

Project fact sheet: "A societal value compass for the steel industry" 2018-06-27

#agenda2030compass: using the UN Global Goals to reach societal values

The UN Agenda 2030 and the Global Goals

In September 2015 a milestone in setting the direction for sustainable development was reached, when 193 nations agreed on the United Nations Agenda 2030 and its 17 Global Goals (aka the Sustainable Development Goals or the SDGs). The Global Goals rest on three basic principles of being *transformative*, *universal* and *indivisible*. The Goals are *transformative* in that achieving them require fundamental changes in how societies and economies are organised; they are *universal* in that they are embraced by 193 countries and apply equally to all people; and they are *indivisible* in that they are inextricably linked, efforts to achieve each Goal also influencing performance on the other Goals.



UN's 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development



The prototype Agenda 2030 Compass

In essence, the Global Goals establishes a framework for assessing what is valuable in a society where basic level of human well-being is ensured while safeguarding the ecological systems on which all well-being depends. As such, Agenda 2030 can be seen as “the world’s largest purchasing order for sustainable development”, a guide for foresighted actors to identify tomorrows business opportunities.

Turning aspiration into action

In 2013 the Swedish steel industry presented a foresighted vision for 2050: *Steel forms a better future*. The vision’s three commitments – technical excellence, creativity and partnership, and resource efficiency – concludes that all outputs from Swedish steel producers shall contribute societal value. In order to turn the vision into action, Jernkontoret (the Swedish Steel Producers’ Association) initiated a collaboration with the Stockholm Environment Institute and Swedish steel industries, funded by the Hugo Carlsson Foundation. A first co-creation based research project was carried out 2015-2016 using explorative scenario methodology to develop a strategic ten point action plan to meet the vision’s commitments. The project concluded that the UN Global Goals, which had then recently been agreed upon, would make for an interesting framework to explore further for assessing the steel industry’s commitment to deliver only societal value. The *transformative* nature of the Global Goals was well suited for the industry’s aims and comparative advantages in technology, creativity and partnerships to deliver high-end solutions. The *universal* nature ensured that societal value of future products could be assessed across global markets. The *indivisible* nature made it possible to develop a comprehensive assessment framework, that ruled out sub-optimising and “cherry picking” particularly beneficial Goals, focusing instead on societal value broadly.

The Agenda 2030 compass

The second project, started late 2016 with the aim to develop a prototype “Agenda 2030 compass” for assessing the potential societal value of a new product or production process. Based on scientific foundation

from Weitz et al (2017), where cross linkages between the Goals had been analysed in a Swedish context, the project has developed a workshop based methodology for structured assessment of a certain intervention's potential direct impacts across all the Goals, and a tool for analysing how the direct impacts translates into indirect impacts across all Goals taking into account country and policy related differences.

The project has organised six workshops, gathering a total of about 100 participants from steel and mining industries, governmental departments and agencies, academia and research institutes, as well as representatives from other sectors. In the spring 2017, three workshops were carried out to test different facilitation approaches and to gather initial data on how different steel products and processes might affect the Global Goals. Materials collected were used as input for the design and prototyping of a first pilot version of the Agenda 2030 compass.

In the spring 2018, the prototype compass was piloted in three workshops. The first workshop assessed and compared the applicability of metallurgic slags used in asphalt or in water purification. The second workshop assessed difference between high quality steel applications in "the greenest" heavy duty vehicles of tomorrow and current generation vehicles in a first session, and additive manufacturing in a second session. The third workshop involved participants from the public sector, government ministries, parliament and authorities assessing how different policy alternatives could come to affect the Global Goals.

In each of the workshops, participants assessed how an alternative solution, e.g. a new product or production process, might influence each of Agenda 2030's 17 goals and their associated targets. In the first step, participants made qualitative judgements about how and to what extent pursuit of a given option might influence each of the Goals. In subsequent steps, the Agenda 2030 Compass was used to evaluate how different choices can be expected to impact each of the Goals in either a positive or negative direction.

Based on expert assessments on how the different Goals affect one another, the Agenda 2030 Compass provides a form of multi-criteria analysis taking into account the complexity of interactions between Agenda 2030's 17 Goals.

Not an Oracle, but a distinctive prototype thinking navigator

The compass is not intended to provide straight-up answers about what course of action should be taken. Nor will it ever be final, as the relationships between different goals will evolve with development over time. However, based on best available knowledge at a certain time, it will help in the assessment of different courses of action by placing the complexity of multiple interactions in a tool that supports crucial teamwork among people with diverse backgrounds, and by pointing to areas where further analysis is needed. The work with the Agenda 2030 Compass has resulted in the following distinctive results and insights:

- While most Agenda 2030 related efforts have focused on picking a few key Goals and then measuring progress, the Compass is forward looking assessing the systemic effects of a planned action before it is taken and comparing it to a baseline or to other options.
- While a lot of the Agenda 2030 related work in governments and industry have addressed fairly generic policymaking levels, the work with the Compass has brought together main actors from a heavy manufacturing industry and its key stakeholders in agencies and society in a co-creation process to discuss and assess concrete options for actually contributing to the Goals.
- The selection of new Swedish steel industry products and processes that were assessed in the workshops indicate that Swedish steel industry has considerable potential to contribute to the Global Goals.
- While the Agenda 2030 Compass prototype has been developed for the steel industry, the methodology is general and can be used by any actor in industry or government.

In the autumn, work will continue to systematically verify the accuracy of the modelling and data inputs, after which a fully functional model, usable by any actor, can be launched.

