7,0	9,0	6,0
	Availability of strategic partners to lead on innovation with	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,5	45,5	6,5	6,0	7,0	7,0
	Challenge transitioning to sustainable packaging	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	3,1	45,0	7,5	7,0	8,0	6,0
	Difficulty creating inclusive and accessible offerings	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	3,3	44,0	5,5	6,0	5,0	8,0

Method and Definitions: The industry challenges were researched leveraging VNR strategic partner research and then prioritised in the VNR Industry Round Table series by participating companies. Stakeholder input was then used to assess the challenges and risks for impact and probability to determine a final priority rating. This final priority rating averages the two impact ratings and is then multiplied with the probability (a standard risk assessment calculation).

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Industry Risks and Challenges:

Low investment impedes progress to innovate and modernise.

Cross sector and industry strategies need to capitalise on opportunities and mitigate future impact.
Challenges facing the Mining, Natural Gas and Resources industry are exacerbated by low levels of investment and the vital need for a unified cross-sector strategy to maximise value creation of the 'critical minerals' demand opportunity. Volatile markets resulting from global conflict and supply chain issues are challenging the cost base. Action is needed to enable sustainable prospecting. Responsible, sustainable mining that results in beneficiation for local communities is best enabled by low operating cost and market related prices which enable innovation.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

IMPACT OF CHALLENGES:

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Challenge Type	Industry Critical Challenges	Selected SDG Linkage	Participant Priority	Challenge Rating	Challenge Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Challenge Probability
Challenges to **Prosperity:**	Declining Resources and Ore Quality	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	2,8	68,0	8,5	8,0	9,0	8,0
	Cost of Transition to Sustainable Operations	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,5	64,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	8,0
	Poor Economy and Volatile Markets	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	3,9	60,0	7,5	8,0	7,0	8,0
	Energy Cost and Sustainable Supply	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	3,9	56,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	7,0
	Labour Cost, Supply and Relations	SDG 4: Quality Education	2,7	52,5	7,5	8,0	7,0	7,0
	Supply Chain and Infrastructure Issues	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,6	49,0	7,0	7,0	7,0	7,0
	Regulatory Compliance and Challenges	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	3,5	45,5	6,5	7,0	6,0	7,0
	Data Privacy and Availability of Analytics	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,1	36,0	6,0	6,0	6,0	6,0
Challenges to **Sustainability:**	Delivery on Responsible, Sustainable Production	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	3,0	72,0	9,0	9,0	9,0	8,0
	Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions	SDG 13: Climate Action	3,4	68,0	8,5	8,0	9,0	8,0
	Execution of Transition to Sustainable Products	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,5	59,5	8,5	9,0	8,0	7,0
	Engaging for Sustainable Communities	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	3,4	56,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	7,0
	Evolving Sustainable Supply Chains	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,1	52,5	7,5	7,0	8,0	7,0
	Speed of Technology Innovation	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	2,8	52,0	6,5	7,0	6,0	8,0
	Assuring Safe Working Environments	SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	2,6	49,0	7,0	6,0	8,0	7,0
	Fair Distribution of Mining Benefits	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	3,1	45,5	6,5	5,0	8,0	7,0

Method and Definitions: The industry challenges were researched leveraging VNR strategic partner research and then prioritised in the VNR Industry Round Table series by participating companies. Stakeholder input was then used to assess the challenges and risks for impact and probability to determine a final priority rating. This final priority rating averages the two impact ratings and is then multiplied with the probability (a standard risk assessment calculation).

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Industry Risks and Challenges:

Digital transformation is hard, fast and expensive.

Cyber risks and opportunities are arising very quickly. The digital divide is getting wider.
Technology innovation is bringing forward new data, privacy and cyber risk for both individuals and for business, leaving some businesses behind on ability to protect stakeholders. Policies and regulations need rapid, proactive innovation and compliance is expensive, difficult and beyond the capabilities of some organisations. Technology is experiencing supply chain cost and availability issues for hardware, software and for skills. Heavy economic pressure is being felt by learners and by vital media services.

PRIMARY RISK SDGs:

IMPACT OF CHALLENGES:

Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

Challenge Type	Industry Critical Challenges	Selected SDG Linkage	Participant Priority	Challenge Rating	Challenge Impact	Business Impact	Sustainability Impact	Challenge Probability
Challenges to **Prosperity:**	Data security, privacy and cyber crime	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	4,1	68,0	8,5	9,0	8,0	8,0
	Corruption and challenges to justice	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	4,5	60,0	7,5	8,0	7,0	8,0
	Financially constrained customers and economic impact	SDG 1: No Poverty	4,8	59,5	8,5	9,0	8,0	7,0
	Regulatory challenges	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	3,9	56,0	7,0	8,0	6,0	8,0
	Energy cost and loadshedding	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	4,9	52,5	7,5	7,0	8,0	7,0
	Rising cost of digital transformation	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,6	52,0	6,5	7,0	6,0	8,0
	Extreme competition and changing needs and values	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	3,4	49,0	7,0	8,0	6,0	7,0
	Talent shortages and challenges	SDG 4: Quality Education	3,3	45,5	6,5	7,0	6,0	7,0
Challenges to **Sustainability:**	Sustainable ICT sourcing and supply chain	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,6	76,5	8,5	9,0	8,0	9,0
	Evolving future fit, fair, sustainable regulations and policy	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	3,6	68,0	8,5	8,0	9,0	8,0
	Equitable access for vulnerable customers and learners	SDG 1: No Poverty	4,3	64,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	8,0
	Evolving educational curricula for future needs	SDG 4: Quality Education	4,4	63,0	7,0	7,0	7,0	9,0
	Promoting justice, and ethical, responsible practice	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	3,5	60,0	7,5	8,0	7,0	8,0
	The digital divide and ICT skills	SDG 4: Quality Education	4,1	59,5	8,5	9,0	8,0	7,0
	Balancing growth with equity and rights	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	3,8	56,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	7,0
	Sustainable strategies to deal with digital change	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3,4	52,5	7,5	7,0	8,0	7,0

Method and Definitions: The industry challenges were researched leveraging VNR strategic partner research and then prioritised in the VNR Industry Round Table series by participating companies. Stakeholder input was then used to assess the challenges and risks for impact and probability to determine a final priority rating. This final priority rating averages the two impact ratings and is then multiplied with the probability (a standard risk assessment calculation).

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Industry Risk Clusters

The risks raised by each industry sector were clustered into themed groups to create a high-level view of the top ten risks impacting companies, creating a private sector level view.

This highlights the need for investment in infrastructure, industrialisation that is sustainable, and fostering innovation: This goal has a wide scope, with 21 risks raised, evidencing that technological advancements and innovation are outpacing investment and the ability to implement futureproof solutions. This coupled with 13 risks raised against SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals, underlining the importance of collaboration to address both prosperity and sustainability risk in business. Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) was close behind with 12 risks, speaking to private sector struggles with a slow growth economy.

Industry Risk Clustering:

The industry risks raised at the round tables were based on company contribution workbooks and review with strategic partners. These were then rated at the industry round tables and clusters as per the structure below to consolidate the Top 10 Risks.

Security and Safety for Staff and Customers

- Assuring Safe Working Environments
- Cybersecurity Challenges
- Data Privacy and Availability of Analytics
- Data security and cybercrime issues
- Data security, privacy and cyber crime
- Disaster and Climate Impacts

Energy Management and Cost Efficiency

- Challenges transitioning to low carbon operations
- Difficulty transitioning to clean energy
- Energy cost and loadshedding
- Energy Cost and Sustainable Supply
- Impact of loadshedding and cost of energy
- Loadshedding and energy cost
- Loadshedding disruption and cost of energy

Environmental Impact and Resource Management

- Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Challenges implementing water efficiencies
- Challenges mitigating environmental impact
- Challenges reducing waste and pollution
- Challenges reducing waste and use of plastics
- Declining Resources and Ore Quality
- Delivery on Responsible, Sustainable Production
- Difficulty in Risk Assessment
- Investments that cause environmental impact

Lack of critical mass landing circular economies

Policy, Regulatory Compliance and Business Integrity

- Challenges with regulation and policy
- Corruption and challenges to justice
- Corruption in procurement processes
- Evolving future fit, fair, sustainable regulations and policy
- Policy and regulatory challenges and uncertainty
- Promoting justice, and ethical, responsible practice
- Regulatory Compliance and Challenges

Market Competition and Economic Stability

- Access to Funding
- Aggressive competition and ecommerce disruption
- Attracting investors and funding
- Changing customer demand hard to meet
- Consumer is financially constrained and not spending
- Customer inability to afford prices
- Difficulties with funding and investment
- Evolving diverse customer needs
- Extreme competition and changing needs and values
- Fierce domestic and international competition
- Financially constrained customers and economic impact
- Heightened risks and hazards
- Investment in low integrity businesses
- Investor or Customer Trust
- Market Volatility
- Poor Economic Conditions
- Poor Economy and Volatile Markets
- Property market instability
- Risky and volatile investment environment

Project Implementation Cost and Complexity

- Challenges aligning and collaborating on action
- Challenges with project delivery and execution
- Cost of innovation and transformation
- Cost of Transition to Sustainable Operations
- Execution of Transition to Sustainable Products
- Rising cost of digital transformation

Social Responsibility and Inclusivity

- Access to inclusive banking, insurance and lending
- Balancing growth with equity and rights
- Challenges accelerating partnerships and communities
- Difficulty creating inclusive and accessible offerings
- Engaging for Sustainable Communities
- Equitable access for vulnerable customers and learners
- Exclusion due to the digital divide
- Fair Distribution of Mining Benefits
- High interest rates exacerbate inequality

Sustainable Supply Chain and Source of Supply

- Access to affordable sustainable materials
- Availability of low carbon transport options
- Challenges building up local supply base
- Challenges establishing transparency and traceability
- Challenges landing sustainable supply chain logistics
- Cost of production and supply chain
- Difficulty sourcing local suppliers
- Evolving Sustainable Supply Chains
- Inflating cost of production and supply chain
- Limited ecofriendly sources of supply
- Supply Chain and Infrastructure Issues
- Sustainable ICT sourcing and supply chain

Workforce Development and Labour Dynamics

- Ability to source talent and labour challenges
- Evolving educational curricula for future needs
- Labour challenges and skills shortage
- Labour Cost, Supply and Relations
- Skill and labour shortages and unrest
- Talent shortages and challenges
- The digital divide and ICT skills

Innovation for Sustainability

- Access to best practice on green technologies
- Access to innovative methods and practical know how
- Availability of strategic partners to lead on innovation with
- Challenge transitioning to sustainable packaging
- Challenging innovating to emerging sustainable products
- Cost of innovation
- Low availability of sustainable innovation
- Rapid Digital Transformation
- Rapidly evolving technology
- Speed of Technology Innovation
- Sustainable strategies to deal with digital change

Note: The Challenges chapter of this report contains the emergent view of the top ten risks facing the private sector and the rating scale used to assign probability and impact to each risk.

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INDUSTRY SEGMENTATION, PROFILES AND PARTICIPATION QUALITY

This section comprises industry profiles and the rationale behind the industry segmentation upon which the Voluntary National Review is based. The profiles provide an analysis of the diversity and inclusion within each industry as achieved by this report, identifying any gaps and offering recommendations for future inclusion.

The segmentation of industries in the South African private sector's Voluntary National Review (VNR) was designed to enable a comparative analysis with 2019, while also making a strategic effort to provide an 'extended value chain' perspective on progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

The quality of diversity and inclusion within and across industries showed varied levels of engagement. The best-engaged sector was mining, natural gas and resources, largely due to the strong role played by the Minerals and Metals Council, which was highly effective in engaging its members. Key gaps included sufficient representation of renewable energy players, the manufacturing industry (particularly automotive) and FinTech.

The **agriculture, food production, and retail** was segmented to encapsulate the full food value chain, considering the growing diversity of businesses from producers to food retailers, hospitality, tourism and innovative startups focusing on sustainability. This segmentation aimed to assess progress in food security comprehensively.

The **electricity, water infrastructure, and real estate** sectors were designed to include all aspects of enabling infrastructure, from electricity production to water infrastructure and services, property and transportation. This was intended to address the integrated nature of sustainable cities and communities, particularly the interplay between energy, water and logistical infrastructure.

The **financial services and fintech** sector was structured to include all aspects of finance, including investment, asset management, insurance and retail financial services. This sector was designed to encompass both traditional financial services and emergent fintech digital organisations, as well as new value propositions such as cryptocurrency.

Manufacturing, consumer goods, pharma, and health were grouped to center on the consumer, including fast-moving consumer goods, industrial manufacturing, construction materials and healthcare. This aimed to understand shifts in consumer demand following the pandemic, as well as to delve into responsible consumption and production within operations.

The **mining, natural gas, and resources** sector profile was structured to include core mining operations and natural gas, as well as the extended value chain for metals and coal-based products and services, in order to understand the dynamics related to lowering carbon intensity and the applications of critical minerals.

Finally, the **telecommunications, ICT, education, and media** sector profile was broadened from a primary focus on telecommunications to include education and media companies. This was to enable a holistic focus on the availability of digital information, services and infrastructure for business and people, particularly including learners.

Industry Profile: Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

How the Voluntary National Review segmented the industry:

This industry sector was structured to provide an end-to-end focus on the food value chain:
The company mix in 2024 has become more diverse than in 2019, particularly among agricultural producers, food processors and grocery retailers. The sector now encompasses innovative startups dedicated to sustainable food production, food waste management and circular economies, resulting in more comprehensive reporting, especially from the perspective of smaller enterprises. The aim of this segmentation is to facilitate an overview of progress in achieving food security.

EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION:

While there was excellent participation from smaller enterprises in agriculture and food processing, gaps were noted in the representation of restaurants, catering and hospitality. Participants suggested that future research should more comprehensively include the tourism sector.

Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

TYPES OF BUSINESS MODEL		COMPANIES EXAMPLES OPERATING IN SOUTH AFRICA	
Agricultural Producers	**Food Processing**	**Agricultural Producers**	**Food Processing**
• Crop Farming • Livestock Farming • Fisheries and Aquaculture • Agribusiness Conglomerates	• Food Manufacturing • Beverage Production • Dairy Processing • Packaged Foods • Bakery and Confectionery	• Agri SA • Astral Foods • Agricultural Cooperatives • Karabo Brangus • Buffalo Breeders • IandJ (Irvin and Johnson) • Oceana Group	• Tiger Brands • RCL Foods • The Coca-Cola Company SA • South African Breweries (SAB) • Distell (Heineken) • Clover Industries • Pioneer Foods (now part of PepsiCo)
Grocery Store Chains	**Restaurant and Food Services**	**Grocery Store Chains**	**Restaurant and Food Services**
• Supermarkets • Specialty Grocery Stores • Convenience Stores • Hypermarkets	• Full-Service Restaurants • Fast-food Chains • Cafes and Coffee Shops • Food Trucks and Mobile Food Vendors • Catering Services	• Woolworths • Nude Foods • Shoprite • Pick n Pay Stores • Spar Group • Makro • Game Stores	• Mugg and Bean | Vida e Caffè | Bootlegger • Nando's | KFC | Ocean Basket • Steers | Wimpy | Spur • Mr. Delivery | Uber Eats • Compass Group | Fedics | Royal Schools Catering

PRIMARY BUSINESS CHALLENGES		PRIMARY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES	
Agricultural Producers	**Food Processing**	**Electricity**	**Water and Utilities**
• Cost of innovative technology • Water scarcity and climate change impact • Disease and pest management • Land Reform, ownership and regulatory compliance • Price volatility and rising cost of imports • Overfishing and sustainability	• Loadshedding impact on production and energy cost • Quality and safety control and regulatory compliance • Inflating cost of ingredients and production • Market volatility and competition, including imports • Evolving health, wellbeing and transparency needs • Constraints on local production and sourcing	• Water scarcity and irrigation efficiency • Challenges introducing sustainable methods • Effective sustainable pesticides, chemicals • Preventing pollution, overgrazing and land degradation • Animal welfare and use of antibiotics • Traceable oceanic sustainability	• Waste reduction and circular economies • Reduced water footprint and effluent management • Transition to low carbon supply chain • Effective sustainable packaging • Clean, sustainable, cost-effective energy • Ingredient traceability and transparency
Grocery Store Chains	**Restaurant and Food Services**	**Infrastructure**	**Real Estate**
• Pressure on customer income constrains spend • Rising supply chain costs and import inflation • Aggressive e-commerce competition • Changing and highly diverse customer preferences • Workforce enablement, retention and productivity	• Recovery from Covid impact on cash reserves • Inflating operating costs • Workforce costs and availability • Intense market competition • Health, safety, regulatory and quality control	• Waste reduction and managing the cold chain • Cost effective, low carbon of source of supply • Availability of affordable, sustainable local suppliers • Transition to sustainable packaging • Traceable, transparent, nutritional information • Future proof staffing models (unmanned stores)	• Lower carbon emissions • Sustainable materials usage • Energy-efficient construction. • Waste reduction strategies • Environmentally friendly products • Green construction best practices

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Industry Profile: Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

How the Voluntary National Review segmented the industry:

Providing insight into the private sector contribution to basic services and infrastructure.
This sector was structured to offer a holistic view on the integration of basic services and infrastructure. In 2024, the diversity among company participants has notably increased compared to 2019, extending beyond the primary focus on electricity and renewables. The inclusion has broadened to feature Eskom more prominently and to bring water, property and real estate businesses into the fold. This approach is aimed at presenting a comprehensive overview of the private sector's contribution to the development of sustainable cities and communities, with particular attention to the nexus of water and energy management.

EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION:

Whilst there was excellent participation from Eskom, Water and infrastructure participants, the process was short on participation from the medium to small sized renewable energy players, RIEPPPP participating companies and from logistics, distribution and transport organisations.

Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

TYPES OF BUSINESS MODEL

Electricity

- Electricity Generation and Distribution
- Independent Power Producers (IPPs)
- Renewable Energy Developers
- Energy Services Companies (ESCOs)
- Utility Companies
- Energy Research and Development Companies
- Energy Storage and Grid Solutions Providers

Water and Utilities

- Municipal Water Utilities
- Private Water Companies
- Water Retailers
- Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)
- Environmental and Waste Service Companies

Infrastructure

- Construction and Engineering Firms
- Logistics and Distribution Companies
- Transportation Services Providers
- Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Real Estate

- Property Developers
- Architects and Spatial Planners
- Property Management Companies
- Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)
- Shopping Malls
- Elevators, Escalators and Electrical Installations

COMPANIES EXAMPLES OPERATING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Electricity

- Eskom
- Enel Green Power South Africa
- Solar Capital
- PowerX
- Nersa Energy
- ACWA Power
- BioTherm Energy

Water and Utilities

- uMngeni-uThukela Water
- Rand Water
- Veolia South Africa
- Suez Water Technologies and Solutions
- Amanzi Water and Environmental Services
- Nanotech Water Solutions
- Dolphin Coast Water and Sanitation Concession

Infrastructure

- Murray and Roberts
- Group Five
- Aveng
- WBHO Construction
- Basil Read Holdings
- SANRAL
- Gautrain Rapid Rail Link

Real Estate

- Redefine Properties
- Growthpoint Properties
- Pam Golding | Remaxx
- JHI Properties
- Investec Properties
- Pareto
- Vukile Property | Emira | Liberty Two Degrees (REIT)

PRIMARY BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Electricity

- Aging infrastructure and maintenance
- Power supply instability and loadshedding
- Shortage of funding and financial crisis
- Energy policy uncertainty and high energy cost
- Tender and procurement corruption

Water and Utilities

- Water supply infrastructure constraints
- Water quality and sanitation issues
- Financial sustainability of utilities
- High demand causing backlogs in service provision
- Drought and water scarcity

Infrastructure

- Slow economic growth
- Public infrastructure funding constraints
- Project delays and cost overruns
- Skills and labor shortages
- Regulatory and political uncertainty

Real Estate

- Economic recession impact on customers
- Challenging investment environment
- Rental payment difficulties
- Declining property values
- Tenant and lease challenges

PRIMARY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Electricity

- Carbon emissions and pollution
- Challenges transitioning to clean energy
- Grid resilience and reliability
- Resource depletion and scarcity
- Energy access inequality
- High renewable integration costs

Water and Utilities

- Water scarcity and drought
- Water pollution and sanitation
- Aging water infrastructure
- Inefficient water use
- Ecosystem degradation
- Financial viability of utilities

Infrastructure

- Environmental impact mitigation
- Sustainable materials and construction
- Transport emissions reduction
- Climate resilience planning
- Biodiversity conservation
- Inclusive infrastructure development

Real Estate

- Lower carbon emissions
- Sustainable materials usage
- Energy-efficient construction
- Waste reduction strategies
- Environmentally friendly products
- Green construction best practices

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Industry Profile: Financial Services and FinTech

How the Voluntary National Review segmented the industry:

A noticeable rise in FinTech companies, including payment processing, outsourcing and security. The blend of companies included in the 2024 private sector voluntary national review evolved to include more digital organisations than before. South Africa has a rich blend of traditional and emergent financial services companies. Highly skilled and advanced cyber security and block chain plays sit alongside a growing number of financial call centre offerings. Several of the very big financial players play across the four industry quartiles.

EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION:

Whilst there was excellent participation from large financial services players, representing retail banking, insurance and investment, there was less engagement from FinTech, payment services and finance business process outsourcing companies, which tend to be medium sized.

Financial Services and FinTech

TYPES OF BUSINESS MODEL

Banking and Lending

- Traditional High Street Banking
- Online Retail Banking
- Credit Unions
- Peer-to-Peer Lending (P2P)

Investment and Asset Management

- Investment Banking
- Asset Management
- Wealth Management
- Private Equity and Venture Capital
- Hedge Funds

Insurance and Risk Management

- Insurance
- Real Estate Investment
- Property Insurance

Fintech and Payment Services

- Payment Processing
- FinTech Startups
- Cryptocurrency Exchanges
- Financial Planning and Advisory
- Crowdfunding

COMPANIES EXAMPLES OPERATING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Banking and Lending

- Absa Group
- Standard Bank Group
- Nedbank Group
- FirstRand
- Capitec Bank Holdings
- Glencore | ExxonMobil | Shell | Chevron

Investment and Asset Management

- Investec
- Sanlam
- Old Mutual
- Coronation Fund Managers
- Allan Gray

Insurance and Risk Management

- Sanlam
- Old Mutual
- Discovery
- Momentum Metropolitan Holdings
- Santam
- ELB Engineering

Fintech and Payment Services

- Naspers Limited
- African Rainbow Capital
- Johannesburg Stock Exchange
- Shoprite Money
- Ikhokha
- Purple Group

PRIMARY BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Banking and Lending

- Regulatory Compliance
- Economic Volatility
- Digital Transformation

Investment and Asset Management

- Market Volatility
- Regulatory Environment
- Investor Trust

Insurance and Risk Management

- Risk Assessment
- Regulatory Compliance
- Fraud and Claims Management

Fintech and Payment Services

- Regulatory Hurdles
- Cybersecurity
- Access to Funding

PRIMARY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Banking and Lending

- Social impact of predatory loans
- Investment that cause environmental degradation
- High interest rates exacerbate inequality

Investment and Asset Management

- Short term investment in damaging industries
- Investment in companies with poor labour practice
- Volatile speculative or short-term investments

Insurance and Risk Management

- Equitable educational access and quality
- Poverty alleviation for vulnerable students
- Adapting curricula to evolving digital competencies
- Enabling effective, accessible online learning
- Overcoming shortfalls in early childhood education

Fintech and Payment Services

- Data privacy and security
- Digital divide for communities without technology
- Change outpaces regulatory frameworks

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Industry Profile: Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

How the Voluntary National Review segmented the industry:

Focusing on responsible consumption and production, and opportunities in manufacturing:
This sector witnessed enhanced representation from the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries compared to the 2019 Voluntary National Review, crucial amidst the growing interest in wellbeing post-pandemic. Contributions spanned consumer goods, including fast-moving consumer goods, and industrial manufacturing, offering a more comprehensive perspective than previously seen. Following the industry round tables, a decision was made to move Construction and Building Materials to the Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate sector, to align more closely with real estate.

EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION:

While there was robust participation from the manufacturing, pharmaceutical, and consumer goods sectors, participants observed that the automotive manufacturing sector, being both substantial and impactful, could have benefited from better representation.

Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

TYPES OF BUSINESS MODEL

Consumer Goods and FMCG

- Textiles, Clothing and Apparel
- Consumer Electronical Appliances
- Furniture, Home and Household
- Books, Music, Sports, Recreation and Entertainment
- Paper, Print, Packaging, Office and School Supplies
- Home Improvement and DIY
- Luxury Goods

Pharmaceutical and Healthcare

- Pharmaceuticals and Medications
- Health, Beauty and Wellbeing
- Medical Device, Equipment, Diagnostics and Testing
- Dental Healthcare Services, Products and Equipment
- Healthcare Services (In Patient, Outpatient, Tele)
- Alternative and Complimentary Healthcare
- Research, Biotechnology and Life Sciences

Industrial Manufacturing

- Automotive, Transportation and Heavy Machinery
- Agricultural Machinery
- Aerospace and Defense
- Ceramics, Glass and Wood
- Precision Instruments, Electronics and Electrical
- Metal and Metal Products
- Chemical and Industrial Process Equipment

Construction and Building Material

- Concrete, Cement, Brick and Clay Products
- Insulation, Roofing, Flooring and Ceiling Materials
- Plumbing and Pipe Products
- Electrical, Wiring and Cabling
- Paints, Waterproofing and Sealants
- Building hardware, doors, windows and fasteners
- Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning

COMPANIES EXAMPLES OPERATING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Consumer Goods and FMCG

- Mondi | Sappi | Nampak | Novus
- The Focshini Group
- Samsung | Defy | Mercer
- Nedtex
- Coricraft | Ergoform
- Penguin Random House
- Builders Warehouse

Pharmaceutical and Healthcare

- Aspen Pharmacare Holdings
- Adcock Ingram
- Medtronic | Roche | Dentons | Smiths | B.Braun
- Netcare | Mediclinic
- Biovac | Pathcare | Ampath
- Cura Health Group | Biopulse

Industrial Manufacturing

- Volkswagen | Toyota | Ford | Nissan | BMW | Isuzu
- MAN Truck and Bus | Transnet Engineering
- Siemens
- Bell Equipment
- Denel SOC
- Babcock Ntuthuko
- ArcelorMittal

Construction and Building Material

- Italtile | Cashbuild | Ceramic Industries | Hansgrohe
- Console Glass
- PG Bison | Yale | Roto Frank
- Afrisam | Plascon
- Pretoria Portland Cement (PPC) | Afrimat
- Marley Roofing | Isover | Duroplastic Technologies
- Incledon | Sasolburg | Aberdare

PRIMARY BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Consumer Goods and FMCG

- Fierce competition and market saturation
- Supply chain disruptions and logistics costs
- Evolving consumer preferences and trends
- Regulatory compliance and product safety
- Cost of energy and Loadshedding disruption
- Brand differentiation and marketing effectiveness

Pharmaceutical and Healthcare

- Stringent regulatory requirements and approvals
- Research and development costs and timelines
- Protecting IP and competition from generics
- Healthcare affordability and access issues
- Adherence to ethical standards and compliance
- Data security and patient privacy concerns

Industrial Manufacturing

- Economic fluctuations and demand uncertainties
- Global competition and price pressures
- Technological innovation demands
- Supply chain disruptions and raw material costs
- Quality control and production efficiency
- Environmental regulations

Construction and Building Material

- Economic cycles and construction industry volatility
- Fluctuations in raw material prices
- Competition and pricing pressures
- Environmental regulations and standards
- Safety and quality control measures
- Project delays and supply chain disruptions

PRIMARY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Consumer Goods and FMCG

- Reduce packaging waste
- Ethical sourcing practices
- Sustainable supply chains
- Eco-friendly product designs
- Reduce carbon footprint
- Promote recycling efforts

Pharmaceutical and Healthcare

- Green manufacturing practices
- Affordable healthcare access
- Reduce pharmaceutical waste
- Ethical research standards
- Patient-centric care
- Accessible healthcare services

Industrial Manufacturing

- Emissions reduction
- Efficient resource use
- Pollution control
- Circular economy adoption
- Sustainable materials
- Green energy adoption

Construction and Building Material

- Lower carbon emissions
- Sustainable materials usage
- Energy-efficient construction
- Waste reduction strategies
- Environmentally friendly products
- Green construction best practices

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Industry Profile: Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

How the Voluntary National Review segmented the industry:

Strong participation was facilitated by the Minerals Council of South Africa.
The mining, natural gas and resources industry sector was the most active sector in the private sector voluntary national review. Many of the mines that participated had extended business models that addressed resource exploration, prospecting and support services as a direct part of their business model. This reflects the strength of the mining industry within South Africa as well as the elevated level of collaboration across the industry. Many of the participating mines have pan-African or global operations.

EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION:

Whilst there was excellent participation from minerals, metals and from energy and chemical products, there was less participation from the wider mining supply chain specific businesses, including mining support services, prospecting, resource exploration and trading specialist organisations.

Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

TYPES OF BUSINESS MODEL

Mineral and Natural Gas Mining

- Precious metals (Gold, Platinum, Diamond)
- Base Metals, Minerals and Rare Earth Elements
- Energy and Industrial Minerals (Coal, Iron etc.)
- Natural Gas Production, Processing and Refining

Energy and Chemical Products

- Integrated Energy and Resource Conglomerates
- Mineral Processing and Refining
- Chemical Product Manufacturing
- Petrochemical Processing and Production
- Recycling and Circular Economy Businesses

Mining Support and Services

- Environmental and Sustainability Consultancy
- Mining Technology Innovation
- Mining Infrastructure and Logistics
- Natural Gas Distribution and Transportation
- Mining Equipment and Clean Technology Solutions
- Mining Health and Safety

Resource Exploration and Trading

- Exploration and Prospecting of Mineral Resources
- Natural Gas Exploration
- Geospatial and Data Analytics
- Commodity Trading and Brokerage
- Financial Services and Investment
- Resource Royalty and Streaming Companies

COMPANIES EXAMPLES OPERATING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mineral and Natural Gas Mining

- Anglo American
- AngloGold Ashanti
- Impala Platinum Holdings
- De Beers
- African Rainbow Minerals (ARM)
- Gold Fields
- Thungela

Energy and Chemical Products

- Sasol
- Afrox
- Lonmin (Sibanye-Stillwater)
- Linde South Africa
- AECI
- ArcelorMittal
- Mpact | Interwaste Holdings

Mining Support and Services

- Minerals Council of South Africa
- DBK | ERM | AECOM | Mintek | FutureBridge
- Komatsu | Caterpillar | Sandvik
- WorleyParsons
- FLSmidth
- Bateman Engineering
- Transnet Freight Rail

Resource Exploration and Trading

(MAINLY GLOBAL ORGANISATIONS)

- Barrick Gold | Newmont | Freeport-McMoRan
- ExxonMobil | Royal Dutch Shell | Chevron
- Esri | Fugro | Trimble
- Glencore | Trafigura Group | Cargill
- Franco-Nevada | Wheaton | Royal Gold

PRIMARY BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Mineral and Natural Gas Mining

- Local and global economic performance
- Energy cost driven by energy supply problems
- Declining ore grades and reserves
- Labour unrest, disputes and production stoppages
- Cost of compliance and regulations

Energy and Chemical Products

- Cost of transition to sustainable practice
- Operational efficiency and process optimisation
- Market Competition and price pressure
- Increasing cost of regulatory compliance

Mining Support and Services

- Aging infrastructure
- Intense Market Competition
- Economic downturns reducing demand
- Rapid adaptation to new technologies

Resource Exploration and Trading

- Resource price volatility and uncertain markets
- Political and geopolitical supply chain impact
- Data privacy and market competition
- Resource depletion and environmental compliance

PRIMARY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Mineral and Natural Gas Mining

- Addressing Environmental in mining operations
- Assuring safe work environments for labour
- Enabling long term community welfare
- Preventing mineral, gas and resource depletion
- Fair distribution of mining benefit

Energy and Chemical Products

- Addressing greenhouse gas emissions
- Preventing water and air pollution
- Transition to lower carbon products and services

Mining Support and Services

- Innovating technology to reduce emissions
- Reducing transportation emissions
- Advancing sustainable mining practices
- Implementing circular economy models

Resource Exploration and Trading

- Addressing civil society concerns in prospecting
- Equitable access to and responsible use of data
- Responsible and sustainable investment practice
- Sustainable resource royalty practices.

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Industry Profile: Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

How the Voluntary National Review segmented the industry:

Better inclusion of education, media, advertising and ICT has enriched perspectives.
The blend of companies in 2024 has been more diverse than in 2019 when the deep dive for this industry sector was primarily focused upon telecommunications. Better inclusion of educational organisations has surfaced key concerns about current economic impact on learners, youth employment challenges and evolving curricula, whilst stronger media participation has addressed critical concerns about access to information.

EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION:

Whilst there was excellent participation from technology and telecommunication companies, the educational organisation representation did not reflect the full range of business models holistically, with gaps in secondary and tertiary organisation representation. Advertising participation was also light.

Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

TYPES OF BUSINESS MODEL

Telecommunications

- Telecom Service Providers
- Device and Hardware Manufacturers
- Telecom Infrastructure Companies
- Internet Service Providers
- Telecom Equipment and Leasing Services

Technology Players

- Software Solution Developers
- ICT Cloud Computing Consultancies
- Data Analytics and Big Data Companies
- ICT Support and Maintenance Providers

Educational Organisations

- Universities (Traditional and Online)
- Online Educational Bodies
- Private Primary and Secondary Schools
- TVET Institutions
- FET Colleges
- eLearning Platforms
- Learning Content Providers

Advertising and Media

- Advertising Agencies
- Media Production Companies
- Broadcasting Companies (TV and Radio)
- Digital Advertising Agencies
- News Outlets and Online Media

COMPANIES EXAMPLES OPERATING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Telecommunications

- Vodacom
- Telkom
- MTN
- Cell C
- Afrihost | Webafrica
- Vox Telecoms
- MWEB | Axxess

Technology Players

- EOH
- BBD | AdaptIT
- Dimension Data | SAP | IBM | Oracle | Cisco
- Amazon Web Services | Microsoft | Sage
- Data Tech | Xperien
- PwC | EY | Accenture | Deloitte

Educational Organisations

- Harambee | BPESA
- Pearson | eAdvance
- GetSmarter
- Curro | ADvTECH | Stadio | Varsity College
- The Institute of Digital Education
- Learntech | Digital Girl Africa
- GIBS Business School

Advertising and Media

- Naspers
- Daily Maverick
- SABC
- Media24 | News24 | Mail and Guardian
- 5FM | Radio 702 | eMedia Holdings
- Publicis Africa | Ogilvy | FCB
- Mirum South Africa (including Quirk)

PRIMARY BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Telecommunications

- Regulatory pressures
- Intense competition
- Cost of infrastructure investment
- Rising energy costs and loadshedding
- Data security and privacy
- Consumer affordability and inflation

Technology Players

- Cybersecurity threats
- Talent shortages
- Global market competition
- Economic volatility
- Digital transformation costs
- Regulatory compliance

Educational Organisations

- Enrollment challenges
- Economic disparities and inclusion
- Regulatory and accreditation challenges
- Student digital literacy, enablement and buy in
- Infrastructure and costs
- Sourcing quality educational professionals

Advertising and Media

- Digital disruption and communication congestion
- Responsible implementation of POPIA
- Declining print media and intense online competition
- Customer reluctance to pay for online media
- Customer ability to pay for services
- Content piracy and fake news

PRIMARY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Telecommunications

- Evolving regulatory policies to protect customers
- Expanding infrastructure for equitable access
- Bridging the digital divide in impoverished areas
- Balancing economic growth and customer equity
- Energy consumption and e-waste challenges

Technology Players

- Mitigating the impact of automation on jobs
- Addressing digital divide and inclusion issues
- Recycling and upcycling ICT equipment
- Green energy data centers and electronic waste
- Fostering job creation and skills development
- Combating corruption and ethical business practices

Educational Organisations

- Equitable educational access and quality
- Poverty alleviation for vulnerable students
- Adapting curricula to evolving digital competencies
- Enabling effective, accessible online learning
- Overcoming shortfalls in early childhood education

Advertising and Media

- Protecting the freedom of press and media
- Promoting responsible advertising practices
- Fostering ethical journalism
- Environmental impact of print media
- Addressing corruption in advertising
- Aligning media for sustainability outcomes

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10

Methodology

“South Africa’s whole-of-society approach to sustainable development and attaining the SDGs is demonstrated in its comprehensive and inclusive methodology for drafting the 2024 VNR: A writing team with business, civil society, academic and government representatives collaboratively drafted the VNR and integrated stakeholder insights.”

South African VNR 2024

Global Compact
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ABOUT THE PRIVATE SECTOR VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW

This section contains information about the Voluntary National Review process, including how the participation of the private sector was managed.

Methodology Overview for the 2024 VNR Report: Engaging the South African Private Sector

For the South African Private Sector's 2024 VNR Report, an interactive methodology was employed, grouping six industries to provide comprehensive insights into sustainability trends, challenges, and opportunities. Participating companies contributed keynote speakers who presented industry insights and shared sustainability frameworks. Additionally, registered companies submitted case studies and completed a broad-based survey to offer further insights, while also prioritising the SDG's.Tailored workbooks outlining the VNR process and key dates for industry discussions were crafted for each participating company. These companies engaged in six industry-focused round table discussions, guided by expert panels and moderators, and delved into ten targeted topic discussions. Diverse feedback mechanisms, including digital platforms like Mentimeter, facilitated rich, multi-dimensional dialogue. Post-discussions and one-on-one sessions were arranged to review the workbooks that companies completed, culminating in a collection of success stories. These narratives, alongside insights from the round tables, formed the basis of the report's findings.

Method approach breakdown

A varied interactive approach was used incorporating 9 key areas.

- Detailed methods and approaches each company used for their contributions.
- Overview of participating companies and their roles in the process.
- Engagement and participation in industry-specific round table discussions.
- Involvement in discussions focused on priority topics relevant to sustainability.
- A workbook for companies to document their contributions and insights.
- A schedule outlining key meetings and engagement sessions for the VNR process.
- The structured process for conducting the Voluntary National Review.
- Contributions from companies towards building a comprehensive VNR business case.
- Ensuring all efforts and contributions are aligned with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Review and Moderation methods formed an integral part of finalising the report.
Element:

- Evaluation by peers within the same industry to ensure relevance and accuracy.
- Assessment by academic experts to validate the methodology and findings.
- Input from Small and Medium Enterprises to incorporate diverse business perspectives.
- Review by industry associations to align with sector standards and practices.
- Final editorial check for clarity, coherence, and consistency in the report.

Through this process we surfaced opportunities, challenges, risks and Innovation.

- Opportunities on how to move forward to expedite the achievement of goals.
- Challenges around blockers that are preventing the attainment of goals.
- Risks that are facing the Private Sector translating into what this means for business.
- Innovation in pockets that can elevate the success of the industries.

The Company Contribution Method and Approach

A high level of effort was put into ensuring that there was clear guidance for participating companies, to ensure quality information was collected and fully utilised to generate valuable insights.

PRIVATE SECTOR VNR 2024 COMPANY CONTRIBUTION METHOD AND APPROACH:

Participation Approach Principles:

The Global Compact Network South Africa provided the writing team with a set of design principles to underpin the private sector Voluntary National Review reporting process:

- Simple and practical
- Produces outputs that can be tangibly used
- Collect and share existing insight and data
- Strong opportunity to feedback insights and ideas
- Dynamic methodology that can evolve
- Maximised transparency and visibility
- Responsible data management

The Participation Approach:

The Company Contribution Methodology and Approach had five key parts:

PART 1:

Identify Sustainability Priorities:

In this part of the process, we confirmed participating company's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) priorities. Additionally, companies completed a Frameworks and Standards Checklist. If the organisation has an SDG Sustainability Model, we encouraged its submission. Lastly, we asked to provide a self-assessed Sustainability Maturity Rating to measure sustainability progress.

PART 2:

Capture Company's Success Stories:

We asked companies to share a success story within the context of industry or sectoral collaboration. This had to include relevant facts and Impact Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that demonstrate the tangible outcomes of the sustainability initiatives. Further to this, companies confirmed how their case study aligned with SDGs and with the Voluntary National Review Priority Topics.

PART 3:

Confirm Company Information:

Participating companies provided essential details about the company, including its name, industry or sector, and a brief description. The company's sustainability ethos was captured in a 'Sustainability Slogan'. Financial information was gathered such as turnover and sustainability budget per annum, enabling comparative analysis. Company website address, integrated reports and additional sustainability information was also captured.

PART 4:

Engagement for Industry and Priority Topic Round Tables:

Participating companies were engaged with to identify subject matter experts aligned to both topics and industries. The Priority Topic Synopsis was also circulated to gather early insights. Participants were asked to contribute research, analysis, insights into emerging trends, opportunities and challenges. During the round table series attendees to shaped the narrative and gave prioritisations and ratings.

PART 5:

Capture of the Leadership Survey and Quotations:

The Leadership Survey was completed by participating companies, who captured Leader insights into each organisation's intended sustainability innovations and changes. Additionally, a quotation was submitted from the CEO or Sustainability leader to capture the organisation's perspective on sustainability. This leadership perspective were approved for use in both the Voluntary National Review report, and as well as in the launch campaign.

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Company Participation Overview

There was a total of 16 stakeholder engagement, with 132 companies participating in the process. The process captured and analysed 3,410 unique Mentimeter inputs from 284 unique participants. Additionally, 31 company case studies were submitted, and 6 strategic partners contributed to the research and analysis.

16 Stakeholder Engagement Virtual Round Tables	**132** Companies Participating in the Process	**3,410** Unique Mentimeter Inputs captured and Analysed
284 Unique Participants Engaged in the Process	**31** Company Case Studies	**6** Strategic Partners Contribution to the Research and Analysis

Participation Challenges:

The Voluntary National Review process took longer than expected and consumed more resources than anticipated, mainly due to the complexities of collaborating with numerous participating companies. Key challenges managing participation included:

Challenges in Communicating the Process:
- Limited reach and engagement on social media platforms.
- The perceived intricacy of the review process.
- The need for individualised engagement with participants.
- Difficulties in impactful communication through private sector associations.
- Private sector organisations' cautious approach to member contact to uphold privacy.

Challenges in Persuading Companies to Participate:
- The perceived complexity and technical jargon of the process.
- A struggle to grasp and apply full sustainability concepts.
- Concerns over the extensive time commitment required.
- The belief that the review favoured companies with existing sustainability expertise.
- Scepticism regarding the practical benefits of the VNR and the relevance of the SDGs.

Challenges in Ensuring Full Completion of the Process:
- Obstacles associated with conducting thorough internal reviews.
- Disruptions caused by changes in key personnel within companies.
- A tendency to prioritise pressing reporting obligations over the review process.
- Difficulties in obtaining critical insights and endorsements from senior leadership.
- Complications arising from the review of internal communications.

Key notes on participation:

- **The Priority Topic Round Table series engaged with 284 unique participants:** The sessions took place between September and November 2023. In addition to participating in the round tables, participating companies prepared information into participant contribution workbooks. This content included a leadership survey, confirmation of sustainable development goal priorities, and company level challenges and opportunities.
- **The Industry Profiles provide a participation quality analysis:** A review of the quality of participation within each sector is given in the Industry Profiles that follow. These profiles provide a summary of the way that the industry sectors were scoped, and of the quality of participation within each sector.
- **Participation was primarily from large corporate businesses and NGOs.** It was challenging to engage with medium sized and small companies that do not have the dedicated sustainability resources and capabilities.

Critique of Methodology:

A critique of the Priority Topic methodology was done with strategic partners and representatives of the GIBS Business School. This gives valuable recommendations for further analysis and development of this methodology in the future:

- **Participation was from sustainability-oriented companies:** The companies that signed up to participate in the process are companies that tend to be actively engaged in sustainability. This means that company perspectives given in this report are not fully reflective of companies that are less sustainability orientated.
- **Further rigorous analysis is required:** The individual company level views that have contributed to the priority topics need to be further processed to translate the views given by individual companies into a more holistic and broad-based perspective and provide an integrated private sector perspective.
- **Application of recognised terminology:** Some of the terminology arising from companies is not recognisable as the standard terms of reference used within the wider sustainability community and by industry or academic subject matter experts.
- **Clearer Multi-Level accountability:** The collaborative nature of the priority topic round tables emerged with a collective narrative tone, commonly referring to 'we'. The further development of the content should be clearer on where accountability, challenges, or perspectives sit.
- **A less parochial and insular mindset:** Companies and wider role players are approaching sustainability in a fragmented and insular 'individual company' way that is unlikely to deliver the sustainable development goals. The national issues that need to be addressed cannot be tackled systemically.
- **Better private sector data is needed:** The priority topic approach is a qualitative method that is only able to provide individual company perspectives. More science and fact-based data is needed to make concrete observations. These are currently not readily available at private sector level to enable inform decisions.

Given that what gets measured is what gets managed, better strategic information is needed to motivate for continuous improvement and to validate the emergent priority topic findings and proposed delivery pathways.

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Participating Company Contribution Workbook

Guide to how the contribution workbook was structured:

Participating companies registered online, nominated representatives for round tables and suggested keynote speakers. They ranked SDG priorities based on integration, collected sustainability frameworks, and identified challenges, opportunities and successful initiatives. Company KPIs measured progress since 2019.

COMPANY REGISTRATION:
Companies registered to participate in the VNR by completing an online registration form, giving an initial SDG and priority topic prioritisation.

ROUND TABLE REGISTRATION:
Industry- and Priority Topic Roundtable dates, along with virtual meeting links, were provided and participating companies suggested keynote speakers.

LEADER QUOTE:
Intended to raise awareness and motivate collective action towards sustainability in the South African private sector.

LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS SURVEY:
This aimed to facilitate a benchmark of CEO intention in South Africa, that enabled a comparison to the international consensus.

SDG PRIORITIES:
The SDG Priority ratings were determined based on the priorities set by participating companies within their organisations. Ratings reflected the degree of integration with each SDG.

SDG MATURITY:
The assessment helped understand how deeply embedded these goals are in companies' strategies and operations.

FRAMEWORKS USED:
Participating companies indicated which frameworks they report on. This helped inform industry-level analysis and benchmarking, without attributing specific responses to individual companies.

OPPORTUNITIES:
Opportunities at a company, industry and country level helped to identify areas where progress can be made and where interventions or initiatives can be focused.

CHALLENGES:
Company challenges helped understand the obstacle and barriers that may impede progress towards SDGs that allowed to tailor discussions and initiatives to address them effectively.

INITIATIVES:
Company initiatives showcased successful practices and potential solutions to sustainability challenges.

SUCCESS STORY:
Participating company success stories contributed to the VNR narrative and provided a structured and comprehensive overview of sustainability efforts across different sectors.

KPIs:
Company KPIs measured the change between 2019 and current performance. This assessed progress, identified areas of improvement, and help understand the impact of external factors on the South African economy.

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The VNR Schedule of Meetings and Engagement

Facilitating Inclusive Engagement

Driving Collective Insight and Action. The VNR Collaboration Schedule was a robust platform orchestrating interactive sessions, industry deep dives, and multi-stakeholder consultations, meticulously designed to foster collective insight and action towards sustainable development goals (SDGs). Crafted with careful consideration, it commenced with an in-depth review of the VNR 2019 and an exploration of the VNR 2024 methodology, providing participants with a comprehensive understanding of the process's evolution, objectives and roadmap ahead.

As the collaboration unfolded, participants engaged in a series of six interactive Industry Deep Dive virtual sessions tailored to each industry's nuances. These sessions offered stakeholders a platform to delve into industry-specific insights, engaging in focused discussions and knowledge-sharing exercises to ensure a comprehensive exploration of key topics and enrich the dialogue with diverse perspectives.

In addition to industry deep dives, dedicated sessions focused on the top 10 priority topics, providing participants with opportunities to delve into pressing issues and potential solutions. Extensive invitations were extended to participating companies, prioritising inclusivity and diversity, and fostering a collaborative environment where stakeholders were adequately prepared and engaged.

Integral to the collaborative process were multi-stakeholder consultations, providing various stakeholders with a platform to contribute insights and perspectives. These consultations offered a holistic view of sustainability challenges and opportunities across different sectors, fostering dialogue and collective learning.

To ensure that valuable insights generated during the collaboration were captured and shared effectively, all sessions were recorded and disseminated across social media platforms such as the GCNSA YouTube channel, website and Linked-IN platform. This approach enhanced accessibility and amplified the impact of the collaboration by reaching a wider audience. Additionally, real-time feedback mechanisms, such as mentimeter, were utilised during sessions to gather insights and ratings, further enhancing participant engagement and facilitating data-driven Decisionmaking processes.

During industry round tables, participants engaged in comprehensive discussions to identify and address industry-specific risks and challenges. These insights were synthesised into an industry risk and challenge profile, informing participating company priority ratings for prosperity and sustainability challenges at the industry level. The integration of these insights into the top ten risks to the private sector underscored their significance and relevance in shaping the VNR report's narrative.

Similarly, during Priority topics sessions, participants explored key challenges and opportunities within each priority area, contributing diverse perspectives and insights. This structured approach ensured clarity and alignment in addressing priority challenges, driving collective action towards sustainable development goals.

Navigating through the VNR Collaboration Schedule, participants embarked on a journey of discovery, collaboration and action, shaping the narrative of sustainable development and paving the way for a more resilient and inclusive future.

Date	Day	Time	Collaborative and Interactive Virtual Round Table
24-May	Friday	11:00am – 1:00pm	**VNR 2019 Review and VNR 2024 Methodology**
18-Aug	Friday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Welcome, VNR Synopsis Overview and Participant Onboarding**
The 6 Industry Insights Deep Dive Series			
12-Sep	Tuesday	9:00am – 12:00pm	**Financial Services and FinTech**
14-Sep	Thursday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Mining, Natural Gas and Resources**
19-Sep	Tuesday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Agriculture, Food Production and Retail**
21-Sep	Thursday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate**
03-Oct	Tuesday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Telecommunications, Education, ICT and Media**
05-Oct	Thursday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Manufacturing and Consumer Goods**
The 10 Priority Topic Round Table Series			
10-Oct	Tuesday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Growing Sustainable Investment**
12-Oct	Thursday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**A Just Transition To Carbon Neutral**
17-Oct	Tuesday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Solving Our Energy Crisis**
19-Oct	Thursday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Ethical Transformational Governance**
24-Oct	Tuesday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Effective Public Private-Sector Collaboration**
26-Oct	Thursday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Synergies With Civil Society and Community**
31-Oct	Tuesday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Impact and Opportunity Post Pandemic**
02-Nov	Thursday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Building Global Supply Chain Resilience**
07-Nov	Tuesday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Empowering Women To Achieve Gender Equality**
09-Nov	Thursday	10:00am – 12:00pm	**Leveraging Sustainability Frameworks**
Industry Consultation and Opportunity Evaluation			
19-Mar	Tuesday	1:30pm – 3:00pm	**Mining, Natural Gas and Resources**
20-Mar	Wednesday	1:30pm – 3:00pm	**Financial Services and FinTech**
26-Mar	Tuesday	1:30pm – 3:00pm	**Telecommunications, Education, ICT and Media**
27-Mar	Wednesday	10:30am – 12:00pm	**Agriculture, Food Production and Retail**
27-Mar	Wednesday	1:30pm – 3:00pm	**Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate**
03-Apr	Wednesday	2:30pm – 4:00pm	**Manufacturing and Consumer Goods**
Multistakeholder Consultation			
13-Feb	Tuesday	9:30am – 15:30pm	**NPC Cross Sector Stakeholder Consultation 1**
08-Apr	Monday	9:00am – 4:00pm	**NPC Cross Sector Stakeholder Consultation 2**
27-May	Monday	8:30am – 1:00pm	**NPC Cross Sector: Country Report Validation**

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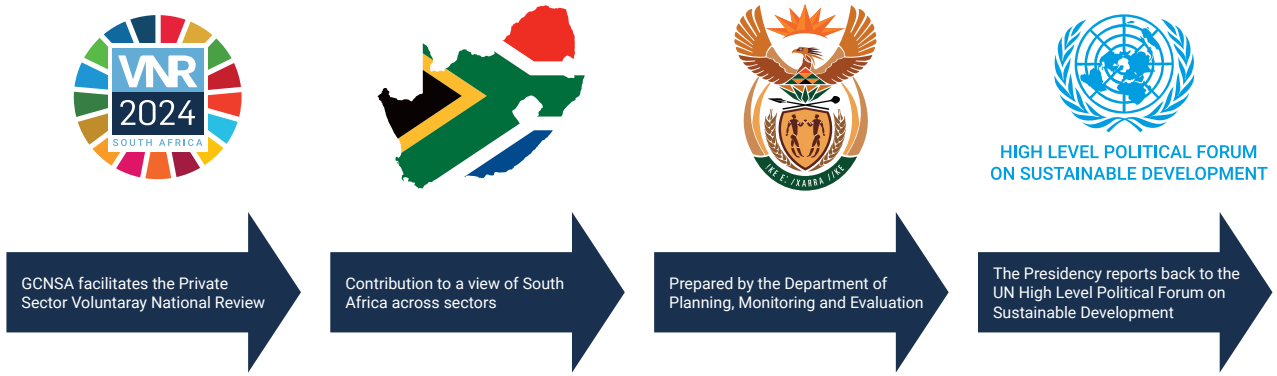
The Voluntary National Review Process

A sustained and holistic contribution, despite ongoing challenges.

Companies reported that they have sustained and evolved their efforts: The South African private sector plays a crucial role in creating ownership of the SDGs, often through mechanisms that align business operations with sustainable development principles. The primary ways that companies are contributing to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda include:

THE VNR REPORTING PROCESS



The VNR Objective

Our first Voluntary National Review of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals was in 2019. The VNR 2024 objective is to be part of the private sector input into the South African President's Report to the UN High Level Political Forum in 2024. Last time the GCNSA platform facilitated a view of the top ten trends within the South African private sector, yielding insights in challenges, emerging frameworks and best practices. This time, we are even more ambitious, seeking to include even more businesses to gain broad-based insights into how the South African private sector is performing against the 2030 Agenda. We want to grow participation and collaboration aimed at delivering the Sustainable Development Goals.

Join us and participate! You will play a vital role in developing success stories that articulate private sector action. Your role is to bring your energy and leave no-one behind.

The VNR is an opportunity to rapidly advance your company's sustainability strategy and to grow your personal sustainability frame of reference and personal expertise. Through learning, communicating and leading, we played a vital role in shaping the South African private sector's performance against the 2030 Agenda and delivering meaningful impact for generations to come. Leverage the opportunity!

During the VNR Review Process, we connect with industry experts and peers, gaining valuable knowledge and insights to drive progress and deliver impact. Through active participation, we discover South African best practices and innovative approaches, equipping ourselves to tackle sustainability challenges effectively and advance towards our goals.

Trust and credibility is built by communicating our progress and commitment to sustainability goals within our communities and stakeholder networks. By sharing our successes and challenges transparently, we inspire confidence and foster collaboration, encouraging others to join the journey towards a more sustainable future.

Leadership boldly showcase expertise and innovative solutions, inspiring others to follow suit and take action. The VNR Review Process provide a platform to demonstrate leadership in sustainability, enabling opportunities for collaboration and collective action to address shared challenges and drive meaningful change.

We connect with industry peers and experts, forging valuable relationships and collaborations that transcends organisational boundaries and sectors, fostering unity and synergy in South African sustainability efforts.

CONNECT

Connect with industry, experts peers enabling networks across organisations and sectors, unifying South African action.

LEARN

Gain the knowledge and skills to make progress and deliver impact by showcasing South African best practice approaches.

COMMUNICATE

Build trust and credibility by communicating your progress towards South African sustainability goals and targets.

LEAD

Show bold leadership and inspire others. Enable opportunity for leadership to surface and flourish, share your expertise.

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Companies Contributed to a "VNR Business Case"

When the Voluntary National Review of the South African private sector was announced during the Global Compact Dialogues session in May 2023, we invited UNGC members to contribute to a 'business case' for participation that could attract further company involvement in the process.

We asked businesses why sustainability matters, and their response was clear: aligning strategies with sustainable outcomes is not just beneficial—it's essential for success. Companies that authentically value sustainability are performing best and attracting and retaining top talent better than those that don't.

Companies articulated that they stood to benefit from participating in a Voluntary National Review (VNR) for a multitude of reasons. First, it provided a platform to forge new collaborative partnerships across various industries and sectors, potentially unlocking new business opportunities. Secondly, engaging in the VNR allowed them access to the vast economic opportunities presented by the SDGs, valued at an estimated USD 12 trillion, thus enhancing their attractiveness to sustainability-conscious customers.

Thirdly, their involvement served to bolster trust within the South African economy, showcasing to local and global investors their reliability as business partners. Fourthly, by contributing insights and sharing data related to the SDGs, they could help shape a national dialogue and escalate SDG action within South Africa.

Moreover, their contributions were crucial in crafting a robust South African narrative that would inform the National Development Plan and mould private sector SDG strategies, reinforcing the collective private sector voice and establishing a cohesive platform for sustainability.

Lastly, participation afforded them the opportunity to reflect on their SDG journeys collectively, exchange best practices, engage in peer learning, pinpoint priority areas, and narrate their success stories. This collective introspection and exchange were pivotal for spurring ongoing progress, inspiring innovation, and catalysing sustainable change within the private sector.

The Future Benefit Case:

Further to the benefits envisaged from participating in the Voluntary National Review and supporting companies in delivering the 2030 Agenda, key responses included:

1. Fostering peer learning and best practice sharing amongst participating companies.
2. Enhancing access to collaborative projects and partnerships aligned with the SDGs.
3. Provision of a benchmarking system to compare progress and drive performance.
4. Offering a repository of case studies and research to inform future strategies.
5. Creating opportunities for joint advocacy on critical sustainability issues.
6. Facilitating mentorship programs linking emerging businesses with industry leaders.
7. Establishing a framework for continuous improvement and innovation in sustainability.
8. Providing a channel for increased visibility and recognition of sustainability efforts.
9. Enabling the sharing of tools and resources for efficient SDG implementation.
10. Creating a feedback loop to refine and improve SDG-related actions and reporting.
11. Encouraging knowledge transfer and capacity building across sectors and regions.
12. Forming a community of practice to address common challenges and identify solutions.
13. Offering support in navigating the regulatory environment for sustainability initiatives.

7 REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE VNR:

1. Connect to create new collaborative partnerships across industries and sectors. To open new business opportunities.
2. Collaborate to tap into SDG opportunity that economists estimate is worth USD12 trillion. Sustainability is attractive to customers.
3. Build trust in our South African economy: inspire local and global investors, communicate that we are good to do business with.
4. Provide insights and your SDG data to inform trends that can scale SDG Action in South Africa, creating a national dialogue.
5. Contribute to a strong South African narrative that informs the National Development Plan and private sector SDG strategies.
6. Be part of a strong private sector collaborative voice that creates a unified sustainability platform for business.
7. Reflect collectively on SDG journeys, share best practice, peer-learn, and surface priority areas. Tell your success stories.

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About the 2030 Agenda

The Sustainable Development Goals:

In 2015, South Africa, along with all other United Nations (UN) Member States, committed to the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This historic agreement marked a significant milestone in global efforts to address pressing challenges facing humanity and the planet. At the core of the 2030 Agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which serve as a comprehensive blueprint for achieving a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous world by the year 2030.

The SDGs encompass a wide range of interconnected objectives that aim to tackle the most pressing issues of our time. From ending poverty and hunger to promoting gender equality, ensuring access to quality education, and combating climate change, the SDGs represent a holistic approach to sustainable development. They recognise that these challenges are interlinked and require integrated solutions that address economic, social and environmental dimensions simultaneously.

Each of the 17 SDGs is accompanied by specific targets and indicators, providing a framework for measuring progress and holding governments, businesses and civil society accountable for their commitments. By setting clear targets and benchmarks, the SDGs provide a roadmap for collective action and guide Decisionmaking at all levels, from local communities to global institutions.

In South Africa, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs has provided a framework for aligning national development priorities with global sustainability objectives. The government has integrated the SDGs into its National Development Plan (NDP) and other policy frameworks, recognising the importance of addressing social, economic and environmental challenges in a coordinated manner.

Furthermore, the SDGs serve as a call for collective action, mobilising stakeholders from across sectors to work together towards common goals. Civil society organisations, businesses, academia and communities are actively engaged in initiatives that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, leveraging their unique expertise and resources to drive positive change.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals represent a shared commitment to building a more sustainable and inclusive future for all. By working together and embracing the principles of sustainability, we can overcome the challenges we face and create opportunity to thrive.

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VNR Strategic Partner: BLSA

BLSA aims to create a conducive environment for the private sector, with high ethical standards, through initiatives underpinned by the belief that proven economic management, fiscal, monetary, manufacturing, and trade policies are fundamental for a successful South Africa.

Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA) serves South African business to create a conducive environment for the private sector to unlock economic growth and development for all South Africans. Originating from the South Africa Foundation in 1959, BLSA has consistently cultivated the relationship between business and government in the national interest, undergoing a rebranding in 2005.

With a focus on promoting the interests and growth of the private sector domestically and internationally, BLSA formulates views on macro-economic and national interest issues, emphasising the importance of sound economic management, fiscal policies, and ethical standards to ensure South Africa's success.

At the core of BLSA's mission lies the commitment to advancing a modern, inclusive, and growing economy, upholding the constitution, and protecting the integrity of state institutions. BLSA recognises business as a catalyst for South Africa's inclusive growth, transformation, and development of a strong society.

With an emphasis on rights and responsibilities, BLSA believes that a prosperous South Africa is one that attracts investment, fosters effective markets, and ensures stability across political, social and economic spheres. Moreover, BLSA is committed to combating corruption, promoting transformation within the business sector, and supporting black-owned and managed supplier businesses, contributing to the growth of a new generation of black business leaders and entrepreneurs.

Through its advocacy efforts and collaborative initiatives, BLSA drives sustainability within the South African private sector, effecting positive change and contributing to the nation's socio-economic development. By championing ethical standards, promoting inclusive growth, and advocating for effective governance, BLSA plays a pivotal role in shaping a prosperous and equitable future for all South Africans.

When the Voluntary National Review of the South African private sector was announced during the Global Compact

1. Skills
Appropriate to support business growth.

2. Responsive economic policy
Trade, industrial and competition policy should support development of a competitive business sector.

3. Policy and regulatory certainty
Businesses should be able to plan for the long term with clear visibility of the regulatory environment.

4. Effective and efficient network industries
A low cost environment with excellent services from network industries.

5. Positive international relations
South African business should be welcomed by major trading partners in the West and East.

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SOUTH AFRICA

6. Sustainable fiscus
Government finances should be sustainable, with positive credit ratings.

7. Capable state
Government should be able to implement policy efficiently and effectively.

8. Effective public services
People and businesses should receive quality services from local and national government.

9. Safety and security
Rule of law businesses should be confident that the rule of law is upheld and that people are safe and secure.

10. Social stability
Society should have a stake in a conductive environment, with high employment.

> **We empower farmers to not just have market access and a consistent income stream, but we upskill them with business and agricultural training, so they run sustainable businesses.**

Busisiwe Mavuso
Chief Executive Officer,
Business Leadership South Africa

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VNR Strategic Partner: BUSA

Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) members represent 95% of South African business. We engage across diverse stakeholders including government and civil society, advocating for the future economic, social and environmental policy needed to benefit business and society.

Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) plays a crucial role as the primary advocate for South African businesses, representing a significant majority of them through its member associations. Operating as an apex body, BUSA fosters dialogue among diverse stakeholders, including civil society and government, to shape policies that address future economic, social and environmental needs.

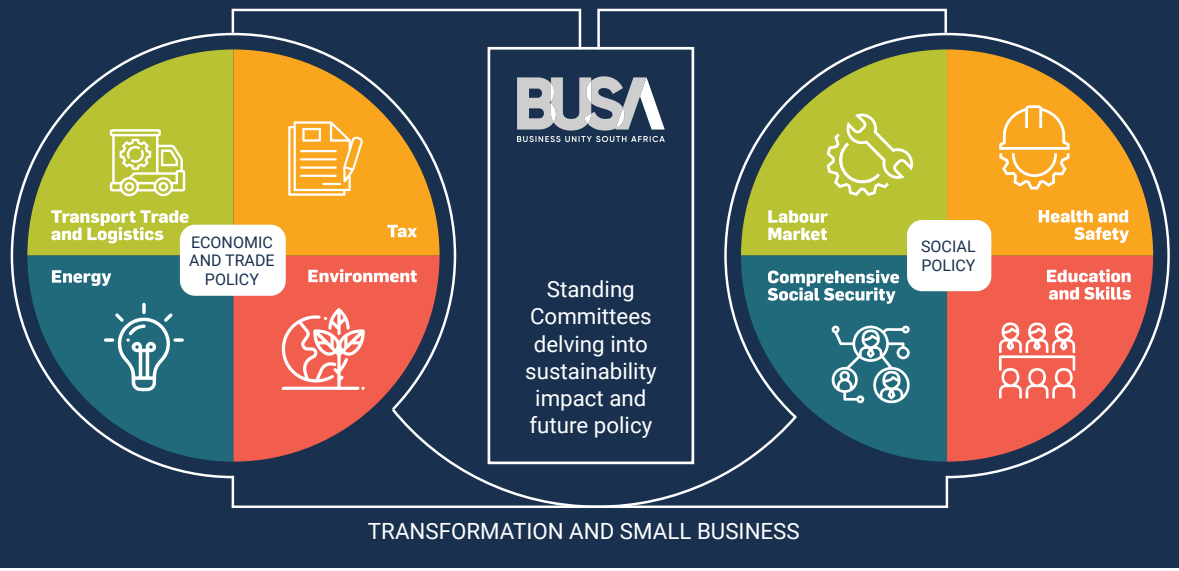
BUSA's mandate is expansive, aiming to cultivate an environment where businesses of all sizes and sectors can thrive within South Africa's economic landscape. This includes advocating for inclusive growth, employment opportunities and enhanced competitiveness, both domestically and internationally.

Central to BUSA's mission is its commitment to facilitating collaboration between the private sector and government entities. By actively participating in forums such as the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), BUSA ensures that the voices of businesses are considered in decisions impacting national interests.

Additionally, BUSA engages in parliamentary submissions and representation on state institution boards, further amplifying the influence of the business community on critical policy matters.

Internationally, BUSA represents South African business interests in various forums, contributing to the nation's global standing and economic diplomacy. Through its involvement in platforms like the SADC Private Sector Forum and the B20, BUSA fosters partnerships and collaboration on a global scale. Furthermore, its participation in organisations like the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) enhances South Africa's influence in shaping international economic policies. BUSA's multifaceted approach, spanning advocacy, collaboration and representation, underscores its pivotal role in advancing the interests of the private sector in South Africa and contributing to the nation's economic development and prosperity.

Highlighting critical business issues



Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) members represent 95% of South African business. The VNR's success hinges on surfacing the action business is engaged in to deliver the SDGs. If we bring these into the light, we can further advocate for polices that increase impact from ground-level efforts. We urge our member associations to cascade the opportunity to participate in the VNR, to the benefit of both business and our civil society.

Mr. Khulekani Mathe
Deputy Chief Executive Officer,
Business Unity South Africa

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VNR Strategic Partner: NBI

The SDGs offer the best available collective global plan for sustainability, with defined outcomes and measures. We intend to be at the table, sharing our existing research, with the intention of enabling future collective action.

The National Business Initiative (NBI) stands out for its remarkable ability to drive tangible change on the ground by uniting businesses toward a common goal. As a collective force, the NBI recognises the urgent need for the private sector to take action to ensure future sustainability and prevent further negative impacts on society and the environment. Anchored in the belief that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a robust framework for global sustainability efforts, the NBI emphasises the importance of aligning business practices with these goals to secure a prosperous and equitable future for all.

At the core of the NBI's mission lies its commitment to supporting and promoting efforts aimed at achieving the SDGs, while acknowledging the pressing challenges faced by companies, particularly in transitioning to low-carbon economies to mitigate climate change impacts. Urgent support is needed to navigate regulatory complexities, such as impending carbon border taxes, which threaten the competitiveness of South African businesses.

By advocating for climate action and facilitating the transition to more sustainable business models, the NBI strives to ensure the long-term resilience and prosperity of the private sector. Committed to fostering a national trajectory that navigates the challenges of sustainability, the NBI emphasises the importance of long-term thinking and alignment with sustainable development objectives.

Leveraging a strong scientific foundation, the organisation has developed scenarios and options to guide South Africa toward a more sustainable future. Through initiatives like the Voluntary National Review, the NBI seeks to share its findings, enrich collective understanding of the SDGs, and mobilise collaborative action among businesses. By harnessing the collective power of its member base, the NBI aims to drive systemic change and propel South Africa toward a more sustainable and prosperous future. Additionally, the NBI's strategic thought leadership, capacity-building efforts, and focus on designing business-led solutions further amplify its impact, fostering dialogue, participation and actionable outcomes in pursuit of sustainable development goals.

Shifting the dial with collection action

NBI
National Business Initiative

Focal Areas

- **Environment** — Climate, water, energy, green economy, biodiversity and just transition pathways
- **Economic Inclusion** — Skills and employability, township economies, SMEs and youth
- **Bold and Ambitious Leadership** — Cross-cutting including anti-corruption, ethics and transformation
- **Social Cohesion and Inequality** — Gender, race and intergenerational equity
- **Institutional and Government Capacity** — Governance and capacity building

IMPLEMENTING OUR PURPOSE

Environmental Sustainability
We empower business leaders so that they can make sense of the net effect of global environmental drivers on their businesses. This enables them to take decisions now that will help them ensure their business remains competitive in the future.

Social Transformation
We encourage bold, action-orientated dialogue about meaningful transformation in the workplace. This includes tackling corruption, while co-creating intiatives to achieve an inclusive and transformed workforce. This ensures businesses can be a valuable contributor to the economy, ensuring a cohesive and equitable South Africa.

Economic Inclusion
We work to understand the systemic barriers to driving economic inclusion and co-create interventions that enable change. This includes through ethical leadership, towards ensuring a sustainable and thriving South African.

Institutional and Government Capacity
We offer a cross-cutting capacity building function through a focused and outcomes-based technical mentorship and development approach to strengthen Government's capacity. This includes Government's service delivery mandate, which contributes to the creation of conducive environments in which business and society can operate effectively,

Sustainable Developement Goals (SDGs)
The SDGs are and important cross cutting focal area for the NBI. We work with businesses to enable companies to integrate and implement the SDGs in their business operations. This is a key aspect of our membership journey.

> **"Progress on the SDG's is imperative for all of us. The Global goals represent our best global, collective plan towards achieving the aims of sustainability in a measurable way. The VNR is an opportunity to shift the dial. The stock take of our private sector is galvanising in further action to achieve the SDGs and along with it some of our own national agenda in reducing poverty, inequality and unemployment. It is my hope that the process inspires and drives much needed systemic change."**

Shameela Soobramoney
Chief Executive Officer,
National Business Initiative

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VNR Strategic Partner: Minerals Council of South Africa

MINERALS COUNCIL
SOUTH AFRICA

The Minerals Council South Africa is dedicated to advancing and advocating for the South African mining industry. As a prominent employers' organisation, its vision is to reestablish the mining sector as the leading industrial sector in South Africa, fostering growth and investment.

The Minerals Council South Africa (Minerals Council) is a mining industry employers' organisation that supports and promotes the South African mining industry. The Minerals Council's vision is to reposition the South African mining sector as South Africa's foremost industrial sector. The Minerals Council seeks to create, in partnership with key stakeholders, a conducive policy, legislative and operating environment that facilitates growth and investment to grow the mining industry.

As a member association of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), dedicated to a safe, fair and sustainable mining industry, the Minerals Council brings together 27 mining and metals company members and over 35 national, regional and commodities association members. Through collaboration and catalysing change, the Minerals Council strengthens environmental and social performance, enhancing mining's contribution to society. With a focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Minerals Council pilot report in 2022 demonstrated broad impact across all goals, particularly emphasising SDGs 8, 9, and 11.

These goals encompass aspects such as decent work and economic growth, industry innovation and infrastructure, and sustainable cities and communities. Looking ahead, the Minerals Council anticipates increased contributions to environmental SDGs as data becomes available, particularly in areas such as clean energy and capital expenditures.

The Minerals Council operates through various specialised teams, each dedicated to addressing critical issues facing the mining industry. These teams cover a wide range of areas including economics, employment relations, safety and sustainability, health, public affairs, transformation, legal matters, skills development, and environmental management. Through collaborative efforts and expertise in these areas, the Minerals Council actively promotes safety and health in the workplace, facilitates skills development initiatives, addresses environmental concerns, provides legal advice, and works to combat illegal mining activities. By engaging with stakeholders and implementing initiatives across these domains, the Minerals Council drives sustainability and positively impacts the South African private sector, contributing to economic growth, community development and environmental stewardship.

Strategic goals and objectives

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Drive the development of a shared vision for a globally competitive mining industry that is a significant contributor to South Africa's economy and supported by all stakeholders.

Objective 1.1
Lead the industry agenda for structural change, ethical leadership and good governance to arrest the decline and stabilise volume output to position the industry for growth, through partnerships for business advocacy and impact.

Objective 1.2
Build and promote a positive image and reputation of the mining industry and deploy the Minerals Council brand for a reimagined mining industry integral to growth and development.

Objective 1.3
Successfully alleviate and prevent the negative impacts of mining legacy issues (viz., migrant labour, poor living conditions, social wage, acid mine drainage, derelict and ownerless mines, mine rehabilitation, outstanding payments of compensation for occupational lung diseases and pension funds) in collaboration with stakeholders.

Objective 1.4
Promote research, development and innovation (RD&I) to modernise the mining sector through adoption of relevant technology applications.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Advocate and lobby for a policy, infrastructure and social environment that is conducive to investment and growth of the industry and maximises the benefit for the country from its mineral endowment.

Objective 2.1
Engage government (and other stakeholders) on relevant policies, legislation and regulations to create an enabling environment that is stable, competitive and predictable to promote and facilitate mining investment and growth.

Objective 2.2
Partner with government, regulators, state owned enterprises, labour and communities to resolve infrastructure challenges (electricity supply and prices, rail, ports and water); social development in mining communities (housing, schools, clinics), and crime (as it affects mining through illegal mining, product theft, theft of mining supplies, criminal syndicates).

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Communicate progress and impact of aggregate economic, environmental, social and governance (EESG) performance (with specific reference to transformation, health and safety) and adoption of leading practices.

Objective 3.1
Lead initiatives to fast track mining's progress to zero harm.

Objective 3.2
Lead the development of a vision of what good transformation looks like in collaboration with stakeholders, including the design of a practical, workable and enforceable instrument to facilitate further industry transformation.

Objective 3.3
Promote consolidated (and cumulative – over time) member ESG performance.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Ensure continuous improvement of the effectiveness and service of the Minerals Council to members.

Objective 4.1
Conduct regular (at least once per annum) reviews of the strategy and performance against the strategic objectives.

Objective 4.2
Broaden the Minerals Council's membership to include emerging miners and ensure their voice on the Board.

Objective 4.3
Proactive risk response management system, aligned with the strategic objectives, to manage mining industry risks and take advantage of opportunities.

Objective 4.4
Design and implement an effective Human Resources Development strategy to attract, develop and retain a professional team aligned to strategic goals.

> **We are determined to continue playing a meaningful role in the economy, society and communities in which member companies operate. We will ensure that our social licence to mine is beyond reproach and that we continue #MakingMiningMatter in a safe sustainable environmentally conscious way.**

Nolitha Fakude
Chairman of Anglo American's Management Board in South Africa

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GCNSA

The Global Compact Network South Africa is an independent network that is dedicated to promoting the private sector's adherence to the Ten Principles of the UNGC and the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

This report was commissioned by the South African Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation to gather and represent the progress of the South African private sector in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda, as part of the South African Voluntary National Review, being presented by the South African Presidency to the UN High-Level Political Forum in July 2024.

The GCNSA operates as a platform primarily led by businesses. It serves as a hub for companies to collaborate, share best practices, and coordinate efforts in advancing sustainability within South Africa. The primary goal of the GCNSA is to scale up and accelerate the impact of businesses in driving sustainable development. This involves encouraging companies to integrate sustainability principles into their core operations and strategies. They are committed to aligning its activities with both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Development Plan (NDP) of South Africa. By focusing on these frameworks, the network ensures that its efforts are in line with global and national sustainability priorities.

The GCNSA promotes adherence to the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC). These principles cover areas such as human rights, labour standards, environmental sustainability, and anti-corruption practices. By upholding these principles, businesses contribute to creating a more ethical and sustainable business environment. Through various collaborative initiatives, the GCNSA facilitates dialogue, knowledge sharing, and joint action among its member companies. This includes organising events, workshops and projects focused on addressing sustainability challenges and opportunities.

As a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations Global Compat is a call to companies everywhere to align their operations and strategies with Ten Principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption

With more than 15,000 companies and 3,800 non-business signatories based in over 160 countries, and 69 Local Networks, the UN Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative. One Global Compact uniting business for a better world.

Global Compact
Network South Africa

Our ambition is to accelerate and scale the global collective impact of business by upholding the Ten Principles and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals through accountable companies and ecosystems that enable change.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Principle 1:
Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2:
Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

LABOUR

Principle 3:
Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

Principle 4:
The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.

Principle 5:
The effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6:
The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

ENVIRONMENT

Principle 7:
Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8:
Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9:
Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Principle 10:
Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

"Since our last report in 2019 there have been many significant changes to our South African socio-economic and political climate. The private sector has been tested. Now, more than ever, there is a need to demonstrate unity with government, and commit our country's development priorities. At the GCNSA, we believe in the power of business to create positive change. We invite you warmly to participate."

Dr. Achieng Ojwang
Executive Director,
Global Compact Network South Africa

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Glossary of Terms

AI (Artificial Intelligence): Simulation of human intelligence processes by machines.

Biodiversity Conservation: The protection and management of biodiversity to ensure the sustainable utilisation of species and ecosystems.

Black Economic Empowerment (B-BEE): A program launched by the South African65d government to redress the inequalities by giving previously disadvantaged groups economic opportunities.

Blockchain Technology: A decentralised digital ledger used to record transactions.

Circular Economy: An economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources. It involves reusing, sharing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling existing materials and products to keep materials at their highest utility and value.

Climate Risk Assessment: Evaluation of potential risks and impacts related to climate change. Collaboration: Working together towards a common goal.

Collective Action: Collaborative efforts by multiple stakeholders, such as businesses, civil society organizations, and governments, to work together towards common goals, such as the SDGs.

Corporate Social Investment (CSI): The commitment of a business to contribute to the well-being of society, often through philanthropic activities and social development programs.

Cyber Security: Protection of computer systems from theft or damage to their hardware, software, or electronic data.

Data Protection: Safeguarding data from unauthorised access or corruption.

Digital Divide: The gap between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not.

Digital Inclusion: Ensuring everyone has access to digital technologies.

Effluent Management: The process of treating and disposing of wastewater or liquid waste in an environmentally friendly manner.

Emergent Technologies: Technologies that are currently developing or evolving.

Energy-Efficient Construction: Building practices that reduce energy consumption and promote sustainability.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Principles: Principles that guide companies to integrate environmental and social considerations into their operations.

ESG Reporting: Stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance reporting, which evaluates a company's performance in these areas.

Futurology: The study or forecasting of future trends and developments.

Gig Economy: A labor market characterised by short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs.

Globalisation: The process of increasing interconnectedness and interdependence among countries.

Global Compact Network South Africa (GCNSA): A business-led platform working to scale and accelerate the collective impact of businesses by delivering on the SDGs, the National Development Plan, and the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, contributing to the greenhouse effect and global warming.

Green Technologies: Environmentally friendly technologies.

Greenwashing: Misleading claims about the environmental benefits of products or practices.

Industry or Sector: A specific category of economic activity, such as banking and lending, investment and asset management, insurance risk management, and fintech and payment services.

IoT (Internet of Things): Interconnected devices that can communicate over the internet.

Just Energy Transition: A policy roadmap aimed at transitioning to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Quantifiable measures used to evaluate the success of an organisation or a particular activity in achieving its objectives.

Low Carbon Supply Chain: A supply chain that minimises carbon emissions and promotes sustainability.

Market Liberalisation: Opening up markets to competition and reducing government intervention.

National Development Plan (NDP): A long-term plan for South Africa that outlines the country's development priorities and goals, including the integration of the SDGs.

National Dialogue: A process of inclusive and participatory communication and discussion aimed at addressing national issues and challenges.

Precision Agriculture: The use of technology to optimise crop yields and reduce waste, such as using GPS, sensors, and data analysis to improve farming practices.

Private Sector: The part of the economy that is not state-controlled, including privately owned businesses and enterprises.

Quantum Computing: Utilises principles of quantum mechanics to perform operations on data, potentially offering significant advancements in computing power.

Renewable Energy: Energy derived from natural resources that are replenished.

Resilience: The ability of a system or organization to withstand and recover from disruptions.

Resources: Various materials or assets that can be used to create value.

Risk Management: Strategies to identify, assess, and mitigate risks that could impact a business.

STEM Skills: Skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

Smart Grid Technology: Modernised energy distribution system.

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Social Enterprises: A non-profit organization.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A set of 17 interconnected global goals adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, aimed at addressing pressing global challenges and promoting sustainable development by 2030.

Sustainable Packaging: Packaging materials designed to have minimal environmental impact and promote recycling.

Sustainable Water Management: The responsible use and conservation of water resources to ensure their availability for present and future generations.

Systematic: Methodical and organised approach.

Telecommunication: Communication over a distance by cable, telegraph, telephone, or broadcasting.

Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact: Principles covering areas such as human rights, environmental sustainability, and anti-corruption practices, aimed at guiding businesses to operate responsibly and contribute to sustainable development.

Traceability: The ability to track and trace the origins and history of products or materials.

Transformation: Significant change or evolution.

Transparency: Openness and clarity in operations, providing information to stakeholders.

Voluntary National Review (VNR): A process through which countries voluntarily report on their progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level.

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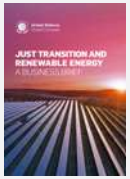

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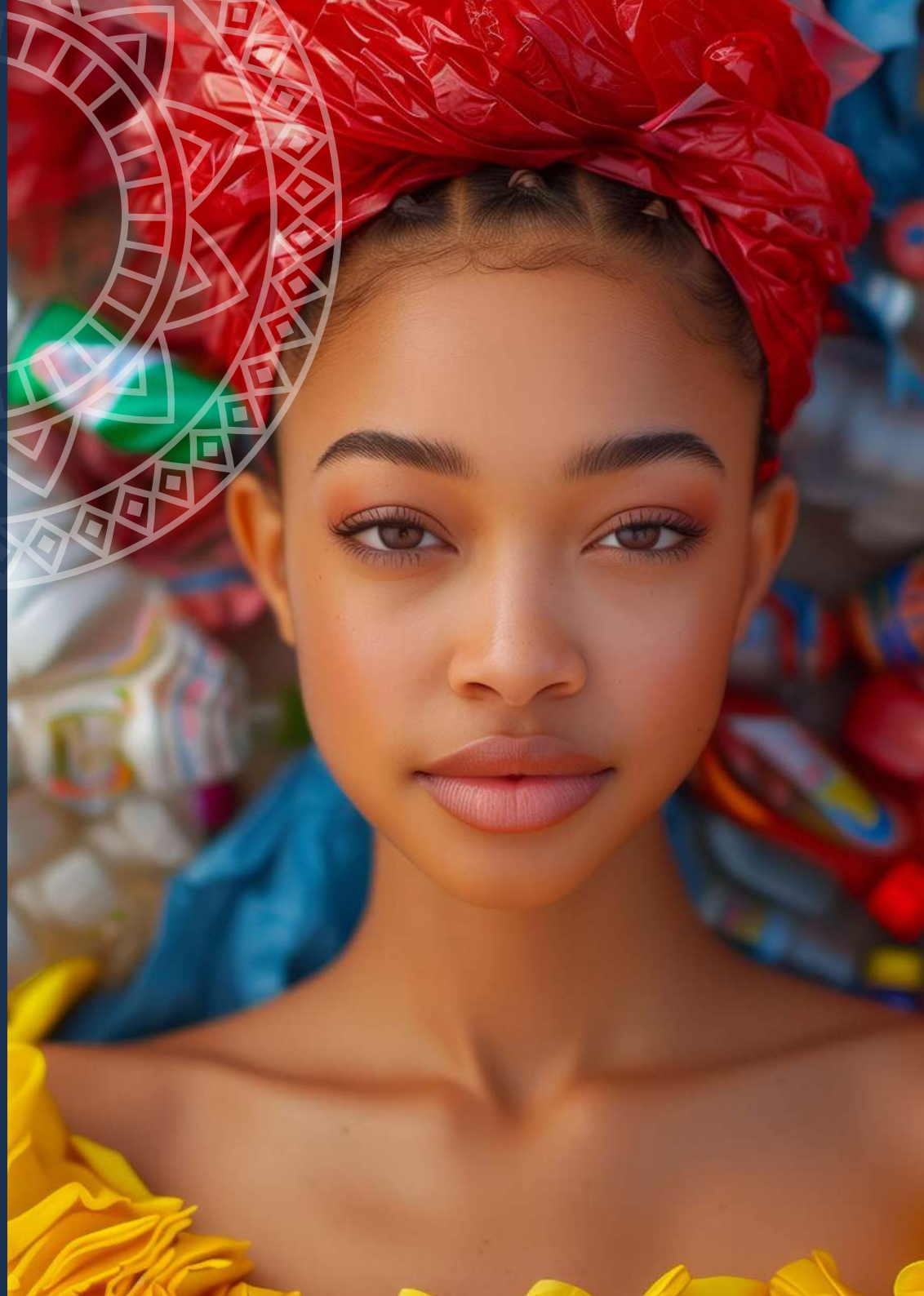

CONTRIBUTIONS

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Business as An Active Force for Good

Empowering Africa's tomorrow, together... one story at a time.

Absa is one of Africa's largest renewables funder, offering a range of retail, business, corporate and investment solutions to customers and clients across Africa. We are a truly African financial services leader, inspired by the customers and clients we serve and determined to sustainably create value in a way that empowers people to achieve more.

Our purpose is to serve as an active force for good in everything we do. This is why we are focused on creating measurable and material change through renewable adoption, education, and inclusive community support. We deliver innovative financial solutions that align with environmental and social responsibilities, creating value and positive impact for a diverse range of stakeholders. We seek to differentiate ourselves by bringing purpose to life.

Industry:
Financial Services and FinTech

Web:
www.absa.co.za

More info:
Sustainable Finance Issuance Framework Dec2023

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At Absa, one of our strategic imperatives is to be an active force for good in everything we do. Our ethos resonates deeply with the SDG's call to "leave no one behind". Our commitment to ensuring that sustainable development touches every individual echoes in our every endeavour. We see this not just as a corporate responsibility but as a moral duty, underlining our commitment to inclusive growth in both South Africa and across our dynamic continent. We have worked, and continue to work, diligently to solidify our foundation for a sustainable future.

Punki Modise
Group Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer

IMPACT SUMMARY

Net zero & much more

Publishing our Net Zero Statement, defining a clear pathway to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, is a substantial stride in our sustainability initiatives. As one of the leaders in South Africa's renewable finance sector, we played a significant role in the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme projects, being mandated lead arranger and lender for three Red Ricket renewable energy projects valued at approximately R12 billion, which will add 364MW of capacity to the grid. We launched Africa's first certified green loan in partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) strengthening our sustainable financing commitment. The R4.5 billion loan agreement was through the Market Accelarator Green Construction (MAGC) programme, with at least 50% of the overall MAGC allocated to affordable housing transactions. The agreement builds on the work with the IFC in 2022, when it provided a loan of up to R2 billion to fund affordable housing in South Africa.

In 2023 we invested over R285.8 million towards community development through education, youth employability, strategic engagement initiatives, as well as corporate community support. The investment underscored our commitment to community upliftment as well as contributed to promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Africa. This investment reached more than 105 337 beneficiaries through financial education for long-term financial health, and 122 students who participated in the Absa Fellowship programme, aimed at supporting the development of future leaders in Africa, among other initiatives. Additionally, Absa's broad-based black economic empowerment transaction, setting aside 7% of group shares for staff and communities, demonstrates our commitment to transformation. The bank's resilience is underscored by advancements in corporate purpose, culture, and values, exemplified by a new purpose statement, "Empowering Africa's tomorrow, together... one story at a time." This comprehensive approach aligns our focus on ESG and SDG impact, emphasizing sustainability and positive community contributions.

As a signatory to the Principles for Responsible Banking (PRB), we are committed to prioritising SDGs where we have the most impact. Based on our sustainability strategy, we prioritised SDG 5, 7, 8, 10, 13 and 16. These are all areas of substantial impact for us, where we can set targets for specific SDG subcomponents.
Our Group Sustainability Policy specifies the broad principles and control requirements for managing sustainability. It is supplemented by the following additional documents:

- Sustainability Risk Policy
- Net Zero Statement
- Pillar III Risk Management Report
- Human Rights Statement

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SUCCESS STORY:
Climate Responsive Business

It is critical to investors, regulators and other stakeholders that the irreversible impact of climate change risk is incorporated into Decisionmaking and planning, and that compelling business opportunities, such as green product offerings, be incorporated into our core business. We have set our net-zero ambition in line with our goal of becoming Africa's leader in sustainable finance. Our climate strategy has four components:

1. **Promote sustainability decarbonisation efforts:** Balancing environmental care, social equity, economic growth and reducing emissions.
2. **Lead the transition to green solutions:** Empower our clients to finance green solutions and adopt sustainable practices.
3. **Enhance climate risk and governance processes:** Actively manage current and emerging climate-related risks through our Enterprise Risk Management Framework and improve Board skillset and oversight.
4. **Engage our stakeholders:** Engage with stakeholders on climate related topics with a systemic and integrated approach to improve awareness and overall relationships.

TOP RESULTS

R84.1 sustainable finance cumulative since 2021

R12bn leader arranger for three wind energy projects

105 337 consumer education participants

60.6% female employees

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

AgriVuno

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Elevating agribusiness success

Empowering smallholder farmers for sustainable agricultural growth

AgriVuno is committed to enhancing agriculture for smallholder farmers. Our extensive services encompass Agri consulting, which tackles knowledge gaps, post-harvest losses and negotiation skills; Business development, offering training to boost entrepreneurial skills among farmers; Access to markets, utilising our industry network to facilitate favorable off-take agreements; and Stakeholder management, maintaining robust partnerships to bolster long-term growth.

Our goal is to empower smallholder farmers to actively engage in the agricultural economy. By providing opportunities for market access, we facilitate the development of African farmers, ensuring growth and sustainability in the sector.

Industry:
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

Web:
www.agrivuno.co.za

More info:
Women in Agri Accelerator Program

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> **We empower farmers to not just have market access and a consistent income stream, but we upskill them with business and agricultural training, so they run sustainable businesses.**

Masabata Sebusi
Founder

IMPACT SUMMARY

Breaking ground for gender equality in south african agriculture

In South Africa, AgriVuno emerged with a transformative vision, recognising the stark gender disparities in agriculture where only 20% of female farmers own land despite constituting the majority of smallholders. Our mission centers on empowering women, promoting gender equality and facilitating market access in an industry largely dominated by men.

Acknowledging the challenges posed by a male-dominated sector, our inaugural year witnessed the securing of two off-take agreements and the attainment of two international awards. These victories symbolise not only our success, but also a triumph for every farmer we've served.

SUCCESS STORY: Women in Agri Accelerator challenge

AgriVuno's commitment to empowering females and promoting gender equality addresses the profound gender disparities in South Africa's farming landscape. By prioritising female farmers as key stakeholders, we challenge norms and actively contribute to reshaping agricultural leadership.

Our inaugural year marked significant milestones with the acquisition of two crucial off-take agreements and the clinching of two prestigious international awards, signifying both business success and tangible impact on the lives of the female farmers we serve.

As AgriVuno thrives, our mission extends beyond financial success. By championing female landowners and smallholder farmers, we aspire to be a catalyst for positive change, influencing a more inclusive and equitable agricultural landscape in South Africa and beyond.

AgriVuno's Women in Agri Accelerator programme is a comprehensive initiative empowering female entrepreneurs in agriculture. The programme equips women with the knowledge and tools for agri-business success by focusing on:

- Sustainability
- Gender equality through education
- Development
- Networking opportunities

Emphasising technology integration, personal growth and leadership skills, it contributes to a resilient and equitable agricultural industry.

The collaborative approach with partners such as HerEmpire Collective, Explainer Worx and The Pink Chameleon Foundation amplifies the programme's impact, driving sustainable business growth and promoting gender equality in the business world. These partnerships underscore a shared vision for gender equality, emphasising the transformative potential of collaborative initiatives in shaping a more inclusive future for the agricultural sector.

The partnerships exemplify a shared vision for promoting gender equality in the business world, emphasising the transformative potential of collaborative initiatives in shaping a more inclusive future for the agricultural sector.

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TOP RESULTS

>250 women applied for Agri-Accelerator programme

4 knowledge partners on board

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

AngloAmerican

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Reimagining mining with platinum group metals

Harnessing the power of platinum group metals for a sustainable future

At Anglo American Platinum, we are driven by our Purpose, which is to re-imagine mining to improve people's lives.

We believe that platinum group metals can accelerate our world towards a cleaner, greener, healthier tomorrow, helping to reduce the challenges caused by climate change. Our metals are already playing an essential role in everyday life: they are used in healthcare products and equipment, for example, as well as in vehicle components that reduce harmful gas emissions, in smartphones, wind turbines and jewellery.

This is only the beginning. The list of potential uses for our metals is long and growing, from hydrogen-fuelled vehicles and keeping food fresh for longer, to more innovative healthcare solutions and lower-energy computing.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.angloamerican.com

More info:
Integrated Report 2022
Sustainability Report 2022
Anglo American Reports Library

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> **Taking definitive action to help tackle climate change is crucial to the sustainability of our business, its stakeholders and the world at large**

Norman Mbazima
Chairman, Anglo American Platinum

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Our Global Sustainability Pillars

Our Sustainable Mining Plan has three global sustainability pillars with three stretch goals beneath each one. The pillars are:

- **Environment: Healthy Environment**
  The pursuit of carbon neutrality, to address climate change, preserve biodiversity and demonstrate responsible use of water.

- **Social: Thriving Communities**
  The pursuit of carbon neutrality, to address climate change, preserve biodiversity and demonstrate responsible use of water.

- **Governance: Trusted Corporate Leader**
  The pursuit of carbon neutrality, to address climate change, preserve biodiversity and demonstrate responsible use of water.

SUCCESS STORY:
Hydrogen Valley – creating new engines of economic activity through hydrogen

Anglo American Platinum's efforts to develop green hydrogen in South Africa, backed by a feasibility study, hold transformative potential. The plan involves creating hydrogen hubs and pilot projects, aligning with the national hydrogen roadmap. This strategic move positions South Africa as a global green hydrogen exporter, fostering economic growth and supporting a net-zero economy by 2050. The partnership efficiently leverages investments to assist small businesses in the energy transition.

We have for some years been working on establishing the right ecosystem to successfully develop, scale-up and deploy hydrogen fuelled solutions.

These include investing in innovative ventures and enabling technologies, as well as forging wide-ranging collaborations across industry, to fully harness the transformative potential of green hydrogen for our economy in South Africa. Stakeholders that benefit from this success are:

- **Host communities**
- **Government and Regulators**
- **Industry Partners and Collaborators**

This initiative contributes to SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) advancing affordable and clean energy solutions through the development of hydrogen-fueled technologies, particularly green hydrogen.

The initiatives also align with SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) focusing on industry, innovation, and infrastructure development, as evidenced by investments in innovative ventures and collaborations to establish the necessary hydrogen ecosystem.

With a strong commitment to SDG 13 (Climate action), the story emphasizes climate action through the promotion of clean technologies and the reduction of carbon emissions in the pursuit of a hydrogen economy.

TOP RESULTS

R73.1bn tax and economic contribution to society in 2023 (detailed in our sustainability Report , p.15)

19% reduction in GHG emissions intensity

29% women representation in management

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

AVS

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Flowing forward

Proudly caring for a sustainable tomorrow.

AVS prioritises sustainability by offering a selected range of eco-conscious valves and related solutions. Through innovative technologies and a dedication to reducing environmental impact, AVS exceeds expectations of our sustainability-conscious customers.

Our business value proposition lies in delivering high-quality valves that not only enhance operational efficiency, but also contributes to a greener and more sustainable future.

AVS recognises the importance of sustainable business practices in contributing to a better future for the environment and society. At AVS, we are committed to embracing sustainability as an aspect of our company. Our sustainability report outlines our intentions and initiatives planned for next year, namely, to raise internal awareness, improve our packaging and foster sustainable ecosystems with our suppliers and customers. We recognise the importance of sustainable business practices in contributing to a better future for both the environment and society.

Industry:
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

Web:
www.alliedvalvespecialists.co.za

More info:
linktr.ee/alliedvalvespecialists

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In a recent pilot project lasting less than 12 months, AVS and Hunt and Mitton's Euro Chlor-approved control valves helped South Africa's largest chlorine manufacturer on their sustainability journey.

The valves we supplied NCP lasted 6-times longer than their predecessors.

Tina Angelos
Managing Director, Allied Valve Specialists

IMPACT SUMMARY

Industry advancement through digital innovation

Allied Valve Specialists (AVS) is leveraging innovative technologies to redefine industry standards and drive positive impact. Through their new digital platform, AVS offers customers seamless access to knowledge, products and services, evolving the supply chain and fostering collaborative partnerships. Emphasising knowledge sharing, AVS empowers suppliers and customers alike, facilitating shared expertise to address common challenges and achieve mutual goals.

AVS is committed to sustainability, with a dedicated sustainability specialist guiding their journey towards net zero emissions. By engaging with clients to understand supply chain impacts, AVS collaborates closely with sustainability teams, offering expertise to drive sustainable practices. Their partnership with organisations such as the Cape Chamber and German Chamber of Commerce further solidifies their commitment to sustainability, enabling collective action on impactful projects.

SUCCESS STORY:
Cradle-to-grave Sustainability

Impacting sustainable lifecycles across ecosystems

WHAT DID WE DO?

1. **Identified a specific supplier and a specific customer ecosystem** where we could demonstrate the value of tracking product sustainability attributes and company level sustainability goals to customers and our customer's customers.
2. **Engaged our supplier to gain insight** into their company policies and product level sustainability attributes and/or certifications.
3. **Engaged our customer to understand** their sustainability needs and targets and worked to match their sustainability need with our supplier's sustainability product attributes.
4. **Co-created a business case** that identified the possibilities to R-based and sustainability benefit, that will be passed to the customer and the customer's customers.
5. **Added all sustainability data points** into our product database for transparency and future value-add.

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WHAT DID WE ACHIELVE?

1. **Open, transparent dialogue** and sharing of sensitive data in pursuit of shared sustainability goals.
2. **Strong, equitable partnerships** supporting mutual people, planet, profit benefits.
3. **Improved customer production efficiencies**, improved resource utilisation and improved employee safety.
4. **Improved individual awareness and internalisation** of the why's and how's of sustainability.

Our 2030 Vision – **Trusted leader for sustainable valve solutions**

TOP RESULTS

5 product lifecycle assessments

80% of all waste reused, repaired or recycled

2 supplier sustainability risk assessments

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

BAOM
eco solutions

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

BAOM Eco Solutions

BAOM envisions an economically prosperous and environmentally conscious future, manufacturing biofilms to replace flexible plastics, aligning business operations with a commitment to people and the planet.

BAOM produces compostable and consumable biofilms to replace flexible plastics for various industries' applications such as packaging. Our current primary focus is providing biofilms to agricultural and land restoration businesses. We are an SDG centred business model with 100% female founder team.

Industry:
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

Web:
www.baom.co

More info:

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BAOM's biggest success and contribution to SDG attainment has been developing viable alternatives to flexible plastics, winning recognition worldwide for our innovation and securing our first production facility.

Chloe Cormack
Co-Founder & Head of Business Development,
BAOM Eco Solutions

IMPACT SUMMARY

In its inaugural year, BAOM Eco Solutions swiftly garnered acclaim, winning five prestigious internationally recognised awards in 2023. Namely: AU-EU Innovation Festival Overall Winner; Land Accelerator Grant; Green Pitch Challenge 2023: Overall Start-up and Grant Winners; Global Start-up Awards: Overall Regional Winner of Southern Africa as Best New Comers; Overall Winner of the Global Women's Forum Start-up Prize for the Women Entrepreneurs 4 Good challenge.

Founded in November 2022, BAOM's innovative approach to replace flexible plastics with a regenerative product aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Climate Action (SDG 13) but also enhances industry standards by introducing fully home compostable and even edible products various industries.

These accolades, underscore BAOM's commitment to sustainability; designing new businesses that work in harmony with planet and people and its rapid impact on reducing plastic pollution. BAOM's success illustrates how start-up enterprises can drive significant environmental change, inspiring a shift towards sustainable industry practices and communities (SDG 11) globally while ensuring decent economic growth and work opportunities (SDG 8).

Ambition: BAOM's business model and operations aim to ensure global food security and climate action, low emissions production of flexible plastic alternatives, gender equity and economic prosperity for the widely unemployed population of our nation while safeguarding our natural environments.

From Garage to Factory – BAOM's Innovation Success.

After starting BAOM biofilm development in 2018 in a garage, the company formally registered in 2022 and won multiple incubation and accelerations grants and programmes in 2023 and developed 7 viable flexible plastic replacements prototypes that restore soil health, protect humans and wildlife from plastic toxins and pollution and succeed in various applications.

The majority of challenges stemmed from a lack of access to funding and enabling business and legal environments for start-ups but the UVU Bio, AU-EU Innovation Festival and Green Cape Pitch Challenge 2023 programmes helped to overcome some of these challenges through mentorship and grants.

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Network South Africa

Main stakeholders that have and will continue to benefit from this success are:

- Female Entrepreneurs and STEM students
- Impoverished communities
- Businesses searching for viable and affordable plastic alternatives for their operations.

BAOM's future innovation and next steps that this success story lays the foundation for is developing a fully functional production line and macro lab for future biofilm development to produce scalable biofilms for agriculture, land restoration and packaging needs. Strategic partners and collaborators in landing the success will be private businesses, financiers and governmental departments.

TOP RESULTS

5 Internationally Recognised Awards

8 Climate Change and SDG focused Business Incubation and Acceleration Programs 2023-2024

1st Official BAOM Factory and Macro-Lab Facility 2023

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Bidvest

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Empowering everyday life

People and products behind a brighter future

Bidvest is a leading B2B services, trading and distribution group focused on providing the often overlooked, essential components of everyday life, with an entrepreneurial and decentralised operating philosophy. It spans 250 businesses and almost 130,000 employees across four continents.

The group focuses on deploying products and services that represent innovative, sustainable solutions to customer needs while also positively influencing impacts that stem from our business operations. The notion of stakeholder capitalism and sustainable enterprise value creation resonates with the group.

Industry:
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real estate

Web:
www.bidvest.co.za

More info:
Integrated Report 2023

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We continue to be deliberate, ambitious and consistent in advancing our sustainability commitments and objectives. As a profitable, growing organisation that is deeply rooted in South Africa, we want to build something that is worth building and will stand the test of time.

Ilze Roux
Bidvest Corporate Affairs executive

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Sustainable growth: Bidvest's impactful initiatives and ambitions

Our decentralised and diverse portfolio, performance driven culture and financial strength are used to deliver scale and growth whilst also caring for the Bidvest family and connected societies and drive positive change through partnerships and social dialogue. Our sustainability ambitions include nurturing people and business diversity, unlock value through innovation and efficiencies and represent responsibly made product.

Key initiatives include:

- being an inclusive employer, in terms of gender and race, at all levels
- reducing our carbon, water and waste footprint
- becoming SA's leader in supply chain transformation.

Our purpose guides our efforts to create value for each stakeholder group at a sustainable cost to society.

SUCCESS STORY: The power of 250 businesses pursuing consistent and measurable ambitions

In 2020, Bidvest embarked on a transformative journey by establishing an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Framework, aligning its sustainability ambitions with tangible targets to create a meaningful impact. This comprehensive approach is structured around six key metrics, steering the company toward significant achievements and setting new benchmarks for corporate responsibility.

Gender parity and inclusivity: Bidvest emerged as the only JSE Top 40 company achieving gender parity or better at both board and executive levels, showcasing a commitment to inclusivity and diversity.
Environmental stewardship: Demonstrating a commitment to reducing its carbon, water and waste footprint, Bidvest achieved remarkable milestones, with emission and water intensity dropping significantly. These achievements underscore the company's dedication to sustainable practices.
Local procurement and economic empowerment: Bidvest's focus on empowering local communities is evident in its procurement strategy, with 76% of local procurement spend directed towards Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) compliant suppliers, reflecting a substantial increase from 50% in 2019.

ESG integration in performance metrics: The ESG framework integrates seamlessly into Bidvest's incentive scorecards, ensuring that sustainability goals are cascaded from executive leadership to operational managers. This approach fosters a culture of accountability and collective responsibility throughout the organisation.
Innovation and job creation: Bidvest's growth and innovation have not only contributed to job creation, but have also led to the development of products and services aligned with sustainability goals. The company's proactive stance on societal challenges positions it as a catalyst for positive change.
Aligned with global sustainability goals: Embracing the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Bidvest strategically focuses on key areas, including good health and wellbeing, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, industry innovation and infrastructure and responsible consumption and production.

As the company looks ahead, it aims to further enhance its social impact, emphasising the importance of social components in its sustainability agenda, contributing to a more equitable and prosperous future.

TOP RESULTS

58% females on Group Exco

35% reduction in emission and water intensity since 2019

76% local procurement spend with B-BBEE L1-4 suppliers

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Authentic Bokashi Bran® food waste composting

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Green waste solutions

Making food waste good for the environment

Bokashi Bran is a sustainable waste management company that specialises in food waste recycling solutions. They offer a unique and eco-friendly method for converting food waste into nutrient-rich compost, reducing landfill waste and promoting sustainable agriculture.

Bokashi Bran's business value proposition centres on delighting sustainability-conscious stakeholders by providing a green and effective waste management solution. Their method not only diverts organic waste from landfills, but also produces high-quality compost that enriches soil and reduces the need for chemical fertilisers. This benefits the environment, local communities and farmers, aligning perfectly with the values of environmentally-conscious individuals and organisations.

Industry:
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

Web:
www.bokashibran.co.za

More info:

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Our most significant success has been our unwavering commitment to diverting food waste from landfills in the hotel industry.

Over the past 12 years, we have not only reduced waste collection costs and minimised environmental impact but, more importantly, have contributed significantly to Sustainable Development Goal 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production.

We believe that by redefining how we handle food waste, we are pioneering a path towards a more sustainable and responsible future for our planet.

Bronwyn Jones
Bokashi Bran

IMPACT SUMMARY

Eco-friendly food waste management

Bokashi Bran is committed to a sustainable future through innovative food waste management. The strategy aligns with environmental preservation and soil enrichment while reducing reliance on chemical fertilisers. The primary challenges we encounter are:

Excessive waste: Tackling the increasing issue of organic waste accumulation in landfills.

Soil deterioration: Addressing the decline in soil quality and fertility resulting from conventional chemical agriculture practices.Bokashi Bran focuses on diverting organic waste from landfills and promoting nutrient-rich composting. They seek to rejuvenate soil health and educate communities on the environmental and agricultural benefits of their sustainable solutions. By reducing waste and enhancing soil quality, Bokashi Bran strives to leave a positive impact on our planet's sustainability journey.

Bokashi Bran's unwavering ambition is to be at the forefront of a global movement towards zero food waste in landfills.

SUCCESS STORY:
A Decade of Success in the Hotel Industry

Over the past decade, Bokashi Bran has collaborated with approximately thirty prominent hotel groups in South Africa, including Southern Sun, Tsogo, Hilton, Marriott, Protea Hotels and the City Lodge Group, to address waste diversion challenges. The initiative aimed to redirect food waste away from landfills by establishing commercial composting facilities capable of managing the substantial volume generated by these hotels.

Challenges Faced:

- **Waste diversion:** Redirecting food waste from around thirty hotels, including those from Southern Sun, Tsogo, Hilton, Marriott, Protea Hotels and the City Lodge Group, required finding suitable commercial composting facilities.
- **Behaviour change:** Educating and training staff to separate food waste at its source was a significant challenge, necessitating changes in HR policy to adopt the Bokashi system.
- **Optimising processes:** Identifying and implementing efficient processes for treating food waste and compost production posed another significant challenge.

Over the past 12 years, the concerted efforts of these hotels have resulted in impressive outcomes:

- **100% food waste diversion:** All food waste generated in these hotels was successfully diverted from landfills.
- **Reduction in waste collection costs:** This initiative led to substantial savings in waste collection and disposal costs.
- **Food waste awareness:** Increased awareness about food waste, leading to reduced wastage at the source, contributing to sustainability goals.

Global Compact Network South Africa

TOP RESULTS

20% increased recycling rates of uncontaminated recyclable waste

120m³ compost made monthly from 50 tonnes of food waste

12% reduction in food costs by raising awareness to unnecessary waste

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

BUSHVELD MINERALS

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Elevating sustainability through impact initiatives

Bushveld Minerals offers a diverse vanadium product portfolio, catering to steel, energy, and chemical sectors, participating in the entire value chain.

At Bushveld Minerals, we're dedicated to uniting innovation with a profound regard for our employees, their communities, our clientele, and the global community at large – fostering a seamless connection between essential resources underground and the needs of society.

Our array of top-tier operations, coupled with diverse developmental opportunities, offers vital metals and minerals crucial for a cleaner, more sustainable world, catering to the burgeoning needs of billions worldwide. With a focus on our workforce, we leverage inventive techniques and cutting-edge technologies to uncover new reservoirs and to responsibly extract, process, transport, and distribute our offerings to our customers – ensuring safety and sustainability remain paramount.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.bushveldminerals.com

More info:
Sustainability Approach
Annual Report 2022

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"In 2022, we made notable progress in our sustainability journey, highlighted by the establishment of an Environment Social and Governance (ESG) Committee to oversee and monitor the implementation of our ESG strategy.

Our longer-term ambitions remain unchanged. The safety and well-being of our employees and contractors is an absolute priority and we remain committed to the objective of zero harm in our workplace."

Fortune Mojapelo
CEO

IMPACT SUMMARY

Bushveld Minerals' Sustainable Future: Nurturing Growth, Empowering Communities:

Our initiatives are aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, covering critical areas such as clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry innovation and infrastructure, responsible consumption and production, and climate control.

At Bushveld Minerals, sustainability is more than a strategy – it's our commitment to creating lasting value for our stakeholders and building a better, greener future for all. Our commitment hinges off four pillars:

- **Clean water and Sanitation**
  We have a number of ongoing water monitoring, water efficiency, and water recycling / recovery initiatives and are looking to provide excess purified water to communities.
- **Affordable and Clean Energy**
  Given the importance of battery storage solutions for renewable energy projects, as well as Bushveld Energy's battery manufacturing operations and investments.
- **Decent Work and Economic Growth**
  We create jobs compliant with the sector health and safety standards. We also developed Social and Enterprise Development initiatives, as well as preferential procurement policies.
- **Industry Innovation and Infrastructure**
  Bushveld Energy's facility, which will make electrolytes for vanadium flow batteries in the Eastern Cape, directly supports SDG 9 through its local industrialisation efforts.
- **Responsible Consumption and Production**We implemented several mineral and non-mineral waste management initiatives, and plan to take further action in this space.
- **Climate Control** We track and monitor emissions and will continue to look for ways to improve our operations.

By aligning with the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, we ensure our efforts contribute to global progress while creating lasting value for all stakeholders. Through innovation, collaboration, and responsible practices, we pave the way towards a greener, more prosperous world, leaving a positive legacy for generations to come.

Global Compact Network South Africa

SUCCESS STORY: Advancing Vanadium Electrolyte Production

Bushveld Minerals is spearheading vanadium's pivotal role in the energy transition through a strategic vertical integration approach. By amalgamating primary vanadium mining, beneficiation, and downstream energy storage ventures, the company champions the adoption of Vanadium Redox Flow Batteries (VRFBs). Despite regulatory challenges, Bushveld Energy's innovative 3.5 MW solar PV and 1 MW / 4 MWh VRFB hybrid mini-grid project for Vametco marks a significant breakthrough in South Africa's energy landscape.

This pioneering project not only serves as a testament to VRFBs' viability but also showcases their potential for long-duration energy storage coupled with renewable sources. With substantial procurement initiatives underway by government bodies and Eskom, and increasing interest from municipalities and private entities, Bushveld Minerals remains at the forefront of driving sustainable energy solutions in Africa.

TOP RESULTS

2,156 of water recycled and reused
FY2022

49% female representation for corporate office (incl. Bushveld Energy)
FY2022

36% decline in total waste generated
FY2022

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

CLICKS GROUP
LIMITED

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Sustainable retail, down to the detail

Integrating solar power to existing infrastructure; prioritising sustainability across all operations; forging a brighter and eco-friendly future.

The Clicks Group, a leading champion of sustainability in the retail landscape, has been dedicated to reshaping consumer habits since its inception. With a steadfast commitment to ethical sourcing and eco-conscious operations, the Clicks Group offers ,quality products products derived from sustainable and ethical practices and waste reduction principles.
The group's ethos revolves around creating shared value and fostering sustainable progress at every stage of its value chain. The Group recognises the intimate interconnection between their success and the wellbeing of the communities they serve, driving them to advocate for positive change that benefits both society and the environment in the territories it operates in.

Industry:
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

Web:
www.clicks.co.za
www.clicksgroup.co.za

More info:
Integrated Report 2023

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Sustainability management and environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices are integrated into our strategic planning and operational processes, with ESG metrics being applied as downward modifiers in both the Group's short and long term incentive schemes.

The Group's inclusion in the globally recognised FTSE4Good Index for the past seven years is an independent endorsement of the progress it has made in advancing sustainability.

Bertina Engelbrecht
CEO

IMPACT SUMMARY

The Clicks Chronicles: A Tale of Growth and Impact

In the competitive world of retail, Clicks serves as a leader of financial success and social responsibility.

Financial Capital:
Clicks announced a 11.5% increase in Group Adjusted Diluted HEPS, dividends of 679 cents per share, and a solid 43.6% return on equity, maximising value for shareholders.

Intellectual Capital:
With a class leading 24.0% share in the retail pharmacy market, 28.0% in private pharmaceutical wholesale and inclusion in the FTSE/JSE Top 40 Index, Clicks solidified its position as a market leader.

Manufactured Capital:
Expansion remains pivotal, with 45 new Clicks stores and 38 pharmacies opened , extending accessibility and digital presence to a legion of 1.8 million social media followers.

Social and Relationship Capital:
Beyond financial success, Clicks injects R689 million into communities through its ClubCard cashback programme and contributes R969 million in taxes across operational countries.

Human Capital:
Recognising employees as its most valuable asset, Clicks invests R4.4 billion in total payout and R135 million in training and development, with 4 273 employees trained.

Natural Capital:
Despite challenges, Clicks limits carbon emissions to 150,436 tonnes of CO2 and recovers 4.4 million kg of waste, showcasing dedication to sustainability.

At Clicks, we enrich lives, empower communities and set a retail example, committed to growth and impact.

Global Compact
Network South Africa

SUCCESS STORY:
The Clicks Groups Solar Saga

The Clicks Group has achieved notable progress in sustainable energy production. Rooftop PV solar panels have been installed across its distribution centres and head office, generating 3 636MWh of renewable energy last year. With a R28 million investment in solar panel installations, the group is poised to increase renewable energy generation to 4500MWh by 2023.

Committed to carbon neutrality, ambitious targets have been set for a 4.2% annual emissions reduction over a decade. Actively involved in climate action, collaborations with industry and participation in awareness programmes are ongoing.

As proud signatories of the African Business Leaders' Climate Statement, the Clicks Group remains dedicated to making a positive environmental impact.

TOP RESULTS

3.64m KWh of renewable energy produced and supplied.

106m used for the development of skills for previously disadvantaged employees.

R26.7m invested in socio-economic development projects.

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

DE BEERS GROUP

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Protecting the natural world

We aim to achieve carbon neutrality, reduce our water footprint, and generate a net positive impact on biodiversity.

Our partner communities cannot be healthy or thrive economically unless we work together to protect the natural world. We operate a sustainable approach to land management that includes continuous restoration and rehabilitation in partnership with local communities and follow best practice for water and biodiversity management, waste, air quality, emissions and mine closure.

Beyond this, we are focused on delivering transformative environmental performance through FutureSmart mining technology, the development of carbon-neutral mines, halving our water footprint and protecting some of the world's most vulnerable species.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.debeersgroup.com

More info:
Sustainability Report 2022

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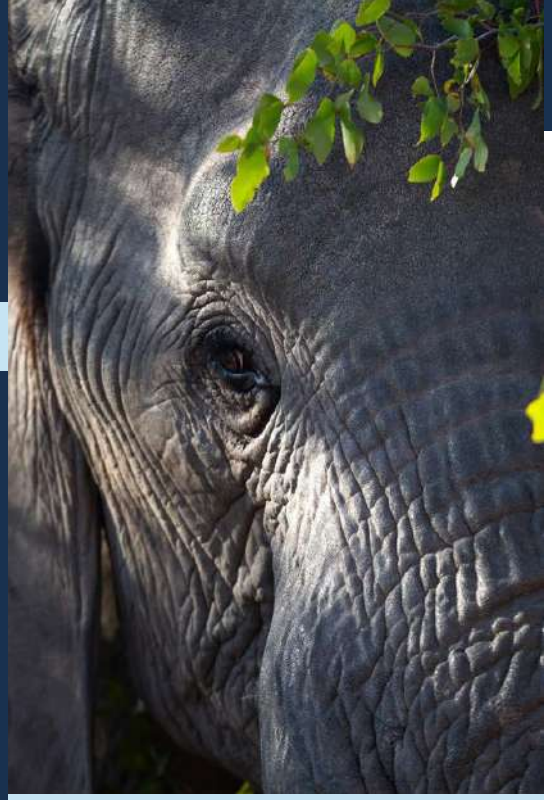

> **We operate a sustainable approach to land management that includes continuous restoration and rehabilitation in partnership with local communities and follow best practice for water and biodiversity management, waste, air quality, emissions and mine closure.**

Erin Parham
Head of Biodiversity and Environmental Partnerships

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Diamond mines: Fortresses of conservation on the Diamond Route

Unsurprisingly, diamond mines are some of the most secure areas in the world. As a result, the land around our mines acts as excellent conservation areas for flora and fauna, including many endangered species.

Across Southern African we protect almost 200 000 hectares of land for biodiversity. Known as the Diamond Route, for every hectare used for mining we set aside six for conservation. In South Africa we have set aside 140,000 hectares actively conserved by De Beers over 100 years.

The Diamond Route is one of Africa's most extensive and important conservation networks, comprised of eight different nature reserves in South Africa and Botswana, and maintained with the help of dedicated and passionate ecology teams focused on biodiversity conservation.

SUCCESS STORY: Moving giants

Our Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve in South Africa is part of the De Beers Group Diamond Route. Whilst it is home to a flourishing ecosystem, its fertile lands and safe conditions created a unique challenge – too many elephants.

In 2018, working in partnership with the Peace Parks Foundation, we began one of the longest translocations ever attempted. So far, we've moved over 100 elephants 1,700 km to a new home, with a further 100 elephants to move in the coming years.

A Challenge at Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve

Established in the early 1990s, the Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve (VLNR) covers 32,000 hectares of incredible landscapes, from the lush riverine forests of the Limpopo River, to rocky ridges and ancient baobab trees. Home to over 400 species of birds, as well as numerous flora and fauna, the reserve sustains a diverse ecosystem.

As the area can only adequately accommodate 60 elephants, we sought to help find a new home for 200 of the elephants that lived there.

A Solution at Zinave National Park

With Peace Parks Foundation, a leading conservation charity focused on the preservation of larger cross-border ecosystems, we began to translocate the first of the elephants from the VLNR to Zinave National Park in Mozambique.

In stark contrast to South Africa, Mozambique's wildlife population, including elephants, was depleted following a civil war in the country three decades ago. Despite being over 408,000 hectares, Zinave was home to fewer than 60 elephants before the translocation began.

Over 100 elephants have arrived at their new home in Zinave and have settled in well. We have been delighted to hear that there have been sightings of new elephant babies, the first to be spotted in the park for a long time. This positive news provides the first milestone to indicate the translocations have been successful, with the elephants successfully adapting and thriving in their new location.

TOP RESULTS

R400k funding support to update the mammal red list dataset 2022/2023

140,000 hectares conserved in South Africa

13 funded training in conversation leadership program

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

DE BEERS GROUP

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Accelerating equal opportunity

Empowering equality across the diamond value chain

Building on our work to establish ethical practices and generate positive outcomes for the people and environments where we operate, we also focus on creating equal opportunity for all, across the entire diamond value chain. We recognise that it takes continuous focus on identifying and removing systemic barriers to social and economic inclusion and that equal opportunity will benefit us all.

We are therefore implementing and continually strengthening our programmes to support equal opportunities – in our business, our communities and in the wider industry – across all forms of diversity including gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.debeersgroup.com

More info:
Our 2030 Goals

©Global Compact Network South Africa

Our Accelerating Women-Owned Micro-Enterprises (AWOME) programme runs in partnership with UN women and local governments, provides mentoring, networking, business and life skills training for women microentrepreneurs.

Shahila Perumalpillai
Group Social Performance Manager

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Commitment to gender equality

Supporting women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is on the critical path to gender equality and De Beers Building Forever goal of achieving equal opportunity for all.

De Beers women in the STEM framework is addressing systemic barriers across the career development pipeline. De Beers aims to engage 10,000 girls in STEM and support 10,000 women entrepreneurs by 2030.

De Beers implements programmes across three pillars: Education and Awareness, Career and Business Development and Leadership, which support our internal goals to increase women in leadership and across our workforce, as well as community goals to support women entrepreneurs and increase livelihood opportunities.

SUCCESS STORY:
Empowering women in STEM

De Beers championed a transformative journey towards gender equality and diversity within its organisation, particularly in the realm of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). Committed to the HeForShe initiative, De Beers achieved gender parity in senior leadership appointments by 2017 and further extended its commitment in 2020 to ensure equal opportunities and gender parity across its entire workforce.

A pivotal stride was taken in 2021 as De Beers renewed its membership in the UN Women HeForShe Alliance, reinforcing its dedication to increasing the representation of women in technical roles and leadership positions. The strategic partnership with WomEng and WomHub, initiated in 2019, has been a catalyst for driving impactful initiatives to engage and empower women in STEM fields.

In collaboration with educational institutions, programmes targeting students has been implemented at various academic levels. These initiatives include engagements with schools, providing students insights into STEM careers through interactions with successful women from De Beers. Undergraduates have been given the opportunity to explore and pursue STEM careers through comprehensive training and mentoring covering innovation, leadership, employability and wellbeing.

A pilot programme with Vhembe TVET in 2023 introduced a fellowship for women from TVETs, amplifying opportunities for technical education and career development. The Trailblazers accelerator programme, launched by De Beers, further supports female founders in the STEM and tech sectors, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

Collaborating with the award-winning social enterprise WomEng, De Beers extends its impact across southern Africa and Canada, aiming to develop the next generation of highly skilled women for engineering and technology industries. The partnership includes workshops, exhibitions, and innovation challenges, creating awareness and providing practical tools for girls from school age to early careers. Events like GirlEng #AskAnEngineer workshops empower students to explore STEM subjects and access engineering and technology careers.

TOP RESULTS

33% women in leadership roles as at end of 2022 from 17% in 2017

3730 young women in engaged in STEM 2019 – 2022

13 funded career development training in the conversation leadership programme

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

DE BEERS GROUP

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Partnering for thriving communities

Commitment to combatting the quadruple burden of disease

At De Beers Group, our dedication to the well-being of our employees and communities is evident through our "Partnering for thriving communities" pillar within the Building Forever sustainability framework. We acknowledge that addressing the complex challenges posed by the quadruple burden of disease in South Africa requires a united effort involving the government, private sector and civil society. Through collaborative commitment, we aim to make significant advancements in combating these health challenges. This collective approach not only aligns with our sustainability goals but also facilitates the Department of Health's outreach to communities lacking easy access to comprehensive healthcare services. We take pride in our role alongside our valued partners on this impactful journey towards a healthier and thriving society.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.debeersgroup.com

More info:
Sustainability Report 2022

©Global Compact Network South Africa

To this end, partnering with community members is necessary to achieve sustainable health goals, and mining companies need to understand the social determinants of health in their surrounding communities, as well as the structural barriers to advance sustainable health in workplaces and communities around them.

Dr Tshepo Sedibe
Principal Health De Beers Group

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Advancing health equity

By the end of 2021, we finalised the baseline work conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in collaboration with local public health partners.

In our host communities in southern Africa, we will partner to reduce HIV and TB infection rates, child and maternal mortality, the incidence of gender-based violence and road accidents.

In Canada, we will focus on specific vulnerable groups within our partner First Nations communities.This includes implementing programmes to address youth life skills, mental health and substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and obesity.

We recognise that it is only through firm commitment and a shared resolve between government, private sector and civil society, that we can endeavor to make meaningful strides in the fight against the quadruple burden of disease that is prevalent in South Africa.

SUCCESS STORY: Venetia mine Community Wellness Day

De Beers Group's Venetia Mine partnered with Afrocentric and SABCOHA to invest in the health of the communities around Musina, Alldays and Blouberg. This was a follow up of a successful similar partnership with EOH in 2017. The inaugural 2017 baseline saw both companies investing R1,8 million each to understand the communities around Venetia mine better. In 2023 Afrocentric and De Beers Group more than doubled the 2017 investment in a contribution of R4,7 million each. More than 10 million was spent to uplift the health of the community.

Health screening is anchored on government's Cheka Impilo Campaign - an accelerated national wellness campaign that focuses on screening for human immunodeficient virus (HIV), tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and noncommunicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. This also aligns with National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB, and UN SDG 3 Goals.

The community support and participation was amazing. 25 530 people compared to 15 000 in 2017 were screened and empowered to know better about their health.

Those with health challenges requiring further care were supported to access care. Beyond screening, meaningful and sustainable partnerships with Civil Society Forum, community-based organisations, government and business were established.

The initiative has already seen 10,000 people receive comprehensive health screening and 100 micro-enterprises from the Musina area given training.

By collaborating with key partners and leveraging innovative screening sessions, the initiative aims to achieve ambitious targets, including zero new HIV and TB infections, preventable deaths and cases of discrimination.

The pioneering efforts in HIV screening underscore the company's dedication to employee wellbeing, with impressive statistics showcasing the success of previous programmes. De Beers Group continues to lead the way in promoting health, fostering partnerships and making a positive impact on both individuals and the broader community.

TOP RESULTS

50% men accessed services on the Venetia screening day

25,530 screenings we completed

360 out of a total of 565 community members that attended the event accounted for women

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

DRDGOLD LIMITED

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Social impact at the heart of our business model

Our business model would not be complete, and perhaps not even worth pursuing, in the absence of social relevance

DRDGOLD is a JSE-listed gold producer and specialist in the recovery of residue metal from the retreatment of tailings with a proven track record of optimising innovative technology-driven processing and demonstrated expertise in surface processing infrastructure development.

Our strategic focus areas are directly linked to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance within which sustainability is embedded. Our business model adds to the ESG-story - it is one where product is produced from waste using recycled water and soon, renewable power, to clean environmentally sensitive areas and unlocking land for redevelopment. While doing so, we create value for and improving the quality of life of various stakeholders and especially those communities in and around our operating footprint.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.drdgold.com

More info:
Reports and Results 2023

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"We believe that a business needs a stable environment within which to prosper and therefore strive to improve the quality of life of those living in proximity to our operations."

Wayne Swanepoel
Senior Manager: Human and Social Capital

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Our commitment to community wellbeing

Our business model would not be complete, and perhaps not even worth pursuing, in the absence of social relevance. Large parts of our operations are situated in urban areas. In addition, most of the communities that live near our facilities are in the grip of poverty and socio-economic stress. Our social value add is therefore focused on the realities faced by these communities and aims to alleviate poverty and educate the youth.

One of the challenges that we are facing is the growing expectation of society for the private sector to step in where government fails to provide services that are typically the domain of the state. This continued lack of delivery into its social mandate is causing heightened frustrations that may spill over in protest actions and social unrest that may disrupt our operations. Ongoing engagement with communities are therefore important to us to seek solutions, provide the opportunity for new social partnerships to be formed and increased collaboration toward enhanced social capital for the benefit of both business and society.

SUCCESS STORY: The Broad-Based Livelihoods (BBL) programme

In FY2023, R55.2 million was spent on socio-economic development, including youth education programmes and the Broad-Based Livelihoods programme. Large parts of our operations are situated in urban areas.

In addition, most of the communities that live near our facilities are in the grip of poverty and socio-economic stress. Our social value add is focused on the realities faced by these communities and aims to alleviate poverty and provide educational opportunities to the youth.

Our programmes:

- Focus on enabling communities to be self-sustainable by providing skills development in the areas of entrepreneurship and business acumen.
- Ensure improvement in the quality of life of communities neighbouring our facilities.
- Strive for meaningful engagement with community groups to understand their struggles and concerns and to respond in an appropriate way.

Our initiatives to contain the impact of our operations on the environment, in particular the removal of mine dumps and the containment of dust and effluent, clearly overlap with this objective.

Poverty alleviation and self-empowerment takes place through our very successful alliance with Umsizi Sustainable Social Solutions which has assisted us in rolling out the Broad-based Livelihoods programme in the Ekurhuleni, the city of Johannesburg and Merafong communities. The programme has empowered around 8 000 participants with skills and infrastructure to produce healthy food, generate an income, grow a business and trade in the market.

The BBL offering is constantly evolving, with a growing set of sub-programmes in response to participants' interests and ideas for increased economic activity in their communities. This could be in retail and services, crop and livestock agriculture, as well as the health, wellness and the beauty sectors.

TOP RESULTS

42% communities reached by our projects

R55.2m spent on socio-economic development

11,200 BBL participants equipped

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

ensekta

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Circular economics for a better future

To serve as a beacon of success for sustainable and profitable cross-industry circular economics

In 2019, Ensekta was established with the aim of introducing South Africa to the nutritional benefits of insect-based foods.

Today, as South Africa's foremost commercial cricket farm, we have shifted our focus to meet the growing demand for insect protein in both human and animal food markets. Working closely with industry partners, our goal is to become one of the largest insect farms globally while leading research into insect-based nutrition solutions. We have discovered that by using the waste from one industry, crickets can nourish another industry, while also enhancing the health and wellbeing of a third industry by using cricket waste as crop fertilizer.

Industry:
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

Web:
www.ensekta.com

More info:

©Global Compact Network South Africa

To continually contribute to the growth and integrity of all relevant Sustainable Development Goals within our industry. Ensekta contributes to our nation's sustainability by forming partnerships with the agricultural industry to implement circular economics by utilising their waste as our food.

Daniel Steyn
Co-Founder, Ensekta

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Revolutionising waste utilisation

Insects have emerged as a groundbreaking solution for repurposing waste material generated by traditional food manufacturing processes. Ensekta has leveraged the transformation of this waste into processable protein powders, which can then be incorporated into the very foods that initially produced the waste. Through months of dedicated research and development, we are poised to make significant strides in enhancing sustainability across various sectors.

Ensekta's impact extends across key industries:

- Agriculture
- Food
- Manufacturing

By forging strong partnerships with non-profit organisations, the agricultural sector, and the food industry, we aspire to become a beacon of success for sustainable and profitable cross-industry circular economics.

SUCCESS STORY:

Bridging Innovation with Tradition

In recent years, Ensekta has utilised its unique position as one of Africa's foremost cricket farms to bridge the gap between innovative concepts and traditional industry manufacturing methods. Our efforts have also created opportunities for economic growth and environmental conservation.

The stakeholders poised to benefit most from Ensekta's initiatives include:

- The impoverished
- General society
- Agricultural sector

By leveraging our foundation of success, we aim to cultivate a culture of cross-industry collaboration that transcends the boundaries of our direct involvement.

With Ensekta leading the charge, the future holds promise for a more sustainable and interconnected global economy, where waste is transformed into valuable resources and collaboration fuels progress towards a better tomorrow.

By repurposing waste material into nutrient-rich protein powders, Ensekta contributes to improving access to nutritious food options, thereby promoting good health and wellbeing.

The innovative approach to waste utilisation aligns closely with SDG 12's objectives of promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns.

By forging strong partnerships with non-profit organisations, the agricultural sector and the food industry, Ensekta leverages collective expertise and resources to maximize its impact.

TOP RESULTS

87% of our natural waste product output that is re-used for fertilizer

100 tonnes of industry waste that we hope to re-use in our facility by 2030

6:1 our goal ratio (in Kg) of input waste material to sold product

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

exxaro

POWERING POSSIBILITY

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Commitment to sustainable resettlement

No household should be worse off after resettlement than what they were before

Exxaro prioritises sustainable practices and stakeholder wellbeing. Our value proposition centres on delighting sustainability-conscious stakeholders with ethically and environmentally conscious mining.

We provide high-quality products, including responsibly sourced minerals for the energy and industrial sectors, adhering to sustainable mining practices. Exxaro aims to be a leader in responsible resource extraction, contributing positively to the communities we operate in and the global energy landscape.

Our business activities impact our people, the environment and broader society. Therefore, we have a responsibility to reduce our negative impacts, increase our positive impacts, and ultimately create mutually sustainable value for stakeholders and ourselves.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.exxaro.com

More info:
ESG Report 2022

©Global Compact Network South Africa

We maintained our leadership position in the FTSE Russell ESG Index driven by exemplary governance, record safety performance, economic empowerment of people and contributing to social progress through infrastructure development.

Dr Nombasa Tsengwa
CEO

IMPACT SUMMARY

Sustainable circular economy initiatives

The Phumulani Agri-village community is a resettled community that was relocated during the Belfast mine implementation project. To create sustainability, a multi stakeholder partnership was initiated in February 2022, between Exxaro, Siyakhana Growth and Development NPC, the University of Johannesburg, Komatsu and the community. 10 Community members were trained and mentored on regenerative agricultural skills.

To improve living conditions and promote sustainable practices, the project 's approach is that of a circular economy.

Two vegetable tunnels, a seedling tunnel, a biodigester, a kitchen, a worm farm and a poultry project were established. This is an example of using available resources to create sustainable solutions for waste management, clean energy and cooking facilities for the project beneficiaries and enriching the agricultural practices by producing rich compost and reducing costs for both the agri project and the household gardens.

SUCCESS STORY: Phumulani Agri-village community resettlement

The implementation of Exxaro's Belfast project between 2017 and 2019 in the Emakhazeni municipality in Mpumalanga province necessitated the relocation of 32 non-landowning households, which comprised mainly of farmworkers employed or previously employed on surrounding commercial farming operations.

The aim of Phumulani Agri-Village is to:

1. Create a technologically advanced rural village focused on agriculture post-mining.
2. Generate sustainable employment and income for resettled households.
3. Implement an integrated model of economic and social development based on the agroecological approach.
4. Offer environmentally-friendly solutions for soil fertility, renewable energy and water and energy security to enhance food and nutrition security.
5. Foster the establishment and growth of small businesses in the food and related industries through entrepreneurship.
6. Facilitate widespread community involvement.
7. Collaborate with key stakeholders to ensure long-term societal impact.

Global Compact Network South Africa

Challenges include:

Beneficiary conflicts: Addressing internal conflicts among beneficiaries is crucial for project success.
Security concerns: Enhancing security is vital for safeguarding the community and initiatives.
Soil health management: Preserving and enhancing soil fertility is a key challenge for sustainability.
Inconsistent water supply: Tackling water supply issues is crucial for sustaining agricultural activities.

The project is transitioning from infrastructural and training agri-project to a Smart Agroecological Village and Economic Hub (2024 to 2026) with an expected huge socio-economic and environmental impact on the whole village and beyond.

TOP RESULTS

R75.9 bn market capitalization FY2022

671GWh renewable energy generation FY2022

30,81% black-empowered

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

exxaro

POWERING POSSIBILITY

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programme

Empowering communities

Exxaro's operations aim to produce resources powering a clean world. Their portfolio includes coal, iron ore, pigment manufacturing and renewables (wind, Cennergi).

Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) refers to a set of affirmative action and local content development measures aimed at promoting economic transformation. Under the revised B-BBEE codes, ESD refers to the combination of Preferential Procurement, Supplier Diversity, Supplier Development and Enterprise Development programmes.

"Investing in empowering black owned, black women owned and black youth owned enterprises in host communities (in particular) in ways that offer real long-term benefits and sustainability"

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.exxaro.com

More info:
ESG Report 2022

©Global Compact Network South Africa

IMPACT SUMMARY

Our commitment to community wellbeing

Exxaro's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programme has made a substantial impact on economic transformation and community wellbeing in South Africa. Over the 2018 to 2022 period, the programme allocated R842.3 million to 121 beneficiaries, providing zero-interest loans and grants. This financial support enabled these enterprises to acquire assets, fulfill contractual obligations and secure a sustainable future beyond their engagements with Exxaro.

The success story isn't just about financial figures, it is about Exxaro's strategic investment in the long-term prosperity of communities. The programme not only provides capital, but also delivers non-financial support, enhancing business management capabilities in beneficiary enterprises. Through this comprehensive approach, Exxaro has emerged as a driving force for sustainable development, creating a lasting and meaningful impact on the socio-economic landscape of South Africa.

SUCCESS STORY: Transformative impact through ESD programme

The Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programme stands as a beacon of commitment to fostering economic transformation and community wellbeing in South Africa. Envisioned to power better lives in Africa and beyond, Exxaro integrates leading practices in ESD across its core functional areas.

Over the 2018 to 2022 period, the ESD programme demonstrated its dedication to community wellbeing by providing substantial financial support amounting to R842.3 million distributed among 121 beneficiaries. This financial injection was not just about capital, it was a strategic investment in the form of zero-interest loans and grants that aimed to empower black-owned suppliers and entrepreneurs. The funds were earmarked for asset acquisition, enabling beneficiaries to meet contractual obligations, enhance their asset base, and, significantly, ensure sustainability beyond Exxaro's contractual engagements.

Recognising the challenging landscape for small enterprises in South Africa, with a staggering nine out of ten facing closure within the first three years, Exxaro goes beyond mere compliance. The ESD programme embodies a holistic approach, encapsulated in its five key objectives:

1. **Legislative compliance:** A strong emphasis is placed on aligning operations with relevant laws and regulations, ensuring adherence to legislative requirements.
2. **Supplier diversity:** Actively promotes a diverse supplier base, fostering inclusivity and expanding the range of businesses engaged with Exxaro.
3. **Supporting innovation:** Innovation is a cornerstone, with active encouragement and support provided to beneficiary businesses to drive advancements and efficiencies.
4. **Socio-economic impact:** Beyond business considerations, the programme is dedicated to creating tangible socio-economic benefits in the communities where Exxaro operates, contributing significantly to local development.
5. **Financial sustainability:** The programme not only focuses on providing financial support to beneficiaries, but does so in a manner that ensures its own financial sustainability, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship.

"We know that there is a better place to be tomorrow than where we are today."

Dr Nombasa Tsengwa
CEO

TOP RESULTS

99% of the 121 supported small enterprises remained in operation

1,234 new jobs created by the 121 supported small enterprises

1,796 jobs sustained by the 121 supported small enterprises

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

exxaro

POWERING POSSIBILITY

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Educational empowerment

Exxaro's commitment to education powers the possibility for better lives

Exxaro's operations aim to produce resources powering a clean world. Their portfolio includes coal, iron ore, pigment manufacturing and renewables (wind, Cennergi).

Everyone has a fundamental right to education. Education is able to arrest and reverse cycles of generational poverty and has proven to be a successful tool to uproot poverty.

One of South Africa's leading black empowered and diversified mining and energy solutions company, Exxaro Resources, has always recognised the importance of education and ensuring tangible change happens in improvised communities.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.exxaro.com

More info:
ESG Report 2022

©Global Compact Network South Africa

IMPACT SUMMARY

Empowering minds, transforming futures

Exxaro has undertaken a comprehensive assistance programme over the past 12 months to support our education system: From renovating school buildings and supplying equipment, to hosting academic camps and sponsoring school shoes to children in need.

SUCCESS STORY:
Commitment to education

The company's edu-support highlight in 2021 was hosting a career expo for Grade 12 learners from Lephalale in collaboration with Lephalale Municipality. About 1000 learners from Lephalale schools participated in the career expo. The company further collaborated with three education circuits in Lephalale and identified 70 learners who undertook a psychometric assessment (aptitude test). The intention was for the leaners to be able to identify their strength so that they can choose careers aligned to their strength and interest. To supplement issues of good career choices, Exxaro further distributed 1000 books about post-school opportunities to selected schools across our host communities.

Another great success is the company's flagship programmes in its digital transformation initiative which aims to connect schools to Wi-Fi. Two of the seven selected schools in Lephalale, Nelsonskop Primary School and Phegelelo High School have been connected to a high-speed wireless connection. Seventy-two schools in Lephalale were selected and twenty-five schools with high reception points will be connected in Q2 to Q3 of 2022, followed by the remaining schools. The total budget for all the 72 schools is R22 266 547,51. For Nkangala, 16 schools were identified for connection with a budget of R5 898 570. Connection to all the schools will be completed by Q4 2022. The project, which is being implemented in partnership with the Impact Catalyst, has an allocated budget of R28 165 117,51 for the entire project benefitting 88 schools.

"It's these kinds of interventions that we believe will help us to contribute to an environment in which we can develop the next generation of South Africans who will move our country in a new era of hope and prosperity," said Leepile.

Among some of the other successes recorded by Exxaro are the following:

- All its business units, namely Grootegeluk, outside Lephalale Limpopo, Matla, Belfast and the Coal Central Complex all in Mpumalanga, collected and donated more than 600 pairs of shoes to needy learners.
- Undertaking to build four classrooms, two toilets each for girls and boys, and a hall in Nelsonskop Primary School, Lephalale.
- The completion of two classroom blocks containing three classrooms and four storerooms at the Arnot School in Mpumalanga.
- Project support programmes for the Sedibeng special school in Lephalale.
- Supporting 15 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) female students from second year of study in the engineering field.
- Food gardens were established at three schools in Mpumalanga in collaboration with World Vision (Cosmo Haven, Bonginhlanhla and Bonani schools).

"The right to quality education is fundamental if we are to reduce poverty and inequality. Unfortunately, most of our learners don't have access to quality education and infrastructure. We have committed to work hand in hand with our hosting communities, local municipalities and the Department of Education to make sustainable changes and break the cycle of generational poverty."

Tebogo Leepile
Community Development Manager

TOP RESULTS

1200 benefitted learners

15 technical and vocational education and training female students supported

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

GOLD FIELDS

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Creating enduring value beyond mining

Gold Fields is one of the largest global gold miners with operations in South Africa, Ghana, Chile, Peru, Canada and Austria.

At Gold Fields Mines, we fuse smart innovation with deep-rooted care for our people, communities, customers and the global ecosystem. Our goal is simple: to bridge the gap between the earth's precious resources and the needs of society.

With a portfolio of leading-edge operations and a spectrum of future growth opportunities, we provide essential metals and minerals for a cleaner, greener world. These resources meet the everyday demands of billions while propelling us towards a more sustainable future.

Putting our people first, we employ innovative practices and cutting-edge technologies to discover, extract and deliver resources to our customers safely and sustainably.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.goldfields.com

More info:
Integrated Report 2022
Gold Fields South Deep Gold Mine - The South Deep solar plant

©Global Compact Network South Africa

Reducing reliance on municipal supplied water not only reduces overall costs, but has a positive impact on our surrounding communities and the environment itself.

Stephen Joseph
Head of Metallurgy
South Deep Gold Mine

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Driving sustainable value: Our ESG commitment and vision

The long-term success and sustainability of the company hinge upon effective management of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) considerations, thereby generating value for our most significant stakeholders. To this end, we have established ambitious targets to be achieved by 2030 across six key ESG priority areas:

Health, safety, wellbeing and the environment: We prioritise the protection of our workforce, local communities and the environment through stringent health and safety protocols and environmental management practices.

Diversity and inclusion: At Gold Fields, we understand that the key to realising our full potential is by embracing the diverse attributes and perspectives of our people. We want our organisation to better reflect the demographics of the countries and communities in which we operate, with a particular focus on gender diversity.

Stakeholder value creation: We are dedicated to creating enduring value for all stakeholders by fostering mutually beneficial relationships, transparent communication and responsible business practices.

Decarbonisation: We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint and transitioning towards cleaner energy sources to mitigate climate change impacts.

Tailings management: We uphold rigorous standards for the safe and responsible management of tailings, ensuring minimal environmental impact and adherence to regulatory requirements.

Water stewardship: Recognising the importance of water as a precious resource, we are focused on sustainable water management practices, including reducing consumption and implementing effective treatment technologies.

Our overarching ambition is encapsulated in our vision to become the preferred gold mining company, distinguished by our ability to deliver sustainable, superior value. This vision encompasses our commitment to responsible mining practices, ethical conduct and continuous innovation to meet the evolving needs of our stakeholders while safeguarding the planet for future generations.

SUCCESS STORY: Pioneering water treatment at South Deep

Water is a vital resource for our mining and ore processing activities but most importantly, a vital resource for our community.

It is for this reason that we are committed to responsible water stewardship and reduce our freshwater withdrawal, to preserve it for society.

In line with Gold Fields' water stewardship strategy, as well as South Deep's commitment to reduce the municipal supplied water consumption to zero by 2030, a second Reverse Osmosis (RO) plant, capable of producing 3.0 ml per day has been designed, constructed and commissioned. This plant follows the 2.0 ml per day RO plant commissioned in 2016. Both plants are operated on a built, own operate model with South Deep only paying for potable water produced.

Water from various sources are treated by different processes, including reverse osmosis to produce potable water which complies with the South African Drinking Water standard. The two RO plants are connected directly into the current municipal supply reservoirs securing supply to the Twin and South Shaft complexes.

Having an additional treatment facility allows the operation to not only reduce municipal water consumption, but also to reduce the possibility of an environmental spill during high rainfall periods.

TOP RESULTS

R12m cost savings as a result of reduced municipal water consumption

80% of water recycled

0 environmental incidents related to water pollution

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Goldilocks and the Bear Foundation

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Vision for child well-being

The Foundation's aims to improve children's wellbeing and build resilient and resourceful children free from mental health difficulties

Goldilocks and The Bear Foundation (#gb4adhd) was proudly founded by psychiatrist professor Renata Schoeman ("Goldilocks") and Nic de Beer ("The Bear)". In 2017, Nic and Renata competed in the 3-day AfricanX Trailrun. They decided to raise funds while competing, with the intention to donate the proceeds to a non-profit organisation supporting children with ADHD. However, they were unable to find an organisation which offered these services and so the idea of the Goldilocks and The Bear Foundation was born. The Foundation was officially registered as a non-profit organisation/public beneficiary organisation in 2017, introducing South Africa's first free ADHD screening and early intervention services.

Industry:
NGO, Public Sector, Development and Civil Society

Web:
www.gb4adhd.co.za

More info:

©Global Compact Network South Africa

The Goldilocks and The Bear Foundation firmly believe that every child's life we touch, helps a family and changes a community. By removing mental health barriers to education, we strive to develop resilient and resourceful children – empowered to change the trajectories of their lives. Mental health is wealth – and education is the power to change the world.

Renata Schoeman
Co-founder, Director, Goldilocks and The Bear Foundation

IMPACT SUMMARY

Child Mental health initiatives

The Foundation wants to be part of the change that sees more resilient and resourceful children that can deal with the educational challenges they face to function effectively in society. Addressing the mental health difficulties experienced by children in school is the strategic pathway the Foundation has embarked upon to bring about this change. This is premised on the vulnerability of children to mental health difficulties given the high levels of poverty, contributing to significant disparities in living conditions and access to opportunities, violence, discrimination and food insecurity in South Africa. Furthermore, it is premised on the recognition of the importance of early intervention because of the cost to society of not intervening. The following highlights are key impact aspirations:

- Provide education and advocating for improved child mental health services.
- Early intervention and child mental health care to improve the effectiveness in addressing child mental health.
- Research and knowledge building and sharing is key to addressing child mental health and learning challenges.

The contributions of the Foundation are expected to lead to the development of an effective and efficient ecosystem of child mental healthcare provision in the areas in which it operates, focused on enabling positive educational attainment and outcomes for children dealing with mental health difficulties.

SUCCESS STORY: Empowering Children

After the Foundation completed attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) awareness and training workshop at a low-resourced school, Amy*, an 8-year-old learner from a disadvantaged background was referred to the Foundation through her school. Her mother used substances during her pregnancy and she currently resides with her grandmother. The teacher was concerned about learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Foundation assessed Amy and referred her for a visual and an educational assessment. Our volunteer optometrist assessed the child and found visual difficulties and prescribed spectacles. There were also perceptual difficulties noted and the volunteer optometrist offered visual therapy at a significantly reduced rate. Amy's teacher brought her to all the appointments and paid for the visual therapy. The educational assessment was completed by the Foundation and it was noted that Amy presented with a low mood and was withdrawn. She also struggled significantly with reading tasks.

Furthermore, it appeared as if Amy had symptoms suggestive of ADHD. However, after Amy started receiving visual therapy from the optometrist, her behaviour, academic ability and mood started to shift. This was the feedback received from the teacher:

"Amy used to be very busy and disruptive in class, she constantly walked around and teased her peers and kept them from doing their work. She also frequently asked to go to the toilet and would only return after a long period. She constantly had to be reprimanded for her behaviour. Thanks to her glasses and visual therapy she is now a sweet quiet girl. She is focused on her work and no longer bothers her peers. Her handwriting all improved. She now remembers her sounds and sight words. I am very proud of her."

Through the collaboration of the school, teachers and volunteer health care practitioners, the Foundation was able to get the right support for Amy for her to realise her full academic potential as well as improve her overall wellbeing.

This case study highlights Goldilocks and The Bear Foundation's (the Foundation) alignment with the SDGs 3, 4 and 17.

Global Compact Network South Africa

TOP RESULTS

1740 children assisted with early intervention

441 psychometric assessments completed

926 children identified with mental health difficulties

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Hollard.

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Our purpose in action

Fulfilling purpose through shared value excellence

At Hollard, we're not just in the business of insurance - we're in the business of enabling more people to create and secure a better future. We intend to do this through shared value, which is the unbreakable link between our purpose and our actions. It is the sweet spot where meaningful impact, enabling culture and focused competitiveness come together.

We are not only content with feeling or looking good, we are here to make a meaningful and deliberate impact on society and the environment. Every move, every product, every choice – it's all run through the shared value filter, ensuring that we contribute positively to our communities and to our environment, as well as to business profitability.

Industry:
Financial Services and FinTech

Web:
www.hollard.co.za

More info:
Annual Report 2022

©Global Compact Network South Africa

> **Never before has it been more important for governments, business and civil society to collaborate to solve pressing environmental and social challenges. While Hollard is still in the process of developing and applying a formal ESG framework to its business, it is somewhat ahead of the curve, because such frameworks are perfectly aligned with Hollard's purpose of "Enabling more people to create and secure a better future". Hollard has always believed in doing good through the business that it does and through the way it does business. Through fulfilling this ideal in one of the most volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous periods in world history, I believe that the organisation has cemented its reputation as a truly purpose-driven company."**

Adrian Enthoven
Group Chairman

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Testimonial from client
31 Oct 2023

"I was coming from work and had just stopped by at a shop that is one house away from mine. Two kids came running to me shouting that the alarm is ringing in my house. I quickly ran to the house and when I opened, indeed the alarm was ringing. I was quick enough to stop the fire using water. The alarm helped a lot because if the kids had not heard it my house was going to be entirely destroyed. I managed to stop the fire because of the alert from the alarm. I wish people knew how helpful this alarm is."

This tale was related by a Lumkani client in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. Two days before, a single fire burnt over 500 people's homes. The difference is early warning. The fire only damaged a small portion of this client's home and four working days later they received a claim of R6 715 to rebuild what they had lost.

SUCCESS STORY:
Lumkani fire cover

Our partnership with Lumkani enables those living in informal housing to protect what is dear to them from the ravages of fire. Lumkani leverages the power of South African-developed technology to alert residents of informal settlements to the risk of runaway fires, while also offering them a means to protect their hard-won possessions.
At the heart of the offering is a robust, easy-to-install, low-cost fire alarm, developed specifically for informal environments, that uses simple cellphone technology to alert the device owner to a potential fire threat. The device is designed to communicate with other such devices nearby, creating a network that can help communities better manage their fire risk. Hollard's low-cost, tech-enabled insurance product provides cover in the event a fire that cannot be contained, ensuring that homeowners can not only rebuild their shelter in the event of fire, but they can also replace their precious possessions.

Lumkani is just one of the ways we're taking the power of insurance to where it is most needed. Enabling better futures for more people.

Challenges:

- Fires are a key contributor to the destruction of informal dwellings, often leaving people homeless and vulnerable with nothing to their name.
- In SA, at least 18.2m homeowners have no property insurance, and 27.9m individuals have no home contents insurance. Barriers are linked to affordability, education and trust in insurers.

Solution:

Lumkani (a fintech) developed a low-cost fire detection device appropriate for use in informal settlements. When a device's alarm goes off, in addition to the loud ringing noise, the owner and those living in the area are notified via SMS so that they can attend to the fire ASAP.

This device is rented to those living in informal settlements at R80pm, with embedded fire insurance providing cover of up to R40 000 from Hollard.

Our goal is to prevent the fire from spreading and prevent the extent of loss of life and property damage, but should there be property damage, the insurance from Hollard kicks in to enable clients to get back on their feet and put a roof over their head.

The product is sold via field agents living in informal settlements thereby creating employment in these areas. Women agents are mostly employed. Additionally, Hollard's StreetWise Finance consumer education programme is run on weekends in these areas to increase financial literacy.

TOP RESULTS

R130m of informal property saved from over 150 fires in the last three years

300 jobs created for people, mostly women, living in informal settlements in the last three years

60 000+ informal homes with fire alarms, and 10 000+ with fire insurance

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Investec

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Creating enduring worth

Integrating sustainability: A commitment to enduring worth

Investec exists to create enduring worth. This purpose demands that we regard sustainability as an integral part of our business rather than ancillary to it. Over the past year, our leadership team has engaged extensively on how best to create enduring worth for all our stakeholders, including the societies within which we operate and the planet that sustains us. We're proud of the enthusiasm with which colleagues across the organisation are embracing our purpose and working to imbue it into everything we do. ESG considerations have been successfully integrated and embedded into most of our operational activities and incentive structures. We are now more consciously incorporating sustainability into our business strategies, drawing on the expertise of our Group ESG Executive Committee to help align and leverage sustainability activities across the organisation.

Industry:
Financial Services and FinTech

Web:
www.Investec.com

More info:
Youth Development
Sustainability Report 2023

©Global Compact Network South Africa

The partnership that we've fostered with Investec is a model of true impact investing. We are proud to announce that we will be building a new hydroponic farm in Prieska with support from Investec. In so doing, we are partnering to maximise the impact of our renewable energy assets, ensuring that our host communities experience sustainable growth and development.

Fumani Mthembi
Pele Energy Group Co-founder and Director

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

The Touwsrivier Commercial Hydroponics Farm impact

The farm is owned by Knowledge Pele and the Touwsrivier Solar Community Trust, in which 50% of equity is held by the community.

The Touwsrivier Commercial Hydroponics Farm (TCHF) produces over 4,000 kg of leafy green vegetables a month, focusing mainly on seven types of lettuce. The farm has off-take agreements in place with reputable retailers and plans to erect additional tunnels to expand the operation once additional funding is secured.

The TCHF project initially employed 19 people from Touwsrivier, with Investec's Youth Employment Service (YES) program paying all farm workers who were under 35 for the first year. There are now 12 community members from Touwsrivier permanently employed at the TCHF, five of which have come from the Investec YES program, including Theodalene Bosman, who manages quality control.

Ambition: We wanted to build something that was technologically advanced and would meet numerous Sustainable Development Goals by creating industrial and social infrastructure, while also working in the local context.

SUCCESS STORY: Pele Energy Group

Investec, as mandated lead arranger, has partnered with leading black-owned independent power producer, Pele Green Energy (Pele) in the refinancing of CPV Power Plant No.1 (Pty) Ltd (CPV1), the 44MW concentrated photovoltaic (CPV) solar plant in Touwsrivier, Western Cape, in the form of a senior term loan facility. CPV1, in which Pele is the majority shareholder, is one of the largest solar CPV plants in the world and the only one on the African continent. In addition to providing power to the area and contributing to the reduction of South Africa's carbon footprint, the Touwsrivier plant has also helped create jobs and develop local business and community infrastructure.

The plant was built as part of Round 1 of the South African Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) and has been in operation for seven and a half years. The refinancing was necessitated by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), in a bid to reduce electricity tariffs and make electricity more affordable for South African consumers. Investec also provided grant funding to partly fund the development of a commercial hydroponic farm jointly owned by Pele and the Touwsrivier Community Trust (also a shareholder in the CPV project) located at the project site.

The plant consists of 1 500 dual-axis solar tracking systems with a total of 18 000 modules over its site of 190 hectares. It powers roughly 26 000 homes each year and has achieved a reduction of 69 tonnes of CO_2 on average per year when compared to coal-fired power plants in South Africa.

The plant's continued operation is an important asset to the impoverished community of Touwsrivier. 733 jobs were created during its construction and the plant now employs 44 permanent staff. Following its development, and thanks to Pele's involvement, the Touwsrivier community has seen 55 bursaries and 59 internships being granted, the development of 63 start-up enterprises, 38 SMEs being mentored, and three solar PV systems installed at schools. There have also been investments into two agricultural initiatives as well as the development of a community resource centre. All parties to the transaction have demonstrated a shared commitment to the delivery of clean, affordable electricity to South African households and businesses.

This project serves as evidence that business can create economic value while making the needed contributions to the broader national development objectives.

TOP RESULTS

44MWp renewable energy

R8mn grant fund, which Knowledge Pele deployed to develop the Touwsrivier Commercial Hydroponics Farm

50% equity is held by the community

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

KROPZ

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Responsible mining and agriculture

Sustainable phosphate mining to the benefit of all stakeholders

Elandsfontein hosts South Africa's second-largest phosphate deposit. It is well understood and importantly, has low cadmium and other heavy metal content often found in sedimentary phosphate deposits, which allows the production of fertilisers that support food security and sustainable agriculture.

Through smart mine design, rehabilitation of the open pit mine will take place concurrently with mining. Mining is simple, cost effective and efficient, as a result of the sandy nature of the ore.

In a world first process, Elandsfontein extracts groundwater, directs it around the open pit in a closed system and reinjects it back below the water table, thus protecting the local ground water resources and the Langebaan Lagoon.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.kropz.com

More info:
Kropz ESG

©Global Compact Network South Africa

Sustainability through employment and conservation

Our commitment extends beyond mere engagement with local communities in the Saldanha Bay municipality. We prioritise the creation of meaningful employment opportunities while concurrently championing sustainable partnerships and collaborations with diverse stakeholders. Our emphasis on responsible water management is exemplified through the implementation of a world-class Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) system and active participation in the Elandsfontein Water Monitoring Committee (EWMC), demonstrating our dedication to preserving and protecting groundwater resources.

Furthermore, our conscientious approach extends to post-mining environmental restoration through integrated rehabilitation initiatives. Recognising the potential of integrated rehabilitation to restore post-mining environments to functional ecological states, we view this as an opportunity to contribute positively to the regions where we operate, fostering a harmonious balance between industrial activities and environmental preservation. "Integrated rehabilitation offers a good opportunity to restore post-mining environment to a functional ecological state."

SUCCESS STORY: Hopefield Thusong Centre upgrade

The ongoing transformation of the Hopefield Thusong Centre exemplifies Kropz Elandsfontein mine's unwavering commitment to fostering comprehensive community development. Having successfully concluded phases one and two in 2022, we are poised to embark on phase three, focusing on the establishment of a cutting-edge e-learning and computer centre designed to be accessible to all community members. This visionary initiative serves as a pivotal step in bridging the digital divide, equipping individuals with essential skills for navigating the modern world, fostering a collaborative and resilient community.

Beyond its significant educational impact, the project radiates positive influences across various stakeholders, creating a ripple effect of progress. The Hopefield community stands to gain not only enhanced educational facilities, but also a central hub for social interaction, community empowerment, and economic development. The Saldanha Bay Municipality reaps the benefits of strengthened infrastructure, fostering a collaborative and resilient community fabric.

Teachers, learners, and the Eco Club initiative at Hopefield Primary experience a transformative uplift, marked by improved resources and expanded opportunities for growth. Simultaneously, Jurie Hayes schools receive valuable support for their educational endeavors, contributing to a more robust local academic landscape.

The broader community, including the West Coast Fossil Park, enjoys the positive outcomes of our commitment to holistic development, ensuring a sustainable and thriving environment.

Kropz Elandsfontein mine's dedication remains steadfast in its mission to contribute meaningfully to community welfare, promoting responsible resource extraction practices and fostering sustainable growth. Through initiatives like the Hopefield Thusong Centre upgrade, we actively strive to create a lasting, positive impact on the lives of individuals, the community and the broader region we are privileged to serve.

"Driving local employment and economic development, through innovation and responsible phosphate mining."

Mark Maynard
COO

TOP RESULTS

93% employees from the local Saldanha Bay Municipality in 2023

23% women in mining

Long-standing water monitoring committee successfully concludes 12th meeting since mine's inception

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

MAKWANDE GROUP

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Leaving no one behind

Transforming business with circular economy principles

Makwande Group is an impact driven group of companies that applies the principles of the circular economy to transform companies from a linear Take-Make-Dispose system of production to a sustainable circular business model that designs out waste, keep assets at the highest value and regenerate nature whilst we #LeaveNoOneBehind.

They aim to elevate the worth of both the environment and humanity. The fundamental principles of the circular economy guides them throughout their operations. These principles structure their activities to eliminate waste through innovative design, prolong the lifespan of materials within the economy to maintain their highest value and actively contribute to the regeneration of nature.

Industry:
NGO, Public Sector, Development and Civil Society

Web:
www.mankwandegroup.com

More info:

©Global Compact Network South Africa

Trust and openness are core elements in a successful symbiosis partnership. Coming from different sectors, setups, and industries, we look at each others' challenges and opportunities in new ways and transform this into new innovative projects.

Michael Hallgren
Senior Vice President of Novo Nordisk and Chairman of Kalundborg Symbiosis

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Transforming Waste: Makwande Auctioneers' Innovative Collaboration for Sustainable Resource Management

In 2022, Makwande Auctioneers, a subsidiary company of Makwande Group, received technical assistance from the NCPC-SA. The NCPC-SA facilitated the material testing with Cermalab CC, and the analysis report provided opportunities for alternative use of the resource. Makwande Auctioneers approached AfriSam and proposed a waste management mitigation to process the grinding media balls that form part of waste in the production process of crushing materials. This synergy created two seasonal jobs based on the market demand. The two artisans played a role in the collection of 328 910 kg grinding media balls and repurposed it as an alternative raw material for the manufacturing of new high chrome balls, aggregates and construction materials. The resource is classified under the metals group and was traded according to the scrap metal pricing index.

Ambition: To scale our operations as a resource recovery partner to strategic Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) in the mining and manufacturing sectors.

SUCCESS STORY: Industrial Symbiosis Programme Synergy

The NCPC-SA industrial symbiosis programme is a free facilitation service that promotes the exchange of residual resources of one company with another that can make use of it. It aims to build a network of businesses with links or synergies between companies where resources are exchanged to create social, economic and environmental benefits for each role player in the value chain.

Some of the benefits of industrial symbiosis include:

- **New business opportunities**
- **Increase in revenue streams**
- **Utilisation of assets**
- **Reduction in GHG (Greenhouse Gas) emissions**
- **Resource efficiency**
- **Knowledge transfer and capacity building**
- **Resilient supply chains and logistics networks**

Used grinding media, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic panels are the three residual resources for which we are developing recovery pathways. We are also in discussions with various OEMs to undertake feasibility studies and implement offtake agreements.

This model will facilitate the development of some of the green skills required to help facilitate South Africa's #justtransition to a circular economy whilst designing out waste, keeping materials in use within the economy at their highest value and regenerating nature.

TOP RESULTS

R1.6m in financial savings

328.1mt used grinding media diverted from landfill

630,76mt GHG emissions reduction

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

MINERALS COUNCIL
SOUTH AFRICA

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Minerals Council of South Africa

South Africa's primary advocate and representative of the South African mining industry for more than 90% of mineral production by value

The Minerals Council supports and promotes the South African mining industry by providing strategic support and advisory input. We facilitate interaction among mining employers to examine policy issues and other matters of mutual concern to crystallise and define desirable industry standpoints through our strategic plan based on five strategic pillars that focuses on critical issues affecting the mining sector.

Our reputation as an effective and trusted business advocacy organisation and the representative voice of South African mining, we participate in several local and international bodies to strengthen the social, environmental and economic performance of the South African mining industry.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.mineralscouncil.org.za

More info:
Women In Mining Data Portal

©Global Compact Network South Africa

We are determined to continue playing a meaningful role in the economy, society and communities in which member companies operate.

We will ensure that our social licence to mine is beyond reproach and that we continue #MiningMatter in a safe, sustainable, environmentally conscious way.

Nolitha Fakude
Minerals Council President

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

The impact of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) drives long-term value

Though ESG may be time-consuming and costly to undertake, consultation with miners on environmental, social and governance priorities have indicated a belief that the impacts that follow from ESG investment are worth the investment. This includes new market opportunities, as well as resources such as:

1. Green premiums
2. Fundamental shifts in competitive landscape
3. Tax savings by shifting supply chains
4. Creating jobs and upskilling in emerging markets
5. Job satisfaction
6. Greater trust and fewer business disruptions
7. Inclusive projects
8. Increased security and lower borrowing costs
9. Resilience in changing market conditions
10. Digital systems resilience
11. Improved brand recognition
12. Responsible technology innovations

Mining industry needs to drive more impact

- A uniform and consistent reporting framework developed by and for the mining industry.
- Informed Decisionmaking amongst stakeholders.
- Accountability and shared responsibility towards a sustainable industry while holding us equally to account.
- Automation (systems and eliminating data silos).

SUCCESS STORY: MCSA initiatives that make tangible differences

1. Women in Mining (WiM) initiative
The MCSA's gender equality programme, aligned with SDG 4, focuses on leading by example in transforming the mining sector. Recognising the importance of reliable data, the MCSA WiM programme coordinates industry-wide efforts to address challenges faced by women, promoting increased transformation and participation at all levels. The Gender Diversity and Inclusion Dashboard, launched in 2021, tracks industry performance across key areas, influencing policies in member companies for hiring, leadership and maternity. These measures not only foster internal transformation, but also impact local communities, enhancing economic empowerment and addressing gender-based violence. The overall result is a more diverse, inclusive and sustainable mining industry, contributing to broader societal wellbeing.

2. Masoyise health programme
This multi-stakeholder programme leads the South African industry's commitment to fight Tuberculosis (TB), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and AIDS, Occupational Lung Diseases (OLDs) and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), focusing on disease reduction, management and support. The programme enabled material increase of testing, disease avoidance and personal disease management in all focus areas effectively increasing the SDG 3 reach.

3. The Water Conservation and Water Demand Management (WC/WDM) self-assessment reporting tool (WSART) supports government regulatory requirements for water use efficiency in mining. Facing water supply insecurity, the mining sector integrates WC/WDM practices to ensure sustainable water management. The MCSA spearheads the development of a user-friendly tool, addressing challenges in allocation, development, and protection of water resources. Mainstreaming WC/WDM ensures water use efficiency and pollution mitigation through systematic steps: avoidance, minimization, mitigation and correction. The MCSA's ambition is to lead in developing tools for mining to implement WC/WDM principles, promoting sustainable mineral resource development and ensuring water and sanitation for all.

TOP RESULTS

73% reduction in mining industry fatalities – the lowest in recorded history FY2022

83% screening average for TB, diabetes and high blood pressure FY2022

45% GBV incidents resolved FY2022

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

MODERN CENTRIC
UNOTHERING THE OTHER

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Un-othering the other

Empowering workforce solutions and social responsibility initiatives

Modern Centric Holdings is a leading human capital solutions company, offering comprehensive and cost-effective workforce solutions to businesses of all sizes. We conduct most of our business practices with the sustainability in mind which inevitably benefits our stakeholders. Our core focus is to provide individuals within these groups access to employment opportunities through collaborative partnerships with our clients.

Our key offering includes 360° recruitment solutions, internal skills and training consulting, learnerships and bursary management, accessibility audit, reasonable accommodation, agribusiness, as well as CSI (Corporate Social Investment) and ED (Enterprise Development) initiatives, DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) workshops at different corporates, GBV (Gender-Based Violence) and SRH (Sexual and Reproductive Health) initiatives.

Industry:
NGO, Public Sector, Development and Civil Society

Web:
www.moderncentric.co.za

More info:
Modern Centric LinkedIN

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The Zakhele reusable pad project has provided sustainable employment opportunities for survivors of GBV (Gender Based Violence). These individuals strive to continuously engage in efforts to promote education and women's rights.

Marisse Edwards
Operations Manage, Modern Centric Holdings

IMPACT SUMMARY

Modern Centric Holding is committed to promoting inclusivity by ensuring equal opportunities for people living with disabilities, LGBTQIAP+ and GBV. In addition, the production of the Zakhele reusable pad and its packaging are environmentally friendly. The business also aims to offer comprehensive skills development by offering learnerships and bursaries. The primary challenges that our organisation faces are short staffing, lack of clientele as a result of being an SMME (Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise) and lack of investors. Our company focuses on empowering the youth through our programmes which include bursaries, learnerships, agriculture, GBV, LGBTQIAP+ initiatives and recruitment.

You can also identify the top initiatives that you are leveraging within or beyond your organisation to take action on the 2030 agenda.

- Education
- Employment
- Food security

Our Ambition is to impact more than a million lives.

SUCCESS STORY:
Zakhele's reusable pads

Millions of South African schoolgirls grapple with period poverty, confronting challenges of limited access to sanitary products and enduring stigmas surrounding menstruation. Statistics reveal that around seven million girls lack access to or cannot afford feminine sanitary products, resulting in an estimated 30% absence rate from school during their menstrual cycles. Recognising the urgency of this issue, our initiative focuses on distributing sanitary products to schools, creating a platform for workshops and educational sessions addressing feminine hygiene, sexual health and career guidance.

Enter The Zakhele reusable pad is a SABS-approved sanitary pad made from 5% biodegradable material. Designed to combat period poverty affecting over 7 million females, this initiative initially faced challenges related to funding, hindering production scalability and employment opportunities. However, through corporate social investment (CSI) and strategic partnerships, the program successfully donated over 100,000 pads.

This not only increased school attendance by 20%, but also reduced stigmas, enhanced sexual and reproductive health (SRH) practices and provided employment opportunities for disadvantaged women.

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The success of this initiative benefits various stakeholders:

- GBV victims find employment and support through the initiative.
- Unemployed women gain job opportunities and economic empowerment.
- Disadvantaged families experience improved access to menstrual hygiene products, positively impacting household dynamics.

Manufactured in Nelspruit by a team of women, including recruits from GBV safe houses, the reusable sanitary towels empower women by providing them with marketable skills. The ultimate objective is to alleviate the adverse effects of poverty, such as low school attendance and high unemployment rates among women. This initiative paves the way for future endeavors, including nationwide distribution, increased school and work attendance, improved WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) and SRH practices, socioeconomic advancement for beneficiaries and enhanced environmental sustainability.

Strategic partners such as Malaika Textile, Wild Hearts Foundation, Nedbank Foundation and Modern Community Foundation play a crucial role in achieving these goals through collaborative efforts.

TOP RESULTS

250 bursaries that were dispersed

100,000 Zakhele reusable pads donated

150 disability placements done

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

NEDBANK GROUP

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Empowering change through sustainable banking

Nedbank, a leader in sustainable banking, pioneers financial solutions that harmonise economic growth with environmental and social responsibility

Nedbank is dedicated to growing its focus on sustainable development finance to meaningfully address social and environmental challenges that are aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The bank has prioritised 9 SDGs where it believes it has the greatest ability to deliver a meaningful impact through its core business activities. It also integrates responsible finance and investment practices into its core business strategy and practices.

Nedbank actively champions diversity, equity and inclusion both internally and externally, showcasing this commitment through, by example, holistic financial inclusion offerings. Through sustainability frameworks and impactful partnerships, Nedbank continues to lead in its efforts to create lasting societal change.

Industry:
Financial Services and FinTech

Web:
www.nedbank.co.za

More info:
Integrated Report 2022

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IMPACT SUMMARY

Driving Sustainable Impact: Nedbank Sustainable Development Framework

The Nedbank Sustainable Development Framework was designed to focus attention and resources on the most material goals and targets of the sustainability agenda. This framework guides the bank's collective efforts to delivering on the sustainable development imperative primarily through its core business of lending and investment.

Nedbank's commitment to sustainable development finance (SDF) is anchored on three pillars of sustainable finance, financing the transition and financial inclusion. These pillars, combined with the banks approach to human capital, transformation, human rights, corporate social investment (CSI), and market conduct ensure an integrated approach to delivering positive impact. Innovative financial solutions targets key SDGs like affordable clean energy, decent work and economic growth and quality education, including:

1. Raising R8bn in green bonds;
2. Remaining a leading funder of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) in SA, with funding of 3,5 GW across 50 projects.
3. R22bn lending exposure to small businesses and their owners.
4. Funding >11 000 student loans and >43 000 student beds since 2015

The bank disclosed their fossil fuel and power generation glidepaths, which are aligned to achieving net zero by 2050, also committed to increase SDF exposures to more than 20% of the group's total GLAA by the end of 2025 . Nedbank plans to achieve this through the support of more than R150bn in new SDF that is aligned with the SDGs by the end of 2025 (from our starting base in 2021).

SUCCESS STORY: Developing integrated finance solutions to drive SA's decarbonisation

In a landmark transaction, Nedbank served as the sole mandated lead arranger, underwriter, and book runner in a R2,5bn quasi-equity funding package for Pele Green Energy, a SA-based, 100% black-owned IPP. This funding package represents a significant stride forward for Pele and Nedbank in the renewable energy sector, as it facilitates Pele's equity contributions to 8 renewable energy projects.

The transaction is not just significant in terms of its financial value; it also represents a substantial investment in a premier black economic empowered IPP within SA and exemplifies Nedbank's leading market expertise in delivering custom and innovative renewable energy financial solutions

The deal also highlights the strength of our renewable energy partnerships, which are pivotal for SA's energy recovery and economic growth. Transactions like this reaffirm our commitment to sustainable development and to supporting a Just Energy Transition.

WWF Nedbank Green Trust Project: Eco-champs building towards SA's environmental resilience

The Eco-champs programme empowers young South Africans to contribute to conservation efforts and develop their capabilities within local communities.

Participants operate from their home villages and receive invaluable mentoring.

The programme has significantly impacted the protection of over 30 springs and 15,000 ha of rangeland, raised environmental awareness and taught agroecology principles across 40 villages. The Eco-champs programme has sown the seeds for sustainable livelihoods and knowledge development in the Eastern Cape.

> **Financial institutions, particularly banks, have a crucial role to play in the Just Transition journey. By deliberately channeling capital into sectors to diversify the economy and bring about meaningful environmental and social change is imperative. Nedbank understands this intricate balance. Through aligning our investment and lending practices with a vision for a net-zero economy by 2050, we are delivering on a key strategic business commitment – one that recognises that a history of concentrated capital lies at the heart of social inequality.**
>
> **Mike Brown**
> Chief Executive, Nedbank

TOP RESULTS

Level 1 B-BBEE status for the 5th consecutive year running

14 external awards that recognise the profound sector expertise, innovation, and purpose-driven approach

16% of the group's total loans and advances support sustainable development finance

PRIORITY SDGS

Global Compact Network South Africa

CONTRIBUTIONS

NUDE FOODS
PLASTIC-FREE GROCERY

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Closing the loop on sustainable food

Redefining food industry sustainability through ethical sourcing and zero waste practices

NUDE FOODS, a beacon of sustainability in the food industry, has been dedicated to reshaping consumption practices since its inception. With a commitment deeply rooted in ethical sourcing and eco-conscious operations, NUDE FOODS operates with a national reach, offering exceptional products derived from sustainable agriculture and zero waste principles.

Their ethos revolves around creating shared value and fostering sustainable progress at every stage of their journey. NUDE FOODS recognises the intimate interconnection between their success and the wellbeing of the communities they serve, driving them to advocate for positive change that benefits both society and the environment on a global scale.

Industry:
Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Pharma and Health

Web:
www.nudefoods.co.za

More info:

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By choosing to shop zero waste, you're voting for a world you want to see, as well as reducing your own impact.Beyond our personal use and misuse of plastic, every purchase also serves as a warning to the companies that still choose to use plastic in their production, as well as a celebration of those using alternative solutions.

Zero waste shopping eliminates all packaging from the equation, creating a closed-loop ecosystem where nothing goes to waste.

Paul Rubin
Founder

IMPACT SUMMARY

NUDE FOODS: Pioneering zero waste shopping

NUDE FOODS recognises the critical state of our planet and the urgent need for change. The environmental landscape is dire, with temperatures soaring, oceans suffocating under the weight of over 5.2 trillion pieces of plastic and landfills bursting at the seams.

This crisis demands immediate attention and concerted action to regenerate and rebuild our ecosystems, with plastic pollution standing out as a major focal point for transformation.

The staggering statistic of over 300 million tonnes of plastic generated annually by the human population serves as a stark reminder of the scale of the challenge ahead. While industry giants bear significant responsibility for their contributions to this crisis, individual consumers also play a pivotal role in addressing it.

In response to this pressing issue, zero waste shopping emerges as a powerful and pragmatic solution. By embracing zero waste alternatives, consumers not only shrink their personal environmental footprints, but also send a resounding message to companies still heavily reliant on plastic packaging. NUDE FOODS passionately advocates for zero waste shopping as a transformative approach that not only eliminates packaging waste entirely but also fosters a closed-loop ecosystem where nothing is discarded or wasted.

This commitment extends far beyond the realms of mere sustainability; it embodies a bold vision of a waste-free, regenerative system that breathes new life into our ecosystems. Together, let us wholeheartedly embrace zero waste shopping as a potent catalyst for positive change, forging a path towards a cleaner, healthier planet for ourselves and for generations to come.

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Network South Africa

SUCCESS STORY:
NUDE FOODS: Pioneering zero waste shopping

With a track record of over seven years, and over 1,000 consciously sourced plastic-free products, NUDE FOODS continues to lead the way in South African conscious retail.

Their supplier database now extends beyond 200, with many of these being small scale, local producers. NUDE FOODS always prioritises local over imported options in an effort to reduce carbon impact and support the local economy.

However, the NUDE FOODS ecosystem extends beyond just suppliers and shoppers, the organisation has also partnered with many aligned initiatives. Some of these include: TWYG – a sustainable fashion NPO who co-host regular clothing swop events at NUDE FOODS; Waste-Ed – an organisation pioneering Eco-Bricks in the Western Cape, NUDE FOODS is a drop-off point for these. Abalimi Bezekhya – an NPO helping small scale organic produce growers bring their produce to market.

TOP RESULTS

0% waste achieved at restaurants

0% plastic use at shopping stores

100% recycling capacity throughout our production

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

OLDMUTUAL

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Empowering Financial Prosperity

Responsibly build the most valuable business in our industry.

Old Mutual is an African financial services Group that offers a broad spectrum of financial solutions, in the form of banking and lending, asset management, life cover and savings and property and casualty insurance to retail and corporate customers across key market segments in 14 countries, with primary operations in South Africa.

Our victory condition of becoming our customers' first choice to sustain, grow and protect their prosperity, is anchored in our purpose. This means that we aim to be their preferred partner for financial wellness and help them achieve their lifetime financial goals.

Industry:
Financial Services and FinTech

Web:
www.oldmutual.com

More info:
Sustainability Info
RI Report 2023
Sustainability Report 2022
RI Transparency Report 2020

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Old Mutual Investment Group has long committed itself to "investing for a future that matters" – incorporating responsible investing into how we manage our clients' money, how we steward our investee companies, and how we engage regulators and policies within our industry.

Tebogo Naledi
MD, Old Mutual Investment Group

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Investing for a future that matters

In line with our victory condition of becoming our customers' first choice to sustain, grow and protect their prosperity, we continue to responsibly build the most valuable business in our industry, while showing our commitment and responsibility across all our stakeholders.

Our approach to responsible investment is founded on an understanding of the investment and systemic risks posed by sustainability issues. Our focus is on delivering sustainable long-term returns for our clients, while being responsible stewards of the assets we manage. Investing for a future that matters permeates everything we do, as we integrate sustainability considerations across our investment and ownership decisions.

- Responsible integration
- Responsible stewardship
- Product innovation

SUCCESS STORY
Our stewardship activities by impact

We believe that ESG factors and metrics must be included in Anglogold Ashanti's remuneration policy, along with clearly articulated targets for management. We were also concerned about both succession planning and the need for greater diversity and inclusion within the organisation.

We engaged the board on enhancements to AngloGold's remuneration policy. The board confirmed changes to the short- and long-term incentive schemes, which aligned to both the interests of shareholders and global best practices. We were pleased with the remuneration policy amendments.

Stakeholders that benefit from this success:

- AngloGold board, management and employees
- AngloGold shareholders

AngloGold further confirmed that in the recent past, key positions across different levels have been filled from within the organisation. The board and management have also tasked a committee to track the organisation's talent pipelines and skills development initiatives to ensure its future needs are met.

Furthermore, our commitment extends to investments in the green economy.

Investment in green economy:
Green economy is a low-carbon, resource-efficient and socially inclusive economic growth path that aims to improve human wellbeing and social equity while reducing environmental risks. Our proprietary green economy taxonomy governs and defines 'green' financial instruments, enabling us to track investments in the green economy. We are currently aligning with the South African National Treasury Green Finance Taxonomy.

In addition to advocating for ESG integration and supporting green investments, we actively engage in climate-focused stewardship.

Climate-focused stewardship in action:
In 2022, Old Mutual Investment Group conducted climate-related engagements with 53 investee companies, primarily focusing on sectors with the highest climate-related risk. These engagements, based on proprietary ESG scoring and portfolio carbon risk analytics, remain ongoing. Case studies of continued engagements with Sasol Limited (Sasol) and Glencore plc (Glencore) exemplify our commitment to climate stewardship in action.

TOP RESULTS

76 company engagements with OMIG addressing 164 key matters

R146,2bn of funds under management invested in the green economy

R172m Old Mutual ESG Equity Fun

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Orion Minerals

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Shaping responsible resource development

Delivering growth and opportunity by discovering, developing and producing metals for a cleaner future

Orion Minerals Ltd (ASX: ORN | JSE: ORN) is a globally diversified metal explorer and developer which is on track to become a new generation base metals producer through the development of its flagship Prieska Copper Zinc Mine and its near-term Okiep Copper Project, both located in South Africa's Northern Cape.

Orion Minerals considers its relationships with local communities to be equally as important as the protection of its natural resource base, while ensuring the technical and commercial needs of the organisation are met. Orion's company ethos is Responsible Resourcing.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.orionminerals.com.au

More info:
Orion Minerals Annual Report 2022

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Our award-winning approach to community participation, in particular, our Community Participation Framework developed at the Prieska Copper-Zinc Mine (PCZM) supports "Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth".

We are proud to provide focused education and skills development in mining and actively encourage host community involvement in our operations.

Marcus Birch
Executive Sustainability

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

A model of sustainable partnership in mining development

Since its inception, Orion has aimed to support and develop communities in parallel with its transition from exploration company to developer. Orion's operations are located in an impoverished region that has been starved of employment opportunities and without new mine development for more than 30 years, where communities were unable to establish mining skills.

While Orion is one of the few junior mining companies to comply with the South African Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act and Mining Charter that specifically address transformation and the redress of historical imbalances, it realised that it could play a pioneering role in the establishment of a formal partnership with local communities.

Its successful collaboration with regional and local governments, and particularly with host communities, has resulted in a formal partnership with host communities.

This framework was born out of a two day independently facilitated workshop in October 2021.

Orion was recognised for this community participation framework by the Australia-Africa Minerals and Energy Group (AAMEG) 2023 award for "Emerging ESG Leader for an Explore/Developer".

SUCCESS STORY: Host Community Participation Framework

Supported by regional and local governing authorities, workshop participants comprised 35+ participants from host community stakeholder groups including Orion's own Stakeholder Engagement Forum, local business chambers and the local municipality.

Areas of collaboration were identified where there could be greater collaboration and participation between parties.

A task team was then established under the guidance of an independent social facilitator to draw up an implementation and monitoring plan that would support collective aspirations.

The work of the task team culminated in the establishment of a community participation framework, which will help the parties work towards community participation targets of 50% host community employment, 30% host community procurement and 40% contracting opportunities at the Prieska Project.

This framework can be applied across Orion's operations to create a sustainable mining ecosystem for host communities and serve as a model for other junior mining companies. It also compliments Orion's earlier community upskilling interventions which included running an introductory mining familiarisation short course within host community towns.

Equipping community members to participate in future mining-related opportunities, this course was followed by Occupational and Operator Assessments to determine suitability for future artisan and operator roles to help Orion select candidates for further development and possible employment.

TOP RESULTS

40% host community participation in contracts

30% host community procurement

50% host community employment

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Comprehensive Community Assistance

We are in the business of helping people

Patch-Up South Africa is dedicated to assisting communities grappling with poverty, substance abuse, hunger, poor health and unemployment. Central to our service delivery is a strong emphasis on nutrition, recognising its pivotal role in the wellbeing of our beneficiaries, ultimately influencing their functional capacity to engage in our sustainability programmes. We address food security through agricultural initiatives and meal distributions, while our healthcare services focus on HIV, TB, and psychosocial support. Following our primary interventions, we empower beneficiaries to pursue further education and personal development, placing them in jobs within our organisation or collaborating with our partners. Additionally, we facilitate the capacity building of individuals and their communities to establish their own businesses.

Industry:
NGO, Public Sector, Development and Civil Society

Web:
Website launching in March

More info:
Patch-up SA Facebook

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The employment initiative by Patch-Up South Africa stands as a beacon of hope for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth. By providing meaningful employment opportunities and work experience, Patch-Up contributes to building a more inclusive and sustainable economy, aligning with the global commitment to leave no one behind.

Kagiso Mahlangu
Founder, Patch-Up South Africa

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Fostering sustainable community development

Patch-Up South Africa's impact is designed to address multifaceted challenges within communities by adopting a holistic approach. Our business strategy is closely aligned with sustainability, encompassing nutrition, healthcare, education, and economic empowerment. Recognising the pivotal role of nutrition in the wellbeing and functionality of beneficiaries, our focus for impact is centered on this essential foundation.

Our business strategy is intricately woven with sustainability, aiming not only to address immediate challenges, but also to empower communities for long-term resilience. The interconnection of nutrition, healthcare, education and economic empowerment serves as the backbone of our holistic approach, ensuring a comprehensive and enduring impact.

Top initiatives:

- SDG 1: No poverty
- SDG 2: Zero hunger
- SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing
- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Ambition: Holistic impact today, sustainable communities tomorrow

SUCCESS STORY: Empowering Youth and Transforming Communities

Patch-Up addressed the challenge of unemployment by implementing a solution focused on providing jobs and valuable work experience for over 40 youth. This initiative was deeply rooted in Patch-Up's mission to uplift and transform vulnerable communities. Through strategic employment opportunities, Patch-Up aimed to not only combat unemployment, but also to empower young individuals with the skills and experience necessary to thrive in the workforce.

As a result, the initiative successfully employed and empowered youth across various job functions, contributing to holistic community development. These employment opportunities not only provided individuals with a source of income, but also fostered positive growth within the community, creating pathways for sustainable economic development and societal progress.

Looking ahead, Patch-Up remains committed to ensuring the long-term impact of its initiatives. By creating a skilled workforce for the future, Patch-Up aims to address broader societal challenges and contribute to the overall wellbeing of South African communities. This commitment underscores Patch-Up's dedication to making a lasting difference in the lives of individuals and the communities they serve.

In conclusion, Patch-Up's employment initiative stands as a testament to its successful approach in combatting unemployment, transforming lives, and laying the groundwork for a more sustainable future in South African communities.

The stakeholders benefiting from this success include:

- Unemployed people and their families
- Local communities
- Sponsors
- South African government.

Through collaboration and collective effort, Patch-Up's impact extends far beyond individual employment opportunities, leaving a lasting legacy of positive change.

TOP RESULTS

66% women and youth employed by the organisation

3761 meals distributed to food insecure communities

400 substance users accessing healthcare services

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Pick n Pay

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

A legacy of quality and innovation

Embracing omnichannel sustainability

Over the past 56 years, the Pick n Pay Group has built a well-respected and sustainable business. We procure quality products at the best available prices and our operating model is supported by a strong and talented team. This enables us to provide our customers with a tailored range of high-quality food, grocery, omnichannel, liquor, clothing and general merchandise products at competitive prices.

As part of our omnichannel strategy, our offering now includes both scheduled and on-demand online offerings. The Group is actively operational using sustainable practices in its core activities, with an emphasis on fresh thinking and innovation, informed by a clear analysis of the significant risks and opportunities in creating a resilient business.

Industry:
Agriculture, Food Production and Retail

Web:
www.picknpayinvestor.co.za

More info:
ESG Performance Summary and Data book 2023

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We are repurposing organic waste as animal feed, effectively closing the loop on waste generation and consumption.

Steffen Burrows
Sustainability Manager, Pick n Pay

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Advancing Waste Management and Recycling Initiatives

In supporting the principles of a circular economy, our progress is underpinned by promoting the "avoid, reduce, re-use and recycle" waste management hierarchy. Our efforts are guided by our waste management policy.

A waste management dashboard introduced in 2021 helps us track our progress towards targets, including improving levels of recycling, increasing waste resource donations and reducing waste to landfills. We raise awareness with our employees on how to reduce waste in stores and have systems in place to collect recyclable material. We continue to expand recycling facilities at our stores where customers can deposit plastic bags and plastic containers, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), batteries and ink cartridges. Pick n Pay company-owned stores generated 26,025 tonnes of general waste in FY23 and recycled 43.9%. Our commitment to recycling extends to increasing the use of recycled materials in clothing products and store refurbishments.

We also partner with suppliers and customers to innovate and create a healthier planet free from unnecessary waste. In repurposing waste, our award-winning trolleys in stores are made from high-density polyethylene (PEHD) and consist of 50% post-consumer recycled material. To date, we have introduced a recycling vending machine in 7 stores. These units reward customers for recycling any recyclable waste product with a relevant barcode.

SUCCESS STORY: Pick n Pay's Circular Economy around Organic Waste

As a prominent food retailer on the African continent, the Pick n Pay Group acknowledges its responsibility to reduce its impact on the global food and agricultural system.

The Group has identified waste reduction, emission reduction and water efficiency as the primary focus for its sustainability strategy and has set the following KPIs:

- 50% reduction in food waste by 2030
- 75% diversion of general waste from landfill by 2025
- 20% reduction in water intensity by 2025
- Set science-based targets with SBTi by 2025

Pick n Pay has taken a proactive approach to waste diversion and emissions reduction, by forging a partnership with Farmer Angus, a local regenerative agriculture farmer, to divert inedible food waste from their operations. This project showcases a circular economy in action, as Pick n Pay also stocks Farmer Angus products in their stores. By redirecting food waste from landfills, this initiative not only repurposes discarded items, but also curbs the emission of harmful greenhouse gases that result from the natural decomposition of organic waste in landfills. This project fosters a win-win situation by strengthening ties with a local farmer and exemplifying the advantages of a circular economy.

Benefiting Stakeholders:

- Farmer Angus
- Spier
- Pick n Pay

Organic waste diversion initiatives are regionally specific and require partners and solutions in close proximity to the waste. This initiative in Stellenbosch will provide a blueprint to rollout organic waste diversion projects in other regions.

TOP RESULTS

4.5 tonnes CO^2 saved per month

2.1 tonnes waste diverted from landfill weekly

3-way partnership between PnP, Farmer Angus and waste service provider

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Redefine PROPERTIES

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Opting for the Upside

Embracing complexity: Navigating towards a 10-year vision

In an ever-changing world, real estate companies face an increasing barrage of competing pressures, with short-term demands clashing with long-term goals. As the complexities evolve, we remain inspired by our mission – in this decade to deliver the smartest and most sustainable spaces the world has ever known. This is an embodiment of our purpose and is brought to life through strategic pathways that flow throughout our business. These pathways enable the realisation of our vision and, ultimately, the delivery of our purpose, which is to manage spaces in a way that transforms people's lives.

We know that this bold goal will require more from us than ever before. Harnessing the power of our purpose to lead our people has allowed us to navigate and embrace these complexities and work daily to deliver on our strategic priorities.

Industry:
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

Web:
www.redefine.co.za

More info:
Environmental, Social and Governance Report 2022

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These initiatives are making it clear that a mall is not just for shopping and refreshing outings. Maponya Mall, however, is here to help you connect with other members of the community, as well as helping you sustain your family and more especially assist progress in your personal and professional development.

Anelisa Keke
Chief Sustainability Office

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Fostering youth empowerment and SME (Small and Midsize Enterprise) development

A multiyear partnership was created between Redefine and Afrika Tikkun to focus on our youth sector interventions. The Hub facility at Maponya Mall was launched and held on 8 March 2023.

- 500 youth (training) – YTD 1055 directly impacted, of which 133 are in enrolled in Retail, IT and YAP programmes.
- 50 SMME's (Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise) (upskilling) – YTD 341 SMMEs in our database made use of the facility for meetings and/or workshops.
- 25 NPOs (training and upskilling): YTD 137 of which 22 are enrolled for a local fundraising and mobilising support training programme and 115 in our database make use of the facility as an information hub.

SUCCESS STORY: Maponya Mall Community Hub

The Challenge Convention at Maponya Mall included two conventions and a series of work groups and forums for the youth, NPOs and SMMEs.

The convention highlighted the need for skills programmes and facilities to encourage greater collaboration and information sharing among NPOs, SMMEs and the youth. We focus on addressing these needs through our CSI initiatives at the mall.

Objectives for the Maponya Mall Community Hub:

Provide access to information: A centralised place for the community to access information on facilities, services and opportunities to promote inclusion and economic activity.
Stimulate economic activity: Enable economic development through skills and technological improvements, space for meetings to facilitate collaboration and a space to provide training and skills to youth, SMMEs and entrepreneurs.
Build capacity: Identify, nurture and develop talent through educational training, access to bursaries, and skills development through partner collaborations.
Develop sustainable partnerships: Forge and strengthen sustainable partnerships within the community to ensure that solutions to problems are community-led and there is long-term sustainable social change.

With the selection of 35 candidates for the second cohort of the Youth Accelerator Programme, coupled with recent impactful community engagement events, significant strides in youth empowerment and community development are underway, including:

- 38 young people participated in the Work Readiness assessment process, 11 managed to pass the assessment and will be enrolled at Afrika Tikkun's training centre in Braamfontein.
- On 7 September 2023 African Bank (Pty) Ltd held its Annual Enterprise Supplier Development National Business Summit that was attended by 59 community members.
- On Saturday the 26th of September, the Hub successfully hosted an SMME training workshop in partnership with the Lora Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. A total of 45 SMMEs and 4 NGOs attended the workshop and will receive a certification for their participation in the workshop.

TOP RESULTS

325 individuals impacted directly

8 jobs created or people employed as a results

3348 number of individuals surveyed or engaged with

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Sanlam

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Sanlam revolutionises finance for a brighter future

Sanlam offers global financial services, specializing in insurance and wealth management, with a focus on empowering generations to be financially confident, secure and prosperous.

We blend groundbreaking financial solutions with a genuine focus on our people, their families, local communities, our clients and the world at large. Our diverse range of competitive financial services, coupled with forward-thinking options, play a role in fostering a sustainable and resilient world.

With our people at the core of our operations, we employ innovative practices and cutting-edge technologies to deliver secure and efficient financial services, ensuring safety and sustainability in every aspect of our work.

Industry:
Financial Services and FinTech

Web:
www.sanlam.co.za

More info:
Sustainability Report 2023

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Our commitment to sustainability excellence is a journey, not a destination. It is about collaborating with partners, stakeholders, and communities to achieve a sustainable environmental, social, and economic impacts.

Our dedication extends to supporting transformative initiatives that positively impact lives and enhance community resilience against challenges like poverty, education and climate change.

Abel Sakhau
Chief Sustainability Officer, Sanlam Group

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Integrated Sustainability Framework with core foundations and local strategies

Sanlam recognises the importance of environmental sustainability and resilience, with a comprehensive sustainability strategy with clearly defined strategic focus areas:

- Financial strength, resilience and consistent performance.
- Trust and Reputation
- Financial Inclusion
- Investing for good in people and planet
- Partnerships
- Thought leadership

Our sustainability strategy is designed to contribute to the UN SDGs, recognised as crucial for promoting economic and sustainable growth. These SDGs serve as the foundation for our long-term value creation strategy and guide our short to medium-term strategies.

The following are some of the initiatives implemented by Sanlam that contribute to the priority SDGs:

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	• Group health offerings through Afrocentric. • Improved culture score and turnover rate.
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	• Launch of an education programme endorsed by the Minister of Basic Education of South Africa.
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	• Workplace policies to address and prevent discrimination. • Hybrid working model in place. • Minimum living wage.
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	• Increasing financial inclusion through accessible and affordable products and channels. • Level 1 B-BBEE status in South Africa. • Awarded Top Employer in South Africa for eight consecutive years.
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	• Collaboration with municipalities through the Partnership for Risk and Resilience (P4RR). • Funds directed towards infrastructure.
13 CLIMATE ACTION	• GHG target reduction of 10% by 2025. • Key participant in the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) initiative and the Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) pilot.
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	• Partnership with WWF-SA, integrating nature-based solutions, drive investment in ecological infrastructure and help improve risk management and disclosure around biodiversity issues.

SUCCESS STORY: Empowering futures and transforming lives

- We develop innovative and affordable financial solutions to bridge the insurance and investment gap, this is a testament to our commitment to financial inclusion.
- Since its inception in 2011, the Sanlam Foundation has invested R746m in support of development in education, financial literacy, health, water security, enterprise and supplier development initiatives and staff volunteerism.
- R24,6 billion was invested in Empowerment financing.
- Sanlam invested in excess of R12 billion to help build sustainable cities through long-term sustainable infrastructure projects throughout South Africa over the past decade.
- The launch of the Sanlam SANParks Rural SMME fund which has provided R10 million interest-free funding to local micro enterprises from which SANParks procures goods and services.

TOP RESULTS

62% Women employee

R139m CSI spend in 2023

56% black representation at board level

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

sasol

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Navigating the future with purpose and Impact

Pioneering a net-zero future through purpose-driven strategies and stakeholder value

Sasol is a prominent global chemicals and energy company and is deeply committed to purpose-driven initiatives and resolutely navigating the transition towards sustainability, all while fostering shared value for our stakeholders.

Our holistic sustainability approach seamlessly integrates environmental, social and economic considerations, prioritising them based on their material impact. Anchored by the three pillars of sustainability – People, Planet and Profit – Sasol aligns its strategy and business activities with the broader goals of sustainable development. With over 70 years of expertise in the production and marketing of fuels and chemicals, we remain steadfast in our commitment to sustainability, actively working towards our ambitious goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.drdgold.com

More info:
Sustainability Report Library
Climate Change Report 2023

©Global Compact Network South Africa

Sustainability is core to our future Sasol strategy. Our commitment to fulfilling the objectives of the Ten Principles and the Sustainable Development Goals contributes to ensuring that we continuously progress toward becoming more sustainable. Viewed through the People, Planet and Profit framework, progress can only be made through embracing collaboration and partnerships, which remain constant on our path to sustainability.

Johan Thyse
Vice President Sustainability and Reporting

IMPACT SUMMARY

Fostering sustainable well-being and socio-economic impact

Our community environmental programme is strategically designed with the overarching objective of enhancing the overall quality of life within the community. It aims to facilitate better access to community services and improved health outcomes linked to environmental risks. Additionally, the programme is geared towards providing valuable support to learners, educators and the broader community, fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate connection between the environment, economic opportunities and our inherent dependency on the environment.

SUCCESS STORY: Comprehensive environmental action

Our environmental programme is not just focused within our facilities, but also our communities. Here we play a catalytic role in education, street clean-up, waste collections and recycling in Govan Mbeki and Metsimaholo Local Municipalities.

In FY23, we:

- **Energy-efficiency Industrial Company of the Year:** Awarded by The South African Energy Efficiency Confederation (SAEEC) for implementing simple solutions for complex operations. Sasol committed in 2005 to the South African Energy Accord aiming for 30% improved energy productivity by 2030.
- **Green hydrogen:** By March 2023, Sasolburg produced first volumes of green hydrogen from existing facilities. A key development to ultimately achieving the scaled production from renewable energy sources, progressing our post-2030 vision to catalyse a green hydrogen economy.
- **House-to-house education and awareness:** Successfully reached and engaged with a substantial 3,769 households through comprehensive house-to-house education and awareness campaigns.
- **School-based environmental education:** Conducted educational programmes at five schools in eMbalenhle, Secunda and Lebohang to enlighten students and foster awareness on critical environmental issues such as waste management, water conservation, air quality, biodiversity and sustainable food systems.
- **Tree planting initiatives:** Contributed to environmental sustainability by planting a total of 1,350 spekboom, 200 indigenous trees and six fruit trees in strategic locations including Leandra, Kinross, Bethal and Charl Cilliers.
- **Recyclable waste collection:** Accomplished an impressive feat by collecting a substantial 120,139 tons of recyclable waste, further contributing to our commitment to responsible waste management.
- **Illegal dumpsite transformation:** Transformed 12 illegal dump sites into productive and environmentally friendly food gardens in the Metsimaholo Municipality, promoting a cleaner and greener community.
- **Water-saving project implementation:** Executed a water-saving project aimed at raising awareness and cultivating water-saving behaviors within Metsimaholo communities.

Global Compact Network South Africa

TOP RESULTS

R857,3m social investment spend FY2023

13,9% energy efficiency improvement FY2023

7,2% total non-hazardous waste decreased FY22

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

we are one Sibanye Stillwater

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Sibanye Stillwater

To be a leader in superior shared value for all stakeholders

Sibanye-Stillwater is a multinational mining and metals processing group with a diverse portfolio of operations, projects and investments across five continents. The Group is also one of the foremost global recyclers of PGM autocatalysts and has interests in leading mine tailings retreatment operations.

Sibanye-Stillwater has established itself as one of the world's largest primary producers of platinum, palladium and rhodium and is a top tier gold producer. It also produces and refines iridium and ruthenium, nickel, chrome, copper and cobalt. The Group has recently begun to diversify its asset portfolio into battery metals mining and processing and increase its presence in the circular economy by growing its recycling and tailings reprocessing exposure globally.

Industry:
Mining, Natural Gas and Resources

Web:
www.sibanyestillwater.com

More info:
Annual Report 2022

©Global Compact Network South Africa

"There is no excuse for abuse. Sibanye-Stillwater has ZERO tolerance for harassment which comes in many different forms. Extending GBV training and awareness beyond our operating boundaries is equally important."

Fatima Collins
Project lead: Women of Sibanye-Stillwater

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Three-dimensional approach to global impact and business excellence

Sibanye-Stillwater has a three-dimensional strategy. Our strategic foundation defines the impact we aspire to make in the global economy and in local societies. As part of our strategic essentials to maintain business excellence is ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) embedded as the way we do business. The strategic differentiators represents the opportunities that we have identified to be distinctive in the global minerals industry. To be recognised as a force for good and being inclusive, diverse and bionic are two of our differentiator factors.

Our sustainability strategic themes supports the three-dimensional strategy and is anchored in our commitments to the SDGs.

- SDG 5 Embedding human rights and ethics: Inside and out
- SDG 13 Develop climate resilience
- SDG 15 Entrenching long term economic sustainability
- SDG 16 Data driven and considered Decisionmaking

Our themes and SDG anchors defines our ESG long-term incentive plans for executives.

SUCCESS STORY: Gender Based Violence a company-community focus

In 2022, the company took significant strides by initiating comprehensive training and education programmes targeting GBV and substance abuse. These programmes recognise the profound impact of such issues on local communities, especially among vulnerable groups such as girls, women and the youth. Sibanye-Stillwater's approach goes beyond conventional interventions, aiming to empower local faith-based leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to actively engage and address these pressing social challenges.

More than 71 churches in the Marikana and Rustenburg areas have actively participated in the programme. To date, 86 faith-based leaders have completed the training and all are already implementing positive changes within their local churches, clinics and schools. 71 churches have been designated as GBV support centres as an outcome of this programme. This community-driven approach is instrumental in creating a safer and more supportive environment, aligning with Sibanye-Stillwater's commitment to social responsibility.

The company has continued its anti-sexual harassment campaigns and has incorporated anti-sexual harassment training into its induction programmes. Moreover, GBV reporting and referral centres have been established at its South African operations, complemented by the launch of a dedicated GBV reporting platform. These measures underscore the company's dedication to creating a workplace free from gender-based violence, promoting a culture of reporting and accountability.

In acknowledgment of the unique challenges faced by women in predominantly male-dominated environments, Sibanye-Stillwater has instituted a Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Council. This council plays a pivotal role in promoting a more inclusive work environment, fostering diversity and ensuring that the company remains at the forefront of creating positive social change.

Through these multifaceted initiatives, Sibanye-Stillwater is not only addressing immediate concerns, but also actively contributing to the broader social fabric. By empowering faith-based leaders and integrating community-driven strategies, the company is building a foundation for lasting change.

TOP RESULTS

31% women on our Board

27 faith-based leaders completed training to address GBV in communities

67% of new appointments were local recruits in 2022.

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

UMGENI WATER · AMANZI

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Strengthening sustainability

Pioneering balanced sustainable water and waste-water services

UMngeni-uThukela Water 's (UUW) core mandate is the provision of bulk water and wastewater services in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.
UMngeni-uThukela Water has in place an integrated strategy espoused through a balanced scorecard that serves as the entity's value creation model to demonstrate its contribution to sustainable development.
This Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which traverses one aspect of sustainable development, serves as the blueprint for UUW to promote effective management and conservation of natural resources, upon which it crucially depends to achieve sustainable growth and development.

Industry:
Electricity, Water, Infrastructure and Real Estate

Web:
www.umgeni.co.za

More info:

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UMngeni-uThukela Water is committed to doing business in a sustainable manner and part of that is ensuring that sustainability is embedded into the DNA of the organization.

By integrating sustainability into the core business strategy, operations and Decisionmaking processes, we create lasting value for society, the environment and future generations while ensuring enduring prosperity and relevance.

Thobekile Gambu
Environmental Scientist

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Driving Environmental Sustainability

One of UUW's core values is environmental sustainability. We are committed to the sustainable use of our diminishing natural resources. We have ensured the integration of sustainability into our corporate strategy by ensuring the integration of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) linked to sustainability. Initiatives are aggregated into 12 priority areas which are mapped to the sustainable development goals.

UUW faces a number of challenges regarding the implementation of sustainability initiatives and these are mostly related to:

- Financial constraints.
- Supply chain challenges.
- Adequate by-in at all levels.

Key initiatives that UUW is leveraging to act on the 2030 agenda include:

- The biodiversity management programme which addresses the threat of alien invasive plants, particularly aquatic weeds, which jeopardise water quality and quantity. The organisation implements interventions both upstream and at dams operated by UUW, partnering with community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, and the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Environment.
- Integrating renewable energy, diversifying its energy sources for sustainability. Feasibility studies for hydropower, solar and waste-to-energy have been completed, although challenges hinder implementation. Solutions include exploring power purchase agreements and public-private partnerships.

- Hydropower: The Mooi-Mgeni Transfer Scheme (MMTS) was constructed to augment water resource of the Mgeni System.
- The scheme requires significant pumping and much of the potential energy required to lift the water is dissipated at the Mpofana outfall. A hydropower unit at the Mpofana outfall could harness this "wasted" energy and offset the energy cost that drives the pump sets at Spring Grove Dam.

SUCCESS STORY: Alien invasive plants management programme

Well-managed and sustainable water resources are critical to UUW's core function of providing sustainable potable water supply. The threat of alien invasive plants, particularly aquatic weeds, jeopardises water quality and quantity. To ensure the effective management of these invasives, UUW through its subsidiary, Msinsi Holdings SOC Ltd, initiated a programme for the eradication of invasives. This programme aimed to not only eradicate invasives, but also to reduce unemployment and alleviate poverty through the creation of work opportunities. The number of jobs created was 497 with over 700 hectares cleared of invasive species. Partners of the programme include:

- community based organisations.
- non-governmental organisations.
- non-profit organizations and the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Environment.

TOP RESULTS

497 temporary jobs created

722.9h cleared of invasive plants

5MW planned hydro power planned

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

vodacom

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Inclusion for all

Fostering sustainable and inclusive value: Vodacom's integrated approach to ESG management

While we cannot remedy all societal challenges on our own, we believe that responsibly and ethically executing our strategy, which focuses on our core capabilities and the role of technology and connectivity in promoting equality, can contribute to creating sustainable and inclusive value across our African footprint. Effectively managing ESG matters is pivotal for sustainable and inclusive value and calls for an integrated approach. This is why at Vodacom, ESG is not a distinct strategy or set of activities separate from our daily management of the business. Managing ESG opportunities and risks is interwoven with our business model. With this approach comes the need to build sound stakeholder relationships guided by the three core principles of our Social Contract – trust, fairness and leadership. Our ESG framework illustrates how ESG activities are embedded into our purpose-led strategy and how we operate.

Industry:
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

Web:
www.vodacom.com

More info:
Our Social Contract 2023

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Vodacom's holistic ecosystem for sustainable learning

Vodacom's education ecosystem approach supports government in delivering on its Education Vision: 2030. The ecosystem supports the provision of quality education considering all levels of education, from early childhood development (ECD) to adult education. It encompasses learners, teachers, parents and communities and comprises of 27 ECD centres, 25 schools of excellence and 9 youth academies where our holistic and comprehensive approach is to support the development of curricula, provide connectivity and computer centres and upgrade infrastructure and security at these school.

The purpose of Vodacom's education ecosystem is to provide comprehensive support to educators and learners in under-serviced communities and by doing so we are responding to some of the most pressing needs in society.

SUCCESS STORY:
Community empowerment through quality education

In a world that is increasingly shaped by digital advancements, quality education stands as a fundamental driver of empowerment and opportunity. Acknowledging this, Vodacom has launched a mission to revolutionise education and uplift communities throughout South Africa through a series of impactful endeavours. At the core of Vodacom's initiatives lies an unwavering dedication to ensuring that every community is included in the educational landscape. Leveraging 86 community development centres as hubs of technology, Vodacom has introduced digital skills training at the grassroots level. Over 2,600 female farmers have gained essential digital competencies, while more than 1,500 youth academy learners have undergone ICT training, laying the groundwork for future generations to flourish in the digital era. Yet, Vodacom's influence transcends skills development.

Since 2018, over 195 unemployed youth have been enlisted from the youth academy alumni and deployed to schools of excellence, non-profit organisations, and community development centres, serving as catalysts for inspiration and transformation in their communities. In furtherance of their commitment to empowerment, Vodacom has established partnerships to equip youth academy graduates with entrepreneurial skills through collaborations with the Innovator Trust. Moreover, initiatives such as #CodeLikeAGirl have empowered over 4,000 girls in South Africa with coding skills, dismantling barriers and nurturing inclusivity in the tech sector.

Vodacom's commitment to quality education embodies a vision of empowerment, inclusion, and opportunity. The Vodacom Foundation e-Learning platform has reached over 1.4 million users, offering free and unlimited internet access to digital curriculum aligned with educational standards. Additionally, 25 university and 58 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) college websites have been zero-rated, giving learners free access to learning material.

Vodacom has played a pivotal role in enhancing school leadership and teacher training. Collaborating with the Department of Basic Education, Microsoft, and other partners, Vodacom has trained teachers on integrating ICT into the classroom, empowering educators to harness technology for enhanced learning experiences.

Vodacom placed 36 psychosocial support professionals across all provinces, reaching >26 000 learners across 42 schools.

The professionals support educators and learners to address issues of violence, bullying and GBV in schools. To compliment the work of the psychosocial support professionals, Vodacom launched Digi-Parenting, providing parents with the tools and knowledge to create safe digital environments for their children.

> **It is important that we support a safe, inclusive environment conducive to promoting lifelong learning. Strong evidence links inclusive ECD care and education with well-being and learning success throughout life.**
>
> **Taki Netshitenzhe**
> Director of External Affairs, Vodacom

TOP RESULTS

>R1.4 million
registered on the e-Learning platform

R.6bn on CSI since 1999

27 Early Childhood Development Centres and 25 Schools of Excellence

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

vodacom

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Digital society

Democratising internet connectivity

Vodacom pledged to invest R60 billion in South Africa over the next five years, having delivered on its promise to invest R50 billion over five years in 2018. This latest substantial investment is expected to contribute significantly to enhancing network resilience to keep customers connected, further accelerating Vodacom's deep rural coverage programme to help bridge the digital divide. The announcement was made at the fifth South Africa Investment Conference in 2023.

Industry:
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

Web:
www.vodacom.com

More info:
Our Social Contract 2023

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"We passionately believe in creating a better future for the communities we serve. We hope that we can lead by example, encouraging other organizations to actively invest in a future where good business and doing good are synonymous."

Sitho Mdlalose
CEO, Vodacom South Africa

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Driving sustainable impact

A digital society realises the benefits of communication, facilitates inclusion and enables access to other services through digital technology. We acknowledge the digital divide in South Africa and believe that to benefit from a digital society, we must drive inclusion.

SUCCESS STORY: Bridging digital divides and enhancing financial inclusion

Vodacom believes in the power of connectivity and digital services to strengthen the resilience of economies. Through their mobile and fixed networks, data flows at speed, connecting people and communities.

Affordable data solutions: Vodacom's EveryDay-Ta bundles and Just4YouTown initiatives are redefining affordability and accessibility in data and voice services. By offering significant value through tailored data bundles and identifying impoverished areas for targeted offerings, Vodacom ensures that every South African, regardless of socio-economic background, can stay connected and informed.

Smartphone penetration and digital inclusion: Recognising the pivotal role of technology in bridging educational divides, Vodacom has introduced affordable 4G smart feature phones and revamped platforms like NXT LVL. These initiatives provide young people with opportunities to connect, learn and earn, fostering digital literacy and empowering the next generation of leaders.

Youth empowerment and job creation: The Vodacom Get-a-Gig initiative and support packages for job seekers underscore Vodacom's commitment to addressing youth unemployment. By leveraging technology and partnerships, Vodacom is not only connecting millions of youth to job opportunities but also equipping them with the skills and resources needed to thrive in the digital economy.

Health solutions and government efficiency: Through its subsidiary Mezzanine, Vodacom is driving innovation in healthcare with solutions like mVacciNation and eLABS, revolutionising vaccine administration and pathology laboratory operations.

Empowering SMEs: Vodacom supports SMEs with tailored data packages like Business Tickets, ensuring connectivity and productivity. Through the Innovator Trust, it empowers ICT SMEs and young entrepreneurs, providing vital skills and financial assistance. With preferential payment terms and early payments, Vodacom injects over R2.5 billion into SME procurement, fostering financial sustainability. Additionally, it invests in supplier development, upskilling, and diversity initiatives, driving inclusive growth in South Africa's tech ecosystem.

Providing platforms for financial inclusion: Globally, 2 billion people remain unbanked. Many people, especially women, still lack access to financial services. Digital services are key to helping people access safe, secure financial services. Without the ability to transfer money, people battle to save, access loans, start a business and get paid. Financial inclusion is necessary to reduce poverty. We work with various licensed banking and financial services providers to enable people in remote areas to access payments, loans and savings on their mobile devices.

TOP RESULTS

R60bn pledged to be invested in South Africa over the next 5 years

>2.5bn spent on SME procurement and R1 bn in early payments (to 180 black-owned SMEs)

7.6million downloads and 4.1 million customers completing the wallet registration process on the VodaPay super-app

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

vodacom

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Guiding Principles for Positive Impact

We connect for a better future

Our sustainability strategy is underpinned by our purpose pillars (Digital society, Inclusion for all and Planet), our Social Contract and our responsible business practices – all of which form our sustainability framework.

This enables us to manage sustainability risks and deliver positive impact through sustainability-related opportunities.

Industry:
Telecommunication, ICT, Education and Media

Web:
www.vodacom.com

More info:
Our Social Contract 2023

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Planet

Business success should not come at a cost to the environment. Vodacom's view is that the only way we can create a sustainable future is when good business and the acts of doing good are aligned, and are collaborative efforts, be that with society, our employees, or other corporates and stakeholders

SUCCESS STORY:
Optimised, future ready TechCo

Collaborative Efforts for a Greener TomorrowVodacom acknowledges that combating climate change requires collaborative efforts involving both the private sector and government entities. By engaging with partners and stakeholders, Vodacom seeks to find innovative solutions to reduce its carbon footprint and promote circularity.

We continue to engage with private sector partners and governments to find solutions to reduce our carbon footprint.

Virtual Wheeling: Innovating Energy ConsumptionOne of Vodacom's initiatives is the Virtual Wheeling mechanism, developed in collaboration with Eskom, South Africa's national energy provider. This innovative approach allows Vodacom to wheel privately generated renewable energy to its network sites, thereby reducing reliance on traditional fossil fuels. The Virtual Wheeling Agreement, signed in August 2023, marks a significant milestone in Vodacom's journey towards sustainability, enabling the procurement of renewable energy through a digital platform accessible to all corporates in South Africa.

The virtual wheeling platform pilot project with Eskom exemplifies this collaborative approach, offering a scalable solution for clean energy production and increased power generation.

Vodacom's proactive approach to climate action sets a powerful example for the telecommunications industry and beyond. Through innovation, collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to sustainability, Vodacom is driving positive change and paving the way towards a greener, more sustainable world.

Eco-village at Midrand Campus: Harnessing Renewable Energy
Vodacom's commitment to sustainability is further exemplified by the 'Eco-village' concept at its Midrand campus. Through the installation of solar panels, the campus is set to generate approximately 11GWh of renewable electricity annually, significantly reducing carbon emissions. Additionally, the campus features a solar-powered Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station and a recycling pod for waste collection. By repurposing organic waste into compost for campus gardens, Vodacom demonstrates a holistic approach to sustainability that encompasses energy efficiency and waste management.

These efforts are not motivated by meeting sustainability targets only, as proven by Vodacom's principal membership to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which it secured in 2010. Through this alliance, Vodacom has partnered with the WWF-SA branch to use technology to promote ocean literacy and marine conservation.

"As a purpose-led company we believe that urgent and sustained action is required to address climate change and that business success should not come at a cost to the environment. Our view is that together we can create a future where good business and doing good are the same thing."

Taki Netshitenzhe
Director of External Affairs, Vodacom

TOP RESULTS

10.8GWh renewable electricity on completion of Midrand solar project

74% reduction in water consumption since 2017

WWF Partnership strengthened through a 3-year partnership agreement

PRIORITY SDGS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Xperien

VNR 2024 SUCCESS STORY

Committed to Sustainable IT Management

Empowering Businesses Towards a Greener Future

At Xperien, we lead the charge in sustainable IT management, prioritising equipment longevity and repurposing retired hardware for a circular economy in line with UN SDG 12. Through our IT Asset Disposal (ITAD) services, we ensure maximum ROI for organisations while reducing e-waste and promoting eco-friendly practices. Sustainability is at the core of our mission as we redefine corporate technology management, introducing ethical initiatives to minimise environmental impact.

With our dedicated team committed to preserving the planet's resources, we drive positive change in the IT industry, reshaping how businesses approach hardware disposal. Xperien is proud to be a driving force in creating a greener, more sustainable future for all.

Industry:
Financial Services and FinTech

Web:
www.xperien.co.za

More info:
Xperien ESG Report 2022 - Sea Edition

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"With highly trained staff and state-of-the-art facilities, Xperien guarantees efficient and dependable service, enabling businesses to focus on their core operations with peace of mind, while also minimising the environmental impact of their IT asset disposal activities."

Wale Arewa
CEO, Xperien

IMPACT SUMMARY

Global Compact Network South Africa

Leading the Charge in Secure and Sustainable IT Asset Disposal

In the digital age, businesses face the challenge of managing obsolete IT equipment responsibly. Xperien addresses this by providing end-to-end IT asset disposal solutions that prioritise security and sustainability, aligning with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals. With a commitment to data security, Xperien ensures compliance with industry standards and regulations like NIST800-88 and POPIA, safeguarding against financial and legal liabilities. By emphasising environmental sustainability, Xperien reduces electronic waste and minimises emissions, contributing to a circular economy. Through comprehensive services and customer-centric approaches, Xperien earns the trust of businesses nationwide, positioning itself as a leader in IT asset disposal while promoting a greener, more sustainable future.

SUCCESS STORY:
Eco-Friendly IT Asset Management

We take proactive steps to combat climate change by extending the lifespan of your IT assets, participating in the circular economy, and supporting SDG 12 for responsible consumption. Reusing IT equipment not only reduces our carbon footprint but also conserves energy and mineral resources used in manufacturing.

At Xperien, we specialise in creating re-use programs that align with your environmental impact objectives. We refurbish end-of-life IT equipment, extending their lifecycle by up to 10 years. This can be achieved through:

- Redeploying equipment within your enterprise, minimising the need for new purchases.
- Reusing equipment for community projects, enhancing our social impact.
- Remarketing and recovering residual value, reducing Total Cost of Ownership (TCO).

We minimise our ecological footprint by responsibly managing electronic e-waste, a rapidly growing waste stream. Making an impactful environmental change involves adopting waste management solutions that ensure proper disposal.

Xperien adheres to certified ITAD processes that prevent IT assets from contributing to pollution while complying with environmental legislation. Electronic waste recycling recovers valuable mineral resources and reduces the need for resource-intensive mining, supporting SDGs 14(Life below water) and SDG 15 (Life on land). We also advocate for RoHS-compliant equipment, which restricts the use of hazardous materials.

We amplify our social impact by developing a Corporate Social Investment program, addressing inequalities in alignment with SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities). Donating used IT hardware to disadvantaged communities bridges the digital divide and promotes quality education in compliance with SDG 4 (Quality education).

TOP RESULTS

70 kWh of energy is generated from a solar installation consisting of 166 panels.

-26,500,000kg CO^2
saved from emission by reusing 120,000 IT Hardware devices 2023

PRIORITY SDGS

Acknowledgments

The Private Sector Contribution for South Africa's 2024 Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals reviews the progress made by the South African private sector since the first South African Voluntary National Review in 2019. The review comes at the midway point in the lifecycle of the 2030 Agenda, which was resolved upon by the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives of the United Nations in 2015. The report is published at a time when the fundamental SDG principles of social inclusion and cross-sector cooperation, responsible consumption and production, and universal access to quality education and clean energy are needed more than ever at local, regional, and global levels.

The report was commissioned by the South African Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation and delivered by the Global Compact Network South Africa, which engaged Empanda, a UNGC participating company, to facilitate the writing process in cooperation with Business Unity South Africa, the National Business Initiatives, the South African Mining Council, and Business Leadership South Africa, who contributed research materials and engaged with their memberships to gather inputs for the report under the overall supervision of Rethabile Mbokodi and Christy Kirkpatrick. The report was generously sponsored by Absa and Anglo American South Africa.

The report combines data and analyses given by participating companies and organisations during online round-table sessions, as well as research deliverables contributed by subject matter experts and strategic partners. It also leverages company integrated reports and UNGC Communication of Progress reports, which are also available in the public domain.

We also thank the GCNSA Board for their commitment and support of this initiative, as well as the National Planning Commission and Africa Monitor, with whom the private sector collaborated in order to balance the private sector research with information arising from public sector structures, StatsSA, and civil society organisations including organised labour, community-based organisations, and non-governmental organisations operating beyond the auspices of the private sector.

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NBI National Business Initiative

BUSA Business Unity South Africa

Business Leadership South Africa

Minerals Council South Africa

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Global Compact
Network South Africa

ABOUT THE GLOBAL COMPACT NETWORK SOUTH AFRICA

The Global Compact Network South Africa is a business-led platform working to scale and accelerate the collective impact of business by delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals, the National Development Plan and the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact.