



Setting the Next Generation of Sustainability Goals

OCTOBER 2019



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Publisher

The National Association for environmental, health, safety, and sustainability (EHS&S) Management (NAEM) empowers corporate leaders to advance environmental stewardship, create safe and healthy workplaces and promote global sustainability. As the leading business community for EHS&S decision-makers, we provide engaging forums, a curated network, peer benchmarking, research insights and tools for solving today's corporate EHS&S management challenges. Visit us online at naem.org.

About This Report

The announcement of a company's latest set of corporate sustainability goals is about more than just the numbers themselves. Behind each new target is months of hard work to identify priorities, align resources and create organizational commitment to the future. This report captures insights from the internal leaders who are stewarding this process from idea to reality.

Over the course of the past decade, external sustainability reporting has gone from a leading-edge practice to a business norm. Today, 86% of the companies listed on the S&P 500® index issue a sustainability report, up from only 20% in 2011. The bonanza of reporting activity has not only provided greater transparency on corporate behavior, but has helped sustainability overcome its roots as a public relations activity to become an integrated part of business strategy.

With the advent of materiality as a strategic planning construct for sustainability, companies are now leveraging detailed market analyses to identify the issues that most affect them, and that they can most impact. The result has been a refinement in how companies set their sustainability agendas, define their goals, manage their programs and respond to external requests for information.

As Craig Riley, Director of Sustainability Services for AECOM, said at NAEM's 2019 Sustainability Impact conference, "We're in a new era of corporate sustainability: one where material issues are actually being managed deeply and addressed by companies in a variety of manners; where reporting and disclosure has become a significant component of a company's expenses and its ongoing communications; and where companies are expected to be ever more transparent. In this space, companies set goals and if you're doing them right, the goal-setting process can be one of the most complex aspects of sustainability management today."

This report is an opportunity for EHS&S leaders to hear how their peers are setting priorities, framing their goals and engaging stakeholders across the business in support of the goal-setting process. We hope this benchmark of how the companies complete this process will inform some of your thinking and inspire your efforts as you set your sights on the next generation of targets.

Research Approach

This report synthesizes results from three recent NAEM research initiatives on how companies set their sustainability goals. Taken together, this information paints a directional portrait of where corporate sustainability goal-setting stands today, what processes companies are using to gain internal alignment around goals, how mature companies are pushing the horizon and what emerging issues will likely be on the agenda in the future.

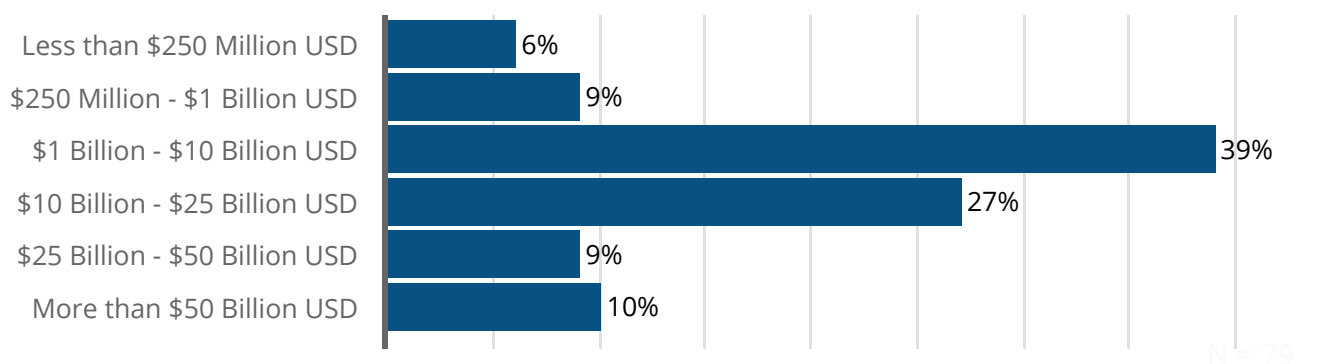
The following is a brief summary of each of these projects, with notes on the respective approach and analysis.

NAEM's 2018 Trends Survey

The first set of data derives from NAEM's biannual survey on EHS&S trends, which was fielded in August 2018 and included responses from 79 in-house EHS&S leaders from across industries. The demographic information that follows is a profile of the companies who responded to this survey.

To understand the prevalence of several activities related to goal-setting and reporting, respondents were asked to indicate whether they had an existing program in place ("Yes/No"), or whether they are in the piloting or planning stage of launching such a program over the next three years ("Evaluating").

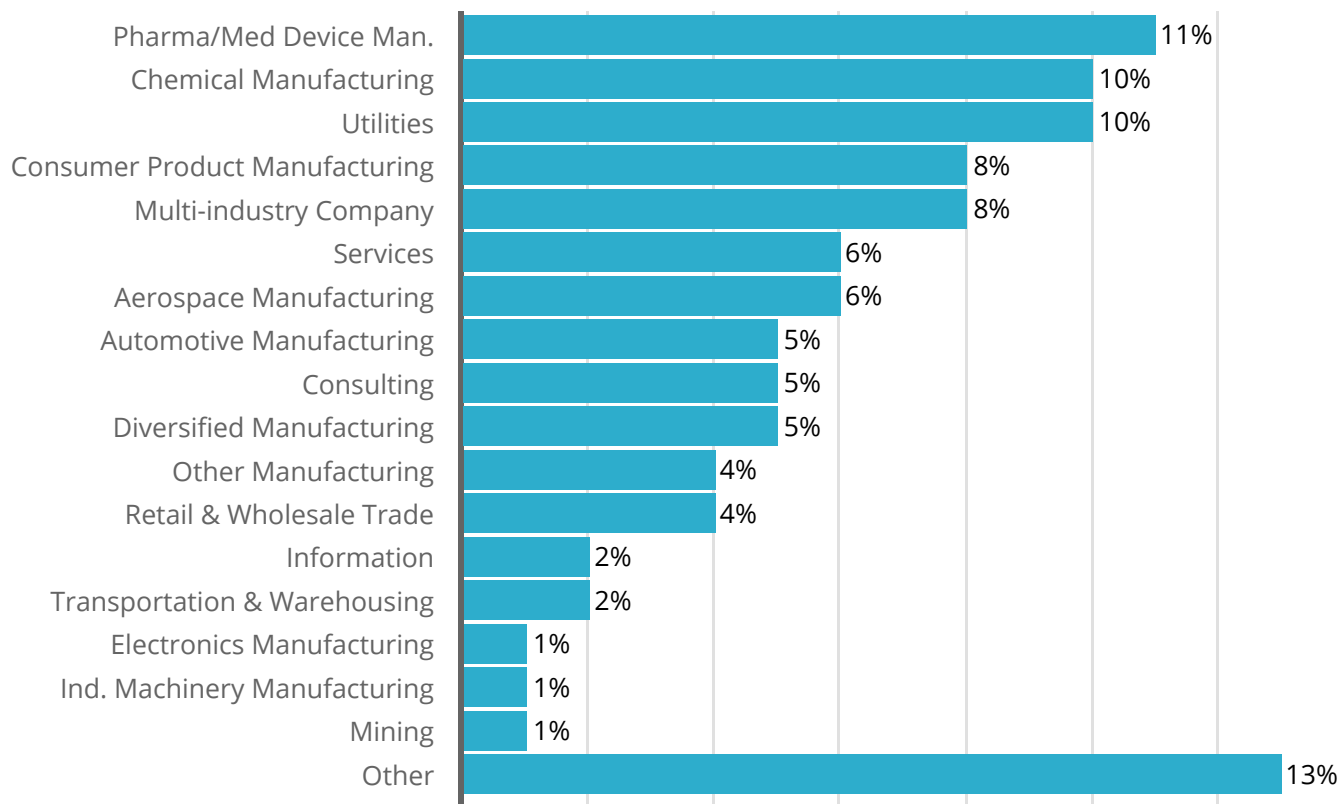
Company Annual Revenue



Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 79

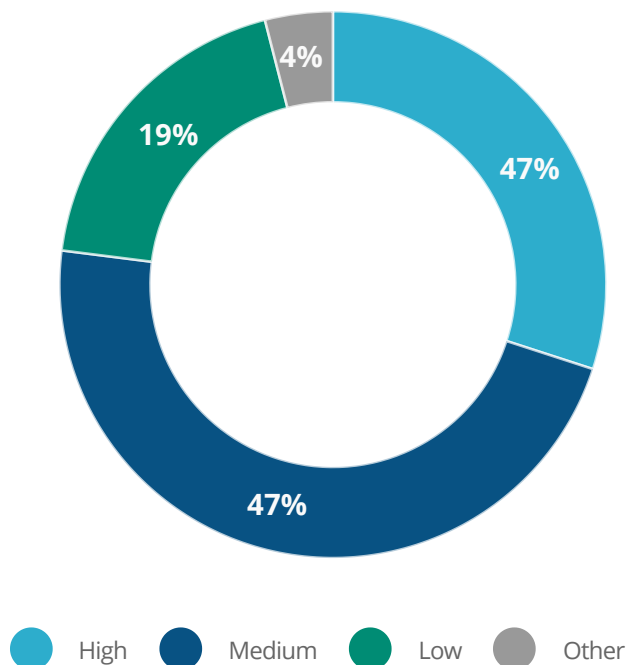
Industry Sector



Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 79

Maturity of Sustainability Program



Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 79

Research Approach

Interviews With Corporate Sustainability Leaders

The third set of information in this report comes from interviews with corporate sustainability leaders at NAEM's 2019 Sustainability Impact Conference. The program details supplied by these professionals are incorporated here as examples and for context. By sharing their perspectives with us, these contributors and their respective companies were neither responsible for the outcome of these findings, nor explicitly endorsed the veracity of the results.

Live Poll at NAEM's 2019 Sustainability Impact Conference

The second set of data presented here comes from a live poll of attendees at NAEM's 2019 Sustainability Impact Conference. The interactive poll, which targeted in-house environment, health, safety and sustainability (EHS&S) leaders, was used on-site to relate to a panel discussion among experts on the goal-setting process. No demographic information is available for these results, but the conference attendees represented a variety of industry sectors, company sizes and maturity levels.

Abbott Laboratories
Alcon Laboratories
Ameren
American Electric Power
Amphenol Corporation
Axalta Coating Systems

Baxter
BD
Best Buy Co. Inc.
BNSF Railway Co.
Bureau Veritas North America Inc.
Cabot Oil & Gas Corp

Company Classification



66%	Publicly traded
20%	Privately held
6%	Public sector / government
3%	Non-governmental organization
5%	Other

Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 79

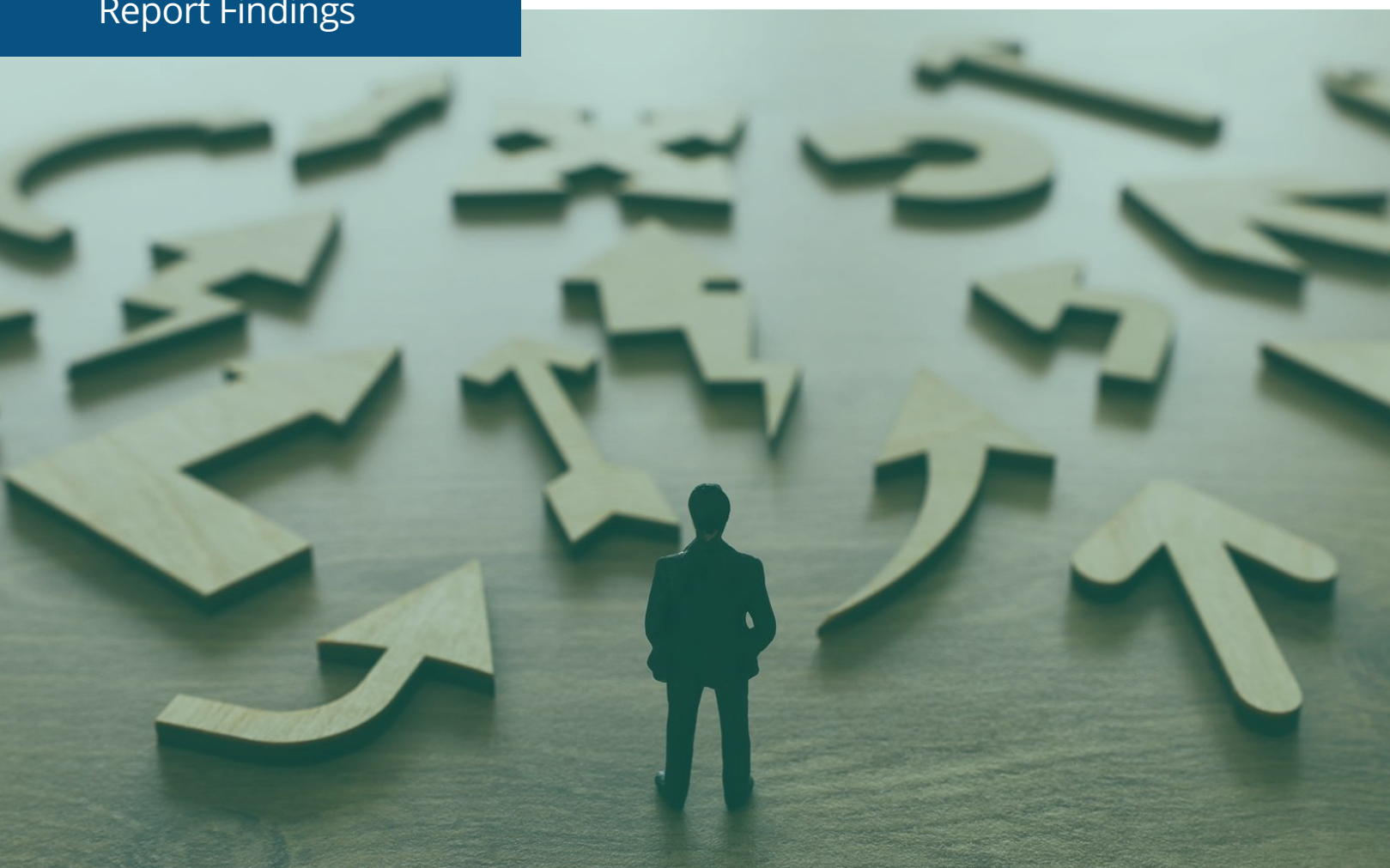
Research Approach

Cabot Oil & Gas Corp
CF Industries Holdings Inc.
Charter Dura-Bar Inc.
Charter Steel
CHS Inc.
City of Milwaukee
Costco Wholesale
Cox Enterprises
Dominion Energy Inc.
Duke Energy
DuPont
Eli Lilly and Company
Energy Transfer
Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas
Flex
Freeman
GE Healthcare
General Mills Inc.
General Motors
Geronimo Energy
Great Dane
IBM Corp.
IFF
Innophos
Inpro Corp.
ITW
Johnson Controls

Juno Therapeutics
Kellogg Co.
Lidl US
Mary Kay Inc.
Merit Medical Systems Inc.
MilliporeSigma
Molson Coors Brewing Co.
Novartis Business Services
Olin Corp.
ONEOK Inc.
Orlando Utilities Commission
Oshkosh Corp.
Pfizer Inc.
Rockwell Automation Inc.
SC Johnson & Son Inc.
Schneider Electric SE
SECURA Insurance
Silgan Containers Manufacturing Corporation
Sloan
Smith & Nephew Inc.
Stepan Co.
Takeda Pharmaceutical Co.Limited
United Airlines
United States Postal Service
Washington River Protection Solutions
WI DNR
Willow Valley Communities

Editorial Practices

The results presented in this report were independently researched and analyzed by NAEM. The sponsor of this report, AECOM, recommended interview questions for the peer experts, but did not influence the analysis, nor the content of the published results.



Business Drivers and Expectations

As reporting efforts have grown more robust, and investors seek more meaningful insight into how companies are managing their ESG risks and opportunities, materiality assessments have become a standard tool for establishing sustainability priorities. What matters to the stakeholders who contribute to these analyses is among the key drivers influencing the sustainability agendas at companies such as Baxter, Flex and General Mills.

Within companies, feedback on the issues of concern to the company filters through the functions that support the sustainability efforts (e.g., investor relations, government affairs), through customer inquiries, external surveys and social media, and through relationships with non-governmental organizations such as Ceres and the World Wildlife Fund.

Customers are driving corporate sustainability efforts

Customer inquiries are the most important stakeholder group, according to those who contributed to this research.

“Some of our large customers expect green products,” said Rob Currie, Senior Director of Corporate Environment, Health & Safety at Baxter Healthcare, a medical device manufacturer. “A very large customer in the United Kingdom is very focused on the carbon footprint of products as well as on human rights, so we’ve got to answer directly to their expectations and requirements.”

Customers are communicating their environmental and sustainability requirements with their suppliers in a variety of ways, Mr. Currie said, including requests for proposals, which often contain their environmentally preferred purchasing requirements and requests for product environmental data.

About Baxter Healthcare Corp.

Every day, millions of patients and caregivers rely on Baxter’s leading portfolio of critical care, nutrition, renal, hospital and surgical products. For more than 85 years, Baxter has operated at the critical intersection where innovations that save and sustain lives meet the healthcare providers that make it happen. With products, technologies and therapies available in more than 100 countries, Baxter’s employees worldwide are building upon the company’s rich heritage of medical breakthroughs to advance the next generation of transformative healthcare innovations.

About General Mills Inc.

General Mills is a leading global food company based in Minneapolis, Minn. It has a portfolio of well-known brands such as Cheerios, Yoplait, Old El Paso, Pillsbury, Nature Valley and Betty Crocker. With brands such as Annie’s Organic and Cascadian Farms, the company is also the second largest manufacturer of natural and organic products in the U.S.

About Flex

Flex designs and builds intelligent products globally, spanning several industries such as automotive, healthcare, communications, energy and appliances. With approximately 200,000 employees across 30 countries, Flex provides innovative design, engineering, manufacturing, real-time supply chain insight and logistics services to companies across industries and markets.

Business Drivers and Expectations

For global food company General Mills, strong consumer concern is intrinsic to the category, according to Diane Curelli, Manager of Environmental Risk & Sustainability with the company.

“We know that people want to know where their food is coming from, which is why our consumers are really our biggest drivers...they want to know, and they want to purchase from a company that’s responsible,” she said.

Top Drivers Influencing Sustainability Goal-Setting



- 22%** Customer demands
- 17%** Operational efficiency
- 16%** Business resiliency
- 14%** Investor inquiries
- 13%** Peer benchmarking
- 11%** Material issues

Source: Live Poll at NAEM's 2019 Sustainability Impact Conference

N = 64

Investors have joined the conversation—and are being heard

The explosion of interest in ESG issues by mainstream investors is also rapidly changing the value proposition for sustainability programs. Wall Street’s interest in sustainability performance is now factoring strongly into which issues companies deem material, and therefore which ones they choose to address.

Business Drivers and Expectations

According to data from NAEM's 2018 survey on leading-edge practices in EHS&S management, 71% of those surveyed are disclosing their metrics to third-party frameworks such as the CDP, Dow Jones Sustainability Index or the Global Reporting Initiative.



Our company publishes a sustainability report, or is planning to:

84%

N = 78



Our company reports to third-party sustainability frameworks such as CDP, DJSI, GRI, or is planning to:

76%

N = 77

Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

Mr. Currie remarked on the sea change this represents for how companies frame their sustainability programs in terms of the business value they create.

"We just had a meeting with [our] Investor Relations [team] and now they're coming to us, and saying, "Hey, this is important to our investors, so how are we going to address it on our Investor Relations webpage?"

Over the past few years, the global design and manufacturing company Flex has increased the amount of sustainability information it discloses to investors via its Securities and Exchange Commission filings.

Sustainability governance, strategy, management system, solutions and key achievements are included, along with water- and carbon-related risks and opportunities, according to Global Manager of Sustainability Barjouth Aguilar.

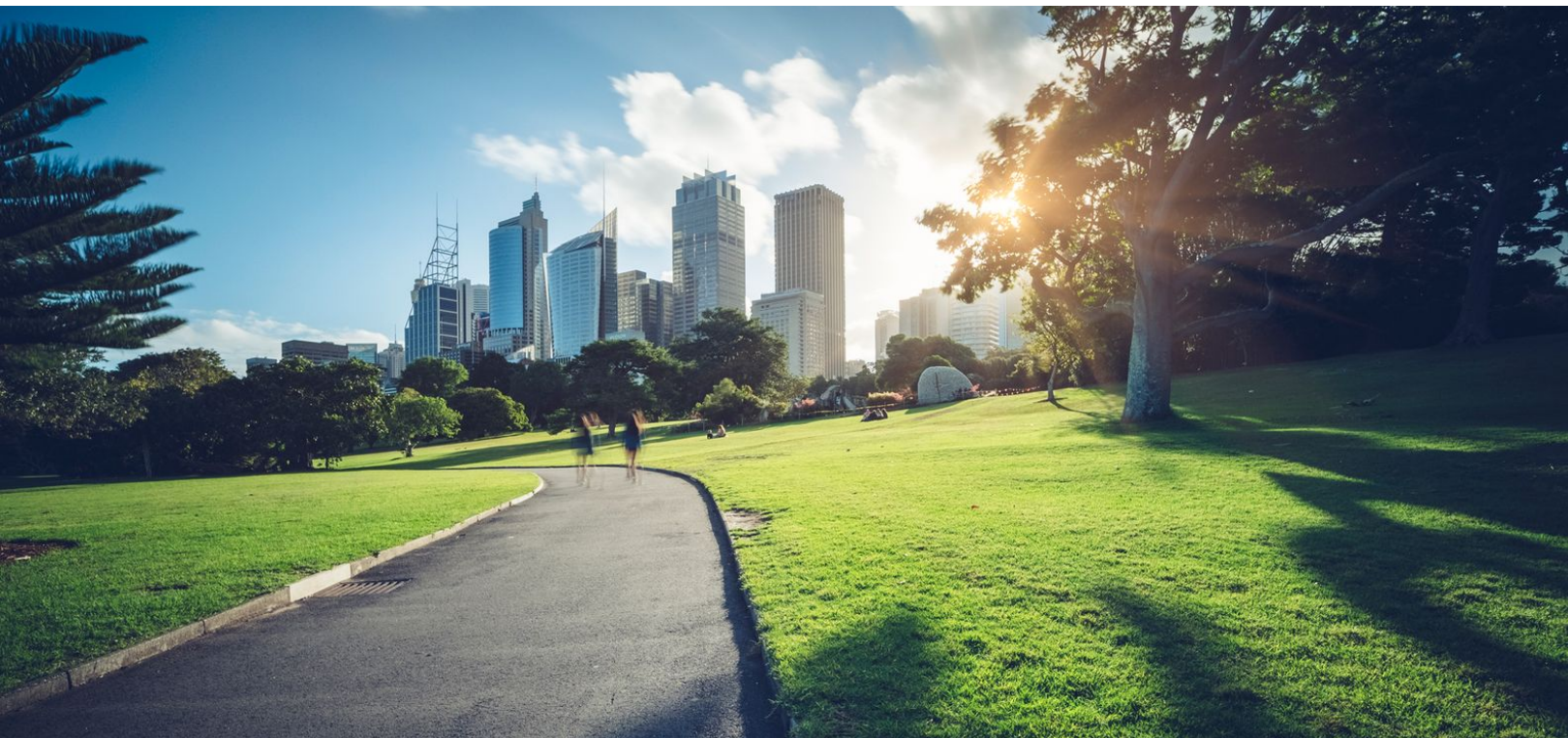
Community stakeholders increasingly expect companies to consider the impact of their operations on society

At the basis of every stakeholder map, of course, are the communities in which companies operate, and those they impact along the value chain.

“It definitely has evolved,” Mr. Currie said. It used to be much more internally focused. Now, it’s much more supply chain, value chain and externally focused.”

For Ms. Curelli, this is captured by what the company calls the “supply chain imperative,” which not only takes the company’s own operations into account, but also the viability of agriculture generally.

“There is an alarming stat by the United Nations that we really only have 60 harvests left,” she said. “As populations increase and livelihoods improve, there will be a significant increase in demand for food, but a decrease in the availability and condition of our resources. So, it’s an interesting balance being driven by growth and supply chain resiliency in where we’re going with the business.”





The Goal-Setting Process

Setting sustainability goals takes time—and a lot of it

Whether companies use a structured process for goal-setting or one that depends on the particular issue at hand, setting sustainability targets requires lots of dialogue and benchmarking.

At Baxter, the goal-setting process involves collaboration between a cross-functional Corporate Responsibility Council, composed of vice presidents from across the business. The corporate EHS&S group leads the council and serves as the subject matter experts for the process.

The Goal-Setting Process

The council is responsible for conducting an upfront sustainability program and reporting gap analysis. This looks at important, timely topics and analyzes data from such entities as: the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), CDP, financial surveys, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

"The idea is to identify opportunities and gaps within our sustainability programs, assessing what might rise to next-generation goal level," Mr. Currie said. "Ultimately the analysis informs what we should be managing and improving, and where we need stronger engagement."

At General Mills, a formal sustainability governance board oversees the goal-setting process and makes the ultimate decisions. For each of the issues that arises from the initial materiality assessment, Ms. Curelli's sustainability team engages with internal experts to conduct the analysis or scientific modeling required to understand what a target in that area should look like. It then seeks perspectives from across functions to understand the implications the goal could have on the business.

"Our soil scientist will engage with R&D, and with our regulatory affairs groups as well to determine where the risks are, where we want to start to drive, and then we'll take it to the [sustainability governance] board and work through that process," Ms. Curelli explained.

Not surprisingly, all of this input and alignment takes time: For about half of responding companies (45%), the goal-setting process takes a year or less. For an additional 29%, however, it can take more than a year.

Q: How long does the goal-setting process take?



Source: Live Poll at NAEM's 2019 Sustainability Impact Conference

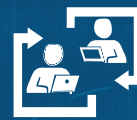
Companies are leveraging stakeholder input to set priorities

Inviting stakeholders to weigh in on sustainability programs is not a new practice, but using materiality assessments to hone program priorities is rapidly becoming an invaluable part of the goal-setting process.

Among those surveyed in 2018, 44% of respondents said their company currently defines its EHS&S strategy based on a formal materiality assessment, and an additional 24% are evaluating whether to adopt the practice.

One reason for the expanding use of this tool is the requirement by the GRI for companies to report on all of their “material” issues.

For Baxter, the process is also a chance to challenge the company’s program priorities to ensure a strong focus on what matters most to the business and to their stakeholders. Based on their most recent assessment, these include things such as: climate change, diversity and inclusion, ethics and compliance, innovation and quality, and patient safety.



79%
of companies engage external stakeholders as part of its strategic planning process, or are planning to do so.

Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 79



68%
of companies define their EHS&S strategies based upon a formal materiality assessment, or are planning to do so.

Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 79

Getting buy-in for sustainability goals touches leaders at all levels of the organization

Board-level engagement with sustainability programs is approaching a tipping point, according to NAEM's trends research, with 83% of those surveyed saying that their Board of Directors either reviews its sustainability metrics (61%) or is planning to do so (22%).

Before that information reaches the Board, however, it has likely received buy-in from leaders from across the business, beginning with the members of the company's cross-functional Corporate Responsibility Council. Using the prioritized issues from the materiality assessment, Baxter then sets goals that support each priority.

"We sit down with every goal owner, using a summary working document with detailed backup information provided by the gap analysis and formulate the goals. We then put all the proposed next-generation goals before the Corporate Responsibility Council and say, 'Okay, are these the right goal and priorities?'"



**Among 83%
of companies, the
Board of Directors
reviews the
sustainability
metrics, or is
planning to do so.**

Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 79

Program Spotlight:

At Flex, Support of Sustainability Initiatives Starts at the Top

Flex is a global company that designs and builds intelligent products for a variety of industries, including automotive, communications, cloud, energy and healthcare, to name a few. The company provides innovative design, engineering, manufacturing, real-time supply chain insight and logistics services to customers around the globe. The company's sustainability program is designed to engage all levels of the organization around five cornerstones: people, community, environment, innovation and integrity. Flex is a participant in the United Nations' Global Compact (UNGC), the world's largest sustainability initiative, and a constituent of the FTSE4Good Index.

With 20 sustainability goals aligned to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (U.N. SDGs), Flex has made an organizational commitment to meeting the highest sustainability standards across its operations and supply chain.

Each executive signed off the goals, according to Global Manager of Sustainability Barjouth Aguilar.

For example, achieving environmental goals, including energy and GHG reduction, falls under the Executive Vice President of Strategy and Resources (including real estate and facilities), who reports to their CEO, she said. Annual performance reviews measure and assess progress with global programs, projects and targets, and like other organizations, the company's annual merit process is based on performance against specific criteria. For employees in departments responsible for sustainability objectives, metrics are built into their annual performance reviews, figuring into bonus compensation.

The ultimate responsibility for sustainability-related issues, however, resides with the audit committee of the company's Board of Directors. The charter for the audit committee includes, among other activities: the responsibility to review legal and regulatory matters that may have a significant impact on financial statements, and the responsibility to assess the steps management has taken to minimize risks. As such, the audit committee is best positioned to oversee the company's sustainability program, including climate- and water-related issues.

The Board of Directors also conducts an annual strategic review of sustainability-related risks and opportunities, including initiatives that increase the company's on-site solar power capacity and generation.



Current Goals

Goals come in all forms, and not all of them are external

“They can be operations-based. They can be science-based. They can be aligned to the SDGs. They can be absolute reduction or intensity reduction goals. They can be incremental or more aspirational. They can be public or internal. But one thing for sure, they can also become a rallying cry and a measuring stick to your company in matters that are both positive and negative for the way you’re perceived.” — Craig Riley, AECOM

Current Goals

While the backbone to reporting is the goal-setting process, even those companies who don't have publicly communicated goals may have internal targets for the sustainability performance. Based on the results of the live poll at NAEM's 2019 Sustainability Impact conference, 20% of respondents have internally-focused sustainability goals only.

They also sunset at different times, as General Mills' current goals demonstrate. Based on the evolution of the stakeholder map and the issues that are important to them, the company's goals are a roadmap for their journey. Among the next to come of age are those related to supply chain resiliency, which as Ms. Curelli explained, are central to both the company's viability as well as to its customers' well-being.

Q: Which of the following goals do you have?

40%	A mix of public and internal
24%	No goals
20%	Internal only
16%	Public

N = 25

Source: Live Poll at NAEM's 2019 Sustainability Impact Conference

General Mills Inc. Sustainability Commitments

Goal Date	Description	Year Set
2020	Sustainably source 100% of our 10 priority ingredients	2013
2021	Protect and establish +100,000 acres of pollinator habitat	2015
2025	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions across our full value chain by 28%	2015
2025	Help restore key at-risk watersheds to health	2014
2025	Achieve zero waste to landfill at owned production facilities	2015
2030	100% of our packaging to be recyclable by design	2019
2030	Advance Regenerative Agriculture on 1MM acres	2019

Leadership companies are aligning their goals with the U.N. SDGs

One of the most ambitious ways to ensure scalability of a company's commitments to their material issues is aligning their work with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

This set of impact-oriented targets is providing a new way for Flex to focus its sustainability strategy, a process which the company started in 2015. According to Ms. Aguilar, the global sustainability team worked with a team members across various functions to define "SMART" goals under the Flex 20 by 2020 umbrella.

These goals included targets for a broad set of issues, from employee development, management system audits, rest day compliance, incident rate reduction and increased volunteer hours, to CO2 emissions reductions, increased renewable energy use and supplier screening.

The team mapped its goals to the U.N. SDGs based on guidance from GRI, WBCSD and the U.N. Global Compact. They discovered that while most of their goals were contributing in some way to all of the SDGs, there were four in particular that best aligned with its business strategy: quality education (SDG 4), clean energy (SDG 7), decent work (SDG 8) and responsible consumption (SDG 12).



63%

Our company is aligning, or is planning to align, its goals around the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals

Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 79

How Flex Integrates its Goals with SDG4

Through the Flex 20 by 2020 development goal and its employee scholarship program, the company contributes to the U.N. SDG 4, quality education. Leveraging its supply chain scope, the company encourages its suppliers to provide the same educational resources and opportunities. Flex also provides skills training to its suppliers' employees through its Worker Empowerment Training Program.

- **Target 4.3: Equal access to quality education** | Flex supports vocational education and training programs, and provides funding for employee education.
- **Target 4.4: Relevant skills for employment** | Flex offers technical and vocational guidance, ensuring that company-supported education and vocational training programs are equally available and accessible to all groups. The company engages with educational institutions to develop or support programs for vocational training, employment skills and educational development, and improve teaching technical skills by providing innovative solutions — complementing rather than substituting government and public sector action.

Once developed, the targets were submitted for approval to the company's executive leadership team, CEO and Board of Directors.

This approach was applied to the Flex 20 by 2020 goals, new global programs, the Flex Foundation strategy and management, as well as to community efforts.

Greenhouse gas goals are increasingly ambitious and science-based

Where the early greenhouse gas goals were limited to internal operations or units of production, companies are increasingly ambitious in their scope and impact.

“We believe — and scientists agree — that in order to halt or slow climate change, we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” said Ms. Curelli of General Mills. To do its part toward keeping global temperatures from rising beyond 2-degrees Celsius, the company was one of the first to set a science-based target. It is working toward sustainable emissions levels by 2050 and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 28% by 2025 across its full value chain.

“This one is hard,” Ms. Curelli admitted.

Because agriculture is the biggest aspect to their footprint, and it falls within Scope 3, the company is challenged to work in new ways to affect that impact.

Where General Mills led the pack, others are now following. Indeed, 65% of those surveyed by NAEM have either adopted a science-based target or are planning to do so.

Align With the SDGs

Visit unglobalcompact.org to learn how to align your sustainability goals with the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.



Mr. Currie agreed, adding that the movement is affecting companies at all levels.

“We’re definitely going to be looking at science-based goals,” he said. “I think that’s an imperative. We need to take a close look at being carbon neutral or purchasing a 100% globally renewable energy goals. But again, science-based is key.”

Some goals are reinventing business models or reshaping entire systems

As sustainability moves deeper upstream within companies, the goals are increasingly tied to value creation.

Baxter’s product innovation goal is a good example of this: The company plans to reduce the material in three of its products or therapies by 15%. The company’s access to healthcare goals are also driving innovation in how the company delivers its services.

One strategy implemented is to “pre-place” medical products in locations where natural disasters are predicted, such as hurricanes. Another innovation is to change how they deliver services to people in rural areas, such as to kidney dialysis patients in rural China.

“You’ve got to come up with a whole different business model in terms of how you do that, which is what we’ve done in China and are now doing in Indonesia, in Guatemala, and other places.”



65%
**of companies have
adopted science-based
targets for GHG
emission goals or are
planning to do so**

Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 79

Current Goals

Innovation is even finding its way into packaging goals.

“While we’ve already made important strides in producing packaging that is kind to the environment — in 2018 in the U.S. 89% of our packaging was already recyclable by design — our most recent ambition addresses our work to have 100% of our packaging be recyclable by design by 2030,” Ms. Curelli said.

“Taking this step is an important one in preserving the natural resources we depend on as a global food company.”

The company also has made a commitment to advance the adoption of Regenerative Agriculture practices on one million acres by 2030.

“This is ambitious. But we know that we have the opportunity to have impact with our scale and it’s the right thing to do for our business, our consumers and the planet,” she said.

Read More





Looking Forward

Climate change is becoming an issue of major concern

As NAEM documented in its 2014 Planning for a Sustainable Future report, climate change has become a recognized risk to businesses, and one that they are actively addressing as such. And in its most recent trends survey, NAEM found that 62% of responding companies are publicly describing this risk or are planning to do so.

It's perhaps not surprising, then, that respondents to NAEM's live poll at the 2019 Sustainability Impact conference said that going forward, climate mitigation rose to the top of the list of areas for future goal-setting efforts.

Looking Forward

There will be increased integration of sustainability goals and business strategy

Another key shift that contributors said will continue is the integration of sustainability programs with business strategy and external communications.

Doing so is not only smart strategy, but it's also in line with what investors increasingly expect.

"They expect transparency, and it needs to be driven by science because you need to be able to prove what you're doing," Ms. Curelli observed. "For us, and I think a lot of companies, it is really going to be driven by growth and resiliency, so that we can still operate for another 150 years."



42%
Our company includes sustainability data in its 10K filing, or is planning to do so.

N = 74



49%
Our company publishes an integrated sustainability report, or is planning to do so.

Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 77



62%
Our company has publicly stated climate change as a business risk, or are planning to do so.

Source: NAEM's 2018 Trends research

N = 77

Q: Which is your company planning to address in the future?

- 22%** Climate mitigation
- 18%** Circular economy
- 14%** Water scarcity
- 12%** Climate adaptation
- 8%** Human rights
- 7%** Biodiversity
- 6%** Income equality
- 6%** Ocean plastics
- 6%** Other

N = 50

Source: Live Poll at NAEM's 2019 Sustainability Impact Conference



Lessons Learned

Set your priorities and stick to them

For those who have been on the front lines of building programs from within, the key to success is focus.

“Bite off what you can chew,” Mr. Currie said, “and if you start with the materiality assessment, really sharpen the pencil there. Stay focused on what is truly material to your company and stakeholders.”

Ms. Curelli agreed, adding that setting priorities has helped her company’s programs mature.

“We have a new Chief Sustainability Officer and I’ve really enjoyed watching her take a look at what we’re doing and to say that less is more. You can only do so much well, so being able to figure out what you want to prioritize and work on is really important,” she said.

Align your sustainability goals with the business strategy

To better integrate your program (and its goals) into the fabric of your business, Mr. Currie advised sustainability managers to understand what your customers need and how your work supports that.

“Weave the customer expectations requirements into the goals every time. The more you [do], the more you’re going to be integrated with the business, and the more buy-in, the more support, the more enthusiasm you’re going to get,” he said.

“We tried to align our priorities with the company’s priorities,” he recalled, “Understand your mission, vision, pillars — whatever your company calls them call them —and align, align, align.”

Don’t be afraid to ask for help

As the scope of responsibilities continue to grow for sustainability professionals, there may not be enough time to do it all by yourself, Ms. Curelli advised.

She recommended seeking support from consultant experts, joining organizations that are bringing companies together to solve shared challenges, or taking advantage of industry initiatives that offer guidance to those who are on that path.

“You can’t do everything,” she said. “Don’t be afraid to be ambitious, and don’t be afraid to ask for help.”

Acknowledgments

Contributors

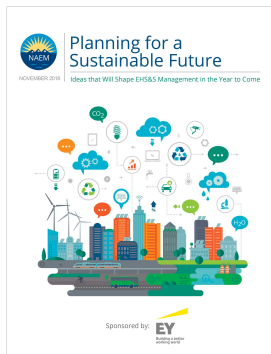
NAEM extends its deepest appreciation to the following experts who contributed their knowledge and perspectives to this report.

- **Rob Currie**, Senior Director of Corporate Environment, Health & Safety at Baxter Healthcare Corp.
- **Diane Curelli**, Manager of Environmental Risk & Sustainability at General Mills Inc.
- **Barjouth Aguilar**, Global Manager of Sustainability at Flex

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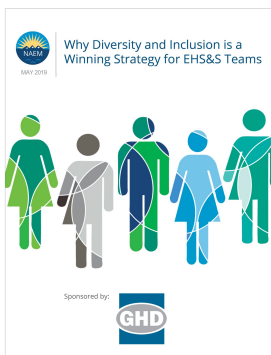
The logo for AECOM, featuring the word "AECOM" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "E" is stylized with three horizontal bars.

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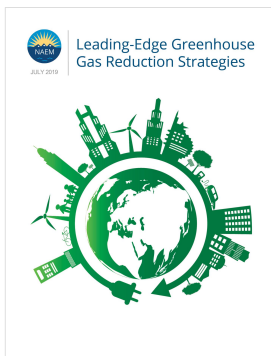
Planning for a Sustainable Future

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