Introduction

Sustainability is rooted in Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) origins, with time broadening the definition to cover a multitude of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) topics. Throughout this evolution, Social topics, such as people and their health, safety, and wellbeing, have been deprioritized, as sustainability is now more commonly associated with Environmental impacts.

As we work to revive the “S” in ESG, our global priorities around ESG – including net zero carbon commitments, social justice, and the future of work – are priority focus areas for L’Oréal that are redefining the role of EHS and opening opportunities to highlight EHS contributions. These connections are becoming clearer and more critical to address holistically in today’s world.

Increasingly, our EHS professionals are providing more value through business alignment with ESG efforts. L’Oréal was proud to host the first world summit on “Putting People Back into Sustainability” (April 2019) in collaboration with the Center for Safety & Health Sustainability. Additionally, we welcome a new decision by the ILO to make health and safety a basic fundamental right along with freedom of association, collective bargaining, elimination of forced labor, abolition of child labor, and elimination of discrimination.

To help visualize this shift, we have created the following model that emphasizes the interconnectivity and aims to show concrete links between people and their health, safety, and wellbeing with ESG issues, using the lens of climate change. We hope this model will help those working within health and safety and ESG to start to definitively “connect the dots” (as my good friend Kathy Seabrook always says!).

We understand that people contribute to the problem but that we are also connected to the solution. It’s together that we will protect the planet and, at the same time, improve our health, safety, and wellbeing whilst creating sustainable businesses #bethehummingbird.
Background

In daily life, we interact with multiple facets of health which have the potential to influence our mental and physical wellbeing, our environments, and our natural surroundings. These facets range from a number of psychosocial, physical, biological, socioeconomic, and environmental factors, among others, to culminate into a depiction of our “holistic health” and shape our qualities of life. Our moods, demeanors, physical capabilities, interactions with others, and emotions are all impacted by the layers of health. Health is delicate, yet resilient, as it ebbs and flows in tandem with its surroundings and consistently adjusts to stressors of our world.

For these reasons, our health demands as much attention as a social (“S”) topic as environmental (“E”) ones. In the ESG space “E” stressors are often emphasized with the most urgency for action due to the more obvious impacts, predictable risks, and measurable outcomes. Additionally, the “E” category has a powerful track record with an abundance of research and history to reference. The “S” and “G” topics of ESG are not as commonly monitored, and, thus, are not as commonly prioritized. Human health falls into the domain of human capital as a “S” topic and is often overshadowed by current “E” concerns in the world of sustainability.

As we move into an era projecting climate action failure, natural resource crises, extreme weather, and biodiversity loss*, our health stands at risk amongst these natural “E” concerns and displays prime opportunity to address health, safety, and environmental concerns simultaneously. The purpose of this work is to highlight the interdependencies that span both the ESG and human capital domains to showcase the interconnections between all realms of ESG and their impacts on our health.

*World Economic Forum’s The Global Risks Report, 2022 denotes these as major environmental risks over the next 10 years.
Contexts of Health

In discussing “health”, we frame the word under three intersecting categories:

1. **Natural Environment**, which is representative of an individual’s natural, physical surroundings—water, air, and land—at the community level and how these surroundings affect health and well-being where one lives and works.

2. **Occupational Health, Safety, and Well-being** to frame your health and well-being as it relates to the workplace.

3. **Individual Health**. These are items that fulfill essential needs to survive, aspirational needs to thrive, and support an individual’s development overall (such as how you show up in the workplace and as a member of the public health community).

This list is not extensive, but it creates a foundation to see health from interdependent perspectives from key aspects of one’s life: an individual level, the work environment level, and the community level. The Venn Diagram illustrates how these three themes overlap in real world application.

By understanding the variations of health, one can amplify and prepare for these facets, resulting in greater attenuation and change management, as impacts occur.
Connection Approach

Driver

Driver +
Natural System +
Workplace System +
Human System

Driver +
Natural System

Driver +
Natural System +
Workplace System

Climate Change

Diseases infect your body and spread through interactions with others

Biodiversity/
Biological:
Increase vectors, pathogens, hosts, and allergens

Biological Diseases: Impacts those working with people, such as emergency workers, post-disaster remediation, health care workers

Approach

Example
Connection Approach

When thinking about the connection between the different contexts of health, we think about it in four systematic layers—the driver, the natural system, the workplace system, and the human system. The images denote the general approach on the left with an example of the approach in action on the right.

• **The Driver is a risk point that results in impact on a system.** The driver sparks change in one or multiple systems. For example, climate change derives risks such as increased temperatures or increased GHG concentrations in the ozone.

• **From there, layer on or factor in a system.** Our example starts with the natural system, or your environmental surroundings, as it is the most “macro” level of environment. This system includes items such as air pollution and quality; water access and quality; biodiversity; biological pathogens, vectors, and diseases; land use; and climate and weather. Within this system, the driver is altering the ambient environment. Continuing the climate change example, increased temperatures result in an increase in vectors, pathogens, as they thrive in warmer temperatures.

• **Next, add in the workplace layer.** This system comprises workplace health and safety hazards and contributes to exposure and interaction with hazards. These include topics such as worker safety; materials handling and storage; and fatigue from shift work. Per the example, your workplace could be an ambulance, working emergency responses. One’s exposure to vectors, pathogens, and diseases increases as one interacts with those who are sick.

• **Lastly, add in the human system, which is one’s individual-level health or the yellow items.** These include aspects such as fitness; nutrition; and sleep hygiene, and these consider health impacts on an individual basis, such as responses or adverse outcomes from exposure.

One can start from any point in the approach and work forwards or backwards in connecting the pieces. The takeaway is that this is not a linear connection; the systems are interwoven and are influenced by multiple factors.
Example: Climate Impacts (driver)

- Increased temperatures
- Precipitation extremes and increased frequency of extreme weather events
- Sea Level rise
- Increased GHG concentration in ozone

Exposure: Workplace or Community

- Extreme heat/frequent heat
- Reduced air quality
- Reduced food supply or quality
- Reduced water support or quality
- Changes in pathogens or other infectious agents
- Land use changes resulting from migration
- Socioeconomic impacts affecting labor availability, supply chains, and quality of life

Environmental System Context

- Eco system change
- Land use change
- Infrastructure conditions
- Geography
- Agricultural production

Human System Context

- Age
- Gender
- Race and Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic status
- Education
- Access to health care/equity/nutrition
- Health

Human Health Impacts

- Heat-related illness
- Food, water, vector-borne, and sexually transmitted diseases
- Mental health stress
- Nutrition deficits
- Decreased access to infrastructure and services
- Asthma, cardiorespiratory, and lung problems
These layers coincide into a peak question: How do these systems interact and impact each other using the four basic components? This slide expands the climate change example from the previous slide to show all of the systems working simultaneously.

A **driver, Climate change** in our example, disrupts your workplace, human health, and natural systems, and in turn, these systems, contribute to amplifying the impacts.

The **systems can impact outcomes for worse or better** – it’s not guaranteed if the impacts will be positive or negative, as they all respond differently; They are simply multifaceted by nature.

As shown in this graphic, changes in climate system can cause human health impacts. Climate change drivers, such as air temperature rise; an increase in extreme heat; and sea level rise increase exposure to extreme heat, reduced air quality, changes in biological pathogens, and contribute to heat-related illnesses, vector-borne diseases, stress, and respiratory health concerns.

Alongside this are your environmental factors, shown in green, and your demographics, shown in yellow, amplifying the impacts based on natural and human systems.

The main takeaway is that this connectivity is complex with many potential interdependencies.
Driver: Climate Change

Key

- Driver
- Life Essentials
- Workplace System
- Environmental System
- Human Health System

Water: Availability

Physical Hazards: Atmospheric Conditions

Biological: Diseases

Heat increases/exposure

Air: Temperature rise

Food

Safety Needs

Built Environment: Indoors

GHG Concentration: Ozone

Air Pollution

Biological: Vectors, Pathogens, Bacteria, etc.

Hazard Materials Exposure (Chemical, Biological, Radioactive)

Life Safety: Incident preparedness

Fatigue, Shiftwork, and Psychosocial Hazards

Increase extreme weather events

Water: Quality

Biological: Disease

Air

Food

Driver: Climate Change

Life Essentials

Workplace System

Environmental System

Human Health System

www.erm.com

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C1 - Internal use
Driver: Climate Change

This web illustrates the direct and indirect relationships between our natural, workplace, and health systems through the lens of a climate change driver. These nodes are not extensive of all climate-driven impacts, but they demonstrate the interwoven relationship between the various health facets. The width of the arrows indicates strength of connection/evidence at this time.
Sources
Resources

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Resources

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Additional Resources - Global Context

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Thank you