

## Vendor Profile

# European Sustainability Index Vendor Profile: Oracle

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### IDC OPINION

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The IT industry plays a major role in mitigating environmental and societal risks. Technological innovation is an essential catalyst for enabling green transition, improving energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions, and resolving societal and environmental challenges exacerbated by the pandemic.

Oracle is one of the top performers among 29 ICT equipment manufacturers and infrastructure vendors assessed by IDC using this framework due to its long-standing commitment to corporate citizenship and a dedicated sustainability office; well-developed internal goal setting, monitoring, and reporting mechanisms; and a strong focus on sustainable practices.

### IN THIS VENDOR PROFILE

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This IDC Vendor Profile provides a detailed view of Oracle's own performance against IDC Europe's proprietary Sustainable Strategies and Technologies Index Market Maturity framework across three pillars: Technology Vendor Performance, Technology as an Enabler, and Technology for Good.

This document examines the vendor's performance against a set of criteria within each of these pillars, highlighting areas in which the vendor strongly outperformed the industry average and providing an overview of key drivers and events that will shape sustainability issues in the future.

Oracle recognizes the importance technology in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and applies these principles in its operations throughout its products and solutions, company operations, and through the Oracle Corporate Citizenship program. Oracle's internal goals revolve around cutting energy consumption by maximizing energy efficiency, embracing renewable energy aimed at lowering greenhouse gasses emissions, and reducing water usage and waste. The Oracle Corporate Citizenship program has been in existence for over three decades, whereas the company established its sustainability office in 2008.

IDC has selected the vendors for individual profiles based on their performance, proactivity, and transparent provision of material information.

### SITUATION OVERVIEW

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In recent years, European public and private organizations have been looking at sustainability as an area of increasing strategic priority. In fact, there is a large number of drivers for sustainable practices, placing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals and performance high on their agendas to future-proof their organizations, safeguard customer trust, and avoid pitfalls that may arise from non-adherence to best practices. These key drivers for sustainability include (but are not limited to):

- **Regulatory environment.** Legislators at local, national, and international level are constantly forging new laws and regulations around environmental issues, under strong influence from pressure groups, societies, industry bodies, governments, and individuals to replace existing voluntary agreements with concrete legislation.
- **Financial interest.** Suppliers that have sustainability strategies in place and execute them efficiently are reaping financial rewards, while those that lag their main competitors cannot capitalize on opportunities that come their way. It may be the case that by not investing in sustainability, some suffer financial ramifications as investors look the other way.
- **Conscious consumers.** Customer demand for sustainable IT goods and services is becoming a key driver for IT providers to adapt their business models and product offerings to remain relevant and continue thriving. Meanwhile, failing to adapt quickly to consumer demand for sustainability could mean loss of trust, investments, and profits for IT vendors.
- **Reputation and trust.** Trust is an important decision factor for many consumers when choosing IT suppliers as potential issues down the line may also damage customer reputations. Suppliers need to clearly demonstrate to customers their adherence to sustainable practices, leveraging it as a differentiator.
- **Technology availability.** With rapid technological developments, organizations are starting to use precise tools to calculate sustainability. For instance, carbon calculators enable customers and suppliers to gain control over their carbon footprints, a precondition for further actions leading to carbon emission reduction while demonstrating actions toward preserving the environment and committing to sustainable operations.
- **COVID-19.** The pandemic has made the need for sustainability more pressing, especially as the social impacts of COVID-19 are still rippling throughout the globe. The way we work and interact with society is integral to well-being, and many initiatives from individuals and states are having an impact for good.

## Introduction to IDC Europe's Sustainable Strategies and Technologies Index Framework

The events of 2020, from the COVID-19 pandemic to unprecedented social unrest and environmental disasters, have emphasized the delicate balance between nature and society. These events have also brought attention to the crucial role of all parties in society (individuals, organizations, governments, and the private sector) and the need for collaboration between them to help solve the challenges we face. The ICT industry is a fundamental piece of this puzzle, both as a culprit but more importantly, as a provider of solutions.

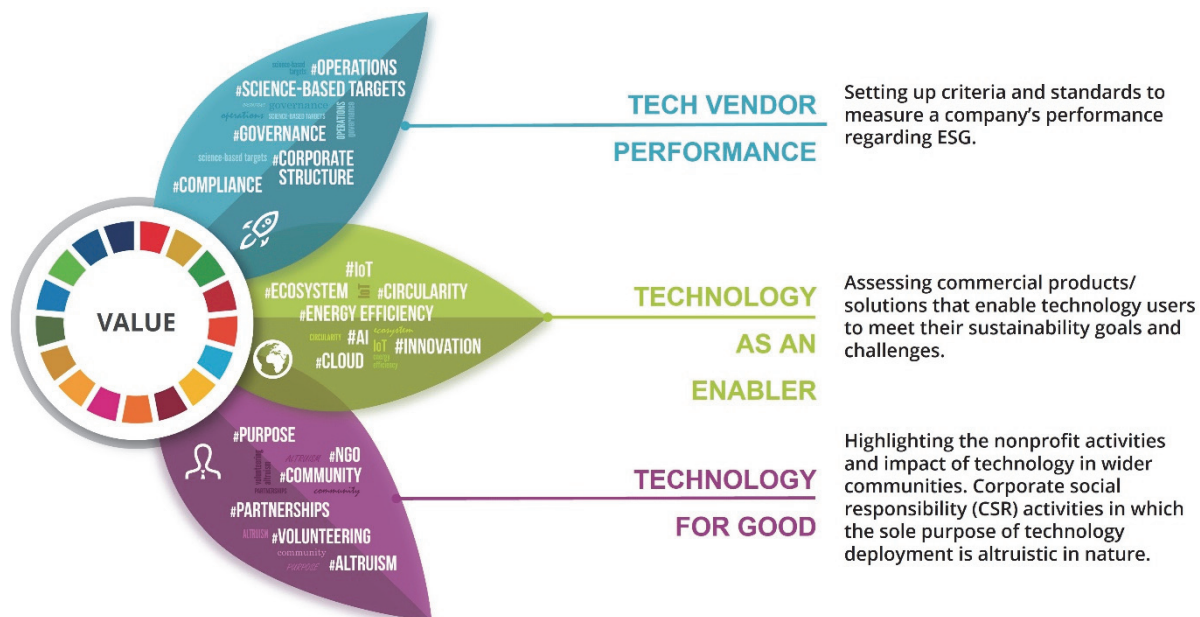
IDC Europe's Europe Sustainable Strategies and Technologies Index Framework considers the three main ways in which the ICT industry can enable sustainable enterprises and industries:

- How IT vendors and service providers perform with regards to setting and achieving their ESG indicators
- How they help their partners and customers to reach their sustainability objectives and goals through their portfolio of products and solutions
- How they behave as altruistic parties in enabling well-being across communities in need. IDC Europe's Sustainable Strategies and Technologies Index aims to provide a comprehensive vision of the current state of the European ICT industry regarding sustainability and social impact. It was created to reflect the ICT market's maturity in terms of sustainability achievements and initiatives as well as to help identify areas still in need of improvement.

For this, we are measuring ICT players across three key pillars: Technology Vendor Performance, Technology as an Enabler, and Technology for Good.

FIGURE 1

## IDC's Sustainability Framework: The Three Pillars



Source: IDC, 2022

### Technology Vendor Performance

The first pillar focuses on vendors' own performance against ESG-related attributes. The framework references ESG objectives and the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, applying the "monitor, measure, compare, and report" principle. The first pillar refers to vendors' and service providers' credentials, their performance against their goals and objectives, their aims in the coming years, and the progress and achievements they report.

### Technology as an Enabler

The second pillar refers to technology as a tool and a means to achieve sustainability-related goals. It focuses on the products, services, and solutions vendors offer their clients to meet their sustainability- and diversity-related goals. Product manufacturers can demonstrate how their product/solution portfolios help their respective clients/customers and differentiate from competitors.

### Technology for Good

The third pillar focuses on the altruistic side of vendors' activities and actions. The objective is to highlight vendors' achievement of good deeds through the deployment of technology while pursuing a good cause. This pillar encompasses nonprofit, altruistic activities and partnerships that many technology vendors have implemented to positively impact communities in need. This usually relates to these organizations' CSR activities.

The IDC Europe Sustainable Strategies and Technologies Index measures vendors against more than 200 parameters across these three pillars. With the framework in mind, this IDC Vendor Profile provides a detailed overview and assessment of its sustainability activities and strategy to date.

## Company Overview

Founded in 1977 as a Silicon Valley start-up, Oracle Corporation (Oracle) has since become the leading database management company globally. In December 2020, the organization moved its headquarters from California to Austin, Texas. The company's portfolio features infrastructure solutions (Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, Software, and Hardware) and applications (cloud applications, industry-specific solutions, NetSuite, and on-premises applications). Oracle employs 135,000 people worldwide and helps over 430,000 customers in 175 countries see data in new ways.

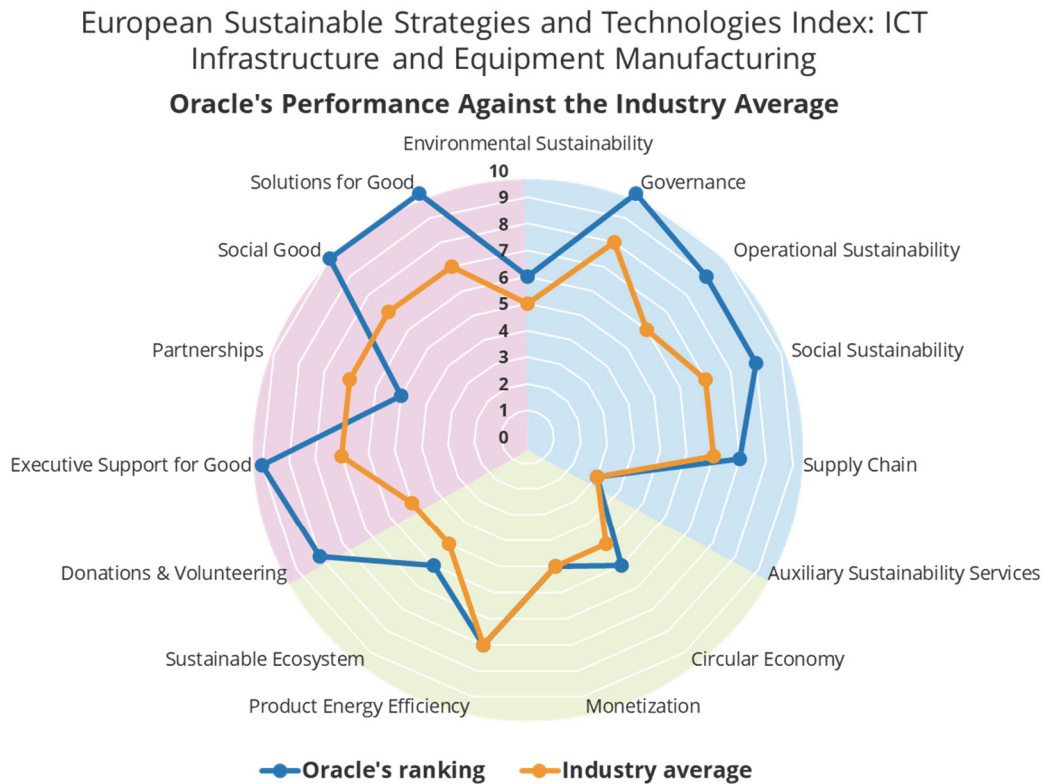
## Oracle's Sustainability Strategy

Oracle's approach to sustainability is rooted in the company's long-standing Corporate Citizenship program, established in 1989. The company has identified several key priority areas – education, giving, volunteering, sustainability, and health – with the latter fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic. These areas are being addressed through four main areas of activity:

- **Technological offering.** The company's technological offering – which was already enabling the next generation of work through digitization, enhanced collaboration, and productivity – became even more relevant during the pandemic. One of 2020's most mentioned conferencing platforms, Zoom – which was instrumental in maintaining a sense of normality for workers, students, and communities worldwide – is hosted on Oracle's cloud infrastructure. Furthermore, the company – in partnership with the Tony Blair Foundation – is providing governments in Ghana, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone with 10-year free access to the Oracle Health Management system, which helps contain major diseases, specifically supporting large-scale vaccination programs by digitizing records and bringing them to the cloud.
- **Environmental action.** In terms of effects on the environment from operations, the company has committed to run Oracle Cloud with 100% renewable energy by 2025. The company is also developing solutions that would help its customers and partners to operate more sustainably.
- **Philanthropic activity.** Employees are encouraged to volunteer through the Oracle Volunteers program, which in 2020 was also adapted to a virtual environment. During the past year, Oracle Academy and Oracle Education foundation provided invaluable support to educators and students, leveraging Oracle Cloud to bring classrooms to virtual environments.
- **Cultural engagement.** Oracle's efforts in fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion throughout the organization brought recognition in the form of awards from the Great Place to Work Institute. It also earned the highest rating (100%) for 14 years in a row on the Corporate Equity Index established by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

FIGURE 2

## Oracle's Sustainability Performance Against IDC's Sustainability Framework



Source: IDC, 2022

### Oracle's Performance Against IDC Europe's Sustainable Strategies and Technologies Index

Oracle was ranked sixth out of 29 companies measured in IDC's sustainability framework. Figure 2 illustrates Oracle's performance against the industry average (for IT equipment and infrastructure providers). The vendor showed strong performance across all pillars, outperforming the industry average with a score of 8 on the 10-point scale.

Oracle's strong performance stems primarily from the company's efforts in the third pillar, Technology for Good, in which it scored 9 out of 10. Oracle also ranked above industry average on the remaining two pillars with 8 out of 10 for Technology Vendor Performance and 6 out of 10 for Technology as an Enabler.

#### Pillar 1: Technology Vendor Performance

Oracle placed among the top 5 out of 29 vendors tracked for the first pillar. The vendor outperformed the market on all five key categories (Governance, Social Sustainability, Supply Chain, Operational Sustainability, and Environmental Sustainability).

## Governance

Well-established internal governance practices within the organization gained Oracle a place in the top 5 vendors in this category. Oracle scored the maximum of 10 points in the governance category due to its efforts and focus on:



























- **Implementing a sustainable development strategy.** A long-standing commitment to corporate citizenship for over three decades and having established a dedicated sustainability office since 2008.
- **Strong executive sponsorship** and full accountability for corporate responsibility and sustainability management from CEO Safra Catz and CSO Jon Chorley.
- **Established sustainability team on both corporate and regional level.** Oracle's Environmental Steering Committee consisting of representatives from different business groups in charge of managing sustainability for their line of business, while the Corporate Citizenship Team is responsible for education, volunteering, and donations.
- **Clearly defined environmental policy** is in place, focusing on minimizing the business' adverse impact on the environment and working with customers to develop solutions that will help them manage their own environmental efforts.
- **Sustainability reviews.** Establishing a thorough and frequent review process for sustainability policies and practices; after performing a two-day annual review, a cross-functional sustainability team convenes monthly to review the progress toward targets and update action items, while the company's Environmental Steering Committee holds quarterly meetings. New goals are set every five years.

Through its operations, product development and engagement with customers, and corporate citizenship program, Oracle's efforts are aligned with 10 out of the 17 UN SDGs (Figure 3)

- **Oracle's operations** place an emphasis on responsible management of natural resources, supply chain transparency and compliance, and operating a clean, circular, and efficient Oracle Cloud. The company's 2025 goals focus on three core areas with quantified KPIs: energy and emissions, supplier engagement, and water and waste.
- **Oracle's solutions** range from cloud operations, the use of emerging tech, tools to optimize business operations, risk, and performance management analytics, targeting issues such as management of resources, reporting, risk management, value chain execution, implementation of smart cities projects, facilitating design for environment, and a sustainable supply chain.
- **Through Oracle's Corporate Citizenship program**, the company executes all giving, volunteering, and educational initiatives, some of which include supporting educational equality, closing the gender gap in technology, land protection and restoration, waste reduction, and promoting sustainable farming.

**FIGURE 3**

**Intersection of Oracle's Main Goals With the UN's SDGs**

UN's 17 SDGs		How does Oracle address these goals?		
Main Goals for Oracle		Through Oracle Operations	Through Oracle Solutions	Through Oracle Corporate Citizenship
 <b>GOAL 2: Zero hunger</b>				
 <b>GOAL 3: Good health and well-being</b>				
 <b>GOAL 4: Quality education</b>				
 <b>GOAL 5: Gender equality</b>				
 <b>GOAL 8: Decent work and economic growth</b>				
 <b>GOAL 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure</b>				
 <b>GOAL 10: Reduced inequality</b>				
 <b>GOAL 11: Sustainable cities and communities</b>				
 <b>GOAL 12: Responsible production and consumption</b>				
 <b>GOAL 13: Climate action</b>				

Source: IDC, Oracle, 2021

**Social Sustainability**

This category relates to corporate policies fostering diversity and inclusion, related goals, education, and strategies in place to achieve these goals. With a score 9 out of 10, Oracle outperforms the industry average (7) and solidifies its position as one of the top vendors in social sustainability, particularly regarding policies related to workforce empowerment, customer trust and privacy, diversity, and inclusion.

Oracle employees are encouraged to set up "Green Teams" that champion regional sustainable initiatives. The vendor offers recognition to exemplary efforts undertaken by employees either at work or in their personal lives. Furthermore, the company performs mandatory compliance training on corporate responsibility and sustainability strategy, with resources made available during the onboarding process as well.

In terms of diversity and inclusion, Oracle has undertaken important steps in promoting greater inclusivity, with programs related to gender, ethnicity, and diverse abilities.

## Operational Sustainability

Oracle is one of the top performers in the Operational Sustainability category, which relates to incorporation of sustainable practices in day-to-day operations, including waste and resource management, responsible travel, and ongoing analysis and tracking of key sustainability-related metrics (e.g., carbon footprint, energy usage). The company scored 9 out of 10, outperforming the industry average of 6.

Nearly 60% of the operational waste from Oracle-owned buildings is being diverted from the landfill, and the company has deployed its own technology to actively track, analyze, and report on key environmental indicators. The vendor places emphasis on responsible travel by providing employees with a number of programs to promote an alternative to commuting (such as shuttle services, carpooling, biking to work), emphasizing the use of communication technologies when possible to avoid travel.

## *Pillar 2: Technology as an Enabler*

Looking at the second pillar, Oracle outperformed the market on two out of the five key categories (Circular Economy and Sustainable Ecosystem) and was on par with the industry average on the remaining three (Auxiliary Sustainability Services, Monetization, and Product Energy Efficiency).

## Circular Economy

The company is one of the top 10 leaders in this category and outperformed the industry average (5) by scoring 6 out of 10. Oracle has excellent product life-cycle services, incorporating a wide variety of programs to encourage the remanufacture/recycling of its own equipment, including free disposal, recycling, reselling, buy-back, upcycling, and remanufacturing, while also providing disposal, recycling, and reselling services for items manufactured by other vendors. Besides compliance with regional regulations applicable to recycling, Oracle also offers customers financial credits on certain systems. Oracle's products are manufactured following the Design for Environment (DfE) product guidelines, and they are also designed for serviceability to ensure ease of repair and disassembly.

Regarding materials, Oracle's primary products use 100% recycled plastic materials. The company reports annually on the treatment of conflict materials and requires suppliers to run due diligence, assurance, and reporting processes on their mineral sourcing. Lastly, the vendor adheres to the European Packaging and packaging waste directive 94/62/EC (1994), aimed at promoting reuse and recycle as well as limiting waste, and all of Oracle's packaging materials are recyclable.

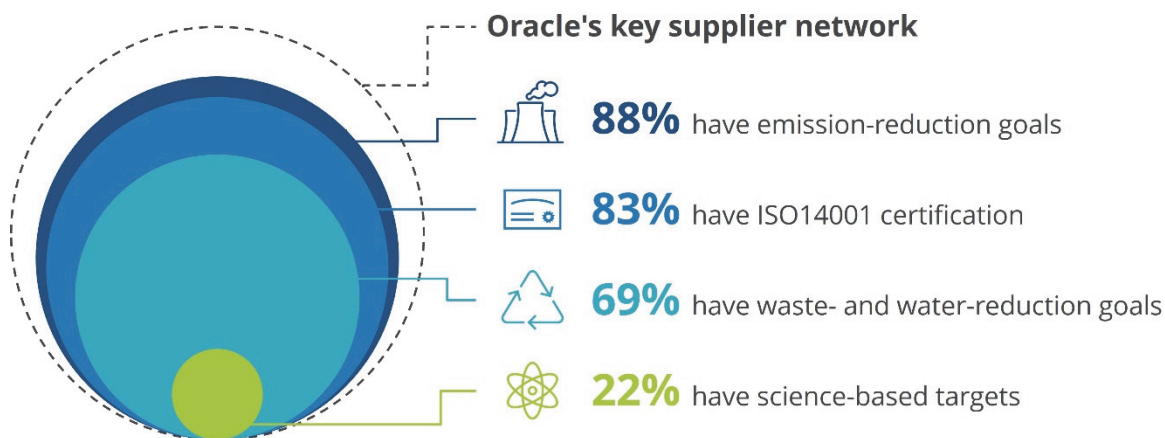
## Sustainable Ecosystem

Oracle also outperforms the market average (5) in the sustainable ecosystem category, scoring 6 out of 10. The company provides support and services to its sales staff and customers on the company's take-back program, available through collateral materials and Oracle's website. It also actively works with suppliers to acquire as much data as possible on the origin of materials and any related environmental impact (Figure 4). The company's entire network of partners, together with their resellers and employees, are expected to follow Oracle's Partner Code of Ethics and Business Conduct. Oracle also uses technology solutions and monitoring mechanisms to track sustainability indicators across its entire logistics ecosystem.



FIGURE 4

## Sustainability of Oracle's Key Supplier Network



Source: IDC, Oracle, 2021

### Product Energy Efficiency

Oracle matched the industry average in this category, which is already significantly advanced, with 8 out of 10 points. The company can provide a variety of certificates and eco labels, including Energy Star, EcoDesign EU 2019/424, Energy Efficiency (SERT), which vary by product category.

### Pillar 3: Technology for Good

For Technology for Good, Oracle ranked 6th out of 29 vendors analyzed for this index. The vendor outperformed the industry average on most categories, including Donations and Volunteering, Executive Support for Good, Social Good, and Solutions for Good.

### Donations and Volunteering

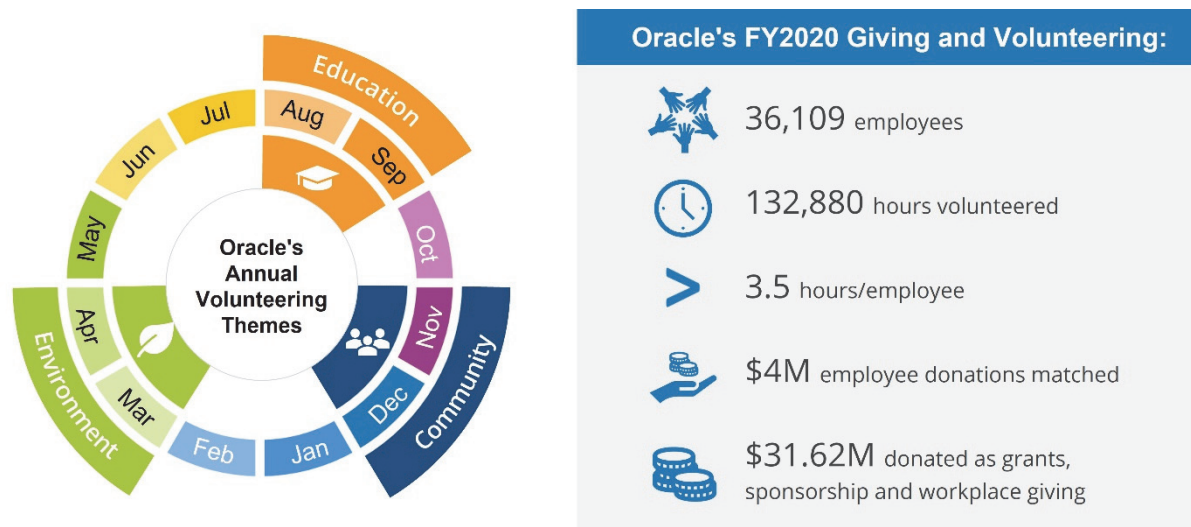
Oracle scored 9 out of maximum 10 points in this category due to its extensive support and programs for giving and volunteering. During the company's 2020 financial year, it donated 0.07% – \$21.62 million – of its revenue for good causes worldwide. This figure includes \$4 million in matched employee donations. In the same year, employees recorded 132,880 hours of volunteering. The company's corporate volunteering policies has rotating focus throughout the year:

- Every March and April, employees engage in actions to preserve the environment in partnership with environmental organizations.
- Throughout August and September, employees provide support to educational institutions, students, and related nonprofits.
- November through December, activities focus on community support.

Regarding donations, Oracle's program matches \$1,000 of funds donated for a good cause per employee each year.

**FIGURE 5**

**Overview of Oracle's Donations and Volunteering Activities**



Source: IDC, Oracle, 2021

**Executive Support for Good**

Oracle ranks as best-in-class in terms of Executive Support for Good, with the maximum rating of 10 points, ahead of the industry average of 7. The company's CEO and Board Member, Safra Katz, is directly engaged with Oracle's Corporate Citizenship program.

**Social Good**

Oracle also scored the highest on the 10-point scale in Social Good initiatives due to its efforts in facilitating employee community involvement and provision of grants and placement programs for young people interested in technology. The company places strong focus on education support to foster skill development, innovation, and diversity in tech, achieved with the help of Oracle Academy and Oracle Education Foundation, dedicated to providing young people with science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) skills and knowledge. In Europe, Oracle supports with grants the community nonprofit Voedselbank Amsterdam as well as education nonprofits JINC (Netherlands) and Prince's Trust (U.K.). Oracle's Employee Resource Groups facilitate networking of employees with diverse backgrounds, aiming to foster inclusion within the company and focusing on inclusive recruitment, community outreach, and employee retention. Oracle employees are also encouraged to collaborate with educational nonprofits to provide workshops and mentorship to young people interested in technology.

**Solutions for Good**

With a wide range of solutions benefitting health and well-being, education, equal opportunities and living standards, climate change, and disaster response, Oracle places at the top of the industry for this category, with the maximum score of 10, surpassing the industry average (7). The company's strategy in this sphere focuses on partnering with organizations in developing countries to improve health, education, and standards of living. In Europe, the company operates mainly through the Oracle Startups program, an example for which is the partnership with U.K.-based startup Gapsquare, with a platform running on Oracle Cloud to analyze remuneration structures within companies for pay transparency, especially for closing gender and ethnicity pay gaps.

## FUTURE OUTLOOK

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### Focus on Sustainability Goals

Sustainability is becoming a prevalent topic in conversations about business strategy globally, and the IT industry is in the center of this. With technology's capabilities to tip the scales of environmental change, IT vendors are obligated to stand at the forefront and lead by example with best practices. This requires assertiveness in setting short- and long-term ESG goals and ambitions to overcome current societal issues, whether they are caused by the pandemic, social inequality, or global warming. Targeted action is imperative because vendors that are inflexible and do not adapt quickly will fast fall behind the rest of the industry, which is already implementing changes on various levels, and hesitation will result in loss of trust by customers, employees, and investors; potential fines for non-compliance; declining market share; and financial losses.

Oracle is one of the trailblazers in leading this change with a well-rounded sustainable strategy, implementation, and portfolio, according to IDC's assessment of 29 prominent vendors in the IT market. But regardless of the encouraging nature of future sustainable IT, current achievements do not necessarily guarantee future success. It is important to maintain tangible (science-based targets) together with intangible (CSR-related) indicators that are frequently adjusted to adequately reflect current achievements and desired outcomes.

### Regulatory and Legal Environment

The ever-changing body of legislative regulation in the EU and individual countries in Europe pose a challenge to many IT vendors, and they need to comply with an increasing amount of sustainability-related regulation to continue operating in the region.

Currently, the European Green Deal underpins this framework, and its commitment is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Europe by 2050. This has two major implications for the IT sector. First, companies need to strike the right balance between the amount of GHG emissions released from operations and the amount removed from the atmosphere to achieve net-zero by 2050. Second, the industry needs to make big strides in improving IT hardware efficiency to slow down energy consumption growth. Some European programs, such as the Next-Generation EU financial framework, are targeting the development and implementation of greener and more energy-efficient datacenters, among other areas.

For example, IT vendors can greatly contribute to these efforts by ramping up R&D to improve product design and energy efficiency and by embracing circular economy principles to minimize waste. They can also integrate advanced technologies into their offerings, such as AI/DevOps for predictive analytics to optimize business processes and energy consumption across all operational siloes.

### Advice for Oracle

#### ***Continue Working Toward Creating a Wider Sustainable Ecosystem of Customers and Partners***

With excellent performance across a wide range of criteria and strong support from senior leadership toward ESG practices, Oracle is already one of the leaders in sustainable IT. It needs to continue leading by example and expand its network of partners and customers engaged in this topic to create a wider sustainable ecosystem. At the end of 2019, 58% of European companies were incorporating sustainable objectives in their RFPs when choosing IT providers (*IDC European Services Survey*, 2019). In the next few years, IT vendors' sustainable practices and their ability to prove their solutions can help customers achieve their own ESG goals will become a major differentiator factor for IT decision makers. Oracle needs to amplify messaging around its dedication to sustainability, demonstrate full supply chain transparency, and focus on solutions that can help customers improve their own KPIs related to sustainability.

#### ***Consider Further Developing Monetization Strategies and Auxiliary Sustainability Services***

Oracle has a well-developed corporate citizenship program, and it should focus on advancing its performance in the categories from Pillar 2, such as monetization and creating auxiliary sustainability services. Many IT vendors underperform in this area as this is an advanced step that established organizations tend to follow only after social good practices and sustainable operations have been implemented. Oracle's products demonstrate a range of sustainability benefits through a commercial portfolio with wide geographical coverage, supported by case studies and reference projects. The next step would involve building out a dedicated consulting capacity to proactively engage with customers at this level and solidify its position as a preferred partner for sustainable IT.

#### ***Expand the Oracle Start-up Network in Europe***

At the moment, Europe is the most advanced region in terms of regulations pushing for greener IT. Furthermore, the continent is becoming a technology innovation hub for start-ups focusing on social good and sustainability. These are propelled by regional incentives, such as the European Innovation Council (EIC) Accelerator program, providing over €1 billion in funds to 293 companies (*IDC Market Glance: European Technology Start-Ups for Sustainable Development* – IDC #EUR247507821, March 2021). By proactively attracting some of Europe's sustainability-focused new businesses, Oracle for Startups can demonstrate its dedication to helping advance the continent's sustainability agenda and solidify its relationship with customers in the region. This can be a significant differentiator as many global IT vendors lack a strong European focus.

## LEARN MORE

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### Related Research

- *Sustainability Index Vendor Profile: Cisco* (IDC #EUR248149020, September 2021)
- *Sustainability Index Vendor Profile: HP Inc.* (IDC #EUR248000020, July 2021)
- *European Sustainability Index Vendor Profile: Xerox* (IDC #EUR147930221, June 2021)
- *Sustainability Index Vendor Profile: Nokia* (IDC #EUR147188621, May 2021)
- *Sustainability Index Vendor Profile: Epson* (IDC # EUR147613321, April 2021)
- *European Sustainability Index Vendor Profile: Ricoh* (IDC #EUR247535320, March 2021)
- *IDC Europe Technology for Sustainability and Social Impact Index Market Maturity Report: Infrastructure and Enterprise Equipment Manufacturers* (IDC #EUR146127520, February 2021)

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