



CALL FOR PROPOSALS: SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR THE 2026 SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL CONFERENCE

Leveraging Partnerships for Momentum. How businesses accelerate environmental, social, and governance progress through cross functional partnerships.

Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Location: American Family Insurance Headquarters, 6000 American Pkwy, Madison, WI 53783

[Link to submit a proposal](#)

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The Sustainable Business Council (SBC) invites sustainability practitioners and business leaders to submit session proposals for the **2026 SBC Conference**.

This year's theme, **Leveraging Partnerships for Momentum**, explores how organizations move from strategy to sustained impact by working across functions, sectors, and value chains. As expectations around environmental performance, workforce leadership, and governance continue to evolve, partnerships have become essential to accelerating progress, managing risk, and embedding sustainability into core business decisions.

The 2026 conference is designed for **business-to-business learning**, grounded in real-world experience, actionable insights, and peer exchange.

CONFERENCE STRUCTURE & FORMAT

The conference will feature **three concurrent breakout tracks**, aligned with the ESG framework and designed to move participants through a cohesive learning arc across the day.

Track Flow (Sequential by Session)

- **Session 1:** Environmental (E)
- **Session 2:** Social (S)
- **Session 3:** Governance (G)

All sessions within each track will occur simultaneously during their designated time block and will be approximately **60 minutes** in length.

SESSION TRACKS & TOPIC AREAS

Session 1: Environmental Systems & Risk: Science-based decision-making, data, and environmental performance. Proposed topics include:

- Greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting and climate risk management



- AI's impact on sustainability data, measurement, and reporting
- Water systems, water risk, and stewardship strategies
- Using data to inform environmental performance, resilience and impact

Session 2: Workforce, Finance & Society: People, skills, and embedding sustainability into core business decisions. Proposed topics include:

- AI's impact on the workforce and leadership development
- Translating sustainability strategy into financial decision-making
- Selling sustainability internally across departments and functions
- Roles and responsibilities for sustainability integration (operations, procurement, HR, leadership)
- Sustainability education across the value chain

Session 3: Governance, Partnerships & Civic Leadership: Governance, accountability, and influence beyond the organization. Proposed topics include:

- The business role in public policy and civic engagement
- Regulatory considerations, implications and accountability
- Corporate community stewardship and localized impact
- Cross sector partnerships (business, government, nonprofits, academic)
- Scope 3 collaboration with customers and value chain partners

Cross-Cutting Topics to Be Embedded Across Sessions

SBC encourages proposers to **deliberately weave one or more of the following cross-cutting topics** into their session content where appropriate. These themes should be integrated within discussions, examples, or case studies, rather than treated as separate subjects.

- **Regulations & compliance:** Address current, emerging, or anticipated legal and regulatory requirements relevant to sustainability.
- **Stakeholder and leadership engagement:** Explore strategies for involving both internal and external stakeholders, including leadership, in sustainability initiatives.
- **Public-private partnerships and collaborative governance:** Highlight models and examples of cross-sector collaboration to advance sustainability goals.
- **Natural resources & land use:** Examine approaches to managing and protecting water, air, soil, and other natural assets.
- **Environmental metrics and stewardship:** Discuss how organizations measure, monitor, and improve environmental performance across operations and the value chain.
- **Business value and financial benefits:** Demonstrate the tangible value and financial gains associated with sustainability efforts.

Proposals that effectively link these themes to real-world business decisions, collaborative partnerships, and measurable outcomes are strongly encouraged.



SESSION DESIGN & SPEAKER EXPECTATIONS

SBC places a strong emphasis on **educational, non-promotional content** that fosters peer learning and the practical application of sustainability best practices currently in use by businesses.

Effective proposals should:

- Feature **authentic business case studies** that showcase tangible and measurable outcomes.
- Include **cross-functional** and **cross-sector** viewpoints, ensuring a diverse array of insights and experiences are incorporated.
- Offer **practical takeaways** that attendees can apply immediately within their own organizations.
- Maintain alignment with conference theme, highlighting **collaborative, partnership-driven** approaches, moving beyond isolated or siloed initiatives.
- Integrate lessons learned, best practices, and **clearly demonstrate business value**.
- Present relevant **metrics and transparent methodologies** for assessing the impact of the topic or project discussed.

Speaker and Session Guardrails

- Sessions must be educational, not sales-oriented
- Consultants are required to co-present with a business or organizational partner
- Speakers must disclose relevant affiliations or financial interests with SBC leadership
- SBC retains final editorial and programming decisions

ELIGIBLE SESSION FORMATS

- **Panel Discussion:** A facilitated conversation among multiple experts sharing diverse perspectives and real-world experience on a focused topic, with time for audience Q&A.
- **Case Study:** A focused presentation highlighting a real-world business challenge, the approach taken, and lessons learned, with practical insights participants can apply.
- **Interactive Workshop:** A structured, hands-on session where participants actively engage in guided activities, exercises, and peer learning to build skills, explore tools or frameworks, and apply concepts in real time, with practical takeaways they can use immediately.
- **Facilitated Discussion:** A hands-on, participant driven session designed to encourage dialogue, collaboration, and practical problem solving through discussion.

Note: Final format selection may be adjusted to align with agenda flow and audience needs.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Proposals must be submitted electronically [at this link](#) and include:

- Session title and brief description (300 words or less)
- Primary track alignment (Environmental, Social, or Governance)



- Intended audience (e.g., beginner, intermediate, advanced)
- Proposed session format (panel, case study, workshop, or discussion)
- Speaker name(s), title(s), and organization(s)
- Sample of speaking, if available

Preference will be given to proposals that emphasize **collaboration, systems thinking, and integration across ESG pillars.**

REVIEW & SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals submitted for the SBC Conference will undergo a thorough assessment by SBC staff and the 2026 Conference Content Committee. The evaluation will be conducted using a standardized framework to ensure consistency and fairness throughout the selection process.

EVALUATION CRITERIA INCLUDES

- **Alignment with Conference Theme and Track:** Proposals must demonstrate a clear connection with the overarching conference theme as well as the selected track, whether Environmental, Social, or Governance.
- **Quality and Clarity of Learning Objectives:** Learning objectives should be precisely defined, realistic, and directly relevant to the session topic, enabling participants to understand what they will gain from attending.
- **Practical Value for Business Audiences:** Session content should offer actionable insights, tools, or strategies that businesses can readily implement in their operations.
- **Relevance to Sustainability Best Practices Across Sectors:** Proposals are expected to highlight how their approach or topic reflects recognised sustainability standards and practices, with emphasis on applicability across different industry sectors.
- **Speaker Engagement with SBC:** SBC values evidence of previous involvement or collaboration with its activities. Proposals from SBC Members will be given additional consideration in the evaluation process.
- **Demonstrated Outcomes and Lessons Learned:** The proposal should provide clear and measurable outcomes, such as examples of improved governance, enhanced performance, or increased return on investment. Specific metrics should be mentioned to illustrate the business benefits, particularly concerning workforce and financial performance, and to demonstrate ROI.
- **Leadership Lessons:** Each proposal should articulate the involvement of leadership, outline key learnings, and offer practical recommendations for future improvements.

KEY DATES

- Call for Proposals opens: April 28, 2026
- Proposal submission deadline: June 19, 2026
- Speaker notifications: starting in mid-July 2026



OTHER SPEAKER CONSIDERATIONS

Speakers will not be permitted to collect audience information directly. Instead, connections will be facilitated via a form provided by the SBC. (Exhibitors may collect information at their booths.)

Non-SBC Member speakers will be encouraged to purchase a discounted speaker ticket, priced at \$75, which contributes towards the cost of food and beverage. We recognise that sharing your expertise and skills requires a significant investment of time, and we are extremely grateful for your contributions to making our event successful. As an educational non-profit, we appreciate your support in helping us cost share with us. Exceptions can be made through our Executive Director.

Speakers will be required to sign a speaker agreement and participate in one to two planning calls ahead of the event.

SPEAKER EXPECTATIONS

outlines expectations to ensure sessions remain educational, non-commercial, and aligned with SBC's mission and values.

1. Your Role: You agree to participate as a speaker at the SBC Annual Conference on the agreed date(s) and time. Your session must support SBC's mission and deliver educational value to attendees.

2. Session Commitment: You agree to present substantially as described in your approved proposal. SBC reserves the right to request modifications to ensure alignment with conference standards.

3. Content & Non-Solicitation Policy: All sessions must be educational and non-promotional. The following are strictly prohibited during sessions:

- Sales pitches or service promotion
- Product demonstrations tied to commercial offerings
- Pricing discussions
- Direct or indirect calls-to-action (e.g., "book a call," "work with me")

Speakers may not solicit business from attendees unless they are an official SBC sponsor. SBC reserves the right to review presentation materials in advance and assign a moderator to ensure compliance.

4. Sponsorship Boundary: If you wish to promote your services, you must do so through an official SBC sponsorship package. Speaking alone does not grant promotional access.

5. Disclosure of Business Activity: If you are a consultant, service provider, or business owner, You agree to inform SBC of any business opportunities, client engagements, or revenue generated as a direct result of your speaking engagement at the conference. This includes work initiated through:

- Conversations at the event
- Post-event outreach referencing your session
- Attendee-initiated follow-up tied to your presentation



SBC may use this information in aggregate to evaluate conference impact and sponsorship value.

6. Marketing & Lead Generation: You may not collect attendee contact information during your session. QR codes, gated content, or lead capture tools are not permitted. Any follow-up must be initiated by the attendee independently.

7. Disclosure & Transparency: You must disclose any relevant financial, professional, or organizational interests related to your presentation content.

8. Recording & Content Rights: SBC will determine whether sessions are recorded. SBC owns all recordings; speakers retain ownership of their original content.

9. Compensation: Speaking is unpaid or included as part of a sponsorship agreement.

10. Changes or Cancellation: If you are unable to participate, you must notify SBC promptly. SBC reserves the right to modify session details or substitute speakers.

12. Professional Conduct: Speakers must maintain a professional, respectful environment.

13. Enforcement: Failure to comply with this agreement may result in

- Removal from the session
- Exclusion from future SBC events
- Ineligibility for future speaking or sponsorship opportunities

QUESTIONS?

For questions about the Call for Proposals or your submission, contact Executive Director, Jessy Servi Ortiz at Jessy@SustainableBusinessCouncil.org.

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION LINK

To submit a proposal, please do so at this link: [2026 Call for Proposals | SBC Conference](#)

Or copy and paste https://wmepsurvey.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8BrbC2Hx4gilNeK