Pathway toward a sustainable 2050

World Business Council for Sustainable Development

VISION 2050: THE NEW AGENDA FOR BUSINESS

Under the WBCSD's Vision 2050 Project, twenty-nine WBCSD member companies have developed a vision of what it will take to be sustainable by 2050 and the pathways leading to that world.

This mural is a basic for visualizing the transformations that will need to occur to provide a tool for strategic planning, prioritizing, and monitoring progress to help countries, businesses, NGOs, international organizations and citizen groups understand the role which we are on track to accomplishing the vision.

This pathways mural represents just one of the many ways to depict the vision. After creating a rough idea of what a sustainable future might look like (see our mural containing the 22 elements of the Vision for 2050), we asked the question: what must happen between preceding 2050 what would have to be in place for us plausibly to arrive at a sustainable 2050? This process is often called "backcasting." The results are presented here in the form of pathways.

Perhaps the most significant components of the mural are (1) the yellow boxes, which together present a statement of the "critical path" of what, in broad terms, must happen - for the world to reach 2050 in a sustainable way; and (2) the measures of success at the far right side of the mural, which create a kind of prototype for a global dashboard.

The mural presents a large number of interdependencies, choices, dilemmas and options. It gives a sense of possible "tipping points" and "critical mass." Please note that all future dates and numbers are approximations.

This mural is released in the name of the WBCSD. It is the result of an 18-month collaborative effort among representatives of 29 member companies and was supported by the WBCSD secretariat. Like other WBCSD projects, Vision 2050 has involved a broad range of stakeholders in locations around the world. Developed in consultation with WBCSD project members and other cross-sectoral consultations/dialogues, the mural was developed using a backcasting methodology to ensure a broad agreement of its principal views and perspectives. However, this does not mean that every member company necessarily endorses or agrees with every statement in the mural. Ideas and drawings of and references on the mural shall be at the discretion of the authors.

The content of the mural is aligned – as far as possible – with the content of the parallel Vision 2050 report. Perfect alignment is, however, neither possible or desired as the mural has its own independent creative process. Please contact WBCSD for copies of a report.

Project member companies
Accenture, Alcoa, Allianz SE, ArcelorMittal SA, Boeing, Cargill, Cemex, CH2M HILL, Chevron, Holdings Limited, Enviro Industries AG, FALCK Group, Fortum Corporation, GDF SUEZ, GrupoNueva SA, Holcim Ltd., Infosys Technologies Limited, Osaka Gas Co. Ltd., Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Rio Tinto plc, Royal Philips Electronics NV, Sony Corporation, Storebrand ASA, Syngenta International AG, The Boeing Company, The Dow Chemical Company, The Tokyo Electric Power Company, Inc., Toyota Motor Corporation, Unicore, Vattenfall AB, Volkswagen AG, WeyerhaeuserCompany

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ENERGY AND POWER - Meet increasing demand while stabilizing global temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius – equivalent to approx. 450 ppm CO2 in atmosphere

Price of carbon in place, preferably on a global basis. Tax incentives / subsidies drive renewables expansion. Proven commercial viability of CCS.

2010s | 2020s | 2030s | 2040s

Key elements: Energy R&D increases rapidly; Major collection of international agreements on climate and energy; Carbon Prices, R&D and international agreements on climate and energy; Roughly 10 demonstration Carbon Capture Sequestration (CCS) plants in operation, CCS technology is determined to work well; Policies to promote efficiency and renewables have lowered unit technology costs; Rapid scale-up of renewables; Rapid growth in carbon capture sequestration (CCS); Renewables achieve at least parity with more traditional forms of generation; Strict enforcement; Rapid transition to renewable fuels; New energy mix in place; Closed loop manufacturing common; Hyper-innovative economy; Peak oil happens before alternatives fully deployed; Major nuclear accident; Major CO2 emissions reduction; Major oil shortage; Major oil scarcity; Major oil scarcity; Major oil scarcity