



## Cornerstone UN SDG Series: Life Below Water

### Investing to Align with SDG 14: Life Below Water

SDG 14: Life Below Water focuses on the critical role played by oceans, along with coastal and marine resources, in contributing to human well-being as well as economic opportunity. The oceans provide food for the world's growing population, and our rainwater and drinking water are ultimately provided and regulated by the sea. However, ocean health and marine life are threatened by overfishing, pollution and acidification.

SDG 14 is further refined by targets that can be more readily translated into actions. These targets highlight the interconnected nature of the goals: for example, strategies to support Life Below Water are intertwined with strategies that support SDG 3 (Good Health and Well Being), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. Below are a series of synergies that can come from providing access to products, services and systems that address Life Below Water.



### Access to Sustainable Sources of Food and Nutrition

More than 3 billion people depend on the oceans as their primary source of protein<sup>1</sup> making oceans the world's largest protein source. Fish accounts for 17% of the global population's intake of animal protein.<sup>2</sup> Sustainable fishing practices, including responsible fisheries and aquaculture, offer opportunities to reduce hunger and improve nutrition.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, aquaculture is the fastest-growing food sector and has the potential to produce the fish needed to help meet the demands of a growing population.<sup>4</sup> The FAO forecasts that almost three-quarters of the growth in demand for fish between 2017 and 2026 will come from Asian countries with rapidly growing populations.<sup>5</sup>

The global share of marine fish stocks that are within biologically sustainable levels declined from 90% in 1974 to 69% in 2013.<sup>6</sup> Marine protected areas need to be effectively managed and well-resourced, and regulations need to be put in place to reduce overfishing.<sup>7</sup> As of January 2018, just 16% (or approximately 22 million square kilometers) of the marine waters under national jurisdiction—i.e., 0 to 200 nautical miles from shore—were protected.<sup>8</sup>



#### What are the UN SDGs?

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals set by the UN General Assembly in 2015. The SDGs are a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The SDGs are part of Resolution 70/1 of the UNGA titled "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," now referred to as the "2030 Agenda".

#### What are the UN SDGs designed to do?

The SDGs are designed to address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, sustainability, and peace and justice. They represent a call to action for governments, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector to align their activities with the social, environmental and economic changes needed to ensure the continued viability of our planet and the dignity of societies and individuals.





## Access to Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Our rainwater and drinking water are ultimately provided and regulated by the sea.<sup>9</sup> Approximately 70% of Earth's surface is covered in ocean water. When water at the ocean's surface is heated by the sun it gains energy. With enough energy, the molecules of liquid water change into water vapor and move into the air. This process is called evaporation.<sup>10</sup>

Rising temperatures will intensify the earth's water cycle, increasing evaporation. Increased evaporation will result in more storms, but also contribute to drying over some land areas. As a result, storm-affected areas are likely to experience increases in precipitation and increased risk of flooding, while areas located far away from storm tracks are likely to experience less precipitation and increased risk of drought.<sup>11</sup>



## About the Cornerstone SDG Series

By providing a brief overview of each of the UN SDGs, Cornerstone Capital Group seeks to help investors understand how incorporating SDG alignment into their investment decisions can contribute to progress. Because the SDGs were not created specifically with investors in mind, Cornerstone effectively "translates" them into investment opportunities by focusing on the concept of access: the ability of individuals and societies to achieve desired social, economic and environmental outcomes. We believe that investing in products, services and systems that increase access is key to driving progress toward the SDGs.

**At Cornerstone, we believe that investments can achieve competitive financial performance and positive societal impact – performance that sacrifices nothing, except indifference.**

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(1) <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>  
(2) <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/231522/icode/>  
(3) <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/overview/fao-and-the-post-2015-development-agenda/fisheries-aquaculture-oceans-seas/en/>  
(4) <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/goals/goal-14/en/>  
(5) [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/agriculture-and-food/oecd-fao-agricultural-outlook-2017-2026\\_agr\\_outlook-2017-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/agriculture-and-food/oecd-fao-agricultural-outlook-2017-2026_agr_outlook-2017-en)  
(6) <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg14>  
(7) <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>  
(8) <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2018/overview/>  
(9) <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>  
(10) <https://www.acaedu.net/cms/lib3/TX01001550/Centricity/Domain/389/5.88%20The%20Sun%20and%20Water%20Cycle.pdf> (11) <https://pmm.nasa.gov/resources/faq/how-does-climate-change-affect-precipitation>