

Contribution to the SDGs

What are the SDGs?



The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal blueprint for prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. They represent the collective actions the world can take to address the most pressing issues we face as a global community — inequality, injustice, poverty and climate change.

The 17 SDGs are interconnected. Contribution to one SDG will affect outcomes in others, therefore sustainability initiatives must balance social, economic and environmental aspects.

These Global Goals recognise the synergies between improving economic prosperity, health, education and the environment, to set society on a transformative path towards a more resilient and sustainable future.



Our prioritisation process

While we recognise that our business impacts all 17 SDGs to varying degrees, we evaluate our primary contribution¹ by:

- Connecting our long-term targets and annual progress to SDG targets
- Analysing the 169 SDG underlying targets and connecting them to our material focus areas and future strategic direction

The six goals and 12 targets that resulted from this prioritisation represent where AstraZeneca has the greatest capacity for impact and action.



See [Sustainability Data Summary](#) for more detailed information.

Why they matter

SDG 3 Good health and wellbeing

COVID-19 has shown the vulnerability of many global systems in a crisis setting, resulting in the loss of human life and widespread economic downturn. Both communicable pandemics² and non-communicable diseases (NCDs)³ are projected to increase, and health systems will need to become more resilient to continue to provide services to those in need. Furthermore, NCDs kill more than 41 million people each year, which is equivalent to 71% of all deaths globally.⁴

SDG 5 Gender equality

Supporting women is essential to promote health and enhance business performance. Women's equality in the workplace could add as much as \$28 trillion to global annual gross domestic product by 2025.⁵ If business as usual is maintained, it would take 202 years to achieve gender equality in the workplace.⁶

SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth

Inequality is rising globally and there are not enough jobs to keep up with a growing labour force. Although COVID-19 offers opportunities to improve work-life balance through reduced business travel and remote working, it has also accelerated and exacerbated existing work inequalities, especially for the most vulnerable. Certain groups — such as workers with disabilities, women and migrants, among others — face significant obstacles in accessing decent work and may be particularly at risk of abuses.⁷

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

Economic and social progress over the last century has been accompanied by environmental degradation that is endangering the systems upon which our future development and survival depend. Production and consumption patterns need to change so as not to lead to further degradation of the planet.⁸

SDG 13 Climate action

Climate change affects every aspect of human existence, from access to water and food, to severe weather events and pollution, resulting in health issues. Even with widespread restrictions upon travel and huge shifts in energy demand around the world, emissions reductions in 2020 were not enough to keep warming to 1.5°C in the future.⁹

SDG 17 Partnership for the goals

No one industry or actor alone is sufficient to address the converging health and climate crises. A multitude of actions, initiatives and investments are necessary. The more coordinated, and mutually reinforcing these efforts are, the higher the likelihood of setting society on a transformative path towards a more resilient future.

Our primary SDG contributions



SDG 3 | Good health and wellbeing

3.4 Reduce premature mortality from NCDs

Over 25 million people reached through Access to healthcare programmes,¹⁰ since 2010. 2025 target is 50 million.

3.6 Halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents

46% reduction in the vehicle collision rate of our workforce since 2015. 2025 target is 55%.

3.8 Achieve universal health coverage

Over 3,340 health facilities activated or partnered since 2015.

3.c Increase the health workforce in developing countries

Over 132,000 healthcare workers trained¹⁰ since 2010. 2025 target is 170,000.

SDG 5 | Gender equality

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

46.9% of senior middle management roles and above held by women, up from 45.4% in 2019. 2025 target is 50%.

50.5% of all AstraZeneca employees are women, up from 50% in 2019.

35.7% women representation on Board of Directors, up from 33.3% in 2019.

SDG 17 | Partnership for the goals¹¹

17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships

Patron sponsor for the United Nations' Goal 3 action platform, Healthy People Healthy Planet.

Committed to the United Nations Women's Empowerment Principles.

Signatories of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) since 2010 and joined as Participants in 2018.

UNGC's Our Only Future member.

SDG 8 | Decent work and economic growth

8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers

64% reduction in reportable injury rate from 2015 baseline. 2025 target is 75%.

SDG 13 | Climate action

13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

60% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions from 2015 baseline. 2025 target is 100%.

3% increase in Scope 3 emissions from 2015 baseline. 2030 target is to be carbon negative.

SDG 12 | Responsible consumption and production

12.2 Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources

20% reduction in water use since 2015. 2025 target is to maintain absolute water use at 2015 baseline levels.

67% of active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) syntheses met resource efficiency targets since 2015, up from 50% in 2019. 2025 target is 90%.

12.4 Achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes, and reduce their release to air, water and soil

100% of API discharges from AstraZeneca sites assessed as safe and 94% from suppliers.¹²

12.5 Reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse

2% reduction in our waste since 2015. 2025 target is 10% below 2015 baseline.

40% of total waste is recycled, down from 44% in 2019.

12.6 Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle

61.3% of critical manufacturing suppliers disclosed their energy, waste and water footprint, up from 60.7% in 2019.

See [Sustainability Data Summary](#) for full metrics and methodology.

1 We also consider SDGs where we have additional or secondary impact. These include SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation and SDG 15 - Life on land. Our impact on these SDGs is reflected in our reporting on SDG 12.

2 <https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/5-reasons-why-pandemics-like-covid-19-are-becoming-more-likely>

3 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7190114/>

4 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases>

5 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

6 <https://www.weforum.org/projects/closing-the-gender-gap-accelerators>

7 <https://sdgcompass.org/sdgs/sdg-8/>

8 <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/goal-12/>

9 <https://essd.copernicus.org/articles/12/3269/2020/>

10 Includes four Access to healthcare programmes: Healthy Heart Africa, Healthy Lung, Phakamisa and Young Health Programme.

11 Select United Nations-related engagements shown. This is a sub-set of AstraZeneca's partnerships for the goals.

12 Scope is 48 APIs for which data is available to calculate safe API discharge limits and based on 2019 manufacture.