



### OUR COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

Political and institutional change towards achieving the Global Goals needs to be built on knowledge underpinned by science. Make room for science-based and inclusive decisions that build confidence in action.



### THE GOALS GIVE US COMMON GROUND

Embrace multilateralism and engage all levels of society in the transformations to sustainability. Entry points for such transformations are known and universal. High-income countries must keep their promises to ensure effective global cooperation.



### THE WINDOW IS STILL OPEN

For action on the Goals to lead to sustainable outcomes, leadership is needed that takes a long-term perspective and considers future generations. Act boldly. Choices made today will have impact now and for centuries to come.



### RETHINK MEASURES OF PROGRESS

The ways in which we track progress on the Global Goals need to mirror the inseparable threads between society, economy and environment. The time has come to move beyond GDP as the measure of prosperity.



### GATHER THE EVIDENCE TO ACT

Make it easier to lead with science. Track, expect and recognize progress and embrace new ways of collecting data.



### KEEP PROMISES MADE

While promises made have languished, time still remains to achieve the Goals. Build trust in action through better transparency and participation. Act on commitments made.



### LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The Goals are for everyone. Advancing the political and economic position of the world's poorest countries is essential for making lasting prosperity for all.



### FROM EXTRACTION TO CARE

Our relationship to the planet needs to deepen. Let Indigenous expertise serve as an essential source of knowledge. Consider the legal rights of nature.



### NO GOAL IS AN ISLAND

To progress on the universal Global Goals and leave no one behind, we must recognize how they are interconnected. Visualize and leverage these relationships to collaborate within and between countries.



### REALIGN FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

Address the funding gap for the Global Goals. Make sustainability standard practice in private finance and ensure long-term stable investment conditions.

Much work remains to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Progress reports and the state of our world make it clear: we must correct our course. We have gathered what scientists recommend for accelerating progress and keeping the Goals within reach.

**#TimeToLead**  
**sei.org/timetolead**

# TIME TO LEAD — Science to accelerate the Global Goals



## OUR COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

- Ensure science for the Goals is relevant for society. Initiate and produce more research outside of high-income countries. Support the participation of low-income countries, and citizens, in science initiatives.
- To deepen trust in science and public information, intensify and tighten engagement in science-policy-society interactions.
- Increase public research and development funding to missions that have been jointly defined by civil society, local communities, industry and academia.
- Keep scientific results open to all and enable knowledge-sharing. Provide public interest groups, policymakers, industry leaders and teachers with free access to relevant publications, data and software.
- Include Indigenous and local knowledge and expertise in knowledge accumulation and national policy-making related to nature conservation.



## RETHINK MEASURES OF PROGRESS

- Recognize the need to redefine prosperity through alternative indicators, and generate buy-in across society through consultative approaches, including with subnational governments.
- Ensure that national statistics offices routinely adopt consumption-based and life-cycle accounting. Set goals and strategies for reducing footprints, giving special attention to institutions with low capacity.
- Develop indicators for measuring the pace of transformations towards the Goals, recognizing near-term action that deliver on long-term visions.
- Transform science on sustainable development by designing new performance indicators and invest more in empirical research on implementation of the Goals, including their interlinkages.



## FROM EXTRACTION TO CARE

- Expand and invest in nature-based education. Methods and experiences of Indigenous cultures can serve as references and sources of knowledge.
- National legislative bodies should consider whether establishing rights of nature is effective for protecting its integrity.

## NO GOAL IS AN ISLAND

- Use systemic and integrated approaches to policymaking, with tools that analyse synergies and trade-offs between the Goals.
- Apply step-wise and timely decision-making, with wider system boundaries and extended timescales that account for future generations.
- Consider geographical spillovers — synergies and trade-offs emerging from implementation of the Goals in one place with effects in another.



## THE GOALS GIVE US COMMON GROUND

- Strengthen multilateralism by rebuilding trust through meaningful commitments, monitoring and accountability on progress with transparency, and fulfilling financial promises by high-income countries. Use the norm-setting powers of multilateral institutions to make sustainability an easy choice.
- Implement interventions across entry points for transformations: human well-being and capabilities, sustainable and just economies, sustainable food systems, energy decarbonization and universal access, urban and peri-urban development, and the global environmental commons.
- Agree on a framework for transformations that can bridge local action with international cooperation, so that solutions reflect our diverse contexts. Develop science-based national plans to implement the framework and engage the public.
- Strengthen capacities for transformations at individual and institutional levels, including foresight capacity, public engagement, effective knowledge production, and stronger science-policy-society collaboration.



## GATHER THE EVIDENCE TO ACT

- Invest in data, science-based tools, evaluation methodology and policy learning to improve planning and follow-up of progress on the Goals.
- Build a community of practice, to strengthen ability to track progress. Engage a diversity of actors who can contribute to collective knowledge, including national statistics offices, academia, civil society and philanthropic organizations.



## KEEP PROMISES MADE

- Improve accountability of governments and other stakeholders on implementing the Goals at international, regional, national and subnational levels.
- Enable multiple perspectives in resolving goal conflicts, by enforcing higher standards for transparency and public participation in the procedures for policymaking. Involve young people in decision-making and take future generations into account.
- Start major meetings convened by the UN, such as the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and SDG Summit, with an accountability forum to give a dedicated and high-status platform for follow-up. Review performance to date before announcing new pledges and commitments.
- Systematically track action and progress on as many stakeholder pledges and by as many countries as possible, drawing on both official data from national reporting and other data sources.



## THE WINDOW IS STILL OPEN

- Bold, science-based decisions can speed up progress towards the Global Goals. Compressed timescales and extended time horizons in decision-making are needed to avoid lock-in and intergenerational discrimination.
- Deep, rapid and sustained climate mitigation actions are needed now to minimize projected losses and damages for humans and ecosystems. For many systems and regions, feasible and cost-effective mitigation options are available.
- Progress on the Goals have more synergies than trade-offs with long-term strategies for climate mitigation and adaptation.
- Consider integration of the Goals in environmental law and impact assessment procedures.
- Make a sustainable lifestyle an easy choice for individuals and communities. Reduce footprints of high-income people and nations.



## LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

- Encourage inclusive growth centred on those living in poverty, together with progressive redistribution measures. Financing can come from reformed tax-based and domestic carbon-pricing revenues, and from the wealthiest countries committed to financing global poverty reduction.
- Clearly link reduced inequalities to environmental benefits, to show that it is possible to address inequality without exacerbating climate change or further degrading ecosystems.

## REALIGN FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

- Make the global financial system work for sustainable development. Provide an international and national policy environment with long-term goals in key areas, that lowers risk, increases incentives and makes sustainability the norm for investments.
- Coordinate governments to harmonize financial regulation frameworks and remove barriers to mobilizing international investments.
- Develop multilateral and national mechanisms for targeting international finance to low- and middle-income countries, to support sustainable fossil-free economies.
- Integrate the Goals in the codes of conduct for business strategies. Invest in technology innovation systems that accelerate widespread adoption of sustainable technologies and practices.

## #TimeToLead

[sei.org/timetolead](https://sei.org/timetolead)

**Time to Lead — Science to accelerate the Global Goals** is a campaign by researchers at Stockholm Environment Institute, the International Science Council, and researchers at Linköping University. It presents a synthesis of scientific recommendations for accelerating the Global Goals, first released in conjunction with the UN 2023 SDG Summit.

Recommendations in *Time to Lead* are based on the following scientific reports: [Global Sustainable Development Report 2023](#), [The Political Impact of the Sustainable Development Goals](#), [IPCC Synthesis Report 2023](#), [Sustainable Development Report 2022](#), [Stockholm+50: Unlocking a Better Future](#).

Read more at [sei.org/timetolead](https://sei.org/timetolead)

