United Nations Institute for Training and Research

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Business leading the way: the SDGs as a tool for sustainability and growth.

Deadline: 1 Jul 2017

Type:	Workshop
Location:	New York, United States of America
Date:	13 Jul 2017
Duration:	1 Days
Thematic Area:	Other
Website:	https://unitar.org/ny/
Price:	$0.00
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Partnership:	EcoVadis, , UN DESA, , SDG-Fund

BACKGROUND

Business leading the way: the SDGs as a tool for sustainability and growth

The achievement of the SDGs requires strong involvement and clear strategy to strengthen business awareness and inspire robust action in decreasing material footprint and advancing more sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Several representatives of key private sector organizations have been contacted by the United Nations to explore the possibility of co-organizing a workshop during the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2017 to foster increased understanding, support and commitment from the private sector towards the SDGs with an emphasis on collaboration and innovation. The workshop is envisioned to take place on 13 July 2017 during the HLPF SDGs Learning, Training and Practice segment which is jointly organized with UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research).

There is an interest to bring together close to 40 experienced private sector representatives from multinationals, SMEs, and some of their best performing suppliers and clients to further educate, advocate and inspire dedicated conversations with the private sector aimed at identifying lessons learned, best practices and challenges in incorporating the SDGs into indexes, ratings and/or standards already used by the private sector to report impact to boards of directors, clients, investors and consumers. There is also interest that the workshop could focus on addressing sustainable and socially responsible sourcing practices within global enterprises using the supply chain as leverage for action.

The UN 2030 Agenda gives the world the opportunity to be transformational and ambitious in the approach to business contributions to aspire to a better world in 14 years. Profit should not be a dirty word or practice. The profit making nature of the private sector should no longer be in contradiction with sustainability when business embraces “profit with a purpose”, in which the “purpose” should be the SDGs.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

The workshop aims concretely to:

1. Discuss concrete examples of how SDGs can be mainstreamed in private sector reporting by addressing already used indexes, ratings and/or standards by the private sector.

2. Generate more interest and concrete actions from the private sector in implementing the SDGs by sharing the value of communicating and incorporating SDGs among companies, their clients and suppliers (SMEs).

3. Showcase solutions and opportunities to generate traction and information exchange on companies' existing client and supplier base, increase market visibility and leadership as well as demonstrate better services by embracing the SDGs.

4. Support further partnerships among Member States and the private sector for successful SDGs implementation.

5. Launch a tangible voluntary year-long SDGs joint pilot initiative or programme that is measurable, visible and deliverable.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

For companies, the workshop could serve to help more than 40 members from the private sector identify expansion opportunities in their client base, visibility and leadership, contribution to the successful implementation of the SDGs as well as demonstrate services to potential clients and peers.

For the UN, the workshop will serve to convene a select group of leaders to offer concrete examples of what can be implemented with the active participation of the private sector, disseminate the SDGS in private sector networks and experiment with target setting in the private sector incorporating the SDGs.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Workshop Description:

The workshop in July 2017 during the HLPF will offer hands-on sessions to discuss practical approaches to incorporate the SDGs into business practices. It aims to explore the potential to kick off a "SDGs joint pilot initiative" over the following year (from 2017 to 2018) with the participation of a few pioneer companies that are committed towards integrating SDGs goals and targets into business monitoring and reporting indexes, ratings or standards that companies are already utilizing for their reporting on market impact to their various stakeholders.

Lessons learned from the pilot initiative could be reported back to the HLPF during its 2018 session when SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production) will have dedicated discussions.

A call to companies could begin identifying the baseline for actions to embrace the SDGs addressing best sustainability practices in investment, construction, apparel, procurement and marketing sectors, among others. Candid discussions on how to integrate the SDGs into business value chain processes can demonstrate that the SDGs could indeed be a business opportunity.

The involvement of institutions and companies such as EcoVadis, GRI, SIG and IPG as well as other companies developing indexes/ratings already used by the private sector to monitor their progress and market impact, can offer demonstrable evidence of the practical integration of the SDGs into existing business measuring indicators. The EcoVadis assessment, for instance, could allow multinationals to map their supply chain and understand which suppliers have the most potential for improvement on specific goals or targets. Companies could then use corrective actions with these suppliers to help them improve, and generate reporting on their actions in achieving the SDGs.

TARGETED AUDIENCE

Private Sector and the UN