

# Global Goals Week 2019: Charting Four Years of our Work with the SDGs

As the global community marks the 4th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), research shows that the progress towards these goals has been slow.

During Global Goals Week 2019, amfori is reaching out to stakeholders to engage on how we can best maximise our tools, services and geographical reach to have meaningful impact on the SDGs.

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This statement provides an assessment of amfori's positioning with regard to the SDGs and reiterates a call for engagement with stakeholders in order to continue advancing in the coming years.

amfori has developed a comprehensive approach to the SDGs, through identifying where and to which Goals our activities and resources deliver the greatest impact. This is set amid an increasingly dramatic backdrop.

According to the UN's July 2019 [report on the Sustainable Development Goals](#), the impacts of climate change and increasing inequality across countries are both undermining progress on the SDG agenda, threatening to reverse many of the gains made over the last decades. Other [reports](#) have also pointed the urgent need to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as a main block on progress on the SDGs.

## Linking amfori's Tools, Services and Programmes to the SDGs

As the leading global business association for open and sustainable trade, amfori's mission 'to enable each of its members to enhance human prosperity, use natural resources responsibly and drive open trade globally'. This vision aligns considerably with the aims of the SDGs.

Similarly, in its vision 2030 Strategy adopted in 2017, amfori explicitly commits to ensuring that its members are in the best position to advance the SDGs.

**amfori BSCI** enables companies to trade with purpose by improving social performance in their supply chain. Its strong [code of conduct has 11 principles](#) that support members. These range from fair remuneration to no child labour, along with a step-by-step approach that enables companies to monitor, engage, get empowered and receive support to put sustainable trade at the heart of their business.

**amfori BEPI** provides a comprehensive range of services that enable companies to drive focused environmental improvements in their supply chain. It covers a comprehensive scope of [11 environmental performance areas](#), ranging from energy use and greenhouse gases to chemical management.

**amfori Advocacy** helps implement amfori's vision and mission. The approach is to help both our members and other organisations influence the international, regional and national legislative frameworks and create a policy landscape that enables sustainable business.

Beyond these three core services and tools, other amfori programmes that drive the SDGs are:

**the amfori Academy** provides various online and face-to-face learning opportunities to increase skills and knowledge to the benefit of amfori members and their supply chains;

**the amfori Country Due Diligence Tool** supports companies to determine the level of risks linked country's governance and gives them an overview of its trade and sustainability situation;

**the amfori Timber Due Diligence Programme**, which supports companies to conduct due diligence in their supply chains and helps ensure that their wooden products do not contribute to illegal deforestation; and

**the amfori Women's Empowerment Programme**, which brings together three specific projects in China, India and Bangladesh aimed at achieving SDG 5 by improving women's rights and offering them the training and guidance necessary to advance their careers.

### amfori and the SDGs

In developing our approach to the SDGs, we have mapped out the alignment of the above-mentioned services, tools and programmes with the specific SDGs.

While all of the SDGs are critical to building a better planet, amfori's work centres specifically on 10 of the 17 SDGs. These are:

	amfori BSCI, amfori BEPI, amfori Advocacy, Country Due Diligence Tool		amfori BSCI, amfori Academy, Country Due Diligence Tool
	amfori BSCI, amfori BEPI, Women's Empowerment Programme, amfori Academy		amfori Academy, Country Due Diligence Tool
	amfori BSCI, amfori Advocacy, Women's Empowerment Programme		amfori BEPI, amfori Academy, Country Due Diligence Tool
	amfori BSCI, amfori BEPI, amfori Academy, Country Due Diligence Tool		amfori BEPI, amfori Academy, Country Due Diligence Tool
	amfori BEPI, amfori Academy, Country Due Diligence Tool		amfori Advocacy, amfori BSCI, amfori BEPI

### The SDGs and amfori's Focal Countries

amfori's geographical scope is worth noting with regards to its positioning on the SDGs. While amfori is a global association, our activities such as the implementation of amfori BSCI and amfori BEPI projects and training mainly take effect in the main sourcing countries of our members.

The top 5 sourcing countries for amfori members are **China, Bangladesh, India, Turkey** and **Vietnam**. Many of these countries are particularly relevant to the achievement of the SDGs from a global perspective.

Eradicating global poverty is the cornerstone of the SDGs, to which almost all of the goals are connected. According to the World Bank, half of those affected by extreme poverty worldwide live in just 5 countries: **India**, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and **Bangladesh**.

Progress in reducing extreme poverty is dependent on significantly increasing living standards in these five countries. The World Bank also highlights that reductions in poverty across **China** have been crucial to the reduction of global poverty and will remain crucial to the achievement of the SDGs with regard to poverty by 2030. The same argument can be made about Vietnam, with almost 10% of its population (the 15<sup>th</sup> largest population globally) living under the global poverty line.

On climate change which is the most problematic SDG for all countries the performance of amfori's top 5 sourcing countries is mixed at best. In a [ranking](#) of 62 high and middle income countries, **China (33)**, and **Turkey (50)** feature in the bottom half while **India** is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> (Vietnam and Bangladesh as lower income countries are not featured).

For a more holistic view on the SDGs and amfori's top sourcing countries it's useful to look at [the SDG 2019 Index](#) produced annually to assess where each country stands with regard to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In a ranking of 162 countries according to overall SDG performance, the report presents a varied picture for amfori's top 5 sourcing countries in 2019:

<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>– 116</b>
<b>India</b>	<b>– 115</b>
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>- 79</b>
<b>Vietnam</b>	<b>- 54</b>
<b>China</b>	<b>- 39</b>

However, what is evident is amfori's focus on its top sourcing countries can make a contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. Nevertheless, consideration could also be given to other sourcing countries where progress on the SDGs is most needed.

## Advancing Partnerships and Collaborations for the SDGs

amfori has endeavoured to build collaboration and partnerships with several global actors including UN institutions, and range of civil society actors. In 2018 we established an **amfori Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC)** made up of representatives of international organisations, business associations and civil society to advise amfori's on its strategic priorities and actions.

Considering the opportunities and challenges faced by advancing our work on the SDGs, it is wholly necessary to identify existing alignments between amfori's work and the countries where we can bring added value as identified above. Nevertheless, it is clear that this approach will require more strategic outreach to certain actors.

This year, amfori reinvigorated its engagement with the United Nations Global Compact ([UNGC](#)), and joined the Global Reporting Initiative ([GRI](#)) Community as well as the UNGC Belgian Chapter [The Shift](#). amfori has also in 2019 invited an environmental expert from Rainforest Alliance into the amfori SAC for the first time and signed on as a supporting organization to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s [Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action](#).

More will need to be done in the coming months in relation to the work and challenges described above including more targeted engagements at country level in countries of particular relevance to the SDGs and amfori.

To this end, amfori is reaching out to all relevant stakeholders (civil society, governments and international organisations) to engage with us and work together on increasing the chances that next year's 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SDGs can report greater progress.

## About amfori

At amfori we believe in a world where all trade delivers social, environmental and economic benefits for everyone. We call this Trade with Purpose.

As the leading global business association for open and sustainable trade, we bring together over 2,400 retailers, importers, brands and national associations representing a combined turnover of more than one trillion euros.

We offer our members a practical framework and world-class tools that enable them to manage the social and environmental performance of their supply chains and anticipate trends. We also advocate for progressive policy and collaborate with high-level stakeholders to achieve common aims.

Our work enables organisations to enhance human prosperity, use natural resources responsibly and drive open trade globally. These are major challenges across the world which require a collaborative effort to tackle. So, while our members can't solve them on their own, together we can influence and drive positive change at scale.

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**For more information please visit our website or contact:**

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