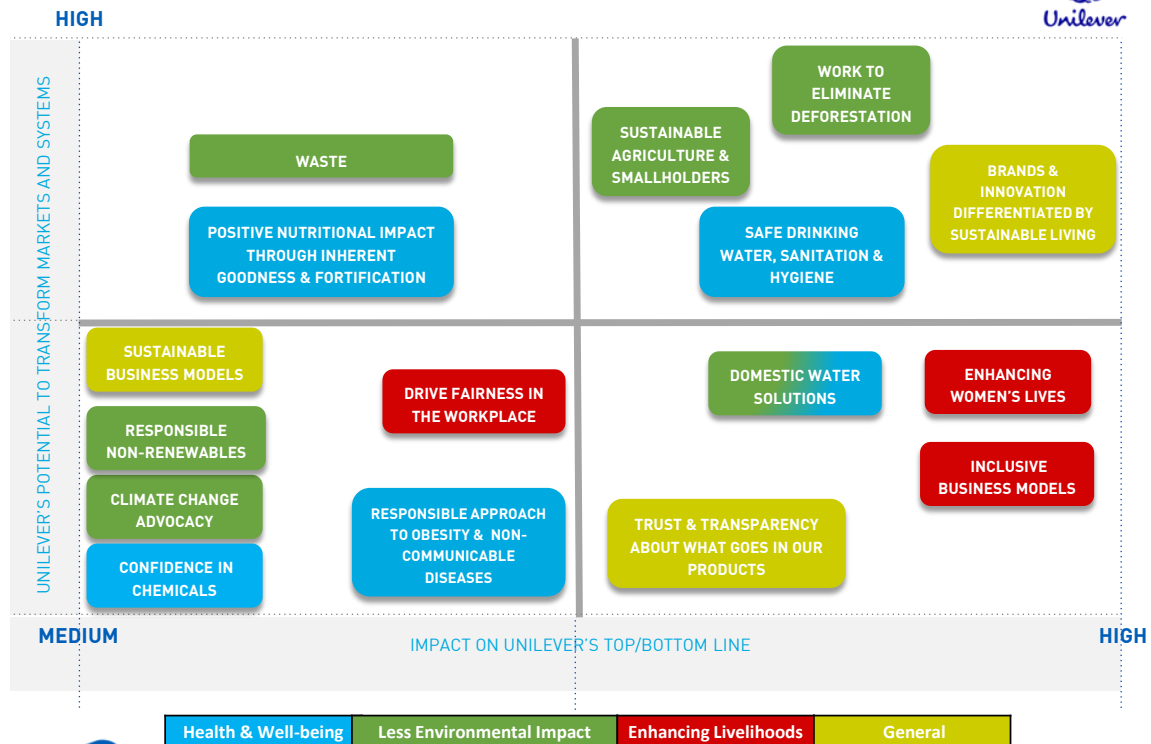


Company:	Unilever
Sector:	Consumer Goods
Report Year:	2014
Headquarters:	London, Rotterdam
Standard Application:	IIRC and GRI G4
Format:	Matrix (online)

## UNILEVER MATERIAL ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES SUSTAINABLE LIVING PROGRAMME



## HOW DO WE DEFINE OUR MATERIAL ISSUES?

Understanding our sustainability impacts and priorities enables us to address the sustainability issues that matter most to our business strategy and to our stakeholders. It also allows us to tailor our reporting so it is aligned with audiences' interests and needs.

We define sustainability issues to be material to our business in terms of:

- The degree to which an issue is aligned with our vision and purpose, brand portfolio and geography.
- The potential impact on our operations, or on our sourcing and consumers.
- The extent of Unilever's influence on the issue.
- The importance of an issue to our key stakeholders.

Unilever's purpose as a business is to make sustainable living commonplace. The Unilever Sustainable Living Plan is the blueprint for achieving our vision of doubling the size of our business while reducing our environmental impact and increasing our positive social impact.

When we developed our Plan in 2009-2010, we used an in-depth materiality assessment process for determining the issues we address in our Plan. Our Plan is now the central focus of our reporting. However, we also report on issues that are not contained in our Plan but are of interest to our stakeholders. We keep these under regular review and aim to be as responsive as possible to stakeholder needs. See [Engaging with Stakeholders](#).

### DEFINING OUR MATERIAL ISSUES

Three years after the launch of our Plan, we conducted an in-depth review of our material issues. For this exercise we looked specifically at two key materiality criteria:

- The potential for an issue to help us grow our sales or increase profitability, in line with our business model.
- Assessing the level of stakeholder interest and then studying the potential for Unilever to drive transformational change for that issue.

Our materiality assessment went beyond the conventional assessment of business impact against stakeholder importance. In addition we factored in the broader question of how far Unilever could deliver transformational and systemic change for a particular global issue. Forum for the Future, a not-for-profit working with business, helped us review the mega trends and issues facing our business and map the potential for Unilever to drive change.

The result of the exercise identified the following top 15 material issues:

- Deforestation
- Sustainable agriculture and smallholder farmers
- Safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene
- Brands and innovation
- Enhancing women's lives
- Inclusive business models
- Trust and transparency
- Domestic water solutions
- Waste
- Food fortification
- Fairness in the workplace
- Obesity and non-communicable diseases
- Non-renewables
- Climate change advocacy
- Chemicals.