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Sustainability Leadership: *Action Speaks*

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Contents.

Foreword.

by John Elkington

It seems impolitic to speak of breaking the rules inside Britain's House of Lords, but at the second Climate Leaders Forum that's what we did.

In the first of two fireside exchanges I grilled Hannah Jones, currently CEO of Prince William's Earthshot Prize and formerly Nike's chief sustainability officer, or CSO, on what it will take to move from talk to action.

"We have to do things that are different," she insisted. "We're going to have to break rules. We're going to have to be courageous, bold, all of us with every power and privilege we have."

Outside the Cholmondley Room and Terrace, that epicentre of British power and privilege, the tidal Thames surged in and out—as the change agenda itself does.

Yes, we discussed the ongoing "ESG recession," and the risks of a "sustainability recession" but there were encouraging signs of a growing acceptance that this is both inevitable and, ultimately, helpful.

Such downturns are clearly ramping up the pressures on many CSOs who were in the room that day, but they also provide an opportunity for us all to rethink and reboot.

In my own case, I noted, that this has meant expanding the spotlight from responsible businesses to resilient and ultimately regenerative markets.

Innovation basked in the spotlight, with many leading innovators and entrepreneurs in the room. But as Lord Adair Turner summed up our collective challenge: *"The real innovation lies not in setting targets but in exceeding them through tangible actions."*

It will be fascinating to see how much progress we have made by the third Climate Leaders Forum in 2025.

John Elkington is Founder & Global Ambassador, Volans, and author of *Tickling Sharks: How We Sold Business on Sustainability* (Fast Company Press, 2024).

John Elkington, Volans

Executive *Summary*

In a world where climate commitments are abundant but tangible progress often lags behind, the 2024 Climate Leaders Forum brought together pioneers and decision-makers from across industries to shift the narrative.

Hosted at the historic House of Lords, this exclusive gathering, held in the lead-up to COP29 and COP16, was more than just a conversation - it was a call to action. With leaders from technology, policy, finance, and sustainability in the room, the focus was clear: moving from promises to progress.

As global leaders prepare for the critical discussions at COP29 and COP16, the forum provided a platform for candid exchanges on what it really takes to turn ambitious climate goals into measurable outcomes. Across keynotes, fireside chats, and roundtable discussions, a common theme emerged: **action must speak louder than ambition.**

Leaders and decision-makers discussed the pressing need for tangible progress, sharing insights and strategies to navigate the complexities of policy, innovation, corporate accountability and building trust through transparency.

Shifting from Commitments to Tangible Actions

The forum highlighted a decisive pivot in climate leadership, moving from ambitious pledges to a focus on demonstrable results. Stakeholders are increasingly demanding evidence of progress, requiring companies to embed sustainability across all functions. Leaders must prioritise immediate, actionable steps, transforming long-term goals into measurable achievements that build public trust and operational resilience.

Leadership Alignment & Accountability

Effective climate strategies start with leadership accountability. Forum participants emphasised that CEOs, CFOs, and board members must integrate climate goals into the core business strategy, setting the tone for company-wide engagement. Leadership alignment around climate objectives enhances credibility, fosters consistency, and drives meaningful change across organisational levels.

Systemic Collaboration and Shared Responsibility

Achieving climate objectives requires a collaborative ecosystem where companies, governments, and industries unite under shared goals. Discussions underscored the value of public-private partnerships and cross-sector alliances that leverage collective resources. This shared responsibility is critical for scaling solutions and fostering an environment of mutual accountability.

The Evolving Role of Data and Transparency

Data has become the foundation of climate accountability, evolving from a measurement tool to a critical element of stakeholder trust. Advanced technologies like AI and digital platforms now allow organisations to monitor and report progress in real time, meeting stakeholder expectations for transparency. Forum insights underscored that data-driven transparency is essential not only for compliance but for driving impactful decision-making.

Accelerating the Transition through Innovation

Innovation is key to closing the gap between ambition and action. Leaders at the forum explored how disruptive technologies, from renewable energy advancements to biodiversity monitoring, are transforming climate efforts. Accelerating this transition will require investment in pioneering solutions and a willingness to embrace risk, as breakthrough innovations are essential to drive scalable, sustainable change.

Resilience in the Natural World

Building resilience in response to climate impacts is a priority for businesses and communities alike. Nature-based solutions, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem restoration emerged as essential elements for buffering against extreme climate events. The forum highlighted that resilience strategies must extend beyond emissions reductions to include long-term environmental stewardship and adaptation measures that protect both natural and human systems.

The insights from the 2024 Climate Leaders Forum provide a strategic framework for organisations committed to making impactful, lasting contributions to global climate goals. By aligning leadership, fostering collaboration, advancing transparency, and accelerating innovation, companies can turn sustainability promises into powerful actions.

This report is designed for leaders who are focused on turning vision into tangible progress.

Anna Samuelsson, Milkywire

Elizabeth Corse, Discom

Kat Bruce, NatureMetrics

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Shifting from Commitments to Tangible Actions

Brennan Spellacy, Patch

In recent years, the landscape of climate leadership has been dominated by ambitious pledges and net zero commitments. However, as climate impacts accelerate, the focus has decisively shifted from setting targets to delivering real-world results. The time for promises has passed - now, it's about proving progress with tangible actions that make a measurable difference.

Stephen MacKenzie, Apple

Growing pressure from stakeholders - ranging from investors and customers to regulators—demands evidence of genuine impact.

Simply meeting regulatory standards is no longer enough; businesses must demonstrate how they are actively reducing emissions, improving energy efficiency, and adopting sustainable practices across their operations. This shift has sparked a renewed emphasis on transparency and accountability, ensuring that companies' claims align with reality.

Real-world examples showcased how organisations have moved beyond commitments. From decarbonising supply chains to implementing circular economy principles, these actions are not just about risk management but seizing opportunities for growth and innovation. It is clear that those who turn ambition into action can gain a competitive edge in a rapidly evolving market.

Yet, turning words into action is not without its challenges. Discussions revealed that companies often face barriers like misaligned incentives, complex regulatory landscapes, and the difficulty of embedding sustainability into core business practices. Overcoming these hurdles requires cross-functional collaboration and aligning efforts across all levels of the organisation.

Ultimately, the path to tangible progress is one that requires bold leadership, clear metrics for success, and a willingness to embrace new approaches. By prioritising today's achievable actions, companies can build sustained momentum that drives systemic change.

Madeleine Rawlins, Mott MacDonald

Insights

Lord Adair Turner, Energy Transitions Commission

Sarah Schaefer, Electrolux

1. Proving Progress & Accountability

Proof Over Promises: Turning ambition into concrete action is crucial for maintaining industry credibility.

Impact Now, Not Later: Stakeholders demand proof of impact, shifting the focus from long-term targets to short-term results.

Measure What Matters: Clear metrics are essential for tracking progress and ensuring accountability in climate action.

Make It Transparent: Transparent reporting of progress is becoming a non-negotiable aspect of corporate climate strategies.

Scaling Circularity at Speed: The focus should be on accelerating existing efforts to scale up, increase pace, and drive collective impact, rather than launching more small-scale projects.

> “We can no longer rely solely on promises; the market demands evidence of progress, not just ambitious targets.”
>
> **John Elkington**

Lucy Ronan, Octopus

2. Collaborative Efforts for Success

Powering Progress Together: Cross-functional collaboration within companies is key to translating sustainability goals into actions.

Breaking Down Barriers: Achieving tangible progress requires a shift from siloed efforts to integrated sustainability strategies.

Leading The Way: Leadership buy-in is a critical driver for turning climate commitments into real-world results.

Action Beyond Alignment: cross-functional efforts require actionable strategies rather than just alignment.

> “Employees are increasingly the ones driving demand for real progress within companies—they are the true change agents.”

> “We need to focus less on offsetting and more on scaling genuine solutions within and beyond our value chains.”

3. Aligning Sustainability with Business Strategy

Sustainability Sells: Aligning sustainability actions with business strategy can create new competitive advantages.

Nature as a Business Asset: Integrating nature into business strategy requires moving beyond compliance and finding ways to make ecological considerations a core part of operations.

Leading with Ecology: Introducing a Chief Ecology Officer role could bridge the gap between nature data and business strategy, aligning ecological goals with financial priorities.

Busola Lagoke, Dentsu

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Leadership Alignment & Accountability →

Georgia Stewart, Tumelo

Sophia Kesteven, Tech Zero

Leadership plays a crucial role in transforming climate goals into actionable outcomes, setting the tone for sustainability across entire organisations. It's not enough for C-suite executives to make ambitious commitments; they must also take responsibility for driving change at every level of the business. The importance of aligned leadership emerged as a foundation for embedding sustainability into core operations and strategy.

Jing Le, Tencent

In a rapidly evolving landscape, leaders are expected to go beyond symbolic gestures and demonstrate real accountability. Investors and stakeholders are looking for companies where leadership transparency aligns with visible progress toward climate goals.

This new reality requires CEOs, CFOs, and boards to be actively involved in embedding sustainability into decision-making processes.

The most effective climate strategies emerge when leaders work in unison with other departments - such as finance, operations, and human resources - ensuring that sustainability initiatives are integrated into all aspects of business activity. Examples of cross-departmental collaboration illustrate how aligning efforts can transform climate objectives into tangible actions, highlighting that alignment is not about top-down mandates but about fostering a culture of shared responsibility.

However, achieving alignment across leadership comes with its challenges. Many leaders find themselves balancing short-term market pressures with the need for long-term climate resilience. Discussions emphasised the importance of resilience, with leaders needing to adapt quickly to new information and shifting priorities without losing sight of their broader climate commitments.

Leadership that prioritises accountability makes sustainability a central part of a company's ethos, turning it into a guiding principle rather than a checkbox. When leaders take ownership of their climate agendas, they inspire action within their organisations and set a powerful example for others across their industries.

Smruti Naik-Jones, Deloitte

Insights

Louisa Tholstrup, Earthshot Prize

> “Until you take those things that have been externalised from the boardroom... we don’t get to the scale fast enough.”
>
> **Hannah Jones**

1. Leading with Accountability & Transparency

Top-Down Accountability: Leaders must take direct responsibility for embedding climate goals across all business levels.

Trust Through Transparency: Investors are increasingly focused on companies where leadership transparency aligns with measurable climate progress.

Leading by Doing: Leaders who visibly support sustainability initiatives inspire broader action throughout their organisations.

Leadership Shapes Strategy: The strategic role of leadership is to ensure that climate goals are not just set but achieved through clear direction.

Balancing Act: Leaders face challenges in managing short-term financial pressures while pursuing long-term sustainability objectives.

C-Suite Commitment: Circularity requires active involvement from the entire C-suite, not just the CSO, to drive impactful, organisation-wide change.

Hannah Jones, Earthshot Prize

2. Collaborative Strategies for Climate Impact

Collaboration Drives Impact: Effective climate strategies rely on leaders uniting departments like finance and operations toward shared sustainability goals.

Silos to Synergy: Aligning leadership across departments transforms climate strategies from isolated efforts to company-wide initiatives.

Aligned Ambitions: Successful companies align leadership goals with measurable climate outcomes for lasting impact.

Digital-First Leadership: Encouraging leaders to embrace digital transformation in supply chain operations can facilitate faster progress toward sustainability goals.

Setting the Standard: Leaders in the supply chain should push for adopting science-based standards and transparency to drive the entire sector forward.

George Darrah, Systemiq Capital

> “Leaders who can adapt quickly to new data and changing conditions are the ones who will lead the way in the climate transition.”
>
> **Lord Adair Turner**

3. Integrating Ecology and Sustainability into Business Strategy

Linking Ecology to Strategy: A Chief Ecology Officer can connect nature-based goals with business objectives, ensuring that leadership values nature as much as other strategic priorities.

Nature as an Asset: Leadership needs to recognise that investment in nature is an investment in the long-term health of the business.

Bridging the CFO Gap: Training CFOs to understand the value of nature can help integrate ecological considerations into financial planning.

Data Powers Progress: Leaders need to invest in technologies that enable better data management and emissions tracking to stay competitive in a sustainable market.

Cara Williams, Mercer

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Systemic Collaboration and Shared Responsibility

Lord Adair Turner, Energy Transitions Commission

Jonathan Oates, Drax Group

Sammy Fry, Tech Nation

David Over, Climate Tech

Addressing climate challenges demands more than individual initiatives—it requires systemic collaboration across industries, governments, and communities. Recognising that no single entity can achieve net zero independently, businesses, policymakers, and innovators must work together, sharing responsibility for climate outcomes.

As Hannah Jones highlighted, “We need policymakers to then make that something that people get rewarded for” - underscoring the role of public-private partnerships in bridging the gap between policy frameworks and real-world impact.

It’s not just about regulations guiding business actions; it’s about companies stepping up as partners in the policy-making process. By bringing together diverse perspectives, these alliances enable faster scaling of solutions and help to align long-term goals with immediate needs.

The value of collaborative innovation became evident in examples of cross-sector partnerships. Startups bring agility and fresh ideas, while established corporations provide scale and resources. United, these forces unlock new pathways for progress that neither could achieve alone. Many leaders highlighted the importance of sharing knowledge and taking collective risks, recognising that competition is less important than the urgency of the climate crisis.

Collaboration, of course, presents its own set of challenges. Differing priorities and pressures among stakeholders can create friction that hinders urgently needed progress. Participants explored ways to build mutual understanding, including setting shared metrics and fostering open dialogue that transcends organisational boundaries. Trust, they found, is the essential currency of any successful partnership.

What became evident is that meaningful progress hinges on a readiness to reimagine traditional roles and to dismantle the silos that often separate industries and sectors. Embracing a spirit of collaboration and prioritising shared outcomes enables stakeholders to transform the climate challenge into an opportunity for collective leadership. Ultimately, it’s not about taking credit - it’s about achieving something far bigger together.

2023 saw a historic high of 250 Climate Tech acquisitions, predominantly in the energy, transport, and food & agriculture sectors.

Source: State of Climate Tech 2023, Net Zero Insights https://netzeroinsights.com/state-of-climate-tech-2023/

It is a sign of increasing demand for climate innovation. However, the amount of corporates involved in climate tech partnerships and investments only makes a small percentage of the FTSE250.

Insights

John Elkington, Volans

> “Public-private partnerships are the key to making climate action achievable and scalable.”
>
> **Brennan Spellacy, Co-founder & CEO, Patch**

1. Collaborative Innovation & Scaling Solutions

Collaborate to Innovate: Partnerships between sectors accelerate the development and scaling of climate solutions.

Pooling Resources: Cross-sector partnerships make it easier to tackle complex climate challenges that single entities cannot address alone.

Scaling Together: Partnerships allow companies to scale new technologies faster, making a greater impact.

Collaboration and Competition: Balancing joint intellectual property efforts with healthy competition can drive innovation in sustainable practices.

Brand-Supplier Partnerships: Fostering open communication between brands and suppliers is key to sharing data, driving innovation, and achieving collective sustainability goals.

Alyssa Gilbert, Grantham Institute

2. Alignment & Shared Ambitions

Shared Goals, Shared Success: Aligning efforts between businesses and governments creates a pathway for meaningful climate progress.

Aligned Ambitions: Success comes when partners align their climate goals around a shared vision.

Strength in Numbers: Collective action can achieve results that are impossible for any one organisation to accomplish alone.

Public-Private Synergy: Effective climate action requires cooperation between regulatory frameworks and business innovation.

Collective Action Needed: Effective collaboration across all supply chain entities is crucial for making meaningful progress on sustainability targets.

Transforming Big Business for Innovation: Scaling B2B circular innovations relies on preparing large companies to adapt, with B2B models often proving more successful than B2C in circular transitions.

Arlo Brady, Frueds

> “Embedding sustainability into procurement decisions isn’t just a checkbox exercise—it’s a fundamental shift in how we evaluate value.”

3. Building Trust & Engaging Stakeholders

Breaking Barriers: Open communication is key to overcoming cultural and competitive challenges in collaboration.

Trust Through Transparency: Building trust among partners is essential for fostering effective collaboration.

Visual Impact Labels: Using labels that show the environmental impact of products can help consumers make more nature-friendly choices.

Next Generation Drivers: Empowering younger employees and internal stakeholder groups could drive corporate change in how businesses value nature.

Community Storytelling: Making people aware of their reliance on nature through storytelling can foster a deeper appreciation for ecosystem services.

From Silos to Solutions: Collaborative efforts can break down barriers that often hold back climate progress.

Ben Knight, Leonardo

Richard Andrews, KPMG

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Dr Sally Uren, Forum for the Future

The Evolving Role of Data and Transparency

Gunnlaugur Erlendsson, ENSO

Pru Ashby - London & Partners

Climate action has entered a new phase where data isn't just supportive - it's the backbone of accountability. As organisations aim to demonstrate progress and adapt their strategies, the ability to collect, analyse, and share reliable data has become essential. Data has evolved from being a mere metric to becoming the narrative that underpins climate action, guiding decisions and validating claims.

The demand for real-time transparency has raised the expectations of stakeholders, who now seek up-to-date insights rather than waiting for annual reports.

This shift compels companies to build systems that provide continuous visibility into their climate impact, from emissions tracking to supply chain performance. Meeting these expectations can be challenging but is vital for maintaining credibility and fostering trust.

Technology is reshaping how businesses manage and interpret climate data. With advanced tools like AI and digital analytics, companies can transform vast data sets into actionable insights, enabling leaders to respond quickly to emerging trends and refine their approaches as they work toward climate goals. However, adopting these technologies involves navigating challenges like data consistency and integration with existing systems.

Data integrity is also essential to the conversation around transparency. Ensuring accuracy and comparability across regions and sectors is crucial for avoiding greenwashing and maintaining stakeholder confidence. Many leaders emphasised the importance of third-party verification and industry-wide standards to ensure that data reflects genuine progress—not just good intentions.

Those who can effectively harness the power of data are not only meeting compliance requirements but are also turning transparency into a strategic advantage. The ability to translate complex metrics into a compelling story of climate progress distinguishes leaders in this space. As the standards for openness continue to rise, companies that adapt quickly will shape the future of climate accountability.

According to a study by the European Commission and the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN), "42% of green claims made online by companies are exaggerated, false, or deceptive," often misleading consumers regarding environmental benefits.

Source: European Commission & ICPEN. (2021). Screening of websites for 'greenwashing': half of green claims lack evidence. https://icpen.org/news/1146

Insights

Rupert Simons, Systemiq

1. Harnessing Technology for Transparency & Real-Time Data

Real-Time Expectations: Stakeholders increasingly demand up-to-date climate data rather than waiting for annual reports.

Tech for Transparency: AI and digital platforms are becoming essential for managing complex climate data.

Technology for Transparency: Cloud-based solutions and AI are essential for real-time insights into supply chain sustainability, enhancing decision-making processes.

Data-Driven Decisions: Accurate data enables businesses to adapt strategies in real time and enhance accountability. Challenges in Integration: Integrating new technologies into existing systems can slow down data transparency efforts.

> “We can no longer rely solely on promises; the market demands evidence of progress, not just ambitious targets.”
>
> **John Elkington**

Tony Greenham, British Business Bank

2. Transforming Data into Actionable Insights

From Data to Insight: Turning raw data into actionable insights is key to driving meaningful climate action.

Storytelling with Data: Companies that can transform their data into a compelling narrative will stand out.

Storytelling with Impact: Using data to tell compelling stories can help connect with stakeholders and drive meaningful action for nature.

Make Data Meaningful: Data must translate into actionable insights, especially for those on the ground, like farmers and local communities.

Data Needs Action: Relying solely on nature-related data can hinder progress. Use data to drive tangible outcomes rather than getting bogged down in metrics.

> “The future belongs to those who can harness data and turn it into a competitive advantage.”
>
> **Lord Adair Turner**

Claire Soper-Lorains, Tesco

3. Building Trust through Standardisation & Verification

Verifying the Numbers: Third-party verification of data is crucial for maintaining credibility and avoiding greenwashing.

Standardising Metrics: Consistent data standards across regions and industries are essential for comparability.

Transparency Builds Trust: Open access to data is key to maintaining trust with investors and regulators.

Balancing Openness: Transparency must be balanced with protecting competitive business interests.

Primary Data Matters: Capturing primary data from supply chain activities ensures accurate tracking of emissions and environmental impact.

Data as a Connector: Sharing data openly across the supply chain builds trust and fosters collective responsibility for sustainability.

Tessa Clarke, Olio

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Accelerating the Transition through Innovation

Dr Susan Graham, Dendra Systems

Adam Elman, Google

Innovation has become the driving force behind the shift to a sustainable future. As industries confront the realities of climate change, the need for breakthrough technologies and creative solutions has never been more urgent. From renewable energy advancements to new approaches in carbon capture, innovation is enabling businesses to rethink their strategies and achieve climate goals faster than ever before.

Chadwick Houghton, US Department of State

At the heart of this push is a recognition that incremental changes will not be enough. Leaders emphasised the need for disruptive innovations that can reshape entire sectors and drive meaningful change at scale.

Whether it's reimagining energy storage solutions or developing new materials for circular production, the focus is on technologies that can deliver rapid results within a short time frame.

Yet, while innovation promises much, it also presents challenges. Many participants highlighted the gap between early-stage innovation and widespread adoption—a space where promising ideas often struggle to gain the traction needed to scale. Addressing this "valley of death" requires targeted support from investors, strategic partnerships, and a willingness to take calculated risks.

Corporate leaders are also turning to collaborative innovation models, where partnerships with startups, academia, and other industries become catalysts for progress. These collaborations allow companies to explore new ideas without being bound by the constraints of in-house development. The result is a vibrant ecosystem where diverse players work together to find solutions that no single entity could develop alone.

Embracing innovation is about more than just technology; it's about fostering a culture that encourages experimentation and adaptability. Those willing to pivot quickly, learn from setbacks, and invest in new capabilities are better positioned to lead the transition. This forward-looking mindset is helping to turn ambition into action, pushing the boundaries of what is possible in the race to net zero.

> **'Otherwise known as "death by pilots", viable and commercial-ready climate tech is struggling to hit the market because they need corporate partners, but navigating the world of large incumbents is expensive, time-consuming, and opaque'**
>
> **Source:** Mach 49: How Corporates Can Solve Climate Tech's 'Valley of Death'

Insights

Helen Avery, Green Finance Institute

Carrie Harris, British Airways

> “Until you take those things that have been externalised from the boardroom... we don’t get to the scale fast enough.”
>
> **Hannah Jones**

1. Driving Innovation to Bridge the Gap

From Ideas to Impact: Bridging the gap between innovation and large-scale adoption is critical for climate progress.

Breakthroughs Needed: Incremental improvements won’t suffice—disruptive innovations are required to drive real change.

Learning Through Failure: Experimentation and learning from setbacks are crucial for pushing the boundaries of innovation.

Scaling the Valley: Support from investors and strategic alliances is key to overcoming the “valley of death” in innovation.

Adapting Quickly: Companies that can pivot and adapt to new technologies are leading the way in climate action.

2. Leveraging Technology for Transformation

Tech-Driven Emission Reductions: Advanced tech solutions like AI and machine learning are transforming how companies manage their carbon footprint throughout the supply chain.

Nature and Tech Together: Leveraging technology to monitor and manage biodiversity can create new pathways for scaling nature-based solutions.

Rethinking Energy: Advancements in energy storage and renewables are reshaping how industries approach the transition.

Innovative Standards: Developing science-based standards with the support of robust policy frameworks can accelerate the transition to sustainable supply chains.

Alice Bodreau, Ellen MacArthur Foundation

> “Leaders who can adapt quickly to new data and changing conditions are the ones who will lead the way in the climate transition.”
>
> **Lord Adair Turner**

3. Building Collaborative Ecosystems

Partnerships for Progress: Open innovation models accelerate the development of game-changing technologies.

Ecosystems of Innovation: Collaboration with startups, academia, and corporates creates a thriving climate tech ecosystem.

Circular Innovation: New materials and processes are driving circular economy practices that reduce waste.

Leveraging Policy for Progress: Advocating for stronger policies, producer subsidies, and consumer incentives is key to driving sustainable purchasing and practices.

Carolyn Ball, Compass Group

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Resilience in the Natural World →

Matthew Bullivant, Athora & Rishi Madlani, Investec

Annelie Selander, WSH Group

As climate impacts intensify, the focus has shifted from mitigation alone to building resilience against the inevitable changes already underway. Businesses and communities alike are grappling with how to adapt to a world where climate volatility is a constant. This new reality calls for a proactive approach to resilience, where anticipating risks and preparing for disruptions becomes as important as mitigating carbon footprints.

Justine Porterie, Depop

In discussions, leaders highlighted the importance of scenario planning as a core tool for resilience. Rather than reacting to crises as they arise, companies are investing in strategies that anticipate various climate outcomes.

This shift towards forward-looking planning enables businesses to navigate uncertainties and make informed decisions about where to invest, how to protect assets, and how to maintain continuity in operations.

The role of nature-based solutions also emerged as a critical element in building resilience. Restoring ecosystems, enhancing biodiversity, and protecting natural resources are not only beneficial for the environment but also help to create buffers against extreme weather events and rising temperatures. Many participants noted that embracing these solutions requires a mindset shift, where nature is viewed as an ally in resilience rather than merely a resource to be managed.

> **In 2022, investments in nature-based solutions totaled approximately $200 billion, but finance flows to activities directly harming nature were more than 30 times larger**
>
> https://www.unep.org/resources/state-finance-nature-2023
>
> State of Finance for Nature 2023, UNEP

Building resilience is not solely about environmental measures—it also requires strengthening social and economic systems. Discussions underscored the need to support communities most vulnerable to climate impacts, ensuring that adaptation measures are inclusive and equitable. This means not only investing in critical infrastructure but also empowering local stakeholders to take ownership of resilience efforts.

Adaptation strategies are only as strong as the commitment to continual learning and flexibility. As new climate data emerges and impacts evolve, organisations must be willing to adjust their approaches. This adaptability allows for agility in a world where climate patterns can shift quickly, ensuring that businesses remain robust and capable of weathering the storm, whatever form it takes.

Insights

Nick Edgar, Savills & Sarah Schafer, Electrolux

> “Public-private partnerships are the key to making climate action achievable and scalable.”
>
> **Brennan Spellacy, Co-founder & CEO, Patch**

1. Nature-Based Resilience

Nature as Ally: Nature-based solutions are key to building resilience against extreme weather events.

Biodiversity Buffers: Enhancing ecosystems creates natural defenses against climate impacts.

Resilience through Restoration: Restoring natural habitats strengthens the resilience of both ecosystems and communities.

Nature Builds Resilience: Recognizing the role of biodiversity in business resilience is essential for adapting to climate impacts.

Biodiversity as a Buffer: Ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation are vital for creating natural buffers against climate extremes.

Subsidy Reform Needed: Reforming subsidies can help align economic incentives with ecological value, ensuring that businesses invest in sustainable land use.

2. Strategic Adaptation & Foresight

Prepared for Anything: Scenario planning is essential for navigating the unpredictability of climate risks.

Investing in Foresight: Planning for multiple climate scenarios helps companies stay ahead of disruptions.

Learning to Pivot: Continual learning and adjustment are key to maintaining resilience in the face of change.

Adapting in Real Time: Agility and adaptability are crucial as climate conditions continue to evolve.

Policy-Driven Adaptation: Strong policy support is critical for adapting supply chains to new climate realities and fostering innovation in sustainable practices.

Danielle Walsh, Clearly

> “Embedding sustainability into procurement decisions isn’t just a checkbox exercise—it’s a fundamental shift in how we evaluate value.”

3. Empowering Communities & Inclusive Resilience

Inclusive Adaptation: Resilience efforts must be inclusive, focusing on supporting vulnerable communities.

Empowering Communities: Local stakeholders play a vital role in creating resilient adaptation strategies.

Beyond Carbon: Resilience strategies extend beyond emissions reductions to include social and economic stability.

Supply Chain Resilience: Building digital and data-driven supply chains enhances resilience against climate impacts and market disruptions.

Long-Term Focus: Sustainable supply chain strategies require a long-term perspective that balances immediate cost concerns with the need for lasting environmental impact.

Conclusion *and Next Steps*

The 2024 Climate Leaders Forum brought together diverse voices from across industries, united by a shared sense of urgency to move from commitments to tangible action.

While the challenges of achieving net-zero remain formidable, the discussions highlighted a crucial shift: it's no longer enough to set ambitious goals; what counts is delivering real-world impact. Across roundtables and conversations, participants delved into the complexities of aligning leadership, fostering innovation, and navigating the evolving regulatory landscape.

From Ambition to Action: As companies move beyond the rhetoric of sustainability, it is clear that those who thrive will be the ones that translate their commitments into measurable outcomes. This requires more than just transparency in reporting—it demands a culture of accountability that starts with the C-suite and permeates through all levels of an organisation. Leaders must not only champion change but actively break down silos, integrating sustainability into every aspect of their business strategies.

Collaboration as a Catalyst: The forum underscored the power of collaboration—across industries, between the public and private sectors, and within supply chains. Addressing climate challenges at scale requires a collective approach, where competition takes a back seat to shared goals. Whether through innovative public-private partnerships or by supporting small enterprises in the supply chain, working together remains a cornerstone of progress.

Innovation for Resilience: Technological advancements hold the potential to accelerate the transition to a sustainable future, yet they must be paired with a willingness to take risks and adapt quickly. Participants stressed that embracing new solutions and investing in disruptive technologies can turn obstacles into opportunities. Equally, recognising the value of nature and integrating biodiversity into business strategies offers a pathway to resilience, ensuring that as we adapt, we don't lose sight of what we aim to protect.

Looking Ahead: Turning Insights into Impact The insights from the forum serve as a roadmap for what must come next. Companies, policymakers, and stakeholders have the opportunity to turn this collective learning into meaningful actions that reshape industries and set new standards for climate leadership. As the world prepares for COP29 and COP16, the urgency to act has never been greater.

For those ready to move beyond good intentions and embrace the difficult work of systemic change, the path forward is clear: focus on action, invest in innovation, and build partnerships that drive measurable progress.

Six Key *Action Points*

01
Embed Accountability Across Leadership

01 Embed Accountability Across Leadership:

Leaders at all levels, from the boardroom to department heads, must take direct responsibility for integrating climate goals into core business strategy. This means moving beyond commitments to ensure that tangible progress is measured, reported, and adjusted regularly.

02 Foster Systemic Collaboration:

Effective climate action requires breaking down silos and building strong partnerships across industries, sectors, and borders. Companies should seek strategic collaborations, including public-private partnerships, that can accelerate the scaling of sustainable solutions and create shared value.

02
Foster Systematic Collaboration

03
Leverage Data for Transparency

03 Leverage Data for Transparency:

Accurate, real-time data is critical for driving climate progress. Businesses need to invest in advanced digital tools and AI solutions to streamline data collection, improve transparency, and ensure that progress is both measurable and visible to stakeholders.

04
Prioritise Direct Emission Reductions

04 Prioritise Direct Emission Reductions:

To make a real impact, companies should focus on strategies that reduce emissions directly rather than relying solely on carbon offsets. This shift will require targeted investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable innovation within their operations.

05 Support Internal Champions for Change:

Empowering employees and internal champions can be a powerful way to drive sustainability initiatives from within. Recognising and supporting these individuals helps to embed a culture of sustainability and can drive significant organisational change.

05
Support Internal Champions for Change

06
Adopt a Long-Term, Inclusive Approach

06 Adopt a Long-Term, Inclusive Approach:

Addressing climate challenges requires a balance between immediate actions and long-term planning. Companies must ensure that their strategies support vulnerable communities, integrate nature-based solutions, and prioritise equitable transitions. This approach not only helps build resilience but also ensures that the benefits of climate action are shared more broadly.

Powered *by:*

London Tech Week is the global tech ecosystem - where visionaries and entrepreneurs, investors and enterprise tech leaders come together in the right balance to accelerate the infinite cycle of tech innovation. Wherever you sit in the ecosystem, you'll find the insights, inspiration and connections that you need to thrive.

Tech Nation is the independent voice of the tech ecosystem, providing scaling tech companies with the support they need to unlock growth and impact, with a core focus on sustainability. We believe in the power of the network and forge meaningful connections between investors, corporates, policy makers and founders for the good of the ecosystem. More than a third of all tech unicorns created in the UK have gone through a Tech Nation programme, collectively raising over £28bn so far in venture capital and capital markets.

Founders Forum Group is an event powered community and group of businesses supporting innovative entrepreneurs at every stage of their journeys. Founded in 2005, our invite-only forums unite founders, investors, corporate and government leaders to tackle era-defining questions in iconic locations across the globe.

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Authors:

David Over
Lead, Climate Tech, London Tech Week

Sammy Fry
Head of Climate, Tech Nation