

How to

# SOLVE A COMPLEX PROBLEM

Social and Environmental

In Your Company



## 1. DEFINE THE PROBLEM

Define the problem you're trying to solve within your company, supply chain, or an area your business serves.

**Example Problem A:**  
"Suppliers led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are under-represented within our supply chain."

**Example Problem B:**  
"Scope 3 emissions are significantly higher than the industry average, contributing to climate change and increasing material risks to the company."

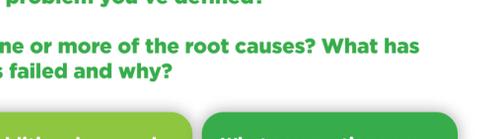


Describe the rationale for prioritizing this problem, including why it affects your company and those your company directly impacts.



Narrow in on who or what you want to positively impact. A certain population or community? A natural environment? Outline the boundaries of your focus.

## 2. ASSESS THE LANDSCAPE



What are the root causes of the problem you've defined?

What solutions could address one or more of the root causes? What has been tried elsewhere? What has failed and why?

Listen deeply to those affected by the problem to understand it from their perspective.

Do additional research to understand the problem by searching published literature, speaking with non-profits that are working on similar issues, or interviewing subject matter experts

What assumptions are you making about the problem? What do you need to confirm to validate your understanding of the problem?

Note: This landscape assessment will require more or less depth depending on the complexity of the problem

## 3. CREATE AN IMPACT GAPS CANVAS

Summarize your assessment of the landscape using an Impact Gaps Canvas. This is a learning tool developed by Daniela Papi-Thornton that visually summarizes the challenge landscape, the solutions landscape, and the gaps in between:

The challenge landscape is where you outline what you learned about the problem: who or what is impacted, what is holding the current status quo in place (root causes), the history of the problem, etc

The solutions landscape is where you outline what has already been tried, what has worked and what hasn't, how are these efforts connected and building upon each other, what future efforts are planned, and so forth

In the middle, is the Impact Gap. Use this section to outline what is missing in the whole ecosystem of the solutions landscape, what types of efforts are missing, why past efforts failed, what would increase impact, etc.

### IMPACT GAPS CANVAS



## 4. SET AN OVERARCHING GOAL AND PRIORITIES

To assess your progress, you need a goal.

Based on your research, you can set an overarching goal that describes what you want to achieve, by when, and for whom. Your goal should strike a balance between aspirational and realistic.

Now, looking at the Impact Gaps Canvas, which of the gaps can you fill, to create a bridge from the problem to the solution? These will become your priorities to achieve your overarching goal.

**Example of an overarching goal for Problem A:**  
By 2025, 50% of our supply chain will be filled by companies that self-identify as led by BIPOC.

- Example Priorities:**
- 1) Invest in BIPOC-led start-ups in our industry.
  - 2) Transform our supplier selection process.
  - 3) Create a DEI Policy Framework for our company.
  - 4) Increase BIPOC leadership within our company.

**Example of an overarching goal for Problem B:**  
By 2025, we will reduce our scope 3 emissions to 20% below the current industry average.

- Example Priorities:**
- 1) Set new standards for vendors, including emissions targets for each supplier.
  - 2) Support existing vendors to reduce their emissions.
  - 3) Cut vendors unable or unwilling to meet standards and emissions targets.

## 5. DEFINE OUTCOMES & TARGETS FOR EACH PRIORITY

What outcome are you trying to achieve through each priority? What objectives will you work towards?

Use data from the Avetta One platform to understand your current benchmarks, ratings, and worker insights.

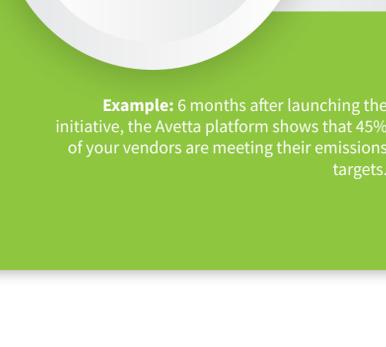
**Examples for Problem B, Priority #2**

**Outcome:** Maintain existing relationships, while working towards our goal of reducing Scope 3 emissions.

**Target:** Establish an emissions-reduction plan with 50% of current vendors by next year.

## 6. MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

Use data, including data collected from your suppliers within the Avetta One platform, to track your progress, monitor ESG ratings and maturity scores, diversity prequalification, and course-correct depending on industry benchmarks and data-driven insights. Use Avetta's custom reports based on your specific goals.



## 7. CELEBRATE AND SHARE SUCCESS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Host a celebratory event that brings internal and external players together where you discuss progress towards your overarching goal and targets, you highlight what you've accomplished, and outline your plan of action moving forward.



**About Charla Vall**

Charla Vall, Founder of Vall Impact Company and Avetta Fellow, helps organizations find the clarity, confidence, and capacity to create meaningful social and environmental change. To learn more or inquire about hands-on support tackling a complex social or environmental problem in your company, reach out to Charla through her website: [charlavall.com](http://charlavall.com) and follow her on social media:

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