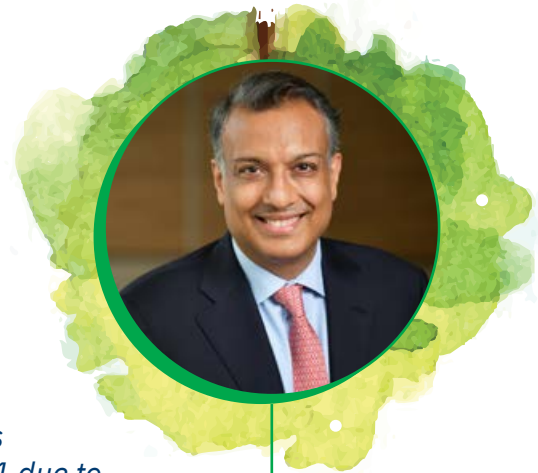


# Striving towards a sustainable future



*India's score on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has increased from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2021 due to improvements in clean water and sanitation and affordable and clean energy across the nation*

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The country, as it stands today, has most business enterprises trying to commit to the Environment, Social and Governance related goals. Last year, many Indian companies rushed to adopt the environment, social and governance norms, following pressures from investors and regulators. Many of them have taken steps to restructure their operations in order to meet India's goal of net-zero emissions by 2070.

The private sector is essential for realizing ambitious national climate objectives. Business is not only a key partner in achieving sustained growth, but it is also the primary driving force to get there - through both changes in behaviour and resources that go far beyond government budgets.

## **Sustainability is a critical differentiator**

Sustainability has become a key differentiator for Indian companies because it provides them with an opportunity to create long-

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term value while contributing to social and environmental goals. Companies in India who embrace sustainability initiatives can set themselves apart from the competition, while also helping to build a better future.

Companies have a large responsibility to help tackle environmental challenges, both through domestic laws and regulations as well as international treaties and frameworks. Indian corporations have been asked to increase the amount of information they disclose regarding sustainable practices, and many companies





have adopted the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to do this. Additionally, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has also suggested integrating reports for greater insights.

The government has released new National Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct, which is incorporated into the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reports (BRSR) to be submitted by India's top 1000 listed companies.

Indian businesses are also beginning to adopt the practice of the "circular economy", in which resources are reused and recycled with minimal waste being released into the environment.

A circular economy seeks to minimize waste and environmental damage, while concurrently maximizing efficiency, productivity, and economic growth. This type of economic system keeps resources and products circulating without creating any waste, pollution, or overconsumption of natural resources. By 2030, the projected global economic impact of this system is over one trillion dollars, with India's portion estimated to be \$218 billion.

According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, implementing a circular economy in India by 2050 could be incredibly beneficial, with estimated benefits amounting to approximately Rs 40 lakh crore (\$624 billion).

Furthermore, it has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an impressive 44 percent.

India is currently greatly dependent on imported oil and gas, its import bill for the first half of 2022-23 having increased 76 percent to \$90.3 billion. As such, it is of vital importance that India follows the Government's mission of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and pursues a circular economy. To this aim, several policies have been enacted, including the Natural Resource Efficiency Policy, Plastic Waste Management Rules, Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules, Metals Recycling Policy, and Extended Producer Responsibility.

To achieve economic self-sufficiency and reduce the reliance on foreign debt, India must focus on reducing its imports. Embracing the circular economy can help to bridge the growing demand-supply gap.

