Future-Fit
Business Benchmark

Action Guide

BE10

Employee health is safeguarded
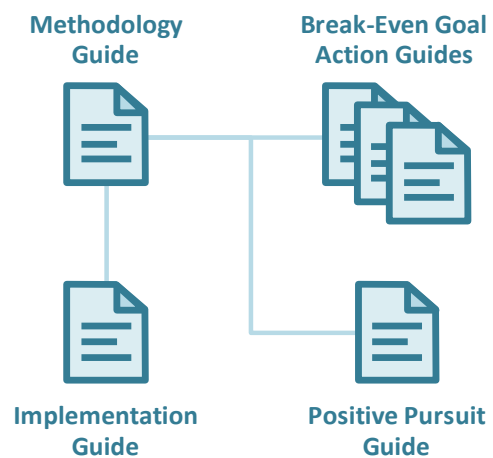
Release 2.2

Future-Fit
Foundation

About this document

*This document forms part of Release 2.2
of the Future-Fit Business Benchmark.*

Action Guide

This document is an Action Guide, offering specific guidance on how to pursue future-fitness with respect to a particular aspect of the business.

The text is written to be accessible to a general business audience: no academic or technical knowledge about systems science, sustainability practices, or other specialist topics is assumed.

Documents included in Release 2.2

Methodology Guide

The scientific foundations and concepts underpinning the Benchmark, together with details of its key components and how they were derived.

Break-Even Goal Action Guides

Guidance on how to transform business operations, procurement practices, and products in pursuit of future-fitness. There is one Action Guide for each of the 23 Break-Even Goals.

Positive Pursuit Guide

The kinds of activities that any business may undertake – above and beyond its pursuit of Break-Even – to speed up society's transition to future-fitness.

Implementation Guide

Supplementary guidance on how to begin pursuing future-fitness and how to assess, report on and assure progress.

All Release 2.2 documents are available for download here.

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Goal BE10

Employee health is safeguarded

1.   Ambition

A Future-Fit Business safeguards the health of its employees by ensuring physically safe work environments, having zero tolerance for harassment and bullying, and by nurturing emotional and mental wellbeing.

1.1   What this goal means

Companies that do not adequately address workplace[1] health issues may cause serious long-term negative health problems for their employees.

Note that "health" here extends beyond physical safety to mental and emotional wellness, and must encompass stress management and mitigation.

When it comes to physical safety, companies should take steps to minimize and mitigate the effects of accidents, and strive continuously to reduce work-related injuries, illnesses, and fatalities to zero.

To be Future-Fit a company must: (a) ensure the safety of all workers, (b) foster physical health (e.g. through proactive positions on exercise, nutrition and smoking), and (c) foster mental wellbeing (e.g. zero tolerance of bullying and harassment).

1.2   Why this goal is needed

As with all Future-Fit Break-Even Goals, a company must reach this goal to ensure that it is doing nothing to undermine society's progress toward an environmentally restorative, socially just, and economically inclusive future. To find out more about how these goals were derived based on 30+ years of systems science, see the **Methodology Guide**.

These statistics help to illustrate why it is critical for all companies to reach this goal:

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[1] The workplace extends to any company-owned or controlled facilities.

- **Regardless of a decades-long focus on corporate health and safety, there is still much work to be done to ensure workplace safety**. Globally, 2.78 million people die each year from a work-related accident or disease, and 374 million people suffer from a work-related accident or illness. [1]

- **Safety issues have huge financial consequences.** The economic burden of poor occupational health and safety practices is estimated at 4% of global Gross Domestic Product each year. [1]

- **Extending initiatives beyond traditional health and safety to focus on mental health can reap financial benefits.** A report by the WHO found that for every $1 spent on treatments for common mental health disorders there was a return of $4 in improved employee health and productivity. [2]

1.3 How this goal contributes to the SDGs

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collective response to the world's greatest systemic challenges, so they are naturally interconnected. Any given action may impact some SDGs directly, and others via knock-on effects. A Future-Fit Business can be sure that it is helping – and in no way hindering – progress towards the SDGs.

Companies may contribute to several SDGs by safeguarding the health of its employees, and actively encouraging their suppliers to do the same. But the most direct links with respect to this goal are:

	Support efforts to ensure everyone has access to safe and nutritious food.
	Support efforts to promote mental health and wellbeing.
	Support efforts to end all forms of violence against women and girls everywhere.
	Support efforts to ensure everyone has access to adequate sanitation while at work.
	Support efforts to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers.

1.4 Related goals

The purpose of this section is to help clarify the scope for this goal. It will help you understand which issues are covered by this goal, and where other goals apply instead.

- **Procurement safeguards the pursuit of future-fitness:** The *Employee health* goal applies to a company's employees only. The health of suppliers' workers is covered by

the *Procurement* goal. To determine whether a worker should be considered to be an employee or an independent contractor (i.e. and so treated as a supplier) see the **Implementation Guide**.

- **Operational emissions do not harm people or the environment**: The *Operational emissions* goal deals with substances intentionally or accidentally discharged directly into the environment. It is possible for companies to have emissions that occur inside their enclosed facilities (leaks, spills, etc.) which may have a reduced or limited effect on the natural environment, but which may have very negative health implications on employees. Even if these emissions or spills have negligible impact on the *Operational emissions* indicator, they should be considered as risk factors to be addressed by the *Employee health* goal.

- **Employees are paid at least a living wage**: The *Employee health* goal is focused on the work environment. The *Living wage* goal includes consideration for employees to afford healthcare, for themselves and their families, to foster health outcomes that are unrelated to their day-to-day employment.

- **Employees are subject to fair employment terms:** The *Employee terms* goal covers a separate and complementary set of criteria (including working hours, holidays, and leave) which help to ensure that employee wellbeing is not subverted through unfair contractual terms.

- **Employee concerns are actively solicited, impartially judged and transparently addressed:** The *Employee health* goal requires that companies proactively seek to ensure that employee health is safeguarded. The *Employee concerns* goal seeks to supplement this and other employee-related goals, by ensuring that employees are empowered to raise any problems that do arise.

2. Action

2.1 Getting started

Background information

Anticipating and mitigating the potential causes of workplace injuries and illness is a continuous and complex task, involving inputs from multiple sources: policy makers, trade and regulatory bodies, and the employees themselves.

Questions to ask

These questions should help you identify what information to gather.

How does the company currently identify health issues that must be addressed?

- Does the company have a proactive or reactive approach to health policy? Are issues more likely to be discovered via incidents that occur at company workplaces, the appearance of new legislation, concerns raised by employees or their representatives, or via a regular review performed by the company?

- Does the company work in an industry with government or industry group recommendations on best practices for employee health considerations? How are these reflected in the company's health policies?

How often does the company assess and update its policies?

- Does the company have a control process to regularly check for possible improvements in its health policies? Is this done at the company level? For individual departments?

- Does the company track work-related injuries and illnesses? How is the data broken down? Is the information self-reported by employees? If so, are there any factors that might discourage workers from reporting incidents (e.g. risk of losing pay as a result of taking sick leave, or safety-based performance rewards)? Who reviews this information, and how is it acted on?

- How is health policy information made available to employees? Is management confident that workers are knowledgeable of potential dangers and hazards, and know what action to take in the event of an accident?

How to prioritize

These questions should help you identify and prioritize actions for improvement.

In which areas could the company have the biggest impact?

- Are there particular groups of employees in specific locations or who perform specific tasks that could expose them to a greater risk of adverse health impacts?

- Which facilities or activities have the most reported incidents?

- Are there any significant differences in cultural or industry norms that could affect the company's approach to employee health?

In which areas could the company most easily make progress?

- For separate groups of employees performing similar tasks (e.g. at different locations, or at different times), do the same health and safety policies apply? Where there are differences, are they reflective of different risk factors unique to the circumstances? If not, are there opportunities to quickly replicate best practices across all locations?

- For the areas needing to be addressed, whose approval would be needed to implement new internal controls? Which teams would need to be engaged in

designing the solution? What resources would be required to communicate the new policy to employees? Would training be needed to bring employees up to speed?

Could the company find ways to *exceed* the requirements of this goal?

- Beyond what is required to reach this goal, is the company able to do anything to ensure that *people have the capacity and opportunity to lead fulfilling lives*? [2] Any such activity can speed up society's progress to future-fitness. For further details see the **Positive Pursuit Guide**.

The next section describes the fitness criteria needed to tell whether a specific action will result in progress toward future-fitness.

2.2   Pursuing future-fitness

Introduction

For a company to be Future-Fit with respect to this goal, all employees must be subject to effective health policies that fully satisfy all of the criteria categories described below.

Guidance on determining which workers are in scope as 'employees'

There are many different types of working relationships between a company and those contributing labour to its activities. It is important to distinguish who qualifies as a direct employee, and who is part of an outside organization providing services to the company. See the **Implementation Guide** for details on determining who is an employee.

Fitness criteria

There are six categories of criteria that determine the future-fitness of a health policy: physical safety in the workplace, mental wellbeing, physical activity, nutrition, smoking and support for lost time. An employee is considered to be subject to a Future-Fit health policy when all six categories are satisfied.

Physical safety in the workplace[3]

- Controls are in place to identify, assess, and eliminate or control hazards including:
  - Chemical, biological and physical hazards.[4]

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[2] This is one of the eight Properties of a Future-Fit Society – for more details see the **Methodology Guide**.
[3] 'Workplaces' include premises owned or leased by the company, in addition to sites that are not primarily controlled by the company, but where the company or its representatives are delivering or providing services or otherwise performing work.
[4] Examples of chemical hazards include solvents, asbestos and pesticides. Examples of physical hazards include noise, excessive heat and air pollution. Examples of biological hazards include mould and lack of clean water or hygiene facilities.

- Ergonomic, mechanical, energy and mobile hazards.[5]

- A risk assessment and mitigation program has been implemented, and all staff have access to information, training and (where applicable) tools addressing workplace risks that affect them, and documentation on associated internal controls.

- Workplace safety policies and activities are regularly monitored for new hazards, and improvements are made accordingly.

Duty of care to non-employees at company workplaces

Unlike the other categories in this goal, the criteria around *Physical safety in the workplace* apply not only to the company's employees, but also to visitors to company-owned or controlled sites and other workplaces. This includes but is not limited to: suppliers, partners, and (particularly in the case of sites such as retail stores) customers.

The risk assessment process, as well as internal controls related to employee safety, should include appropriate considerations for non-employee individuals. Companies should acknowledge that these individuals may have different levels of knowledge about the risks associated with that workplace (e.g. knowledge of where to go in the event of a fire), and that different forms of communication and (where appropriate) training may be required.

Mental wellbeing

- The organization has a zero-tolerance policy regarding bullying and harassment.

- Flexible working conditions are available to employees (when the job requirements make it possible to do so) in order to help them deal effectively with work-life conflicts, including flexibility in timing and location of work.[6]

- Employees have access to informational guidance or supporting resources (e.g. counselling services) to help address primary sources of stress at work, such as workload demands, lack of control/empowerment, lack of support from colleagues, inadequate resources, conflict relationships, unclear roles, and change fatigue.

Physical activity

- Employees are permitted to take breaks during working hours to ensure vigilance and physical fitness.[7]

- Timing and length of work breaks is flexible to facilitate exercise.

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[5] Examples of ergonomic hazards include awkward postures, heavy lifting and overly-repetitive physical actions. Mechanical hazards include risks from operating machinery. Energy hazards include risks from exposure to electricity. Mobile hazards include employees driving in dangerous conditions, or employees falling from heights.

[6] Flexible work schedules should not affect other benefits (e.g. health care provision, parental leave).

[7] See the ILO's Q&As on business and working time. [4]

Nutrition

- All company workplaces provide employees access to healthy eating options[8] on site or – in locations without catering facilities – within reasonable distance.[9]

Smoking

- All work environments are smoke free.

- All communal areas, both inside and outside, are smoke free.[10]

Support for lost time

- Companies have formalized policies in place to support and accommodate and/or financially compensate employees whose ability to work is affected by a work-related health issue or accident.[11]

3. Assessment

3.1 Progress indicators

The role of Future-Fit progress indicators is to reflect how far a company is on its journey toward reaching a specific goal. Progress indicators are expressed as simple percentages.

A company should always seek to assess its future-fitness across the full extent of its activities. In some circumstances this may not be possible. In such cases see the section *Assessing and reporting with incomplete data* in the **Implementation Guide**.

Assessing progress

This goal has one progress indicator. To calculate it the following steps are required:

- Assess the fitness of health policies with respect to each employee.

- Calculate the company's progress across all employees.

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[8] The definition of 'healthy food' varies significantly by region, so companies are encouraged to use relevant government-issued nutrition guidance and definitions when available to plan or assess the food options available to employees in a given location.

[9] 'Reasonable distance' is defined as within an area that allows time for travel to and back from the location, along with consumption of food, to be accomplished during the allotted break.

[10] The company may provide designated smoking areas, as long as they are set up to ensure non-smokers do not come into contact with second-hand smoke.

[11] See the *Definitions* section for an explanation of work-related health issues or accidents offered by the UK Health and Safety Executive.

Assessing fitness of health policies for each employee

Note that although fitness is measured on a per-employee basis, the assessment can be done by group (e.g. by location, job function, etc.), provided that all employees in a group are subject to the same health policies.

If employees' work functions, locations, or health policy details would cause the scoring of the progress indicator to differ, they should be evaluated separately. Some criteria are likely to vary by job type (e.g. support for lost time and flexible conditions may differ between labourers and management), others might vary by work location (e.g. smoke-free environments and access to healthy eating), and some may depend on multiple factors (e.g. physical safety in the workplace).

The company is **0% fit** with respect to any employee/group who has not been assessed, and also any employee/group for whom the health policy does not live up to the fitness criteria for the *Physical safety in the workplace* category – regardless of progress in the other categories.

If all criteria in the *Physical safety in the workplace* category are satisfied, the fitness score of the health policy is calculated incrementally as follows:

- **30% fit**: *Physical safety in the workplace* is the only category satisfied.
- **Add 20%**: If the *Mental wellbeing* category is satisfied.
- **Add 20%**: If the *Support for lost time* category is satisfied.
- **Add 10%**: If the *Smoking* category is satisfied.
- **Add 10%**: If the *Nutrition* category is satisfied.
- **Add 10%**: If the *Physical activity* category is satisfied.

For example, a health policy satisfying only the *Physical safety in the workplace*, *Mental wellbeing* and *Nutrition* categories would score 60% (= 30% + 20% + 10%).

Calculating company progress

Overall progress is calculated as follows:

- Identify the total number of employees in the company during the reporting period.
- Calculate progress as the weighted average fitness of the company's health policies across all employees.

This can be expressed mathematically as:

$$F = \frac{0(E_{0\%}) + 0.3(E_{30\%}) ... + 0.9(E_{90\%}) + 1(E_{100\%})}{E_T}$$

Where:

F Is the progress made by the company, expressed as a percentage.

$E_{x\%}$ Is the number of employees in the company whose health policies score is x%, based on which of the six fitness criteria categories are being met.[12]

E_T Is the total number of employees in the company during the reporting period.

For an example of how this progress indicator can be calculated, see here.

3.2 Context indicators

The role of the context indicators is to provide stakeholders with the additional information needed to interpret the full extent of a company's progress.

Total number of employees

In addition to the percentage of employees subject to health policies, the total number of employees that worked for the company during the reporting period must be reported.

Note that for this indicator it is not appropriate to use the average number of employees (e.g. equating two employees working 20 hours per week each to one full-time employee, or three workers employed for four months each as one full time job) as such methods would risk obfuscating the impacts on one or more of the individuals concerned.

Work-related incidents

The company should also report the following:

- number of **work-related accidents**, illnesses, and cases of disease[13] that caused lost time of more than one business day and how many days were lost.

- number of **work-related fatalities** (if any) that occurred within the reporting period.

It is acknowledged that some incidents are likely to occur year-to-year even in the most safety-conscious organizations. Reporting on both the structure of internal controls (via the progress indicator) and knowing their outcomes (via the number of incidents) will help stakeholders to determine whether the company's policies are sufficient on an ongoing basis.

For an example of how context indicators can be reported, see here.

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[12] For example, $E_{30\%}$ would be the number of employees with policies scoring 30% fit, because they work in a location and role where the *Physical safety in the workplace* category is the only one being met.
[13] Not including work-related fatalities.

4. Assurance

4.1 What assurance is for and why it matters

Any company pursuing future-fitness will instil more confidence among its key stakeholders (from its CEO and CFO to external investors) if it can demonstrate the quality of its Future-Fit data, and the robustness of the controls which underpin it.

This is particularly important if a company wishes to report publicly on its progress toward future-fitness, as some companies may require independent assurance before public disclosure. By having effective, well-documented controls in place, a company can help independent assurers to quickly understand how the business functions, aiding their ability to provide assurance and/or recommend improvements.

4.2 Recommendations for this goal

The following points highlight areas for attention with regard to this specific goal. Each company and reporting period is unique, so assurance engagements always vary: in any given situation, assurers may seek to evaluate different controls and documented evidence. Users should therefore see these recommendations as an illustrative list of what may be requested, rather than an exhaustive list of what will be required.

- Document the methods used to determine the number of employees of the company during the reporting period, and how these employees are categorized into groups for the purposes of the evaluation. Assurers may use this information to verify the accuracy of the calculated indicator.[14]

- Document the methods and frequency through which the company identifies and assesses hazards at its worksites. For each hazard identified through this process, retain any evidence of actions taken by the company to eliminate or mitigate it. This can help assurers to understand the approach taken by the company to ensure that potentially harmful conditions have been identified and addressed.

- Document the methods and frequency through which the company assesses the performance of the controls used to assess hazards at its worksites. When these assessments identify opportunities for improvement, retain any evidence of actions taken by the company to implement controls that address them. This can help assurers to verify that an appropriate evaluation process is in place and being used by the company.

- Document the ways in which the company communicates policies regarding bullying and harassment to employees, and any confirmation it gathers from employees

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[14] This information is relevant for all employee-related Break-Even Goals.

acknowledging that they have reviewed and understood the policies. Retain any notes or documentation from instances where policy breaches were responded to by the company. This can help assurers to verify that the employees are aware of the policy, and that enforcement occurs when appropriate.

- Retain any working notes and record sources used in the process of identifying regionally-appropriate nutritional guidelines for eating options at each worksite, and maintain documentation showing how these needs are addressed at each location. Assurers may use this information to verify the assessment of this criterion as described in this Action Guide.

- Document the policies for accommodating and/or financially compensating employees whose ability to work is affected by a work-related health issue or accident. Having this documentation can help assurers to understand and verify the existence of the systems in place to support employees.

For a more general explanation of how to design and document internal controls, see the section *Pursuing future-fitness in a systematic way* in the **Implementation Guide**.

5. Additional information

5.1 Example

ACME Inc. sells lemonade products. Its operations consist of two sites: a bottling plant and an office space. The company has a total of 250 employees: 50 working in the office and 200 at the bottling plant.

The 50 employees in the office space have health policies that score 80%, as they satisfy all criteria with the exception of offering support for lost time.

The 200 employees at the bottling plant do not have access to the same support mechanisms for stress as the office staff, and therefore do not meet the *Mental wellbeing* criteria. They also do not have access to support for lost time, and do not have flexibility to take breaks during their shifts. As a result, their health policies score only 50%.

The company can calculate its progress as:

$$F = \frac{0(E_{0\%}) + 0.3(E_{30\%}) \dots + 1(E_{100\%})}{E_T} = \frac{80\% \times (50) + 50\% \times (200)}{250} = 56\%$$

Context indicators

The company also reports that across a total of 250 employees, there was one work-related fatality of a bottling plant employee, and 15 work-related incidents that resulted in at least one day of lost time, with a total of 48 days lost from these incidents.

5.2 Useful links

Health@Work

Health@Work is a UK charity which has created The Workplace Wellbeing Charter, a standard with both online and formal assessment options. This guidance has been factored into our criteria for a Future-Fit health policy.

World Health Organization (WHO)

In 2010 the WHO published Healthy Workplaces: a model for action, a framework to assist companies in creating a healthy work environment. This guidance has been factored into our criteria for a Future-Fit health policy.

5.3 Definitions

Health

We use the definition provided by the WHO: [3, p. 100]

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease.

Work-related accidents

We use the definition provided by the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE): [4]

The fact that there is an accident at work premises does not mean in itself that the accident is work-related – the work activity itself must contribute to the accident. An accident is 'work-related' if any of the following played a significant role:

- *the way the work was carried out;*
- *any machinery, plant, substances or equipment used for the work, or;*
- *the condition of the site or premises where the accident happened.*

Guidance on defining work-related diseases is available on the HSE website.

Appendix 1: References

[1]   International Labour Organization, "Safety and Health at Work," [Online]. Available: http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/lang--en/index.htm. [Accessed 2 September 2017].

[2]   World Health Organization, "Mental Health in the Workplace," September 2017. [Online]. Available: http://www.who.int/mental_health/in_the_workplace/en/. [Accessed 11 October 2017].

[3]   World Health Organization, "Preamble to the Constitution of WHO as adopted by the International Health Conference," World Health Organization, New York, 1946.

[4]   Health and Safety Executive, "Key Definitions," [Online]. Available: http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/key-definitions.htm. [Accessed 18 August 2017].

Appendix 2: Licensing

The Future-Fit Business Benchmark is free to use, share and modify with a few conditions.

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Join the movement today

We must all play our part in society's journey toward future-fitness – and we'll get there faster if we work together.

For more information visit:
futurefitbusiness.org

Who we are

Future-Fit Foundation is the non-profit developer, promoter and steward of Future-Fit Benchmarks. Our vision is a future in which everyone has the opportunity to flourish. Given where we are today, this vision can only be realised through a rapid and radical shift in the way the global economy works.

Our mission is to catalyse that shift – by translating systems science into practical, free-to-use tools designed to help business leaders, investors and policy makers respond authentically and successfully to today's biggest challenges.

info@futurefitbusiness.org

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