

Development Southern Africa

Business and the SDGs: Examining the early disclosure of the SDGs in annual reports

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Abstract

The private sector has a critical role in terms of countries being able to meet the SDGs. We evaluate the extent to which South Africa's top 100 listed companies have responded to the SDGs, through a review of their early disclosure of the SDGs in their annual reports. Of these companies, only 6% and 11% in 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 financial year ends respectively have incorporated the SDGs into their business model and strategies as reported. Even though there was an increase between the years, it was noted that only 2% of the companies in 2017 communicated how they incorporated and prioritised the SDGs within their business model and value creation proposition in their Integrated Report specifically. Without a defined business case for the adoption of the SDGs into business, the uptake will continue to be slower than required for the contribution of business in meeting the SDGs to be realised.