

**DEVELOPING
SOCIALY
SUSTAINABLE
BUSINESS**

How Human Side of Sustainability Drives Business Performance

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS





Social engagement creates real opportunities for companies that go beyond the E of ESG. It's all about harnessing the power of human capital, whether it's employees, stakeholders or the people you share your community with, to become a better business.

That was the summary of the recent CCIG conference on *How Human Side of Sustainability Drives Business Performance*

We gathered representatives from business, government and academia, alongside social innovators, to explore the intersection between social sustainability and business growth. Discussions centered on how businesses can create positive social impact while ensuring long-term profitability. The emphasis was on the importance of public-private partnerships, innovative financial approaches and the integration of social responsibility into core business strategies.

The conference was organised by:



OUR ESTEEMED SPEAKERS WERE



Click on speaker for LinkedIn



Vincent Subilia
CCIG



Lukasz Bochenek
Leidar



Arnaud Debia
Ipsos



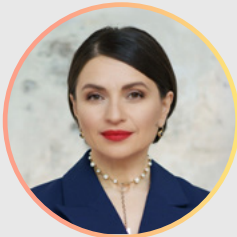
Matthew Kilgarriff
Advisor



Dorothee Baumann-Pauly
Geneva Center for Business
and Human Rights



Scott Weber
Peaceinvest



Natalya Yemchenko
SCM



Inna Malaia
BEVEL ON Association



Rosa Sangiorgio
RSG Impact Investing



Massimo Calamassi
CoRegener8



Mathieu Crettenand
Hospice général



Mario Marchesini
CCIG



MODERATOR

Oleksandr Kryvosheyev
BEVEL ON Association

The discussion was focused around seven key themes:



1 PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

Public-private partnerships have a pivotal role in addressing societal challenges, such as labour shortages, economic inequality and refugee integration. These partnerships are essential for fostering innovative solutions that support both social welfare and economic growth. And this includes collaboration between businesses and government to tackle difficult issues such as affordable housing and workforce shortages, especially in sectors like healthcare and IT.

Collaborative efforts between public, private and non-profit sectors in skills training and employability programmes for vulnerable groups, including refugees, enable businesses to help alleviate labour shortages while contributing to long-term economic stability.

Active engagement in developing housing and employment solutions, for example, gives businesses opportunities to help ensure their own sustained economic success by supporting the wider community.

2 GROWTH THROUGH SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMMES

The discussions explored how businesses can manage risks and boost results through socially responsible practices such as economic education programmes for marginalised women and digital skills training for refugees. These types of initiatives improve employment prospects and talent pools while enhancing corporate reputations, and demonstrating the value of investing in human capital as a key driver of economic growth. An important case study from Ukraine showed how corporations can maintain and increase their commitment to social responsibility, even in war-affected zones.



3 BLENDED FINANCE MODELS TO SCALE SOCIAL INITIATIVES

Blended finance models combine public and private resources to scale social initiatives. This approach helps mitigate risks for private investors, encouraging their participation in projects that benefit marginalised groups. It is also an ideal mechanism to fund large-scale initiatives, particularly in war-ravaged communities.

One example showcased the redistribution of wealth through the development of renewable energy infrastructure. This initiative supported environmental sustainability and provided job opportunities to underserved communities, illustrating the power of finance in achieving social, environmental and financial returns.



4 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AS A CORE BUSINESS STRATEGY



A recurring message was that social responsibility has to be integrated into the core of business strategy and operations. Embracing social sustainability frameworks is about creating lasting, meaningful change within communities, not simply about mitigating risks. Companies that prioritise social impact are typically better positioned to attract and retain talent, enhance brand loyalty and build consumer trust.

Importantly, consumers increasingly favour businesses that align their activities with social and environmental values. Over 70% of consumers trust brands that demonstrate commitment to social sustainability and are willing to pay a premium for their products. Embedding social responsibility into business strategies is both a business necessity for long-term success and a moral imperative.

5 REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY-CENTRED STRATEGIES

Another key theme was the importance of adopting a regional and community-centred approach to addressing social challenges. Businesses should engage with local communities and align their practices with regional needs. This includes focusing on the creation of regenerative economies that benefit both local communities and the environment. Importantly, regional development is critical to building resilience and businesses should first address local needs before expanding their impact globally.

The regeneration of economies begins with supporting local communities and small businesses. By addressing the needs of those working in and for the community, businesses can create sustainable models that uplift both people and the environment.



6 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ESG REPORTING

As regulations around ESG reporting continue to evolve, businesses need to adopt responsible practices across their supply chains, employee management and community engagement. Transparent governance and reporting are crucial for building consumer trust and ensuring sustainable business operations. Strong corporate governance is central to aligning financial returns with positive social outcomes, highlighting the importance of robust ESG frameworks.

However, while accurate reporting is important, actions matter more. Therefore, businesses should prioritise impactful programmes that bring tangible positive change to the communities they operate in.

7 CONSUMER TRUST AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



Examples of companies that have successfully integrated social responsibility into their core values showed how this results in higher employee satisfaction and retention rates. And a significant portion of consumers trust brands that demonstrate a commitment to social sustainability. Therefore, businesses that align with social values are well-positioned to build loyalty, enhance their reputation and secure a competitive advantage in the marketplace.



**Finally, it is all about
creating a culture
of engagement and
positive impact.**



DEVELOPING SOCIALY SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

The conference closed with a call to action encouraging businesses to integrate social sustainability into their operations. This applies as much to large and small businesses: they can all deploy relevant and impactful initiatives.

CONCLUSION

Businesses should seek to leverage public-private partnerships, blended finance models, and community-centered strategies to help tackle social challenges. Aligning business practices with social impact is essential for enhancing brand loyalty and employee engagement. It is also indispensable for driving long-term profitability.

The role of the Chamber of Commerce will be critical in rallying the business community around social initiatives, developing networks, fostering trust and collaboration between public, private and non-profit sectors.

