



In Pursuit of Long-Term Sustainability

To BCG's network around the world,

Among the most important responsibilities of the CEO and corporate board today are understanding which sustainability issues are most pressing, developing a plan to address them, and delivering on that plan. In fact, boards are pushing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues higher than ever on their agendas. But are they making enough progress in understanding and overseeing these issues, and engaging with management on them?

To find out, we recently teamed up with the INSEAD Corporate Governance Centre to conduct multiyear pulse check surveys and interviews. For our first report, [Directors Can Up Their Game on Environmental, Social, and Governance Issues](#), we interviewed more than 50 experienced directors, together serving on over 150 corporate boards, and surveyed 122 board members. The outreach resulted in revealing insights:

- About 70% of respondents reported that their boards are only moderately or not at all effective at integrating ESG into company strategy and governance.
- Among companies with an official net-zero commitment, only 55% of directors reported that their organizations have prepared and published a plan for reaching that goal.
- The biggest threat to delivering on ESG goals, according to 43% of respondents, is companies' inability to execute.

The report also lays out how boards can take thoughtful action to help the companies they govern build sustainable business models that will lead to long-term value.

BCG Annual Sustainability Report: A Time to Lead

Our collaboration with INSEAD fits in with our larger efforts to help companies succeed in setting and achieving ESG commitments—and with our own ESG and sustainability goals at BCG. We’ve just released our [Annual Sustainability Report](#), which highlights how we have delivered on our ESG targets. And in my first year as CEO, I have to say that I feel immensely proud of our accomplishments in 2021.

Here are a handful of highlights:

- We delivered more than 1,300 social impact consulting projects to over 650 clients, and we invested more than \$320 million of BCG resources to help tackle the world’s greatest societal challenges.
- We were the exclusive consulting partner for COP26 and launched new partnerships with the First Movers Coalition and Breakthrough Energy Catalyst, aimed at advancing climate technologies. And within the firm, we validated our emissions reduction target—to cut in half our emissions intensity by 2025—with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and were recognized for our leadership as the only management consultancy to earn a place on the CDP Climate A-List.
- We increased the proportion of women joining the firm overall from 44% to 48% and maintained equal promotion and retention rates for men and women on our consulting teams.

Our environmental and societal challenges are only growing more urgent, and senior leaders and boards of directors are feeling the pressure from stakeholders to play a more influential role. It’s a work in progress for us all as we strive day to day to help build a sustainable and inclusive future and make a difference in society.

Please see below to read our full sustainability report, along with other resources I’ve found helpful.

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christoph', written in a cursive, fluid style.

Christoph Schweizer
Chief Executive Officer

Further Reading



A Time to Lead: 2021 Annual Sustainability Report

BCG details how it is stepping up to respond to sustainability challenges and outlines the firm's programs, policies, and performance on critical environmental, social, and governance topics.

[READ MORE →](#)



Directors Can Up Their Game on Environmental, Social, and Governance Issues

Board members at companies across geographies and industries understand that competitive advantage increasingly demands sustainability. And that is rapidly pushing ESG issues higher on board agendas.

[READ MORE →](#)



The Five Digital Building Blocks of a Corporate Sustainability Agenda

Achieving ESG goals and building sustainability as a competitive advantage requires integrating technology and data from the beginning.

[READ MORE →](#)