



Ceres Company Network Engagement Offerings & Case Studies

The following is a collection of examples of the various engagement offerings available to Ceres Company Network members. Member companies receive one customized formal engagement per year, in addition to other [membership benefits](#).

Engagements focus on mutual priorities of the member company and Ceres and typically take 2-3 months to complete. Ceres can conduct engagements with an expanded scope or multiple engagements in one year for an additional fee.

There are two main ways in which a company may choose to use an engagement with Ceres:

- 1. Education, guidance & internal buy-in:** Helps internal constituencies understand and align on emerging sustainability issues. Engagements in this category provide expert advice and research to articulate the business case for sustainability.
- 2. External validation and collaboration:** Focuses on pre-competitive discussion and external validation and feedback on more fully developed sustainability strategy or policies. Each engagement option can be customized to fit members' unique needs and goals.



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Education, Guidance, and Internal Buy-In Engagement Offerings

Guidance on Strategy & Goals Development

Description

What

Direct feedback from Ceres experts on elements of a member company's sustainability strategy. This can include feedback on proposed targets or internal policies; guidance on larger strategic elements, like climate transition plans; or advice on how to approach issues of growing importance, like biodiversity, water, or just transition. This guidance can stand on its own or inform a strategy or disclosure that could be a focus of a subsequent Ceres-led stakeholder dialogue.

Who it's for

Companies looking to build out new components of their sustainability strategy that could benefit from targeted guidance as they begin the strategy development process or could use feedback on drafted strategy updates.

Format

Ceres can provide guidance in a variety of ways including in-line comments on draft strategies, targets, or policies; informal one-on-one calls between the member company and Ceres experts; or a formal analysis and set of recommendations delivered in a memo or presentation. Members can receive informal guidance throughout the year in addition to one of the other formal engagement options outlined in this document.

Guidance on Strategy & Goals Development

Case Study

Objective: Provide expertise and recommendations to a food sector company finalizing a new impact pathway to guide its human rights strategy.

Approach: Building on multiple years of engagement with the company on its human rights saliency assessments, policies, and supplier codes of conduct, Ceres provided detailed feedback on the draft of the impact pathway. Ceres' guidance focused on addressing interrelated risks to improve the well-being of workers, farmers, and communities in the company's value chain; setting interim milestones to measure progress; and framing impacts on affected groups through the lens of a just transition.

Results: Ceres' feedback helped inform the final version of the impact pathway, which was published in the company's subsequent sustainability report to demonstrate transparency and accountability to stakeholders. The company plans to update the impact pathway to ensure continued relevance as its salient human rights issues and priorities evolve.



Customized Research & Internal Education

Description



What

Tailored research to help a member company's sustainability team level up their understanding of emerging sustainability issues. Education about how emerging issues can be material for a given sector, how to measure risks and opportunities, how sector peers are preparing, and best practices for strategy development and disclosure. Alternatively, Ceres can educate other teams at the company that are critical to implementing the sustainability strategy.

Who it's for

Companies who are at the beginning stages of establishing and/or developing internal buy in on a strategy addressing a sustainability issue. This engagement type can be beneficial for companies who want to act on issues where there are well-established best practices, as well as for companies that want to lead on emerging sustainability issues.

Format

Customized research and internal education are most often delivered as memos or presentations. Ceres can also host half-day workshops for members who are looking for more in-depth education and/or buy-in within the company.

Customized Research & Internal Education

Case Study



Objective: Provide tailored research to a banking sector member on the history and key principles of the just transition movement, the business case for bank action, and how the company can incorporate elements of just transition into its products and services.

Approach: The Ceres team spent several months researching just transition in the banking sector and collaborating with internal experts to compile a report providing background on key principles, along with actionable opportunities for the bank. The report clarified the definitions and scope of related issues, such as climate justice and environmental justice. It also highlighted how peers are addressing the topic, outlined relevant regulations, and identified opportunities for the bank to leverage its core products and services to support a just transition to a low-carbon economy.

Results: The report was widely shared throughout the company and served as a starting point for continued engagement on this topic. The following year, Ceres hosted a stakeholder engagement with the company to provide feedback on how it can best deliver a just transition strategy and co-convened a high-profile panel discussion on the topic.

Disclosure Review

Description



What

Actionable recommendations to enhance the quality and transparency of a member company's forthcoming or recently released sustainability-related disclosure. Recommendations incorporate disclosure trends, expectations from disclosure frameworks and shareholders, examples of leading practices, and ways the company can set itself apart from peers. Ceres can review standard annual ESG or CSR reports, as well as issue-focused disclosures like TCFD reports, climate transition plans, DEI reports, or human rights policies.

Who it's for

Companies who are making a major shift in how they approach sustainability reporting, releasing an issue-focused report (e.g., TCFD) for the first time, or disclosing a major strategy update, such as new targets.

Format

Options include in-line comments on draft disclosure, a brief memo of key recommendations, or a presentation of feedback.

Disclosure Review

Case Study



Objective: Conduct an expert review of a technology sector member company's draft ESG report. Support the company as it combines several existing reports into one to demonstrate stronger coordination across sustainability efforts at the company.

Approach: Ceres reviewed the draft report and identified its strengths; suggested fixes to enhance clarity; provided recommendations for future strategy and goal setting, based on best practices from peer companies; and suggested improvements based on the company's previous ESG reports. Ceres presented the feedback to the company's reporting team, issue experts, and leadership and delivered a summary memo to the company.

Results: By seeking guidance while the report was still in draft form, the company was able to integrate many of Ceres' recommendations into the final version of the report. The published report presented a more cohesive vision of the company's ESG strategy and incorporated key elements of leading ESG disclosure. Following the report's release, the summary memo continued to serve as a resource during ESG strategy and goal-setting discussions.

Climate Transition Action Planning

Description

What

Customized guidance on climate transition action plan (CTAP)--a forward-looking, short-term set of actions a company plans to take to decarbonize its business in line with the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. Ceres can educate member companies on CTAP trends in their sector, the disclosure guidance landscape, and the four components of a [credible CTAP](#). Ceres can also conduct a gap assessment of a company's draft CTAP and provide prioritized, actionable recommendations; provide focused guidance on a specific element of a CTAP; or facilitate gathering stakeholder feedback.

Who it's for

Companies with an existing decarbonization target who plan to establish a CTAP or companies who have already drafted or published a CTAP.

Format

Climate transition action planning is often the focus of a series of engagements. Ceres recommends that companies begin with internal education, move into a review of a draft strategy or disclosure, and conclude with a stakeholder dialogue. However, Ceres is here to work with member companies to develop tailored engagement approaches that meet their unique needs and can utilize any of the engagement models outlined in this document as the format for a CTAP-focused engagement.

Climate Transition Action Planning

Case Study – Gap Analysis



Objective: Work with a banking sector member to educate staff on the core features of a Climate Transition Action Plan (CTAP) and provide custom recommendations to guide the development of the bank's CTAP.

Approach: Ceres conducted a gap analysis of the bank's disclosure against a sector-specific CTAP framework that incorporates leading sector guidance. Ceres met with the climate strategy team to review the business case for CTAPs, sector-specific expectations, and gap analysis results. The bank then shared an update on transition planning efforts already underway at the company with the Ceres team. Following this, Ceres updated the gap analysis and presented the findings, accompanying recommendations, and peer case studies to a wider group of bank staff from beyond the climate strategy team.

Results: The engagement helped the bank prioritize its transition planning efforts by identifying essential gaps for the bank to address to meet best-in-class CTAP expectations. It also supported integration of transition planning across the bank by introducing staff beyond the climate strategy team to the importance and key features of CTAPs.

Benchmarking

Description

What

A comparison of a member company's performance on a specific set of sustainability issues against a group of 4-10 peers. Ceres will provide insights on where a company is excelling and lagging, highlight peer best practices, and provide a prioritized set of recommendations.

Who it's for

Companies who plan to update their sustainability strategy and are interested in learning how peers within and/or outside of their sector are performing on a given set of issues. Benchmarking can also be a helpful tool for companies seeking buy-in from company leadership to act on specific sustainability issues.

Format

Benchmarking results are typically delivered as a spreadsheet accompanied by a slide deck outlining summary findings and recommendations. Findings can be shared with established company contacts or presented to relevant staff from across the business.

Benchmarking

Case Study



Objective: Work with a financial sector member to identify specific near-term actions it can take to improve its climate scenario analysis and risk management practices.

Approach: To identify opportunities for improvement, Ceres assessed the climate scenario analysis and risk management practices of 8 peers, including both U.S. and international companies. The benchmark assessed scenario analysis methodologies and disclosure, risk management structures, decarbonization strategies, and integration of climate into risk appetite and investment policies. Ceres presented the benchmark results, examples of best practices for each indicator, and recommendations for how the company could integrate the assessment findings into its strategy.

Results: In identifying specific areas where the company was lagging its peers, the benchmark assessment helped the company get internal buy-in for improving its climate scenario analysis and risk management practices.

Board & Executive Engagement

Description

What

Education of a member company's board of directors and/or executive team on a material sustainability issue(s) or corporate sustainability trends, such as growing investor expectations and evolving disclosure requirements. In addition to educating boards and executive teams on sustainability issues and trends, Ceres can share best practices for governance of sustainability risks, opportunities, and strategies.

Who it's for

Companies that want to establish greater leadership buy in for sustainability initiatives, and/or companies looking to expand board and executive team oversight of sustainability initiatives.

Format

Board and executive engagements can be formatted in various ways, including a virtual presentation, a series of issue-focused educational briefs, or on-site training with [Ceres' governance experts](#).



Board & Executive Engagement

Case Study

Objective: Support a retail sector member in educating its board of directors on the company's most material ESG issues via quarterly board memos. Enhance the board's ability to weigh in on conversations with the company's sustainability leads.

Approach: Ceres collaborated with the company to identify the top 12 ESG issues to address in a series of 2- to 3-page memos. Ceres conducted research, benchmarked peers, and developed recommendations for best practice on each topic. Ceres worked with the company to ensure the memos covered all relevant information and aligned with the board's depth of knowledge on the topic.

Results: The 12 memos helped the company's board better understand the relevance of these issues for the sector and the company and the actions the company is taking to address each issue. They also helped the board understand where the company is leading versus where it needs to dedicate more time and resources to accelerate its ambition.



Development of Sustainability Analysis Tools

Description

What

Assistance with development of internal sustainability assessment tools to aid in risk analysis, day-to-day decision-making, strategy development, or progress tracking.

Who it's for

Companies who want to better understand their evolving sustainability risks; formalize processes for sustainability strategy integration; or establish processes for assessing progress towards achieving sustainability goals.

Format

Tools may include scorecards, the development of KPIs and scoring methodologies, assessment frameworks for internal and peer benchmarking, questionnaires, etc.



Development of Sustainability Analysis Tools

Case Study

Objective: Provide guidance to a banking sector member on integrating a sustainability assessment framework into its enhanced due diligence process for the oil and gas sector. Create a decision-useful assessment methodology that considers the most material sustainability risks for the oil and gas sector, data availability constraints, and accessibility to staff without expertise in sustainability.

Approach: The Ceres team conducted research and data analysis and developed the scoring methodology. Throughout the process, Ceres frequently met with the company to present progress, request information, and ensure alignment. The final scorecard was piloted with focus companies, and Ceres provided recommendations on how to advance this work after the engagement.

Results: The Ceres team conducted research and data analysis and developed the scoring methodology. Throughout the process, Ceres frequently met with the company to present progress, request information, and ensure alignment. The final scorecard was piloted with focus companies, and Ceres provided recommendations on how to advance this work after the engagement.



External Validation and Collaboration Engagement Offerings

Stakeholder Dialogue

Description



What

Feedback from an expert group of stakeholders on elements of a member company's draft sustainability strategy. These elements may include new or updated goals, implementation plans, or policies and position papers. Ceres draws from its relationships with members of Ceres Investor Network, subject matter experts, leading peer companies, NGOs, and academics to form a group of 8-12 expert stakeholders to provide actionable insights for member companies. All stakeholder dialogues are held under Chatham House Rule, and engagement findings are confidential to the member company and stakeholder participants.

Who it's for

Companies looking for diverse stakeholder feedback on a draft sustainability target, strategy, or policy/position. Feedback can be gathered while the strategy is still in draft form or after publication to inform the next iteration.

Format

A virtual or in-person roundtable, typically for 90-120 minutes, facilitated by Ceres. Prior to the roundtable, Ceres works with members to identify stakeholders and develop the dialogue agenda. Ceres holds individual preparation calls with each stakeholder and develops a memo summarizing stakeholder feedback. Note: Ceres can also support companies in gathering stakeholder feedback by conducting individual stakeholder interviews and summarizing feedback.

Stakeholder Dialogue

Case Study (1/2)



Objective: Gather stakeholder feedback to inform the development of an apparel company's 2030 sustainability goals.

Approach: Ceres and the company identified 13 expert stakeholders—NGOs, investors, academics and peers—for the Ceres team to interview. During one-on-one discussions, stakeholders reflected on the company's 2025 goals; the evolving ESG disclosure landscape; headwinds and challenges; shifting expectations; and where the company should focus its efforts heading into the next decade. The Ceres team presented a summary of stakeholder reactions and feedback to teams responsible for taking the goal-setting work forward at the company.

Results: Stakeholder interviews provided the external feedback needed to inform the company as they developed clear, measurable and impactful 2030 sustainability goals that are well positioned to stand up to scrutiny.



Stakeholder Dialogue

Case Study (2/2)



Objective: Support the development of a transportation company's circular economy strategy by gathering stakeholder input.

Approach: Ceres worked with the company's sustainability team to identify stakeholders and craft a dialogue agenda that would deliver actionable feedback to the company. Ceres met with stakeholders—including investors, NGOs, academics, and leading peer companies—to familiarize them with the company's existing circular economy approach and key questions the company was looking for input on. In the dialogue, stakeholders provided feedback on how the company should incorporate circularity principles into product design, identify effective metrics, and innovate end-of-life management practices. Ceres delivered a summary of stakeholder recommendations to the company.

Results: Since the dialogue, the company has incorporated aspects of stakeholder feedback into its circular economy strategy. It has disclosed more information on facility operations throughout the product lifecycle, established targets for plastic recycling, developed a comprehensive set of circular design and engineering principles, and organized a supplier symposium focused on circularity.

Cross- and Intra-Sector Convenings

Description



What

Discuss common challenges, share learnings, and brainstorm solutions with peers in a private, confidential setting. Leaning on the power of its networks, Ceres can facilitate convenings with companies within the same sector or with companies from different sectors who share the same pre-competitive issues. Convenings can also include issue experts from Ceres and its partner NGOs, members of Ceres Investor Network, representatives from relevant standard setters and industry associations, and, where appropriate, policymakers and regulators.

Who it's for

Companies looking for new ideas on how to tackle sustainability challenges, companies who have identified pre-competitive collaboration as a key strategy for achieving sustainability goals, or companies interested in sharing best practices.

Format

Cross- and intra-sector convenings can be virtual or in-person roundtables or half- or full-day workshops.



Cross-Sector Convening Case Study



Objective: Partner with a leading food sector member to design and host a workshop for nature-dependent companies on developing holistic corporate nature strategies. Provide a forum for mutual learning and position the partnering member company as a solutions-oriented leader in tackling shared challenges.

Approach: Ceres convened a private, virtual workshop with 20 companies from the food, beverage, retail, apparel, and consumer goods sectors that included a presentation from Ceres' experts on the business case and tools for assessing nature-related issues, and candid peer-to-peer discussion on barriers and opportunities. Ceres surveyed participants in advance to inform the workshop agenda and provided a written summary of actionable recommendations and resources for participants.

Results: Participants learned where material nature-related issues can exist within their businesses, how to identify gaps and synergies in their current efforts, and strategies for effective management and disclosure. The partnering member company also gained insights on progress across sectors and opportunities for further peer collaboration.



Intra-Sector Convening

Case Study



Objective: Design and host a workshop for power sector member companies to learn about and discuss best practices for nature stewardship and disclosure.

Approach: Ceres convened a private, virtual workshop with its six power sector member companies. The workshop began with a presentation from Ceres' experts on nature related risks and opportunities unique to the power sector; investor expectations for nature stewardship, and TNFD expectations. Participants then scoped TNFD's LEAP (Locate, Evaluate, Assess, Prepare) process in breakout rooms and discussed learnings and potential challenges with peers. Following the workshop, Ceres provided a written summary of actionable recommendations and resources for participants.

Results: The Ceres-hosted workshop helped lay the foundation for the companies to identify their most material nature-related impacts, dependencies, risks, and opportunities using the LEAP process. Many of the company participants have begun expanding their nature stewardship disclosure and continue to discuss nature stewardship priorities with Company Network peers.

Climate Transition Action Planning

Description

External Validation and Collaboration

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Who it's for

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Format

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Climate Transition Action Planning

Case Study – Stakeholder Dialogue



Objective: Work with an apparel sector member to inform the development of the company's first Climate Transition Action Plan (CTAP). Help ensure it aligns with current best-practices and stakeholder expectations to position the company as a climate leader.

Approach: Ceres experts reviewed an initial draft of the CTAP and provided detailed feedback based on leading guidance. After the company made updates, Ceres facilitated a 90-minute dialogue between ten expert stakeholders, including investors, NGOs, and peer companies. Stakeholders shared recommendations with representatives from the company's finance, sustainability, communications, and senior leadership teams. Feedback focused on the core pillars of a robust CTAP: emissions reduction strategy; governance and business strategy integration; just transition; and public policy.

Results: Ceres summarized the stakeholder feedback in a memo of recommendations for company leadership. The company has since considered and integrated key aspects of stakeholder feedback into the final version of the plan.

Collaborative Thought Leadership

Description



What

Partner with Ceres to establish and highlight best practices and/or innovative approaches for addressing a specific sustainability topic via a public-communication channel.

Who it's for

Companies with a leading strategy, commitment, or position who want to amplify their performance, reach a wider audience, and spur collective action.

Format

Collaborative thought leadership can take the form of a co-published op-ed or position paper, or a co-presentation at major sustainability conferences, such as GreenBiz, Climate Week, or COP.

