



Cornerstone UN SDG Series: Clean Water and Sanitation

Investing to Align with SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

UN Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation recognizes that access to clean water and sanitation can materially improve the living conditions of even the world's poorest citizens while preventing millions of unnecessary deaths annually. A lack of access to clean water affects people's lives in myriad ways including their access to nutritious foods, levels of health, and ultimately, their financial well-being.

SDG 6 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 Clean Water and Sanitation also promote progress toward SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). Below are a series of synergies that can come from providing access to products, services and systems that address Clean Water and Sanitation.



Access to Clean Water, Including Sanitation & Hygiene

Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impact food security, health, housing, and educational opportunities for poor families across the world. At the current time, more than 2 billion people are living with the risk of reduced access to freshwater resources and, by 2050, at least one in four people is likely to live in a country affected by chronic or recurring shortages of fresh water. Drought afflicts some of the world's poorest countries, worsening hunger and malnutrition.¹

Fortunately, there has been great progress made in the past decade regarding drinking sources and sanitation, whereby over 90% of the world's population now has access to improved sources of drinking water. However, as the negative effects of climate change grow, previously available water sources are becoming scarcer, jeopardizing some of the improvements that have been felt by communities around the world. Women and girls are disproportionately experiencing the impacts from limited water supplies, as they are responsible for water collection in 80% of households without access to water on premises.



Access to Adequate Housing and Living Conditions

Approximately 2.4 billion people lack access to basic sanitation services, such as toilets.² In 2015, 892 million people practiced open defecation, and only 27% of the population in less developed countries had basic handwashing facilities.³ Even in densely populated urban areas with run-down housing and high rates of poverty, water piped directly to households and piped sewage systems have been shown to result in significant improvements in the quality of living conditions.⁴



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.

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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 business and investment activity 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 Capital Group, we believe that investments can achieve both positive societal impact and competitive financial performance — performance that sacrifices nothing, except indifference.

1) <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>, 2) <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>, 3) <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg6>, 4) <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9666.pdf>