



Private sector contributions to the Voluntary National Review

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ABOUT THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT

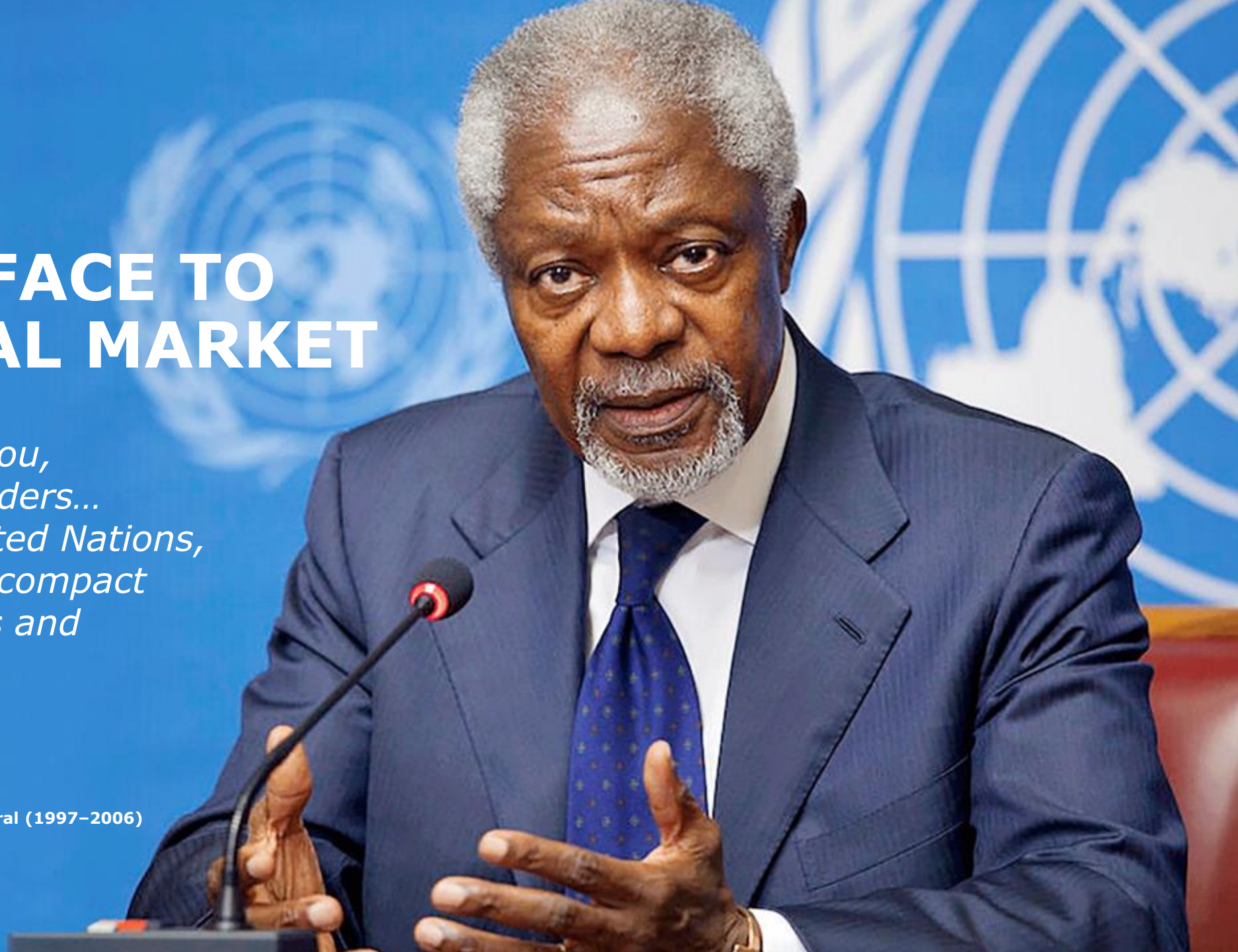


THE WORLD IN 1999

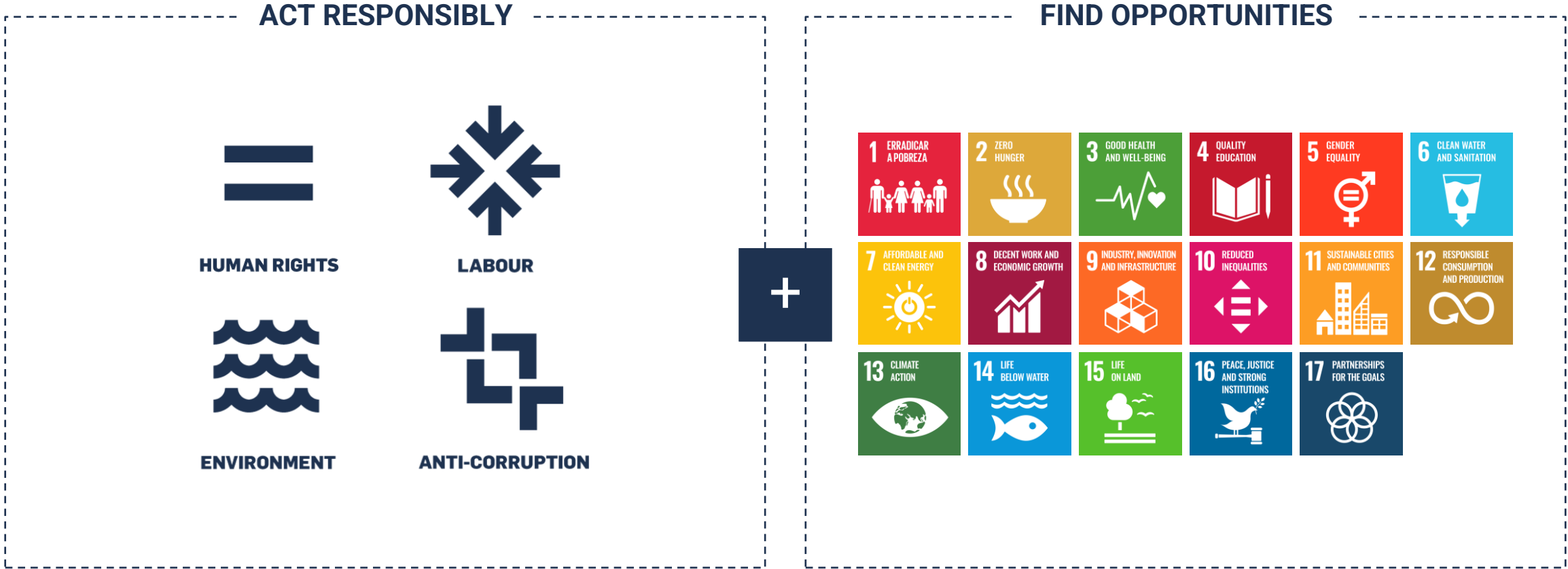
A HUMAN FACE TO THE GLOBAL MARKET

“*I propose that you,
the business leaders...
and we, the United Nations,
initiate a global compact
of shared values and
principles*”

Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General (1997–2006)



Implementing a Principles-based Approach to the SDGs Promotes Progress Toward a Sustainable and Inclusive Global Economy



UN GLOBAL COMPACT: OVERVIEW

20,000+

businesses committed to the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact

56%

of participating businesses are SMEs

160+

countries with UN Global Compact participants

70+

Country networks and growing



HUMAN RIGHTS



LABOUR



ENVIRONMENT



ANTI-CORRUPTION



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THE VNR 2024 JOURNEY





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THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW 2024

In May 2023, the Global Compact Network South Africa began the process of reviewing how the private sector were progressing action to deliver the 2030 Agenda.



This is the
private sector
response →



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COLLABORATING ACROSS SECTORS

The private sector view was then integrated with perspectives from the public sector and civil society to deliver the South African Report 2024.



The GCNSA facilitated the Private Sector Voluntary National Review

Participation on the National Writing team to integrate findings with across sectors.

Playback and review of the South African VNR 2024 Report with stakeholders.

The Presidency will report back to the UN High Level Political Forum

JULY 2025



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EXTENSIVE PARTICIPATION

The level of engagement was a substantial increase beyond the first VNR in 2019, with more holistic representation across industries and higher engagement from SMEs.

16

**Stakeholder Engagement
Virtual Round Tables**

132

**Companies participated
in the process**

3,410

**Insights captured and
analysed**

300+

**Individual contributors
participated**

37

**Company Case
Studies**

6

**In Collaboration with
Strategic Partners**



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PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT STEPS

Participating companies engaged with a 5-step process for gathering insights:



5 Step Participation Process

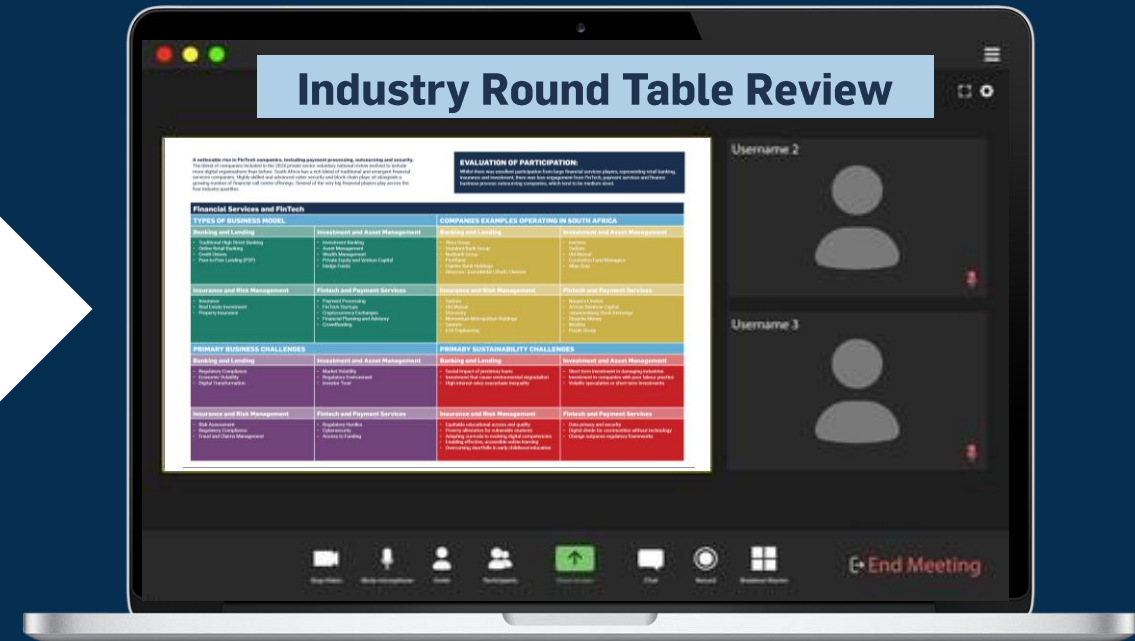
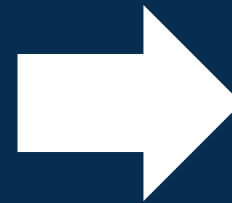
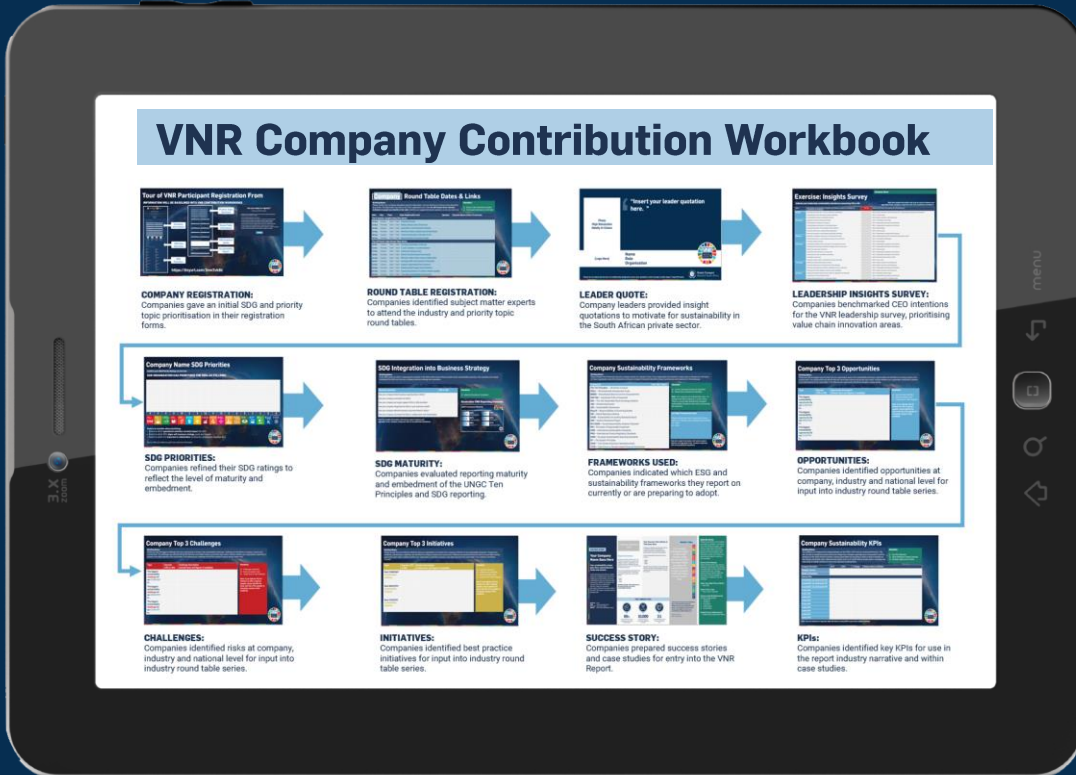
1. Engagement with Business Leadership
2. Contribution of SDG priorities and progress
3. Input of company success stories, risks and opportunities
4. Input of company Key Performance Measures
5. Participation in industry and priority topic round tables



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GATHERING INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Company Contribution Workbooks were integrated into 6 baseline industry profiles that were collaboratively reviewed within the industry round table series:





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THE VNR OBJECTIVE

The objective was that the VNR process would enable connection, learning, leadership and communication through interactive, diverse multistakeholder collaboration:

12 Month Event Programme

Enabling the South African Private Sector to move *Forward Faster*:

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



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.



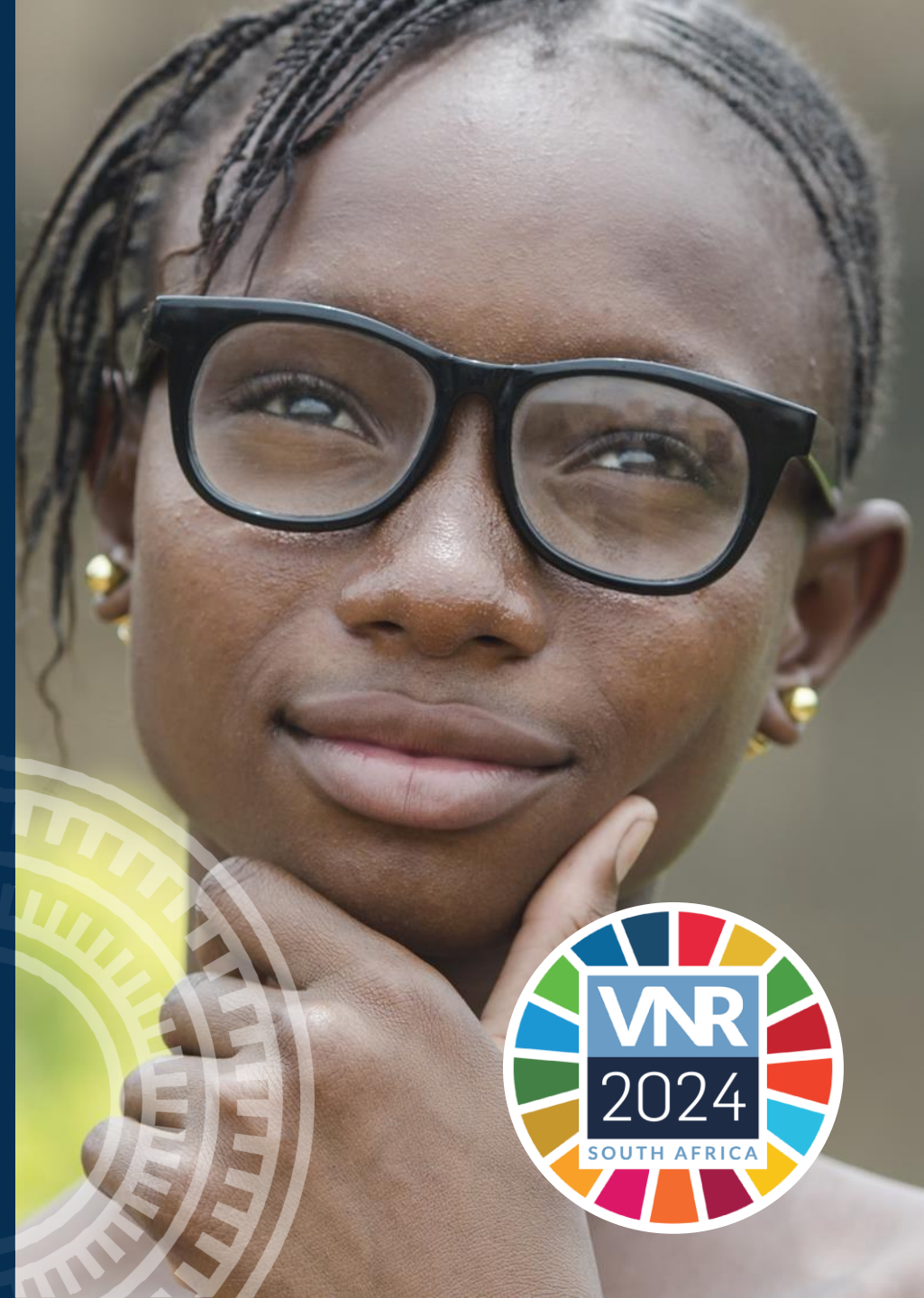
LEAD

Show bold leadership and inspire others. Enable opportunity for leadership to surface and flourish, share your expertise.



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THE SDG PRIORITIES





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OVERALL SDG PRIORITIES

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure emerges in 2nd place overall, despite it not achieving the top 5 for action that companies are taking.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR PRIORITY SDGs



Action Companies Taking

TOP SDGs:



When companies prioritise, the action being taken by their companies to deliver sustainability outcomes...

Addressing Priority Topics

TOP SDGs:



When companies seek to address the priority topics affecting the South African private sector ...

Mitigating Risks

TOP SDGs:



When companies identify mitigations for the risks and challenges that are compromising sustainability...

Leveraging Opportunity

TOP SDGs:



When companies identify the emergent opportunities that can enable sustainable jobs and economic prosperity...



SHIFTING SDG PRIORITIES

Climate Action, Partnership for the Goals, and Zero Hunger saw the sharpest rises. Innovation, Education, and Responsible Consumption and Production fell steeply from the top 5.

	2019	2024	Five years later...	
1	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	8,58	↔
2	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	8,07	↑
3	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	8,04	↑
4	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	7,57	↑
5	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	7,52	↑
6	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	7,49	↓
7	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	7,44	↓
8	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	7,37	↓
9	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	2 ZERO HUNGER	7,37	↑
10	13 CLIMATE ACTION	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	7,33	↓
11	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	5 GENDER EQUALITY	7,31	↑
12	5 GENDER EQUALITY	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	7,15	↓
13	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	7,12	↓
14	1 NO POVERTY	1 NO POVERTY	7,02	↔
15	15 LIFE ON LAND	15 LIFE ON LAND	6,22	↔
16	2 ZERO HUNGER	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	6,02	↓
17	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	4,84	↔

The Likely Rationale

1. Rise in awareness and policy relating to Climate Action
2. Economic hard times and volatile trading environments
3. Negative impact of the pandemic on staff and operations
4. Negative financial impact due to loadshedding
5. Impact on communities, including inflation, poverty and hunger



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INDUSTRY SDG PRIORITIES

Top SDG priorities vary significantly across industries, based on where they can maximise impact:

COMPANY ACTION PRIORITIES BY INDUSTRY





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POLICY ENABLEMENT

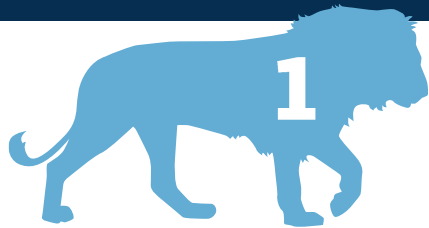




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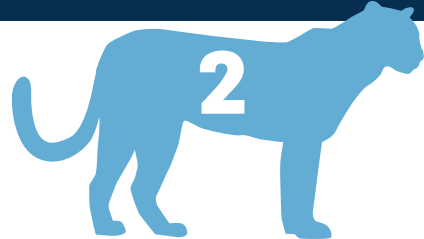
THE BIG FIVE OF COMPANY POLICY ASKS

Companies were deeply concerned that policy is not innovating quickly enough...
With policy compliance remaining too difficult, too resource consuming, and too punitive.



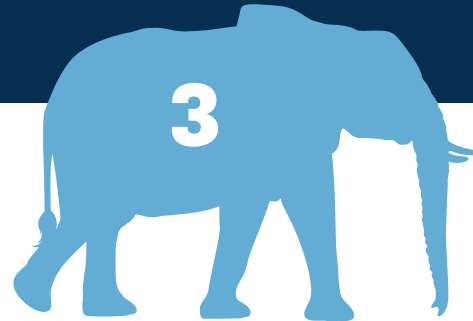
MAKE IT SIMPLER TO ADOPT

- streamline policy & process
- eliminate bureaucratic hurdles
- easy entry level certifications
- shorter, better guidance
- simple, accessible training



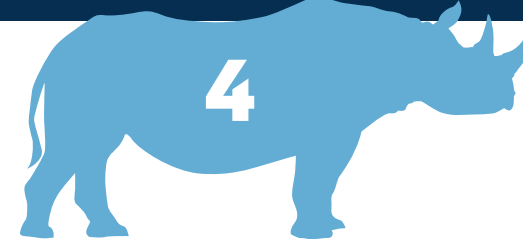
'ONE STOP SHOP': ONLINE PORTAL

- digital portals
- user-friendly navigation
- automate for speed
- automate to end 'back handers'
- reduce overlaps



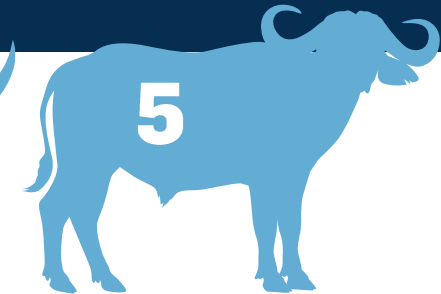
MAKE IT CONSISTENT

- harmonise local and provincial
- harmonise national and regional
- consistency across jurisdictions
- integrate reporting frameworks
- Consistent calculations & KPIs



CHECK IT'S WORKING

- transparent policy review
- feedback on efficacy
- spotlight effective policies
- analytics for policy performance
- capitalise on lessons learned



MORE FOCUS ON INCENTIVES

- More tax rebate incentives
- More financing incentives
- Better scaling of success stories
- better policy to stimulate growth
- more focus on value creation
- incentives for collaboration



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VNR PROCESS

Successes, challenges, gaps and lessons learnt.

Successes

1. Increased Private Sector Engagement
2. Collaboration & Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships
3. Collaboration with strategic partners, Minerals Council South Africa, BLSA, BUSA & NBI
4. Well-coordinated invitation process
5. Structured, simple insight collection design and process
6. Policy & Advocacy Influence
7. Showcasing best practices & Impact Stories
8. Capacity Building & Awareness

Challenges

1. Data Collection & Reporting Inconsistencies
2. Validation of company data
3. Lack of specific integrated KPIs and metrics



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VNR PROCESS

Successes, challenges, gaps and lessons learnt.

Challenges

4. Consistency of private sector data metrics
5. Promoting the VNR concept to get engagement
6. Concerns over the extensive time commitment required
7. Company lack of awareness of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda
8. Scepticism regarding the practical benefits of the VNR and the relevance of the SDGs
9. 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



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VNR PROCESS

Successes, challenges, gaps and lessons learnt.

Lesson Learnt

1. Early Stakeholder Engagement is Key
2. Collaboration & Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships is critical for success of the VNR process
3. Clarity on methodology and guiding questions and outputs
4. Have a dedicated resource for gathering and analysing existing private sector data
5. Encourage participating companies to refer other companies, especially SMEs from their value chain
6. Continuous Tracking & data improvement.



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THANKS

Without the dedicated commitment from our sponsors, strategic partners, writing team and participating companies this report would not have been able to deliver on upon its business case for shared value creation.

Sponsored By:



Strategic Partners:



The Voluntary National Review Business Case

- 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.