



# United Ventures

ESG Policy  
December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

**We invest in people  
and technology**

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## 00. Introduction

At United Ventures, we believe that companies must responsibly pursue growth to create **enduring value** and **impactful returns**. To this end, we must double down our efforts towards sustainable investing and establish our strategic objectives.

VC firms play an essential role in building a fairer technology ecosystem through business operations and investment activities. Thus, accelerating sustainability across our internal operations, portfolio, and dealflow has become an urgent priority.

This document (the “**ESG Policy**”) sets out our commitment to high standards concerning Environmental, Social, and Governance (“ESG”) criteria. We aim to set out the principles that the firm aspires to and the procedures that United Ventures has implemented to meet our ESG goals.

## 01. Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

We chose the UN’s 17 **Sustainable Development Goals** as the base for our ESG Policy because they represent a positive framework behind which we stand. The 17 SDGs, and their related targets, give clear guidance on what a sustainable future should look like.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



As of the date of this ESG Policy, we currently focus our attention towards:

<b>Environmental</b>	Climate Change, Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Practices (UN SDG #7, 11, 12, 13)
<b>Social</b>	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Decent Work (UN SDG #3, 4, 5, 8, 10)
<b>Governance</b>	Ethical and Governance Standards (UN SDG #16)

The ESG factors listed above are not exhaustive, and United Ventures will continue to revisit, refine and add to the list.

This ESG Policy covers all United Ventures funds, existing portfolio companies, new investments, and United Ventures' operations. All United Ventures' team members must adhere to this ESG Policy.

## 02. United Ventures' Commitment to ESG

United Ventures' efforts to safeguard and enhance ESG are embedded within the firm's internal operations and across the entire investment cycle. This multi-front approach sets out as follows.

### *a. Internal Operations.*

#### **Act in fairness and with integrity**

At United Ventures, we are committed to never failing to respect fundamental values such as honesty, moral integrity, transparency, and objectivity in pursuing corporate objectives. We base our business relations on complete openness and correctness, respect for the law, and independence from all forms of conditioning, both internal and external.

We do our best to overcome daily our conscious and unconscious biases and commit to developing each team member's abilities and skills so that the energy and creativity of individuals find full expression by realizing the potential of each. We foster an open and supportive work environment, emphasizing transparent decision-making, accountability, empowerment, and respect for each individual at all levels of the organization. Read our [Code of Ethics](#) to learn more.

#### **Equality, diversity, and inclusion**

We are committed to providing equal employment opportunities based on individual merit and qualifications related to professional competence. We strictly prohibit discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or other characteristics protected by law.

United Ventures' team members also engage with the broader ecosystem to drive awareness around DE&I by participating whenever possible in workshops, events, and initiatives aimed at building a fairer and more equal tech industry. Some of the initiatives our team members are involved in: [VentureESG](#), [VCs for Female Founders](#), [La Carica delle 101](#).

#### **Agile work**

At the beginning of 2021, we updated our working policies to adapt them to a flexible schedule, and the firm now offers all of its team members the option to work from home when they do not need to be in the office. While the main benefits are flexibility and an enhanced work-life balance, on top of that, there are environmental benefits. [According to the Carbon Trust](#), widespread adoption of hybrid working models could save around 1kg of CO2 emissions per worker/per year.

### **Sustainable travel policy**

At United Ventures, we are committed to reducing our impact when we travel, whether on business or how we commute to work. As general guidelines, we:

- Minimize non-essential business travel, promoting video conferencing over in-person meetings. If travel is required, select the lowest-carbon mode of transport, e.g., considering rail before air for short journeys;
- Limit the number of trips per month/per traveler and the number of travelers/per trip to reduce our carbon footprint; ask for more meetings/per trip to make the most of the time on the road;
- Get public transport whenever possible. Avoid travel by car unless necessary; when in need of taking a taxi or renting a car, favor hybrid or electric vehicles;
- Consider the environmental costs ahead of the financial costs and take the most sustainable option possible; e.g., book direct trips wherever possible;
- Use e-ticketing and apps to avoid paper waste.

### **Sustainability at the office**

Implementing small changes in the office can make a significant impact. Here are some of the sustainability practices we adopted/will adopt soon to encourage an environmentally conscious workplace:

- Switching to a 100% renewable energy provider for office energy; installing smart thermostats to regulate office climate optimally; keeping the lights off when a meeting room is not in use;
- Limiting unnecessary printing and paper use for communications and file-sharing; ensuring that the paper we use is 100% recycled; setting the default on printers to printing black and white and double-sided;
- Swapping out single-use plastic cups, cutlery, and water bottles, and instead adopting reusable water bottles and tableware in the office kitchen; bringing reusable lunch containers;
- Making sure the office has clearly labeled and easy-to-find recycling bins, encouraging a recycling culture, and providing education on responsible waste disposal;
- Providing healthy snacks and fresh fruit, in partnership with green-friendly local businesses;
- Making green thinking a crucial part of our company culture, allowing each team member to be engaged, involved, and more environmentally conscious in the workplace.

### **Climate action**

To accelerate change and kickstart United Ventures' climate journey, in 2021 we joined [Leaders for Climate Action](#), the entrepreneurial community that drives climate action. After starting straight away with generic reduction measures (see above), we are now working with LFCA to measure, reduce, offset, and manage our business carbon footprint while building an empowered, climate-driven work culture.

## **Sustainability governance and reporting**

At United Ventures, we ensure clear and communicated commitment from the top that sustainability is a priority. We appointed a Managing Partner to steer overall ESG issues and one additional team member to support integrating sustainability across all business areas.

With the support of our partner [Ecomate](#), the EU Taxonomy and EU Framework 2030 compliant ESG platform, we periodically monitor and review the ESG goals concerning United Ventures as an organization, with a view to continuous improvement, and on the ESG matters of our portfolio companies. Aiming to have broad transparency on ESG topics with our Limited Partners, starting from 2022, we will produce an annual report on the ESG goals of United Ventures and its portfolio.

### ***b. Embedding Sustainability in the Investment Process.***

Sustainable investing is about investing in progress and recognizing that companies solving the world's biggest challenges can be best positioned to grow. It is about pioneering better ways of doing business. We want to make a difference with our investments and create positive outcomes for people, communities, and society while providing financial returns for investors.

When evaluating an investment opportunity, while we do not automatically exclude startups that do not specifically contribute to any of the SDGs or currently only have a weak positive impact, we are committed to favoring value propositions that strongly pursue an impactful vision.

We believe that integrating sustainability criteria in the investment process and team discussions will change awareness around these issues and, ultimately, lead to the lead to better investment decisions. The overall topics it is important to assess at due diligence are:

- The alignment of the startup's mission and vision with our long-term value creation approach, and the potential for positive or negative impact;
- The founders' mindset around ESG and openness to doing more on this topic;
- Diversity in the company, at management, board, and overall level, and inclusivity of the company culture;
- Any obvious red flags relating to ESG and the commercial model/viability.

As additional steps we have taken so far to leverage sustainability as a driver for the long-term success of investment candidates and portfolio companies, we:

- Developed in-house an **AI-powered tech stack** for data-driven sourcing and intelligent screening, to identify the most promising entrepreneurs from a diverse set of demographics, backgrounds, and experiences, without biases and blind spots;
- Introduced the **Sustainability Risk Factor** in our ARA (Asset Risk Assessment) and FRA (Fund Risk Assessment) models, which contribute, together with the other risk factors already present in the two models, to the determination of the overall Risk Rating at asset and fund level.

### ***c. Working with Portfolio Companies.***

Some of the startups in our portfolio are particularly motivated by ESG criteria and have made it central to their mission and business operations, but embedding sustainability and long-term thinking should be a goal for every nascent business. The business model, culture, and values of global companies are often shaped in the early years of a company's development, and venture capital firms as the first investors and board members play an essential role in this process.

Starting from 2022, we will implement a **Sustainability Clause** in our term sheets and shareholder' agreements, according to which the portfolio company shall, within a reasonable time following the signing, adopt and thereafter maintain a policy evaluating and establishing best practices of its business activities regarding ESG issues.

The startups in our portfolio are very heterogeneous, so a standardized framework is of limited use. Instead, each startup needs a tailored ESG strategy in line with its goals, industry, and business approach. Within a reasonable time after the investment is made, the investment team shall work with the management to approach and establish their ESG strategy, running a session on ESG with the company as part of a kick-off process.

We shall help the company to:

- Identify and prioritize sustainability topics that are material to the business of the portfolio company and how they are a business opportunity or a risk to them;
- Align on an ambition level and formulate sustainability-related targets as well as the activities and processes to reach them;
- Set up sustainability goals to track and assess the portfolio company and put sustainability topics on the agenda in all board meetings.

To monitor our portfolio companies' progress on ESG matters, we leverage the [Ecomate](#) platform, through which we perform an annual assessment.

## **03. Principal Adverse Impacts Statement**

United Ventures does not currently consider the principal adverse impacts of its investment decisions on sustainability factors as set out under the European Union Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation 2019/2088 ("SFDR") as the relevant supplemental framework and required information to assess such impacts have not been finalized yet. This is the current position, which United Ventures will keep under review. When the Regulatory Technical Standards, supplementing the SFDR, are finalized and published, United Ventures intends to assess the mandatory data collection and disclosure requirements, which apply to firms that opt in to consider the principal adverse impacts of their investment decisions. [Read more about our approach to sustainability risk and consideration of sustainability adverse impacts.](#)

## 04. Approval and Review

This ESG Policy is reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors of United Ventures and will be subject to an annual review to integrate any new guideline or regulation in this matter. All ESG strategies and procedures adopted will also be reviewed under policy changes, financial considerations, and new rules. United Ventures is committed to maintaining its stakeholders informed and updated on Policy reviews and updates.

The Board of Directors has approved the Policy of United Ventures on December 21st, 2021.

Please reach out to us with any questions or if you'd like to work together on achieving these goals.