

# Linking Voluntary Standards to Sustainable Development Goals



In collaboration with





# Linking Voluntary Standards to Sustainable Development Goals

## About the report

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations has called on the private sector to contribute more to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This report helps decision makers in the public and private sectors to understand where voluntary sustainability standards are best placed to contribute. It maps the linkages between these standards and each SDG goal, including its specific targets.

**Publisher:** International Trade Centre, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the European University Institute, the University of Amsterdam and the German Development Institute

**Title:** Linking Voluntary Standards with Sustainable Development Goals

**Publication date and place:** Geneva, October 2020

**Page count:** 73

**Language:** English

**ITC Document Number:** SIVC-20-53.E

**Citation** Citation Bissinger, K., Brandi, C., Cabrera de Leicht, S., Fiorini, M., Schleifer, P., Fernandez de Cordova, S., Ahmed, N. (2020). Linking Voluntary Standards to Sustainable Development Goals. International Trade Centre, Geneva, Switzerland.

For more information, contact: Sandra Cabrera de Leicht ([cabrera@intracen.org](mailto:cabrera@intracen.org))

For more information on Voluntary Sustainability Standards and the SDGs, see: [www.standardsmap.org](http://www.standardsmap.org)

ITC encourages the reprinting and translation of its publications to achieve wider dissemination. Short extracts of this paper may be freely reproduced, with due acknowledgment of the source. Permission should be requested for more extensive reproduction or translation. The reprinted or translated material should be sent to ITC.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

Digital image(s) on the cover: © Shutterstock and it was modified by ITC.

© International Trade Centre (ITC)

ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

## Foreword

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide our pathway to progress towards 2030 and will be critical in allowing us to 'build back better' after the global pandemic. This will require smart partnerships between the public and private sector where the focus must be on supporting responsible social, environmental and economic practices in the pursuit of sustainable and inclusive growth.

Voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) are currently at the centre of the approach of businesses to sustainability. Going beyond minimum legal standards established by governments, VSS focus on reducing adverse environmental and social effects and responding to the demands of various stakeholders, including consumers.

Using original data, the present report tracks the extent to which sustainable practices promoted by voluntary standards align with the SDGs. This innovative research provides a clear picture of how the private sector can work towards the SDG targets by adopting voluntary sustainability standards. It documents the overlap between existing VSS standards and the SDG targets and identifies further potential to better align VSS with additional sustainable development goals. The report demonstrates that policymakers can select from a large number of relevant voluntary sustainability standards – at country and sectoral levels – to contribute to the SDGs.

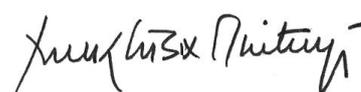
These insights are especially valuable for developing countries in their drive to for a future growth trajectory that is more sustainable and inclusive. Understanding the links between voluntary standards and the SDGs contributes to efforts to build a more resilient business ecosystem, create greener jobs, and build the business case for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to adopt greener technologies.

At the United Nations, we have emphasized the alignment between competitiveness, sustainability and inclusiveness as a means to maximize economic and development impact. This report supports and builds on that approach. Increased understanding of how voluntary sustainability standards can connect with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda makes it possible to widen and advance the effort to meet the SDGs, especially given that we have just under ten years to reach our goal.

This project was the result of successful collaboration between ITC, UNCTAD, the European University Institute, the German Development Institute and the University of Amsterdam. We trust that the findings in the report will be a useful resource for standard-setting organizations, policymakers, suppliers and lead firms as they strive to bring together the public and private sectors and promote sustainable and responsible supply chains in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Pamela Coke-Hamilton  
Executive Director  
International Trade Centre



Mukhisa Kituyi  
Secretary-General  
United Nations Conference  
on Trade and Development

## Acknowledgements

This is a publication of the International Trade Centre (ITC), prepared jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the European University Institute (EUI), the University of Amsterdam (UvA), and the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE).

It was prepared by Sandra Cabrera de Leicht (ITC), Matteo Fiorini (EUI), Clara Brandi (DIE), Philip Schleifer (UvA), Katharina Bissinger (formerly DIE), Niematallah Elfatih Ahmed Elamin (UNCTAD) and Santiago Fernandez de Cordova (UNCTAD).

Joseph Wozniak (ITC), Mathieu Lamolle (ITC), Anders Aeroe (ITC), Siti Ruby Lambert (UNCTAD) and Aimee Russillo (LiSeed) provided valuable comments and feedback.

Data were provided by the Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD) team of ITC. Publication of the report was made possible by the support of the Swiss and German Governments. Natalie Domeisen led the editorial and design production. Julie Wolf edited the report. Production contributors included, Anne Griffin, Sandra Cabrera de Leicht, Vicheth Christophe Khou, Duc Dang, Gregory Sampson, Matteo Fiorini and Andrew Silva. Franco Iacovino provided layout services and Serge Adeagbo the digital printing services.

This report builds on two previous reports, the ITC Report 'Social and Environmental Standards: Contributing to More Sustainable Value Chains' (ITC 2016) and the third UNFSS Flagship Report: 'Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS), Trade and Sustainable Development' (UNFSS 2018).

## Contents

Foreword		iii
Acknowledgements		iv
Acronyms		vii
Executive summary		viii
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Linking business to the development agenda via standards</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Bridging two worlds – standards and development goals</b>	<b>3</b>
	The landscape of voluntary sustainability standards	3
	Connecting requirements in standards to SDG targets	3
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Identifying connections between standards and goals</b>	<b>6</b>
	Links at SDG level	8
	Links with SDG targets	11
	Links at country and sector levels	32
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Charting the way forward</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendices</b>		<b>39</b>
Appendix I	Connections between SDG 5 and VSS requirements	39
Appendix II	Additional figures on VSS and SDGs	41
Appendix III	The SDGs and their targets	42
Appendix IV	Linkages at the level of individual VSS	49
Appendix V	Additional tables on VSS-SDG linkage by countries and sectors	60
<b>References</b>		<b>62</b>

## Boxes, Tables, Figures

Box 1	Defining voluntary sustainability standards	1
Box 2	Precision and correspondence	4
Box 3	Costa Rica's integrated efforts on the SDG agenda	34
Table A1	Connections between SDG 5 and VSS requirements	39
Table A2	Linkages at the level of individual VSS	49
Table A3	Geographic distribution of VSS with positive linkage across SDGs. Focus on top 5 exporters per region	60
Table A4	Sectoral distribution of VSS with positive linkage across SDGs.	61
Figure 1	Links between voluntary standards and SDGs	7
Figure 2	The 17 SDGs in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	8
Figure 3	Voluntary standards linked to each SDG	9
Figure 4	15 voluntary standards most linked with SDG 5	10
Figure 5	SDG 1 targets – related voluntary standards	11
Figure 6	SDG 2 targets – related voluntary standards	12
Figure 7	SDG 3 targets – related voluntary standards	13
Figure 8	SDG 4 targets – related voluntary standards	14
Figure 9	SDG 5 targets – related voluntary standards	15
Figure 10	SDG 6 targets – related voluntary standards	16
Figure 11	SDG 7 targets – related voluntary standards	17
Figure 12	SDG 8 targets – related voluntary standards	19
Figure 13	SDG 9 targets – related voluntary standards	20
Figure 14	SDG 10 targets – related voluntary standards	22
Figure 15	SDG 11 targets – related voluntary standards	23
Figure 16	SDG 12 targets – related voluntary standards	25
Figure 17	SDG 13 targets – related voluntary standards	26
Figure 18	SDG 14 targets – related voluntary standards	28
Figure 19	SDG 15 targets – related voluntary standards	30
Figure 20	SDG 16 targets – related voluntary standards	32
Figure 21	VSS with links to SDG 8, by country	33
Figure 22	Voluntary standards related to SDG 8, by sector	35
Figure A1	Number of VSS with linkages, by SDGs	41

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_8714](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_8714)

