

# The Power of Partnerships

How grant-funded  
multistakeholder platforms  
are seeding solutions to  
address complex challenges

WHITE PAPER

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# Foreword



**Børge Brende**  
President, World Economic Forum

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Børge Brende".

The world urgently needs to take collective action to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement by 2030. In a resource-constrained world grappling with a major global development setback in COVID-19 and looming interconnected climate, nature and health crises, learning which solutions work, demonstrating greater impact and enabling others to adopt and scale these solutions at pace are crucial elements in optimizing limited resources to benefit people and planet. Leaders of public and private sector organizations, through grant-funded multistakeholder collaborations, are experimenting to find scalable solutions to these complex and interconnected challenges while proving that change at scale is possible.

Over the past few years, a growing number of diverse stakeholders have strategically invested grant funds in partnership with the World Economic Forum's resources to move beyond dialogue to action. The aim is to leverage the Forum's unparalleled network of key political, private sector and civil society leaders and establish partnership models anchored in trust and impartiality to collaborate and innovate in agile ways to deliver

real impact. The signing of the [United Nations-World Economic Forum Partnership](#) to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in January 2019 was a recommitment to this important agenda.

This report presents the first of a series of communications highlighting examples of the progress that grant-funded multistakeholder partnerships continue to make in addressing the world's most complex challenges. The growth of grant-funded partnerships is evidence that donors and partners recognize the urgent need for greater experimentation, agility and adaptability to develop and implement solutions quickly. Those with the appetite, resources and will to invest and grow such innovative and collaborative partnerships should be recognized. The passion, commitment and energy of donors, partners and teams – and their collective determination and energy – to address the biggest threats of our time are truly inspiring.

My sincere thanks and gratitude go to the donors, partners and stakeholders who have embarked on this journey with the Forum.



# Executive summary

## Emerging and growing energy for greater collaboration seeds solutions for complex challenges

### Grant funding for impact

The convergence of pressures on the climate, nature, health and inequality agendas, the increasing pressure from non-governmental organizations and communities to act, amplified by policy developments and regulatory developments, have triggered greater private and public sector stakeholder participation and action in the urgent search for ways to make real progress and drive equitable change at pace.

At the World Economic Forum, the growth of grant-funded multistakeholder partnerships – collaborations of diverse stakeholders with a shared ambition during an agreed timeframe to deliver specific mission-driven outcomes – is driving much of this work. Funded by public, private and civil society donors, and complemented by the Forum's own resources, this model supports the development of collaborative and innovative solutions to catalyse systems change and create impact at scale.

To date, some of the world's most respected and forward-thinking private foundations and philanthropic organizations, governments and individuals have collaborated to seed ideas and test hypotheses and solutions that can be scaled as catalytic forces for change. It has attracted new stakeholders with geographic and regional diversity to the Forum's community, further enriching the dialogue and mutual understanding, and fuelling greater collaboration across sectors.

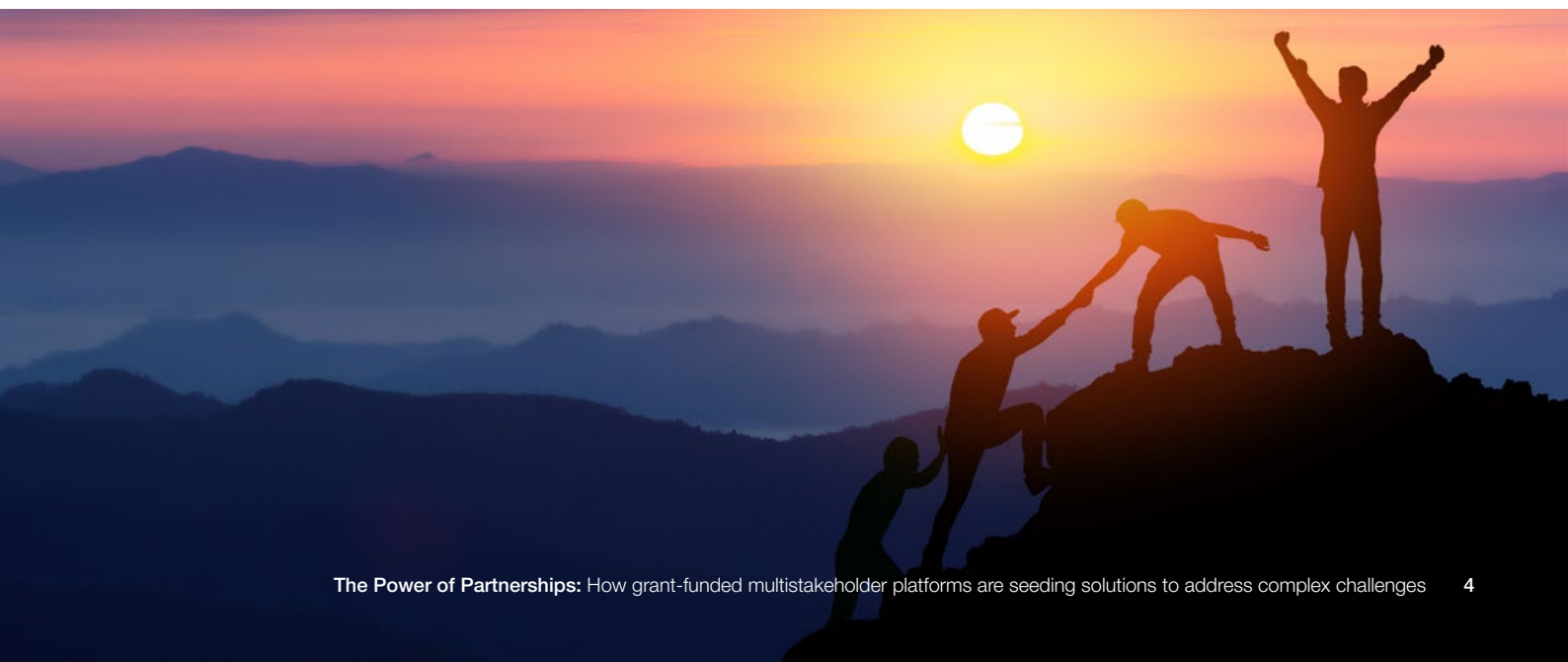
### Impact

The 13 grant-funded multistakeholder platforms featured in this paper are collectively mobilizing climate action to reduce carbon emissions and strive for net-zero outcomes, strengthening nature-based solutions, improving water and ocean systems, developing and scaling digital innovations, and unlocking trade and investment opportunities, all with the aim of contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and delivering wide-ranging benefits for people and planet.

### The role of the World Economic Forum

The Forum's ambition is to increase impact-oriented collaboration efforts between key stakeholders to help improve the state of the world. Through leading-edge interaction, intelligence, insights and frameworks for action, the Forum is stimulating high ambition and cooperation, unlocking capital at scale, and activating public and civil society actors, thus helping to shape among business leaders, heads of government and civil society actors a broader understanding of the challenges at hand and the possible range of solutions.

With over 50 years of experience in bringing stakeholders together, the World Economic Forum has a proven ability to engage leading private sector chief executives and public figures, acting as a catalyst and trusted facilitator to move dialogue through action to impact by partnering with like-minded stakeholders with the resources to enable action.



## Lessons learned

This first synthesis of a selection of 13 grant-funded multistakeholder platforms provides valuable insights into how such platforms – diverse in content and thematic domains – are making progress. On a continuous journey of trial and error to find effective solutions, key interconnected lessons learned include:

**Topics have acted as door openers to more difficult conversations** – By collaborating on a challenge that stakeholders can align on, such platforms can act as entry points into more complex and interconnected challenges, expanding scopes and evolving the collaboration further.

**Building platforms takes time** – Many of those included in this analysis are at an early stage of development, when creating new connections among partners and strengthening existing ones is critical. Finding solutions for the most complex and pressing problems requires open, honest dialogue and collaboration between actors. Through more than 500 events, meetings and other gatherings, these 13 platforms have found ways to bridge geographical, jurisdictional and sectoral divides, and create trusted places for open dialogue on such complex and pressing problems.

**Multistakeholder collaboration is not easy** – Foundational aspects of multistakeholder platforms include trust and goodwill, reciprocity, mutual benefits, accountability and commitment, inclusivity, distributed leadership, financial strength, governance and structure, continuous learning and adaptation, and ongoing alignment among diverse stakeholders. These are essential to creating the conditions for cooperation and collective action.

**Open and trusted dialogue is essential** – With the conditions in place for such a dialogue,

partnerships can co-create solutions. Featured platforms are helping to shape local, regional and global action through financing roadmaps, national action plans and cutting-edge research. These knowledge products are essential to shaping decisions and actions. The production process is equally critical – jointly developed by public and private sector and civil society actors whose collective action is required to bring about change.

**Platforms must invest in continuous learning systems** – Allowing for real-time and meaningful insights into the work they are doing and the difference made helps build intelligence. Agreeing on time-bound outcomes and the pathways to achieve them are some of the critical building blocks to foster trust, transparency and alignment on priorities and actions.

**The value of partnerships lies in their dynamic nature** – They can adapt and respond to changing contexts and environments. Therefore, an essential measure of a partnership's success is not permanence but rather relevance. Partnerships are helping to adapt to these changing conditions by launching innovations, fostering new partnerships, and mobilizing new sources of funding and financing. Ensuring that such partnerships have room to grow and evolve is therefore fundamental to their success.

**The platform's role in tackling complex problems is highly valued** – There is value in changing perceptions, catalysing commitments, increasing the visibility of innovations and solutions, and creating enabling environments for collective action. While local, regional and national partners are advancing local project implementation to address systemic issues, the stakeholder community globally prizes these platforms.



**Multistakeholder partnerships are not only for launching initiatives. They should be used to catalyse and scale what is already out there and already working.**

Diana Guzman, Head, Sustainable Development Investment Partnerships

# Introduction

## Platforms for action: diverse stakeholders mobilize to create change

The urgency, complexity and critical nature of the challenges facing the world have galvanized networks of leading organizations to collaborate on mission-driven multistakeholder platforms hosted at the Forum, unlocking avenues for grant funding from over 100 public and private sector stakeholders and civil society, including philanthropic organizations.

Currently, the World Economic Forum incubates more than **40 grant-funded multistakeholder platforms**. This paper highlights 13 platforms and their successes over the 2020-2021 financial year. These are diverse in ambition, membership and focus, and in their contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. All have been funded through grants and collectively they highlight the diversity, engagement, reach and impact of such platforms at the Forum.

Since 2015, over CHF225 million in grant funding has been raised to contribute to achieving the targets of the Global Goals and to find solutions to complex

trade, mobility, artificial intelligence and healthcare issues. In the previous financial year, the 13 featured platforms raised over CHF30 million in funding from donors as part of multi-year partnerships.

Funding is channelled into delivering results, with investments into best-in-class talent with subject matter expertise and experience to deliver on the platforms' mission, and collaborations with thematic experts, research institutions and academia to produce research, insights and frameworks for action that guide decision-making and shape policy. Funding is also channelled to organizations enabling in-country action and for travel and in-person or in-country events.

The Forum's extensive contributions include access to powerful private and public sector stakeholder networks, civil society leaders, leading global annual events, knowledge, strategic intelligence and digital solutions, unparalleled global communications and media reach, as well as its global network of offices, affiliate centres and staff.

FIGURE 1 Featured grant-funded multistakeholder platforms

### Climate action & the net-zero transition



### Food, ocean & freshwater systems



### Circular economy & sustainability innovation



### Trade & investment



### Nature-based solutions



Nature Action Agenda



TFA



Natural Climate Solutions Alliance



1t.org A platform for the trillion tree community

### Community-based initiatives



SCHWAB FOUNDATION FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP



COVID Response Alliance for Social Entrepreneurs



2 Launch-stage platforms



9 Scale-stage platforms



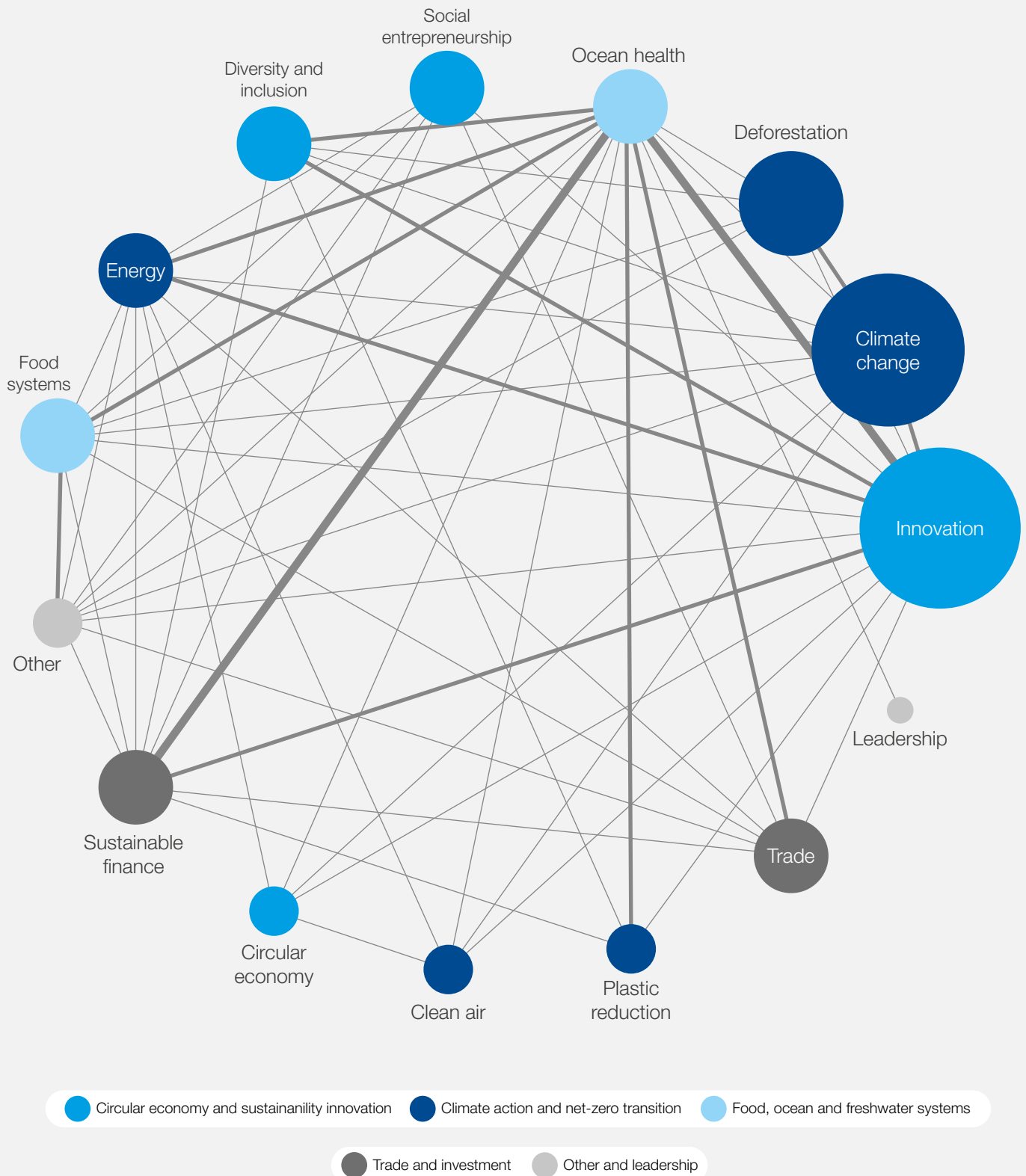
2 Sustain-stage platforms

The featured platforms address five interconnected thematic issues:

1. Climate action and the net-zero transition
2. Nature-based solutions

3. Food, ocean and freshwater systems
4. Circular economy and sustainability innovation
5. Trade and investment
6. Community-based initiatives

FIGURE 2 Detailed interconnected thematic issues

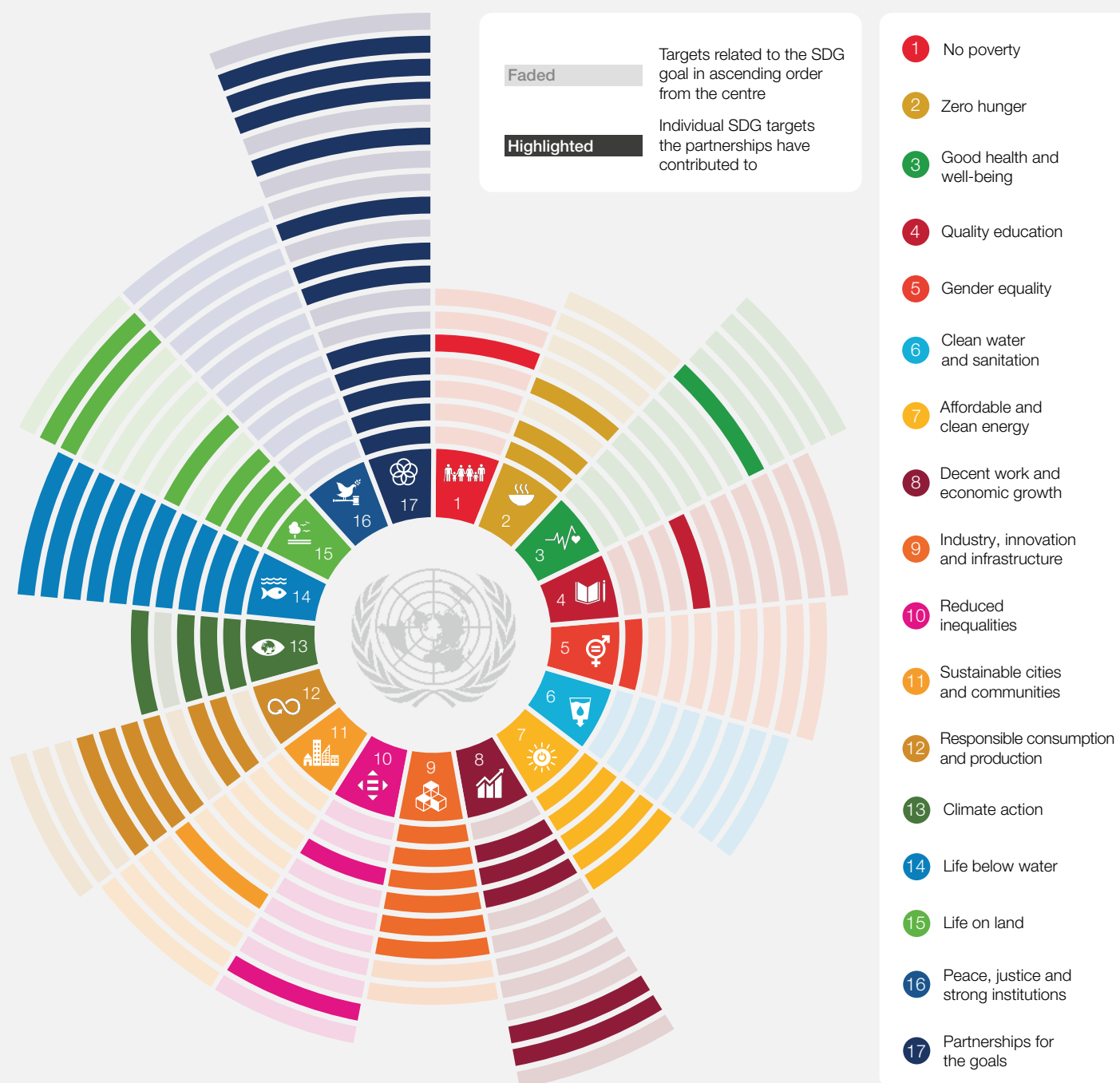


## Strong, vibrant platforms to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Grant-funded multistakeholder platforms are systematically making progress on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 13 partnerships featured have aligned their work to the goals and targets of the SDGs at local, national and global levels by harnessing science, technology and innovation capacity building as mechanisms to expose novel, interconnected ways of achieving them in all countries.

FIGURE 3 Contribution to the SDGs



Source: Adapted from University of Melbourne, [https://melbourne.figshare.com/articles/dataset/UN\\_SDG\\_Target\\_and\\_Indicator\\_Urban\\_Relevance\\_Wheel/16599293/1](https://melbourne.figshare.com/articles/dataset/UN_SDG_Target_and_Indicator_Urban_Relevance_Wheel/16599293/1)

Today, these 13 platforms are active in more than **190 countries around the world**, coordinating globally while delivering impact locally.



### Diverse and truly multistakeholder in nature

The broad engagement of private and public sector, civil society and other actors is evident. Across these platforms, 51% of all engagements (1,616) are with private or for-profit sector organizations active in agriculture, food and

beverage; supply chains and transportation; chemistry and advanced materials; and aviation, travel and tourism, 12% (396) with the public sector, 28% (881) with civil society, including philanthropic organizations, academia, think tanks and international organizations, and 9% with other types of organizations.

FIGURE 4 Industries engaged

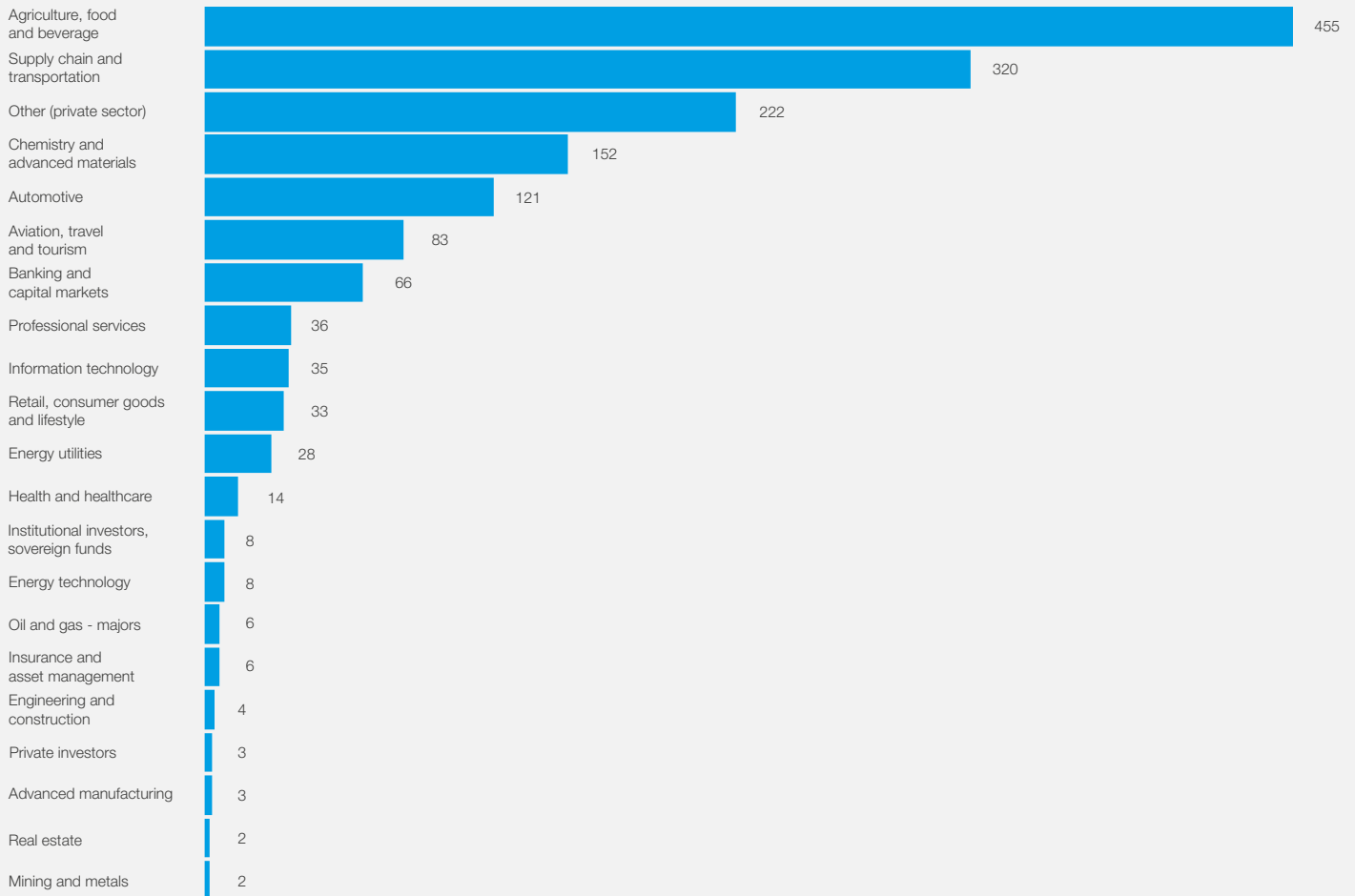
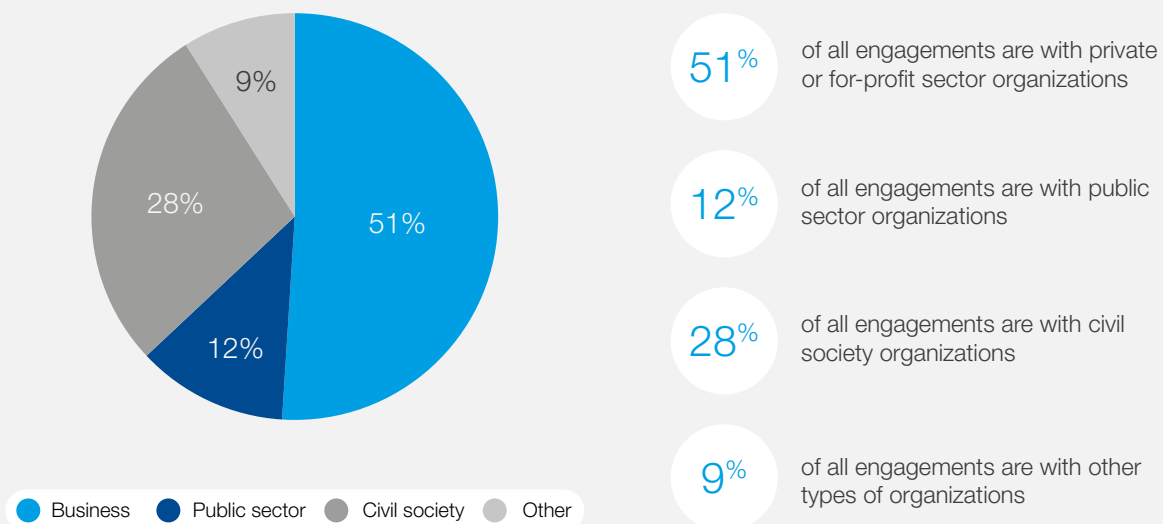


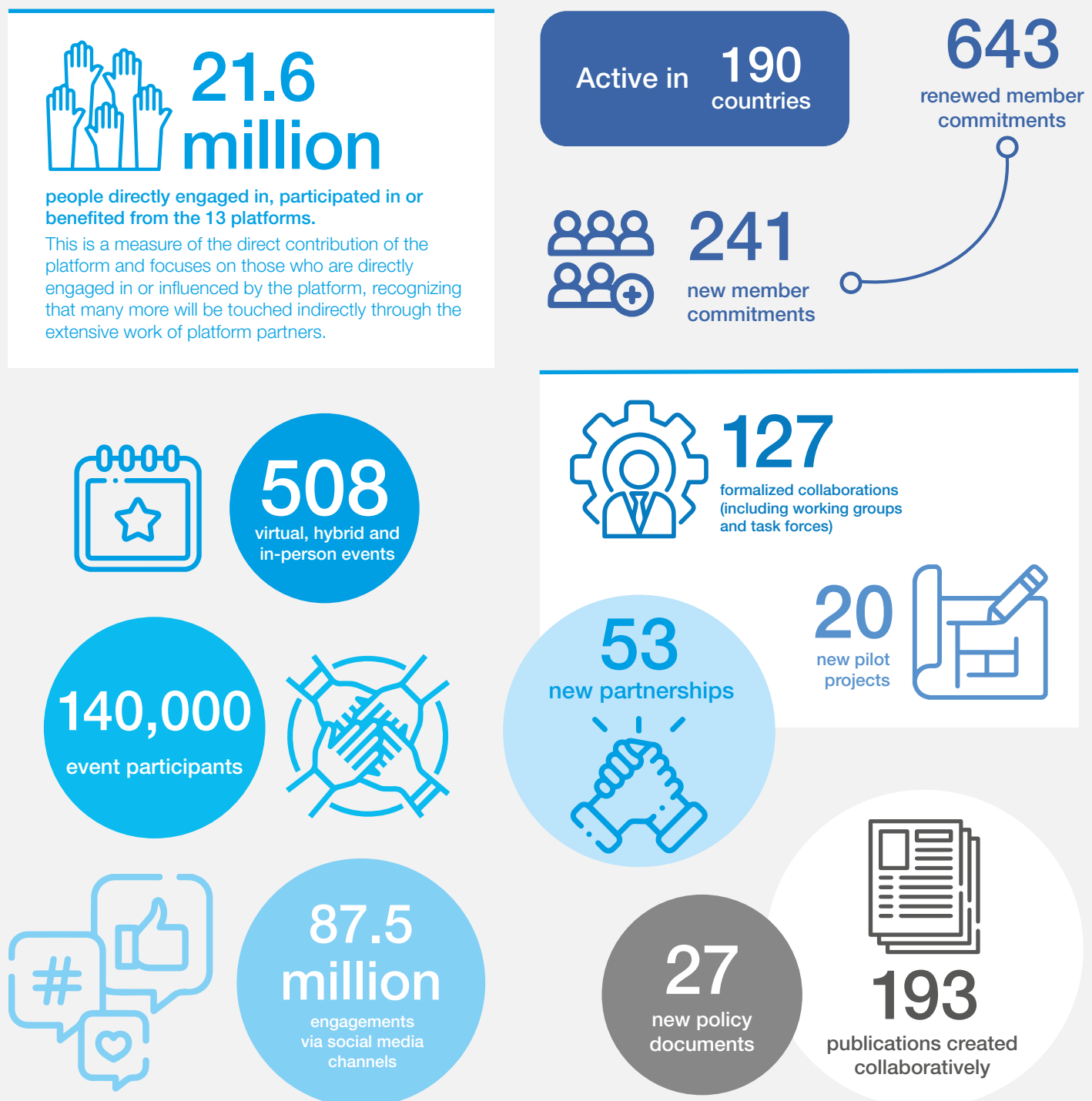
FIGURE 5 Public sector, civil society and other organizations engaged



# Key drivers enabling change

In successful partnerships, interrelated drivers of change deliver results

FIGURE 6 Key drivers of change – by the numbers



Given the complex challenges such collaborations are trying to solve, there is no one sure way to broker effective collaboration that moves whole industries, supply chains or entrenched practices forward. The findings therefore detail **how** progress is being made across the platforms through seven interrelated drivers of change, consistent with commonly recognized critical success factors for multistakeholder platforms focused on bringing about transformational change.

The 7 drivers of change are:

1. Raising awareness and shaping mindsets
2. Engaging cross-sector voices
3. Strengthening policy environments
4. Making ambitious commitments
5. Unlocking financial barriers
6. Building bridges for collective action
7. Unleashing innovation and scaling

FIGURE 7 Interrelated drivers of change for successful partnerships



Insights from the 13 platforms bring to life how these principles are shaping collaborative efforts and generating strong and vibrant platforms.

Central to these efforts is creating impartial and inclusive spaces that partners trust as places for open, solution-focused dialogue.



# 1

## Raising awareness and shaping mindsets

Shaping the necessary systemic and structural changes to address the many environmental, political, social and economic challenges requires people to see and think in a different way. However, dialogue cannot be converted into action without stakeholders coalescing around a shared understanding of the challenges and potential opportunities for taking action.

Through publications and events – including tailored workshops and webinars designed to generate new

insights and greater awareness among participants and collaborators – platforms are able to elevate critical issues and spark the necessary conversations among key stakeholders and the wider public.

Among such publications is [it.org's](#) recent call to action for the development of new monitoring technologies that encourage investment in land restoration, as well as reports from the [Mission Possible Partnership](#) highlighting the efforts of its banking members to decarbonize steel.

The **Nature Action Agenda** has been central to shaping the nature narrative to reflect the business and economic value of nature, resulting in the increasing integration of nature-positive and biodiversity considerations into strategic decision-making and sustainability plans among businesses and governments.

The Nature Action Agenda has established a business and economic case for safeguarding nature through two flagship reports, *Nature Risk Rising* and *The Future of Nature and Businesses*, the latter conveyed through a clear narrative

accompanied by a set of policy recommendations to achieve a nature-positive economy.

Distributed to key government ministries, cited by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres during the One Planet Summit in January 2021, and garnering over 30,000 views and 5,000 direct downloads, *The Future of Nature and Business* flagship report has become a go-to resource supporting businesses and other stakeholders as they define their biodiversity and nature-positive strategies.

Making key information available to everyone can inspire grassroots movements, nurtured by awareness and understanding of critical issues and the mainstreaming of positive ideas for progress.

In the last year, the 13 platforms with targeted content addressing the five thematic issues – climate action and net-zero transition, nature-based solutions, food, ocean and freshwater systems, circular economy and sustainability innovation, and trade and investment – attracted close to **87.5 million** social media engagements – more than **580,000** unique visitors who spent time reading, watching and listening to content. Nearly **300 publications** were generated, including

Agenda articles, blogs and other public-facing communications – each providing insights, solutions and strategies to change practices. This is complementary to the Forum's unparalleled communications channels.

The global reach of the 13 platforms extends further than events or social media and communications. More than **21.6 million people have engaged in, participated in or benefited from the work of these 13 platforms**. The reach of the platforms is an estimated measure of the number of people whom the platform directly engaged or influenced, recognizing that the extensive work of platform partners will indirectly touch many more.

FIGURE 8

### Social media engagements



20.1  
million

Facebook



25.6  
million

Instagram



4.8  
million

Twitter



33.4  
million

LinkedIn



3.6  
million

TikTok



**Friends of Ocean Action** is a group of leaders and experts from the public and private sectors, international organizations, academia and civil society who are committed to efforts that support a sustainable ocean. As part of their engagement, these champions support workstreams ranging from decarbonizing shipping to liberating ocean data.

For example, **Friends of Ocean Action** is working with the World Trade Organization to end publicly funded fishery subsidies that encourage overfishing. A series of webinars spotlighting compelling testimonies, giving voice to those most touched by harmful fishery subsidies, has received positive feedback from the group's members and others active on this issue. By using their influence and the power of the media, **Friends of Ocean Action** is raising public awareness about the subsidies through ardent public campaigning and

compelling visual content. "Fisheries on the Brink" — a short film released with the Environmental Justice Foundation in September 2020 during critical World Trade Organization trade negotiations — raises awareness of the impacts of subsidies on small-scale fishing communities and has amassed over 20,000 views.

The group's engagement has supported efforts to raise greater public awareness about sustainable ocean issues and led to greater knowledge and behavioural shifts among the members themselves. The participation of **Friends of Ocean Action** has increased awareness of what other stakeholders are doing in relevant areas and established greater possibilities for cross-sector and cross-industry collaboration, nurtured a deeper understanding of ocean sustainability issues, and strengthened their own efforts to effect change.



**I think Friends of Ocean Action has raised my ambition level of what can be done.**

Thomas Thune Andersen, Chairman of the Board, Ørsted, Denmark; Friend of Ocean Action

## 2

## Engaging cross-sector voices

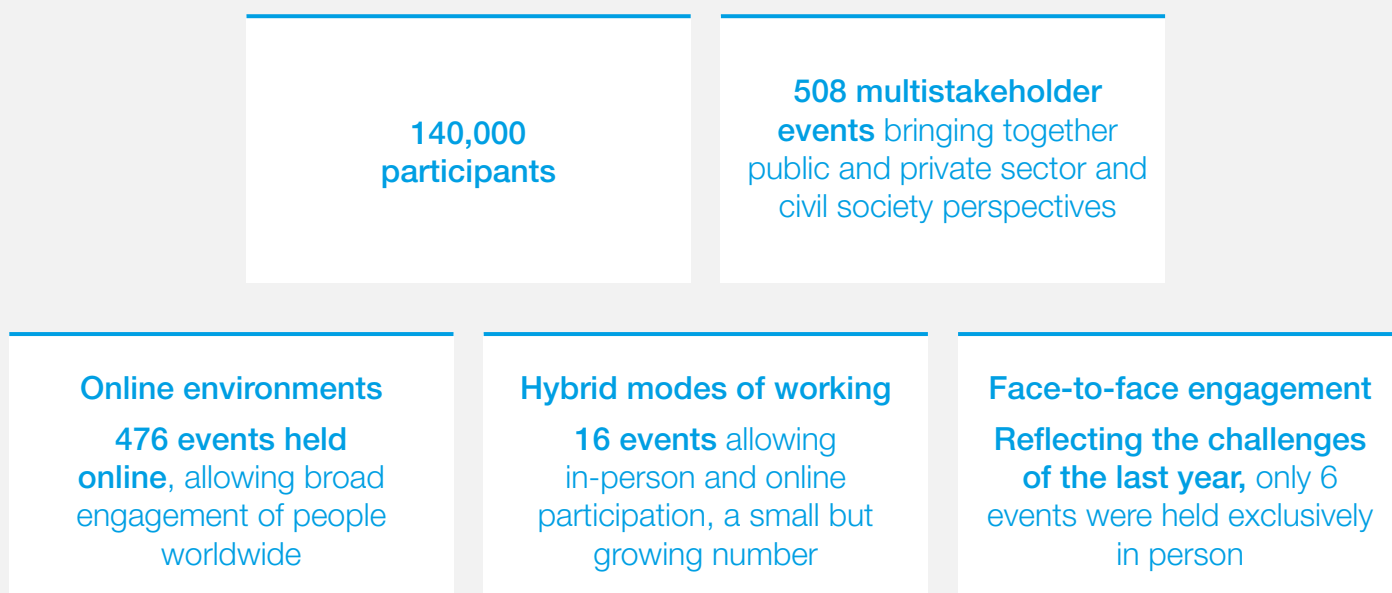
Working across sectors and industries is critical to breaking down siloes, building relationships, generating new ideas, holding actors accountable, and leveraging the expertise and resources of different stakeholders. By working across sectors, actors are able to promote larger visions for change and create sometimes unforeseen synergies that have a greater potential to address existing structural and systemic issues. The global shock of COVID-19 has disrupted lives and livelihoods, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities, requiring unprecedented levels of multi-sectoral collaboration.

In the last year, the 13 Forum platforms welcomed more than **140,000** people in **508** workshops, webinars, roundtables, conferences and meetings — in online, in-person and hybrid locations. These events have been an opportunity for diverse speakers and participants to present their perspectives or expertise, exchange knowledge

and best practices with peers, and engage in dialogue to find commonalities and solutions to shared problems.

Engaging a multitude of voices also offers the opportunity to include the views of those most affected. In Ghana, Viet Nam and Indonesia, the Global Plastic Action Partnership has involved the voices of the informal waste-picking sector in creating solutions that would allow for greater transparency in the plastics value chain and fairer wages for waste pickers. In Ghana, a local waste-picker organization — along with small and medium-sized enterprises, local authorities and multinational companies — was involved in co-designing a software solution to better connect waste pickers with potential buyers and recyclers. By integrating beneficiary voices, the responses developed and implemented are more likely to meet local needs and conditions.

FIGURE 9 | Engaging cross-sector voices at events



#### The Mission Possible Partnership (MPP)

The “harder-to-abate” sectors in heavy industry (concrete, chemicals, steel and aluminium) and heavy mobility (trucking, shipping, aviation) currently account for 10 gigatonnes (Gt) or 30% of total global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. To keep the rise in global temperatures below 1.5°C, it is essential to rapidly reduce and eventually eliminate those emissions. However, to date, many national strategies focus little attention on these sectors.

In less than 2 years, the **Mission Possible Partnership** has convened more than 300 corporate leaders from seven harder-to-abate sectors, along with their suppliers and customers and financial institutions, to develop clear paths to net zero throughout their value chains and to start taking the first steps on that path.

Such collaborative models have demystified the environment for businesses, driving greater participation. They have helped create a shared narrative for stakeholders to make sense of and

tackle the problem. Partners have strengthened collaboration in unprecedented ways throughout the value chain, as well as with civil society and policy-makers, to develop clear decarbonization pathways and contribute to government action. For example, stakeholders co-developed the industry-backed [policy proposal for sustainable aviation fuels \(SAF\) in Europe](#) and [Guidelines for a Sustainable Aviation Fuel Blending Mandate in Europe](#) as part of Clean Skies for Tomorrow initiative. Both were used as design guidance for the Fit for 55 package released in July 2021. Donor funding has enabled pilots that demonstrate such pathways are investible, attracting investors critical to scaling such solutions. The harder-to-abate sector coalitions include the [Getting to Zero Coalition](#) for shipping, [Clean Skies for Tomorrow Coalition](#) for aviation, [Road Freight Zero](#) for trucking, and [Circular Cars Initiative](#), as well as [Concrete Action for Climate](#), [Aluminium for Climate](#), and the [Net Zero Steel Initiative](#) and the [Low Carbon Emitting Technologies Initiative](#) (LCET) for chemicals.



**In building the Climate Action Drumbeat to Glasgow, MPP is driving the conversion of net-zero ambition into action. MPP is a critical step towards delivering real, tangible commitments to sectoral action in the net-zero industry transition.**

Nigel Topping, UK High Level Climate Action Champion, 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Kingdom

The **Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation** brings together public and private sector stakeholders as equal partners to deliver targeted trade reforms – including the design, implementation and delivery of a [risk management system](#) for the National Food and Drug Surveillance Institute in Colombia, which is now helping to boost economic competitiveness by streamlining the inspection of imports and exports through Colombia's borders.

Inclusive trade is a catalyst for sustained economic development and poverty reduction. Alliance interventions give small and medium-sized enterprises the opportunity to be heard through their involvement in in-country working groups. The alliance's regular innovation challenges involve stakeholders from all walks of life – from start-up companies to

students. Drawing on best practices from other organizations, the alliance has also introduced gender mainstreaming guidelines to ensure a sensitive and tailored gender approach in its projects.

The alliance has the ability to convene a wide breadth of stakeholders through the credibility and independence that it provides as an impartial platform. Through open dialogue with donors who actively contribute to shaping the platform, a transparent governance structure that has engendered trust among all partners, and a strong monitoring and evaluation framework that can clearly demonstrate the impact of the projects and support adaptive management, the alliance has maintained the autonomy and agility it needs to drive change.



**We had to build trust with the government and show them that facilitating trade doesn't mean that they will lose control.**

Juan Diego Cano, Director, Legal Affairs,  
National Association of Foreign Trade, Colombia

3

## Strengthening policy environments

Through the engagement of cross-sector voices, the provision of a space for open, trusting dialogue, and a commitment to neutrality, grant-funded multistakeholder platforms can create the necessary conditions for the formulation of industry and government policy and the generation of evidence from multiple perspectives at local, regional and global levels.

Platforms launched 27 new policy documents, providing evidence-informed guidance on policy

options to achieve the SDGs in the previous year. These include [Country Financing Roadmaps](#) supporting governments in Ghana and St Lucia in their move to sustainable financing for the SDGs; a National Multistakeholder Action Plan in [Indonesia](#) – and others to follow in Viet Nam and Ghana – providing guidance on pathways to eliminate plastic pollution; and the [Net Zero Steel Initiative](#) Policy Paper, which is helping the global steel sector on the path to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.

Through its National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP) model, the **Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP)** intentionally focuses on enabling local ownership and direction in developing sustainable solutions to the plastic pollution crisis.

Individual GPAP and NPAP partners have been involved in informing policies, regulations and plans to address plastic pollution. In the last year, 57% of participating partners reported being involved in generating, analysing and/or disseminating government policy options, while 53% of partners reported being involved in corporate policy options.

Their experience and involvement through task forces, working groups and the drafting of key policy documents, including data-driven roadmaps, have contributed to the shaping of national-level policies in Indonesia, Ghana and Viet Nam. In Indonesia, the Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, who is also the co-chair of NPAP Indonesia, has used both the baseline analysis and the resulting action roadmap developed by NPAP Indonesia to inform the strategy of government task forces dedicated to reducing plastic pollution.

## Making ambitious commitments

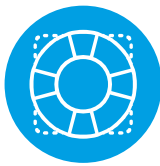
Commitments to new ways of working, with shared objectives supported by all relevant actors, including those affected by the problem or solution, are a critical step in achieving systemic change.

Expressed in signatures, pledges and memoranda, such commitments signal new and ongoing dedications to collective areas of shared concern. In the last year, platform members made 241 new commitments. These included pledges made by companies to plant over 3.5 billion trees spanning 55 countries, as well as ambitious commitments to track and reduce air pollution made by members of the Alliance for Clean Air – the first global corporate initiative to tackle air pollution, launched at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with 10 new companies.

Converting commitments and dialogue to action and, ultimately, impact remains front and centre in the objectives of many platforms. To support corporations in turning their commitments to reforestation into action, 1t.org regularly convenes a global cross-industry group of businesses to collaborate and share lessons learned. With a total of 20 members and growing, the 1t.org Corporate Alliance includes companies ranging from those with the intention to commit to those already implementing their commitments and wishing to scale their efforts.

Importantly, platform members across the 13 platforms have also renewed their commitments, demonstrating the continued value they place on remaining actively engaged. For instance, in the last year, public and private sector organizations involved in the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation committed to [continuing to support 26 projects across the portfolio](#).

FIGURE 10 Commitments



### 241 new member commitments

New commitments include those related to specific goals and targets set by partners, ongoing participation in joint activities, as well as leadership commitments for action in business and non-business sectors.



### 643 renewed member commitments

These include partners recommitting to platform membership (where required), as well as renewed commitments for shared action areas and ongoing collaborative initiatives.

The Global Tuna Alliance (GTA) is an independent group of retailers and tuna supply chain companies dedicated to improving the sustainability of the tuna sector. Through a collaboration with **Friends of Ocean Action**, GTA has implemented the objectives laid out in the Forum's Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration.

The non-legally binding commitments laid out in the declaration were endorsed by 67 retailers and tuna supply-chain businesses, with the support of 21 civil society organizations and six governments. Through webinars and toolkits available in

several languages, Friends of Ocean Action and GTA promote action by providing signatories with the information and solutions they need to implement their commitments.

A series of refreshed commitments launched in March 2021, known as the 2025 Pledge Towards Sustainable Tuna, builds on the momentum and the achievements of GTA members. Twelve companies – nine of them GTA members – have committed to the pledge and continue to work to achieve greater sustainability in tuna supply chains.



## Unlocking financial barriers

Platforms can mobilize new and novel sources of funding or unlock financial barriers that hinder progress. At the recent COP26 in Glasgow, for example, it was made clear that climate goals cannot be achieved without protecting, restoring or managing nature, and enabling finance to flow to nature-positive investments.

On the nature agenda alone, \$133 billion a year currently flows into nature, with public funds making up 86% and private finance 14%. However, this investment needs to triple by 2030 if the world is to meet its climate change, biodiversity and land degradation targets. Collective action is essential in the context of a challenge of this scale and in unlocking financial barriers, a core focus in achieving the SDGs.

Over the last 12 months, platforms have mobilized funding from a range of sectors, including **\$196 million** by the Global Plastic Action Partnership to support participating countries' progress. The LEAF Coalition mobilized **\$1 billion** in new finance committed from the private sector and governments. Designed to accelerate climate action by providing results-based finance to countries committed to protecting their tropical forests, it serves as a catalysing force to amplify private capital at scale, sending a confident signal for more companies to move beyond individual efforts to align with global action.

The [Tropical Forest Alliance \(TFA\)](#) is collaborating to reduce commodity-driven deforestation, shaping company supply chain practices and government legislation, and unlocking financing to address the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Over the past 18 months, TFA and its partners actions to mobilize the private sector, including the finance sector, culminated in the following announcements at COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021:

- Over 30 leading financial institutions, with more than \$8.7 trillion in assets under management, committed to tackling deforestation in their investment portfolios;
- 8 financial institutions and agribusiness companies committed \$3 billion to accelerate conversion-free cattle and soy production in South America through the Innovative Finance for the Amazon, Cerrado and Chaco (IFACC) initiative.
- The Consumer Goods Forum's Forest Positive Coalition of Action of the committed

to transforming production landscapes to be forest-positive, equivalent to their supply footprint, by 2030;

- 12 of the largest traders and processors of forest-risk commodities committed to delivering a shared sectoral roadmap to achieve 1.5°C by the 2022 Climate Change Conference.

In addition, the [Natural Climate Solutions Alliance](#), convened jointly by the [World Economic Forum](#) and the [World Business Council for Sustainable Development](#), launched a campaign to increase private sector investment in natural climate solutions (NCS) to the tune of 1 gigatonne of emissions reductions per year by 2025. Natural climate solutions include activities across forests, agricultural and coastal lands that strengthen nature's ability to absorb carbon and reduce emissions. Members of the Alliance believe contributing to the "1Gt by 2025" investment pool will send a demand signal to carbon markets and reassure policy-makers and project developers to scale investments, leading to higher trust in NCS as a credible and effective solution to reduce and remove greenhouse gases emissions.



**This is a ground-breaking development for natural climate solutions. Creating an investment accelerator will send an important demand signal to carbon markets, governments and project developers on the ground. This initiative will drive credible demand for high-quality carbon credits from natural solutions as part of corporate net-zero strategies. We are deeply grateful to our five founding champions for leading the way towards better carbon markets while increasing financing for nature.**

Giulia Carbone, Director, NCS Alliance, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Switzerland

## 6

## Building bridges for collective action

Stakeholders increasingly recognize the need for joint approaches to solve complex challenges. However, doing so effectively requires common understanding and mutual trust, evidenced through their willingness to collaborate, the products that result, and new partnerships formed.

Partners have participated in **127 different instances of collaboration** for collective action on global and national issues – including steering groups developing new and shared directions such as the [Clean Skies for Tomorrow \(CST\) Coalition](#) by the Mission Possible Partnership; working groups that actively engage partners in implementing agreed plans such as [100 Million Farmers, 1 Billion Consumers](#), an initiative of the Nature Action Agenda to engage farmers in cost-effective and practical solutions for local food solutions; and task forces, such as those implemented by [GPAP's](#) National Plastic Action Partnerships.

In the past year, platforms partners have collaborated to produce **193 publications**, including technical papers and position statements, such as the [Tri Hita Karana Working Paper for Development Finance Institutions \(DFI\)](#) co-authored by members of the Sustainable Development Investment Partnership and the [Nature and Net Zero report](#), which builds on the recommendations from the Natural Climate Solutions Alliance's Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets.

Such publications provide avenues to connect and strengthen relationships, building the basis for shared knowledge and awareness on key issues, helping to lay the foundations for strong and effective partnering.

FIGURE 11 Connections and strengthened networks

# 127

taskforces, working groups and other collaborative structures formed with a range of partners from the public and private sectors and civil society

# 79

focusing on national-level action

# 48

focusing on global action

# 193

collaborative publications

# 53

new partnerships launched

The [Global Plastic Action Partnership \(GPAP\)](#) engages more than 270 global and national organizations from government, business and civil society to forge a future free from plastic pollution, with the ambition to scale its unique national partnership model of convening communities, generating action roadmaps, and catalysing coordinated action to 25 countries by 2025.

GPAP focuses on developing joint solutions to tackle the plastic pollution crisis by convening communities and curating conversations, generating new insights and action roadmaps, and catalysing strategic financing for high-potential solutions. These are supported by collaborative structures designed to engage partners and promote connectivity. At a global level, these include a Governing Council, Steering Board and Advisory Committee, while at national levels,

steering boards, advisory panels and a secretariat govern the partnerships in consultation with the Global Platform.

In each national partnership, multistakeholder groups of technical specialists from government, academia, the private sector and civil society come together in task forces to implement the recommendations of the action roadmaps developed in-country. Organized into six impact areas – informing policy, unlocking financing, transforming behaviour, boosting innovation, harmonizing metrics, and promoting inclusivity – these task forces are creating deep connections among members and strengthening the local and global plastic action agenda, reinforcing the foundations that will be critical for implementing shared plastic pollution reduction strategies.



**We've come to the common understanding that behavioural change requires creating an enabling policy and economic system that creates a thousand nudges to shift behaviour. Impact needs size, and size requires many hands to do the work.**

Tiza Mafira, Executive Director, Plastic Bag Diet Movement (GIDKP)/Aliansi Zero Waste Indonesia (AZWI)

During the last financial year, platforms launched **53 new and diverse local and global partnerships**, involving new combinations of partners. These partnerships are focused on bringing together thought leaders, engaging a diversity of voices and experiences, and supporting evidence-informed policy action. Scale360° has supported country-level

partnerships focused on a just transition to a circular economy in Germany, Chile, India and the United Arab Emirates; the Tropical Forest Alliance has supported Proforest in the [identification and development of a new landscape partnership](#) as part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI), facilitating stakeholder mapping and private sector engagement.

For more than two decades, [the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship](#) has supported leading social entrepreneurs in the creation of a more just, equitable and sustainable world. Through its awards programme, the foundation recognizes leading entrepreneurs and social innovators, and provides a platform for their engagement with like-minded public, private and civil society stakeholders.

For many of the foundation's awardees, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic placed new and significant demands on their time, resources and

capacities. In response, the Schwab Foundation launched a new partnership in collaboration with Ashoka, Catalyst 2030, GHR Foundation, the Skoll Foundation and Yunus Social Business: the [COVID Response Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship](#). The alliance now includes 88 leading global organizations committed to social entrepreneurship that support more than 100,000 social entrepreneurs working at the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic to create an inclusive and resilient society. Together, alliance members are implementing an ambitious portfolio of over 20 projects in 10 areas in which change is vital.



**Now, more than ever, we need to come together to lay the groundwork for an inclusive recovery. We are committed to standing by our different partners, including social entrepreneurs. This is a critical way for us to contribute, learn, innovate and scale for positive impact on people, planet and society. We are in this together.**

Jon Abrahamsson Ring, Chief Executive Officer, Inter IKEA Group, Netherlands; Member of the COVID Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship

The **Sustainable Development Investment Partnership (SDIP)** offers an impartial, inclusive space to support countries in designing strategy and action plans to finance the SDGs, engaging domestic decision-makers from the highest levels of government in attracting new sources of capital for sustainable development.

SDIP collaborated with the Office of the President of Ghana to develop Ghana's Country

Financing Roadmap (CFR), a formulation of the policy actions and innovations needed to de-risk financing opportunities for sustainable development efforts in developing countries. Based on insights from and consultations among 50 cross-sector and cross-industry stakeholders, the Ghana CFR report identified practical and realistic recommendations for the country to successfully signal that they are willing to do what they can to be increasingly investable.



## 7

## Unleashing innovation and scaling

A core focus for many of the Forum's platforms is to bring together diverse perspectives to generate innovations: new ideas, new solutions, new products, new technologies, and new ways of implementing. Over the past 18 months, the 13 platforms have supported more than **200 innovations**, some identified through innovation challenges and hackathons, and some examined through pilot projects that have provided the opportunity for further testing and experimentation.

Multistakeholder platforms are naturally inquisitive spaces where experimentation, calculated risk taking, and pilot projects can be launched. Building on the success of the Country Financing Roadmap for Ghana, a blueprint for increasing access to capital for sustainable development in-country, [SDIP's Africa Hub](#) launched a targeted "sprint" with the affordable housing sector to identify financing constraints to crowding-in private sector capital at scale. By convening investors, government representatives and other experts and practitioners,

new investible opportunities were identified. Similarly, with the successful implementation of a project digitalizing trade processes in Morocco related to phytosanitary certification, demand for the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation's support has soared, with 16 countries (representing 6% of global exports in plants and plant products) seeking the alliance's help in replicating the same process.

In some cases, the creation of key connections has unlocked innovations that can mobilize the needed funding at scale. Through UpLink, an open digital platform for mass participation to accelerate progress on the SDGs, the next generation of mission-driven entrepreneurs and young innovators is joining forces with a trusted community of leading organizations, experts, investors and changemakers to scale their innovations. To date, UpLink has facilitated 700 lasting connections among its engaged stakeholders, with innovators raising close to \$75 million in additional funding since joining the platform.



# 208

innovations

# 20

pilot projects

UpLink's role in supporting innovation is seen through the example of the collaboration with Pachama, an organization founded in Argentina in 2018 by two people dedicated to restoring nature and helping mitigate climate change.

Pachama is developing a modern market for forest carbon credits. It uses remote sensing (satellite images, LiDAR, drones) and machine learning to validate and monitor reforestation and deforestation avoidance projects. Pachama then helps these projects connect to companies seeking to offset their carbon emissions through a data-driven online marketplace.

Pachama joined UpLink in July 2020 to take part in the Trillion Trees Challenge, a call for action to conserve existing forests, restore forest ecosystems and reforest suitable lands. UpLink's recognition of Pachama led to a speaking role at the Forum's Davos Agenda 2021 and global exposure through social media. This visibility enabled Pachama to secure an additional \$15 million in funding and attract several new Fortune100 clients, establishing over 20 other connections with artificial intelligence and carbon-reduction companies. Today, Pachama is a highly recognized company in the carbon reduction space, with three times the headcount, revenue and capital since joining UpLink.

[Scale360°](#) is fast-tracking Fourth Industrial Revolution impact in the circular economy by bringing together public and private sector leaders and innovators to foster dynamic local and regional ecosystems for innovation.

Scale360° launched a new Circular Innovation Playbook to support local and regional

collaborations as they rethink consumption and production, helping to transform the pipeline of future innovations. This work is already having tangible effects: co-creation sessions held in Piedmont, Chile and Brussels have led to new and novel ideas for fostering circular economy solutions, while 8 new national programmes and 14 city hubs are now in operation.



**Transitioning to a circular economy requires determination, technology and mostly collaboration between firms, innovators and authorities. At SOFOFA Hub, we believe this playbook will provide a powerful framework to bring together different visions through a collaborative process that will help accelerate this transition.**

Alan Garcia, Executive Director, SOFOFA Hub Chile



## Ambitions for the future

Looking to the future, the World Economic Forum and its partners see tremendous potential to create equitable change and real impact in support of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement by further building and scaling this multistakeholder grant-funded model.

The grant-funded partnership model's transformative power to drive solutions and deliver impact at scale is evidenced in the data and stories from the featured platforms. The group is collectively

committed to expanding engagement with diverse stakeholders, unleashing new voices and ideas and mobilizing the resources that provide the means to invest in agile and innovative solutions.

The Forum is grateful for the trust and resources provided by its valued partners and is excited to rapidly expand and deepen such multistakeholder partnerships for the future for the benefit of both people and planet.

# Platforms

[Trillion Trees](#) (1t.org) – Connecting, empowering and serving a multistakeholder community to conserve, restore and grow a trillion trees by 2030 in support of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

[Friends of Ocean Action](#) (FOA) – Catalysing science-based action for a healthy and sustainable ocean through a wide range of stakeholders bringing awareness to ocean sustainability issues and driving momentum for positive change.

[Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation](#) (GATF) – Enhancing trade facilitation by bringing together the public and private sectors as equal partners to identify and deliver commercially meaningful reforms in developing and least developed countries.

[Global Plastic Action Partnership](#) (GPAP) – Engaging stakeholders to forge a future free from plastic pollution, with the ambition to scale its unique national partnership model of convening communities, generating action roadmaps and catalysing coordinated action in 25 countries by 2025.

[Mission Possible Partnership](#) (MPP) – An alliance of climate leaders focused on supercharging decarbonization across the entire value chain of the world's highest-emitting industries in the next 10 years.

[Nature Action Agenda](#) (NAA) – Catalysing economic action and policy ambition to halt biodiversity loss and transition to a nature-positive economy, providing thought leadership through the New Nature Economy report series.

[Natural Climate Solutions Alliance](#) (NCSA) – Identifying opportunities and barriers to investments into carbon finance to unlock greater financial flows for nature and increase climate mitigation and planetary resilience.

[Scale360°](#) – Fast-tracking Fourth Industrial Revolution impact in the circular economy by bringing together public and private sector leaders and innovators to foster dynamic local and regional ecosystems for innovation.

[Sustainable Development Investment Partnership](#) (SDIP) – Promoting country-led projects and facilitating multistakeholder platforms that seek to create cohesion among local and global actors across the sustainable finance system.

[Tropical Forest Alliance](#) (TFA) – Reducing and ultimately halting commodity-driven deforestation and transforming supply chains to ensure sustainable livelihoods and a forest-positive future.

[Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship](#) – Advancing the world's leading sustainable social innovation models by building a global community of late-stage social entrepreneurs and highlighting leading models for top decision-makers in business and government.

[COVID Response Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship](#) – Creating the enabling conditions for a thriving social enterprise ecosystem that supports a new, more sustainable economic reality by mobilizing support for and raising awareness of the role that entrepreneurs play in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

[UpLink](#) – A digital ecosystem of entrepreneurs, investors, governments and other cross-sector stakeholders who collaborate on innovative solutions to scale and maximize their impact.

# Donors

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## Academia/think tanks

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## Civil society

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# Glossary

**Collective action** – Action taken by a number of stakeholders working together to achieve a common goal

**Commitment** – Dedication to a cause, objective or activity demonstrated through actions such as official pledges or a donation of time, resources and/or expertise

**Community** – A form of engagement at the Forum, often characterized by its own set of objectives and goals, as well as by frequent communication and engagement opportunities

**Grant funding** – Collaborations of diverse stakeholders with a shared ambition over an agreed timeframe to deliver specific mission-driven outcomes, funded directly by government, philanthropic organizations, civil society or private organizations

**Impact** – The long-term, economic, environmental or social changes that occur as a direct or indirect result of activities

**Initiatives** – An action or plan to solve a problem, involving co-designed and co-implemented solutions among individuals

**Innovations** – New ideas, new solutions, new products, new technologies or new ways of implementing something

**Interventions** – Activities designed to address an identified problem or challenge

**Members** – An individual or organization that engages in the activities of a platform, initiative or project at the Forum; some, but not all, memberships require adherence to a shared set of principles or commitments

**Multistakeholder platform** – A partnership involving members of different societal sectors working together, sharing risks and combining resources and expertise in order to maximize value for its members and wider society, to progress on shared objectives

**Network** – A group of individuals voluntarily interacting on the basis of shared interests or goals, with a healthy network characterized as one with regular communication, knowledge sharing, and trust among those within the network

**Partners** – Private sector individuals or organizations that collaborate on initiatives hosted by the Forum to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives; partners may or may not have signed formal agreements

**Platform** – An in-person or virtual network of stakeholders set up for a shared interest or goal to scale up solutions to complex challenges

**Projects** – A set of activities contributing to a specific short-term goal (e.g. report, pilot initiative, training programme, etc.)

# Research methodology

## Approach

This paper focuses on 13 grant-funded multistakeholder platforms hosted at the World Economic Forum and provides insights into their work, challenges and achievements over the last financial year. The Forum's Impact Measurement and Management team assembled the data and insights using a common impact framework built on shared goals and indicators.

Of those included in this research: 2 platforms are at "launch" stage, with milestones and an active community; 9 are at "scale" stage, accelerating impact through regional or sectoral focuses and increased activity; and 2 are at "sustain" stage, with established identities to sustain through spin-off to being independent.

## Methods of data collection and synthesis

Data were extracted from reports (including annual reports, donor reports and event reports), tracking systems and event logs, social media results, and through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Where possible, quantitative results have been aggregated across platforms to provide a collective picture of progress, supported by featured stories that illustrate a specific platform's approach and achievements in relation to a specified goal. While these results are not a comprehensive picture of all grant-funded platforms, they provide timely insights into the progress being made by these multistakeholder efforts.

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