



**CubeMatch**

Powering Change

# A Green New World? Opinion Paper

September 2023

Justine Tournier | CubeMatch Ireland

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Introduction .....                                  | Page 1   |
| What is Sustainability? .....                       | Page 2   |
| What does Sustainability mean for Businesses? ..... | Page 3   |
| What is ESG? .....                                  | Page 4-6 |
| • <i>Environmental</i>                              |          |
| • <i>Social</i>                                     |          |
| • <i>Governance</i>                                 |          |
| Is ESG here to stay?.....                           | Page 7-9 |
| • <i>The power of Marketing &amp; Greenwashing</i>  |          |
| • <i>Lack of uniform reporting standards</i>        |          |
| • <i>The example of Carbon Credit Markets</i>       |          |
| • <i>Sustainable investing, what's next?</i>        |          |
| Conclusion.....                                     | Page 10  |
| About the author .....                              | Page 11  |
| Bibliography.....                                   | Page 12  |



## INTRODUCTION

---

Our world is currently facing extreme global threats with Climate Change, pandemics, increasing inequalities, resource depletion, ecosystem destruction, deforestation, air, land and water pollution, alongside more and more endangered species getting closer to extinction. For the past 60 years, we have witnessed disaster after disaster, with experts warning us about a fast-approaching Climate Crisis.

The Climate Crisis is here and stronger than ever, demanding urgent global actions and systemic changes to halt it. There is a growing public awareness of the change needed to save the planet, to allow current and future generations to thrive while living harmoniously with their environment. More recently, a lot of new technologies, green initiatives and sustainable concepts have started to emerge, offering the promise of a Green New World.

The increasing public ecological awakening has led businesses, governments, and stakeholders to take a growing interest in the Sustainable world. Corporate Sustainability has been evolving around one key concept: ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance). In the midst of this “Green New World”, we all wonder if ESG is here to stay or just another fad not meant to last.

## WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

---

In October 1987, the United Nations published a report titled “Our Common Future”, also known as the Brundtland Report; where the notion of Sustainability was first defined as: “a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Simply put, Sustainability means existing and developing without depleting natural resources for future generations. Sustainability evolves around three key pillars: environmental protection, social development, and economic growth.



In the midst of Climate Change, ensuring development today, while not negatively impacting the future, is proving extremely challenging. It is now certain that we cannot maintain our current development style, more sustainable choices must be made and worldwide changes must be implemented urgently. Climate Change is the defining crisis of our lifetime and if we do not act quickly, rising temperatures will keep fuelling natural disasters, rising sea levels, population displacements, environmental destruction, food and water insecurity, conflicts, and pandemics; leading steadily to death of nature and soon behind Humanity, as we cannot survive without it.

Collective action is the only way to stem the Climate Crisis tide; requiring deep transformations in all aspects of our society – how we use land, grow food, transport goods, power our economies and consume.

While it is certain that technology has contributed to and in certain cases, even accelerated Climate Change; new technologies, alongside nature-based solutions, will help reduce net emissions and create a cleaner world.

The only way forward is to create and maintain conditions under which humans and nature can co-exist in productive harmony, while supporting present and future generations.

# WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY MEAN FOR BUSINESSES?

---



In the past few years, a growing number of businesses have been integrating Sustainability more and more into their company strategy, realising “they can do well by doing good”. For a company, Sustainability means doing business without harming the environment, community, or society as a whole. Corporate Sustainability addresses two key categories: the effect a business has on society and the environment.

A Sustainable Business Strategy will aim to make a positive impact on at least one of these two categories. Each business has its own unique sustainable business practice involving various elements such as: working with sustainable suppliers and partners, investing in the community by organising fundraisers and donating to charitable organisations, using recycled products, reducing the carbon footprint of their office and employees, etc. A sustainable business must always consider a wide array of factors (environmental, economic, and social) when making business decisions and consistently monitoring the impact of their operations.

While enforcing sustainable practices can help mitigate the global Climate Crisis, it can also have a positive impact on a business’ performance. The “Shared Value Opportunity” shows the overlap between financial gain and social and environmental progress, proving that “doing good” can have a direct impact on a business’ ability to “do well”.

With the Climate Crisis, businesses, investors and even the wider public look more and more at ESG metrics to determine if a business, product, or service is ethical and sustainable. Building strong Sustainability standards allows a stronger business model and enables a business to attract customers, employees and shareholders who are invested in Sustainability; creating a positive impact on the business’ brand image as well as its revenue.



# WHAT IS ESG?

A term we hear more and more nowadays is ESG, which stands for Environmental, Social and Governance. It is defined as “a set of standards measuring a business' impact on society, the environment and how transparent and accountable it is in terms of governance”. It measures how a business integrates environmental, social and governance practices into day-to-day operations, as well as its business model, impact, and sustainability.

The three pillars making up ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) are used in ESG frameworks and represent the three main areas that businesses are expected to report in. ESG main purpose is to capture all the non-financial risks and opportunities inherent to a company's day-to-day activities.



## Environmental

The Environmental aspect of ESG focuses on how a business impacts the environment, the potential risks, and opportunities it can face because of environmental issues (e.g.: Climate Change) and the measures implemented by the business to protect natural resources. This covers the products and/or services, the supply chain and also the day-to-day operations.



### Some examples:

- Encouraging recycling and reducing the amount of waste produced.
- Reducing energy and water usage and when possible using renewable energy sources.
- Reducing carbon emissions.
- Developing a greener offering.
- Switching to zero-waste or recycled products.

## **Social**

The Social aspect of ESG focuses on how a business treats people: its employees, suppliers, customers, etc. More than the workplace culture element, this pillar also focuses on how a business impacts the wider society.

### Some examples:

- Supporting and investing in fair and equal opportunities and conditions for all employees.
- Ensuring products/ services sold are safe to use and that customer data is secure.
- Supporting wellbeing and providing health and safety training.
- Being committed to hiring and promoting equally within the company, implementing Diversity and Inclusivity policies.
- Investing in the community by volunteering and making donations to local charitable organisations.

## **Governance**

The Governance aspect of ESG focuses on the processes of decision-making, reporting and the logistics of running a business. This includes internal controls and practices to maintain compliance (regulations, industry best practices and corporate policies) and looks at the business' ethical behaviour and its transparency with stakeholders about its activities.

### Some examples:

- Providing accurate reporting to all stakeholders on financial performance, business strategy and operations.
- Making sure all business leaders and managers are accountable for risk and performance management.
- Fighting bribery, corruption and all illegal practices.
- Ensuring diversity across all levels.

In a nutshell, ESG allows a business to target different areas of its organisation and implement more sustainable and ethical practices.



This concept was born in the early 2000's with a report from the UN titled "Who Cares Wins", carrying what is widely considered the first mainstream mention of ESG. This report aimed to encourage all business stakeholders (managers, directors, investors, etc.) to embrace ESG long-term and required to incorporate, for the first time, the ESG criteria in the financial evaluations of companies.

Since then, nearly two decades have passed, during that time governments worldwide have updated and/or created new laws emphasising ESG. For instance, in the UK, the government passed the Companies Act, forming the primary source of company law and setting standards for the "G" category. Many environmental laws have also been passed worldwide, fuelled by the Climate Crisis. Lastly, the "S" category has also seen a boost, with several laws passed, encouraging diversity and criminalising discrimination.



## IS ESG HERE TO STAY?

---

While ESG is still a relatively recent concept, more and more organisations worldwide seem to be implementing ESG in their business strategy and day-to-day operations, promising to make Sustainability a top priority. This noticeable movement towards Sustainability can be observed across the entire society, with individuals and entire communities looking to live more sustainable lives, forcing governments and business to make actual changes. Now more than ever, people will expect more from governments and businesses, and won't hesitate to hold them accountable and boycott those who have a harmful impact on the environment.

### **The power of Marketing & Greenwashing**

Greenwashing is generally defined as “a behaviour or a practice of making a company, service, or product appear more environmentally friendly or less environmentally damaging than it is.” In the past few years, Greenwashing has been an increasing threat to Sustainability, misleading thousands of consumers about how sustainable some products and services are.

There is no depth to which some businesses will not sink to try to improve their image and sell more products/ services, taking advantage of trusting customers who are ready to pay more for sustainable products/ services. Sadly, not all businesses are interested in truly integrating social and environmental concerns in their business day-to-day operations; and are not willing to act to reduce their impact on the environment. However, they do see the opportunity of the “Green Market” and all its potential customers and revenue; making them develop false green marketing strategies to convince customers of their false good corporate image and social responsibility, even though they often have a poor environmental performance. Being perceived as eco-friendly and socially engaged is the new trend, making it harder for all stakeholders to identify true green claims and sustainable purchase choices.

Unfortunately, Greenwashing has caused a widespread societal concern that companies are spreading false or ambiguous environmental information, making people more sceptical about the environmental performance and benefits of green products and services. Consequently, many actual green products and services have suffered, since consumers can no longer differentiate the reliability of green claims.





The only way to fight Greenwashing and Green Scepticism is to force governments and authorities to create and enforce binding regulations which will adequately protect consumers from the harmful effects of Greenwashing, reducing the power of Green Scepticism.

In the meantime, consumers, investors, and all stakeholders must be cautious and thoroughly fact-check how environmentally friendly or green a product/ service/ fund truly is to make the best sustainable and informed purchase/ investment.

### **Lack of uniform reporting standards**

Even though many stakeholders have welcomed ESG, the concept still has no uniform reporting standards worldwide. A company or investor will always measure different things and report in its own ways, making it extremely confusing for stakeholders to decipher whether or not their investment made a difference and positive impact on the environment. It is now imperative that global markets start standardising their systems of reporting and metrics.

### **The example of Carbon Credits markets**

Greenhouse gas emissions are a key element of the Climate Crisis and are sadly still rising across all major sectors globally, albeit at a slower pace. Unless we achieve deep reductions in GHG emissions now, Earth's global temperature will rise to a new level, endangering our environment and lives. Concrete and impactful action will require vast investments, but bear in mind that the cost of inaction will be far higher. Many countries are looking to carbon markets as part of the answer to drive and finance the climate transformation.

Carbon credit markets are trading systems in which carbon credits are sold and bought. Companies or individuals can use these carbon markets to compensate for their greenhouse gas emissions by purchasing carbon credits from entities that remove or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One tradable carbon credit equals one tonne of carbon dioxide, or the equivalent amount of a different greenhouse gas reduced, sequestered, or avoided. When a credit is used to reduce, sequester, or avoid emissions, it becomes an offset and is no longer tradable. To date, there are two types of carbon markets:

- Compliance carbon markets.
- Voluntary carbon markets.



Compliance markets are a result of policy or regulatory requirements at national, regional and/or international levels. Where voluntary carbon markets are about the issuance, buying and selling of carbon credits, on a voluntary basis and on national or international levels. Supply for the voluntary carbon markets credits purely comes from private entities which are developing carbon projects, or governments developing programs certified by carbon standards that generate emission reductions and/or removals. The demand for those credits comes from private individuals who want to compensate for their carbon footprints, corporations with corporate sustainability targets, and other actors aiming to trade credits at a higher price to make a profit.

The voluntary carbon credits market is unfortunately unsustainable due to two important factors: a lack of government regulations and transparency, alongside the involvement of profit-driven organisations. The overall market is quite volatile with a low supply of transparent credits and deeply needs radical changes paired with market standardisation.

### **Sustainable investing, what's next?**

Bringing order to the chaotic sustainable investing market will be no easy task. Most of the existing frameworks in operation will have to disappear as many are neither science nor sustainability-based and only exist to serve the needs of the capital markets above our actual and pressing Climate needs. With new regulations slowly coming into place, more and more smaller companies will have to start disclosing, which will help put under pressure the inaccuracy in the market, and large companies choosing to avoid true systemic change.

This global standardisation process will take time, even in Europe, but it will ultimately be highly beneficial in many ways; bringing more transparency in the disclosing of information about the environmental impact of a company's activities; putting an end to the Fad, Greenwashing era. Europe can well lead the way but only by becoming more ambitious and freeing up substantial capital for systemic change and innovation.

Overall, with ESG investment tools and metrics proliferating, the emergence of independent third parties providing ESG ratings, the upcoming centralisation of regulatory frameworks and the birth of new ESG indices; better portfolio benchmarking and ESG disclosure will occur. Standardisation will also bring improved accuracy of information available to the wider public.



## CONCLUSION

---

Are we yet in a “Green New World”? I think we’re not there yet; however, I strongly believe that there is hope and time to achieve this ideal!

We can no longer deny the fact that we can all do better, as individuals – businesses – stakeholders and governments, it’s our collective responsibility to do more. It’s also now more than vital that we fasten the pace, as the Climate Crisis will not wait and the longer it takes us to implement deep global changes – the worse it will get for us and the entire planet.

There are so many ways to do better for our environment and planet, and I am a strong believer in “little things can go a long way”. You don’t have to be perfect, no one is, but we can all start small, learn and grow from there. Small actions as simple as switching off things when they are done charging or not in use – not letting the water run when washing dishes – recycling better – buying less plastic-wrapped goods and banning single-use plastic products – starting a compost bin – signing petitions in favour of the Climate – shopping local and seasonal products – reducing your meat and fish consumption – donating to charities – using reusable and eco-friendly products – reducing your car usage – when outdoors leaving no trace behind whether you’re in the wild or a public space, avoid littering, etc. As individuals, we can all make changes to our lifestyle to fight the Climate Crisis, it’s all about grit and determination.

For businesses, true Sustainable Finance alongside the implementation of CSR initiatives, strong ESG processes and strategies; and Green Investing are key parts of solving the Climate Crisis. Sustainability needs to be put at the forefront of each business’ strategy, investors and stakeholders’ decisions to create impactful and long-lasting changes.

If we all work hand-in-hand; together as individuals, communities, businesses and governments, our efforts will be rewarded and won’t just benefit the planet, but the entire mankind. If our global carbon footprint is dramatically reduced, there will be many positive effects: an improved global ecosystem and biodiversity, less risks of natural disasters, better land restoration and conservation, less endangered species, higher water, food, and air quality etc. By working together, we can all build a Green New World where suffering is diminished, justice is upheld, and harmony is restored between the people and the planet.

Concrete collective action is the only path forward and it starts today. Step up for your planet now!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

---

### JUSTINE TOURNIER

Justine is the author of this paper and has worked on various projects for CubeMatch across Marketing, CSR and Brand Management. She joined CubeMatch Ireland in 2019 and is currently working as Group Marketing Manager, CSR and Brand Management.

Justine is deeply passionate about ESG and CSR. Over the years, she has proudly been leading and organising a number of initiatives such as: the Employee Volunteering Programme, the annual CubeMatch Group Earth Month Challenge, the CubeMatch Group 3,131KM Challenge for Ukraine, the annual Christmas Charity Donations etc.

She trully believes that “a little can go a long way” and that we can all do our part to save the planet.



### CONTACT

#### JUSTINE TOURNIER

Group Marketing Manager, CSR and Brand Management at CubeMatch Ltd.

[justine.tournier@cubematch.com](mailto:justine.tournier@cubematch.com)

#### CUBEMATCH LTD.

Suite 137 The Capel Building, Mary's Abbey, Dublin 7, Ireland

[Ireland@cubematch.com](mailto:Ireland@cubematch.com)

[www.cubematch.com](http://www.cubematch.com)

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

- <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>
- <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/sustainability>
- <https://www.un.org/en/un75/climate-crisis-race-we-can-win>
- <https://www.epa.gov/sustainability/learn-about-sustainability>
- <https://www.twi-global.com/technical-knowledge/faqs/faq-what-is-sustainability>
- <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-sustainability-in-business>
- <https://www.thecorporategovernanceinstitute.com/insights/lexicon/what-is-the-history-of-esg/>
- <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/finance-hub/business-guidance/sustainability/what-is-esg-a-guide-for-smaller-businesses/>
- <https://www2.deloitte.com/ce/en/pages/global-business-services/articles/esg-explained-1-what-is-esg.html>
- <https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/definition/environmental-social-and-governance-ESG>
- <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/greenwashing> Concepts and forms of greenwashing: a systematic review:
- <https://enveurope.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s12302-020-0300-3> Gray Shades of Green: Causes and Consequences of Green Skepticism
- <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-015-2829-4>
- <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-are-carbon-markets-and-why-are-they-important#:~:text=In%20a%20nutshell%2C%20carbon%20markets,or%20reduce%20green%20house%20gas%20emissions>
- <https://www.fidelity.com.hk/en/start-investing/learn-about-investing/esg-investing/what-is-esg>
- [https://finance.ec.europa.eu/sustainable-finance/overview-sustainable-finance\\_en](https://finance.ec.europa.eu/sustainable-finance/overview-sustainable-finance_en)
- <https://www.fidelity.com.hk/en/start-investing/learn-about-investing/esg-investing/what-is-esg>
- [https://finance.ec.europa.eu/sustainable-finance/overview-sustainable-finance\\_en](https://finance.ec.europa.eu/sustainable-finance/overview-sustainable-finance_en)

# HOW CUBEMATCH CAN HELP

---

## • WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2002, CubeMatch is a **global change and transformation consultancy**, specialising in **Financial Services** and selected as the **chosen partner** for some of the largest and most demanding transformation projects within the Financial Services sector.

CubeMatch is an international brand continuously expanding with **six offices** worldwide : **Dublin, London, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Singapore and Chennai**. Combining our world class expertise in Financial Services with our rich capabilities in all aspects of change and transformation, we apply a **Multiplier Effect**, helping clients to be more effective today while creating value for tomorrow.

We are **Banking Native**; it runs through our **DNA**. Unlike more general change consultancies, this banking intimacy means we deliver change and transformation programmes that stick, against a backdrop of complex regulations and continuous disruption.

Over the years, we have successfully built a global firm that is uniquely equipped to deliver pragmatic and business-focused results. We have over **400 staff and multi-million euro revenue**. And through our **strategic partnerships** we apply innovation to help organisations operate, compete and deliver at scale. Blending our powerful change capabilities with next generation technology, we deliver **innovation and business agility** to help businesses thrive.

## • OUR GLOBAL SERVICES



Strategic Change  
and Programme Delivery



Business and Digital  
Transformation



Regulatory, Risk  
and Compliance



Data and Technology



Quality Assurance



Managed Services

- GET IN TOUCH TODAY

Visit our website : [www.cubematch.com](http://www.cubematch.com)



CubeMatch (Ireland) Ltd  
+353 1 253 0020  
[Ireland@cubematch.com](mailto:Ireland@cubematch.com)

CubeMatch Ltd (UK)  
+44 20 3004 8098  
[UnitedKingdom@cubematch.com](mailto:UnitedKingdom@cubematch.com)

CubeMatch B.V. (Benelux)  
+31 20 312 0404  
[Benelux@cubematch.com](mailto:Benelux@cubematch.com)

Other Locations

CubeMatch GmbH (Germany): [Germany@cubematch.com](mailto:Germany@cubematch.com)

CubeMatch APAC Pte Ltd (Singapore): [Singapore@cubematch.com](mailto:Singapore@cubematch.com)

CubeMatch Claritaz (India): [India@cubematch.com](mailto:India@cubematch.com)



# CubeMatch

Powering Change