



What is UpLink?

UpLink is a digital crowd-engagement platform designed to accelerate the resolution of the world's most pressing issues, as set out by the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Hosted by the World Economic Forum, UpLink is a global platform for action, designed to guide and align pockets of activism and entrepreneurialism, and connect this next generation of changemakers to networks of leaders who can enact real change.

UpLink is open to any individual who can offer a contribution to the global public good. The platform invites personal perspectives to help shape and define the global issues we face, and it invites ideas and projects which can provide the necessary resolutions.

All contributions can be uploaded through UpLink's digital interface. An intelligent system will review these upon submission, and connect those with high-potential to specific action groups: networks of leading businesses, NGOs, investors, subject-matter experts and government representatives, who are tackling a similar issue and are ready to collaborate and scale projects to a global level.

UpLink is a platform designed to broaden the concept of multistakeholder collaboration; it offers an ecosystem that enables the experience, expertise, resources and influence of the Forum's network to engage more deeply with the creativity and innovation at the grassroots level.



What is the launch date and road map for UpLink?

The first step is preview of UpLink at the Annual Meeting 2020 in Davos, with a pilot release to the public shortly afterwards. UpLink will initially contain a small set of action groups focused on the ocean, which corresponds to SDG 14: "Life Below Water". This will demonstrate how UpLink action groups can deliver impact, notably within two identified ocean issues: illegal fishing and marine pollution.

A more comprehensive version of 'UpLink Ocean' will be unveiled at the UN Ocean Conference in June 2020; by this time it is anticipated that UpLink Ocean will be fully operational in all issue areas related to SDG 14. Following the UN Ocean Conference 2020, UpLink will expand to four further SDGs topics; these will be determined by feedback and interest gained throughout the year. The aim is to have these up and running by the Sustainable Development Impact Summit (SDI) 2020 in September. By September 2021, UpLink is expected to host action groups working across all the SDGs.

The UpLink platform will be a network of action groups, with its many contributors taking ownership of themes, topics and the activities which relate to one or more of the SDGs.

Why did the Forum choose ocean as the first UpLink topic?

The topic of ocean conservation has gained considerable public momentum, capturing the imagination of youth and entrepreneurs, in particular. Many solutions are urgently required.

The Forum hosts a large ocean network and, in light of the UN Ocean Conference in June 2020, the Ocean Agenda offers an ideal first theme for UpLink. The global ocean community also provides an extensive network of experts and innovators who can help develop the UpLink proposition.

Who is involved?

The World Economic Forum hosts UpLink. The platform was announced in collaboration with the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN during the General Assembly in September 2019. Working closely with the Forum on the design and development of UpLink are three founding partners: Salesforce, Deloitte and Microsoft (LinkedIn). To source the content and expert networks for UpLink Ocean, the Forum is supported by Friends of Ocean Action, the Benioff Ocean Foundation, Katapult Ocean and the Forum's Global Shapers community.

Who are the key contacts at the Forum?

Dominic Waughray is the Forum's Managing Board member responsible for UpLink, with Daniel Lambert as the Forum's Product Owner. Enquiries, expressions of interest and offers of support are welcomed by Louisa Montagu-Pollock at louisa.montagu-pollock@weforum.org.

Why is the Forum creating UpLink?

Many commentators suggest that the stability of the global economy, social and political norms and ecological systems can no longer be taken for granted. Throughout different economies and regions, younger generations are losing trust in the system; there is a belief that the ambitions of global leaders are not enough. Furthermore, there is no "official" global platform to connect global stakeholders, who are ready to act and address the world's most pressing challenges. UpLink is a response to this demand.

The vision of UpLink is to shape a global, mostly digital, platform for action and impact on the SDGs. UpLink builds on the multistakeholder heritage of the Forum, fusing it with a

more digitally enabled “crowd engagement” dimension. It complements and develops the Forum’s existing initiatives, which address these global challenges, and will enable the Forum’s industry partners to engage with young changemakers and social innovators in the delivery of the SDGs.

*“The UpLink project is **an instrument for mass integration of crowd engagement**. It is significant because it integrates the missing dimension into the multistakeholder concept. [UpLink will connect] people on the ground who have great ideas and, who don’t want to only be enthusiastic, but also co-owners and co-operators in the realization of the SDGs.”*

Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum during the UpLink press conference launch at the UN, September 2019

How does UpLink relate to other Forum initiatives?

As the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation, the Forum brings together different stakeholders from all walks of life, who offer the drive, innovation and influence needed for positive change. This has achieved notable outcomes throughout industry, regional and global agendas, which further advance public-private cooperation. Essential contributions to the Forum’s mission for wider innovation and engagement have been added, through the creation of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs in 1998 and the Global Shaper’s Community in 2011.

In parallel, a strategy to digitize the Forum’s engagement has also taken place, which includes the creation and implementation of TopLink and Strategic Intelligence platforms. These platforms continue to yield new digital memberships and engagement opportunities for the Forum.

Now, as we enter the Forum’s 50th year, UpLink offers the next chapter in the expansion of the organization’s drive for wider inclusion and greater digital interaction.

UpLink is an extension to the Forum’s existing platforms, communities and expert networks, and is designed to engage mission-driven entrepreneurs and youth worldwide. This digital extension seeks to spur the evolution of the Forum itself. By working with, and building on the success of the Forum’s platforms and emerging digital networks to date, UpLink seeks to further shape the Forum of the future. It seeks to enhance these platforms by integrating younger and meritocratic “digitally hybrid” communities of purpose and action.

“UpLink will bridge the gap between the decision makers and the idea makers.”

Dominic Waughray, Managing Director of the World Economic Forum during the UpLink press conference announcement at the UN, September 2019

UpLink is a Platform and Extension of the Forum



Who will be able to join UpLink?

UpLink will be available to anybody. It will be the first open online network which the Forum has managed, to which anyone can sign up and respond to the SDG challenges. Topic and issue curators will help high-potential contributors interact with decision-makers within existing UpLink networks.

UpLink will therefore be a platform to expand existing communities of interaction and action through the encouragement of digital contributions. On the platform:

- Decision makers can express their perspectives on SDG challenges and invite comments and contributions
- Contributors can engage, start learning and offer own perspectives and solutions on SDG-related issues. This offers the potential for grassroots organizations to respond directly to decision makers
- New action groups can emerge, which will be supported by UpLink curators: the best ideas from contributors can be shaped by UpLink's issue curators and expanded by those in the Forum's network who can offer expertise, influence and funding
- The objective of action groups is to expand these ideas and develop and scale solutions. In this way a new generation of purpose-driven enterprises can be developed