

7. What's next?

As we look towards 2030, we are reminded that the once-distant target year for the SDGs is now in sight. The world has ten years left to fulfil the promises of the SDGs and achieve real, long-term impact across a range of social and environmental focus areas.

This challenge has undoubtedly been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated many social issues, including income inequality, gender equality, unemployment and digital access. As we build a new strategy for 2030, we must consider these recent changes, so that our efforts have the most significant impact for those most vulnerable.

This decade is also critical for averting climate disaster – we must reduce emissions and reverse biodiversity loss for a future where we can all thrive within planetary boundaries. The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, set out the potential impact of 1.5°C of warming above pre-industrial levels, and stated the need for global emissions to drop by half by 2030 and to net-zero by mid-century, to avoid the worst climate impacts. Lockdown measures may have provided some unintended respite from sustained high emissions as air travel, traffic and industry have slowed, but we know this is not enough to turn the tide, or to offer a sustainable solution. What lockdown has provided, however, is an opportunity to reflect and consider how we rebuild an economy that is restorative and sustainable.

At the same time, we are aware that the digital communications industry is facing a crisis of trust. Issues of data privacy, misinformation and harmful content have led to an erosion of trust in media and digital. Our own 2019 [Digital Society Index](#) report, highlighted that 64% of people surveyed, raised concerns about the misuse of personal data as the key factor undermining trust in the tech industry as a whole. We know that all businesses deploying digital products and services find themselves under similar scrutiny.

As we transition from one decade to another we know the environmental and societal challenges set before us are both serious and significant. And yet we are confident that significant progress in reducing our environmental footprint and that our on-going commitment to using our skills and knowledge to support those most in need of help to conquer the digital skills gap really can, and will enable us to build back better in 2020 and beyond.

