Insights to shape decisions, strategies and a sustainable future | March 2026

Dear

Welcome to the second edition of Material Matters by Trialogue, your go-to source for the latest insights shaping sustainability and ESG in South Africa and beyond.

The heightened conflict in the Middle East continues to underscore how geopolitics shapes sustainability outcomes. The war has amplified volatility in global energy markets, disrupted critical supply chains and heightened cost pressures for businesses worldwide. More profoundly, it has intensified social risks, from humanitarian and workforce crises to rising inequality and political polarisation, reminding us that sustainability is inseparable from stability, peace and social cohesion.

We begin by **unpacking climate resilience as a licence to operate**, highlighting why floods, fires and extreme heat demand stronger risk registers and deeper adaptation planning. Turning to South Africa's structural realities, we examine **inequality, youth exclusion and the DEI retreat**, arguing that inclusion is not political. It is central to resilience and long-term competitiveness.

We also assess why **South Africa's responsible investment ambitions risk stalling** without stronger data, regulation and capability, and outline how the **Western Cape plans to eliminate landfill waste** in the medium term.

Finally, we explore how **risk and ethics together drive meaningful sustainability embedment**, and we are excited to introduce our new **Sustainable Business Self-Assessment Tool**, designed to help leaders measure how well sustainability is embedded across strategy, governance, processes, targets, and reporting.

Join us for our **Sustainability Webinar** on 5 March, where we will be unpacking practical tips for leaders to walk the talk of sustainability.

The question is not whether sustainability matters, but how effectively it is embedded.

TRIALOGUE PERSPECTIVES

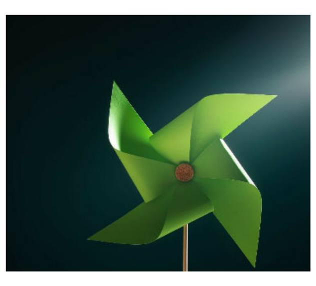
Climate resilience: A license to operate

Climate extremes are no longer rare or predictable. They happen more often, with greater intensity, and with far less warning. For organisations, this has shifted climate risk from a distant concern to a systemic threat that cuts across operations, finances and social license. Traditional ESG risk registers were designed to identify and record risks. That is no longer enough. Risk registers that are fit for the future must reflect this shift.

Inequality, youth exclusion and the DEI retreat

South Africa's inequality crisis is not only a social or political challenge. It is a sustainability, governance and economic-risk issue, and organisations that misread this reality find themselves increasingly exposed. At Trialogue, we believe South Africa can lead the world in demonstrating that inclusive growth is a foundation of sustainability and resilience.

SA's stalling responsible investment ambitions

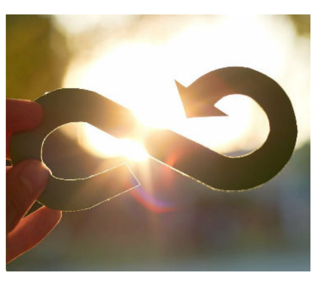


For more than a decade, South Africa has proudly positioned itself as an emerging-market leader in responsible investment. The Code for Responsible Investing in South Africa (CRISA) 2 reinforced this view, urging investors to actively influence environmental and social outcomes and to contribute to an economy that is both green and inclusive. Find out how your company can close the widening gap between ambition and action.

Organic waste to landfill in the Western Cape

The current waste management model in South Africa remains largely linear and landfill-dependent. Waste is collected, transported and disposed of, with limited separation at source or recovery of value. Leading organisations are integrating waste management into ESG and climate transition planning, supporting methane reduction, carbon-tax risk management, energy resilience and more regenerative supply chains.

Embedding sustainability: A risk vs ethics approach



While risk and ethics are familiar concepts within corporate environments, they are often approached from different perspectives. Risk and ethics should be complementary processes that work together to reinforce long-term business sustainability. Read Trialogue Managing Director Nick Rockey's thoughts on how each aspect can add value and how your company can navigate a way forward.

Trialogue's new sustainable business self-assessment tool

Trialogue is proud to launch our **Sustainable Business Self-Assessment Tool**: a practical, executive-level diagnostic designed to help organisations move from sustainability intent to embedment. The tool enables companies to assess sustainability performance across five critical pillars: strategy, governance, processes, metrics and reporting. Register now and complete your self-assessment in less than 20 minutes.

TRIALOGUE EVENTS

Sustainability webinar

Sustainability may be facing reputational headwinds, as ESG increasingly comes to be associated with compliance burdens and regulatory pressure. Yet the underlying social and environmental risks confronting business today have not diminished; they are intensifying. **Register now** to join us on Thursday, 5 March at 09:00 (SAST) for an insight-driven discussion on embedding sustainability across your organisation.

Impact investing webinar

Discover how capital can be a catalyst for meaningful change. This webinar will explore practical impact investment strategies companies can use to drive measurable social and environmental progress. Gain actionable guidance on how to align your investments with your values and position your organisation as a force for good. **Register now** to join us on Thursday, 26 March at 09:30 (SAST).

Trialogue Business in Society Conference 2026

Register for the 2026 Trialogue Business in Society Conference – South Africa's leading platform dedicated to unpacking the 'S' in ESG. Under the theme, Voices. Values. Vision. This year's conference explore how companies can drive meaningful social change by elevating diverse voices and grounding strategy in shared values that deliver real impact. The event will take place on the 5–6 May 2026, at The Wanderers Club, Illovo, Johannesburg.

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20 years in sustainability - Click here to read more.

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