THE SDGs
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESS

Why and How to Engage in Advancing SDGs in Iraq
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals
In 2015, all 193 United Nations member states committed to 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) designed to improve world peace, eradicate poverty, defend and advocate for human rights, remove gender inequalities, and cultivate a healthier planet. Within 17 Global goals there are 169 targets and indicators to guide action.

The countries are expected to align their agendas and political policies with the SDGs. The goals are designed to be interrelated, measurable, action-oriented, and achieved by the year 2030.

The Global Goals cannot be achieved without private sector companies. Through their core operations, financial commitments, employee networks, consumer-facing platforms and high-level influence, companies have a crucial role to play in accelerating progress towards the Goals.

Every business and every employee can make a vital contribution to creating a more peaceful, equitable and prosperous future. The SDGs need to be seen in its whole, yet businesses can prioritize certain Global Goals where they can make the biggest impact. As of 2019, 72% of global companies already include SDGs in their annual reports, and 51% of them have highlighted their priority goals.
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GROW REVENUES
By expanding into untapped markets and discovering innovative solutions. Benefiting from partnership and support provided by the government, international organizations and development partners.

BUILD SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE
By enhancing supply chain sustainability and operational efficiency.

ENHANCE REPUTATION
By increasing the confidence of customers, partners and investors and boosting employees’ engagement and recruitment.

INCREASE ACCESS TO CAPITAL
By increasing attractiveness to a wider range of investors.

REDUCE RISK AND INCREASE COMPETITIVENESS
By keeping pace with policy developments and technological advancement and reducing legal, reputational, and other risks.

GROW AND DIVERSIFY PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH A SHARED PURPOSE
By networking and communicating effectively with stakeholders about their impact and performance, bringing together synergistic partners.
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Define priorities
Identify areas and modes of engagement throughout value chain and business model, define priorities and select indicators

Integrate the SDGs
Anchor sustainability goals within the business, embed sustainability across all functions and processes and engage in partnerships

Report and communicate
Effectively report and communicate on SDG performance, your business role and lessons learnt

Understand the SDGs
What they are, why they are important, the business case and the baseline responsibility of business

Set goals
Define scope of goals, select KPIs, define baseline and goal type, set realistic and achievable targets, and announce commitment

Steps to Align Your Business to the SDGs
Ways to Engage Your Business to the SDGs

**BEHAVIOR CHANGES**: by aligning company’s strategies, practices, processes of how goods and services are produced and delivered to markets with sustainable development objectives, upholding an integrated reporting framework, and conducting due diligence along supply chains, the private sector can better evaluate and address environmental and societal issues.

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT**: leveraging technical expertise and experiences, private sector can deliver quality projects while balancing resources’ efficiency.

**INNOVATIONS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**: introducing new technologies that advance SDGs, such as emission reduction and sustainable and efficient utilization of raw material. (examples electric vehicles, green hydrogen, substituting carbon fibers, organic and biodegradable material for metals and plastics, and waste recycling). It also includes innovative inclusive business models and entrepreneurial activities, particularly social entrepreneurship.

**FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION**: the private sector can participate in financing SDGs related projects through donations and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

**INVESTMENT**: making new investments and redirecting existing investment to SDG-oriented projects. For example, profitable renewable energy projects.
IrisGuard is a UK privately held, electronic payment solutions company and the leading supplier of end-to-end iris recognition biometric technology. In Jordan it realizes and supports the importance of achieving sustainable food security in order to end hunger, particularly among the poor, vulnerable and displaced populations in Jordan.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has deployed IrisGuard’s innovative EyePay® payment terminals in supermarkets providing Syrian refugees with a secure and fast method of paying for groceries using just their eyes without cards, vouchers or any other ID token. IrisGuard’s patented EyePay® technology is an innovative Secure Financial Delivery platform that utilizes end-to-end iris recognition technology such as EyeBank®, EyeCloud®, and EyeCash®.

In 2017, IrisGuard enhanced its EyePay® Secure Financial Delivery platform to include Blockchain technology. With the humanitarian community increasingly adopting Cash-Based Transfers as the means to provide assistance to beneficiaries to enable them to purchase their own needs, new tools and risk mitigation measures were necessary. The World Food Program introduced the WFP Building Blocks where the EyePay® Secure Financial Delivery platform was integrated with Ethereum as a cryptocurrency to provide transparency in blockchain transactions. IrisGuard helped the WFP secure the last-mile of blockchain transactions through the use of iris recognition as a secure and fail-proof authentication of identity instead of the crypto key.

Businesses contributing to the SDGs

Examples from Jordan

Prioritized SDGs

ZERO HUNGER

Engagement Mode C & E

8x Growth in Global Sales
250,000 - 300,000 transactions per month
Excess of 6.9m transactions cumulatively
100% transactional growth between 2017 and 2019
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EXAMPLE FROM JORDAN

PRIORITIZED SDGs

QUALITY EDUCATION

Luminus Education is the largest private TVET provider in Jordan. The training institution has integrated SDGs in the core of its business model to create value for students, employees, donors, corporate partners, employment partners, investors and the wider community. Aiming to deliver the highest quality of technical and vocational education for vulnerable Arab youth, Luminus developed Education for Employment (E4E) model that is the essential part of its Employment Hub. The E4E proves to be effective in Jordan and is demonstrated by Luminus’s 80% job placement rate.

Luminus also targets young people with low and middle-income backgrounds, including women and refugees.

Luminus has offered to date more than 20,000 student scholarships, with support of its funding partners.

Driving up enrollment, Luminus recently:

- Launched a blended finance student lending mechanism; the Islamic Compliant Microfinance program.
- Opened up study options with increased employability opportunities targeting the more economically disadvantaged students, including Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair School of Advanced Computing (ASAC) and an automotive school.
- Increased its partnerships with private sector employers to ensure securing job opportunities for its students.

Businesses contributing to the SDGs

BUSINESS IMPACT

25% increase in student enrollment to reach over 12,000 students in 2019/2020.

A 3-fold increase in the number of graduating students since 2015.
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Example from Sudan, Egypt, Oman

Prioritized SDGs

In 2021, Zain Telecom supported the launch of the Learning Passport in Sudan with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education of Sudan, providing access to the platform across Zain’s network. The Learning Passport provides zero-rate access on both the website and mobile application for all Zain users regardless of their location or connectivity status to overcome and bridge the digital divide. The Learning Passport’s off-line mode also enables those with low internet bandwidth to access all the materials and download educational content. To date, the platform has approximately 2,112 active users.

Founded in 1992, Majid Al Futtaim is the leading shopping mall, communities, retail and leisure space across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. It was founded in 1992 in UAE. Majid Al Futtaim is one of the UAE’s most respected and successful businesses spanning 17 international markets and employing more than 43,000 people.

In 2021, Majid Al Futtaim, as part of their CSR, opened the Almaza Recruitment and Training Centre (ARTC) in one of its four shopping malls in Egypt, in partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). With a range of programmes available, the content focuses on both soft and technical skills, from delivering customer service excellence to developing motivated employees. Importantly, the ARTC provides targeted training for demographics who have historically faced additional barriers to employment such as women, youth, and people of determination. Similarly, Majid Al Futtaim are collaborating with The Retail Agency in Oman on the Tamheen Initiative – that elevates Oman’s retail sector through education and training - to provide specialized training sessions that will support the Omani workforce with the tools and skills needed to excel in the growing retail space. Tamheen will bridge the gap between market supply and demand and help trainees establish a career path, with specific job opportunities within Majid Al Futtaim malls. In 2021, over 148 Omani job seekers completed a three-month training programme through the initiative and were subsequently hired by the mall tenants. In addition, over 126 trainees completed two days training and were hired to gain work experience.

Businesses Contributing to the SDGs

Quality Education

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Ethad Bank in Jordan recognizes the importance of women’s role as a key contributor in building the national economy and that the impact of empowering women financially reflects on the community. As part of their gender empowerment efforts, Ethad Bank launched “Shorouq Program” in 2014 to support women through financial and non-financial services. In 2021, the Bank launched the program “Unlocking Markets with Bank al Etihad”, a two-month export readiness program for SMEs. The companies’ selection for the program prioritized firms with at least one female founder with decision-making power; or that a woman has 50 percent ownership and has decision-making power; or that a woman has at least 20 percent ownership while being the main signatory authority. The selected companies received support through workshops, meetings with market and legal experts, help assessing partnership opportunities, and one-on-one meetings with potential clients and leaders that will facilitate the expansion of the companies to new international markets.

The “Shorouq” program applied a gender lens to the banking services and provided women with the tools needed to access finance, network with experts.

“Shorouq” launched the “Career ComeBack” program: a comprehensive Qualification program aimed at preparing women to re-enter the labor market after having been on a voluntary career break.

The “Unlocking Markets with Bank al Etihad” trained 7 companies with the aim of to empower women led businesses and provide them with opportunities to unleash their full potential, for their positive effect on their societies.
The Baghdad Chamber of Commerce and International Finance Corporation (IFC), a sister organization of the World Bank and a member of the World Bank Group, signed a cooperation agreement, through which IFC and the Chamber will provide training in business management and entrepreneurial skills for Iraqi women entrepreneurs and SMEs. The programme targets four hundred and fifty (450) women by the end of 2022. This is one of several steps that the Chamber has taken to implement its vision to upscale support to private sector and pioneering projects, particularly women, and providing the Iraqi market with a segment of trained entrepreneurs prepared to enter the market.

In Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the Ministry of Planning in cooperation with the Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF) (World Bank-IFC Initiative) established a taskforce for Gender-Responsive Public Procurement (GRPP). In preparation for producing policy recommendations, the partners conducted the initial research on female entrepreneurs and public procurement in KRI and held a series of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with government stakeholders, female lead business and banks.

Zain telecom company launched the Women in Tech program across its operating markets. The program targets young female graduates who specialized in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). The program focuses on providing the technical training for selected candidates that prepares them for working in the field and increasing their employability. So far, 124 women were selected out of 500 applicants. The training also includes mentoring that develops interpersonal and soft skills, as well as exposure to new ideas in business development. The program helped the graduates to find jobs or internship opportunities in the field. The program provided paid internship at Zain for 10 candidates. 7 have been hired by the firm.
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**EXAMPLE FROM UEA**

**AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**

Engagement Modes D & B

Majid Al Futtaim is the leading shopping mall, communities, retail and leisure space across the MENA region. Majid Al Futtaim is one of the UAE’s most respected and successful businesses spanning 17 international markets and employing more than 43,000 people. Its Sustainable Building Policy requires all new projects to achieve a minimum on-site renewable energy generation of 25% of its total energy use.

To achieve its commitments, Majid Al Futtaim has partnered with Yellow Door Energy, the leading solar developer for commercial and industrial businesses in the Middle East and South Asia, on a series of Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs). In 2021, a 17 MW solar park in Jordan became operational, providing 100% of the energy use of 35 Carrefour stores across the country with renewable supply. Comprising over 49,000 solar panels, it is estimated that 300,000 tonnes of carbon emissions across Carrefour’s operations will be avoided because of the PPA over its lifetime.

A second 6.2 MWp PPA was signed in 2021 with the developer, which will be the largest private solar plant in the Kingdom of Bahrain once developed. Spanning over 40,000 m², the rooftop solar plant will generate 10 million kWh of clean energy in its first year of operation for The Bahrain Mall, meeting 50% of the shopping mall’s energy consumption needs, equivalent to reducing carbon emissions by 6,300 tonnes.

Similarly, Majid Al Futtaim’s Shopping Malls business unit is embarking on a third 20-year PPA with Yellow Door Energy to provide renewable energy to 16 shopping malls across the UAE, Bahrain, and Oman. Scheduled to be completed by the end of Q1 2023, the PPA will provide more than 65 million kWh of renewable energy per year and support the business unit to reach its goal of generating 25% of landlord electricity demand from renewable sources.

Source: Majid Al Futtaim ESG Report 2021
Landmark Hotel in Jordan empowers its employees through creating a diverse and inclusive family friendly business environment through several initiatives:

- Establishing a free on-site nursery for the children of male and female employees.
- Implementing different policies and procedures to support work-life balance, like part-time work balance.
- Providing continuous trainings to develop professional and personal skills of its staff members.
- Providing a clinic to fulfil daily employee needs
- Making the hotel wheelchair accessible.
- Having an inclusive policy, the hotel hired and trained several male and female individuals with mental and physical challenges.

In its effort to address the challenges of the workforce in its markets of operation, Zain Telecom launched several initiatives. ZAINIAC is an internal innovation platform that was established in 2017 through the vision of the Vice Chairman and Group CEO to foster internal ideation and intrapreneurship. The platform is open to all Zain employees, providing resources such as mentorship from Zain’s senior management, support of the incubation process, and general assistance in developing business ideas. ZAINIAC focuses on equipping employees with the opportunity to transform their ideas into their own startups by testing their concepts, building prototypes, and pitching theories to a panel of experienced judges. Zain also remains resolute in ensuring its employees acquire the skills that will help them develop, impacting the company’s growth as a digital service provider. Zain’s employees across its markets are being upskilled to ensure they are equipped to play a constructive role in the organization. A cross-sectoral engagement with local and international institutions, the education sector, and government and non-governmental entities allowed Zain to train and develop its employees by leveraging existing accessible digital platforms to provide employees with trainings.

Through ZAINIAC program, 5 ideas submitted; 1,158 Zain employees certified on a startup mindset, 15 workshops conducted, 2 of them in collaboration with Ericsson.
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EXAMPLES FROM IRAQ

PRIORITIZED SDGs

REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Zain Cash was launched in late 2015 by Zain and Iraq Wallet, allowing users to deposit, withdraw, transfer money and pay for goods and services via their mobile phone. Zain Cash service provides mobile banking services for both the banked and unbanked population. The service allows users to deposit e-money onto their mobile numbers, transfer money across Iraq, Cash-in/Cash-out at thousands of locations, purchase digital goods and products online, and more. The service has strengthened the concept of financial inclusion and succeeded in empowering a large segment of population who otherwise do not have access to any formal financial institution.

In early 2022, Zain Iraq and UNICEF established the partnership that is expected to reach people in hard-to-reach areas of Iraq and extend health-related digital initiatives that will target women, children and will provide 1,000 young persons in Iraq with opportunities to reach their full potential through learning and engagement opportunities.

WE ABLE is a disability inclusion initiative that was launched by Zain telecom in 2019 with the aim of making Zain disability inclusive across all its operating markets. WE ABLE launched GROW, a virtual two-month development program facilitated by Zain employees for people with disabilities by targeting fresh graduates with registered disabilities. The program aims to extend the knowledge of disability inclusion within the company to its customers and employees and create lasting connections. There was a total of 28 participants, 10 of whom were hired by Zain operating companies. Additionally, Zain Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia provided sign language trainings for frontline customer service staff to ensure the service is inclusive of members of the deaf and mute communities.

Businesses Contributing to the SDGs

BUSINESS IMPACT

- Increased customer base.
- Increased active users.
- Increased number of transactions.

AS a result of WE ABLE programme, 10 participants with disabilities were hired by Zain.
TotalEnergies oil producing company, in 2021 announced large investment in Iraq that will include oil, gas and solar energy projects worth $27 billion. While this investment does not represent a total shift by one of the major oil companies towards cleaner energy sources, but it is a step in the right direction as the planet battles rising greenhouse gas emissions. TotalEnergies will invest in a number of projects, which include 1) a construction of a solar energy plant to supply Iraq’s Basra regional grid; 2) a project to recover Flared Gas on three oilfields in order to supply local power stations and to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions that occurs during oil production. 3) a project that will involve injecting seawater into oil fields to optimize production while conserving scarce water supplies in Iraq. (Source: TotalEnergies)

Saudi Aramco plans to begin permanently storing carbon dioxide from 2026 in one of the largest facilities of its kind, as the oil giant works to reach its goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. The company is looking to capture carbon dioxide emitted by processes that convert natural gas into hydrogen, among other industrial activities, and permanently store the pollutant deep underground in a reservoir that previously produced oil and gas.

The first phase of the project near the industrial city of Jubail, on the east coast of Saudi Arabia, will be able to store between 5 million and 9 million tons of carbon dioxide per year, which is equivalent to the emissions from about 1 to 2 million gasoline-powered passenger vehicles driven over a year. The project is part of Aramco’s larger vision to become a leader in producing hydrogen, a gas seen as key to the global energy transition since it produces zero emissions when burned. (Source: World’s Largest Oil Exporter Has to Go Big on Carbon Storage, Bloomberg US Edition, 11 August 2022)

Zain telecom company is a member of the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) (https://www.cdp.net/en), an international NGO that runs the global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts. Zain disclosed its risks and opportunities for CDP based on 3 priority areas: 1. Network and Energy Consumption (implement energy reduction initiatives, align to international best practices); 2. Strategy and Communication (build climate change risk scenarios, identify market opportunities, launch awareness campaigns that measure change in behavior); 3. Waste Management and the Circular Economy (reduce waste in warehouses, eliminate plastic packages, embed waste management policies). Zain regularly reports its emission inventory in MENA region. In 2021, Zain started to measure its water consumption across its operations and began implementing water reduction initiatives in its headquarters in Kuwait. As part of its aim to eliminate the plastic consumption and manage and reduce the waste in its warehouses by 50% by 2025, Zain is working towards standardizing warehouse inventory management across its operations in addition to upcycling packages.
The Sustainable Development Goals is an opportunity for businesses to become more innovative, sustainable, and resilient.

Learn more, follow our social media platforms:
- UNDP Iraq
- UNDP Iraq
- https://www.undp.org/iraq

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