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**FAMILY BUSINESSES  
ON A MISSION**

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**ATTAINING THE  
2030 SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOAL  
OF INDUSTRY,  
INNOVATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

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**EDITED BY**

**NAOMI  
BIRDTHISTLE**

**ROB  
HALES**

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**Family Businesses on a Mission:  
Attaining the 2030 Sustainable  
Development Goal of Industry,  
Innovation and Infrastructure**

# FAMILY BUSINESSES ON A MISSION



## **Series Editors:**

Naomi Birdthistle

Rob Hales

The Family Businesses on Mission series examines how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) can be applied in family businesses around the world, providing insights into cultural and societal differences and displaying innovative approaches to complex environmental and societal issues.

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*Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Climate Action*

# **Family Businesses on a Mission: Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**

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# Table of Contents

List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	ix
About the Editors	xi
About the Contributors	xiii
Foreword	xv
Acknowledgements	xvii
<b>Chapter 1 The Sustainable Development Goals – SDG#9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Rob Hales and Naomi Birdthistle</i>	
<b>Chapter 2 Family Businesses and Their Importance to Worldwide Economies</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Naomi Birdthistle and Rob Hales</i>	
<b>Chapter 3 Germany: <i>Creativhotel Luise</i> – The First Climate-Positive Certified Hotel in Europe</b>	<b>15</b>
<i>Markus Pillmayer and Nicolai Scherle</i>	
<b>Chapter 4 Japan: Ishizaka Sangyo – The Challenge of Turning all Waste Into Resources</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>Kyoko Sasaki</i>	
<b>Chapter 5 Australia – Wagner Corporation and Its Airport: Infrastructure that Opens a Rural Region to the World</b>	<b>51</b>
<i>Mary Barrett and Ken Moores</i>	

<b>Chapter 6 Algeria: Fostering Inclusive Development Through Shared Value and Supply Chain Innovation</b>	67
<i>Sofiane Baba, Omar Hemissi and Amina I. Wazoumi</i>	
Index	83

# List of Figures

## Chapter 1

- Figure 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals. 2  
Figure 2. Targets Within SDG#9. 3

## Chapter 3

- Figure 1. Glass House on the Roof of the Hotel. 16  
Figure 2. Hotel Owner and Managing Director Ben Foertsch (Left) With His Fiancée. 18  
Figure 3. One of the Regrowing Hotel Rooms®. 21  
Figure 4. Cross-Section of a Straw Building Board in Timber-Frame Construction. 22  
Figure 5. Thermostat on the Radiator Connected to Booking Software That Automatically Regulates the Temperature in the Room. 24  
Figure 6. The Branch of a Douglas Fir Tree, Humus and Pine Cones, Which Are Presented as Examples of Renewable Raw Materials. 26

## Chapter 4

- Picture 1. Noriko Ishizaka, Second Generation President of Ishizaka Sangyo. 33  
Picture 2. Recycling Plant Tour. 38  
Picture 3. Waste Sorting at Ishizaka Sangyo. 39  
Picture 4. Indoor Sorting and Recycling Facilities. 39  
Picture 5. ESD Programme Example: Rice Planting in a *satoyama*. 47

**Chapter 5**

Picture 1.	Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport.	52
Picture 2.	Toowoomba.	52
Picture 3.	Pinkenba Wharf.	56
Picture 4.	The Goro Nickel Project.	58
Picture 5.	Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) Tanks Built by Wagners in Prigorodnoye, Russia.	58
Picture 6.	The Board of Wagner Corporation: Denis, John, Neill, and Joe Wagner.	59

**Chapter 6**

Picture 1.	Lounis Hamitouche, in Algeria.	69
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# List of Tables

## **Chapter 1**

Table 1.	Key Aspects of the Case Study Template Used by Authors in This Book.	6
----------	--	---

## **Chapter 3**

Table 1.	Creativhotel Luise Key Milestones.	20
----------	------------------------------------	----

## **Chapter 4**

Table 1.	Ishizaka Sangyo's Business Models and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	41
----------	---	----

## **Chapter 6**

Table 1.	Timeline of the Growth and Development of Soummam.	74
----------	--	----

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## About the Editors

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# Foreword

*Professor Walter Leal Filho*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 provide a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

They also entail elements of importance towards a strategic business engagement with sustainability issues. These offer a framework which provides businesses with a systematic approach to identify new business opportunities while contributing to the solution of the grand sustainability challenges facing the world today, including climate change. Each SDG, if achieved, will have a direct and significant positive impact on millions of people's lives around the world and the environment in which they live. Businesses have an opportunity to widen the purpose of business through adopting the SDGs as targets for their operations. Thus, they can make a meaningful contribution to the greater good through achieving their operational objectives.

Family businesses are uniquely placed to contribute to SDGs for many reasons. Firstly, because family business models have longer time perspectives, and this allows the family business to link with the longer-term SDG time frame – 2030. Secondly, family businesses often focus on aspects of business operation which do not have an immediate return on investment such as relationship building with stakeholder groups. Thirdly, family businesses tend to rate the importance of ethics higher than standard businesses and thus align well with the social dimensions of the SDGs. Lastly, family businesses have intergenerational perspectives which is a core principle of sustainability.

This book provides insights into how family business operationalises SDG#9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. The book uses a rigorous case study approach for family businesses to detail aspects of their business which helps to build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation. The cases provided here are living proof that family businesses that operate for the greater good actually work! Non-family businesses can take a leaf out of the family businesses portrayed in this book as they can provide different perspectives on how businesses can successfully align SDGs and business strategy.

Despite many businesses having adopted environmental social governance strategies and environmental management systems, the effect of this activity has not been reflected in a healthier planet. Many 'state of the environment' reports

indicate that planetary health is decreasing, and planetary boundaries are being crossed or are about to be crossed. Whilst the cause of this decline is not entirely the fault of business, there still needs to be a greater effort to address the decline. The challenge for family businesses is to use their unique characteristics and set ambitious programmes of work that make a meaningful contribution to achieving global goals. This book provides insights into how family businesses can achieve such a mission and how non-family businesses can be inspired to do the same.

# Acknowledgements

The Editors would like to thank the contributors of the book for providing insights and sharing the learnings from their business practice. We acknowledge that writing up cases in the format required considerable time and effort. The quality of the cases presented is testament to their efforts.

The Editors would also like to thank Emerald Publishing for supporting the publication of this book and the mission for deeper sustainability through utilising the SDGs.

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## Chapter 1

# The Sustainable Development Goals – SDG#9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

*Rob Hales and Naomi Birdthistle*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all member states of the United Nations in 2015, is a shared blueprint for people and the planet, with the aim to achieve peace and prosperity for all. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a call to action for all countries to address ‘the global challenges of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice’. These challenges are identified by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as depicted in [Fig. 1](#) and within the SDGs are a total of 169 targets. These 17 SDGs acknowledge that ending poverty and other global challenges needs strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests ([United Nations, 2021](#)). The global pandemic of COVID-19 has presented challenges to those working towards achieving the goals. The social and economic impacts of COVID-19 are predicted to increase the divide between people living in rich and poor countries ([UNEP, 2020](#)). However, if there can be concerted action using the blueprint of the SDGs, then human development can exceed pre-COVID development trajectories ([UNEP, 2021](#)). What is needed is a combination of political commitment from all levels of government, investment in green economy initiatives, socially oriented innovation and a (re)focus on the purpose of business to align with SDGs.

This book focuses on SDG number 9 (SDG#9) which focuses on ‘Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure’. As the [UN \(2021\)](#) states, SDG#9 is about enabling dynamic and competitive economic forces that lead to jobs and better salaries for people, through developing ‘inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, together with innovation and infrastructure’. The three components of this SDG can stand alone or work collaboratively with each other. For example, SDG#9 is about building resilient infrastructures which can lead to fostering of innovation within an inclusive and sustainable industry. COVID-19 has led to nations having to pivot and require their citizens and workers to work online. It is



Fig. 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals. *Source: United Nations (2021).*<sup>1</sup>

imperative then those nations have the digital infrastructure in place, and it will require nations to make significant investments in their digital infrastructure to enable and accelerate the economic recovery that will be required and to stimulate jobs, reduce poverty and stimulate productive investment. When designing the SDGs, each SDG was given targets and indicators. For SDG#9 there are eight targets to achieve, and each of these targets has their own set of indicators, which are used to measure progress towards reaching the target. Within the eight targets of SDG#9, there are five outcome targets, which are circumstances to be attained and are identified as Target 9.1 through to Target 9.5, and three ‘means of implementation targets’, which are labelled as Target 9.a; Target 9.b and Target 9.c. The three ‘means of implementation’ targets were developed post the development of the outcome targets and were designed to address the concerns of some Member States about how to achieve the SDGs. All SDG#9 targets are to be achieved by the 2030 timeline that has been set (United Nations, n.d.) Fig. 2 highlights the targets contained within SDG#9.

The first outcome target within SDG#9 is target 9.1 which relates to the development of sustainable and resilient infrastructures to support economic development and well-being. It focuses on having equitable access and a regional focus. Target 9.2 focuses on inclusive industrialisation with a focus on increasing employment. Metrics for this target include having double its share in least developed countries. Outcome Target 9.3 relates to small-scale industrial and/or other enterprises and enabling them to have greater access to credit, financial services and aiding their integration into value chains and markets. Target 9.4 centres on infrastructure and industries ensuring that they are upgraded to ensure that they are sustainable going forward. Target 9.4 refers to retrofitting industries and upgrading the infrastructure with enabling the increase in resource use efficiency and encouraging the adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies along with industrial processes. The outcome target, Target 9.5 focuses

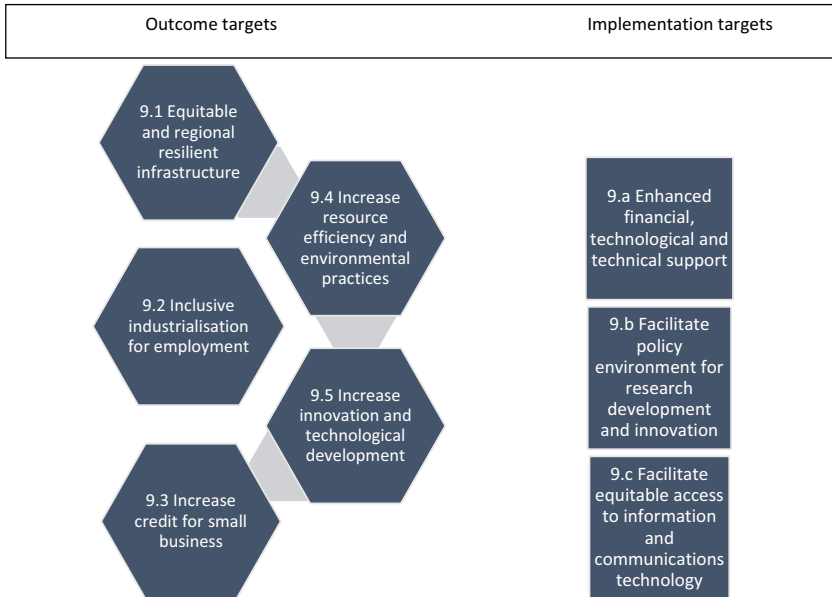


Fig. 2. Targets Within SDG#9.

on increasing innovation and technological development. More specifically it refers to ensuring that in developing countries and all other countries there is enhanced scientific research and the technological capabilities of the industrial sectors are upgraded. It further refers to increasing public and private research and development spending.

For the means of implementation targets found within SDG#9, the first target – Target 9.a – has been designed to focus on supporting African countries, those countries that are landlocked within the developing world, least developed countries and those that have been identified as small island developing states. This Target aims to facilitate these nations to develop sustainable and resilient infrastructure through having improved financial, technological, and technical support. Target 9.b aims to ensure industrial diversification and value addition to commodities through ensuring a favourable policy environment. Additionally, the Target makes reference to supporting domestic technology development and research and innovation in developing nations. The last implementation target – Target 9.c – aims to facilitate equitable access to information and communications technology and make it universal and reasonably priced in least developed countries.

As previously mentioned, this book focuses solely on SDG#9: industry, innovation and infrastructure. SDG#9 aims to build robust infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation, and this book provides insights into how family businesses take action on the SDG through the work of their business. Family businesses play an important role in achieving this. Much research has been directed towards family business, but little attention has been directed to how a family business can advance sustainability

and social impact using SDGs. Many of the family businesses portrayed in this book have the three elements of SDG#9 either individually or in combination at the core of their business model. Therefore, this book provides evidence of family businesses that advance SDG#9 through their work.

Furthermore, the SDGs are a call to action, to develop innovative solutions to some of the world's most complex, societal and environmental challenges. Businesses play a crucial role in forging this path, and since family-businesses account for more than two-thirds of businesses worldwide and contribute to 70–90% of the world's GDP, we believe it is important to showcase the role they play in facilitating the achievement of these SDGs. Furthermore, a key feature of the book is highlighting the role of gender diversity in achieving a better, sustainable world. Thus, we incorporate throughout the series, certain notions, and examples of how women in family firms influence specific, well-grounded efforts to enhance the world we live in. By including examples of women who champion SDGs within their family business, such as the case written about Ishizaka Sangyo, it will provide readers with examples of role models.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many family businesses have shown to be more resilient and operate more sustainably than standard businesses (such as the shareholder approach). The reason for this lies in family businesses generally taking a long-term perspective on stakeholder relationships and the real need for long-term continuity planning to sustain the people within their businesses. The people in their business are most likely to be family members. However, like all businesses, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed financial pressures on family businesses. One needs to ask the question: *How then can family businesses extend their capacity to operate more sustainably and with more social impact during times of business stress?* Well, family businesses can offer unique insights into how sustainability and social impact can be part of the regenerative response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea for the book came from two observations. The first observation was that family businesses that had sustainability at their core were performing well despite the impacts of the pandemic. The second observation was that the SDGs were being used as a framework for regeneration after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **SDG#9 Book Series Focus**

The chapters in this book focus on businesses that have the industry, innovation and infrastructure as a key component(s) of their business model. The first case examines the family business of *Creativhotel Luise* from Erlangen, Germany. The award-winning environmentally conscious hotel and restaurant family business was founded in 1956 but in recent years has embodied a green philosophical practice. The main pillars of green practice are eco-efficiency and climate action enacted through a sustainability strategy. The strategy is very progressive with the *Creativhotel Luise* being the first climate-positive certified hotel in Europe. The family business contributes to SDG#9 through its cradle to grave approach to sustainability. The business has used this approach to retrofit its hotel with new sustainable materials which not only increased efficiency and adds value to the client experience but also valued the 'waste' from old materials which were

recycled. The cradle to grave approach is also applied to its daily operations of consumables. Another infrastructure development that assists the achievement of SDG#9 is the introduction of free electric charging stations included in the room rate.

The next case profiles the family business of Ishizaka Sangyo, which is an industrial waste company from Japan. The main focus of the business is recycling through sorting waste, but this was not always the prime focus. Previously, the focus of the business was waste incineration but due to the owners of the company realising there was a shift in societal norms around waste, the company pivoted towards a more sustainability-oriented business purpose. The shift in business purpose has meant investment in new infrastructure and retraining of the workforce of the company. This was met with some resistance from within the company with many employees leaving the company. The company's current business is the collection, transportation, treatment and recycling of construction waste, but as a new business, it is working on the commercialisation of education for sustainable development (ESD) programmes combining the plant tour and *satoiyama* conservation. The company contributes to SDG#9.4 by upgrading its infrastructure and retrofit operations for the purpose of increasing resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies.

The next case is the Wellcamp company in Australia owned by the Wagner Family. The company is a food distribution company but has expanded into the international market by developing an international airport near Toowoomba in rural Australia. A key feature of the company is the embedded nature of how the business has linked with the local community. The aim of this case is both to show how this development came about, and how Wagners exemplify SDG#9. The choice of constructing an airport in the regional community might be seen as an unacceptable risky venture, but the Wagners have been committed to the local community and chose to invest in the region because it wanted their investment to benefit the local community which they have been a part of for many years. In addition to the investment, they also have civic engagement offering community-based grants for local projects.

The last case is a family business from Algeria called Soummam. The purpose of the family business is to develop new infrastructure which improves the efficiency of the labour force whilst creating new jobs. African countries are heavily dependent on the import of commodities, and thus infrastructure development that facilitates growth rates, diversifies the economies, and improves food security is important to achieve SDG#9. The company was created to address food import dependency and develop local food systems. The name Soummam was chosen by the founder as a tribute to his native village on the outskirts of Mount Djurdjura. Soummam's work in the dairy sector makes an important contribution to SDG#9 by developing a business model which links micro-farmers and transportation micro-entrepreneurs into a larger viable scale system of production. A key to the company's success was to develop a distribution network throughout the country partnerships with micro-entrepreneurs in each region. This gained the trust of local farmers. The Hamitouche family has been operating the present business since 1993.

## Methodological Approach Adopted for the Book

The book used a case study method to gain insights into the practices of businesses using SDGs. The summary outline of the case study template is shown in Table 1. The editors approached a range of potential authors to develop the case studies. They approached early career researchers, PhD students, family business academics, family business consultants, managers of family business centres and family business practitioners to consider submitting a case for the book. For interested authors, they were asked to choose the SDGs that best matched the family business of their choice and use a case study template provided by the editors of the book series to craft a case study on how the family business advanced the particular SDG. A truly global response was received for the book series with participants from all over the globe.

Table 1. Key Aspects of the Case Study Template Used by Authors in This Book.

<i>Vision and mission, services offered by the organisation</i>	<i>How do the vision, mission and background of the organisation relate to the particular SDG?</i>
<i>Background to the company</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When did the SDG become important to the organisation?</li> <li>• Was there a person who championed the SDG?</li> <li>• Is the SDGs explicitly talked about by staff?</li> </ul>
<i>Historical development</i>	<i>Outline the business model of organisation and add how SDG is important.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founding date</li> <li>• Founder details</li> <li>• Human interest angle of founder</li> <li>• Quotes from the founder or key people</li> <li>• Size of organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline key elements</li> <li>• Outline structure of organisation is needed.</li> <li>• Provide a diagram of business model</li> <li>• Identify key activities and return on investment</li> <li>• How does the SDG relate to return on investment?</li> </ul>
<i>How do key stakeholders relate to the SDG championed by the organisation?</i>	<i>How does the organisation see itself in relation to providing benefits outside the organisation? What next for the organisation?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What stakeholders influence the organisation?</li> <li>• Has the adoption of the SDG in the organisation had an impact on stakeholders?</li> <li>• Have stakeholders influenced the actions of the organisation related to the SDG?</li> </ul>	
<i>What are the challenges facing the organisation in implementing the SDGs?</i>	

## **Contribution of the Book**

This book makes an important contribution to research on family business by highlighting how businesses actually promote particular SDGs through their work. There are several streams of research emerging in the literature on family business and sustainability that are relevant to this book. [Ferreira, Fernandes, Schiavone, and Mahto \(2021\)](#) identify four streams of research in family business and sustainability: family business capital, family business strategy, family business social responsibility and family business succession. The case study approach of this book provides insights into how SDGs can be used to advance the family business's sustainability strategy and social responsibility. How a family's trans-generational sustainability intentions positively influence the strategy of the business is identified as a driver of sustainability. Additionally a family's concern for its reputation has also been identified as a driver of sustainability in family businesses.

Additionally, the book series aims to contribute positively towards portraying the role of family businesses and/or women in family businesses, in effectively achieving SDGs on a global basis. The case studies on a family business display supports and embody the principles of an SDG in their operations, culture and/or business philosophy. This book is one of 17 vignette books in which each book will be comprised of a set of short, easy-to-read family business cases related to the unique SDG being discussed in the book. The format of the book series allows the works to be accessible to those working in the field beyond academia such as family business practitioners, family business owners, family business advisors, government and business policymakers, members of NGOs, business associations and philanthropic centres, as well as to those who have a general interest in entrepreneurship and business.

## **Identifying the Readership**

This book will be useful for those wanting to know how businesses use SDGs to make an impact in the world and incorporate this with a deepening of strategic commitment to sustainability. Despite SDGs now being recognised as an important framework for aligning business to build back better from the pandemic, there are very few businesses that used SDGs for developing deeper strategic approaches to sustainability. Most of the large businesses that have been identified in surveys ([Harvard Business Review, 2019](#)) had simply relabelled their existing corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and did not do anything new or different to advance the goals.

This book will be useful for small businesses, groups such as chambers of commerce, consulting organisations and sustainability accreditation bodies who want practical examples of how the SDG business model can deepen sustainability operations. At the time of writing, there were still eight years left before the SDGs need to be achieved. Education about how to achieve the goals is critical during this time period. The book will have practical use for teaching and learning in universities, technical institutions and high schools.

## Note

1. The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

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