



| INTERVIEW

Eurico Brilhante Dias

| HIGHLIGHT

Quidgest\_Academy

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ESEF software solution

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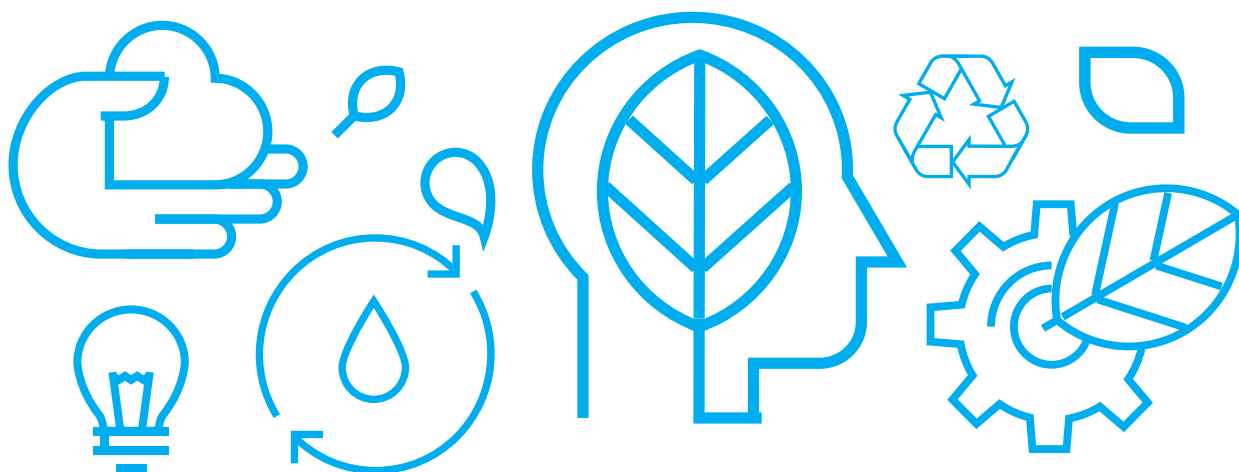
## *Non nobis solum nati sumus* (Not for ourselves alone are we born)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which define the priorities and global desires for 2030, need everyone's support – from governments and remaining public entities to companies and civil society. To ensure the United Nations' program's fulfillment, we need organizations from different sectors to be engaged.

Even though the goal to end poverty and create a life with dignity and opportunities for everyone is easy to understand, the path to its realization is not. Especially now. The turn of the decade brought the spread of a virus which changed social and economic strategies. Some countries and private players whose support was vital for the program had to focus on other activities. The situation changed, but in Quidgest's case, the plan is still the same. We intend to put technology at the services of those who need it the most so that local entities manage their resources better, the services provided to citizens boosted, and the empowerment of human capital through the development of skills in the future technology.

We dedicate this edition of QuidNews to the Sustainable Development Goals and the potential impact technology can have on their achievement. The times we live in and the ones yet to come are challenging, but these are the occasions when we need to reinforce the support to those who need it the most. The least affected by the barriers must support the peers who show more difficulties surpassing them.

**CRISTINA MARINHAS** | CEO at Quidgest



## 5th anniversary of the Portuguese Alliance for the Sustainable Development Goals

### PORTUGUESE ALLIANCE FOR THE SDG 5<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY



Since 2015, when the 2030 Agenda was approved, the United Nations Global Compact and, in Portuguese territory, the United Nations Global Compact Network Portugal, were responsible for organizing the contribution of the Business Sector to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and respective 169 goals.

From the need to contribute to the fulfillment of the goals, the Aliança ODS Portugal [Portuguese SDGs Alliance] emerged. Following SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) aims to create opportunities for multi-stakeholder dialogue to provide the national business sector with a better vision of actions that can be taken to fulfill the United Nations agenda.

The alliance recently celebrated its fifth year of operation with an online event that brought together some associations, non-governmental organizations, companies, and educational institutions that are part of the civic movement. Quidgest, which has been proactive since its foundation in having a sustainable operation and the desire to combine technology with sustainable development, was among them. Engineer Mário Parra da Silva, leader of Global Compact Network Portugal, opened the

event with a clear message: to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals, we need everyone's support, both at an individual level, from our responsible and conscious consumption practices, as well as collectively with companies, from a more sustainable performance that inspires employees and clients. Among the various panels that took place, it became clear the will to fulfill the SDGs. Many participants shared how their products, services, and internal functioning have or are on the track of meeting the United Nations' goals. The technology was one of the themes that emerged several times during the event. Since the opening, where Engineer Parra da Silva stressed the importance of new digital tools in supporting the new way of working and companies' resilience, to the panel dedicated to Smart Cities, where four representatives of Portuguese Municipalities participated. During this last panel, the participants revealed how technology supports their Governance, Accountability, and Transparency initiatives. It has also served, especially when the social distance is required, to bring Cameras closer to citizens and facilitate access to services.

And it was also about technology that Quidgest



guided its presence. João Paulo Carvalho moderated the “Digital Transition” panel, where representatives from NOS, Everis Portugal, and the Institute of Social Security Informatics participated.

Regarding the potential of technological tools to help fulfill the 17 SDGs, the judgment was cross-sectional. Every speaker on this panel believes technology has a great potential to change how we look at environmental issues and contribute to solving economic and social difficulties.

Paula Salgado, chairman of the directive council of the Portuguese Social Security’s IT arm, revealed technology was one of the most critical enablers to help citizens during the pandemic. “We supported 2.4 million people in these last few months. The technology was the accelerator to help the citizens in most need.” But the digital revolution in the Portuguese Social Security is far from reaching an end. The chairman believes the adoption of technologies such as blockchain, big data, artificial intelligence, and machine learning have a great potential of accelerating Social Security’s operation.

The 5G technology’s importance on the fulfillment of the SDGs was also introduced by Tiago Ribeiro, NOS’ director for the B2B market. When questioned about technology, especially mobile

devices, and the respective advancements that have been made in many industries, the telecom business developer claimed that leapfrogging the lack of infrastructure was crucial for developing economies. Microfinancing, banking, and insurance are some industries that 20 years ago required a heavy infrastructure but that nowadays are easily accessed via a smartphone. However, Ribeiro stated that, in order to promote growth, these countries must be able to balance their technology needs with their inner technology production – emphasizing the importance of Quality Education among less developed economies.

Everis’ Portugal CEO shared the idea of a company being more attractive for taking a path towards a more responsible operation. “It is not only the financial outcome that matters, but also how a company treats environmental, social and governance factors. We can attract investment and talent more easily because we have this vision,” said the Portuguese CEO.

By the end of the event, the Global Compact Network Portugal leader assured the audience “the technology help on the fulfillment of the SDGs deserves an event of its own.” This will be the main theme of the 2021 edition of our Q-Day. ■



## “Portugal Exportador” - To be a successful exporter, Portuguese companies must cooperate

“Competitiveness is no longer measured company by company, but ecosystem by ecosystem”. That was one of the ideas Quidgest’s administrator transmitted at the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of “Portugal Exportador”, an online event that brought together some of the largest Portuguese companies.

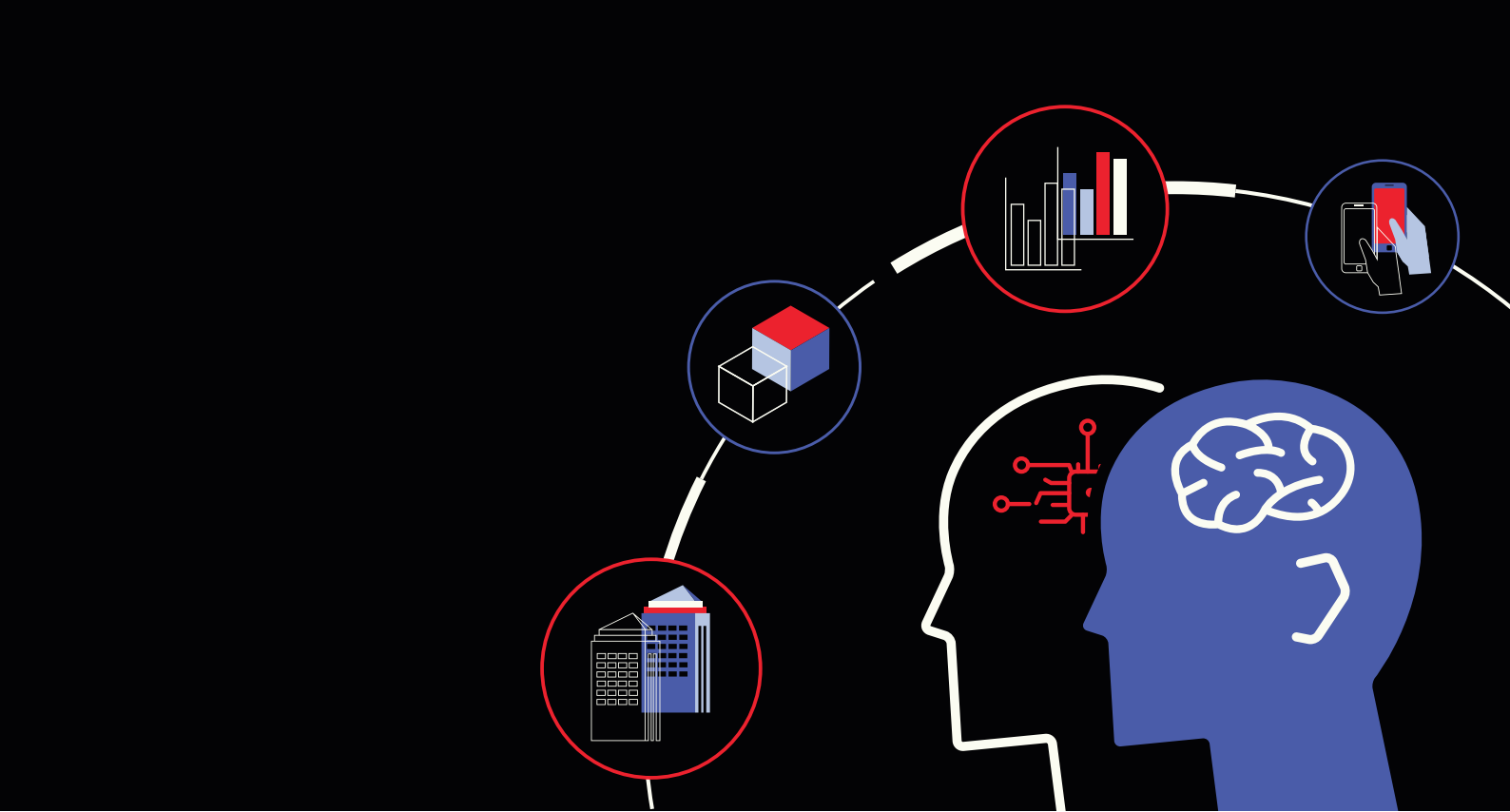
João Paulo Carvalho participated twice as a speaker. The first had the theme “Risk Assessment in Export”, where spokespeople from ISQ, Transitex, and Victoria Seguros also attended. “Only among those present it can imagine forms of collaboration in the current world economy, where it is still necessary to

have competitive advantages,” stated Quidgest’s administrator, in order to share, once again, the idea that if the Portuguese companies want to conquer international markets, they must unite themselves. “Even if we are going alone to a certain market, to a certain contest, to a certain project, we are certainly competing with an ecosystem. If we go as a company against an ecosystem, it is highly likely we will not be able to compete”, he said.

João Paulo Carvalho also shared his perspectives of what is changing in “International Trade”, a panel moderated by Marta Mariz from Sofid. ■







## Digital Twins in discussion

What is a Digital Twin, and how can it help public entities and companies better prepare for the future? These were the main topics detailed in the second edition of our [MeetUp](#), an event that covers the most crucial technology subjects through our specialists' eyes.

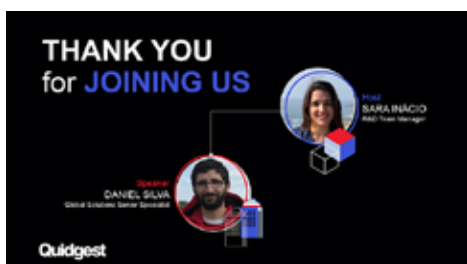
"A Digital Twin is a virtual model of a thing, person, process or socio-economic reality that accurately describes current operations and may also predict future performances for a variety of scenarios. The systems' main purpose is to optimize decision outcomes."

Sara Inácio, Quidgest's Innovation Manager, and Daniel Silva, our Global Solutions Senior Specialist, started the presentation by explaining the somewhat futuristic term and

detailed how organizations can benefit from it. The solution is especially relevant in the current juncture when local, regional, and national politics deploy reactive measures to the spread of the pandemic. But what if they could predict the impact of the introduced legislation and preventive actions via a more holistic and near-real-time data support that helps with the decision-making process and, if needed, swiftly pivot their strategy?

VirVi, our system for Health Vigilance and Control Data, which is already in operation in various organizations to help prevent the spread of the virus, was one example the team used to explain the vast potential of introducing a virtual model in an organization.

If you are interested in learning more about Digital Twins, you can either access the presentation [here](#) or visit the [webpage](#) about the subject.. ■





# A reflection about the SDG

SOLEDAD GONZÁLEZ | IT Consultant and International Business Developer at Quidgest

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are becoming part of the daily vocabulary. It is even visually present - wherever you look at you can see the colorful wheel or the 17 little squares, symbolizing the goals for the 2030 Agenda.*

But, is it a one-size-fits-all?

Countries are being slow in their commitment to measuring SDG indicators. Why?

Some put the guilt on the lack of a transparent methodology to guide and track the goals' progress.

Some countries still see it as an imposition by international organizations.

Additionally, many targets' qualitative nature has led some countries to create a supplementary quantitative measuring mechanism and regionally-specific indicators. This local approach is essential to focus on specific problems faced by each country.

Still, those national proxy indicators should complement rather than replace the global indicators, so the common benchmark to assess global progress can still be done.

As a result of this country ownership and the nature of the targets, implementation occurs in hugely different circumstances regarding government presence and effectiveness, available resources, cultural and religious background, and local biogeography, among other factors.

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning the importance of the private sector to achieving the SDGs and that goals and targets to advance corporate social responsibility (CSR), and sustainability have been widely embraced by this sector.

Despite the same difficulties regarding the accuracy of data or methodology as in the public sector, companies are creating awareness publicly around their activities towards the goals, measuring their impact and contributions, and making the SDGs and Goals part of their business strategy, and (why not) their marketing strategy.

So how can we add something?

**Companies like Quidgest are used to develop and implement solutions that are an added value for the final client. Within the SDGs vocabulary, we have been strengthening institutions and creating partnerships for the goals for more than 15 years.**

When we are implementing or developing a solution to improve our client's managerial capabilities in whatever the sector, we need to emphasize how vital it is to close work and create local partnerships. Knowledge must be transferred and stay local, and we feel proud of our client's and partners' pride and feel of ownership of the solution we built together. Gone are the days of the old fashioned foreign implementer, who created such an alienated

environment and left a client with a rigid tool. We are happy to see our clients in Jamaica, El Salvador, Germany, or Cape Verde, successfully growing with the solutions. Even in a pandemic situation, we still carried out our projects with the same efficiency while forging strong relations.

**As a service provider, we can say our efforts have been quietly contributing to such great goals in each location, and we hope to keep doing it for many years to come.**

As a company, the measurement of our impact is evaluated and reported annually, with the tools and initiatives trying to set standards in this matter, such as the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, the SDG National Reporting Initiative, or the UN Global Compact Network.

We keep faith in the ideals and ambitions represented by the SDGs' targets and indicators and that there is a collective desire to improve the world. But frameworks like the SDGs will only be a platonic vision until we can get fully reliable data and standard methodologies are established for both the public and private sector, so each stakeholder knows clearly what they are working towards and how to keep track. We still have nine years to get there. Will we get there?

They were born in 2012 as a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political, and economic challenges that the world is facing. Governments, who are playing an enormous role, are supposed to use them as a framework to monitor their efforts towards achieving specific objectives in several topics that cover from hunger to the environment. Companies and other stakeholders are encouraged to create coalitions and alliances towards shared values and concerns.

But, is it a one-size-fits-all?

Countries are being slow in their commitment to measuring SDG indicators. Why? ■

# Sustainability and competitiveness

**MARIA MARTINS** | IT Consultant - Information Management and Data Protection at Quidgest



***Today's concept of competitiveness for business and countries alike is becoming strongly linked to the socio and environmental dimensions of sustainability.***

There is a current general understanding that maintaining or improving the capacity to sustain economic growth and attractiveness in an international scope is no longer free from this influence.

For example, the repercussion of regulations on increasing costs and creating constraints for businesses, directly impacting its country-level attractiveness to a particular industry. On the other side, its contribution to enhancing competitiveness by reducing risks and providing answers to the current challenges we all face: scarce natural resources, unstable financial markets, and the gap of qualified talent internationally.

**For the last five years, the international network of multilateral organizations has been committed to creating businesses cases for companies and countries to harness the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).**

Their argument strongly emphasizes this positive impact of sustainability on competitiveness, specifically on enabling long-term growth, addressing risk, and attracting capital.

At the country level, the SDG became a way to access international funds, made available by multilateral development banks and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Programs helping to make policy and regulatory environments more conducive or enhancing the quality of life through technological innovation have been spread worldwide, specifically in developing regions.

We see, by comparing, for example, the Environmental Performance Index with the findings of the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index for the last eight years, that there is a match between the highest-ranked competitive countries and those with the best environmental performance.

Since there is a relationship between companies and countries regarding the overall increase in competitiveness, these programs also focused on attracting the private sector through public procurement or the creation of financial benefits.

**Some programs have offered an opportunity to companies for market expansion. It was the case of Quidgest in Mozambique. Through a large funded project for digital transformation in the country, Quidgest established a local team that became a subsidiary.**

While providing support to the government, the company started to attract local talent to sustain its operations that strengthen its brand in the community. In the long term, it supported the company's growth resilience. In terms of attracting capital and providing financial benefits to corporations, the SDGs only confirmed a global tendency that investors are increasingly paying attention to environmental, social and governance risks when making decisions.

An interesting Investor Survey made by EY in 2017 even evaluates the linkage between companies' stock and environmental performance.

On the other hand, the IFC's Green Bond Program, the first issuer to list a billion-dollar set of green bonds, proved that this type of financial asset is a scalable and profitable product to investors worldwide and a substantial source of capital to projects that contribute to environmental sustainability.

It is no coincidence that the 2021 Davos agenda of the World Economic Forum, which gathered the most influential and powerful government representatives and business CEOs of the world, has dedicated entire days of discussions on zero carbon emissions or digital transformation. For example, there is a substantial willingness from governments like the Biden administration to create benefits for the clean energy sector, which has contributed to its success in the stock market in the last few months.

In conclusion, this demonstrates how countries and companies with SDG-aligned agendas can benefit directly from new capital sources and how sustainability has already reshaped the way we measure our competitiveness. ■



#CENTRAL THEME



## THE 2030 AGENDA

June 13th, 2012, Rio de Janeiro - the first day of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development got underway. The Cidade Maravilhosa (“marvelous city”) hosted leaders from 188 nations, including representatives from the Vatican and Palestine, intending to develop global goals to address the environmental, political, and economic challenges ahead. The conference came 12 years after efforts began with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), targets set by the United Nations that would have to be met by 2015. One hundred ninety-one nations committed efforts to support poverty eradication, boost education, gender equality, maternal health, reduce child mortality, and ensure environmental sustainability.

As a result, over a billion people are no longer in extreme poverty, child mortality and the number of children without access to education halved, and AIDS infections have dropped by 40%. For 15 years, the MDGs have served as a guide to the selfless acts of nations, but with only three years to go before the finish line was crossed and millions of people left out of the effort, new goals needed to be set.

From the meeting in Rio de Janeiro were born the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a new version of the commitment of everyone - nations, public organizations, companies - to the world and to those who need help the most.

Although the road ahead is complex, these 17 points define a coherent framework with the priorities and aspirations for 2030.



## Digital Technology and the fulfilment of the SDGs

Quidgest is fully committed to supporting the achievement of the SDGs by developing digital solutions that meet the goals. But is technology so important in this regard?

The answers from Quidgest interviewees are unanimous. “Yes, absolutely. More than simply supporting and facilitating the achievement of the 17 SDGs, digital technologies are a crucial accelerator of implementing the three pillars of sustainable development - economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability”, says Delfina Soares, head of the United Nations University. While also

adding that technology fosters knowledge societies and boosts global progress.

Joana Paredes Alves, APlanet’s cofounder, describes digital solutions as an “engine that drives practical and innovative solutions that can contribute to an inclusive and sustainable growth” since they help create “greater efficiency and transparency of environmental, social and governance indicators”.

We have never been so bright or endowed with the knowledge that would allow us to invest in technology with such a social, economic and environmental impact. According to João Wengorovius Meneses, secretary-general of BCSD Portugal,



“sustainability and digital transformation will be the two greatest vectors of transformation of societies throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. This will translate into the transition to “super-intelligent and super-connected societies, but centered on people and planet” instead of the main focus of the last few years, which has been on gains in productivity and wealth.

On the other hand, although it may be an accelerator of the needs raised by Agenda 2030, IMVF officials warn that “it is crucial to ensure that the progression and evolution of the sector are inclusive, guaranteeing that access to digital technology and the benefits generated by it reach parts of the world that currently lack a digital infrastructure, reinforcing its role and direct impact on sustainable development”.

## Where technology can help

Quidgest’s solutions cover all the SDGs - from tools that foster transparency of public money spending to natural resource managers. But which areas can most benefit from the technology?

According to João Ribeiro de Almeida, president of the Camões Institute, IP, the technological tools can contribute to all the goals stipulated by the UN.

However, given the institute’s area of activity which stimulates international cooperation and promotes the learning of the Portuguese language, Ribeiro de Almeida gives more significant potential to the areas of Health (3<sup>rd</sup> SDG) and Education (4<sup>th</sup>

SDG) and illustrates them with projects already developed: “regarding Health, the Portuguese Cooperation has been developing the ‘Project Health for All’ in Sao Tome and Principe, a reference in the health sector and which has achieved significant

results in improving [the country’s] health indicators, by ensuring access to basic care, promoting prevention and early treatment of clinical situations and specialized care provided in the specialized hospitals.

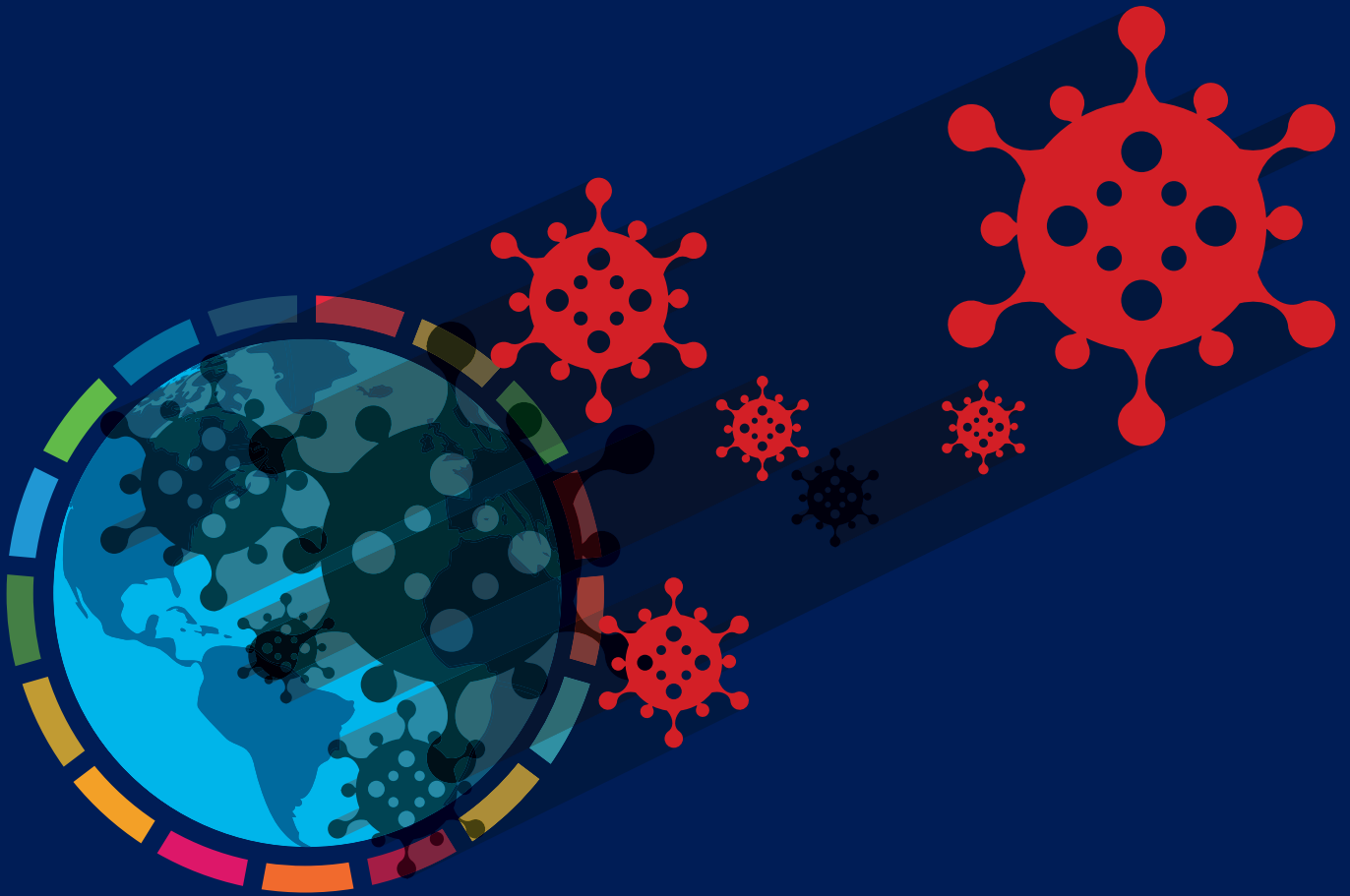
Particularly in the specialized care component, the project has focused much of its action on telemedicine”. Concerning Education, the president of Camões, IP points to the potential of distance learning platforms but adds that the most impoverished countries can hardly enjoy its benefits due to lack of infrastructure.

Thomas Fleurine Sørensen, international director of Sweco, sees more potential in sustainable consumption and production (12<sup>th</sup> SDG) and suggests that the Netherlands and Denmark are examples to follow in the scope of circular economies. However, he warns that “the global commitment to fund more research and business ideas in this area, while finding affordable and applicable solutions for emerging economies, remains a gap in the current sustainable context.”

Aligned with this vision, the secretary-general of BCSD Portugal indicates that tools can also “make societies and corporate value chains more efficient, more transparent and more human” and point to a scenario where technology stimulates efficiency and humanization, and transparency.

Given the area in which the UNU operates, Delfina Soares believes that governance, including in the 16<sup>th</sup> SDG, is one axis with the most significant potential for disruption and stresses its importance: “it is a critical element for the development and progress of society”.

In turn, Joana Paredes Alves sees in the possibility to “gather, analyze, manage and exchange information in several areas” an enormous capacity to benefit society.



## The Covid-19 Challenge

The United Nations' Sustainable Development 2020 report, released in June 2020, finds that the pandemic caused by the coronavirus is causing severe disruption to the achievement of agreed UN goals. While progress has been slow in the pre-pandemic period, the global crisis has undone decades of progress in just a few months. Those interviewed by Quidgest do not paint a positive picture. João Wengorovius Menezes explains that "it will not be easy to achieve the SDGs by 2030" because "we are not advancing at the necessary pace". The IMVF points out that "today we already know that the social, economic and envi-

ronmental impacts caused by the pandemic of COVID-19 will have a devastating effect on the achievement of the SDGs. Furthermore, it is the poorest and most vulnerable - including children, the elderly, people with disabilities, migrants, and refugees, and women - who will be hardest hit by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic," say IMVF officials.

If we do not count the consequences of the pandemic, in 2030, around 6% of the world population will be living in extreme poverty, indicates the president of Camões, IP. And everything points to this number increasing.



**Recent estimates suggest that the effects of COVID-19 could add 71 million people to this figure, due to the devastating effects of the coronavirus on societies and economies.**

**JOÃO RIBEIRO DE ALMEIDA**  
President of Camões, IP

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**The forecasts, some already confirmed, are of an economically and socially complex scenario: reduction of GDP per capita of 4.2% in 2020 (12.1% in the Eurozone); loss of 400 million jobs in the second quarter of 2020; 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy at risk of losing their livelihoods, to name a few.**

**DELFINA SOARES**  
Head of the UNU

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The impact of the pandemic on the pursuit of the SDGs is undeniable. For the co-founder of APlanet, “now more than ever, everyone’s collaboration is urgent if we are to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda”. Although the health crisis has been accentuating - even more - inequalities, not everything is negative: “the pandemic has somehow served as a ‘wake up call’ for companies to start looking inwards and recognize the growing importance of sustainability issues”.

Aligned with this vision, Sweco’s international director adds that “the SDGs started a global wake-up call for us, as members of the international and local communities, to take action to protect our planet”.

The secretary-general of BCSD Portugal states that “the shock with the pandemic was so frontal, global and dramatic that, besides the economic recovery, we are also trying to respond to various social and environmental challenges, that is, related to the sustainability of our development model”.

Therefore, the pandemic we are living through presents itself as a vehicle to reconsider the way we have been acting up to now. The coming years are decisive, and Quidgest will remain fully committed to using digital technology to the benefit of building a more sustainable Economy, more equal Societies, and a more protected Environment - future-ready software and for a more balanced tomorrow.

GENIO, the automatic code generation platform driven by models, is a tool that, by its nature, contributes to sustainability for two main reasons: the reduction of the means necessary for the maintenance and development of technology and the support that the developed systems provide to those who want to manage more effectively the available resources.

But let’s not fool ourselves. Digital technologies have tremendous potential to support sustainability initiatives and their monitoring. However, for effective change, the mission must be understood by all (governments, citizens, businesses). Only then will we reach a level of true sustainability where we pay in advance the mortgage that, if nothing is done, will fall on our descendants and populations in more disadvantaged areas. ■



**Joana Paredes Alves**  
| APlanet

**Do you believe that the culture that seeks to promote sustainability has been gaining ground, developing authentic and lasting impact initiatives, or that it is just a formality where companies try to meet the minimum requirements?**

There are companies leading the way. They already have this purpose integrated into their DNA and are genuinely committed to sustainability. In these companies, business strategy and sustainability strategy are the same.

Then some companies do it only for compliance with legal obligations and not to compromise their reputation. There are also more and more companies that, either because they are in the value chain of companies subject to legal obligations or because of the growing pressure from consumers, have to demonstrate their impacts increasingly.

One of APlanet's missions is to demonstrate to companies that sustainability goes far beyond compliance, as it has been proven that companies that integrate sustainability into their business will be creating greater value for their business and consequently also better economic performance. To this end, at APlanet we have developed technological tools that enable companies to leverage sustainability management.

**What makes APlanet different from the main competitors in this area?**

We see that many of the solutions for sustainability management and reporting are "one-dimensional" in the sense that they only focus on either the environmental (carbon footprint tracker) or social (volunteering platforms) part. At APlanet we have a holistic approach to sustainability, which addresses the main "pain-points" of sustainability management as a whole: environmental, social, and governance. Our solutions also stand out for being more user-friendly and flexible because the technology can quickly adapt to the reality of each company, according to its degree of complexity and maturity in terms of sustainability.

**What would you say is the prominent mistake companies make when it comes to sustainability? And how can this be solved?**

Many companies are not embracing the fact that sustainability should be integrated in a strategic and transversal way, allocating these themes only to one department.

However, it is a fact that sustainability must increasingly be considered a centrality and not an externality of the business.

It is proved that companies that have a purpose beyond the revenue to their shareholders are more profitable. I would even go further; I believe that whether companies are sustainable or not will imply their survival in the market in the medium and long term. Meaning that companies must increasingly dedicate resources to truly understanding which material issues they should focus on in terms of sustainability and where they can improve their impacts. ■



**João Wengorovius Meneses**  
| BCSD

**Has the pandemic changed how companies supported by the BCSD look at sustainability? Has the focus on sustainability been maintained?**

In the 2008-2011 crises, states were swift to inject liquidity into the system to restore production levels, consumption, and investment quickly. However, they did not seize the opportunity, the reset, to take more structural and disruptive measures capable of accelerating societies' transition to sustainability. We have realized with this pandemic that the lack of social cohesion and the diverse and growing imbalances in the biosphere are such profound, systemic, and structural weaknesses that they will give rise to pandemic increasingly frequent socio-economic crises. This time, the shock of the pandemic was so frontal, global, and dramatic that, in addition to economic recovery, we are also trying to respond to various social and environmental challenges, that is, challenges related to the sustainability of our development model.

**To what extent does a company that has sustainability as one of the central axes of its operation become more competitive in the market?**

If we look at the recent past of Portuguese companies regarding competitiveness drivers, in the 1970/80 decades, it was the productivity imperative, then quality, then the

incorporation of more knowledge and added value, and then digital transformation. Today it is that of sustainability. Why is this so? Because most stakeholders demand it - regulators, investors, customers, workers, and impacted communities - and because sustainability is currently the most significant source of investment and business opportunities, with many of its markets growing by double digits or more.

But let's look in more detail. Sustainability has several benefits for companies, the first of which is contributing to their operational and financial efficiency. By reducing the intensity of use of raw materials, energy, water, or any other resources in the production process and the production of waste, pollution, or greenhouse gas emissions, the company directly improves its economic and financial profitability.

But sustainability is also fundamental as a risk management measure for investors. Analyzing the last Global Risks Report of the World Economic Forum, we see that most of the risks considered to have a higher probability of occurrence and impact are related to sustainability (environmental and social). Increasingly, companies that are not sustainable, that is, that do not integrate well the ESG (environmental, social, and corporate governance) factors, will have to pay a risk premium, which will be increasingly higher. The evolution in the behavior of stock markets in the US and Europe in 2020, during the pandemic, is eloquent proof that investors already consider sustainable companies to be more competitive and resilient. ■



**João Ribeiro de Almeida**

**| Camões, IP**

### **How can we recover this year in the next decade?**

The challenges brought by the pandemic have put at risk the achievement of the SDGs at the scale and speed required to meet the 2030 Agenda targets.

The Decade of Action calls for accelerated sustainable solutions to many of the challenges we currently face, from extreme poverty to social inequalities and climate change.

In September 2019, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on all sectors of society to mobilize for a decade of action at three levels:

- A global movement to secure greater leadership, more resources, and more ingenious solutions for the SDGs;
- Local action embedding the necessary transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities;
- Grassroots action, including young people, civil society, the private sector, the media, trade unions, universities, and other stakeholders, to give rise to an active movement in pursuit of the necessary transformations.

It is therefore important that countries manage to translate their actions into greater investment in public services (health, sanitation,

water, education), extended social protection systems and, increasingly, in the sphere of digital connectivity, which has brought people, services and businesses closer together, even in the context of social distancing we currently live.

These actions imply moving towards a more inclusive economy, green and respectful of human rights, which encourages greater equality and sustainability of existing resources, with greater resilience to external risks.

Therefore, it is necessary to improve our ability to predict future pandemics and reformulate, right now, the way we work, learn, and consume.

Meaning that, over the next decade, recovering what was lost will require not only determination but also a great sense of urgency from all of us.

### **Can you give two examples of projects that Camões, IP manages and that are aligned with the SDGs:**

- The GESTDOC Project (Modernization and Strengthening of the Identification Chain and Document Security in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau), whose objective is improving levels of security and migration management in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. This is achieved through the modernization of the system for issuing identification documents, thus strengthening levels of security and law enforcement capacity, including border document control and migration-related issues;

• The PASP PALOP-TL (Project to Support the Improvement of Quality and Proximity of Public Services in the PALOP countries and East Timor), although it ended in 2018, is another excellent example of the importance of digital. The project's objective was to modernize the public administrations of the PALOP and TL through the computerization of public services (Electronic Governance). ■



## Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr

**IMVF's work is developed on the field, in the communities. In this sense, we would like to understand what progress has been made since 2015 and whether the support coming from governmental and private organizations has increased since then?**

In terms of IMVF's activity, the progress made since 2015 is mainly related to the ability to ensure continued and long-term interventions in areas such as health in São Tomé and Príncipe and Guinea-Bissau, sustainable tourism in Cape Verde, civil society, and livestock production in Guinea Bissau and also Education for Development and Global Citizenship in Portugal and Europe. Furthermore, expanding the activity to new geographical areas, such as Colombia and Gambia, has brought new

challenges and opportunities for growth.

In this context, funding from governmental organizations such as the European Union or Camões, IP has been essential, financing projects and ensuring not only the strategic continuity of our intervention, guaranteeing results in the medium and long term, but also responding to emerging issues, such as the consolidation of the peace process in Colombia or addressing the root causes of irregular migration in the Gambia. Over the years, we signed some partnerships with private organizations to make concrete contributions to existing projects. In most cases, the support provided by private companies translates into the donation of material and resources, the contribution of human resources, and technical support and expertise in concrete areas.

**Would you say that training in computer-related disciplines would be a step towards the fulfillment of several Goals? If yes, in what way can technology companies boost this plan?**

Absolutely. Often, even when the challenge of access to technology is surpassed by making technological means available, the benefits generated by these resources prove to be reduced due to insufficient existing capacity to use them. Therefore, ensuring training and monitoring, along with the availability of technological resources, is essential.

In this sense, technology companies such as Quidgest can, in partnership with NGOs and other organisations working direct-

ly in the field, provide human and technological resources (targeted/context-adapted training packages, etc.) that enable computer and even technological capacity building in more specific areas, and in a broader sense, encourage the development and facilitate access to an increasing number of technologies, services, and computer applications that can be used for fairer and more sustainable forms of economic, social and environmental development. ■



## Thomas Fleurine Sørensen

| Sweco

**A Sweco está a implementar proactivamente medidas para lutar contra as alterações climáticas. Como é que a Sweco está a implementar medidas para lutar contra as alterações climáticas? Se sim, de que forma é que as empresas de tecnologia podem potenciar este plano?**

Sweco has participated in the set-up of the national indicators for the SDGs in Denmark. We also consider sustainability as part of our integrated solutions proposed in our tenders and in the implementation of our projects.

We have internal training, mapping of the goals within our projects and have developed platforms that can allow us to provide monitoring of the SDGs to our clients.



**You are currently working in projects that will only be available to the general public in five to ten years from now. "The future may seem remote to others, but it is very much present at Sweco" – how does this future look like and what role does sustainability play in it?**

Sweco is a Scandinavian-led company. Our mind-set is automatically set to find simplicity and sustainable solutions - it is in our DNA. Our role is to keep on building a sustainable future through environmentally and climate friendly infrastructures; through working in flat hierarchies that can promote reduced inequalities; and through providing multi-disciplinary teams that can comprehend the complexities of sustainability across sectors and fields. ■



**Delfina Soares**  
| Head of UN University

**Can you share some examples of projects you have developed in the area of SDGs?**

One project was developing the National Digital Governance Strategy for São Tomé and Príncipe in collaboration with the National Institute for Knowledge and Innovation (INIC) of the Government. Developed collaboratively and encompassing various key actors in the country, this strategy aims to

improve information and services, encourage citizen participation, and make the government more accountable, transparent, and effective. This strategy constitutes an instrument to promote the sustainable development of public institutions and the other sectors of society that will benefit from a more efficient and streamlined Public Administration. It also addresses the globality of the 16<sup>th</sup> SDG and contributes to reducing inequalities (10<sup>th</sup> SDG) by improving the quality of democratic citizenship.

In partnership with UNICEF, UNU-EGOV identified a set of policies and practices adopted in several selected countries. It developed a framework of guidelines addressed to governments and UNICEF national agencies on the opportunities and challenges of e-public service delivery for children and minors. The project entitled "Digital Transformation, Digital Services, and Children" directly contributed to SDG 1 in reducing child poverty, SDG 10 on access and equal rights to services and opportunities, and those in vulnerable situations, and SDG 17 on international partnerships.

UNU-EGOV has collaborated with ITU, UNECE, and UN-Habitat in the context of the U4SSC (United for Smart Sustainable Cities) initiative, which serves as a global platform to advocate for public policies and encourage the use of ICTs to facilitate the transition to innovative and sustainable cities. The initiative, supported by 12 other UN agencies (CBD, ECLAC, FAO, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UN Environment, UNEP-FI, UNFCCC, UNIDO, UN-Women, and WMO), contributes to the 11<sup>th</sup> SDG

The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation

highlighted the need to adopt specific policies to support full digital inclusion and digital equality for marginalized groups. In parallel, the UN report "The Age of Digital Interdependence" calls for the definition of metrics for digital inclusion. Despite some work already done on these issues, there is currently no accepted set of metrics or standards to use in this area. In this context, and in partnership with the Mobile World Capital Foundation,

UNU-EGOV developed the project "Digital Inclusion for Marginalised Communities," which aimed to answer the following questions: how to measure digital inclusion of marginalized groups? What metrics can we use to underpin the definition of digital inclusion policies? Which dimensions, indicators, geographic and user segmentation, frequency and methods of data collection should be used. The project contributes to the achievement of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> SDG. ■







**“Portugal is fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Sometimes goals can be adjusted, but we cannot deviate from the ultimate goal.”**

**Eurico Brilhante Dias**

Secretary of State of Internationalization



**Do you believe digital technologies can support the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals? If you do, could you indicate the goals where technology can have the most impact?**

The digital transition of the global economy, enhanced by the pandemic, has further accelerated globalization. In real-time, we know what is happening, monitor, or even create future scenarios, and to a large extent, this is due to the advancement of digital technological tools. First of all, I would like to point out that Portugal has its very own technological ecosystem. Today, practically all national activity sectors incorporate technology, whether in research, production, or sales, at some stage of their process. The breadth and diversity of the Por-

tuguese technological business fabric mean that both start-ups and more mature companies make a name for themselves in their areas of activity, both nationally and internationally. Their competencies, know-how, and innovation allow them to take on challenges in different parts of the world, even within the framework of integration in projects from multilateral institutions. For example, the project run by Quidgest in Mozambique (BIZ Girl Programme) promotes education, gender equality, and women's health and well-being, which in real-time monitors and analyses the effectiveness of its implementation. Another example to be mentioned is the use of digital tools in the construction and urban planning, water, waste,

**“Technologies have a universal character and - in the various areas - will undoubtedly be a precious tool to achieve the goals. The digital transition is connecting the world, reinforcing the idea that competitiveness becomes more related to the ability to be within the network, and not so much to the proximity to resources or even, in some cases, to demand.”**

and sanitation sectors, which have also played a decisive role, especially in developing countries. They enable city planning, eradicating some diseases or access to drinking water, clearly promoting the economic and social development of the regions.

**In comparison to 2015, the time when the United Nations developed and adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, the socioeconomic situation is completely different due to the pandemic. We are now 10 years from the finish line – do you believe we can still reach these Goals?**

We are currently living in a context of great uncertainty because, abruptly, we were hit by a pandemic without exception.

In a macro framework, the European Union has not changed its fundamental goals. The twin transitions - energy and digital - remain pillars of development, with plans that promote a modern economy, respecting ecosystems and efficient resource use. The recovery of the European continent will undoubtedly pass through a “Fair, Green and Digital” solution.

From a micro perspective, another interesting fact is to analyze the fact that the countries that make up the EU, even in this adverse period, are opting to purchase electric vehicles, which in 2020 will record sales. These examples reflect an individual and collective concern of

society. Portugal was the first country to assume carbon neutrality by 2050. To achieve these objectives, we are all necessary - citizens, public entities, and companies. Our country is fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Sometimes it is possible to adjust the goals, but we cannot deviate from the final objective. Europe - and Portugal - will continue to be influential in constructing a fairer international system, and we are well aware that if we do not come out of this pandemic together - also with developing countries - we will not come out well. Continuing to fight for the SDG targets is central to a more balanced and fairer world.

**How can we recover this year during the upcoming decade? What is the international perception of Portuguese technology companies? What are the greatest advantages of Portuguese technology companies in the international market?**

Until 2019, Portugal presented a solid growth trajectory, with an increase in exports for more than a decade due to business strategies based on quality, differentiation, design, flexibility, technological incorporation in production processes, or adaptability to customer needs. We are a country with competitive sectors, and Portugal’s competencies are becoming increasingly relevant internationally. We are also different in terms of talent, with highly qualified staff, pro-

fessional, higher and scientific education establishments of excellence, good transport and communication structures, a developed ecosystem for hosting FDIs, prestigious incubator, and innovation networks.

Portugal's geostrategic position enhances the triangular relations between Europe, Africa, and America. The integration in the European Union or the adoption of the single currency also increases our notoriety. Allied to these and other indicators, we have a welcoming, multicultural community. In addition to reaching the highest figures ever for exports of goods and services in 2019, we have also been chosen to host investments of global importance, and all these factors have been determining factors in attracting more and better investment.

Um exemplo disto são algumas das maiores tecnológicas mundiais e alguns dos centros de I&D de marcas de referência (setor automóvel, aeronáutico ou saúde) escolherem o nosso país para se instalarem.

An example of this is some of the world's largest technology companies and some of the R&D centers of reference brands (automotive, aeronautics, or health) choosing our country to set up in. We are the host country for Websummit. This is due to our image as a country - a country that does well. National products - goods and services - have a seal of quality regardless of the sector, with conditions to assert themselves in any market. These factors continue to position us as good exporters of technology and as a territory that welcomes investment.

The strategy for the next decade, included in the Programa Internacionalizar 2030, at an external level, aims to attract FDI projects that bridge gaps in the value chains and, simultaneously, projects that respond to the challenges of the future - such as digitalisation, energy transition (carbon neutrality), sustainable mobility,

increasing the resilience of the European economy and greater self-sufficiency in strategic assets, among others, as I mentioned above; and also the strengthening of economic diplomacy actions, such as the support of the Diplomatic Network and the AICEP network, in promoting the internationalization of our goods and services. On the internal front, another determining factor is the reinforcement of coordination between the territorial agents and the qualification of the territories, namely those of low density, thus promoting an increase in their visibility and attractiveness to potential foreign investors, and consequently, greater territorial cohesion. The Government's goals are, until 2023, to recover the values of 2019 (FDI stock of 137 million Euros and 44% of exports over GDP), and after that, until 2027, a growth of 4% per year in the stock of FDI and a weight of 50% of exports over GDP.

### **How can a company like Quidgest boost the Sustainable Development Goals plan?**

In the previous question, I already mentioned an example. Still, I will complement it by noting that Quidgest is active in an interesting range of markets, some destinations even nicely referred to as "unusual" for the reality of internationalization of Portuguese companies.

**Through digital solutions and modernization services, Quidgest's activity in countries that are not part of the OECD allows it to develop projects that will certainly contribute to the construction of more modern and fairer societies that are more aligned with the challenges of Sustainable Development.**

States have a decisive role in the SDGs plan, but private entities, such as companies and the scientific and civil society, are powerful allies in solving this equation. These characteristics of the Quidgest internationalization process are elements that we would like to extend to more companies in the national export sector.

**From your contacts with other governmental decision-makers, are they open or interested in discussing the SDGs' implementation from an international cooperation perspective?**

And does this interest change geographically? If yes, which areas are most concerned by the UN plan and why?

The link between international politics and the SDGs is very present in the North-South relationship, particularly with Africa, Latin America, and even some regions in Asia. In particular, the initiatives of the multilateral banking system, we find approaches to crucial issues of policy development aimed at achieving the SDGs and where the alignment of public and private initiatives is essential.

**In internationalization initiatives, do you directly or indirectly find concerns regarding the SDGs from countries or entities that host Portuguese companies?**

Undoubtedly. And I find in the development of many projects related to the fulfillment of SDGs the need to join competencies that Portuguese companies have and can develop with local partners. In education, health, water and sanitation infrastructures, and transport, Portuguese companies present an admirable portfolio of projects that distinguish them. For

example, the attention that our solutions in the water and waste sector, or even in services within the scope of administrative simplification, are cases that are very well known and that the different multilateral institutions present as good practices.

**We know that you will soon make a State visit to Azerbaijan. What is the value proposition that national technologies can bring to the country?**

This Secretary of State has a comprehensive - and at the same time very intense - mission to accompany our entrepreneurial fabric in external markets, promoting their internationalization, to boost external investment in Portugal and Portuguese investment abroad, and more finely, to solve context costs at a national level. But also, to create instruments (such as double taxation agreements, financing lines, among others) that boost the objectives mentioned above. Due to the current atypical pandemic context, we have not yet managed to predict precisely the next external displacements. However, due to the skills of our companies in general, and technologies in particular, the know-how, innovative character, I dare to consider that they have the right conditions to succeed in any geography. But I must say that in the countries of the Caucasus and around the Caspian Sea, in the transition countries between Europe and Central Asia, the Portuguese offer has the conditions to succeed. For example: in architecture and construction services, in ICTs, and, once again, in water and sanitation. As soon as the pandemic allows us, there is a commercial effort to be made in those territories. ■

# 3<sup>rd</sup> SDG: Value-based Healthcare

RUI FREITAS | Health and Science Consultant at Quidgest



***Healthcare is a universal good that should be distributed with equity and accessibility. Quality in health is a decisive factor for the well-being and development of contemporary societies.***

However, there are natural and human barriers that hinder the feasibility of this process. The United Nations (UN) has made an effort to enhance sustainable development in several areas by implementing global goals and programs. The UN recognizes this reality by proposing “ensure a healthy life and promote well-being for all” as the third sustainable development goal (SDG) of the 2030 agenda.

Information Systems are, therefore, a critical factor to support and make these goals achievable. Based on this premise, it is part of Quidgest’s DNA to be at the heart of digital development, particularly in causes and services that prefigure health as an essential asset and with the aim of adding value to it (value-based healthcare).



**The goal of sustainable development in health is to promote wellness and healthy living. Within this context, we highlight two collaborative projects:**

#### **Instituto Marquês Vale Flôr (IMVF).**

The Non-Governmental Development Organization (NGDO) aims to contribute to sustainable development and promotion of human dignity through the design, implementation, and collaboration in projects and activities in a wide range of areas. The gap in the supply of medicines and health goods in remote areas, especially in African countries such as Guinea-Bissau, is one of the challenges IMVF planned to solve.

A project of Stock Management and Transportation of Pharmaceutical Products emerged from the joint effort. Quidgest developed an information system that allows stock management – from transportation to storage - to organize the distribution through healthcare centers. Mitigating product losses, controlling stock limits, expiration dates, alerts, creating automatic deliveries with forecasts of expenses and shortages are vital points for the process to be successful. The logistics in a country “organized” and with adequate infrastructure is a challenge. In Guinea-Bissau, it has become an epic quest.

#### **Santa Marta Hospital**

Another close collaboration project, which falls under Research and Development, arose with the Santa Marta Hospital. The challenge is to use a data registry of cardiac patients who have undergone a surgical intervention and turn it into a useful clinical support tool, enabling information share and analysis. Each year, an estimated 17 million people die globally from cardiovascular disease. According to 2020 data from the American Heart Association, about 80% of premature deaths can be prevented by controlling major risk factors and making

timely and accurate clinical decisions. The creation of a digital cardiac platform, enabling real-time, hands-on clinical decision support and data analysis for healthcare professionals, is of utmost necessity. The passage from “paper” to digital is thus the milestone of this project, which intends to extract information from data effectively. A significant challenge arises from the outset: to make the data robust, reliable, and reproducible (enhancing the quality and quantity of data - standardization). The development of predictive models for “Operation Risk” and “Post-Surgery Rehabilitation” integrated into the platform is a critical point in this project, which will leverage the artificial intelligence of the Genio framework and thus develop algorithms adapted through Machine Learning tools. Another major challenge within this project arises from obtaining large-scale data to feed the database and make the model more robust. Therefore, it is a pressing need to create a collaborative network between hospitals, research, and technology centers, which will enable an integrated system of information sharing and make the predictive models more robust and reliable.

**The SDGs are part of our guidelines and the way we operate. In the Health and Science team, we believe, above all, that technology is an actual vehicle in supporting the improvement of quality of life and health for all, especially for the people with fewer resources. This whole process is of enormous complexity. However, step-by-step and using the know-how of more than 30 years of Quidgest software development, the path will be shorter. ■**

# Automation, SDGs, and the Future of Work

SUSANNA COGHLAND | *International Business Development at Quidgest*



***SDG 8 focuses on economic growth and decent work. As is the case with all the goals it is interdependent on other goals.***

Delivering SDG 8 will require advances in SDG 4: Quality Education, just as it will be dependent on societies moving towards the sustainable consumption and production patterns addressed in SDG 12: Responsible Production and Consumption, and the integration of protection for workers and communities into the value chains and markets targeted in SDG 9: Innovation, Industry, and Infrastructure.

All of these interlinking connections, and the virtuous circle that can be created as we address each of the SDGs underpin the emphasis in SDG 8 not just on economic growth, or even full and productive employment, but on decent work. Greater productivity is the primary source of improvements in living standards, the most sustainable route out of working poverty, and the basis (and measure) of competitiveness in global markets.

**Many gains in productivity are the result of new technologies and the automation of work processes, and they can cause profound disruptions in the world of work. A historical review of these disruptions shows, however, that while such technological innovations may have displaced workers from specific roles, the overall number of jobs and range of employment opportunities has consistently grown alongside these innovations, rather than reduced.**

A difference now to previous periods of growth in automation, is that automation is set to change/effect or even replace a much greater variety of jobs. Previous periods of innovation focused on programming machines to perform specific tasks: automation.

Now, some jobs previously seen as skilled or knowledge work – jobs which are connected to data collection, data processing, such as a radiologist – could be replaced by automation because a machine can perform the work more quickly and in greater volume.

Automation of more routine tasks within a job has the potential to free up workers to spend more time on the more meaningful

aspects of the job, such as engagement with staff/collaborators/customers, analytical or ‘thinking’ work, advising, counselling, innovation, and other value added inputs of the role. Which have the potential to give the worker, the organization employing them, and ‘customer’ (stakeholder) more value. Humans remain unique in their ability to deal with unpredictable situations and human behaviors, and to be able to engage with other humans in an empathetic and sensitive way. What we must be careful of, however, is that these benefits are realized equally. In both global and national contexts, the application of new technologies is also fueling discussions about rising inequality. In many cases it is still cheaper, or necessary, to employ people in low skills and low engagement sectors than to use automation. It would probably not be a positive evolution for our society if the automation of work threatens to make us a more stratified society, in which some individuals in high income, highly educated professionals doing are “interesting work”, and a large number of citizens are in low paid jobs whose primary aim to provide for the health and comfort of the affluent. Decent work remains the goal.

**With this in mind, we can shape the future of work. It is not something that happens to us, it is something we create through the actions and collaboration of technology companies, governments, civil society, and others forces to bring about the realization of the Global Goals. ■**



## QUIDGEST WILL TRAIN 250 PEOPLE IN 365 DAYS

The Covid-19 pandemic brought many disruptions to our lifestyle. From the way we work to the way we shop and communicate, profound changes were made to societies in order to establish a haven amidst the chaos. People's needs changed and, with it, businesses had to reinvent their operations.

The virus propelled the digital Era in many forms and assured us of two crucial things in our field of work: on the one hand, companies must have user-friendly online channels to keep their market presence relevant and, on the other hand, people must develop software development skills to keep being attractive in the job market.

Both statements are at the center of the work we intend to do in 2021 via the Quidgest Academy – the objective is to train at least 250 people in Portuguese territory. The extended effort we will be doing, which we also intend to keep on pushing in the upcoming years, meets the needs mentioned above.

Quidgest's software engineering school was restructured to answer such challenges, and the team created six different certified pieces of training.

*The objectives and targets of the people that pass through the Academy are distinctive from one another. Having a general course was obviously good for a starting point, but there are specific needs that we are now meeting in the new training.*

**SARA INÁCIO** | Innovation Manager at Quidgest and Head of the Academy





The objectives of someone who joins the G\_Researcher training, which intends to empower people who either want to enhance Genio with new features or boost their research career, are not close to the ones pursued by someone who joins G\_Trainer, where graduates will be qualified to teach Genio and its concepts to other people. Although every training revolves around Genio, there are substantial differences in how students approach the software engineering tool.

**The six courses suit several profiles, but given the current social-economic conjuncture, we believe three specific targets could benefit the most:**

- 1. Entrepreneurs** who want to develop their digital businesses in an agile way and without the help of a costly third-party provider;
- 2. People who saw their roles limited** in the last couple of months and want to enroll in a career in tech;
- 3. Business leaders** or workers who aim to develop their tech-based solutions through swift and efficient software.

We believe these three targets are vital for the economy's current state. Entrepreneurs who develop new businesses that require a qualified workforce have the potential of creating long-term jobs. Through the training, people who are requalified will be granted long-term financial stability if they opt for using the learned skills professionally.

Additionally, already established businesses will improve their resilience by improving their digital presence and possibly creating new revenue channels.

***Our objective is also to capacitate the people who had the expectation of joining the technology world but did not have an opportunity in the past.***

SARA INÁCIO

“By the end of the week, students leave the training with highly developed skills [in comparison with the regular manual coding programmers],” she added to the Portuguese media outlet Observador in an interview.

The Academy's push is also a way of guaranteeing a change in the software development landscape. Although this business field produces a substantial part of the most relevant state-of-the-art technologies, it is still lagging when it comes to adopting more agile, swift, and affordable solutions that have the potential to persist in time. The vaccine may be the answer to ending the pandemic, but digital skills and, most importantly, software engineering aptitudes are the solution to an uncertainty proof future. ■

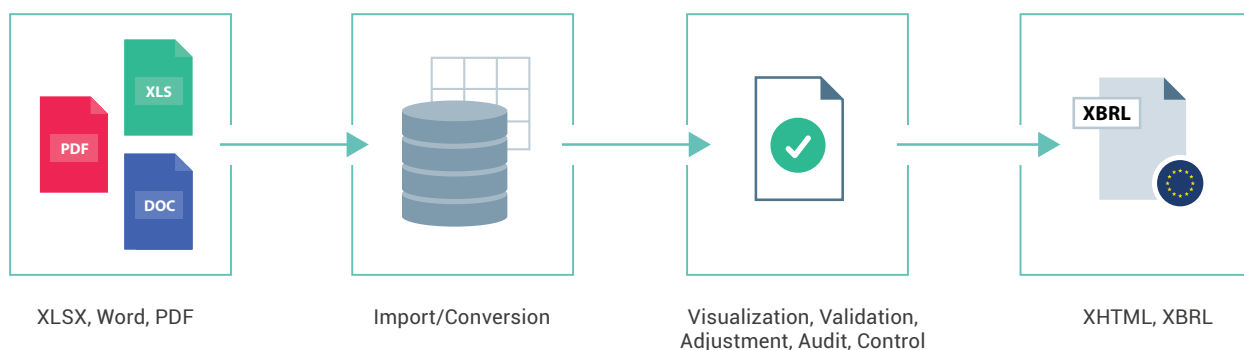




# WHAT SHOULD BE YOUR COMPANY'S APPROACH TO ESEF COMPLIANCE?

In an environment of continuous legislative changes, organizations are prone to face constant challenges when it comes to compliance. Initiatives to fulfill authorities' obligations can be challenging when it comes to investing in technology – it can either be too expensive, not fit for the operation, among many other issues.

The European Single Electronic Format (ESEF) is one of the latest examples of legislative changes. Public listed companies on EU regulated markets are now obliged to use this digital model when filling their annual financial reports.



## What is the ESEF?

In a nutshell, the new legislation introduced by the European Securities and Markets Authority arises to facilitate the communication of information, accessibility analysis, and comparability of the organizations' annual financial reports.

To comply with the recent directive, companies must adopt a technological solution that allows the generation of documents in XHTML format while also using built-in bookmarks in iXBRL. Such documents can come from Word, Excel, and PDF formats.

## What should you consider when acquiring a new solution?

With constant technology progress, legislative changes - such as this one - are often prone to happen. With this in mind, what should companies consider when buying a new system that helps with compliance? According to Anna Muzalska, Quidgest's RegTech Solutions Manager, decision-makers should ask their technological provider the following four vital questions:

**Long-term:** How easy is it to change the system to comply with future changes in this regulation?

**Scalability:** Am I able to add any other additional features to the solution?

**Integration time:** How long does it take you to implement the system and further modules to help our company with future directives in this field?

**Beyond compliance:** Does your solution offer any additional features other than complying with the regulation?

## Quidgest's solution

Considering the complexity of the reporting obligations and the volume of data to report, it is essential to automate the execution process as much as possible. Therefore, companies should focus their resources on preparing the report by automating the process - they will be able to reduce human error on both the introduction and processing of data and the validation of the documents to be submitted.

**Since Quidgest's solution follows the basis of the structure that the European Banking Authority has defined for Common Reporting (COREP) and Financial Reporting (FINREP), the tool enables the centralization of all the reports that, by law, must be delivered to the authorities.**

Due to its flexible nature - and in opposition to most of the tools offered in the market - companies can count on the swift integration of the solution and the quick integration of further compliance modules.

Although all the systems developed by Quidgest are intuitive and straightforward to use, it is vital to guarantee they are being used to their maximum potential. To ensure this, our teams train the companies' human resources that will use or manage the system. ■



# quid NEWS

