



## Global Pathway for Equitable Online Platforms and Improved Climate Action

### Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals



Innovations are highly important for the economic development of nations worldwide, but how can we ensure economic growth is also following a sustainable trajectory, including lower climate impact as well as social equality? Platform economies are one such innovation which are currently growing rapidly, but are infamous for breaking social paradigms and can have a large influence on climate action.

### Transformation to the new system

#### Designing new regulations

In order to guide a world with a sharing economy, it is necessary to design new regulations that deal with the problems of inequalities. Unfairly treated 'freelancers' working those platforms should be having the same labor rights as 'conventional' employees. New regulations will force the platforms to deal with them properly.

#### Stimulate sustainability

To ensure climate action (SDG 13) in combination with sustainable innovation and industry (SDG 9) it is important to support niche markets and projects that are committed to reach these two goals. This can be done with financial support for these projects and platforms to diffuse and reach potential customers.

#### International scope

Online platforms are not geographically bound, which means they operate internationally. For this new system to operate well, contribution and agreements on a global level are necessary. Cities also operate internationally in a way, as they occur all over the world and have networks between them, which can enable them to work together on issues and benefits related to the sharing platforms.

### Problems of Platform Economies

#### Impact on Climate Change

Online platforms in the mobility sector have relevant impacts on Climate action. While carsharing is associated with reducing traffic and carbon emissions, this is not the case for all mobility platforms. Uber is known to have negatively impacted climate action in cities where users prefer to hire private Uber rides instead of taking public transport, begging the question whether mobility platforms in cities are promoting sustainable mobility at all.

#### Unfair Economy and Society

Online platforms have been disruptive to several markets, since they are not subject to the same regulations as firms providing similar services outside the platform system. Users of the AirBnB services do not need to undergo the same licensing and tax procedures normal hotels and bed-and-breakfasts do. Users of delivery platforms such as Deliveroo are subject to rapidly changing payment-rates, but having no official employee status gives them little labour protection.

#### Monopolistic

Most large platforms that have been rapidly growing in the past years hold capitalistic values, and do not allow for platforms that provide similar services in more socially and environmentally sustainable ways to compete in the market. There is a lack of regulation to fix this.

### Institutionalization and its impacts on the SDG's

Once policies on regulations regarding the inequality issues of consumers and employees provide a well organised legal basis for online sharing and gig platforms to operate. Continuation of the use of sharing and gig platforms will lead to behavioural change and to people developing an overall 'sharing mindset'. This will shift the now consumption based economy towards a more collaborative sharing economy- with firms shaping their role as not only market players, but as also as providers of civil services and infrastructure in conjunction with municipalities.

- SDG 9: Better global infrastructure and inclusive and sustainable innovation will develop by strengthening city networks through working together to find common policy regulations for economic platforms.
- SDG 10: Equality in cities all over the world will increase by creating equal regulations in global cities. Furthermore with the protection of employees and the development of sharing opportunities equality will also increase.
- SDG 13: Climate action will increase with this shift towards a sharing economy as less resources are depleted.

### Pockets of the Future

The City of Seoul aims to develop new sharing infrastructures such as co-working spaces, residential houses with shared spaces, car- and bike sharing, etc. to improve quality of life and urban sustainability. These practices include

- economic incentives to stimulate sharing economy start-ups,
- planning approaches with regard to shared(public) spaces
- coordination and information measures to stimulate innovation and adoption of sharing models.

Although not working towards an increase in GDP per se, the aim for an inclusive, innovative model for sharing infrastructure is in line with goal 9.2.

Mayor of San Francisco, Ed Lee, has set up the Sharing Economy Working Group to take on sharing-related regulations, whilst looking at the economic benefits and emerging policy issues around the sharing economy. With help from Shareable, a non-profit news, action and connection hub for the sharing transformation, they were able to get in contact, and work together with local entrepreneurs from, among others, AirBnB.

Urban areas provide the best circumstances when it comes to sharing and gig economies to develop and thrive.

### Existing Examples

