

APRIL 2023 EDITION

SUSTAINABILITY TRENDS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



inśaf

Institute for Sustainability Africa

'Advancing Sustainability Initiatives for Africa'

Sustainability Highlights April 2023

A

SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS

PAGE	TOPIC
3	Why sustainability must become an integral part of STEM education
3	5 Supply Chain Strategies To Avoid Risk And Enable Sustainability
3	Exploring new sides of climate and sustainability research
3	Overcome obstacles to storage sustainability
3	How Unnecessary Paper Packaging Creates the Illusion of Sustainability
4	Green growth: Unlocking sustainability opportunities for retail banks
4	Sustainability: The Key to Business Success
4	Sustainability challenges
4	Moving from corporate responsibility to impact
4	Driving sustainable finance with a clear purpose
5	Africa's energy sector will need to transform radically
5	How unsustainable can Africa go? Actions for government, corporations and SMEs
5	5 steps to embedding sustainability in your business
5	Earth Day for Africa: Overcoming "Differentiated Realities
6	A lifesaver': How e-tricycles are revolutionising the lives of Zimbabwean farmers
6	Urban water crises driven by elites' unsustainable consumption
6	How companies can ride on sustainability marketing
6	More effort needed to achieve zero-waste
7	About INSAF
8	Contact details

Why sustainability must become an integral part of STEM education

Turkey's eastern region is a place where life is at its most extreme. Following a 7.8 magnitude earthquake and a powerful aftershock on the 6th of February 2023, the infrastructure is damaged beyond repair and the inhabitants are in desperate need of help. As a result of the earthquake, over 50,000 people lost their lives in Turkey and over 5,500 in Syria. My hometown, Adana, was a city that was also affected. I lost friends, family members and neighbours, it was a personal turning point in my life. A Monday morning that should have started with science, hope and prosperity turned into shock and denial, leaving me with one of the hardest decisions in my life. **Read more:** <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/04/why-sustainability-must-become-an-integral-part-of-stem-education/>

5 Supply Chain Strategies To Avoid Risk And Enable Sustainability



The supply chain has always been a balancing act. Whether it is cost and efficiency, customer service vs. profitability, or in modern time's resiliency vs. risk. And now, we are increasingly seeing sustainability move into the already crowded field. I have just finished reading a new Oxford Economics study of 1,000 supply chain executives across the world, where all these topics were in play, and some common themes emerged.. **Read more:**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/sap/2023/04/24/5-supply-chain-strategies-to-avoid-risk-and-enable-sustainability/?sh=7e883bf0171f>

Exploring new sides of climate and sustainability research



When the MIT Climate and Sustainability Consortium (MCS) launched its Climate and Sustainability Scholars Program in fall 2022, the goal was to offer undergraduate students a unique way to develop and implement research projects with the strong support of each other and MIT faculty. Now into its second semester, the program is underscoring the value of fostering this kind of network – a community with MIT students at its core,

exploring their diverse interests and passions in the climate and sustainability realms. **Read more:** <https://news.mit.edu/2023/exploring-new-sides-climate-sustainability-research-0421>

Overcome obstacles to storage sustainability

Businesses increasingly talk about sustainability, but data storage isn't always part of the conversation. Edge computing and massive IoT fleets contribute to the increase in data stores, which leads to higher financial and environmental costs. However, the process to make data storage more sustainable is not always evident. Is it something the IT team should look into and enable? Or do ideas need to come from business leaders? And how do IT manufacturers and vendors fit in? Even the most aware companies face obstacles to storage sustainability. **Read more:** <https://www.techtarget.com/searchstorage/tip/Overcome-obstacles-to-storage-sustainability>

How Unnecessary Paper Packaging Creates the Illusion of Sustainability

The environmental threat posed by plastic packaging is well known. The popular press and environmental groups alike have long stressed the dangers of plastic products, from their impact on marine wildlife to their buildup in landfills. In contrast, paper is often seen as the sustainable, environmentally friendly alternative – despite the reality that more than six million tons of paper packaging end up in U.S. landfills every year. Whether due to genuine concern for the environment or the widespread vilification of plastic among consumers, many companies have invested heavily in reducing their use of plastic packaging. **Read more:** <https://hbr.org/2023/04/how-unnecessary-paper-packaging-creates-the-illusion-of-sustainability>

Green growth: Unlocking sustainability opportunities for retail banks

A recent survey by McKinsey shows there is a meaningful and growing appetite among American consumers for climate-linked financial products—but consumers need further education and advice to make informed buying decisions, and providers need to differentiate themselves from the pack. Generic environmental, social, and governance (ESG) offers will not be enough to win in this changing landscape (see sidebar, “About the survey”). **Read more:** <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/sustainability/our-insights/green-growth-unlocking-sustainability-opportunities-for-retail-banks>

Sustainability: The Key to Business Success

Sustainable practices are crucial for long-term success in every industry. The mention of sustainability may trigger some thoughts on the recent climate change issue. However, sustainability, as a phenomenon that describes the utilization of today's resources without jeopardizing tomorrow, also cuts across the business world. This article will discuss why sustainability is essential for businesses in today's business landscape. Why is sustainability important for businesses? For every business, it is important to incorporate sustainability practices in its operation. This allows them to maximize their resources and inputs and still have enough in place for future endeavours. Here are some reasons why businesses must look to be sustainable: Cost savings, Sustainable practices can help businesses save significant operations costs. For instance, switching from a non-renewable energy source to a renewable source (like solar) or reducing the business's energy consumption can help lower utility bills. The same goes for minimizing waste, which will help reduce disposal costs. [Read more: https://www.baltictimes.com/sustainability_the_key_to_business_success/](https://www.baltictimes.com/sustainability_the_key_to_business_success/)

Sustainability challenges

To achieve its ambitious environmental and climate goals, through a socially just transition, Europe needs to radically change the systems of production and consumption such as food, energy and mobility systems. Environmental issues are inseparable from broader sustainability issues, such as social and economic ones. Significant changes in any one dimension (e.g. environmental) will affect the others (e.g. socio-economic). Changes in the way we produce energy, for example, moving away from fossil fuels, can leave whole regions which were dependent on coal mining prey to unemployment and poverty – if the socio-economic dimensions are not factored in (by retraining the workforce, investing in new workplaces and so on). The change cannot come from traditional policy responses alone or just from a change in technologies. To avoid lock-ins, consumption patterns, individual and collective behaviours and mentalities need to change as well, moving away from consumerism, individualism and short-termism. [Read more: https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/sustainability-challenges](https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/sustainability-challenges)

Moving from corporate responsibility to impact



The success of sustainable business leadership hinges on moving from corporate responsibility to corporate impact. As mandatory ESG disclosures and impact economics converge, the role of corporate responsibility is shifting. Impact professionals increasingly need to oversee both traditional ESG risk mitigation and impact-oriented new value creation. What we call the "Impact Economy" is creating new opportunities to increase enterprise value by

both mitigating risks and seizing upon innovations. This is opening new sources of business value and advancing impact alongside profit. As the measure of a company's total value, enterprise value creation is a business's North Star. But the emerging Impact Economy is changing both what constitutes enterprise value and who gets to decide it. As such, we are entering a new chapter in measuring corporate performance – an evolution in the underlying contract between the private sector and the rest of society. [Read more: https://www.greenbiz.com/article/moving-corporate-responsibility-impact](https://www.greenbiz.com/article/moving-corporate-responsibility-impact)

Driving sustainable finance with a clear purpose

Take a look at the price tag of any new car, appliance or home improvement project. High upfront costs and installation fees may leave you with sticker shock. Cleaner alternatives, such as an electric vehicle or rooftop solar panels, may seem even further out of reach. However, that may not always be the case.

The energy transition is accelerating as innovation drives down the cost of electrification, and federal rebates and incentives make it more accessible. Financial institutions such as Wells Fargo can play a critical role by supporting our clients during the transition to a low-carbon future. We are focused on critical pathways where we can apply our expertise, size and scale to deliver meaningful outcomes for our customers and communities. Serving the energy transition: Scaling clean energy, driving sustainability where we live and work, and advancing climate finance and innovation. As companies and consumers seek more sustainable financing options, we are rapidly providing the products and services they need. By 2030, Wells Fargo has set a goal to deploy at least \$500 billion in sustainable financing. And in our first year tracking these investments, we deployed approximately \$68 billion to help our clients reach their goals. It's making a real impact. [Read more: https://www.greenbiz.com/article/driving-sustainable-finance-clear-purpose](https://www.greenbiz.com/article/driving-sustainable-finance-clear-purpose)

Africa's energy sector will need to transform radically



The future of Africa's energy sector is getting increasing attention from policymakers and the private sector. As demand for energy rises, current energy systems must grow rapidly to meet it. This must be done in reliable, resilient and affordable ways - while "staying the course" of climate compatibility and ensuring access for all. Internationally, the future of energy systems has been a hotly debated topic ever since the link between fossil fuel combustion and the

negative impacts of climate change became widely known. Energy transitions - pathways to shift from fossil fuels to cleaner forms of energy - have long been debated in Europe and North America. One visible outcome, among many others, is the increased use of electric vehicles. **Read more:** <https://www.sustainability-times.com/low-carbon-energy/africas-energy-sector-will-need-to-transform-radically/>

How unsustainable can Africa go? Actions for government, corporations and SMEs

If living and business operations continue as usual in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, the available resources will be overstretched, which may pose enormous economic, environmental, and social challenges. The continent's biggest environmental challenges are water pollution, air pollution, and deficits of all types, directly impacting the populace's health and living. For instance, a child born in Africa today risks not receiving proper education or adequate healthcare due to a lack of adequate resources. Not only that; around 340 million Africans have no access to safe drinking water. In addition, more than 672 million live in poverty, which is significant compared to other continents, and these numbers continue to increase yearly. According to records, about 65% of Africa's arable land cannot sustain viable food production due to damage. Therefore it's time to develop sustainable strategies to restore, preserve, and manage African resources and living for the benefit of humanity. **Read more:** <https://www.thecable.ng/how-unsustainable-can-africa-go-actions-for-government-corporations-and-smes>

5 steps to embedding sustainability in your business



Across the world, brands have a significant influence over their internal and external stakeholders, giving them the power to drive real change. By embedding sustainability and jumping on the environmental, social and governance (ESG) wave, organisations can revolutionise the way of doing business. These companies will also become more resilient in the long run and reap benefits such as improved operations and performance, greater customer satisfaction, and better financial results. According to the KPMG 2022 CEO Outlook Survey, 45% of CEOs

globally agreed that ESG programmes improved financial performance - an increase from 37% the previous year. **Read more:** <https://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/356/237941.html>

Earth Day for Africa: Overcoming "Differentiated Realities"

Africa is one of the fastest-growing, most populous, and resource-rich regions on earth. Yet for all its opportunity, the continent is also the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. African and global leaders often recognize this discrepancy and the need to protect the continent's natural beauty and abundant resources, but due in part to regional differences, political and economic drivers, and differences in culture and communication, African leaders have vastly different perspectives on how to advance solutions to the climate challenge. While some African governments, multilateral institutions, and private sector actors align in identifying Africa's unique climate adaptation and mitigation priorities, among the most pervasive areas of disagreement remain rooted in African countries' differentiated realities: Distinct scopes and vantage points, sometimes even within single governments or policy circles that often result in incongruous approaches to solutions and a mismanaged application of resources. **Read more:** <https://www.uschamber.com/international/earth-day-for-africa-overcoming-differentiated-realities>

A lifesaver': How e-tricycles are revolutionising the lives of Zimbabwean farmers



The electric tricycle motor produces a deep thud as Pauline Ndlovu turns it on at her farm on the outskirts of Chipinge in Zimbabwe's Rusitu Valley. Cloaked in a long black skirt and a red top, the 47-year-old dairy farmer loads up the back of the trike with silver milk cans destined for Mayfield - a milk collection centre 7km away - late in the afternoon. "After milking I have to get to Mayfield within two hours," she says. "If I am a minute late, they will not accept it. Milk is a perishable product that requires a farmer to be time-conscious." Ndlovu used to make the journey on foot, carrying nearly 20 litres of milk in a can on top of her head twice a day. She migrated from Chiredzi, around 200km from Chipinge, four years ago to become a full-time dairy farmer. Her electric tricycle, known locally as a hamba - which means "go" in Shona, a language spoken by most Zimbabweans - has changed her working life. **Read more:** <https://inews.co.uk/news/world/zimbabwe-e-tricycles-farmers-sustainability-2068847>

Urban water crises driven by elites' unsustainable consumption

Over the past two decades, more than 80 metropolitan cities across the world have faced severe water shortages due to droughts and unsustainable water use. Future projections are even more alarming, since urban water crises are expected to escalate and most heavily affect those who are socially, economically and politically disadvantaged. Here we show how social inequalities across different groups or individuals play a major role in the production and manifestation of such crises. Specifically, due to stark socioeconomic inequalities, urban elites are able to overconsume water while excluding less-privileged populations from basic access. Through an interdisciplinary approach, we model the uneven domestic water use across urban spaces and estimate water consumption trends for different social groups. The highly unequal metropolitan area of Cape Town serves as a case in point to illustrate how unsustainable water use by the elite can exacerbate urban water crises at least as much as climate change or population growth.. **Read more:** <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-023-01100-0>

How companies can ride on sustainability marketing



SUSTAINABILITY has been at the forefront of public consciousness in the past three decades, with good reason. Large and small companies have been taking note of this trend and have started embedding sustainable practices into their business models, strategy and business development. Green marketing has been rising, in terms of appeal, to customers who have become environmentally conscious about packaging and the products that they buy.

In this article, we explore the business value of sustainability, or green marketing, as a strategy. According to a survey by Unilever, 33% of consumers are choosing to buy from brands they believe are doing social or environmental good. This has potential ramifications on products from developing economies like Zimbabwe when entering international markets. **Read more:** <https://www.newsday.co.zw/theindependent/opinion/article/200010790/how-companies-can-ride-on-sustainability-marketing>

More effort needed to achieve zero-waste



WHILE the world is at the centre of huge masses of solid waste, piling up on the land and seas on daily basis, nothing much has been written on liquid waste, including e-waste, which is intoxicating the atmosphere. In this regard, the world, through the United Nations Environmental Programme and UN-Habitat, chose to commemorate March 30, 2023, as the International Day of Zero-Waste, to raise awareness of Zero-Waste initiatives

including how to improve the way of doing business and contribute to Agenda 2030. To sufficiently interrogate issues of the circular economy-based zero-waste, this year's theme is: Raising awareness to the importance of zero-waste and responsible consumption practices and urban waste management contributing to achieving sustainable development. Indeed, yes, the theme is very clear and sufficiently summing up. **Read more:** <https://www.newsday.co.zw/opinion-analysis/article/200009665/more-effort-needed-to-achieve-zero-waste>

ABOUT INSAF

INSAF is an independent multi-disciplinary independent think tank and research organization working towards a sustainable Africa. The Institute is a registered Independent Trust (MA1218/2012) in Zimbabwe.

OUR VISION

Advance Sustainability Initiatives for Africa

OUR MISSION

Foster Sustainability Initiatives and innovations towards Green Economy, Sustainable Development and Sustainable Living through applied research, programs and technical support services and across sectors.

OUR VALUES

- ✧ A non-partisan research institute
- ✧ An agent for change that promote transformation towards sustainability
- ✧ Committed to rigorous and objective research and analysis to support policy and decision making across sectors
- ✧ Capable of handling complex economic, environmental, developmental, and social issues honestly
- ✧ Committed to environmental sustainability principle, practices and values





CONTACT DETAILS

Institute for Sustainability Africa (INSAF)
Address: 65 Whitwell, Borrowdale West, Harare, Zimbabwe
Telephone: +263 242 796 501/ 0778 357 714
Website: www.instforsustainafrica.org
Email: admin@insafrica.org.zw