SUPPORTING THE BUSINESS RESPONSE TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE VALUE OF EMPLOYEE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

EarthWatch Institute
CREATING KNOWLEDGE. INSPIRING ACTION.
WELCOME...

CREATING KNOWLEDGE. INSPIRING ACTION.

The United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development – more commonly known as the SDGs – were launched in September 2015. They represent an ambitious, integrated framework aiming to end poverty, protect our planet, and ensure future prosperity by 2030.

Many companies are considering how to respond and align sustainability initiatives under this framework. The SDGs present a complex challenge for business, but also an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and commitment to a clear corporate purpose.

Through our partnerships, Earthwatch supports companies to communicate and embed sustainability strategies. We do this through a flexible model of employee and stakeholder engagement in independent scientific research that is material to business. This allows staff, customers, and communities to get actively involved and be inspired to act and change behaviours, whilst providing the critical data needed to fill knowledge gaps and monitor progress against SDG targets.

I believe Earthwatch is uniquely placed to help companies address sustainability challenges. I am pleased this has been confirmed by the senior industry leaders, partners and programme participants who have contributed to this report. We are extremely grateful to them all for sharing their expertise.

If you would like to explore how Earthwatch can support your business sustainability priorities and help align activities with the SDGs, please do get in touch. We look forward to talking to you.

STEVE GRAY
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WHY EARTHWATCH?

HSBC has galvanised more than 10,000 people around the world, including me, to get actively involved in our sustainability programmes through a model of citizen science. This has been a key part of our approach to employee engagement and delivered great value. When I took part I experienced Earthwatch scientists presenting complex environmental challenges facing society, particularly around water and climate change, in a way that educates and, more importantly, inspires behaviour change. It is a powerful way of bringing issues to life.

DOUGLAS FLINT, GROUP CHAIRMAN, HSBC HOLDINGS PLC

BENEFITS: WORKING WITH EARTHWATCH HAS HELPED PARTNERS TO:

- Better engage with their employees
- Communicate sustainability priorities
- Achieve local level engagement on global issues
- Improve staff retention
- Increase customer and supplier understanding and engagement
- Investigate and understand key supply chain issues
- Contribute to real science and the SDGs
- Engage with investors

100,000 people have taken part in Earthwatch-led programmes

100% of partners surveyed would recommend us

90% of citizens believe it is important for businesses to sign up to the SDGs (PWC survey 2015)

PROJECTS IN 39 COUNTRIES ON 6 CONTINENTS

Members of staff who have participated in our various Earthwatch programmes are more engaged with both the business and the environment. This helps us to deliver more effective and more sustainable business solutions.

EARTHWATCH PARTNER
WHAT ARE THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

17 GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED BY 2030

EACH GOAL HAS A SERIES OF TARGETS – THERE ARE 169 IN TOTAL

AIM TO END POVERTY, PROTECT OUR PLANET AND ENSURE FUTURE PROSPERITY

DEVELOPED BY THE UN, IN CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING BUSINESS AND NGOs

LAUNCHED IN SEPTEMBER 2015 AND FORMALLY ADOPTED BY 193 COUNTRIES

MORE BROAD AND INTEGRATED SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS, THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)

THE SDGs INCLUDE AN EXPLICIT ‘CALL TO ACTION’ FOR BUSINESS

UNIQUE CALL FOR ACTION BY ALL COUNTRIES, POOR, RICH AND MIDDLE-INCOME TO PROMOTE PROSPERITY WHILE PROTECTING THE PLANET

Business is a vital partner in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Companies can contribute through their core activities, and we ask companies everywhere to assess their impact, set ambitious goals and communicate transparently about the results.*

BAN KI-MOON,
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

The SDGs present an opportunity for business-led solutions and technologies to be developed and implemented to address the world’s biggest sustainable development challenges.

SDG-COMPASS

*Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations
The SDGs will shape the action taken by governments and influence expectations of consumers, communities, and society at large. Businesses will have a critical role to play, and those that choose to ignore the SDGs or delay a response may miss the opportunity they present and be more exposed to unwelcome risk.

A PwC survey* found that 71% of businesses are already planning how they will respond to the SDGs and this was confirmed in conversation with our partners. Whilst this is encouraging, we know that for many, this planning is at an early stage and that the scale and scope of the SDGs can feel daunting. There is also some uncertainty as to how this framework can align with and compliment existing long-term sustainability strategies.

How can Earthwatch help?

Earthwatch is uniquely placed to support businesses with their response to the SDGs. Our strong scientific background and extensive experience of working in partnership has helped us to develop interdisciplinary programmes that reach across many of the SDGs. We help our partners to understand how they can focus on material issues and to collect and support business-relevant science aligned to their SDG priorities.

Our approach engages employees and other stakeholders and inspires action, connecting them to business sustainability objectives. This enables global programmes to have increased significance and impact at local level and make a direct contribution to the SDGs.

A partner survey confirmed the relevance and credibility of our model of engagement in science as a means to help companies respond to the SDGs. More than three quarters of sustainability leaders we spoke to said businesses have an instrumental role to play and that the SDGs cannot be achieved without active involvement from business.

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* “Make it your business: Engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals”, PwC, 2015
Our model delivers unique benefits to our partners. It enables them to investigate, understand, communicate and take action on issues key to their supply chain and the wider communities in which they operate.

Our partners contribute to real science, filling knowledge gaps which will be critical to achieving SDG targets. Earthwatch’s multi-faceted programmes typically cut across the SDG landscape, which prevents research being undertaken in isolation. Our programme in the Indian Himalaya, for example, contributes to six SDGs (see page 14).

Our partnership with Earthwatch provides unrivalled opportunities to help us achieve strong business benefits and to help our employees think about how they can contribute to the SDGs.

RUPERT THOMAS, VICE PRESIDENT ENVIRONMENT, ROYAL DUTCH SHELL PLC

Employees, suppliers, and communities take part in immersive and transformational experiences, connecting them to partners’ business and sustainability priorities, embedding strategy, and inspiring action for lasting change. These programmes enable our partners to demonstrate leadership in environmental and corporate sustainability.

Our partners have told us that their involvement with Earthwatch has helped them to:

- Better engage with their employees and communicate sustainability priorities
- Achieve local level engagement on global issues
- Improve staff retention
- Increase customer understanding and engagement
- Increase supplier understanding and engagement
- Engage with their investors
THE BENEFITS OF ENGAGEMENT IN SCIENCE

Our model of engagement in science, sometimes known as ‘citizen science’, plays a vital role in providing scientific understanding to address environmental issues, inform business sustainability planning, and drive enhanced performance.

It allows staff and stakeholders to reconnect with the natural world, and reminds them of the interdependency of environmental, social and economic issues. It enables employees to better understand corporate sustainability strategy, and be inspired to take action and change behaviours.

Engagement in science also allows cost-effective collection of very large data sets in short time periods, providing key information to our partners and the wider scientific community. It is rapidly evolving, enabled by digital technology and ‘Big Data’ to be a flexible and relevant tool for real science and engagement in business priorities.

Case Study

Cocoa farming and biodiversity in Ghana

Rapid increases in cocoa production in Ghana accelerated deforestation and unsustainable farming practices, leading to increased farm abandonment. In 2005, Cadbury, Earthwatch, and three research partners began a four-year programme to investigate sustainable cocoa production processes that protected rural livelihoods.

Outcomes included:

- New scientific understanding of cocoa sustainability issues, including the benefits of shade-produced cocoa for nutrient cycling and biodiversity
- Curriculum for sustainable cocoa production developed for nationwide farmer training
- The first Ghanaian cocoa eco-tourism initiative
- 48 research fellowships awarded to Ghanaian students
- 100 Cadbury stakeholders trained as environmental advocates

SDG FOCUS: TARGET 15.2

By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.
INSPIRING EMPLOYEES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Employee and stakeholder engagement is vital to the implementation of sustainability strategies and making an effective contribution to the SDGs. If employees and key stakeholders do not understand strategy, their role in it, or its importance to the business, it is unlikely to be truly successful.

Earthwatch programmes deliver “engagement with a purpose”. They help employees experience environmental issues first-hand and contribute to business-relevant science. They translate the SDGs into meaningful activities and actions.

Participants are supported to develop action plans to take back to their functions and regions, reflecting what they have learnt, how they will apply that knowledge, and promoting long-term behaviour change. The resulting benefits for our partners include direct footprint reductions and innovation around policies and products to better manage environmental risk and create new business opportunities (see case study on page 12).

Our award-winning programmes can range from one-day events on specific themes delivered locally, to immersive environmental research experiences and leadership development programmes. There is a high degree of flexibility, and these programmes can be tailored to align with fundamental business issues and priorities.

We asked our 7,500 strong Freshwater Watch community how their involvement has affected them. We found:

88% say being involved in Earthwatch programmes will help their organisations contribute to the SDGs.

77% are more likely to continue their career with the organisation.

91% have a better understanding of their organisation’s environmental/CSR programme.

99% have a better understanding of their personal environmental impacts. 95% reported having reduced their impacts as a result.

It is vital that employees understand the impact of our business on the environment.

JULIE ROGERS, DIRECTOR AND GENERAL MANAGER, MITSUBISHI CORPORATION INTERNATIONAL (EUROPE) PLC
CASE STUDY

FreshWater Watch

FreshWater Watch is a global programme focussed on freshwater research and education for corporate employees and community members. Employees are trained to collect water quality data enabling scientists to develop insights on water quality and supply management, whilst engaging them on key water issues. FreshWater Watch’s local and global approach is unique in its scale – more than 7,500 ‘FreshWater Watchers’ have been trained around the world, collecting almost 14,000 data samples.

In addition to collecting data, Freshwater Watch has enabled HSBC staff to develop their communication and leadership skills and to share information with colleagues, their families, and the wider community. 99% of HSBC FreshWater Watch participants have told us they better understand freshwater issues and their personal impacts as a result of involvement in this programme.

Professor Steven Loiselle, Earthwatch’s Global Freshwater Research Manager, said: “FreshWater Watch participants have enabled scientists to meet research goals that could never have been met in the past. Every hour spent training a participant provides an average of seven hours of monitoring being performed – a 720% return on time invested.”

The project is showing very significant results, for example allowing scientists to estimate the frequency of algal blooms in rivers and streams across the globe. Additionally, recommendations to policy-makers in 16 countries will directly improve the way in which aquatic ecosystems are being managed.

Water is a precious resource. Freshwater ecosystem services are valued at US$ 400 billion worldwide annually. But by 2050, nearly half of the world’s population will be living in areas where water is scarce.

SDG FOCUS: TARGET 6.6

By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.
Our immersive model is a powerful way to directly connect business leaders to sustainability issues in a relevant natural setting. We help our partners create more conscious leaders able to consider and drive sustainable thinking in all they do, and help their companies deliver a meaningful contribution to the SDGs.

**CASE STUDY**

**Sustainability Leadership Programme (SLP)**

This is a unique professional development experience for senior leaders at the bank, designed to promote a deep understanding of sustainability as a core strategic and operational business issue and opportunity. More than 1,000 leaders have participated since 2009 at 12 Earthwatch research sites around the world, contributing more than 18,000 hours of scientific research.

The programme combines field research with facilitated learning sessions. The leaders focus on the opportunities being created by the transition to a low carbon economy and making their area of the business more sustainable. SLP drives real behaviour change through a greater sense of awareness and responsibility.

Every attendee has said it increased their understanding of how they can make HSBC more sustainable through their day-to-day business activities. The programme has supported HSBC in achieving a 20% reduction in total energy consumption since 2011.

**SDG FOCUS:**

**TARGET 13.3**

**Climate Action**

Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

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**Earthwatch-led programmes provide a deep, immersive experience, through engagement in science. This delivers a positive change in the senior managers that attend, leading to actions that make HSBC a more sustainable business.**

MATTHEW ROBINSON, SUSTAINABILITY ENGAGEMENT HEAD, HSBC BANK PLC
CASE STUDY

Enhanced Learning Programme (ELP)

More than 800 Shell employees from 49 countries have attended Earthwatch programmes since 1998, contributing nearly 40,000 hours of data collection, supporting research that address environmental issues of business relevance to Shell.

As well as contributing to research, many employees take part in a tailored curriculum of discussion and learning, facilitated by Earthwatch and supported by a sustainability professional from Shell. It helps staff to understand key environmental issues for Shell, such as climate change and environmental stewardship. The programme has inspired a range of actions, including additional thinking around environmental performance indicators.

SDG FOCUS: TARGET 12.6

Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

The ELP programme was nothing short of inspirational. It helped in realising sustainability and the importance of having a sustainable mindset.

ELP PARTICIPANT
CASE STUDY

Corporate Partnerships Programme (CPP)

The Corporate Partnerships Programme was designed to help HSBC and its external partners explore new and sustainable ways of collaborating for a common good. Each programme brings together HSBC and two strategic partners to reach a joint understanding of sustainability as a core business issue and opportunity. Conducted in the field, immersed in nature, relationships are built based on trust and shared experience.

The group is then challenged to develop a unique, innovative, and commercial sustainability project. The outcome is a collective appreciation for the global sustainability challenge and a joint commitment to action. The two-day field programme is just the beginning.

The CPP directly supports SDG 17 to revitalise partnerships for sustainable development. The collaborative sustainability project is different for each programme, but past groups have designed actions that will contribute to SDG 8, 9, 11 and 13.

SDG FOCUS: TARGET 17.16

Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

Participant feedback...

"Our citizen science work with Earthwatch has changed the supplier/purchaser relationship for the better."  
ALEX BASE, GLOBAL HEAD, OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY, HSBC BANK PLC
These programmes are linked to the sustainability priorities of our corporate partners, enabling them to gain valuable business insights and contributing directly to filling gaps in scientific understanding. This is both critical to the success of the SDGs and long-term business performance.

This expert knowledge helps our partners to understand national and international priorities and where a business sustainability programme can make the most material impact. Our partner programmes have, for example, supported the development of management plans and policies that conserve vital ecosystem functions and services.

We know the relevance of our science is important to our partners. Almost 90% of those surveyed told us that aligning Earthwatch’s research programmes to their priorities would aid their response to the SDGs. A similar proportion noted the importance of conducting research in the impact areas and countries they operate in.

The case studies on the following pages summarise some of the research projects we have undertaken with our corporate partners. These projects have helped our partners to better understand business risks and opportunities, as well as offering opportunities for employee and community engagement.

The credibility of our programmes and scientific partners means that the data collected is used in global research studies and published in respected peer-reviewed academic papers.
SUPPORTING RELEVANT SCIENCE

CASE STUDY

Forest ecosystem services and pollination in the Indian Himalaya

The Himalayan region of India is known for its rich forest cover and unique floral and faunal wealth. Pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, are a critical component of this ecosystem but are under threat due to unsustainable agricultural practices, loss of habitat, and climate change.

The GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development and Earthwatch are working on a partnership in the Kullu Region, developed as part of the British American Tobacco Biodiversity Partnership. The overall goal is conservation of pollinators and associated flora for enhanced ecosystem services and improved livelihoods in the region.

The project has already:

- Supported community projects in Kullu to revive traditional bee-keeping practices
- Empowered young people, women’s groups and farmers in bee-keeping
- Enhanced bee flora to improve pollinator populations and support sustainable apple production
- Enabled field scientists to generate large amounts of quality data in minimal time, through citizen science, addressing key knowledge gaps on the contribution of forest ecosystem services to the sustainability of agro-ecosystems
- Supported young researchers as part of fellowship programme on sustainable agro-ecosystems
- Acted as a prototype, which in 2016 will be expanded to three further villages
- Engaged employees from ITC, Shell, Amcor and Mitsubishi Corporation. This included learning about natural capital and the link between business and biodiversity
- Provided solar street lighting in local communities

SDG FOCUS: TARGET 15.4

By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.
CASE STUDY

Seaweed farming for carrageenan in the tropics: impacts, interactions, and sustainability

TATE & LYLE

The cultivation of seaweed is dramatically expanding across the tropics, but little is known about its ecological impacts on surrounding ecosystems, supply chain risks and opportunities for livelihoods. This is of direct concern to the food industry in terms of sustainable and responsible sourcing of ingredients, to the local communities, and to scientists concerned with coastal ecology and conservation.

Tate & Lyle PLC, Earthwatch, and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography have begun a four-year research programme in Bali. This project will help Tate & Lyle better understand the opportunities and challenges associated with commercial seaweed cultivation within its supply chain. The results will also inform industry-wide standards, and effective management actions towards the long-term health of coastal ecosystems, community livelihoods, and sustainable seaweed aquaculture.

The project directly contributes to five SDGs by supporting sustainable agriculture that helps to maintain ecosystems, building local capacity around sustainable development, strengthening resilience to climate change and sustainably managing coastal ecosystems.

SDG FOCUS:
TARGET 2.4

By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production that help maintain ecosystems that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.
CASE STUDY

Maintaining rainforest biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and conservation value in a changing landscape and climate

Tropical rainforests are a critical component of the world’s life support system. They are home to 50% of global biodiversity and 500 million people, with a further one billion people directly depending on them.

Earthwatch developed a partnership with Shell and the Royal Society South East Asia Rainforest Research Programme to investigate how to balance productive landscapes with the maintenance of ecosystem functioning.

The findings have significant policy and land management implications, which have directly contributed to the development of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Principles and Criteria for the sustainable management of oil palm plantations. They were also referenced in Malaysia’s commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and have contributed to land-use planning approaches developed by industry and NGO groups.

The programme has also funded three local doctoral students, who have now taken up full time positions in academia and the conservation sector. These early career scientists have every potential to become academic and industry leaders in Malaysia.

SDG FOCUS: TARGET 4b

By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.
CASE STUDY

Coral reefs and communities

Earthwatch and Mitsubishi Corporation are working on a research programme that supports mutual organisational objectives to conserve the marine environment.

Maintaining reef health is essential to the welfare of hundreds of millions of people, but we continue to degrade, pollute, and over-exploit these resources. This adds to the potentially devastating impact of climate change, which could mean that reefs can no longer provide us with the services we depend on and where the diversity of life they support no longer exists.

For the last ten years we have worked together in the national marine parks of the Seychelles to explore how corals respond to a changing climate and which management strategies can build coral and community resilience. Through our partners at the Seychelles National Parks Authority and the University of Essex, this research has informed pro-active conservation solutions, and provided managers and policymakers with the information they need to counteract key threats to coral reefs.

Earthwatch and Mitsubishi Corporation collaborate on similar projects in the Great Barrier Reef, Australia and in Okinawa, Japan. At all sites unique pressures demand local innovation; but these ecosystems are also influenced by changes at a global scale, so by linking these projects we can develop and share models for conservation at an international level.

SDG FOCUS:

**TARGET 14.2**

By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.

Partnering with Earthwatch allows us to engage with the scientific community and enables us to explore business risks and opportunities. It helps our employees to understand issues that are important to Mitsubishi Corporation and will help ensure we are still here in the future. Earthwatch is a good ‘critical friend’, not afraid to challenge us, but also providing a safe forum to discuss difficult issues.

JULIE ROGERS, DIRECTOR AND GENERAL MANAGER, MITSUBISHI CORPORATION INTERNATIONAL (EUROPE) PLC
Mangroves provide numerous benefits to society including shoreline protection, carbon sequestration and supporting coastal fisheries. But in the last 50 years, as much as half of the world’s mangroves have been destroyed.

Urgent action to restore and protect mangroves can help to end poverty, combat climate change, protect our oceans, and halt biodiversity loss – all key aspects of the SDGs. This is the focus of Earthwatch’s work in Kenya, in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University, the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, and a number of corporate partners.

Aviva wanted to understand the role of ecosystems in disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation, so a project was developed to help establish the first community-owned Payments for Ecosystem Services scheme for mangroves. This provides funding to the community through the sale of carbon credits, in return for their work to sustainably manage local mangrove forests. In the first two years the community made $25,000, which supported projects like renovating the local school and building a well.

The project contributes to seven SDGs by supporting the resilience of poor communities, providing opportunities for training and education, including women in decision-making roles, delivering sustainable management of natural resources and coastal ecosystems, and through climate change mitigation.
SDG FOCUS: TARGET 1.5

By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

Earthwatch looks for opportunities to further the development of high potential conservationists. Our work in Kenya has supported numerous MSc and PhD students, including Dr. Joseph Langat who went on to become a senior environmental advisor at regional government level in Kenya.

Professor Mark Huxham, Professor of Teaching and Research in Environmental Biology Edinburgh Napier University, said: ‘Joseph’s success shows how promising young Kenyan scientists can be supported in the field, all the way through to PhD level, without the need to remove the student from Kenya to study abroad. We believe this model of support is much more likely to produce scientific leaders of the future who are rooted in Kenyan communities and ecosystems.’

We have a strong record of supporting professional development opportunities for women, including Caroline Wanjiru, who is investigating the role of mangroves in protecting fisheries, and Anne Wanjiru (pictured) who is developing educational projects focusing on mangroves with local schools and communities.
2015 was a significant year in terms of the call to action to safeguard our planet for future generations. COP21 delivered the historic Paris Agreement, the strongest global climate agreement to date.

The UN concluded consultation with over 7,000 other parties, including more than 1,500 businesses, and launched the SDGs. Leading business figures reaffirmed their commitment to developing successful but sustainable strategies, and advocating for others to do the same. These agreements will shape the business response in the years to come.

Governments, businesses, NGOs, and communities now need to work together to identify opportunities to collaborate, share expertise, and plan and deliver initiatives that support mutual priorities. This will need to be done in a timely and measurable way. This is SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) in action.

“Companies are not in the business of delivering the SDGs, but they have a critical role to play. The business community was very involved in the development of the SDGs through the WBCSD. I see a much greater awareness of the SDGs amongst business leaders compared to the Millennium Development Goals.

I sense a renewed energy, with companies better understanding the need for action and prepared to do more. Businesses are responding to calls to action from different sectors, from the UN and government-backed agreements to increasing demands for disclosure on sustainability matters from CDP, GRI and the Financial Stability Board’s Climate Disclosure Task Force established by Mark Carney, the Governor of the Bank of England.

Companies need to align core strategy so that they understand the positive and negative impacts of business on the natural world and in the locations and communities in which they operate. They will need to develop science-based targets with relevant metrics and measurement processes if they are to meet external demands and contribute to the SDGs. Communicating the fundamental importance of sustainability to the organisation amongst its staff and many stakeholders will be of critical importance.”

Gail Whiteman
Professor-in-Residence, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
Legislative structures will change to ensure governments can drive and demonstrate progress toward their climate pledges and SDG obligations. The so-called “Ratchet Mechanism” introduced in Paris will require nations to increase their ambition over time in the attempt to limit the global temperature rise to “well below 2°C”. This will inevitably impact businesses through tighter compliance requirements, but progressive organisations will use this to enhance their reputation and license to operate. Stakeholder expectations are changing. Employees are likely to prefer companies with strong sustainability credentials. Investors increasingly want to know their capital is not at risk due to a changing climate. Customers at a business and consumer level are likely to demand more information on the provenance of products and services they are buying. Civil society groups will become increasingly demanding. Businesses recognise these challenges and opportunities and are developing mature sustainability strategies that increasingly connect and contribute to commercial priorities. This sees an alignment of traditional corporate responsibility thinking and core corporate purpose. Natural and social capital accounting techniques and integrated reporting are also being increasingly used to facilitate this process.

But organisations will only be able to fully embed sustainability, demonstrate leadership that meets the expectations of civil society, and realise the benefits if they understand the interdependent environmental and social issues that support healthy markets in which to operate. And staff across levels of seniority, and across functions and regions, need to feel engaged and inspired to turn these ambitions into reality.

The Earthwatch model of engagement in science aligned to relevant business issues can deliver significant value. Our programmes align strongly with the SDGs, help our partners confidently communicate their contribution, and provide a catalyst for organisational action and change.

What our partners say...

**Our partnership with Earthwatch provides unrivalled opportunities to help us achieve strong business benefits and contribute to the SDGs.**

**Earthwatch are the go-to people!**

**Great opportunity to engage with the scientific community.**

**Earthwatch helps us to create conscious leaders.**

**Earthwatch delivers inspirational field projects which connect with employees.**

**Our work on leadership development with Earthwatch has been critical to achieving ongoing change.**
OUR GLOBAL REACH

Earthwatch has offices and projects around the world. We work in partnership with leading research institutions, including:

- Natural History Museum, Earthworm Watch, UK
- University of Newcastle, Capturing our Coast, UK
- University of Oxford, Climate Change in Wytham Woods, UK
- Edinburgh Napier University, Managing Mangroves and Capturing Carbon in Kenyan Communities
- University of Essex, Coral Communities in the Seychelles
- South East Asia Rainforest Research Partnership, Climate and Landscape Change in Borneo’s Rainforest
- Scripps Institute of Oceanography, Impacts and Interactions of Seaweed Farming in Indonesia, Bali
- Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Himalayan and Environment Development, Butterflies and Bees in the Indian Himalaya
- Centre for Ecological Research and Forestry Applications, Wildlife in the Changing Andorran Pyrenees
- National Park Service, Acadia National Park, Climate Change – Sea to Trees at Acadia National Park, USA
- Indian Institute of Science, Climate Change in the Indian Western Ghats
- Universidade de São Paulo; Brazil’s algal diversity
- Restauración Ecológica y Desarrollo A.C./Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; Water Bodies of Mexico City
- Shizuoka University, Coral Reef Health, Japan
- The Australian Institute of Marine Science, Recovery of the Great Barrier Reef, Australia
- South China Agricultural University; Following Guangzhou’s Waters; China
- The Open University of Hong Kong; Discovering Hong Kong’s Algae
- Chinese Academy of Science; Tributaries of Shanghai; China
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Our FreshWater Watch community

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SDG Compass

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