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For companies built to last, value is defined most by long-term prospects, even as it is constantly influenced by short-term performance. Half a decade ago, this realization drove Dow’s leadership to imagine the company’s 200th birthday ... in the year 2097. This long-term look led us to the concept of Dow’s 2025 sustainability goals: redefining the role of business in society by developing a “blueprint” for a more sustainable planet.

These targets build on more than 20 years of progress, driven by Dow’s decade-long goals. We have reduced the “footprint” of our operations; we have focused on the “handprint” of our products — that is, their impact on global sustainability; and we have developed cross-cutting collaborations, from our work on natural capital with The Nature Conservancy to the 45,000 homes we have built with Habitat for Humanity.

Still, with the launch last year of our 2025 sustainability goals, Dow took a significant step forward, embedding the value of nature and sustainability into the very fabric of our business strategy. Already, sustainability is increasingly the driving force behind Dow’s technological collaborations, enabling growth across our businesses while supporting sustainable progress for our customers and society.

Take, for example, our role as the Official Carbon Partner of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Dow is working with customers across Latin America to address the Games’ direct emissions through third-party-verified mitigation projects in the areas of food packaging, agriculture, industrial processes, and building and construction.

Or take our personal care business, which recognized that — although hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent disease for millions in the developing world — soap is often seen as a luxury item. So Dow collaborated with Unilever to develop POLYOX™ polymers for Lifebuoy™ soap — which costs just 10 cents a bar and lasts an entire month.

Or take China, where our focus on delivering sustainable value has driven volume growth in spite of a challenging environment. Just one example: We developed PURINZE™, a material science solution that enables Haier’s eco-friendly washing machine to remove 99 percent of bacteria in recycled washing water, reducing water consumption by 30 percent.

Looking at examples like these, business leaders today have to realize that sustainability is not an opt-in/opt-out decision. It is part of your long-term value proposition. Without that understanding, you might be able to deliver the next quarter, but you probably will not be around to see the next quarter century.

SOLUTIONS AT WORK

Dow Terneuzen, the company’s largest facility outside of the United States, is located in a major seaport in a coastal region of the Netherlands where freshwater is scarce. The plant faces competing water demands across agriculture, industry and housing, ultimately making water management difficult. To address this challenge, Dow partnered with the local government to reuse the city’s water up to three times, resulting in an ongoing collaboration that delivers energy savings equivalent to the carbon dioxide emissions of 13,000 cars every year or to the planting of more than 1.5 million tree seedlings over the course of a decade.



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