

OVERVIEW | A PATHWAY TOWARD EARTH RESTORATION

All life on Earth depends on clean air and water, biodiversity, healthy oceans, and a stable climate. These are the **Global Commons: the shared resources that ensure a habitable planet** upon which we can all work, live, and prosper into the future. But according to the latest science, the drain on these resources, largely due to unsustainable consumption and the structure of the global economy, is overwhelming critical life-support systems. **The system is out of balance.**

The **Global Commons Alliance** is a new 21st century platform for the environment and the economy to transform economic systems so that society can prosper on a stable and resilient planet.

Our mission is to create a habitable planet which can be achieved through **catalyzing a transformation of our global economic systems**. To do this we need to create a **critical mass of companies, investors, and cities that adopt science-based targets**, new norms and tools, so that, by 2030, Earth Systems show signs of stabilizing due to coherent, integrated action.

BACKGROUND | PLANETARY BOUNDARIES

Scientists emphasize that the rapid expansion of human activities since the industrial revolution has now generated a global geophysical force equivalent to some of the great forces of nature. A growing number of scientists think we have entered a new geological epoch that needs a new name – **the Anthropocene**.



UniversityJ. Lokrantz/Azote based on Steffen et al. 2015.

In 2008, an interdisciplinary group of scientists led by Johan Rockström of the Stockholm Resilience Centre and Will Steffen of the Australian National University evaluated insights into Earth System dynamics, seeking to characterize the conditions needed for our planet to continue in a stable, Holocene-like state – the state of the Earth over the past 10,000 years in which human civilizations have thrived.

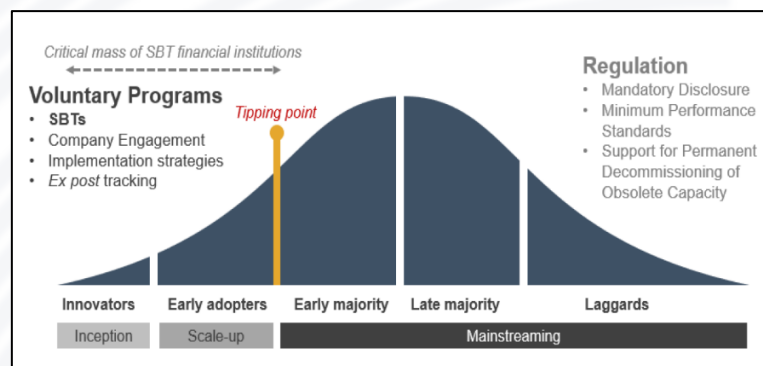
The result was the **Planetary Boundaries (PB) framework** – a set of nine planetary boundaries within which human societies can continue to develop and thrive. The nine boundaries include climate change, biodiversity loss, land use, and ocean acidification, outlining the “safe operating space” for humanity.

Over the past decade, this research has catalyzed a groundswell of related scientific studies, action by civil society, engagement from business leaders, and high-level political initiatives. Following the adoption of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, a coalition of leading multinational businesses and environmental organizations began to develop “Science-Based Targets” as a strategy to help individual companies adhere to the agreement’s 1.5°C goal.

Nearly 800 companies are using science to specify how much and how quickly they need to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) through the **Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)**. By setting science-based targets, these businesses are future-proofing growth, increasing innovation, reducing regulatory uncertainty, strengthening investor confidence, and improving profitability.

THEORY OF CHANGE | SCIENCE-BASED TARGETS FOR EARTH

According to the SBTi, if the ~270 largest corporate emitters set and implement GHG emission reduction targets in line with science, they could contribute ~20% of the required global reduction by 2030. A critical mass of companies with science-based emission reduction targets in key countries and sectors could catalyze a **tipping point towards a low-carbon economy** by providing proof of concept.



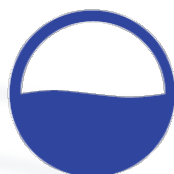
Theory of Change, Science-Based Targets Initiative

The adoption of science-based targets follows the Theory of Change developed by Everett Rogers called **“Diffusion of Innovations.”** According to this theory, once an “innovation” (e.g. Science-Based Target) has been adopted by a critical mass of individuals (typically 16% of the target population), then the innovation becomes “viral,” accelerating the adoption of the innovation in an epidemic way.

The SBTi Theory of Change is proving to be successful so far. Alongside the nearly 800 companies establishing **voluntary science-based targets for climate** to date, there are discussions in the European Union and United States to establish **regulatory frameworks to account for climate risk** such as the European Green Deal and Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). As a result, both voluntary and regulatory narratives are moving towards a tipping point where **mainstream business activities** align to the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and a low-carbon economy.

Yet climate is just one of nine planetary boundaries defined by Rockström and Steffen. The fight against climate change cannot be won without both decarbonizing our economies *and* restoring balance to the Earth’s interrelated Global Commons. Developing science-based targets beyond climate – for land, oceans, freshwater, and biodiversity – is a crucial step to foster greater action and **create system-level change** in line with protecting the life support system of our planet.

The concept for the Global Commons Alliance was born during the **2016 International Dialogue on Our Global Commons** convened by the GEF and IUCN in Washington DC. The Dialogue engaged leading environment, innovation and system design thinkers and analysts from across sectors of society in an unprecedented, informal and engaging strategic discussion. The meeting focused on systems change, and it showed the breadth, interest and support for creating a movement on safeguarding the global commons from many partners. After two years of research, convenings, and proof of concept, the formal launch of the Global Commons Alliance took place at the **2019 World Economic Forum in Davos** with 26 top science and conservation organizations.



ALLIANCE GOALS | CATALYZE SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

Solving the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced will require the ambition and leadership to:

- Define and implement **science-based targets** to maintain the stability of the whole Earth system
- Provide **pathways for companies, investors, and cities** to thrive in balance with the planet
- Engage **key leaders and the broader public** in transforming our economic systems to maintain a safe operating space for life on Earth

FORMULA FOR SUCCESS | INTEGRATED COMPONENTS

These goals will be achieved by investing in four independent but closely intertwined elements of the Global Commons Alliance:



EARTH COMMISSION

Provides a synthesis of the scientific insights to underpin the setting of science-based targets



SCIENCE-BASED TARGETS NETWORK

Creates methodologies and drives adoption for company- and city-level targets



EARTH HQ

Mobilizes a broad public movement to create the shift in sentiment necessary to accelerate adoption of science-based targets



SYSTEMS CHANGE LAB

Distills, reports, identifies gaps, and promotes coalitions for pathways to deliver transformational change in food, energy, urban and production and consumption systems

Building on the momentum of the SBTi for climate, and in response to growing demand, a group of 25 organizations formed the **Science Based Targets Network (SBTN)** for companies, investors, and cities to define and use targets to reduce their impact on - and help restore - the Earth's land, oceans, freshwater, and biodiversity.

The central input to the SBTN will come from the newly-established **Earth Commission**, convened by Future Earth, the world's largest network of sustainability scientists. The Commission is composed of international teams of leading scientists working together to assess the interconnected systems which constitute the Earth system. Their assessment of the latest science about the interrelated systems of land, freshwater, oceans, and biodiversity, coupled with a social science lens, will define the boundary conditions for a healthy planet for flourishing societies.

Communications and mobilization are crucial to success and will be driven by **EarthHQ**, a media platform that will provide context for all interested audiences to the work of the Global Commons Alliance. An Earth Dashboard will allow users to visualize and interact with the Earth Commission's data and technical insights, while also providing transparency on what corporate and government actors are doing – or not doing – in driving sustainability practices. An Earth News Network will be launched as the content and storytelling engine, supported by strategic partners including Mongabay.

The **Systems Change Lab** will distill the lessons for the key players involved in any effort to bring about disruptive system-wide change. By focusing on the drivers of change, this component will be an essential complement to the other three components, identifying what policies, coalitions, citizen support, and other actions are needed to maximize the probability that Earth Commission science is adhered to and SBTN targets are met. Led by the Global Environmental Facility, World Resources Institute, and the World Economic Forum, the Systems Change Lab will provide an essential unifying vision and direction across all components of the strategy.

UNPRECEDENTED COLLABORATION | PARTNERS & FUNDERS

The Global Commons Alliance is an effective collaboration of leadership, technology, science, innovation, and communication developed by some of the world's leading institutions. Launch funders of this effort are the Oak Foundation, MAVA Foundation, Porticus, and the Global Environmental Facility.

ARUP

BSR

CDP
DISCLOSE REVEAL ACTION

Ceres
Sustainability is the bottom line

circle of blue
where water speaks

CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL

EAT

futureearth

gef

IIASA

IUCN

NATURAL
CAPITAL
COALITION

OCEAN
UNITE

PIK

The Nature
Conservancy

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
SOLUTIONS NETWORK
A GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

UN WCMC
environment

United Nations
Global Compact

the value web

WE MEAN
BUSINESS

World
Benchmarking
Alliance

WORLD
ECONOMIC
FORUM

WORLD
RESOURCES
INSTITUTE

WWF

wbcsd

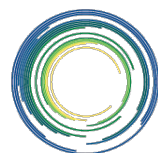
OAK
FOUNDATION

MAVA
FONDATION POUR LA NATURE

PORTICUS

GORDON AND BETTY
MOORE
FOUNDATION

ROCKEFELLER
Philanthropy
Advisors



GLOBAL COMMONS ALLIANCE
A PLAN FOR THE PLANET

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please visit our website at <http://globalcommonsalliance.org/>