

Indicator analysis: PCA Trajectory 2030 (VCDO/CCIW)

For the SustainScore

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Indicator: PCA Trajectory 2030 (VCDO/CCIW)

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How to read this document

PCA Trajectory 2030 is an indicator for the SustainScore. An indicator is a label, certificate, standard, commitment, rating or similar instrument that says something about a company's sustainability.

The analysis of PCA Trajectory 2030 aims to determine the following two elements:

- Which ESG subcategories of the SustainScore does PCA Trajectory 2030 have an impact on? (chapter 3)
- Which score corresponds to each possible outcome of PCA Trajectory 2030, per subcategory affected? This follows from the requirements (chapter 3) and the assurance (chapter 4), and is set out in chapter 5.

Important in this file: “PCA Trajectory 2030” here is the sum of two linked trajectories. The entry level (charter) runs via Voka in Flanders (Voka Charter Duurzaam Ondernemen, VCDO) or via CCI Wallonie in Wallonia (CCIW sustainable entrepreneurship certificate, same methodology). This is followed by three internationally recognised SDG levels, Pioneer, Champion and Ambassador, awarded by CIFAL Brussels (formerly CIFAL Flanders) together with UNITAR. See 6.2 for what SustainCheck was unable to find publicly.

1. Identity

This chapter sets out what PCA Trajectory 2030 is, what does and does not fall under that name, and which outcomes a company can have.

1.1 Official name

PCA Trajectory 2030 (in full: PCA2030 Trajectory), a trajectory run by CIFAL Brussels in cooperation with UNITAR (source 2, source 4). PCA stands for the three levels of the trajectory: SDG Pioneer, SDG Champion and SDG Ambassador (source 2).

CIFAL Brussels was called CIFAL Flanders until March 2026. It is the same organisation under a new name, not a new entity (source 5). Some sources, including a few used in this file, predate that name change or have not been updated everywhere, and therefore still use CIFAL Flanders for the same organisation.

In Flanders, the entry phase runs via Voka, under the name Voka Charter Duurzaam Ondernemen (VCDO) (source 1). In Wallonia, a similar entry phase runs via CCI Wallonie, under the name CCIW certificate, based on the same VCDO methodology (source 7). PCA Trajectory 2030, VCDO and CCIW are programme names of the respective organisations. We found no explicit trademark statement in the sources consulted (see 6.2).

1.2 Short name and aliases

- Short name: PCA Trajectory 2030 (also: PCA2030, PCA trajectory)
- Entry level: VCDO (Flanders), CCIW (Wallonia)
- SDG levels: SDG Pioneer, SDG Champion, SDG Ambassador
- Awarding party for SDG levels: CIFAL Brussels (formerly CIFAL Flanders), UNITAR
- Certificate: UNITAR Certificate of Completion

1.3 Owner / scheme owner

Role	Organisation	Country
Who writes the standard?	CIFAL Brussels (formerly CIFAL Flanders), in cooperation with UNITAR	Belgium (Brussels) / UN (UNITAR)
Who certifies?	Independent external jury, composed per level by CIFAL Brussels and UNITAR	Belgium / international
Who accredits?	No accreditation found in the classic IAF sense (see 4.3)	n/a
Who carries out the entry phase (charter)?	Voka (Flanders, as VCDO) or CCI Wallonie (Wallonia, as CCIW)	Belgium

1.4 Type of instrument

Possible types:

- label
- certificate
- management system standard
- commitment
- rating
- statutory register
- membership
- charter
- award
- hybrid

Main type of PCA Trajectory 2030: hybrid. Charter or commitment as the entry phase (VCDO or CCIW), followed by a tiered award or recognition trajectory (SDG Pioneer, Champion, Ambassador), crowned with a UNITAR certificate (source 1, source 2).

1.5 Version of PCA Trajectory 2030

No separate version number or annual edition as with a standard. The trajectory runs under the name 2030, linked to the UN 2030 Agenda for the SDGs, with successive cohorts per award period (for example 2025 to 2028, or 2025 to 2029). Each SDG level achieved is valid for 3 years (source 2, source 9).

1.6 What this analysis treats as one indicator

Different roles, levels or statuses can fall under the name PCA Trajectory 2030. This analysis applies the following delineation.

This analysis treats the whole trajectory as one indicator with four ascending outcomes:

- Laureate VCDO (or the CCIW equivalent in Wallonia): the entry level, not yet an SDG title.
- SDG Pioneer: first PCA level.
- SDG Champion: second PCA level.
- SDG Ambassador: third and highest PCA level.

Each level builds on the previous one: an SDG Pioneer certificate normally follows at least three consecutive positive annual evaluations as laureate, across all 17 SDGs (source 7). This analysis deals with companies. The variants for local authorities and civil society organisations fall outside this scope (1.7).

1.7 What we do not include under this name

- SDG Pioneer programme for Flemish cities and municipalities: local authorities, not companies.
- SDG Pioneer guidance trajectory for civil society organisations (GoodPlanet Belgium), unless a company itself results from it via its own CIFAL or UNITAR title.
- The Entreprise Eco dynamique label (Leefmilieu Brussel, BECI): a separate Brussels label with its own level scale (1 to 3 stars), not linked to VCDO or to SDG Pioneer, Champion or Ambassador.
- A company that has only submitted an action plan and does not yet have a positive evaluation or laureate status: in the trajectory, candidate.
- An SDG wheel, SDG icons or a company's own sustainability communication on a website without laureate or PCA status.

1.8 Possible outcomes for a company

PCA Trajectory 2030 is not simply present or absent. A company can hold PCA Trajectory 2030 in different ways. Those outcomes determine, in chapter 5, which score applies per subcategory.

Outcomes of PCA Trajectory 2030 for a company:

- Not present: no laureate status and no SDG title.
- Laureate VCDO or CCIW: charter achieved, action plan positively evaluated, not yet an SDG title.
- SDG Pioneer.
- SDG Champion.
- SDG Ambassador.

Each level gets its own score per subcategory (chapter 5). An expired certificate, older than 3 years without reconfirmation (see 2.3), counts as not present, unless the laureates list or the CIFAL page still shows it as active.

2. Scope

This chapter sets out what PCA Trajectory 2030 applies to: the whole company, a product, a chain, a site or a management system.

2.1 What is assessed

- Object: the whole company. The charter and the PCA trajectory are company-wide, not a product label and not a site as a separate unit (source 1, source 2).
- Content: own operations from the entry level onwards. From SDG Champion and SDG Ambassador onwards, explicitly also the value chain, via stakeholder engagement, chain actions and human rights due diligence (source 2).
- The scope stated on the VCDO certificate itself is not published as free text per company. The laureates list shows only name and region, no separate scope statement (source 8).

2.2 What PCA Trajectory 2030 does and does not cover

- Does: a broad sustainability action plan, tested against at least 4 of the 5 P's (People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnership, Peace), with at least 10 action points, at least 2 of which in the core activities (source 1).
- Does: from SDG Pioneer onwards, an internal taskforce, a revised mission and vision, and a SMART action plan covering the 17 SDGs (source 2).
- Does not: no in-depth technical standard per theme. No ISO 14001-level depth for the environment, no SA8000-level depth for labour.
- Does not: no externally validated climate target such as SBTi.
- Does not: no product chain control such as Fairtrade or FSC.

2.3 Validity and version transitions

- Entry level (VCDO or CCIW): annual cycle. A company submits an action plan, receives an external evaluation after a year, and becomes laureate for that year if the result is positive (source 1, source 7).
- SDG Pioneer normally follows at least 3 consecutive positive annual evaluations covering all 17 SDGs (source 7). Some older sources additionally mention a one-calendar-year trajectory for the charter itself. Unknown whether this runs identically everywhere. Reason: no conclusive, unambiguous official timeline found that explicitly reconciles both descriptions.
- Each PCA level (Pioneer, Champion, Ambassador) remains valid for 3 years after completion (source 2, source 9).
- Duration per PCA level: Pioneer 1 to 3 years, Champion 2 to 3 years, Ambassador 1 to 2 years (source 2).
- Recertification or extension after the 3-year validity expires: Unknown. Reason: no public procedure found for what happens when an SDG title expires. SustainCheck's assumption: the company goes through the trajectory for that level again, there is no shorter procedure (see 6.2).

3. Requirements

This chapter sets out what PCA Trajectory 2030 requires, and which SustainScore subcategories are affected as a result.

3.1 Material requirements

Entry level (VCDO or CCIW), core requirements (source 1, source 7):

- At least 10 action points in the action plan.
- At least 4 of the 5 P's addressed: People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnership, Peace.
- At least 2 actions in the company's core activities, not only in supporting functions.
- Compliance with social, welfare and environmental legislation.
- Annual external evaluation by an independent committee of experts, government and business (source 6).

Across the six work areas (Learning, Organising, Formulating, Implementing, Evaluating, Communicating), with increasing ambition per PCA level (source 2):

- SDG Pioneer: internal SDG taskforce and point of contact, mission and vision with a sustainability commitment, SDG impact analysis, SMART action plan.
- SDG Champion: revised action plan based on stakeholder feedback, a code of ethics, a pilot project on transition or sustainability, periodic SDG-focused reporting.
- SDG Ambassador: implementation of a human rights due diligence strategy, integrated reporting (for example according to GRI), a pilot project in the Global South, a multi-stakeholder advisory board.

Each level is completed with an assessment by an external jury and a UNITAR Certificate of Completion (source 2).

3.2 Mapping to SustainScore subcategories

Scale for the mapping:

- strong: the requirement belongs to the core of that subcategory
- moderate: the requirement touches the subcategory, but does not cover it
- weak: side effect, no real coverage

Requirement	Subcategory	Coupling	Evidence in the standard	Source
Externally evaluated action plan (entry level, annual)	G3	moderate	Annual external evaluation by an independent committee	1, 6
Code of ethics (from SDG Champion onwards)	G3	moderate	An explicit code of ethics is a required element	2
Stakeholder mapping and engagement (from SDG Champion onwards)	G3	weak	Part of the six work areas, no separate stakeholder policy as evidence	2
Human rights due diligence strategy (from SDG Ambassador onwards)	S6	moderate	Implementation of a strategy targeting the value chain	2
Human rights due diligence strategy (from SDG Ambassador onwards)	G4	weak	Same requirement, no separate chain audit as with a product label	2
Pilot project in the Global South (from SDG Ambassador onwards)	S7	weak	A pilot project, not structural chain coverage	2
Integrated reporting, for example GRI (from SDG Ambassador onwards)	G3	weak	Reporting on performance, not an externally audited annual report	2

This mapping has deliberately been kept limited, not a fixed allocation. The publicly available sources describe the trajectory in broad terms (the six work areas and the main deliverables per level), not as a checklist of individual requirements. As a result, a complete, precise mapping per action point is not possible today (see 6.2). E5 (dependency on ecosystems), G1, G2 and most other E and S subcategories are not given a row: People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnership and Peace are intended broadly, but we found no sufficiently specific, publicly described requirement on which to base a row there.

3.3 Primary versus secondary

Primary: what PCA Trajectory 2030 is really about. Secondary: additional coverage, usually thinner.

Primary:

- G3: culture, action plan governance and compliance. This is what the entry level and all PCA levels are most consistently about.

Secondary:

- G4 (weak, see 3.2)
- S6 (moderate, see 3.2)
- S7 (weak, see 3.2)

3.4 Limits of coverage

- G3: the action plan and the code of ethics show commitment and process, not a legally anchored governance requirement as with B Corp, and not an externally certified management system as with ISO.
- G4 and S6: the human rights due diligence strategy is only mandatory from SDG Ambassador onwards, the highest and least achieved level, and it is a strategy, not an audited chain control.
- S7: a pilot project in the Global South does not prove structural chain coverage.
- All other subcategories (E1 to E6, G1, G2, S1 to S5, S8): no sufficiently specific, publicly described requirement found to support a row in 3.2. This does not mean the trajectory has nothing to do with them, but it does mean that SustainCheck does not attach a score to them without a more precise source (see 6.2).

4. Assurance

This chapter sets out how reliable the evidence for PCA Trajectory 2030 is. Together with the requirements in chapter 3, this determines the scores in chapter 5.

4.1 Assurance level

Possible levels:

1. Self-declared: the company claims it itself, without independent verification.
2. Second party: verification by a customer, sector organisation or other involved party.
3. Third party audit: independent auditor, without accreditation against an international standard.
4. Accredited third party: independent certification under accreditation. Typically ISO/IEC 17021-1 for management systems, ISO/IEC 17065 for product or chain certification, ISO/IEC 17029 for validation or verification.

Level for PCA Trajectory 2030:

- Entry level (VCDO or CCIW): level 3. Independent external evaluation committee of experts, government and business, but no accreditation against an international standard (source 1, source 6).
- SDG Pioneer, Champion and Ambassador: level 3. Assessment by an external jury appointed by CIFAL Brussels and UNITAR, no ISO/IEC 17021-1-type accreditation found (source 2).

4.2 Audit practice

- Entry level: drawing up the action plan, acceptance, implementation, interim evaluation, final evaluation, repeated annually (source 6).
- PCA levels: assessment on completion of each level by an external jury. Unknown whether this takes place by sampling, on site or remotely. Reason: not published in the sources consulted.

4.3 Accreditation

No accreditation standard or accreditation body found in the sources consulted. N/a on the ladder in 4.1, beyond what is already stated there.

4.4 Verifiability

Whether, and how, someone can check whether a company holds PCA Trajectory 2030.

- Entry level: public laureates list, <https://www.voka.be/vcdo/laureaten> (source 8). Shows only company name and region, no year, no validity status, no SDG level.
- SDG levels: public overview pages per level on [cifal-brussels.org](https://www.cifal-brussels.org), grouped by cohort, for example 2025 to 2028 (source 9). Company logos appear without a machine-readable company name, no alt text, and without a company registration number.
- No open API found.
- The status, valid or expired, is not clearly marked per company on the CIFAL pages themselves.

4.5 Overclaim risks

- Continuing to communicate an expired SDG title, older than 3 years.
- Presenting a company in the trajectory or a candidate laureate as a laureate.
- Applying a VCDO laureate status of a Belgian entity to the whole international group.
- Showing an SDG wheel or own SDG communication without laureate or PCA status.
- Confusing CCIW laureate status in Wallonia with a separate, weaker version of VCDO: the underlying methodology is the same (source 7).

5. Conclusion: impact on the SustainScore

This is the outcome of the analysis: for each possible outcome of PCA Trajectory 2030 (chapter 1.8), which score applies per SustainScore subcategory affected. The substantiation is set out in the requirements (chapter 3) and the assurance (chapter 4). Scores are lower where the public sources describe the trajectory only in broad terms rather than as a checklist (3.2, 6.2).

5.1 Score per outcome and subcategory

Outcome	Subcategory	Score	Note
Laureate VCDO / CCIW	G3	38	Externally evaluated action plan at entry level.
SDG Pioneer	G3	58	Taskforce, revised mission and vision, SMART action plan.
SDG Champion	G3	72	Also a code of ethics and stakeholder engagement.
SDG Champion	G4	29	Chain actions still limited to a pilot project.
SDG Ambassador	G3	82	Also integrated reporting.
SDG Ambassador	G4	47	Human rights due diligence strategy.
SDG Ambassador	S6	52	Human rights due diligence strategy in the value chain.
SDG Ambassador	S7	36	A pilot project in the Global South.
Not present	all	none	No impact via this indicator.

5.2 What PCA Trajectory 2030 does not do

- No score for being in the trajectory or candidate status.
- No score for the variants for local authorities or civil society organisations (1.7).
- No score on E1 to E6, G1, G2, S1 to S5, S8: no sufficiently specific public requirement found (3.4).
- No replacement for a targeted label such as Fairtrade, B Corp, ISO 14001 or SBTi on their core theme.
- No separate score per cohort year or per region, Flanders versus Wallonia: the same underlying methodology gives the same score at the same level (source 7).

6. Sources

Every statement in this document that is used in the SustainScore refers to a source below.

6.1 Sources used

Numbering:

1. Voka. Voka Charter Duurzaam Ondernemen (VCDO). <https://www.voka.be/vcdo?tab-list-73682-active-id=107140> Accessed: 14/09/2026.
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8. Voka. VCDO laureaten (register). <https://www.voka.be/vcdo/laureaten> Accessed: 14/09/2026.
9. CIFAL Brussels. SDG Pioneer, overzicht per cohorte. <https://cifal-brussels.org/pca2030-trajectory/sdg-pioneer/> Accessed: 14/09/2026.

6.2 Looked for but not found

- A complete, itemised list of the exact action points or a stated number of criteria for SDG Pioneer. Public pages describe the trajectory in broad terms, six work areas and core deliverables, not as a checklist.
- An official, unambiguous timeline that explicitly reconciles the one-calendar-year trajectory at entry level with the three consecutive years for an SDG Pioneer title.
- Public cost for the PCA levels themselves, Pioneer, Champion and Ambassador. Only the cost for the VCDO entry level is public (source 1).
- A machine-readable company name or company registration number on the CIFAL cohort pages, only logos without alt text.
- A published procedure for recertification or extension after the 3-year validity of an SDG title expires. SustainCheck's assumption in the absence of a published procedure: the company goes through the trajectory for that level again, there is no shorter recertification.
- An accreditation standard or accreditation body for the jury assessment.

6.3 AI-assisted writing

Generative AI was used in the drafting of this document for linguistic editing, sentence formulation, consistency checking and text refinement. The methodology, the scientific reasoning, the scoring framework and the substantive analysis were developed and validated by the SustainCheck team. The team remains fully responsible for the content and methodology in this document. Generative AI was also used to translate this document from the original Dutch into English.