

Why an Observatory of the SDGs in Portuguese companies?

- 2.1 The origin of this project and its purpose
- 2.2 Project Partners
- 2.3 Team and Advisory Board

2.1 The origin of this project and its purpose

An initiative of the Center for Responsible Business and Leadership at CATÓLICA-LISBON, in collaboration with BPI - Fundação "la Caixa" and the Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos



Establishing an Observatory of the SDGs in Portuguese companies comes at a crucial time for implementing the 2030 Agenda in the country and the world. We are in the so-called “Decade of Action,” thus named by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres – a decade of action to speed up the fulfillment of the SDGs and reach its targets in 2030. In this regard, and considering the vital role of the private sector in fulfilling the Sustainable Development Agenda, it becomes urgent to understand if and in what way Portuguese companies are effectively adopting the SDGs so that potential obstacles to action and opportunities for improvement can be identified.

Therefore, and following this commitment, CATÓLICA-LISBON partnered with BPI- Fundação “la Caixa” to launch this project in September 2021, to which the Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos later joined.

Being a completely innovative project, the SDGs’ Observatory in Portuguese companies promises to be a landmark in the study of this topic in Portugal and the world. This project is inspired by the “Observatorio de Los ODS,” an initiative of the Center for Leadership and Sustainability of the Esade Business School, in collaboration with the Fundação “la Caixa.” The aforementioned project was launched in 2018 to accompany the implementation of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations by a group of Spanish companies. In this case, the SDGs’ Observatory in Portuguese companies pursues a similar goal to the “Observatorio de Los ODS.” However, it presents a different approach and methodology, namely:

- It proposes a study of **a group of Large and Small and Medium-Sized Portuguese companies** in order to ascertain the current situation of these companies in the face of the SDGs’ implementation, considering the different dimensions they present and the particular challenges they face;
- It has an **Annual Report** as output, backed by a longitudinal analysis of data and with a solid and constant theoretical background of analysis based on proposals by economic and corporate science. These will allow for a consistent follow-up and evolving analysis of the gathered information.

- It develops a deep analysis of how Portuguese companies are adopting the SDGs’ Agenda and identifies opportunities for improvement.

The Observatory of the SDGs in Portuguese companies foresees an in-depth analysis never made before in Portugal to assess how and in what way the SDGs are being implemented in Portuguese companies. Consequently, it makes the current situation clear and allows for a dynamic study of how the contribution of the national corporate sector will evolve in the future.

The relevance and added value this study brings to the development and integration of the SDGs in corporate practices should be emphasized, demonstrating that this integration brings transversal advantages to all players involved, starting with the companies and society in general. This is believed to be an innovative project on an international level, which in the future may be emulated in other countries, as well as in various institutional frameworks.

The fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Agenda in Portugal has progressed but is still below what is necessary to fulfill the established goals in the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, it is central to:

- **Promote the involvement of the private sector** in fulfilling this Agenda, with a clear understanding of the benefits for all parties (companies, State, citizens).
- **Understand the Portuguese context in the progress of the fulfillment of the SDGs in the deepest way** and the specific role that companies can play.
- **Understand and measure how these Portuguese companies incorporate the SDGs** in their activities, from the most peripheral to the core of the business.
- **Identify and disseminate good practices** and show the path to follow in alignment with the priority objectives of Portugal and the United Nations in the Universal Agenda.

With this background, this study has three core goals:

1. **Promote a clear understanding** of the involvement of Portuguese companies with the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. **Promote and disseminate** good practices in the implementation of the SDGs at the core of the corporate strategy;
3. **Stimulate knowledge** about the SDGs among the business community, and promote their implementation in the private sector. Sharing good business practices and inspiring more sustainable strategies, thus enhancing the key role that companies have in creating a better world.

As CATÓLICA-LISBON is a business school with a deep alignment with the principles of sustainability, cooperation, and responsibility proposed by this Agenda, our motivation is to contribute so that Portuguese companies recognize the unique opportunity that the Sustainable Development Goals offer as an agenda of action towards the markets of the future and a desired society that is more just and balanced.

Accordingly, this study allows the understanding, monitoring, and enhancement of the adoption of the SDGs by Portuguese companies to boost its strength, efficiency, and potential contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

The involvement and contribution of companies are crucial for fulfilling the Sustainable Development Agenda, as it is unavoidable that said companies assume themselves as active agents in solving global societal problems, in a perspective that goes far beyond corporate social responsibility. On the other hand, companies are also more aware that this is the active and responsible attitude that allows them to operate and have a competitive advantage in increasingly demanding markets, serving customers who are increasingly conscious of the importance of sustainability.

In the face of this context, the Observatory also intends to be a forum for debate and promotion of the SDGs.

At CATÓLICA-LISBON, we have a strong driving force for this purpose: the Center for Responsible Business and Leadership. This center aims to bring the fulfillment of the Global Agenda to the world of business in a way that positively impacts society.



We believe this project's work should be done with a solid collaboration that generates scientific knowledge, closely connected with the reality of corporate fabric. It should be focused on the most urgent needs of Portuguese society and should be developed with partners aligned with the constituent values of our Faculty and University. Consequently, this project was carried out by the team of the CRB at CATÓLICA-LISBON, partnered with the BPI – Fundação "la Caixa" – a non-profit organization that has as its main goal to act against inequality and to

promote general well-being in society, particularly disadvantaged communities. Completely aligned with these values and mission, the Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos joined this project in June 2022. The partners are in line with the goals of this project and with CATÓLICA-LISBON's mission of contributing, through education and knowledge, to a positive impact on society.



CATÓLICA-LISBON, through the CRB, is responsible for the scientific quality of this project and the running of the necessary studies and reports to fulfill the project's goals.

BPI – Fundação "la Caixa" is a founding partner of the Observatory, which is also joined by the Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos as a strategic partner of this project.

2.2 Project partners



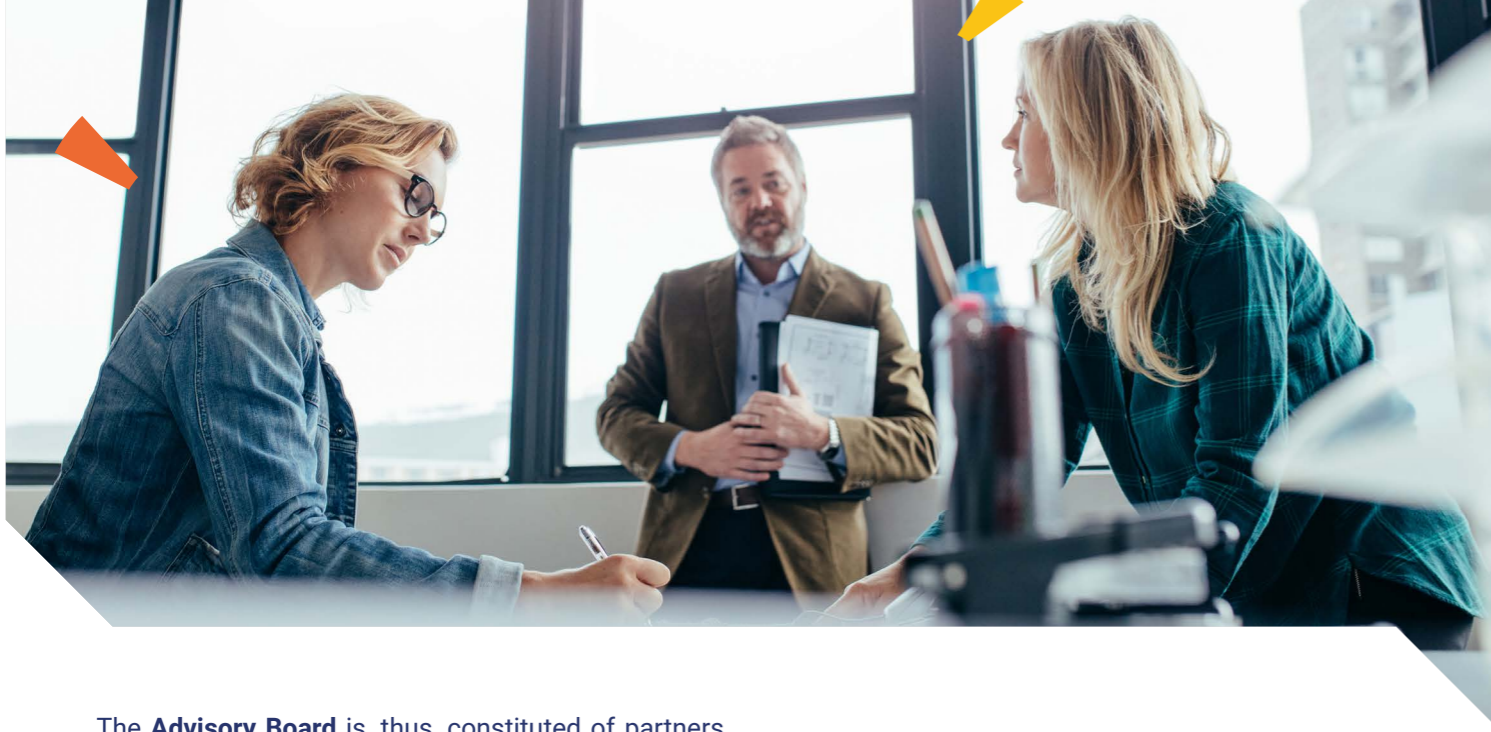
The Observatory of the SDGs in Portuguese companies is a project led by the Center for Responsible Business and Leadership (CRB) – a research center of the Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics.

The Center for Responsible Business and Leadership (CRB) is a strategic initiative that comes from CATÓLICA-LISBON's ambition to be a catalyst for the creation of an impact through the development of knowledge and innovation in order to place the concept of Responsible Business at the heart of business strategy.

2.3 Team and Advisory Board

So that the fulfillment of this project is attained with the most beneficial result for the companies and Portuguese society, the executive team has deemed as essential the involvement of strategic partners capable of conferring accuracy, quality, and a connection to the particular reality of these

companies to the project. With this in mind, an Advisory Board was created, made up of national and international experts capable of counseling and guiding the executive team in achieving this work.



The **Advisory Board** is, thus, constituted of partners who bring strategic worth to this project, representing various entities considered to be central to the study:



António Pires de Lima – President of BCSD Portugal and President of the Executive Commission of Brisa.



Ana Feijó – Head of BPI - Fundação "la Caixa" in Portugal BPI - Fundação "la Caixa".



Filipa Pires de Almeida – Deputy Director, Center for Responsible Business and Leadership – CATÓLICA-LISBON.



Filipe Santos – Dean of CATÓLICA-LISBON



Gabriela Figueiredo Dias - Executive Chair of IESBA - International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants.



Gabriel Bernardino – President of CMVM.



Isabel Ucha – CEO of Euronext Lisbon and Administrador at the Euronext N.V. Administration



José Pena do Amaral – Executive Commission consultant and member of the BPI – Fundação "la Caixa" Social Responsibility Commission.



Margarida Couto – President of GRACE representing Vieira de Almeida and founding Partner of the Vieira de Almeida Society.



Mário Parra da Silva – Network Representative at UN Global Compact Network Portugal.



Nuno Gonçalves – Member of IAPMEI's Director's Council.



Nuno Moreira da Cruz – Executive Director, Center for Responsible Business and Leadership - CATÓLICA-LISBON

The research team has Filipe Santos as Scientific Coordinator, Nuno Moreira da Cruz as Executive Coordinator, and Filipa Pires de Almeida as Project Manager and Main Researcher. Natália Cantarino, Mafalda Sarmento, Marta Sanches and Angela Lucas are part of the team as researchers.



Filipe Santos is a Professor of Social Innovation and Dean of CATÓLICA-LISBON. He has a degree in Economics, a Masters in Management & Strategy, and a Ph.D. in Management Science and Engineering from Stanford University. He is co-founder and president of IES-Social Business School and the Laboratory for Social Investment (Maze-Decoding Impact). He is also the founder of the public initiative Portugal Social Innovation.



Nuno Moreira da Cruz is the Executive Director and co-founder of the CRB and teaches different classes focused on responsible businesses in the Masters and Undergraduate Programs of the UCP. He has a Law Degree, a post-graduate in European Studies, and an MBA from IE Business School. He is co-founder of the NGO "BUS – Bens de Utilidade Social" and Chairman of CADin.



Filipa Pires de Almeida is Deputy Director of CRB at CATÓLICA-LISBON, a Professor of executive training, and is currently developing her Ph.D. at the Rotterdam School of Management in Strategy and Sustainability. She has a degree in Economics and a Master's in Management and completed the Shared Value executive course at Harvard Business School.



Natália Cantarino is a Researcher of the CRB team. She has a Master's in Management with a specialization in Strategy, Sustainability, Social Innovation, and Impact Ventures. She has experience as



an entrepreneur with a focus on product development, design, and strategic management consulting.

Mafalda Sarmento is a Researcher of the CRB team. She is a co-founder and partner at Positive Benefits. She has a Postgraduate Degree in Development Studies from ISCTE-IUL and a Designer degree from ESAD. Previously, she coordinated the development of the IES-SBS mentor program, coordinated the Social Innovation Lab IES-SBS, and the Portuguese and Mozambican Social Innovation Map.



Marta Sanches is a Researcher on the CRB team. She has a Degree in Management and Business Administration from CATÓLICA-LISBON. She has experience in the area of Corporate Finance.



Angela Lucas is a Researcher and Advisor of the CRB team. She has a Law Degree by the Universidade Católica Portuguesa – Escola de Lisboa. She completed the Executive Course "Sustainable Capitalism & ESG" at Berkeley School of Law. She has experience as a lawyer in Environmental Law and Climate Change, was a trainee at the DG Environment of the European Commission, and worked as an advisor for the Cabinet of the Minister for the Environment and Climate Action.