

May 2017

Aligning Your Citizenship Strategy to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Have you been tasked with addressing how your company supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

Are you hoping to connect and align your corporate citizenship efforts to a shared global strategy to put your activities in context and amplify your impact?

It's been about a year and a half since the SDGs – a set of 17 goals such as No Poverty (#1), Quality Education (#4), and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (#16) and 169 associated targets – were adopted as a part of the UN's *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. In the time since, leading corporate citizens have begun to tackle the challenge of aligning their citizenship work to the SDGs.



While the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are intended to provide a shared global framework for addressing society's greatest challenges, they are in no way a one-size-fits-all roadmap for action. **In fact, upon first scanning those 17 goals and 169 targets, which range from reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases to significantly increasing the exports of developing countries, figuring out how to align your company's efforts can feel like an overwhelming task.**

Below, we outline key steps and tips for how to approach this challenge, gleaned from best-in-class examples of corporate alignment to the SDGs, and overlaying these with our own insights and experience working directly with companies on designing and evolving their corporate citizenship strategies.

OUR ROADMAP:



KNOW YOUR COMPANY

- **Understand your objective:** There are a number of reasons why companies may wish to align to the SDGs and a range of approaches you may take. When beginning this exercise for your company, it's important to understand where on the spectrum you fall, from mapping your existing efforts to the SDGs for reporting purposes, to leveraging the SDGs to entirely evolve your strategy (or design a new one). Where you fall on this spectrum will dictate the lens you apply to subsequent steps:

	MAP	ALIGN	EVOLVE
OBJECTIVE	Respond to expectations for reporting against SDGs.	Leverage the SDGs to adjust an established strategy and ensure programs align to a global impact framework.	Leverage the SDGs to inform the design of a new strategy or significant evolution of an established one.
APPROACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on how existing programs and activities contribute to the SDGs • An exercise in collecting information, evidence and data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine existing programs relative to their most closely related SDGs • Adjust approaches and measurement to better align to the SDGs • May lead to tweaks in program goals and measurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate your overall strategy and programs relative to the SDGs • Identify opportunities to better align to the SDGs, including evolving overarching strategy and programs • May lead to a new strategic plan and the prioritization of key initiatives aligned to the SDGs

- **Assess current efforts as they relate to the SDGs:** Regardless of your objective, you'll need to start with an understanding of the SDGs and their targets and a rough idea of where your company may align. Start by reviewing the SDGs; select the goals and targets where you believe your company may have activities and impacts which align. Bucket these activities by business unit and collect information from the relevant "owners" at your company to better understand the programs and results that exist in these areas.

TIP: Don't neglect to think beyond philanthropic and community involvement programs; certainly, your philanthropic programs (and which SDGs they relate to) should be a starting place, but also consider other business units as well (e.g., Human Resources may have an initiative which supports goal #5, Gender Equality). The following diagram depicts some of the business functions, beyond philanthropy, which companies commonly map to the SDGs.



- **Take advantage of the opportunity to extend the reach of your work across the company.** As the chart above suggests, the SDGs are broad-reaching and touch upon many areas of business which may not fall within the direct authority or purview of corporate citizenship or your department. Whatever your eventual goal, you will benefit from connecting with leaders and business units across the company, helping them understand your work and how it connects to the core business strategy. Leverage meetings with internal stakeholders to:
 - **Build buy-in/support:** Have you struggled to establish leadership support? Use this process to demonstrate how peers, competitors and best-in-class companies are focusing on citizenship and aligning to the SDGs.
 - **Connect across the business:** Talk to other departments who previously didn't understand their contribution to the company's corporate citizenship strategy; use the relevant SDG targets to demonstrate how they relate and pave the path for future collaboration.

CHOOSE A FOCUS

- **Identify and prioritize the SDGs and targets that present the greatest alignment to your business and/or your citizenship goals.** While your company's operations and activities, current and future, may technically allow you to touch on all 17 SDGs, you should select a more focused set of priorities to dedicate the majority of your effort and focus toward. As with many things in life, quality over quantity is a good rule of thumb here. Select the SDGs and targets which best align to your business' strengths, assets and priorities. You can still report on what you do in other areas, but use the 80:20 rule and focus 80% of your time and resources on impact and reporting within the 20% of the universe where you can make the greatest impact and tell the strongest story.

Check out [Pearson's 2015 Sustainability Report](#) for a look at how the company narrowed its focus to Goals 4, 8 and 10.

We aligned our business strategy to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



We identified the three goals where we can have the most impact.



4 Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

How Pearson aligns with the intent of this goal:

As a fundamental human right and a driver of economic and social progress, education underpins the achievement of all 17 goals. The education goal and corresponding

targets closely align with Pearson's mission, our capabilities, and our public commitment to delivering access, success, and progress for more learners.



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

How Pearson aligns with the intent of this goal:

We deliver products and services that ensure learners acquire the knowledge and capabilities they need for employment and empowerment, working in close collaboration with governments, educators, employers, and others around the world.

We aim to provide our own employees with a healthy, fulfilling, and inclusive workplace that recognizes their contributions and provides opportunities for advancement, and we encourage our suppliers to do the same.



10 Reduce inequality within and among countries.

How Pearson aligns with the intent of this goal:

We strive to develop inclusive products and ways of learning that are compatible with every learner's needs, and available at appropriate and affordable prices. In our interactions with employees, suppliers,

customers, and communities, we promote equal opportunities for all - innovating where possible to address the specific needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

- **Determine your approach; identify core programs.** Whether you're simply identifying which existing initiatives you will report on relative to the SDGs, establishing new programs targeted at identified SDGs, or something in between, you should develop a high-level framework that articulates which corporate programs and initiatives are aligned to the prioritized SDGs and how the outcomes of these programs help advance the SDGs. If you are taking steps to adjust or evolve your programming, consider joining one of the many pre-existing [partnerships/action networks focused on collective action around the various SDGs.](#)

SET GOALS, TRACK & SHARE PROGRESS

- **Share your company's vision and rationale for SDG alignment.** Choosing to align to the SDGs at any level is founded, at least to some degree, in a recognition that your company is part of a global community and has a role to play in contributing to that community's shared agenda for positive social change. Make sure you take the time to articulate *why* your company is taking action within this shared agenda and targeted goals.



The Social Strategist

- **Set measurable goals within priority areas.** Build from your current baselines and establish aspirational goals that have clear and specific metrics and targets that you can use to measure progress. They should be unique to your company and programs; they do not need to be the exact targets within the SDGs, so long as you can show the step-logic for how they ultimately contribute to them.
- **Track and communicate progress against goals and within priorities.** Develop a system for tracking progress and share your results and learnings with your stakeholders. This is not just to highlight your achievements, though that is certainly important. A shared agenda will not advance if the individual actors are operating in the dark – communicating openly about the work you are doing opens the door for others to learn from your work and build bridges to connect more deeply to your efforts.

Check out [Pfizer's 2016 Annual Review](#) outlining the company's progress against targets within Goal 3.

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Introduction

Sustainable Development Goals that We Are Tackling

• **Our Priority, Goal 3**
Good Health and Well-Being

Communicating Our Progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals

Our Priority, Goal 3

Good Health and Well-Being

For Pfizer, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, is inextricably linked to our belief that every individual deserves to lead a long, healthy and productive life. Good health is fundamental to advancing all of the 17 SDGs, each of which directly benefits from or contributes to advances in public health.

Pfizer is exploring ways to build commercially sustainable, socially responsible business models that address areas of significant public health need in developed, middle-income and developing countries. And by partnering with socially responsible entrepreneurs, we are working collectively to advance progress toward health targets identified by the UN as critical to achieving SDG 3.

Progress Made toward Transforming Good Health and Well-being by 2030

Target by 2030	Progress
Target 3.1: By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.	We support a program with the 2020 MicroClinic in Kenya to implement evidenced-based interventions that decrease maternal and neonatal mortality and improve access to antenatal and postnatal services, including access to a skilled birth attendant.
Target 3.2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under five years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-five mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.	Since 2014, the Pfizer Foundation* has supported a program with Save the Children to improve access to childhood immunizations and family planning services for women in Malawi. The initiative provides vital newborn services like immunization, along with access to information and services in family planning for post-partum women. Through this program we have reached over 290,000 children with health and nutrition services while working with the local Ministry of Health to address barriers to integrating family planning services.