



# SDG AMBITION



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ABOUT SDG AMBITION

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#### Q: What is SDG Ambition?

A: SDG Ambition is an accelerator programme that aims to challenge and support participating companies of the UN Global Compact to set ambitious corporate targets aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and accelerate integration into core business and performance management. SDG Ambition enables companies to move beyond incremental progress and step-up transformative change – unlocking business value, building business resilience, and enabling long-term growth. It was launched in January 2020 at the World Economic Forum in Davos by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres. Subsequently, 10 SDG Ambition Benchmarks were launched in June 2020 at the UN Global Compact Leaders' Summit.

#### What is the SDG Ambition accelerator programme?

A: The pilot of the SDG Ambition Accelerator ran from January to June 2021. Round 2 of the SDG Ambition Accelerator is expected to run virtually. The accelerator will start in October 2021 and consist of on demand and virtual capacity-building workshops with peers and experts to help companies set, manage and track ambitious targets to advance progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For more information about the program, please review the "ABOUT THE SDG AMBITION ACCELERATOR" section.

#### Q: What was released at the World Economic Forum, Davos in January 2020?

A: An introduction to the SDG Ambition program was inaugurated at the World Economic Forum in Davos, titled "SDG Ambition – Scaling Business Impact for the Decade of Action". It launched the new UN Global Compact SDG Implementation Framework that aims to guide companies to deepen integration of the SDGs and the Ten Principles into business strategy, operations and stakeholder engagement. The publication can be accessed [here](#).

#### Q: What was released at the UN Global Compact Leaders' Summit in June 2020?

A: A set of 10 SDG Ambition Benchmarks was launched at the Leaders' Summit, titled "SDG Ambition – Introducing Business Benchmarks for the Decade of Action". The publication can be accessed [here](#).

#### Q: What are the SDG Ambition Benchmarks?

A: The SDG Ambition benchmarks are a set of absolute, measurable benchmarks grounded in established reporting requirements. They translate the SDGs for business, focusing on where business can drive the greatest impact. These benchmarks are applicable across all industries, and their implementation is adaptable, allowing companies to define goals and targets in the areas that are most material for their industry context. For more information, please review the [Ambition Guide](#).

#### Q: What was released at Uniting Business LIVE during UN General Assembly week in September?

A: The new SDG Ambition guides launched at the opening of this year's historic 75th session of the UN General Assembly provide business leaders and their technology partners with directional support on measuring and managing sustainability performance through business technology systems and enterprise software solutions:

- [Ambition Guide: Setting Goals for the Decade of Action](#) establishes the initial set of SDG Ambition benchmarks that challenge organizations to set more ambitious goals and targets in the areas in which business is positioned to have a substantial impact. Business leaders can use this document to support their strategy and set goals ambitious enough to deliver the SDGs by 2030.
- [Integration Guide: Designing Business Systems for the SDGs](#) presents the approach through which the 10 SDG Ambition benchmarks can be integrated into core business processes and systems to enable effective measurement and management of sustainability performance. Business leaders can use this publication to identify the system opportunities to integrate the SDGs into core business processes.
- [SDG Ambition Benchmark Reference Sheets](#) provide illustrative details regarding the steps to integrate each of these benchmarks into a company's business systems, as well as the key design decision required to engage technology partners.

## ABOUT THE SDG AMBITION ACCELERATOR

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### Q: What activities does the SDG Ambition Accelerator include?

A: SDG Ambition is six-month long, outcome-driven accelerator that aims to challenge and support companies in setting ambitious corporate targets and accelerating integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into core business management. It will consist of a series of on-demand and live sessions with peers and experts. Participants will leave the accelerator with a better understanding of what it means to set ambitious company goals required to achieve the SDGs, and a plan to achieve them. The workshops are informed by the research and deliverables published as part of the SDG Ambition accelerator and designed by Global Compact Local Networks to recognize and respond to different country contexts. Participants will learn:

- How to strategically prioritize actions that will accelerate your company's contributions to the 2030 Agenda
- How to set targets aligned with absolute benchmarks that today may seem aspirational but are critical to spearhead the transformation of economies and societies
- How to approach sustainability management differently and design new systems integrating the SDGs
- How to build a business case and generate sustainability buy-in from your company

**Outcome:** At the conclusion of the accelerator, we expect that participants will have one or more revised or new goals aligned with an SDG Ambition Benchmark on a priority topic, a Mapped Integration Journey that outlines how they will achieve it, and a clear plan of action to implement the SDG Ambition Approach going forward within 6 months of completing the accelerator.

### What is the duration of the SDG Ambition Accelerator?

A: On-boarding activities will start in late October 2021 and will be available on-demand. The accelerator will run through April 2021. Global Compact Local Networks will provide a detailed schedule of activities.

### Q: What is the time commitment?

A: The accelerator is divided into 3 modules that will be delivered over the course of 6 months. For each, company participants can expect a mix of on-demand sessions, live workshops and peer-to-peer breakouts, and self-guided activities. On average, participants can expect 2 to 3 hours of on demand content and 3 to 4 hours of facilitated workshops and peer-to-peer breakouts per module. The time spent on self-guided activities will vary for every company, but on average there will be 2 to 5 hours of work to be completed in between live sessions. In total, participants should plan to dedicate about 30 hours to the SDG Ambition accelerator over six-months.

### Q: What is the outcome of the program?

A: The objective of the SDG Ambition Accelerator is to increase the number of companies setting ambitious goals. At the conclusion of the accelerator, participants will have:

- One or more revised or new goals aligned with an SDG Ambition Benchmark on a priority topic
- A Mapped Integration Journey that outlines how they will achieve it
- A plan of action to implement the SDG Ambition Approach
- Develop pitch for goals aligned to the SDG Ambition Benchmark to present to internal stakeholders and gain sustainability buy-in

## Q: What are the benefits of participating for companies?

A: The SDG Ambition Accelerator enables companies to move beyond incremental progress and step-up transformative change – unlocking business value, building business resilience, and enabling long-term growth. The accelerator will allow companies to gain competitive business advantage through setting and integrating ambitious goals. Additionally, participants will have the unique opportunity to collaborate with other companies to share sustainability goals and brainstorm integration methods.

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- How to strategically prioritize actions that will accelerate your company's contribution to the 2030 Agenda
- How to set targets aligned with absolute benchmarks that today may seem aspirational but are critical to spearhead the transformation of economies and societies
- How to approach sustainability management differently and design new systems integrating the SDGs
- How to build a business case and generate sustainability buy-in from your company

## WHAT YOU WILL GAIN

- An understanding of baseline impacts across the business in creating a comprehensive sustainability strategy
- The ability to achieve ambitious goals aimed at galvanizing business actions with what is actually required to achieve the SDGs
- An overview of how to integrate and mainstream ambitious sustainability goals across business units by pioneering a performance integration approach that utilizes enabling technologies
- The foundational tools and understanding to build a business case
- Insight into industries with an outsized impact on the SDGs
- Ability to develop and share ambitious business actions on the SDGs alongside a diverse group of leaders from numerous corporations
- Certificate demonstrating completion of the accelerator programme

## Eligibility Criteria

The UN Global Compact invites companies everywhere to join SDG Ambition. In order to take part, companies are required to be participating companies of the UN Global Compact and to meet the following criteria:

- Currently engaged with a Global Compact Local Network in your region or willing to join (only for the in-country track)
- Committed to strengthening corporate target setting and action to increase progress on the Sustainable Development Goals
- Willing to appoint two representatives (ideally a technology and sustainability representative from the company) to participate in accelerator activities and events and an executive-level "Champion" to follow programme developments, provide support and participate in high-level events

## Q: Who from our company should participate in the SDG Ambition Accelerator? Are there eligibility criteria that we should be aware of?

A: All participating companies are asked to nominate two representatives to actively participate in the accelerator on behalf of the company. This includes attending SDG Ambition workshops and coordinating with colleagues across the organization to advance SDG Ambition objectives. In order to derive full value from our participation in the accelerator each company is strongly encouraged to consider nominating two representatives to engage in the work on the initiative.

1. One representative responsible for prioritization and goal setting (i.e. from Sustainability/Strategy Depts) and
2. One representative with responsibility for overseeing systems to track and manage performance against organizational goals (Information Technology Dept, M&E etc.)
3. In addition to the SDG Ambition representatives, all participating companies are requested to nominate a top-level "Champion" to follow SDG Ambition developments, provide support to the company representatives as needed, and represent the company at high-level events that are part of or related to SDG Ambition. The SDG Ambition Champion should have a direct line of communication to the CEO (e.g., Member of the C-Suite or Board). The company's CEO may also decide to take on the role of SDG Ambition Champion.

## Q: I am not sure who to nominate as a second representative responsible for systems integration?

A: This individual should be someone well-versed or capable of compiling a company's technology landscape. They do not need to have deep technical expertise in every system, but ideally understand the major systems the company utilizes, their high-level capabilities, and has an ability to engage deeper experts as required.

## Q: Is there an extra cost for my company to participate?

A: A small cost-covering fee may apply. Please contact your Global Compact Local Network for further information.

## Q: What is the difference between the local and the global track of the SDG Ambition Accelerator?

**In-country track:** The In-country track is available in 32 countries, where the program will be run in collaboration with Global Compact Local Networks around the world. This track will be facilitated in local language and local time zone. It will offer a series of live and on-demand sessions, hands-on support, more interactive workshops, and peer-to-peer networking. Companies will be grouped with participants from their own country. Participants of the in-country track get access to global track sessions and in-country sessions..

**Global track:** The global track will be facilitated in English, and it will offer the same curriculum content as the in-country track delivered through a series of global live and on-demand sessions. This global track will be available in countries where an in-country track is not available.

## What countries are offering the in-country track of the accelerator?

A: The in-country track of the accelerator is currently being offered by Global Compact Local Networks in the following countries:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Belarus
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Denmark
- Finland
- Georgia
- Germany
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Netherlands
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Portugal
- Serbia
- South Africa
- Russian Federation
- Sweden
- Switzerland & Lichtenstein
- Thailand
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

## Q: My company already has targets in place to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Why should we join the accelerator?

A: According to the UN Global Compact's most recent [Progress Report](#), 81% of UN Global Compact companies report taking actions to support the global goals. However, there is a critical performance gap between the action business is taking right now and the global and societal needs defined by the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, only 39 per cent of companies say they have targets they believe are sufficiently ambitious to deliver Agenda 2030, that are science-based and/or align with societal needs. At the same time, companies report that the biggest challenges they face in advancing sustainability is embedding it deeply within their strategies and operations, and value chains. In our last progress report, less than half of participating companies report that they are embedding the SDGs into their core businesses and only 37 per cent designing business models to support them. The accelerator aims to challenge companies to assess whether their goals are set with the right level of ambition to make progress on the SDGs as well as support companies to embed the right goals within their core business strategy. In addition to uncovering strategies to fast-track progress toward existing targets, companies may be inspired to raise the ambition of their targets to better align with the SDGs and the world's most pressing challenges.

## Q: My company does not currently have corporate targets in place to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Are we required to set a target in order to participate?

A: No. The purpose of the accelerator is to help companies set and meet ambitious targets to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Companies do not need to have targets in place in order to participate. Through SDG Ambition, we aim to provide participating companies with the research and knowledge needed to confidently set corporate targets aligned with the SDG Ambition Benchmarks and integrate these targets within core business operations.

### **Q: Is the accelerator relevant for small and medium enterprises?**

A: We recognize that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) face a different set of challenges when it comes to technology and SDG integration, in particular around the financial resources required to integrate across business systems. It may require a more targeted approach in the issues SMEs address, but the SDG Ambition guidance should still be applicable as you have these discussions. Further, there is an opportunity for SMEs to use the SDG Ambition approach as a competitive advantage to build a more resilient business, but also align products with a more socially-conscious consumer. Additionally, there may be opportunities to partner with other organizations to develop solutions that help pull together a view of sustainable performance across the value chain where the costs and benefits can be shared. We encourage businesses of any size to consider the SDG Ambition guidance in the accelerator and adapt it as your business context requires.

### **Q: Can non-business UN Global Compact participants join the accelerator?**

A: While the accelerator is designed for business, non-business participants with expertise and knowledge relevant to SDG Ambition are encouraged to discuss opportunities to support SDG Ambition with their Global Compact Local Network representative.

### **Q: My company is not based in a country where there is a participating Global Compact Local Network. How can we take part in the SDG Ambition Accelerator?**

A: For the in-country track, only companies based in countries where the Global Compact Local Network is running the accelerator can participate. Note that companies must be members of the Local Network to take part. To learn more about how to join a Local Network, please [click here](#). If a company is not based in a country with a Local Network that is running SDG Ambition, it can sign up to the global track of the accelerator. Please read "[\*What is the difference between the global and local track\*](#)" for more information.

### **Q: How do I register to participate in the SDG Ambition Accelerator?**

A: Companies can complete the [registration form](#) to sign up to participate in the accelerator by Thursday, 30 September 2021.