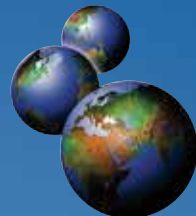




GEO-5 for Business

Impacts of a Changing Environment on the Corporate Sector

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Foreword



Environmental change, in large part driven by humanity's demand for resources, rising lifestyles and growing global population, is accelerating and generating new and emerging challenges but also opportunities for business.

Companies that face up to these realities are likely to be the ones that thrive and remain competitive in a rapidly changing world where factors such as climate change and dwindling availability of natural resources like water will shape future profit and loss and drive new markets.

This new report, GEO-5 for Business, is based on the flagship assessment by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Environment Outlook 5, which was launched in advance of the Rio+20 Summit.

GEO-5 for Business outlines current and future impacts of environmental trends across a range of sectors from construction to food. It dovetails with other assessments such as those by the UNEP-hosted International Resource Panel that estimate consumption of natural resources will triple by 2050 unless urgent action is taken to decouple economic growth from natural resource use.

These trends are likely to not only impact and influence markets but also trigger technological innovation and change while stimulating regulatory and policy developments nationally and internationally, which in turn represent opportunities for business in respect to new kinds of goods and services.

Meanwhile as policy-makers, the public and investors become ever more aware of environmental change, they are likely to demand increasing transparency and more comprehensive corporate sustainability reporting – indeed this new push for sustainability reporting was among a range of outcomes from Rio+20.

GEO-5 for Business notes that not all opportunities glimpsed today may be opportunities tomorrow – as the Arctic melts many oil and gas companies are scrambling to exploit the opportunity, but may expose themselves to a range of other risks in a fragile environment.

GEO-5 for Business recommends that businesses conduct a deeper, company-specific analysis, taking a life-cycle approach using this report as a framework and guide.

Those who succeed may find that they not only can use the trends to their advantage, but can generate real and ever more transformative solutions to challenges already arising from a rapidly changing environment in a rapidly changing world.

Achim Steiner

United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme



Executive Summary



Global environmental trends are creating new risks and new opportunities for businesses in every industry. Indeed the transition to a green economy, now in its early stages, will open up great opportunities for companies that understand the implications of these trends and account for them in their planning and business strategy. Conversely, companies that fail to understand the changes, or that act too slowly, will put value at risk.

GEO-5 for Business is written for business leaders who are responsible for ensuring that risks and opportunities are understood, addressed, and turned into long-term competitive advantage for their companies. The report assesses the operational, market, reputational, and policy implications of environmental trends on ten business sectors:

- Building and construction
- Chemicals
- Electric power
- Extractives
- Finance
- Food and beverage
- Healthcare
- Information and communication technology
- Tourism
- Transportation

The report describes business risks and opportunities based on information derived from existing science, business, policy, and other literature. It also includes brief real-world examples that illustrate the nature of some of these risks and opportunities. The report contains extensive citations throughout, allowing readers to easily access source documents that provide further details on specific trends and impacts.

GEO-5 for Business builds on the findings of UNEP's fifth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5) report, released in June 2012. GEO-5 assessed the current state and trends of the global environment, in which population growth, economic

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