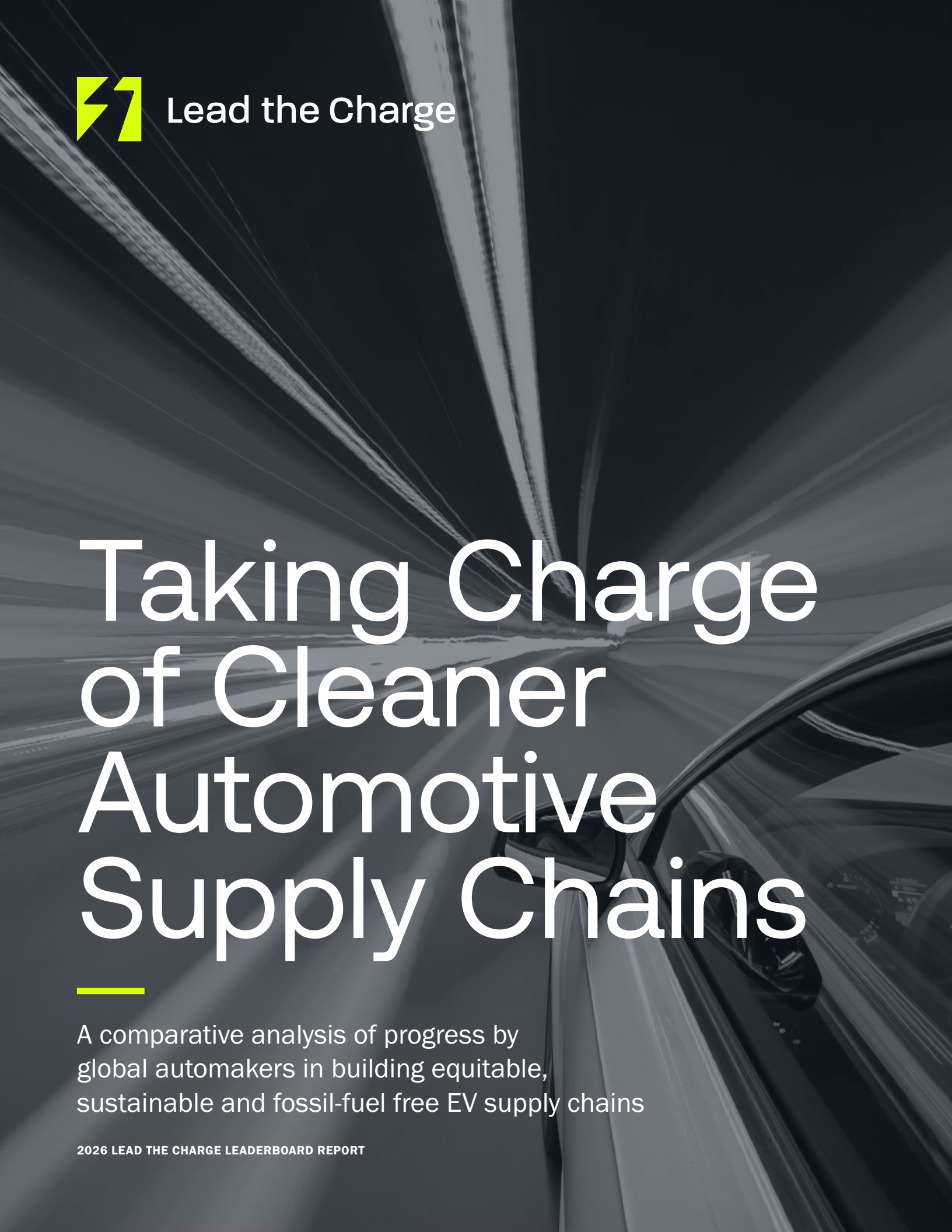


Lead the Charge

Taking Charge of Cleaner Automotive Supply Chains

A comparative analysis of progress by global automakers in building equitable, sustainable and fossil-fuel free EV supply chains

2026 LEAD THE CHARGE LEADERBOARD REPORT

CONTENTS

About this report

This is the fourth annual Leaderboard on automotive supply chains, published by Lead the Charge. The Leaderboard evaluates 18 of the world's leading automakers on their efforts to eliminate emissions, environmental harms, and human rights violations from their supply chains. This report summarizes and analyzes the key findings from the Leaderboard, highlighting progress and gaps, calling out leaders and laggards, and identifying challenges and opportunities for the year ahead. The full dataset of the Leaderboard, together with additional data on individual company performance, can be found on the Lead the Charge website:
Lead the Charge website.

Design: Studio Lake.

CHAPTER 001

Executive Summary

The Lead the Charge Leaderboard explained

The Lead the Charge Leaderboard assesses 18 of the world's leading automakers against over 80 indicators that evaluate their efforts to eliminate emissions, environmental harms, and human rights violations from their supply chains. The Leaderboard aims to establish a new expectation – and competitive advantage – for what it means to produce a truly clean car: not just an electric vehicle (EV), but an EV with an equitable, sustainable, and fossil-free supply chain.

Automakers are given a **percentage score,** out of a maximum of 100%. This enables an analysis of relative performance between automakers and how close each automaker is to the scorecard's expectations of what it means to produce a clean car. Automakers' overall scores are derived from their total scores in each of two sections of the Leaderboard, with each section given equal weighting.

The first section ("**Fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains**") evaluates their efforts to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and environmental harms from across their supply chains. The second section ("**Human rights and responsible sourcing**") evaluates their efforts to prevent, mitigate and remedy human rights abuses in their supply chains, and to source responsibly produced minerals and materials to build their vehicles.

Each of the two Leaderboard sections is further broken down into four subsections. Two "**General" subsections** assess each automaker's overall approach to mitigating environmental and human rights risks/impacts across its full supply chain. The remaining six **issue-specific subsections** evaluate how effectively companies address critically important sources of environmental and human rights impacts within *EV* supply chains: the climate and environmental impacts of **steel, aluminum** and **battery** production; violations of the **rights of Indigenous Peoples** and **workers** in the supply chain; and human rights abuses linked to **transition mineral extraction**. Automakers' climate lobbying track records, as measured by LobbyMap, is also taken into consideration as a modifier for their scores in the climate & environment section.

In order to reward automakers' progress towards the *delivery* of clean vehicles, scores in each of the subsections are weighted towards the indicators requiring evidence of actual implementation, as opposed to merely establishing policies, targets and commitments.

Scores are based on a comparative analysis of company policies and activities as disclosed in publicly available company reporting that has received board level sign off, as opposed to press releases, media or third-party reports. The cut-off date for company disclosures to be included in the analysis was July 01, 2025. Now in its fourth edition, the Lead the Charge Leaderboard makes it possible to continuously track company and industry progress.

Results from the 2026 Leaderboard

Ramping up progress towards even cleaner electric vehicles

This year's Leaderboard findings show that momentum is building towards an even cleaner EV, which doesn't just run on electricity but is built using decarbonized and circular materials, such as fossil-free steel and recycled battery minerals, and in a manner that respects the rights of workers and communities throughout its value chain.

Although we are still a long way off from this goal, the progress identified in this year's report shows that it is increasingly within reach. This year's best-in-class score —the highest score an automaker could achieve simply by emulating the *existing* best practices of peers across different areas — now stands at 86%, a resounding demonstration that clean and equitable supply chains are attainable. The average score across all 18 automakers has also risen for the third consecutive year, showing continued momentum.

Automakers have made the most substantial improvements to their overall approaches to addressing environmental and human rights impacts in their supply chains: the average score in this area has nearly doubled since the first edition of the Leaderboard in 2023.[1] This shows that sustained progress on overall policies and practices for supply chain sustainability and human rights due diligence is possible.

Progress has been significantly slower in the six specific issue-areas evaluated by the Leaderboard, where the average score increased by just 7 percentage points between 2023 and 2026—less than half the improvement seen in overall approaches over the same period.[2] Progress in these areas is crucial, as they evaluate automakers' efforts to address critically important sources of environmental and human rights risks and impacts in their EV supply chains.

However, some foundational steps in these areas are being taken. Particularly encouraging is that, for the first time since the Leaderboard was launched, automakers that have taken initial steps on Indigenous Peoples' rights are in the majority: they now represent 12 of the 18 automakers, when there were only 6 in 2023. Indigenous Peoples' rights is the last of the Leaderboard's focus issue-areas to cross this threshold, with action on steel and aluminum decarbonization also flipping from a minority to a majority in the 2024 edition. Automaker action on clean and equitable supply chains has therefore decisively shifted from the margins to the mainstream.

Shifting from generic to more impactful supply chain practices

Despite this progress, industry performance in the six focus issue-areas evaluated by the Leaderboard remains unacceptably low.[3] However, it is also in these areas that the top 5 leading companies - Tesla, Ford, Volvo, Mercedes and Volkswagen - stand out the most.

Since the first edition of the Leaderboard, these companies have increased their average (overall) score by twice as much as the remaining companies. But across the six focus areas, they have improved their score by three times as much. The average score of the five leaders across these six issue-areas is now more than triple that of their peers.[4]

This reveals an important difference between the practices of leading companies and their peers. Average performers overwhelmingly limit their supply chain decarbonization and due diligence practices to standardized approaches and generic disclosures for their entire supply chains. Leading automakers, on the other hand, are now beginning to pursue more targeted supply chain strategies at the material and issue level - increasing the potential for actual on-the-ground impact - and are increasingly providing more granular and disaggregated reporting of their progress.[5]

The top five scorers are all starting to demonstrate more sophisticated and impactful supply chain practices across multiple issue areas. Furthermore, this year's edition of the Leaderboard shows that some other automakers - Geely, Renault and BMW in particular - are also starting to shift towards these kinds of practices in some areas. These are reflected in a new section of this report and an accompanying companion briefing detailing automakers' best practices across the Leaderboard's indicators.

These shifts have several important implications for the future of clean and equitable automotive supply chains, as detailed in Box 1:

BOX 1: KEY SHIFTS IN SUPPLY CHAIN PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

1. Deploying leverage to drive impact

Although important first steps, formulaic, one-size-fits-all approaches and tools are, by themselves, ineffective at actually addressing the specific risks and challenges found in different supply chains. Achieving real impact[6] requires automakers to think strategically about how they can use their leverage to drive positive changes across specific supply chains and issues, whether that is accelerating the use of renewable energy for primary aluminum production or improving responsible mining practices in the nickel industry.

This year's Leaderboard has identified a number of such strategies. For example: Volvo's position paper on sustainable steel outlines the challenges to decarbonize the steel industry and how the company intends to use its leverage to address those challenges. In its latest Raw Material Report, Mercedes sets out clear theories of change that describe how the company will use its influence to prevent, mitigate and remedy risks of human rights and environmental harm across 12 priority raw material supply chains, such as aluminium, lithium, nickel and leather.

2. Catalyzing a Race to the Top

This year's Leaderboard reveals that companies are disclosing noticeably more information about the practical steps they are taking to ensure the actual implementation of their policies and commitments, especially when compared to the first edition. At the same time, a small number of leading automakers have begun to disclose more granular quantitative data—such as disaggregated upstream Scope 3 emissions data and audit results—alongside concrete, material-specific examples of on-the-ground interventions across a range of supply chains, in order to show the real-world progress they are making.

More granular and comprehensive transparency is critical for effective scrutiny and accountability, but it also serves leading automakers' interests. It enables more meaningful comparisons across competitors and more consistent assessments of progress over time. This helps key stakeholders, such as investors, better distinguish genuine leaders from companies merely ticking boxes, creating competitive pressures that reward frontrunners and expose laggards.

3. From the Supply Chain to the Showroom: New Opportunities to Articulate Impact

Automakers that are simultaneously investing in targeted, material-level strategies together with supply chain traceability are better positioned to link the outcomes of their efforts directly to the vehicles they bring to market. This year's Leaderboard shows early signs of what this can look like, with automakers such as Mercedes, Volvo, and Geely bringing to market new EV models for which they disclose the proportions of low-carbon steel and aluminum used, and actively promoting these attributes as part of their vehicle marketing.

Such steps create a powerful opportunity for automakers to articulate their impact in ways that resonate with consumers, employees, and shareholders alike. However, they also carry greenwashing risks from companies that want to claim the same benefits without putting in the hard work.

4. Future-proofing supply chains as regulatory pressures mount

The emerging best practices identified in this year's Leaderboard are examples of companies beginning to implement existing international standards and frameworks more fully—including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Due Diligence Guidance.

Because many incoming regulations, from the EU Batteries Regulation to the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and European Sustainability Reporting Standards, are grounded in these same international frameworks, automakers making more progress towards their full implementation today will face lower compliance costs and reduced transition risks tomorrow.

5. Electrification Driving Supply Chain Transformation

The 2026 Leaderboard shows how electrification is becoming a driver of broader supply chain transformation and vice versa. EV-specific regulations like the EU Battery Regulations are already driving significant advances in EV supply chain transparency, traceability and circularity far beyond what was ever achieved for internal combustion engine vehicle supply chains.

The Leaderboard results reflect this: much of the most significant progress identified in this year's assessment is specific to EV supply chains. For example, automakers are often demonstrating more comprehensive supply chain mapping, due diligence, and circularity for EV batteries and transition minerals than for other vehicle components. Similarly, automakers are choosing to use, and promote the use of, low-carbon steel and aluminum for their EV models specifically, rather than for their outdated ICE vehicles. Clean supply chains aren't simply an EV add-on – EVs are increasingly driving clean supply chains.

The road ahead

Notwithstanding important progress by several automakers, the rate of progress by the industry as a whole continues to be unacceptably slow: some industry laggards are still failing on the basics, whilst the total average score across all 18 automakers stands at just 25%. Additionally, for the fourth-year running, no company achieved a total score of 50% or over. Even the leading companies are failing to implement the identified best practices consistently, and consequently have little to show in certain areas.

Regressions by some companies, ranging from 1 to a whopping 19 percentage points, are particularly disconcerting. Some of these regressions, such as those by Ford and Stellantis, are especially disappointing since they are in areas where those companies were previously exhibiting industry-wide best practices. Once an automaker has made positive progress by taking new or stronger action, or disclosing more meaningful information, failing to maintain these practices is unacceptable.

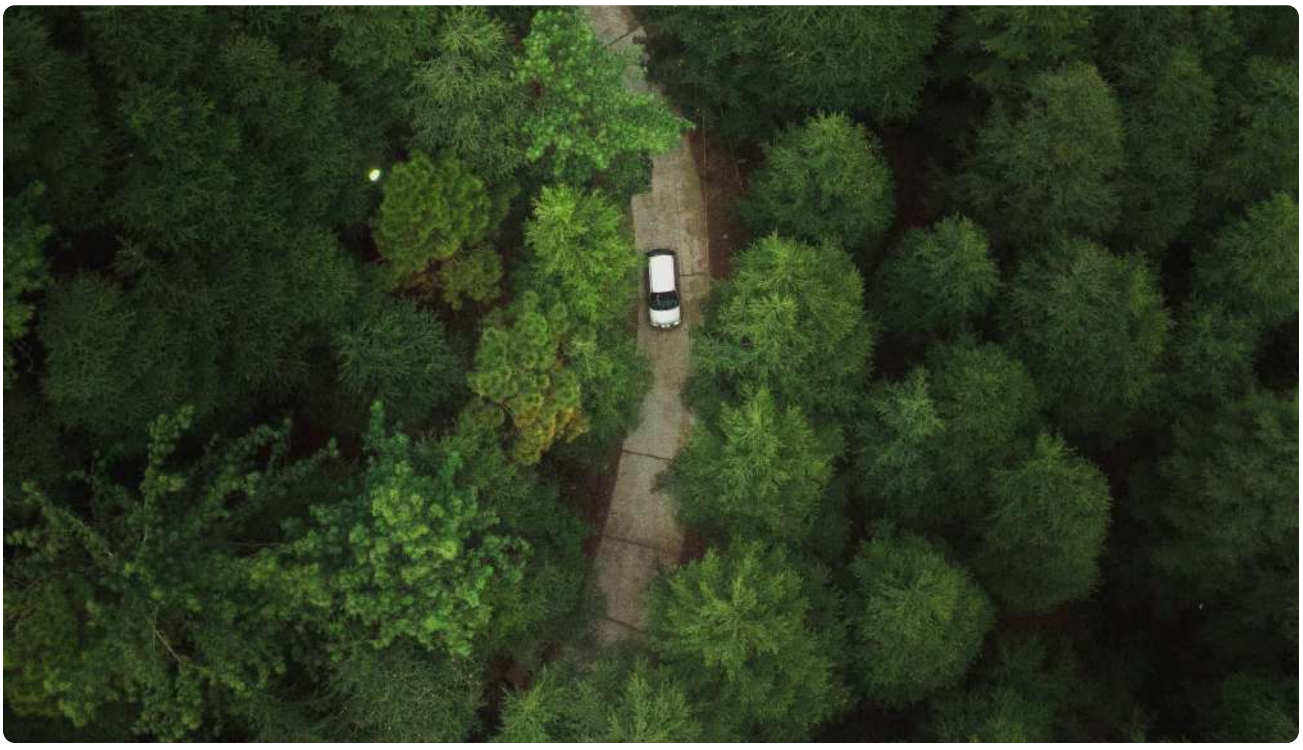
The difference in progress made in the two General subsections compared to the six issue-specific subsections of the Leaderboard also shows that most companies are still failing to move from general policies and procedures into targeted action.

As noted in previous years, there also continues to be a disparity between indicators focused on policies, commitments, and targets and those requiring evidence of actual implementation.

Addressing these gaps is possible right now. The progress made by many companies on overall supply chain policies and practices provides the foundations for more targeted action in priority areas. At the same time, leading automakers are beginning to demonstrate that real progress in these areas is possible, and must now seek to implement these approaches more systematically across their supply chains.

In both cases, automakers can look to the practices of their peers to achieve rapid progress: this year's best-in-class score shows that they could reach a score of 86% simply by emulating the existing best practices already being implemented across the industry.

As the transition to electric vehicles addresses the auto industry's tailpipe emissions, this year's Leaderboard shows that clean supply chains are not only achievable but increasingly within reach—for automakers ready to lead the charge.



Main Findings – Company Performance

TESLA remains the top performing automaker of the Leaderboard for the second year running. **FORD** retains second place. Tesla increased its overall score by 6 percentage points and Ford only managed 2 percentage points. The gap between the two companies has widened: Tesla is now almost 5 percentage points ahead of Ford.

BYD and **GEELY** were tied with Renault as the top three overall improvers, each achieving a 9 percentage point increase. This signals a welcome shift towards sustainable practices from Chinese automakers who, collectively, achieved the largest score improvement this year. For Geely, this represents the third consecutive year that the company has achieved one of the largest score increases in the Leaderboard. The company is now the top scoring East Asian automaker, and has also overtaken GM and Stellantis.

RENAULT's overall score improvement of 9 percentage points was primarily due to achieving significant progress across all four of the human rights subsections.

Former top-ranking automaker, **FORD**, achieved a noteworthy score increase of 7 percentage points in the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains section. However, this has been undermined by a score drop of 2 percentage points on human rights.

VOLVO progressed by 6 percentage points, climbing up to 3rd place and displacing Mercedes. At just one percentage point behind Ford, Volvo virtually shares second place.

For the second year running, **VOLKSWAGEN**'s performance was one of the strongest of the Leaderboard. The company improved on six of the eight Leaderboard subsections, increasing its overall score by 6 percentage points.

FORD and **VOLKSWAGEN** are stronger on human rights than on climate and environment; **VOLVO** is the opposite; whilst **MERCEDES** and **TESLA** are more consistent across both sections.

MERCEDES was one of four companies to regress on their overall score, sliding back to 4th place. The company in fact, dropped its score in five of the eight Leaderboard subsections. Despite this, the company made notable progress in the subsections on steel, aluminum and Indigenous Peoples' rights.

Together with Mercedes, **GM**, **STELLANTIS**, and **TOYOTA** also regressed on their overall scores. Toyota and Stellantis were the worst performers, regressing by 2 percentage points. Stellantis has now been overtaken by Kia, Hyundai and Geely.

GM failed to publish a sustainability report this year, and regressed on its overall score by 1 percentage point. The company also moved back from 7th to 10th position in the overall rankings, the largest drop of all companies jointly with Stellantis.

TOYOTA, **GAC**, and **SAIC** are still failing on the basics and are stagnating at the bottom of the rankings. These companies achieved an unacceptably low average score of just 5% between them, 24 percentage points lower than the average score across the remaining 15 companies.

Fossil-free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains

Companies scored on average 24% on efforts to make their supply chains fossil fuel-free and environmentally sustainable, an increase of 5 percentage points compared to the 2025 edition.

The average score for fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains (24%) still lags behind human rights and responsible sourcing (27%), but the gap has been narrowing. This convergence indicates momentum toward more balanced approaches across both areas.

Collectively, automakers increased their score in the General subsection by 7 percentage points, representing the largest average score increase for a single subsection this year. The average score for this subsection is more than double the average score across the other three subsections.

VOLVO again achieved the largest score increase (11 percentage points) and the top overall score in the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable section (55%), marking the first time any company has surpassed 50% in this area. Volvo is also the only company to score over 50% in both the steel (58%) and aluminum (55%) subsections.

The average score across the top four scoring automakers, **VOLVO**, **TESLA**, **MERCEDES** and **FORD**, was 2.6 times higher than the average score of the remaining 14 companies. For the steel and aluminum subsections it was 5.2 times higher.

Half of the companies assessed have shown progress on **battery circularity indicators**, with many providing concrete examples of battery collection, repair, reuse, and repurposing, as well as in-house facilities and collaborative partnerships for battery recycling. However, few companies have disclosed both qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate actual implementation.

GEELY, **MERCEDES** and **VOLVO** have introduced EV models for which they disclose the quantity of low-carbon steel (**MERCEDES**) and aluminium (**GEELY**, **MERCEDES**, and **VOLVO**) used, setting a new benchmark for transparency at the individual vehicle level.

TESLA, **VW** and **VOLVO** disclosed new offtake agreements for low-carbon aluminium. However, progress on low-carbon steel offtake agreements has stagnated.

TESLA reclaimed the top position in the battery section with an impressive 20 percentage point score increase. Tesla is now the first company to score more than 50% in this subsection and also the first company to fully meet the battery emissions disclosure indicator, after disclosing the individual contributions of cell production and key materials (including lithium, nickel, cobalt and graphite) to its battery supply chain emissions.

BMW GROUP remains the only company to score above 60% for a single subsection within the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains section, scoring 67% in the General subsection. However, the company has not yet translated this into similar progress in the remaining subsections.

GEELY and **BYD** were among the top 5 improvers in this section, increasing their scores by 12 and 9 percentage points respectively, signaling a positive move from Chinese automakers supply chain sustainability.

KIA and **VOLVO** were the biggest improvers in the General subsection, each achieving an impressive 21 percentage point score increase. As a result, Kia achieved the joint largest ranking improvement across all subsections of the Climate and Environment section, matched only by **BYD** in the Aluminium subsection.

Despite the overall progress across the industry, **GAC**, **GM** and **STELLANTIS** regressed in their Climate and Environment section scores. **GAC** and **GM** both dropped by three places in the rankings.

Human Rights and Responsible Sourcing

The average achievement score on human rights was 27%, 2 percentage points more than last year. This represents a slower rate of year-on-year progress compared to the 2025 edition (4 percentage points). No automaker passed the 50% mark this year.

FORD remains the top performer, but its human rights score has now declined for two consecutive years, putting its top position at risk. Tesla is less than one third of a percentage point behind, and other competitors are catching up.

TESLA remains behind Ford in all of the human rights subsection, and a considerable distance behind a few European competitors in some of the human rights subsections, such as workers' rights. **VOLSKWAGEN**, **MERCEDES**, and **BMW** are in third, fourth, and fifth place.

RENAULT is the top improver on human rights. It was in fact the only automaker to improve its score in all four of the human rights subsections. The company is for the first time among the top five scoring automakers on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain.

GEELY improved its general human rights due diligence score by 10 percentage points. Having improved by 24 percentage points last year, the company has managed to achieve a commendable 34-percentage point increase in the course of two years.

BYD achieved an impressive 22 percentage point increase in the general human rights due diligence subsection. Part of this progress is thanks to a new Code of Conduct for suppliers and a supply chain grievance mechanism. However, the company remains within the bottom five performers on human rights.

MERCEDES, **VOLKSWAGEN** and **TESLA** stand out for disclosing detailed and disaggregated information about their due diligence efforts across a range of raw material supply chains. This year, BMW also joined Mercedes and VW in publishing a separate Raw Materials Report, although its first edition is significantly less comprehensive than those of its national counterparts.

BMW GROUP improved by another 8 percentage points in the General subsection, where it now shared the top spot with FORD. In this subsection, the two companies have achieved the largest percentage score (73%) across all four of the human rights subsections.

FORD, **STELLANTIS**, **GM**, **MERCEDES**, and **TOYOTA** regressed over their 2025 overall human rights scores. **TOYOTA** was the worst performer, dropping by 6 percentage points. **GM** became the worst performing company across all the European and US automakers.

TOYOTA, **GAC**, and **SAIC** are the worst performing companies. SAIC and GAC remained in last and second last place across all four human rights subsections. Toyota is in the bottom three in all but one of the human rights subsections.

The average score in the general human rights due diligence subsection section was 47%, the highest of all human rights by a significant margin, followed by responsible sourcing (28%), workers' rights in the supply chain (23%), and Indigenous Peoples' rights (9%).

Ford and Tesla virtually share the top position on responsible transition minerals sourcing, with one percentage point between them. Ford dropped from an 89% achievement score last year to 70% this year, as a result of changing its mineral supply chain grievance mechanism.

Half of the companies evaluated improved their scores on **Indigenous Peoples' rights** this year, representing the most widespread progress on this issue since the Leaderboard was first published in 2023.

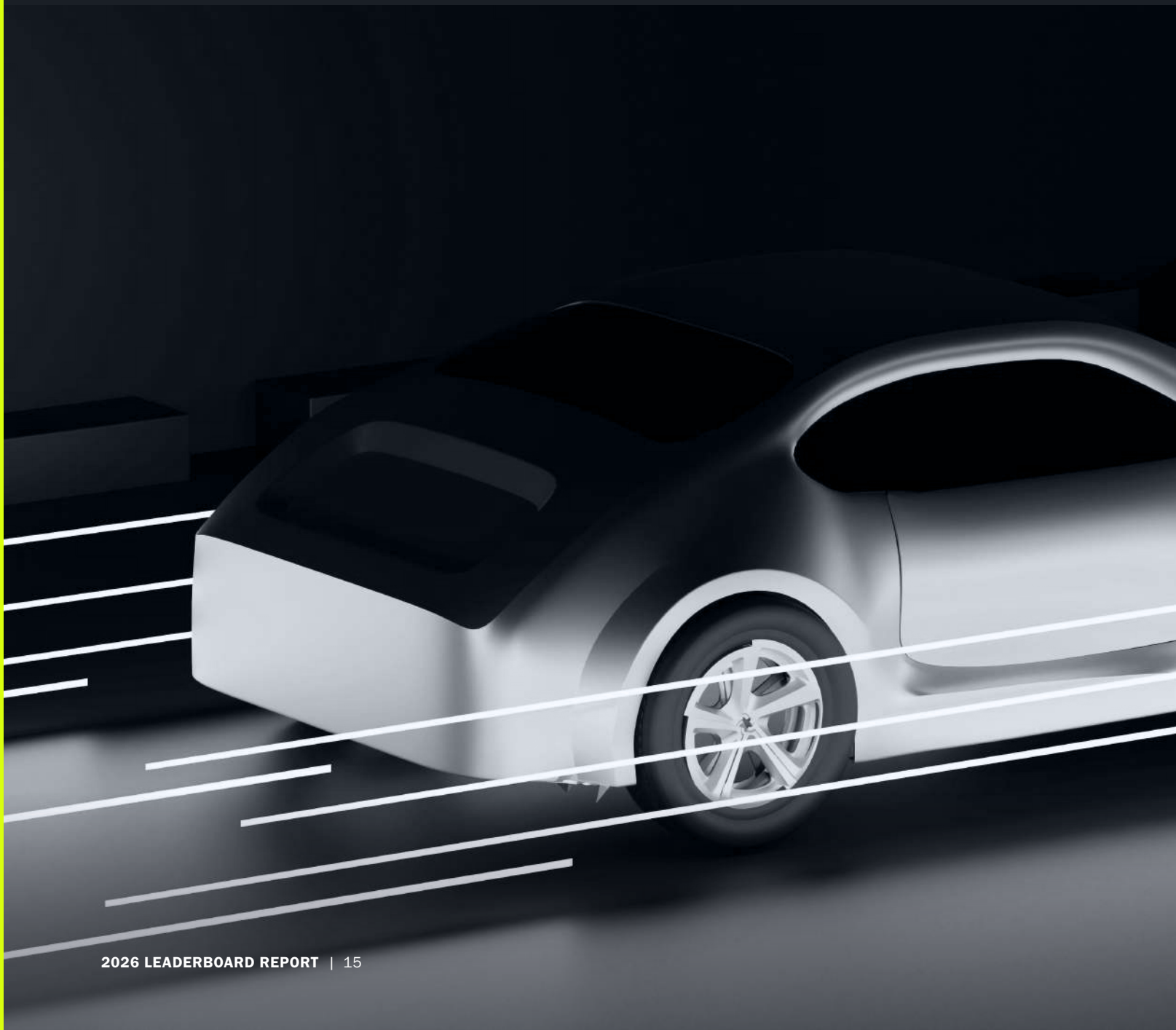
MERCEDES remains the top performer on Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain, followed by **VOLKSWAGEN**. **TESLA** also achieved a notable score increase in this subsection after becoming the first automaker to disclose concrete data on remedy provided for workers' rights violations in its supply chain.

Scores from the 2026 Edition of the Lead the Charge Leaderboard

RANK	AUTOMAKER	FOSSIL FREE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS	HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBLE SOURCING	OVERALL LEADERBOARD SCORE
01	TESLA	50%	48%	49%
02	Ford	40%	49%	45%
03	VOLVO	55%	32%	44%
04	Mercedes-Benz	39%	42%	41%
05	VW	31%	46%	39%
06	BMW	30%	39%	34%
07	RENAULT	28%	35%	31%
08	GEELY	31%	24%	27%
09	HYUNDAI	21%	25%	23%
10	gm	20%	25%	22%
11	KIA	20%	23%	21%
12	STELLANTIS	14%	29%	21%
13	NISSAN	13%	17%	15%
14	BYD	13%	16%	14%
15	HONDA	8%	16%	12%
16	Toyota	7%	10%	9%
17	GAC	5%	2%	4%
18	SAIC	4%	1%	3%

CHAPTER 002

What is Lead the Charge?



What is Lead the Charge?

Lead the Charge is a diverse network of local, national, and global civil society organizations calling on automakers to radically transform their supply chains so they are free of fossil fuels, environmental harms and human rights abuses.

Network members work across multiple geographies and issues, with expertise in climate, environmental justice, human rights, Indigenous rights, heavy industry, ESG and more.

Our vision is an automotive industry where *all* vehicles are made:

01 — Equitably
Respecting and advancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples, workers, and local communities throughout the supply chain.

02 — Sustainably
Preserving and restoring environmental health and biodiversity across supply chains, while reducing primary resource demand through efficient resource use and increased recycled content.

03 — Fossil Free
100% electric and made with a fossil fuel-free supply chain.

What is the Lead the Charge Leaderboard?

The Lead the Charge Leaderboard, published annually and now in its fourth edition, evaluates the progress of 18 of the world's leading automakers towards this vision of building equitable, sustainable, and fossil-free supply chains. As vehicle production shifts to electric vehicles (EVs) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Lead the Charge Leaderboard aims to establish a new expectation for what is meant by a "clean car". This means not just zero tailpipe emissions, but EVs with an equitable, sustainable, and fossil-free supply chain.

A clean car is thus defined as having:

- a fossil-free supply chain that also has the lowest possible negative impact on biodiversity, resource depletion, and ecosystem resilience; and
- a supply chain that respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples, workers, and local communities.

This definition, and the Leaderboard itself, was developed following a review of existing benchmarking initiatives, reporting standards, best practice supply chain initiatives and legislative requirements in two of the largest EV markets (EU and United States). The indicators were aligned to international norms and widely recognized standards, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct (OECD Guidelines), the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures, Global Reporting Initiative, the International Energy Agency, and the EU Taxonomy. Following their drafting, stakeholders were consulted on the proposed indicators which were subsequently refined. See the methodology for a more detailed explanation of the Leaderboard development.

Structure of the Leaderboard

The Leaderboard is designed to give companies a score out of 100%. This enables an analysis of relative performance between automakers and of how close or far companies are to meeting the expectations within the scorecard.

The Leaderboard is divided into two main sections: fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains, and human rights and responsible sourcing. Within each of these there are four subsections, representing different supply chain issue areas, which are outlined in the box below.

LEADERBOARD SECTIONS

Fossil-free and Environmentally Sustainable supply chains (climate and environment):

- Fossil-Free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains (General)
- Fossil-Free and Environmentally Sustainable Steel
- Fossil-Free and Environmentally Sustainable Aluminum
- Fossil-Free and Environmentally Sustainable Batteries
  - Climate Lobbying (applied as a multiplier to total scores in this section)

Human Rights & Responsible Sourcing:

- Respect for Human Rights (General)
- Responsible Sourcing of Transition Minerals
- Respect for Indigenous Rights and Free Prior and Informed Consent
- Respect for Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain

The "General" indicators within both sections provide a baseline score, assessing automakers' general efforts to address human rights, emissions, and other environmental impacts across their supply chains. The other subsections provide a more focused analysis of their efforts to address particularly salient supply chain issues related to the transition to EVs.

Each of the subsections within the two sections of the Leaderboard follow the same indicator structure. Within the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chain section, the indicators of each subsection are shaped around a SBTi report on supply chains which, although focused on emissions, provides a relevant framework for wider environmental impacts.[7] Within the human rights and responsible sourcing section, the indicator design is shaped around UN Guiding Principles.[8]

In order to reward automakers' progress towards the delivery of clean vehicles, the scoring is intentionally weighted towards implementation indicators. These framings and weightings are set out below.

FOSSIL-FREE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS	
INDICATOR CATEGORIES	**% WEIGHTING**
Disclose	22.22%
Target setting & progress	33.33%
Supply chain levers	44.44%

HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBLE SOURCING	
INDICATOR CATEGORIES	**% WEIGHTING**
Commit	15%
Identify	23%
Prevent, Mitigate and Account	31%
Remedy	31%

Within the Leaderboard, some indicators award points for participation in third party accreditation or certification schemes, commonly used by automakers as part of their environmental and human rights due diligence. Given the range in effectiveness of such schemes[9], a point modifier was developed to account for the disparity with regards to their robustness and effectiveness, with points being modified progressively downwards for schemes that fail to meet minimum criteria for effective governance and auditing. This analysis of third party schemes has also been published as a standalone briefing. his analysis has been updated for the 2026 edition of the Leaderboard and the updated scores and point modifiers can be found in the 2026 Leaderboard dataset.

Within the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains section, climate policy lobbying is also considered as an additional factor, reflecting the important role automakers can play advocating for, rather than against, government efforts to raise standards and create a race to the top. As such, the Leaderboard includes a weighting that modifies automakers' overall scores in this section according to their ratings in InfluenceMap's evaluations of automakers' climate lobbying policies and practices.[10]

The indicators and score weightings provide the framework for assessing the automakers. Company policies and activities were then analyzed, which was limited to reviewing official company disclosures as opposed to press releases, media or third-party reports. This focus on company disclosures was adopted to ensure the analysis was based on official company policy and reporting that had received board level sign-off, as well as to encourage greater transparency in the industry. However, in 2025 a change was introduced whereby information from company websites is also considered, provided official company documents explicitly refer to them and/or provide relevant links. The cut-off date for new or modified company policies to be included in this year's analysis was 01 July 2025.

A more detailed description of the methodology, including changes that have been made this year can be found in *Automaker Supply Chain Leaderboard - Methodology* section of the Lead the Charge website. The appendix to the report also outlines the scorecard's individual indicators.

METHODOLOGY UPDATES FOR THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE LEADERBOARD

Best practices and international standards for clean and equitable supply chains are constantly developing. As such, a number of minor adjustments to the assessment framework were incorporated into the 2026 edition of the Leaderboard:

Fossil-free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains

- Across all four subsections, indicators requiring companies to disclose supply chain data now allow for partial points for companies that disclose such data for part of their supply chain. Previously this was only possible for some indicators.
- The indicator on setting science-based scope 3 emissions reductions targets has been modified for greater clarity and to ensure alignment with current possibilities related to SBTi verification.
- New qualitative and quantitative definitions have been developed for lower emission steel and aluminum; and fossil-free steel and aluminum, which are applied across the indicators in these subsections.
- Decarbonization target setting indicators in the steel, aluminum and batteries subsections have been modified to ensure consistency across all three subsections, with the top scoring threshold now using 2040 as net-zero target year in order to reflect current best practice in the industry.
- The indicators on closed loop systems for steel and aluminum recycling have been updated in order to ensure greater precision and clarity in the scoring.
- The indicators on lithium, nickel and cobalt sourcingin the battery subsection have been further refined in order to align them more closely with the OECD Guidelines on Environmental Due Diligence in Mineral Supply Chains.

Human Rights and Responsible Sourcing

- Indicators addressing companies' response to findings of non-conformance have been sub-divided to differentiate between the approach to non-conformance by potential new suppliers (i.e. before sourcing contracts are signed) and existing suppliers.
- A number of indicators on general human rights due diligence and responsible transition minerals sourcing have been adjusted or expanded in order to obtain more detailed information or data, for example on supply chain grievances, the outcome of remedial processes, direct sourcing agreements, and information from supply chain mapping.
- Indicators on Indigenous Peoples' rights have been adjusted or expanded to seek information on the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in due diligence processes, and processes for operationalising FPIC requirements and addressing FPIC breaches.
- Indicators on Workers' rights have been adjusted and/or expanded to elicit greater specificity and/or obtain evidence regarding salient risks to supply chain workers' rights, the involvement of trade union and/or workers' representatives in the elaboration of corrective action plans; and cases of remedy for breaches of workers' rights.
- Some indicators have been refined for greater clarity and precision.

Which companies are we looking at?

The companies assessed within the Leaderboard were selected because they are the largest producers of EVs within specific regions, or are the largest global automakers. As such, the Leaderboard is focused on companies that are, or could be, leading the transition to EVs and who can therefore play a pivotal role in creating a race to the top on EV supply chain practices. The companies selected are listed below.

All automakers were contacted before publication to provide the results and the opportunity for discussion, questions, clarifications, and feedback. All feedback received was reviewed, and where pertinent, incorporated into the final Leaderboard scores and this resulting report.

Automakers included within the analysis:

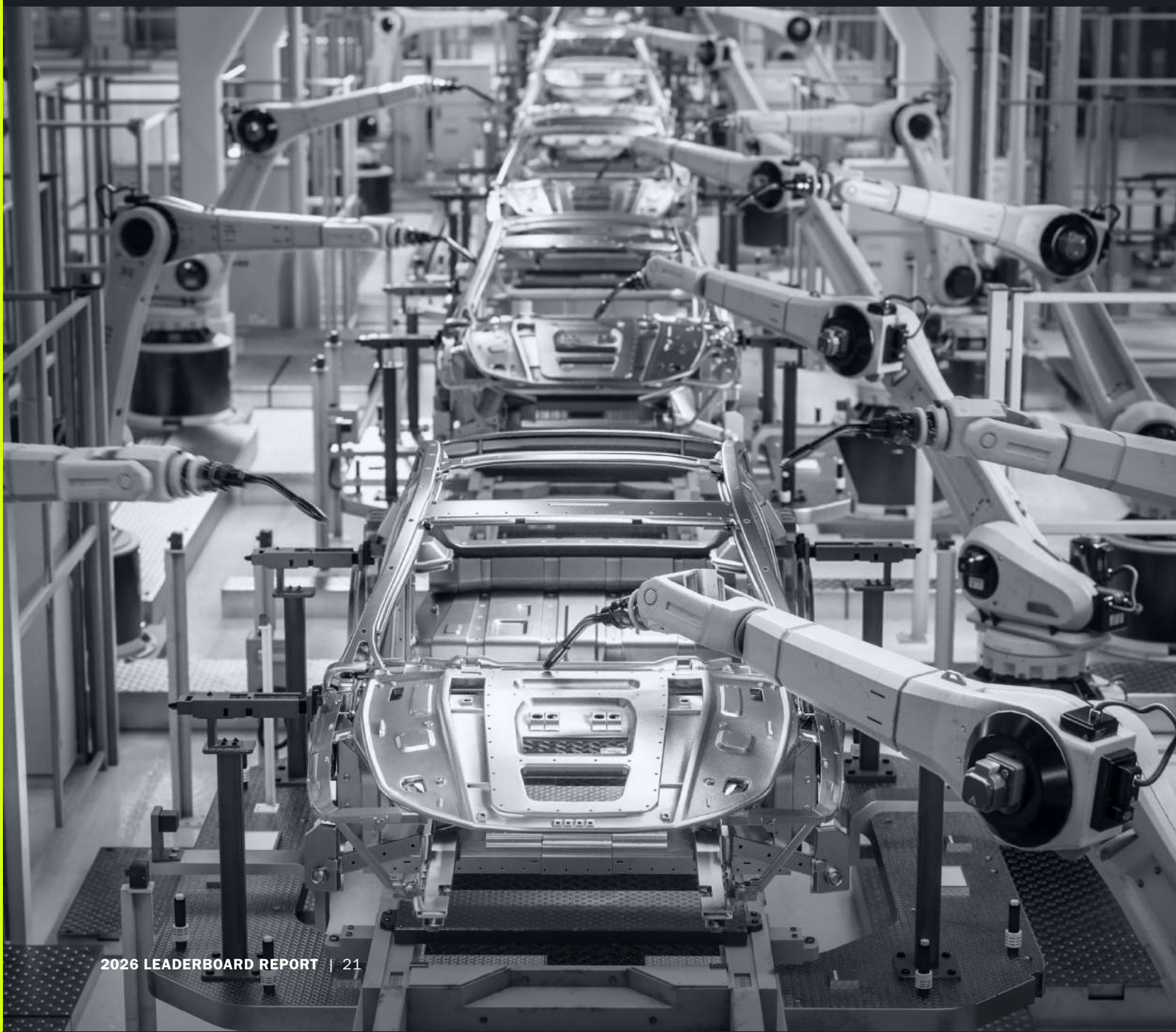
OEM	BEV Sales	Total Vehicle Sales	BEV %	Headquartered Country
BMW Group	418,432	2,198,694	19%	Germany
BYD	2,501,646	4,701,572	53%	China
Ford	246,779	3,976,258	6%	United States
GAC	301,776	632,854	48%	China
Geely Auto Group*	1,120,705	3,130,318	36%	China
GM	1,090,292	5,710,217	19%	United States
Honda Motor	78,562	3,484,078	2%	Japan
Hyundai Motor (inc. Hyundai and Kia)	507,349	6,801,279	7%	South Korea
Mercedes-Benz	188,593	1,768,735	11%	Germany
Nissan	121,886	2,951,910	4%	Japan
Renault	242,080	2,085,120	12%	France
SAIC	330,409	1,492,802	22%	China
Stellantis	352,574	5,008,294	7%	Netherlands
Tesla Inc.	1,836,477	1,836,477	100%	United States
Toyota Motor Corp.	194,798	9,958,852	2%	Japan
VW Group	923,977	8,114,098	11%	Germany
Volvo Car Group	162,132	702,569	23%	Sweden

Source: Automotive sales data from Marklines. All figures are cumulative annual values for the year 2025. The data covers passenger vehicles only.

*Geely Auto Group data includes Marklines sales data from the Geely, Galaxy, Zeekr and Lynk&Co brands only.

CHAPTER 003

2026 Leaderboard Findings



The Lead the Charge Leaderboard assesses the world's leading EV and automakers on their efforts to eliminate emissions, environmental harms, and human rights violations from their supply chains. Disclosures from the 18 automakers selected were analyzed and assessed against the scorecard's criteria outlined in the accompanying methodology.

The results from this assessment are presented below and can also be found on the Lead the Charge website.

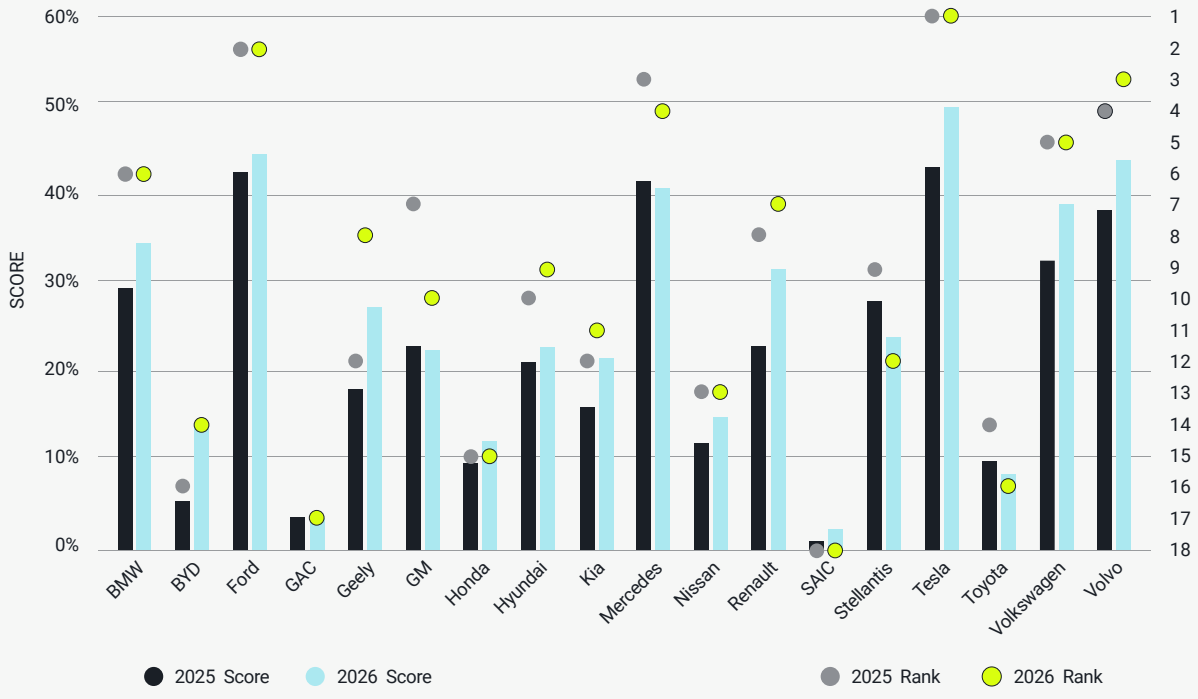
Overall findings

Leaders and laggards in 2026

Most companies improved their overall score this year, with score increases ranging from one to nine percentage points. This has resulted in an average score increase of 3 percentage points across all automakers between the 2025 and 2026 editions of the Leaderboard.

Notably, two of the top improvers were BYD and Geely, both of whom improved their overall scores by 9 percentage points, signalling a welcome ramping up of sustainable supply chain practices from Chinese automakers. Geely, the top-scoring East Asian automaker in the 2026 edition, is now demonstrating some of the industry's best practices on battery decarbonization and circularity, and has continued to make strong progress on overall human rights due diligence. BYD achieved significant score improvements in both of the General subsections after taking important initial steps on supply chain decarbonization and due diligence.

Figure 1 - **Scores and ranks in 2025 and 2026**



Tesla and Ford retain first and second place in 2026, demonstrating an ongoing commitment towards sustainability and continued strong performance. Tesla managed to increase its overall score by 6 percentage points this year, bringing its total score improvement since the first edition of the Leaderboard to a striking 35 percentage points. With Ford only managing a 2-percentage-point improvement this year, the gap between the two companies has widened in the 2026 edition.

Volvo follows the top two scoring companies, taking third place from Mercedes. After achieving the largest overall score improvement last year, the company performed strongly once again this year, progressing by 6 percentage points in its overall score. At one percentage point behind Ford, Volvo now virtually shares second place with this company. Volvo continues to be the clear leader on fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains, scoring double the industry average.

Having been displaced by Volvo, Mercedes is now fourth in the overall Leaderboard ranking. Mercedes was one of four companies to register a drop in its overall score. Volkswagen, in contrast, had another strong year, increasing its overall score by 6 percentage points, though the company still remained in 5th place.

Overall, the top 5 companies have progressed at a much faster pace than their peers since the Leaderboard launched in 2023, achieving an average score increase twice that of the remaining 13 automakers (16 percentage points compared with 8). This shows that industry leaders can continue to raise the bar—and challenges competitors to significantly accelerate their own rate of improvement.

Other strong performers this year were Renault, Kia and BMW, achieving score improvements of 9, 6 and 5 percentage points respectively. Renault achieved the largest score increase out of all 18 automakers in the human rights section, while Kia achieved an impressive 21 percentage point score increase for the General climate and environment subsection, and BMW made strong progress in both of General subsections.

GM and Toyota were the other three companies, alongside Mercedes, to regress on their overall performance this year, primarily due to discontinuing important disclosures on the implementation of their supply chain sustainability and due diligence measures. GAC, meanwhile, was the only company that experienced no change in its overall score.

Of the four companies that regressed on their overall scores, GM deserves a special note. The company took the surprising decision of not publishing a Sustainability Report last year. This is a serious regression in transparency, and it has meant that all the Leaderboard indicators that rely on year-on-year disclosures could not be assessed. This has resulted in many point deductions. Since automakers are expected to report their salient human rights risks on a regular basis (and, at a minimum, yearly), GM failed to achieve any points in this area this year. It is also worth remembering that last year, GM also took a decision to stop disclosing a list of smelters and refiners in its supply chain. This shows regressive decisions affecting transparency year on year.

Shifts in supply chain practices

Companies continue to score higher in the General subsections for both the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains section and the human rights and responsible sourcing section. Since launching the Leaderboard, automaker performance in these areas has improved notably, with average scores between 2023 and 2026 rising in these two subsections from 20% to 39% and from 32% to 47%, respectively. This shows that sustained progress on overall environmental and human rights due diligence policies and practices is possible.

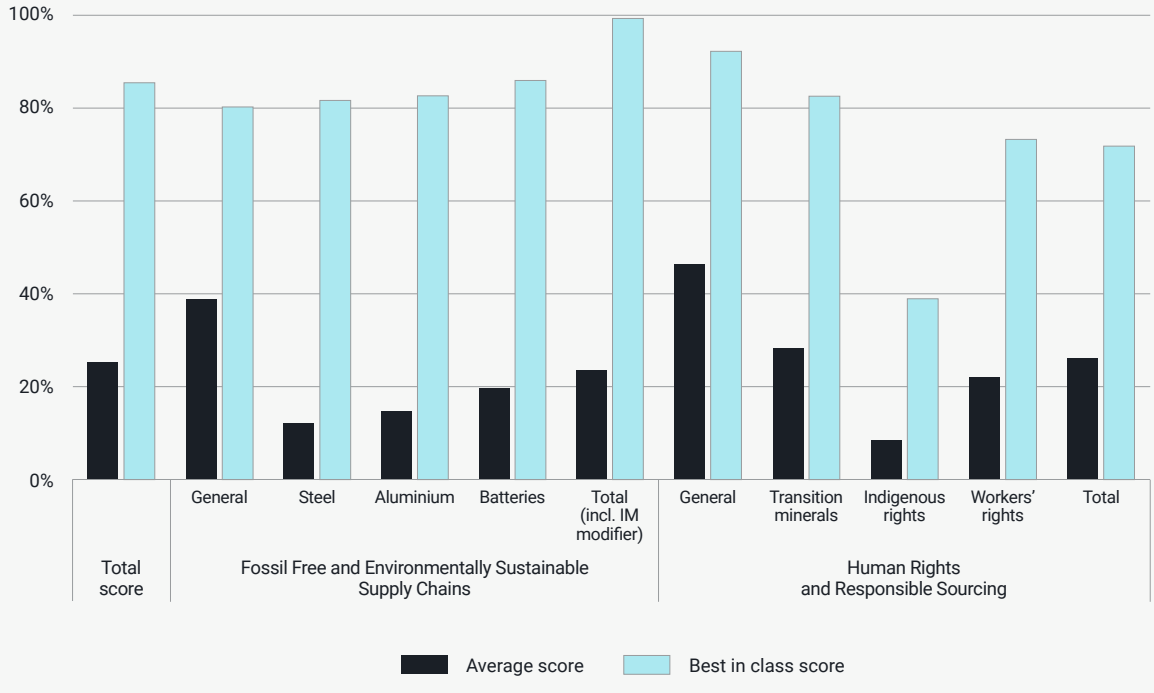
However, as noted in previous reports and shown again in the graph below, improvement in the General subsections has not yet translated into comparable progress in the six issue-specific areas. In the climate and environment section, the average score across the three focus issue-areas was just 16%, whilst for the human rights section it was only 20% - less than half the General subsection averages in both cases. Since 2023, automakers have increased their combined average score across these six subsections by just 7 percentage points.

This signals a general failure by companies to move beyond generic commitments and processes into more targeted and measurable action.

There is no excuse for scores in these areas to remain so low, for two reasons. First, the progress that many automakers have made on overall supply chain decarbonization and due diligence means that they now have the necessary foundations in place to deploy more focused strategies in priority areas such as steel decarbonization, battery sustainability and responsible mineral sourcing.

Second, automakers can draw inspiration from existing best practices to significantly improve their own performance. In fact, the overall best-in-class score this year is now 86%,[11] which means that any automaker could achieve this level of performance simply by emulating measures already being implemented by industry peers. Moreover, as can be noted in the graph below, the greatest opportunities for improvement lie precisely in the six issue-specific subsections.

Figure 2 - **Average and best-in-class scores for 2026**



The striking contrast between average and best-in-class scores across these subsections shows where competitive differentiation on clean supply chains now sits. It is in these areas where the performance gap between the industry leaders and their peers widens most sharply: in 2026, the top five automakers outperformed the remaining thirteen by a factor of three across the six focus issue-areas. In the two General subsections, by contrast, their average score was only 1.6 times higher.

What therefore stands out in this year's Leaderboard are the emerging practices of some automakers that are beginning to push sustainability frontiers towards more tangible, meaningful, and impactful practices. These companies are moving beyond standardized tools and one-size-fits-all approaches to supply chain decarbonisation, sustainability, and due diligence. They are additionally deploying targeted strategies that start with accurate and comprehensive identification of risks and extend through to tailored, case-specific measures to address specific challenges and impacts.

Importantly, examples of these practices do not sit exclusively with the highest-ranked companies. While many appear among the top five performers, others further down the ranking have been able to adopt certain best practices not yet implemented by even the leading companies. BMW, Renault, and Geely stand out in this regard.

Alongside more targeted strategies, there is also evidence of an emerging but noticeable shift towards more granular, disaggregated disclosures on efforts undertaken, outcomes, and progress on specific issues and supply chains, away from generic and aggregated data. Higher levels of transparency are critical for proper scrutiny and accountability, but they are also in automakers' interest. They enable meaningful comparison across industry competitors, and a consistent assessment of progress over time. This should make it easier for leading automakers to distinguish themselves not only from the laggards, but also from average performers who may just be ticking boxes. Ultimately, underperformers truly have very little to show for their actions.

These emerging best practices and the companies adopting them are detailed in a new companion briefing published together with this year's Leaderboard report and are summarized in the graphic below:

Shifts from basic to emerging best practices

BASIC PRACTICES OF AVERAGE PERFORMERS		EMERGING BEST PRACTICES OF TOP PERFORMERS
Basic identification and disclosure of generic risks, challenges and barriers to progress across the company's whole supply chain, which is generally limited to tier 1 suppliers and mostly based on desk research and off-the-shelf annual supplier surveys and audits.	SHIFT TOWARDS	Identify and disclose concrete risks, challenges and barriers to progress in specific contexts and material supply chains, using a risk-based, dynamic and responsive approach that goes beyond tier 1 suppliers, including during the pre-sourcing phase.
Develop one-size-fits-all targets, strategies, processes and tools/methods to mitigate emissions, environmental harms and human rights violations from across the supply chain.	SHIFT TOWARDS	Develop tailored targets, strategies and theories of change at the level of priority materials and issues, which describe how the company will use its leverage to drive meaningful impact in these areas.
Provide generic reporting about company progress via broad statements about activities undertaken and the disclosure of aggregated, supply chain-wide progress data.	SHIFT TOWARDS	Disclose granular, disaggregated progress data from company- and material-specific decarbonisation and due diligence processes, supported by concrete examples of interventions, policy enforcement and supplier engagement in specific contexts, to demonstrate how company policies and commitments translate into actual implementation and tangible impacts.

Despite these improvements, the overall pace of progress across the industry as a whole remains slow. Some companies continue to fail on the basics. The bottom three-scoring companies (Toyota, GAC and SAIC) achieved an unacceptably low average score of just 5% between them, 24 percentage points lower than the average score of the remaining 15 companies.

Even the leading companies are failing to implement these practices consistently, and have little to show in certain areas. The average score across all automakers was therefore just 25% and, for the fourth-year running, no company achieved a total score over 50%. This, in real life terms, represents a huge amount of human suffering and environmental degradation that is not being avoided.

Conventional and formulaic supply chain sustainability and due diligence practices (such as annual supplier surveys and standardized audits) remain commonplace across the industry. While these may be necessary first or foundational steps, many automakers stop with them and their measures therefore prove insufficient.

However, if anything is to be drawn from this year's findings, it is the fact that some industry leaders are beginning to drive a shift towards more tailored, issue- or supply chain-specific approaches that are more effective at actually driving impact. To make these incipient practices mainstream, automakers across the industry must seek to emulate these best practices, and frontrunners must seek to implement these approaches more systematically across their supply chains.

Scores from the 2026 Edition of the Lead the Charge Leaderboard

RANK	AUTOMAKER	FOSSIL FREE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS	HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBLE SOURCING	OVERALL LEADERBOARD SCORE
01	TESLA	50%	48%	49%
02	Ford	40%	49%	45%
03	VOLVO	55%	32%	44%
04	Mercedes-Benz	39%	42%	41%
05	VW	31%	46%	39%
06	BMW	30%	39%	34%
07	RENAULT	28%	35%	31%
08	GEELY	31%	24%	27%
09	HYUNDAI	21%	25%	23%
10	gm	20%	25%	22%
11	KIA	20%	23%	21%
12	STELLANTIS	14%	29%	21%
13	NISSAN	13%	17%	15%
14	BYD	13%	16%	14%
15	HONDA	8%	16%	12%
16	Toyota	7%	10%	9%
17	GAC	5%	2%	4%
18	SAIC	4%	1%	3%

Changes in scores and performance from 2025

Fossil-free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains (Climate & Environment)

The average total score for the fossil free and environmentally sustainable supply chains section is 24% in the 2026 edition of the Leaderboard. This represents an increase of 5 percentage points over the average score for 2025, noticeably higher than the equivalent rate of progress for the human rights section.

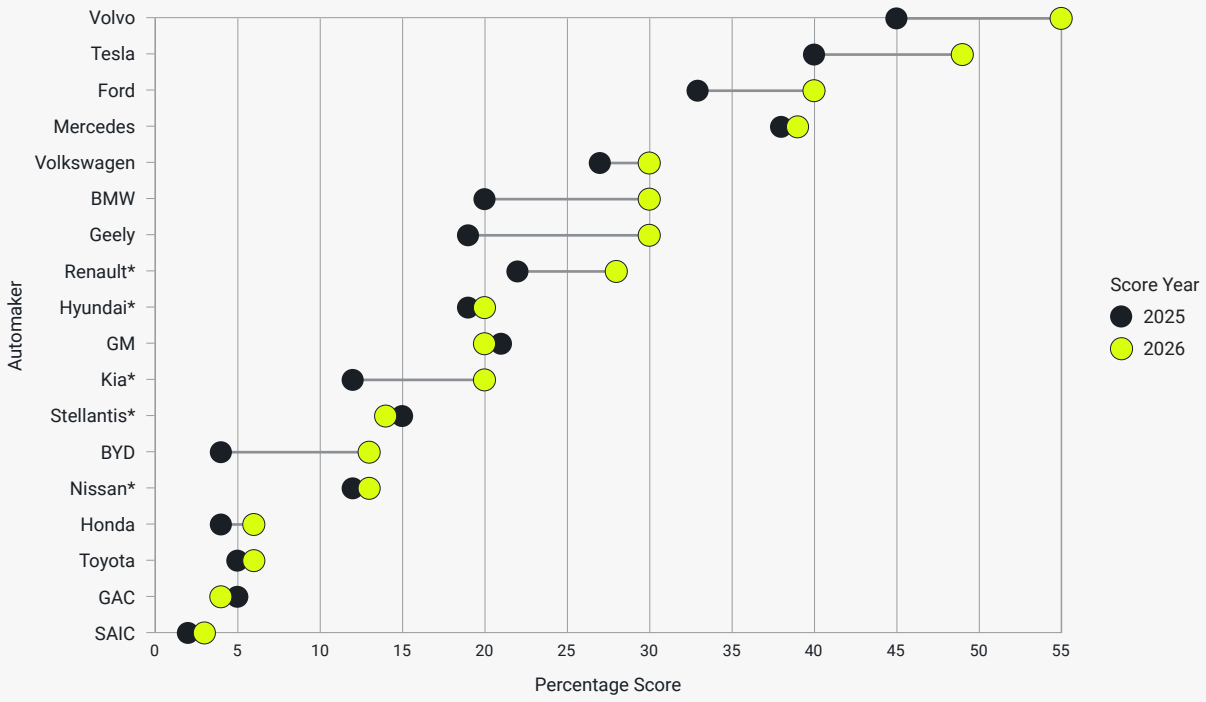
Particularly notable in the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chain section is the dramatic difference between the average and best-in-class scores for the three issue-specific subsections (see Figure 2): the best-in-class score is now more than four times higher than the average score across subsections.[12]

Overall, the best-in-class score for this section now stands at 83% (rising to 99% if the best performance on climate lobbying is also taken into consideration). This means that, even when it comes to indicators that the vast majority of automakers are not meeting, there are usually examples of good practice being implemented by at least one company that others can draw inspiration from in order to improve their own performance.

It is also encouraging that the best-in-class scores have increased across different subsections, with particularly notable improvements in the Steel (10 percentage points) and Batteries (17 percentage points) subsections. This indicates that industry leaders are continuing to raise the bar for others to follow.

Volvo continues to lead in the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable section with a total score of 55%, marking the first time that a company has surpassed 50% in this section. **Volvo** is also one of the top improvers this year, achieving an 11 percentage point score increase. This is in fact the second year running Volvo has achieved one of the largest score increases for the climate and environment section, enabling the company to improve its overall score by an impressive 21 percentage points in just two years.

Figure 3 - **Climate and Environment Score Comparison: 2025 vs 2026**



BMW Group also improved its score by 11 percentage points, but this year it was **Geely** that achieved the largest score improvement of 12 percentage points. The company achieved significant progress in the Battery subsection, and also became one of the few automakers (together with Tesla and Volvo) to achieve a B rating on Climate Lobbying from InfluenceMap. As a result the company has further extended its lead as the top ranking East Asian automaker in the Climate and Environment section.

All of last year's top five companies in the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains section maintained their spot among the top five, with only a slight shift in rankings of the third and fourth place. **Tesla** made a notable leap of 10 percentage points, closing the gap with the industry leader, Volvo, and also solidifying its lead over the other top-performing companies. **Ford**, with an impressive 7 percentage point score increase, moved ahead of **Mercedes** and secured third place this year.

The continued improvements of these three companies, achieving an average score increase of 9 percentage points between them, showcase continued leadership and strong competition at the top. Geely and BMW's impressive rates of progress this year also means that there is now also stiff competition for fifth place, with **VW** scoring just 0.5 percentage points more than **Geely** and 1.3 percentage points more than **BMW**.

This year's score changes highlight key progress and "industry-first" practices. **Geely, Mercedes**, and **Volvo** have introduced vehicles for which they disclosed the specific quantities of low-carbon steel (Mercedes) and aluminium (Geely, Mercedes and Volvo) used, setting a new benchmark for transparency at the individual vehicle level. Notably, in all of these cases, the low-carbon steel and aluminum was disclosed for these companies' EV models specifically.

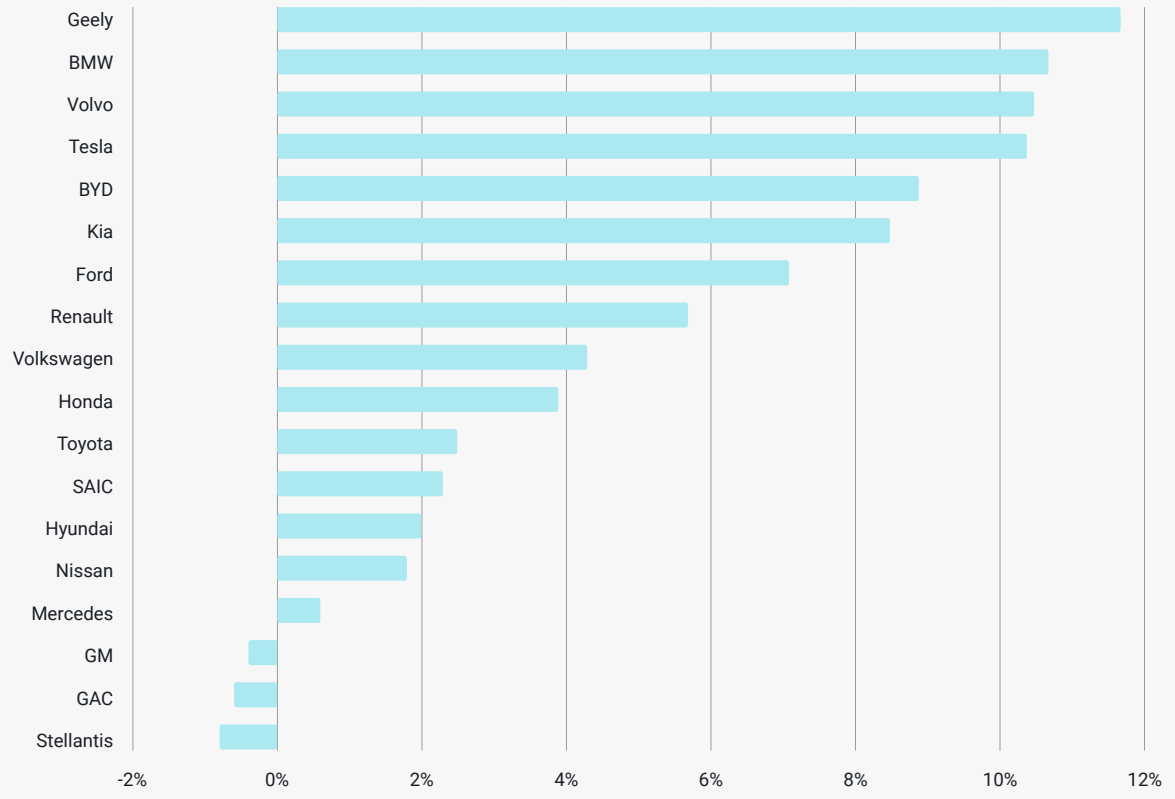
Tesla, meanwhile, continued to strengthen its disclosure of battery supply chain emissions, becoming the first company to further disaggregate these emissions by cell production and key materials, along with the primary data coverage percentage for each category. This sets a new benchmark as the most detailed and comprehensive disclosure of upstream emissions for any single material or supply chain captured by the Leaderboard to date.

A number of automakers provided more granular disclosure on steel and aluminium circularity, including on post-consumer scrap efforts. In addition, Tesla, VW and Volvo disclosed new offtake agreements for low-carbon aluminium.

There was also notable progress on battery circularity, with half of the automakers assessed making some progress in this area, ranging from examples of investments in battery design to improve recyclability through to partnerships that enhance battery mineral recovery.

Companies have also disclosed more detailed environmental due diligence and decarbonization efforts for individual battery minerals, with **BMW Group** having published a responsible raw material management report for the first time through which the company disclosed (limited) examples of environmental due diligence measures undertaken across a range of battery minerals.

Figure 4 - **Percentage point improvements in the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains**



Despite the overall progress across the industry, **GAC, GM** and **Stellantis** all regressed in their Climate and Environment section scores. **GAC** and **GM** have both dropped by three places in the ranking. **GAC** failed to maintain last year's momentum of improvements on fossil-free and sustainable supply chains, remaining one of only a small minority of companies with a 0% score on steel and aluminum.

GM also stagnated in its progress, losing the momentum of impressive improvements shown previously in the 2024 edition of the Leaderboard. The company's failure to publish an annual sustainability report this year has severely hindered progress visibility.

Stellantis' regressions are particularly disappointing, given its previous leadership in areas such providing quantitative disclosures on its processes for end-of-life EV battery treatment. Stellantis now ranks the lowest among European and U.S. automakers on fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains.

Similar to previous years, most companies scored lower in the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable section compared to the human rights and responsible sourcing section. However, this year, there has been notable progress in closing this gap, with the majority of companies narrowing the disparity to under 10%. **Ford**, in particular, has reduced this gap from nearly 20% to below 10%.

This trend shows a positive signal of an overall attention towards more balanced approaches across both areas, although challenges persist in further aligning commitments and achieving synergy between them. For example, in the battery minerals area, companies have the opportunity to build on their existing work on conflict minerals due diligence and risk management, extending the experience and lessons learnt from these processes to environmental due diligence. By cross-pollinating these efforts, companies can strengthen their strategies and progress in both areas, leveraging the synergies between environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

CASE STUDY

Beyond emissions accounting: The role of transition targets in guiding automakers' decarbonisation

By NewClimate Institute

A decade after the Paris Agreement, accountability initiatives have successfully mobilised automakers to set greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets ('emission targets'). As of February 2026, around 90% of Forbes Global 2000 automakers have set both net-zero and interim emission targets. Emission targets are typically aggregated, company-level greenhouse gas reduction goals, sometimes broken down by specific scopes. The emissions targets of more than 20 automakers, including Toyota, Volkswagen and Ford, have been validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

Yet, emission targets alone have failed to drive 1.5 °C-aligned shifts in automakers' operations and business activities along the value chain. Introducing transition-specific alignment targets ('transition targets') alongside emission targets would refocus target-setting to better guide, incentivise and track decarbonisation efforts along the value chain.

Emission targets fall critically short in reflecting automakers' transitions

Recent wanalyses like the Corporate Climate Responsibility Monitor show systemic limitations in current target-setting practices centred around emission targets. Two conceptual limitations are especially relevant for automakers.

First, emission targets depend on emissions accounting and inventories that are often incomplete or inaccurate. This undermines the meaning of automakers' emission targets because they may (i) exclude certain emission sources, (ii) use faulty assumptions about vehicles' use-phase emissions, (iii) lack reliable data on emissions from purchased materials, and (iv) depend on carbon credits to claim reductions. These limitations ultimately obscure whether companies are making any real progress in reducing value-chain emissions.

Second, emission targets often fail to adequately reflect innovation and can favour established automakers. Innovative newcomers might see interim increase in emissions as they scale up, even though their climate solutions may be critically relevant for achieving a 1.5 °C-aligned decarbonisation in the sector.

Together, these limitations make standalone emission targets inadequate to guide automakers' climate strategies. This calls for a timely, science-based improvement to current target-setting, complementing it with the introduction of transition targets.

Introducing transition targets to guide sector-specific transitions

Corporate target-setting should first and foremost ensure that targets guide, incentivise and track companies along key sectoral transitions. Unlike emission targets, transition targets are designed to systematically track progress toward 1.5 °C-aligned transitions across the value chain within a given sector.

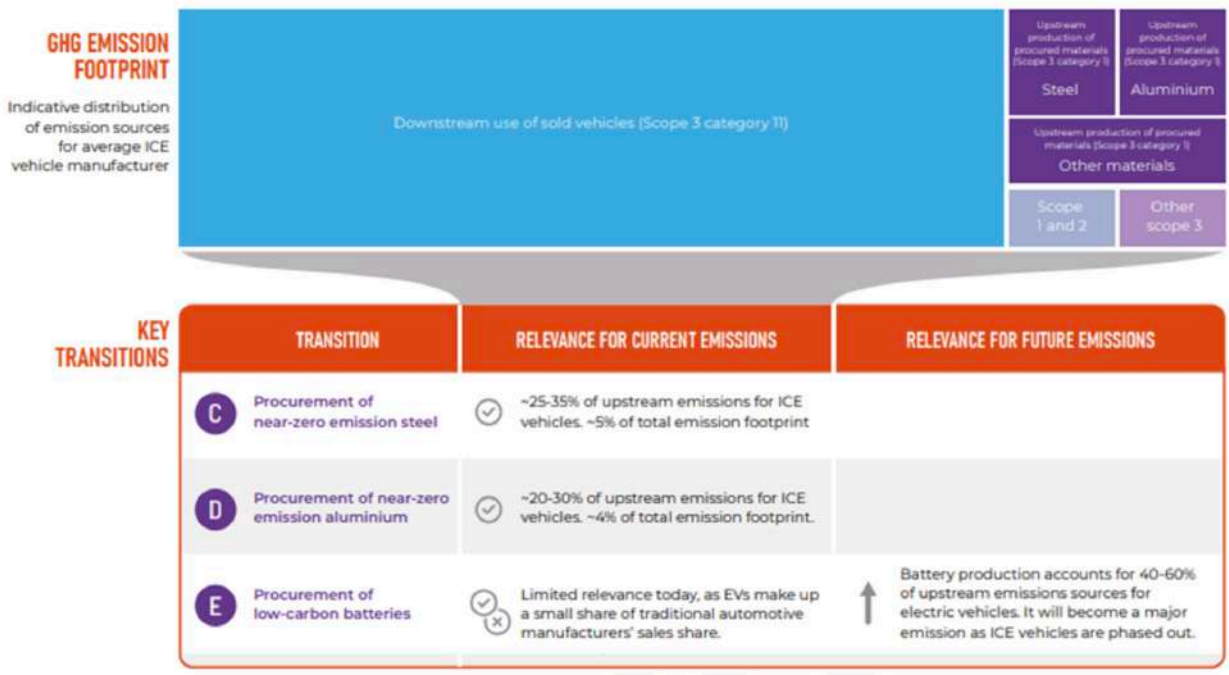
For automakers, this means shifting to zero-emission vehicles and increasing the use of near-zero steel, near-zero aluminium and low-carbon batteries in upstream procurement. Consequently, transition targets place greater emphasis on near-term actions and sector-specific transitions for automakers.

Introducing transition targets alongside emission targets enables stakeholders to identify and reward business changes aligned with 1.5 °C pathways. As a result, investors, regulators, courts and civil society can better distinguish genuine leadership from greenwashing and effectively push for real transitions rather than accounting-based manoeuvres.

From theory to practice: operationalising transition targets

As a first step in operationalising transition targets, identifying key transitions in a sector requires a nuanced understanding of current and future emission sources. For automotive manufacturers, vehicles' use-phase emissions currently account

Figure 1 - **Overview of emission sources and key transitions along the automakers' upstream value chain.**



Source: NewClimate, 2025.

for the majority of total emissions, Beyond this, the largest remaining sources stem from upstream purchases of steel, aluminium and batteries, which are becoming increasingly important as the sector decarbonises (Figure 1)

The second step is to identify actionable and transparent metrics for specific targets. For automakers' upstream activities, these could be the *share of near-zero emission steel procured, the share of near-zero aluminium procured and the GHG intensity per kWh battery capacity*.

The third and final step is to develop 1.5°C-aligned benchmarks for each of these target metrics. This can involve reviewing existing literature and conducting new analyses where gaps remain.

Going forward

For automakers, several initiatives are piloting transition-target methods, including the World Economic Forum's First Mover Coalition and the Climate Group's SteelZero. As of 2026, for example, Ford, GM, and Volvo Cars have committed, via the First Movers Coalition, to purchase 10% of near-zero steel and/or aluminium by 2030. These emerging efforts can provide valuable lessons for broader adoption.

Against this backdrop, the standard-setting cycles by accountability initiatives in 2026 create a key opportunity to introduce transition targets for standard setters. Most prominently, the SBTi plans to publish its Automotive Sector Net-Zero Standard in 2026 or shortly thereafter. A draft released in February 2026 already proposes transition-target options for consultation, including metrics such as the share of zero-/near-zero-emission vehicle sales and targets for priority purchased commodities.

Automakers therefore have a timely opportunity to revisit their emission-only target-setting approaches and set transparent, actionable transition targets that better drive the sector's decarbonisation.

General indicators

Since launching the Leaderboard, companies have demonstrated significant progress in this subsection: **the average score across the 18 automakers has almost doubled since the launch of the Leaderboard**, rising from 20% in 2023 to 39% in 2026. 2026 continues this strong upward trend, with an average score increase of 7 percentage points.

Top five companies and improvers for General (Climate & Environment)

	TOP FIVE SCORING COMPANIES (2026 Score on General)	TOP FIVE IMPROVERS (Percentage point change in General score over 2025)
1	BMW (67%)	Kia (21%)
2	Ford (58%)	Volvo (21%)
3	Volkswagen (54%)	Honda (17%)
4	Volvo (53%)	Nissan (15%)
5	Mercedes (51%)	BYD (13%)

Kia and **Volvo** were the top improvers in the General subsection this year, both achieving dramatic score improvements of 21 percentage points each. Volvo's improvement can be attributed to its updated Code of Conduct for business partners and newly published position papers, which offer more detailed insights into its approach to managing water and deforestation risks in its supply chain.

Kia improvements enabled the company to boost its ranking by 6 places, marking the largest ranking improvement across all subsections of the Climate and Environment section, matched only by BYD in the aluminium subsection. Kia's progress was driven by clearer supplier emissions reduction requirements, more detailed disclosure on supplier progress, and enhanced transparency on measures to mitigate water and deforestation risks.

In addition to Kia, several other Asian automakers have also made notable improvement in this subsection, with **Honda** improving its score by 17 percentage points, whilst **Nissan** and **BYD** each increased their scores by 13 percentage points. **SAIC** improved its score from 1% to 10%. These companies have taken important initial steps toward supply chain decarbonization. For example, Honda disclosed disaggregated scope 3 GHG emissions for the first time, while BYD set a lifecycle target that covers the upstream supply chain. Nissan specified supplier requirements for setting SBTs and BYD, Honda and SAIC all showed more detailed processes for monitoring supplier compliance with GHG emissions targets and broader environmental impacts.

Despite improvements in their scores, **BYD** and **SAIC**, joined by **GAC**, remain the three bottom ranked companies in this subsection. These three companies are the only ones yet to disclose upstream scope 3 emissions. As the Leaderboard expects annual updates of this data to ensure consistent progress tracking, **GM** also received a 0 score against this indicator this year after failing to publish an annual sustainability report, where the company previously disclosed this data.

Ford was another strong improver, increasing its score by 13 percentage points. Ford's improvement is due to its strengthened scope 3 targets, including a clearly defined interim target for scope 3 category 1 emissions, as well as its detailed disclosure on a range of mechanisms that the company adopted to manage water risks and impacts in its supply chain.

It is concerning to note the stagnation and regression among some companies, including **GAC, GM, Hyundai**, and **Mercedes**. **Hyundai**, for example, had previously specified targets for supply chain emissions reductions, but these are no longer reflected in the company's latest Carbon Neutrality Strategy. **GAC**'s lack of progress stands in contrast to its national peers, all of which have shown more progress in the general section. As a result, GAC dropped another position to 17th, now surpassed by BYD.

On a positive note, it is notable in this year's results that most of the automakers (14 out of 18) have established some form of supplier requirement related to deforestation and/or land conversion, which could be attributed to the influence of the EU Deforestation Regulation. However, only five automakers, **BMW, GM, Renault, Toyota** and **VW**, have set up more specific targets and these targets are mostly limited to a single commodity of rubber as part of their membership of the Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPSNR), except

for **BMW** that has also established a commitment on leather through signing up as signatory of the Deforestation-Free Call to Action of |the Leather Working Group (LWG). Overall, only **BMW, VW, Kia, Mercedes** and **Tesla** have shown tangible evidence of due diligence and supplier engagement efforts aimed at addressing deforestation risks and impacts within their supply chains.

Fossil free and environmentally sustainable steel

For the second consecutive year, overall progress on the steel supply chain has been limited, although important progress was made by some companies in key areas. The top improver, BMW, saw only a modest increase of 5 percentage points, while the majority of companies (12 out of 18) either stagnated or regressed in this subsection.

Top five companies and improvers for Steel

	TOP FIVE SCORING COMPANIES (2026 Score on Steel)	**TOP FIVE IMPROVERS** (Percentage point change in Steel score over 2025)
1	Volvo (58%)	BMW (5%)
2	Mercedes (28%)	Mercedes (4%)
3	Ford (23%)	Kia (4%)
4	Tesla (22%)	Geely (3%)
5	Geely (19%)	Ford (1%)

Notable improvements came from **Mercedes** and **Geely,** who became the first companies evaluated in the Leaderboard to disclose the quantity of lower-emission steel used in specific EV models. Mercedes provides the most detail in this regard, stating in the 360 Environmental Check of its CLA with EQ Technology model that the vehicle uses "39 kg of steel from electric arc furnaces, which are manufactured using electricity from renewable energy sources."

On the flipside, **Renault, Stellantis** and **Ford** all stopped disclosing quantitative data they had disclosed in previous years regarding the quantity of recycled steel they used in parts of their annual production cycles.

A range of companies (**BMW, Ford, Kia, Mercedes, Renault, Stellantis** and **Volvo**) improved their scores for providing details on closed loop systems for steel recycling, although few of these examples related to processes for recycling post-consumer scrap specifically.

When it comes to using supply chain levers to drive steel supply chain decarbonization, however, the industry shows limited progress. Members of the First Movers' Coalition, **Ford** and **GM**, for example, have provided little to no information on their progress towards their commitment of purchasing at least 10% near-zero steel by 2030.

The 2026 Leaderboard methodology further clarifies the definitions used for lower-emission and fossil-free steel. **Nissan** received a score downgrade as a result of this methodology change, due to the adoption of mass balance in its offtake agreement for "green steel", as this steel is still produced in a coal-fired blast furnace and so cannot be considered an example of a production method that eliminates "as much coal as technically possible in the ironmaking and steelmaking processes."

It is increasingly concerning that the companies at the bottom of the steel section ranking (**BYD, GAC, Honda, SAIC** and **Toyota**) continue to score 0% across all indicators for another year. These companies are finding themselves in a rapidly dwindling minority, as the number of companies failing to take any action on steel has dropped from 11 in 2023 to 5 in 2026.

CASE STUDY

Mass balance or mass deception?

By SteelWatch

Supply chain decarbonisation is fast becoming a competitive marketing tool for EV makers. Last year, both Mercedes and Volvo actively promoted the low carbon footprints of their latest EV models. The use of low-carbon materials like steel was key for both companies - the top scoring automakers on steel decarbonisation in this year's Lead the Charge Leaderboard.

This is ultimately a positive trend for EV buyers, who can increasingly compare the sustainability performance of different models in order to make an informed choice. Mercedes' new CLA uses 39 kg of steel from electric arc furnaces using renewable energy, whilst Volvo's ES90 uses 18% recycled steel and 43% primary aluminum produced with renewable energy.

Such progress shows that automakers increasingly see economic value, and a competitive advantage, in selling EVs made with cleaner materials. However, as this competition intensifies, it also brings with it greenwashing risks from companies wanting to claim the same economic benefits without actually doing any of the hard work.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the misleading use of "mass balance" accounting within the steel industry. This accounting trickery is diluting the meaning of the term "green steel" and leading to some automakers paying a premium for steel that is being marketed as low-emissions but, in reality, is still produced by burning massive quantities of coal.

What's the problem with 'mass balance'?

Mass balance is a chain of custody model used to track certain materials with an environmental impact as they move through supply chains. Traditional mass balance systems can enable producers to mix dirty and clean inputs and then claim a corresponding amount of the final product is clean or dirty, rather than just an average of the two.

In recent years the Japan Iron and Steel Federation (JISF), and steelmakers including Nippon Steel, launched an entirely different accounting system branded as so-called "mass balance" (now "GX mass balance.") Their method allows a company to claim they achieved greenhouse gas emissions reductions somewhere within a company's steelmaking processes and issue equivalent emissions reduction certificates that they then sell along with steel products.

While the schemes are labelled "mass balance" there is no requirement for an actual link between the reported emissions reduction and the final product. This means that the stated emissions reductions could have occurred in a site with no connection to the steel being sold as "low-emissions" and even "zero emissions." There is no requirement that the emissions reductions result from investments in the deep decarbonisation of production.

This is a worrying development with serious consequences for the automotive and steel industries.

Carmakers - and thereby their customers - risk being duped into paying a premium for "green steel" that has actually been manufactured using the same coal-fired blast furnace technology the industry has used to make steel for over a century.

For steelmakers that are actually investing in constructing costly fossil-free steel facilities this is a slap in the face and a serious threat to their own viability, as the market for the green premium they rely on risks being undercut by steel products that have required no such investments.

Where is this showing up in car supply chains and the Leaderboard?

In 2022 Nissan announced an offtake agreement with Kobe Steel for "low-CO2 steel", and subsequently announced plans to "expand the use of green steel" by purchasing Kobenable®*2 Steel from Kobe Steel, Nippon Steel's NSCarbolex-®*3Neutral, JFE Steel's JGreeX®*4, and POSCO's carbon reduction allocated steel, all of which use this so-called mass balance method.

Nippon Steel, for example, claims that their steel has "achieved a 100% reduction in CO2 emissions from steel manufacturing through the mass-balance method." However, according to research by

Transition Asia, this steel is still produced in a polluting coal-fired blast furnace. Not only is it egregious to claim that such steel is “green”, it is also impossible for any steel to have zero CO2 emissions. Even Stegra - which will produce a genuine near-zero emissions steel product - claims up to 95% emissions reductions, not 100%. The markup premium by Nippon Steel for its so-called zero-carbon steel? A 30-60% premium.

This year the Leaderboard introduced new definitions for lower emission and fossil-free steel, which state that lower emission steel is produced by eliminating as much coal as technically possible in the ironmaking and steelmaking processes. As a result, Nissan has lost points for the offtake agreements it has signed for “green” steel, dropping a significant 10 percentage points in the steel subsection of this year’s Leaderboard report.

Pushback on accounting trickery

Steelmakers are being held to account over their distorted claims on green steel. Last year Korean steelmaker POSCO - a major supplier to automakers such as Hyundai Motor Company and Nissan - was ordered by the Fair Trade Commission in South Korea to withdraw sustainability claims about its steel products, in response to a legal claim submitted by Solutions for Our Climate (SFOC). According to SFOC, POSCO’s ‘Greenate-certified steel’ uses the mass balance methodology to certify some of its products as low carbon, allowing the company to unevenly allocate emissions reductions to specific steel products.

Sadly, the ruling came after POSCO sold up to 300,000 tons of “low-carbon” steel — despite the emissions cuts for the steel accounting for less than one percent of its total emissions.

Civil society groups across the world are pushing back on attempts by Japan Iron and Steel Federation and Nippon Steel to have their distorted mass balance accounting for steel production accepted by standard-setting bodies and national governments. In an open letter, over 30 organisations, including the Lead the Charge network, called on “independent standard-setting bodies and governments to only recognise credible low-emissions steel in their standards and to reject undue influence by steelmakers in weakening these standards”.

The letter adds: “We urge corporate steel buyers not to pay premiums for so-called ‘mass balance’ steel but rather encourage the production of physically low emissions steel”.

Credible green steel

The demand for genuine green steel continues to grow. Automakers such as BMW Group, Mercedes-Benz AG, Volkswagen and Volvo Group are continuing to stick with credible sources of green steel.

The competition for cleaner EVs is heating up and, soon, the first EVs using truly fossil-free steel will hit the market. It is essential that regulators and carmakers, as well as their customers, push back against efforts to dilute the meaning of green steel via distorted mass balance accounting, to ensure green steel produced with revolutionary new technologies is not competing with steel claiming equivalent benefits, despite it being produced using the same old dirty coal.

Fossil free and environmentally sustainable aluminium

Compared to steel, automakers achieved a significantly stronger rate of progress for the aluminium subsection this year, which registered an average score increase of 4 percentage points compared to the 2025 edition.

Top five companies and improvers for Aluminium

	TOP FIVE SCORING COMPANIES (2026 Score on Aluminium)	**TOP FIVE IMPROVERS** (Percentage point change in Aluminium score over 2025)
1	Volvo (55%)	Tesla (13%)
2	Tesla (45%)	Volkswagen (12%)
3	Ford (37%)	Volvo (10%)
4	Mercedes (26%)	BMW (8%)
5	Geely (21%)	BYD (8%)

Volvo maintained its top position on fossil free and environmentally sustainable aluminium this year, further increasing its score by an impressive 10 percentage points and becoming the only company to score over 50% of the total available points in this section. Volvo disclosed the amount of primary aluminium produced with renewable energy for model ES90 and continue to advance in aluminum circularity, expanding its closed-loop recycling to Taizhou and Chengdu plants in China, alongside existing efforts in Sweden.

However, **Tesla** was the strongest improver overall this year, increasing its score by 13 percentage points. Tesla disclosed a new offtake agreement for low-carbon aluminum in North America, with an emission intensity below 2kg of CO2e per kg of aluminium which is achieved commercially through usage of post-consumer recycled scrap content. The company also disclosed additional details about its efforts to enhance aluminium recycling.

VW improved its score by 12 percentage points, being the second top improver after Tesla. VW's improvement is driven by Audi's engagement with the ASI, Porsche's partnership with Hydro for low-carbon aluminum procurement, and increased disclosure on its closed-loop systems across Germany, Hungary and Slovakia.

BYD improved its ranking by 6 places, the largest ranking improvement across all subsections of the Climate and Environment section, matched only by Kia in the General subsection. This progress is largely attributed to the company's progress on aluminium circularity, including establishing an internal recycling line for aluminium waste from both production and automobile dismantling, the adoption of aluminium alloys designed for recyclability, and a partial disclosure of the quantity of scrap aluminium used in its production.

Geely's score improvement of 5 percentage points is mainly driven by its battery subsidiary VREMT, which has set a target of using 100% green electricity in aluminum ingot production, along with enhanced disclosure of the percentage of renewable aluminum ("hydro-aluminum") used in its ZEEKR Mix model. As a result of this progress, the company has now entered the top five rankings on aluminium for the first time.

Although retaining its 4th place, **Mercedes** shows more limited progress, with an improvement of 3 percentage points. Notably, together with Volvo, Mercedes is one of the only two companies to have disclosed a vehicle LCA (for its CLA EV model) which states the specific quantities of low-carbon aluminum used in the vehicle.

Companies made the most progress in this subsection on circularity, with 11 of 18 improving their scores in this area, including through the adoption of closed-loop processes that incorporate both pre- and post-consumer scrap.

Compared to last year, the number of companies scoring 0% in the aluminum section has been halved, with only **GAC, SAIC** and **Toyota** maintaining a 0% score. Together with BYD, Kia and Honda also took initial steps on aluminium this year, improving their scores by 4 and 1 percentage points respectively, in both cases due to investments in aluminium circularity.

CASE STUDY

The role of automakers in pursuing a rights-based and community-centered approach to bauxite mining in Guinea

By Inclusive Development International

Guinea's bauxite industry is expanding rapidly, driven in part by demand for aluminum for use in electric vehicles, solar panels and batteries.

People living in the path of planned new mines desperately want to avoid the land grabs and environmental damage that have been routine in the industry's past. Some communities have begun organizing to demand a fairer deal, and they are asking for support from the industry's major buyers—including global automakers—to ensure mining companies take a truly rights-based approach that centers community agency in decision-making. This represents an important opportunity for car companies to use their leverage to advance human rights and address environmental and social risks in their aluminum supply chain.

Expectations of communities at risk

Guinea's oldest mining company—Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (CBG), a joint venture of Rio Tinto, Alcoa, Dadco and the Guinean government—is currently looking to expand its mining operation to areas north of the Cogon River in Guinea's Boké region. The area south of the river has been heavily strip mined for decades, devastating the landscape and displacing thousands of people.

Now, land-connected communities to the north, so far insulated from the most extreme impacts of mining, are at serious risk. With the support of civil society and their neighbors to the south, who have for many years been advocating for remedy and compensation for harms they have already suffered, communities in CBG's anticipated expansion zone are beginning to organize. The residents of several communities in the north have begun speaking out about how they want the company to engage with them before any mining proceeds on their land, and what they would expect in return if it does.

> "If CBG destroys our land, streams and rivers like they have done on the other side of the river — we are as good as dead."
>
> **Boubacar Bah**, *a resident of Teliwora, one of the towns that lies in the path of new mine.*

Boubacar Bah crossing the Cogon River. Photo by Souleymane Camara.

A recent report, "I Will Do Anything to Stay Here": What a Just Energy Transition Means to Communities at Risk from Bauxite Mining in Guinea, co-published by Inclusive Development International, Action Mines-Guinea, CECIDE and ADREMGUI, presents perspectives from these communities and a list of specific requests for CBG and its shareholders, lenders and buyers. These requests include:

- Mining should proceed only once there has been a true dialogue and affected communities have provided consent to the terms on which the project can proceed.
- There should be a fully transparent census process and participatory impact assessment and CBG and the communities should reach agreement on plans to avoid or mitigate negative impacts and the benefits that communities will receive.
- Fair compensation should be provided, including for losses due to the exploration activities currently underway, before any land-taking occurs.
- Communities should have access to technical and legal advisers to support them in these processes.

> **"This land is ours. We inherited it from our fathers. We want to pass it on to our sons. We should decide what happens to this land."**
>
> **Kadiatou Bah**, *a grandmother of 15 who lives in Horé Lari village, north of the Cogon River in northwestern Guinea*

Responsibilities of CBG's business partners

Companies that use CBG bauxite in their products—including the car companies Audi, BMW, Ford, GM, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche and Toyota—have a role to play supporting at-risk communities in the proposed agreement-making process. They can do this by meeting with community members to understand their perspectives, by engaging directly with CBG and instituting material consequences if the company fails to respect its responsibilities or agreements with local communities, by providing pooled resources to support communities' access to technical and legal advisers, and by enabling or contributing to remedy if harms occur.

Several automakers, particularly Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi, have set positive examples through their engagements with CBG and affected communities south of the Cogon River. For example, Mercedes-Benz has conducted site visits to CBG mines, met directly with affected communities to discuss mining impacts, and has engaged with civil society and with the company regarding these communities' needs. This is in comparison with companies such as GM and Ford, which use CBG-sourced aluminum in their supply chains but have done little to follow up on the human rights issues brought to their attention.

While much more is needed, the positive engagements from select automakers are an important step toward ensuring that communities already affected by CBG's operations receive the remedy they deserve. They can also serve as a foundation for continued engagement with CBG and other stakeholders to ensure that the rights of communities north of the Cogon River are respected. If CBG and its business partners meet the expectations of these communities it will help them avoid conflict, complaints and costs in the future and result in better outcomes for all parties.

A truly just energy transition is not possible unless the people whose land and resources are affected by transition mineral mining have agency in decision making about whether and how that mining happens.

For a guide to what this would take in practice, this policy proposal—endorsed by more than sixty human rights, environmental justice and Indigenous Peoples' organizations—lays out a rights-based approach to community participation in decision-making about extractive and other investment projects that impact their land and lives. We urge mining companies, as well as their investors and customers, including car companies and other end-users of the minerals, to adopt the six measures outlined in the proposal to advance a just transition for project-affected communities.

Fossil free and environmentally sustainable batteries

Overall, the 2026 Leaderboard shows clear progress in the battery subsection compared to the previous edition, with the industry average score rising from 16% to 20%. However, a small group of companies accounts for most of this improvement.

While many companies have strengthened battery circularity and due diligence measures, much of the sector still lacks credible strategies to cut battery supply chain emissions, including clear disaggregated targets, requirements for renewable energy in battery manufacturing, and purchase agreements for low-carbon battery minerals.

Top five companies and improvers for Batteries

	TOP FIVE SCORING COMPANIES (2026 Score on Batteries)	**TOP FIVE IMPROVERS** (Percentage point change in Batteries score over 2025)
1	Tesla (56%)	Tesla (20%)
2	Renault (39%)	Geely (14%)
3	Mercedes (36%)	BYD (11%)
4	Volkswagen (31%)	Ford (10%)
5	Ford (29%)	Hyundai (6%)

Four of last year's top five companies in the fossil free and environmentally sustainable batteries subsection retained their place among the top five, with only Stellantis being replaced by Ford this year.

Tesla and **Ford** are also among the top improvers in this area. Tesla recorded an impressive 20 percentage point increase, reclaiming the top position that it narrowly lost to Mercedes in the 2025 Leaderboard and surpassing Renault, now in second place, by a substantial margin of 17 %. It is also the first time that a company has scored more than 50% in this subsection.

This year, Tesla improved its score by further enhancing its battery supply chain emissions disclosure with detailed breakdown of cell production and key materials, the first company to provide this level of granularity when it comes to battery supply chain emissions. The company also improved its score on the indicators on environmental due diligence for lithium and nickel sourcing.

Ford increased its score by 10 %, with notable progress in disclosing disaggregated data on battery supply chain emissions in the life cycle assessments for specific EV models in Europe, and for disclosing more granular information on environmental due diligence measures related to its lithium and nickel supply chains.

Renault improved its ranking by one place, increasing its score by four %. The company drove this progress by requiring battery suppliers to provide carbon footprint data and emissions-reduction proposals in tenders, and by forming R&D partnerships to reduce reliance on carbon-intensive minerals, including a new collaboration with French startup Verkor to manufacture batteries in France from 2025.

While Asian automakers have traditionally demonstrated strong performance against the battery R&D indicators, **Geely** and **BYD** have made the most significant improvement in broader battery supply chain sustainability. Geely improved its score by 14 % and BYD by 11, reflecting early steps on decarbonisation and circularity, although both still have significant gaps to close.

Geely, for example, has committed to cutting lifecycle carbon emissions from new energy vehicle power batteries by 25% by 2025, but it has not yet set targets or a roadmap beyond this date. The company also strengthened its performance across all battery circularity indicators in the supply chain levers section, having now disclosed one of the most comprehensive strategies, together with corresponding progress data, in this area.

BYD's improvement largely stems from stronger decarbonisation efforts by its battery subsidiary, FinDreams, alongside expanded battery collection and repurposing initiatives. Despite this progress, both BYD and Geely still score zero on the battery mineral due diligence indicators.

Toyota moved up in the battery rankings, rising four places and moving out of the bottom three, driven mainly by greater disclosure on battery R&D and circularity. This includes adopting "easy-to-dismantle" battery design to enable large-scale recycling, making Toyota one of the few automakers to provide concrete examples of using design choices to improve battery recyclability.

Mercedes dropped from the top position in the battery supply chain area by two positions, primarily due to the company no longer disclosing important data regarding the implementation of its battery reuse and repurposing efforts. However, Mercedes remains one of the four companies, alongside **Geely, Hyundai** and **VW,** to disclose qualitative information on investments in battery recycling processes that do not use incineration.

Stellantis also regressed on the indicators focused on battery mineral due diligence and low-carbon mineral offtake agreements, with recent disclosures providing less detail than in previous reporting. The company also lost points on battery repurposing and recycling after it stopped disclosing key quantitative data. Together, these setbacks pushed Stellantis out of the top five, with the company falling to 7th place.

Half of the companies assessed improved their performance on battery circularity, providing concrete examples of battery collection, repair, reuse, and repurposing initiatives, alongside in-house facilities and collaborative partnerships for battery recycling. However, only a small number matched these examples with robust qualitative and quantitative disclosures. **Geely** and **Kia** now join **Volvo** in scoring full points for the indicator on battery repurposing and reuse. However, following regressions by Mercedes and Stellantis, Volvo now stands alone as the only company to score points for providing quantitative data on its battery recycling efforts.

GAC, GM, Nissan, SAIC and **Honda** remain at the bottom of the battery section, scoring less than 10 %. Of these companies, only Nissan and Honda improved their scores - albeit marginally.

InfluenceMap weighting

Public policy plays an important role in the transition to truly clean cars. To ensure that a company is supporting climate-positive regulation and policy, the scorecard includes a weighting for a company's approach to policy advocacy. This weighting is based on the work that InfluenceMap undertakes to assess corporations' and industry groups' influence on policies needed to address climate change. Companies can receive a positive or negative score depending on whether they are positively advocating for climate change policies or judged to be doing the reverse.

BMW, Geely and Renault are the only three companies that have shown improvement on climate lobbying: BMW and Renault received improved ratings from "D+" to "C-", while Geely received a first-time rating of "B-". The InfluenceMap rating also contributed to Geely's overall score improvement in the Fossil-free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains section, enabling the company to surpass BMW and Renault in the ranking of the Climate and Environment section.

CASE STUDY

‘From Pilot to Market Signal: The GBA Battery Passport and the Next Phase of Supply Chain Sustainability’

By The Global Battery Alliance

As electrification accelerates, EV supply chains have become a catalyst for broader sustainability transformation. The Lead the Charge Leaderboard has consistently shown that automakers are making some of their most notable progress in EV-related supply chains, from low-carbon steel and aluminium procurement to more granular battery mineral due diligence.

The Global Battery Alliance (GBA) Battery Passport initiative sits squarely within this evolution. Founded in 2017, the GBA is the world’s largest multi-stakeholder partnership to scale a sustainable, circular and responsible battery value chain by facilitating collective action across the value chain. The Alliance convenes over 150 members including the world’s largest mining, cell manufacturing, battery users and recycling companies, with international organisations, labour unions, NGOs and academia.

The GBA’s flagship initiative, the Battery Passport, is an emerging global sustainability reporting and certification scheme for batteries, underpinned by indicators that allow data on facility-level sustainability performance in the battery supply chain to be gathered, verified, scored, aggregated and compared. It is built on innovative Digital Product Passport protocols and technologies, to enable trusted and harmonized supply chain data to be harnessed effectively.

It represents a shift from fragmented transparency efforts toward harmonized, decision-ready sustainability infrastructure for batteries, beginning with EVs, but increasingly relevant across energy storage, consumer electronics, data centres, and other battery-dependent sectors.

The Challenge: Creating Incentives

The introduction of the EU Batteries Regulation (EUBR) marks a turning point for battery value chains. Mandatory carbon footprinting, due diligence, recycled content disclosure, and digital product passports are reshaping market expectations for the battery supply chain and beyond, creating robust incentives for transparency, decarbonization, circularity, responsible sourcing, and improved traceability across global supply chains. While compliance with the EUBR provides a powerful foundation for transformation, the next step is ensuring that this regulatory baseline catalyzes even broader and deeper improvements in sustainability performance across battery value chains.

Today’s landscape is characterized by multiple overlapping standards and reporting frameworks, albeit with limited comparability of sustainability performance, and increasing traceability requirements focused on security of supply. In this context, there is a risk that due diligence, if implemented narrowly, could function primarily as re-risking and gatekeeping mechanism rather than as a tool for continuous improvement, supplier engagement, and capacity-building with the segments of the value chain at greatest need for capacity building and engagement. This includes small and medium sized enterprises for example.

While regulatory “sticks” are necessary, they are insufficient. *Responsible sourcing must also become a competitive advantage.*

The GBA Approach – from compliance to market differentiation

The GBA Battery Passport is designed not only to support and streamline compliance with the EU Batteries Regulation, but also to translate compliance into genuine market differentiation and competitive advantage. At its core are the Battery Benchmarks, a globally aligned set of sustainability performance indicators covering carbon footprint, responsible sourcing, circularity, and broader ESG criteria developed through multi-stakeholder consensus. The Benchmarks are designed to:

- Align with the EU Batteries Regulation and OECD due diligence guidance
- Build on and recognize credible voluntary and national standards
- Allow nuance between standards
- Enable structured, comparable reporting across the value chain

Traceability is a foundational element but not the end goal. Traceability must enable accountability and recognition. The missing ingredient in many systems today is comparability. Investors and procurers need decision-ready data that allows them to differentiate between products and suppliers when making capital allocation decisions, sourcing contracts, preferred supplier designations, and product-level sustainability claims. Without comparability, transparency cannot translate into market incentives.

The GBA Battery Passport sustainability certification scheme is currently in the operational trials phase. It integrates standardized reporting via the Benchmarks, harmonized GHG accounting rules, a Conformity Assessment Scheme to underpin third-party assurance. It also facilitates the development of enabling digital infrastructure (developed in partnership with the International Trade Centre) for secure and interoperable data exchange.

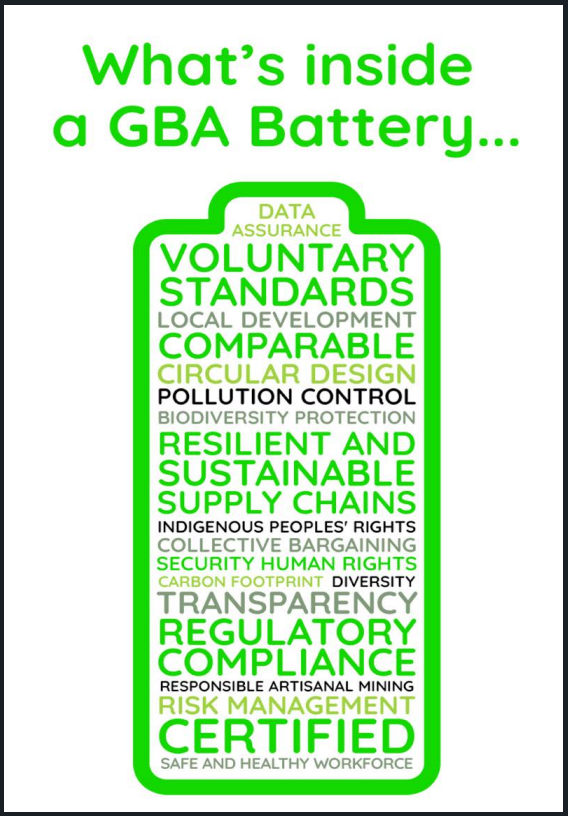
For example, one of the Battery Benchmarks, the Greenhouse Gas rulebook, focuses on carbon intensity at the battery level, requiring standardized calculation methodologies aligned with emerging regulatory requirements. Harmonized GHG accounting rules ensure that emissions from mining, refining, cell production, and assembly are calculated consistently across geographies and actors, enabling credible comparison between batteries produced in different contexts.

Other Benchmarks assess responsible sourcing practices aligned with OECD guidance, including risk identification, mitigation measures, and third-party verification. Together, these elements make sustainability performance measurable, comparable, and actionable.

From the Coalition of the Willing to an Alliance of the Doing

In January 2026, the GBA launched Operational Trials involving 16 industry consortia spanning mining, refining, cell manufacturing, and automotive production and utility scale stationary storage. These pilots are testing:

- The participating organisation's readiness for the EU Batteries Regulation compliance
- Real-world application of the Battery Benchmarks. In practice, this means that participating consortia are mapping real battery value chains—from mineral extraction through to vehicle or stationary storage integration—submitting standardized data against the Benchmarks, testing digital data exchange systems, and undergoing trial assurance processes. This hands-on approach allows companies to identify data gaps, improve internal systems, and prepare for regulatory implementation while simultaneously shaping the future certification framework in a pre-competitive environment.
- Digital reporting and interoperability solutions that enable secure data exchange between upstream and downstream actors, reducing duplication, improving efficiency, and strengthening traceability. Especially for smaller enterprises, the cost of implementation of digital product passport schemes can be a challenge. By developing data exchange infrastructure built on the UN Transparency Protocol, the technological entry barrier to participation is lowered. Together, these mechanisms ensure inclusivity and help translate sustainability commitments into verified performance improvements across the supply chain.



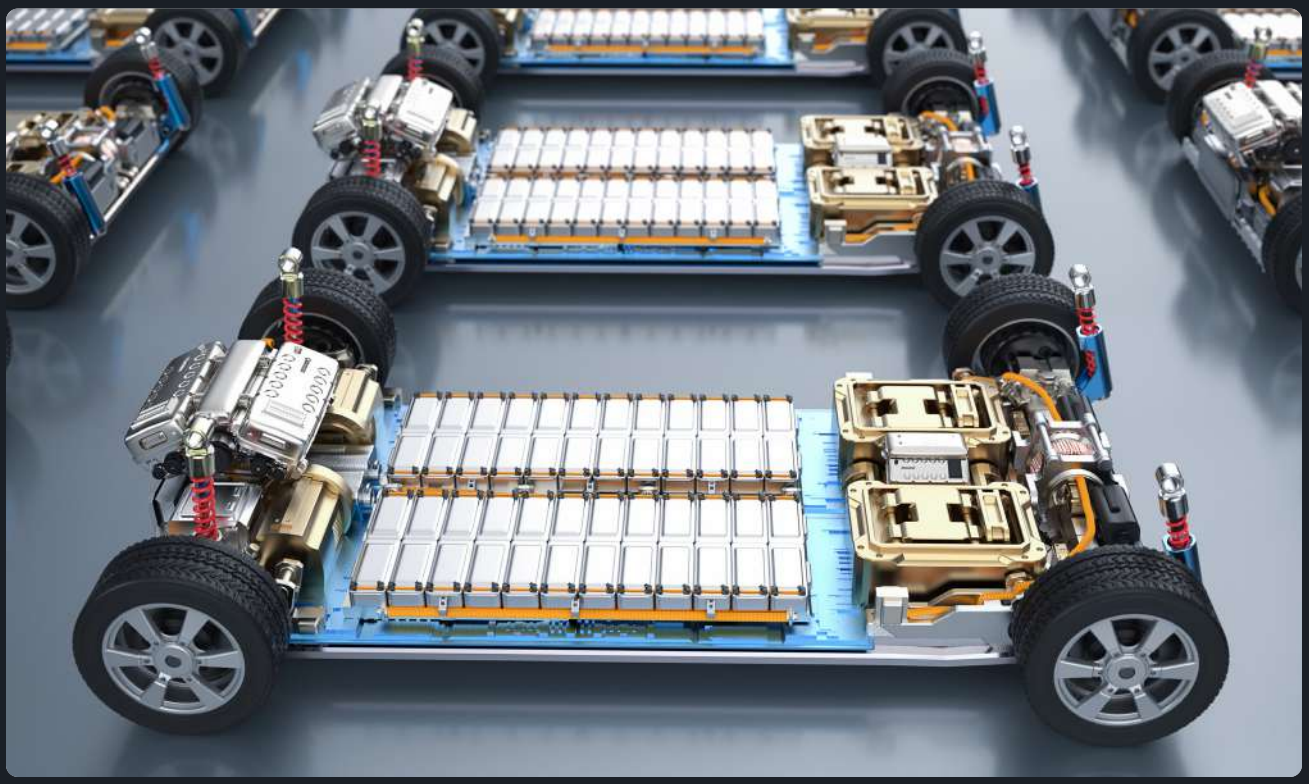
- Assurance and conformity assessment mechanisms: The framework integrates standardized reporting via the Benchmarks, harmonized GHG accounting rules, and a Conformity Assessment Scheme to underpin third-party assurance. The Conformity Assessment Scheme establishes clear verification requirements and auditor guidance, ensuring that sustainability claims are independently assessed and credible.
- Pathways toward a prototype sustainability certification to provide actionable information related to a battery's sustainability performance to end users.

The breadth of participation demonstrates strong market buy-in. Cell manufacturers, supported by automakers have been central drivers of this momentum, reflecting the way EV supply chains are catalyzing broader supply chain improvements. In many cases, battery mineral mapping and decarbonization strategies are more advanced than in other material categories. But the implications extend beyond automotive. As batteries become foundational to grids, buildings, consumer electronics, and strategic infrastructure, scalable sustainability governance becomes a systemic necessity.

From Storytelling to Market Signal

One of the most powerful features of the Battery Passport is that it will enable companies to "tell the story" of the battery embedded in their products, backed by verified data. We are already seeing automakers disclose model-specific use of low-carbon steel and aluminium and integrate supply chain progress into product differentiation strategies. Battery Passports have the potential to further reinforce this trend, allowing sustainability performance to become visible, comparable, and market-relevant.

In doing so, the GBA Battery Passport helps convert regulatory compliance into competitive dynamics, rewarding responsible producers and value chains, and accelerating the transition to more sustainable battery ecosystems. As electrification reshapes global supply chains, transparency alone will not be enough. What matters is transparency that informs decisions and creates incentives for leadership.



Human Rights & Responsible Sourcing

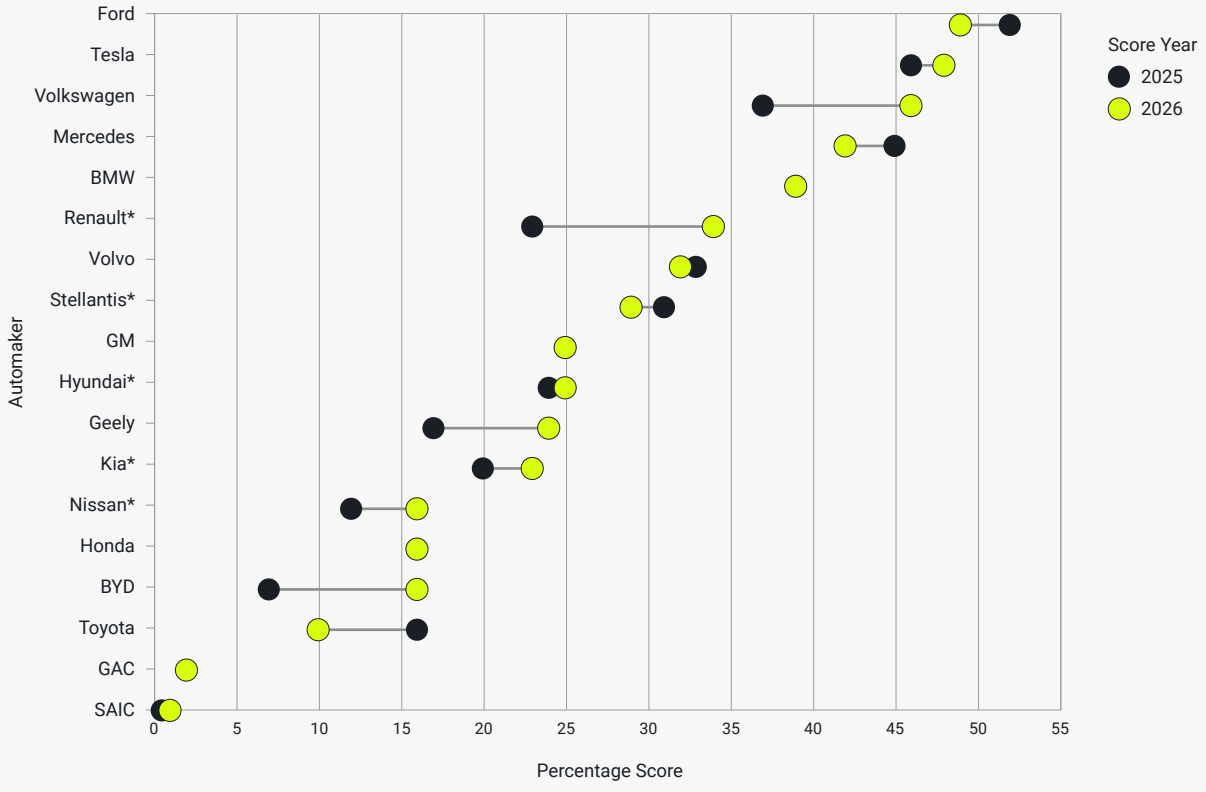
The average overall score for the human rights section is 27% this year. This is only two percentage points more than 2025, which is disappointing on two counts. Firstly, the baseline was only a quarter of the total available points, suggesting that a lot more could and should have been accomplished. In addition, the industry had improved collectively by four percentage points last year. This means that the rate of progress actually slowed down rather than accelerated.

The limited overall progress of automakers on human rights can be explained by two broad factors. On the one hand, a lukewarm performance on general human rights due diligence, Indigenous Peoples' rights, and workers' rights, with average improvements that ranged from 2 to 3 percentage points. On the other hand, the average score on responsible mineral sourcing did not improve at all. Much of this is due to ongoing failures to disclose information, and even some retractions in this area, with some companies failing to disclose key information they had previously published.

Despite these low average scores, a number of automakers are demonstrating promising best practices in a range of critical areas, showing the way ahead for the rest. The best-in-class scores for the General and Responsible Transition Mineral Sourcing subsections now stand at 92% and 83% respectively. The equivalent scores for the sections on workers' rights and, especially, Indigenous Peoples' rights, are notably lower (73% and 39% respectively) but still more than triple the average score in both cases.

A total of 11 automakers improved their overall score on human rights this year. While **Renault, BYD, Volkswagen,** and **Geely** all managed to achieve significant improvements in their scores, the rest advanced by anything from 1 to 4 percentage points. **BMW** and **Honda** did not improve their score at all, and five automakers, **Ford, GM, Mercedes, Stellantis**, and **Toyota** actually regressed over their 2025 human rights scores. Toyota was the worst performer in this regard, registering a 6 percentage point drop in its score.

Figure 5 - **Human Rights Score Comparison: 2025 vs 2026**



Ford continues to lead on human rights. However, the company is now only one percentage point ahead of Tesla. While remaining at the top, both companies' performances on human rights were disappointing this year. **Ford** fell by 19 percentage points on Responsible Transition Mineral Sourcing, and regressed 2 percentage points in its human rights score overall. Having already dropped 3 percentage points the previous year, the company risks soon losing its leadership position.

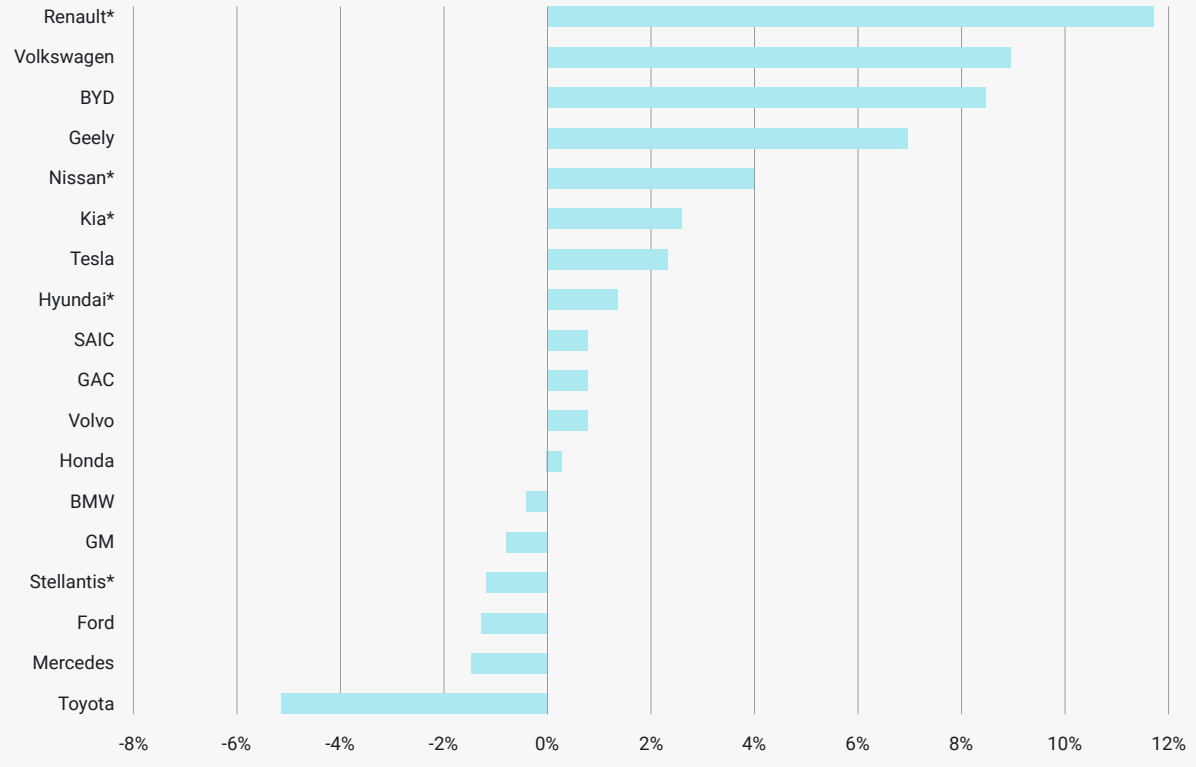
Tesla's performance was stronger overall, although the company still experienced a 1 percentage point drop in its score for both General Human Rights Due Diligence and Indigenous Peoples' Rights, and is behind key competitors in some of the human rights subsections.

Renault was this year's best improver on human rights, with a commendable 11 percentage point improvement overall. It is the only automaker that managed to consistently improve its score in all of the human rights sub-sections. This has allowed the company to move 4 places up the human rights ranking to 6th place - the largest ranking jump by any company in the human rights section this year. Having now surpassed Volvo and Stellantis, Renault is no longer the worst performing European company in the human rights subsection.

BYD and **Volkswagen** are the second-best improvers, each achieving a 9 percentage point improvement in their score. As a result, the companies have also moved up the ladder: BYD from 16th to 15th place and Volkswagen from 5th to 3rd place. Volkswagen's strong performance pushed both Mercedes and BMW down the ladder, moving them from 3rd to 4th place, and from 4th to 5th place, respectively. Having been the top improver on human rights last year, VW is clearly on an upward trajectory.

They are followed by **Geely**, the third best improver with a 7-percentage point increase. This is Geely's third consecutive year as one of the top improvers, allowing the company to continue to rise in the ranking. The company has moved from 12th to 11th place, and has become the top East Asian performer in some of the human rights sub-sections.

Figure 6 - **Percentage point improvements in the human rights and responsible sourcing section**



Mercedes, on the other hand, regressed on its overall human rights score by 2 percentage points. **BMW** also had a disappointing year overall, though it did make significant improvements on its general human rights due diligence practices, for which the company now scores 73% - the highest score for a single subsection in the Human Rights section this year.

It is important to note that despite being in first place, Ford and Tesla only achieved 49% and 48% of the total points available for the human rights section. This shows how far the industry as a whole still has to go to achieve the level of substantive commitments and practices necessary to best guarantee respect for human rights across their supply chains.

General human rights due diligence indicators

This year has seen a rise in the number of companies adopting foundational human rights due diligence. This comprises companies that had so far not taken any action, now taking their first basic steps, and more companies adopting certain practices previously only implemented by a select few. In this way, certain due diligence actions and practices that may have been regarded as marginal or niche in the past, are now becoming more widespread and mainstream.

All but two sub-indicators in this subsection have now been met by at least one automaker. This is important because it demonstrates feasibility: automakers not meeting the standard cannot argue impracticality and are more likely to be judged as simply lacking the necessary will. For the sake of transparency and accountability, they should at least explain why they are not adopting the relevant practice, or disclosing the expected information.

Scores continue significantly higher in this subsection than in the other human rights subsections. On average, companies achieved 47%, more than double the average score of the remaining three subsections (20%). This represents an average overall score increase of a little over 3 percentage points, down from 8 percentage points last year. This shows an unfortunate slowdown in the rate of progress. This is partly because only 9 automakers improved their scores, compared to 14 last year.

Top five companies and improvers for General (Human Rights & Responsible Sourcing)

	TOP FIVE SCORING COMPANIES (2026 Score on General)	**TOP FIVE IMPROVERS** (Percentage point change in General score over 2025)
1	Ford (73%)	BYD (20%)
2	BMW (73%)	Nissan (13%)
3	Volkswagen (68%)	Geely (10%)
4	Stellantis (64%)	BMW (8%)
5	Volvo (64%)	Renault (8%)

BYD was by far the best improver this year, with a remarkable 20 percentage point score increase. This represents the highest score improvement of all companies not only in the general human rights due diligence subsection, but across all human rights categories, and the second highest in the Leaderboard as a whole.

Nissan and **Geely** also achieved notable score improvements of 13 and 10 percentage points respectively. This represents a continuation of strong progress by Geely and an important turnaround for Nissan, who was one of the worst performers in terms of year-on-year progress in this subsection last year.

BMW and **Ford** were also strong performers, increasing their scores by 8 percentage points and 4 percentage points respectively. These two companies now score 73% for this subsection, the highest score for a single subsection across the Leaderboard this year. With a 7-percentage point drop in its score, **Mercedes** was the worst performer.

As in previous reports, most companies in the Leaderboard meet baseline expectations on human rights, with public policy commitments to respect human rights and Supplier Codes of Conduct (SCoCs) that require suppliers to do the same. Recent progress by Geely, which published a dedicated human rights policy, and BYD, which released its first public SCoC, leaves GAC and SAIC as the only automakers without either a public human rights commitment or a Supplier Code of Conduct.

More automakers disclosed details on their human rights risk identification processes this year, with European and US companies continuing to lead. These companies consistently explain their methodology, prioritisation criteria, and assessment frequency, and a growing number now also state whether they consult external human rights experts. BYD disclosed information in this area for the first time this year, while Kia and Nissan strengthened their reporting by clarifying their risk prioritisation criteria and/or assessment frequency.

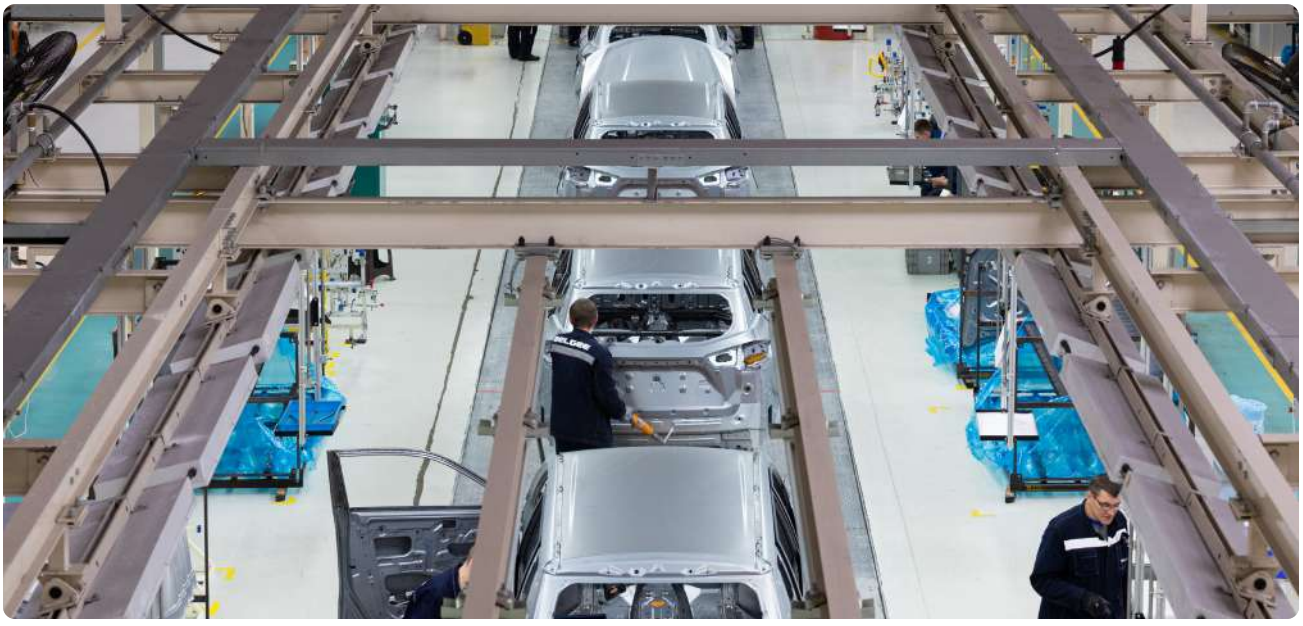
More automakers are now listing the salient supply chain human rights risks they have identified through their risk identification processes, with several companies taking initial steps in this area this year (Geely and Nissan) and others providing more detail and specificity (BMW, Renault and Tesla).

BYD and **Nissan** were the only two companies to improve their scores for disclosing how they monitor suppliers for compliance with the SCoC during the contract period, with BYD providing new quantitative data on the percentage of tier 1 suppliers assessed for human rights compliance and Nissan providing additional explanation of the process it employs to monitor suppliers.

All in all, the findings in this area this year reveal two opposing trends. On the one hand, the number of automakers disclosing statistical information about their activities has risen. On the other, some automakers such as **Ford, Mercedes,** and **Stellantis**, have actually regressed on transparency by failing to disclose information they had previously published. In the case of Stellantis and Ford, this entailed no longer disclosing the number of action plans issued during the reporting year, an area where the companies were previously setting best practice thresholds for their peers.

Only a small number of companies (**BMW, BYD, Ford, Nissan** and **Tesla**) improved their scores on grievance and remedy processes for human rights violations in their supply chains. Notably, BYD joined Geely to become one of only two East Asian automakers evaluated with a grievance mechanism for its supply chain. BMW and Ford also stand out for disclosing new information about the implementation of their grievance and remedy processes.

These gains were partially offset by the fact that several other companies regressed in their performance against these indicators. Most notably, **Mercedes** and **GM** no longer provided data on the number grievances raised during the reporting year and **Volkswagen** stopped disclosing disaggregated information on its supply chain grievances, which the company had previously broken down by type, tier, and geographical location, and also disclosed the outcome of some of them. VW's regression is especially disappointing since it represented best practice in this area.



Responsible Transition Minerals Sourcing

The average score on responsible minerals sourcing remained flat at 28% this year. However, it is important to note that this lack of improvement in the average score reflects score regressions by a small number of automakers on specific issues, rather than a broad-based stagnation across the sector. In fact, many companies strengthened their performance this year, and some in particularly substantive ways.

Another important aspect to note this year is that **all but two sub-indicators in this subsection have been met by at least one automaker,** and one of these sub-indicators (covering mineral supply chain grievance mechanisms) was previously being met by Ford, who disappointingly regressed in this area in the 2026 edition. This makes the aspiration of full compliance against these indicators entirely conceivable.

Top five companies and improvers for Responsible Transition Minerals Sourcing

	TOP FIVE SCORING COMPANIES (2026 Score on Transition Minerals)	**TOP FIVE IMPROVERS** (Percentage point change in Transition Minerals score over 2025)
1	Ford (70%)	Renault (15%)
2	Tesla (69%)	Volkswagen (7%)
3	Volkswagen (48%)	BYD (6%)
4	Volvo (37%)	Nissan (5%)
5	Mercedes (35%)	Geely (3%)

The highest ranked automaker for this subsection continues to be **Ford**, although the company dropped a whopping 19 percentage points in this area. From an impressive 89% achievement score last year, the company dropped to 70%, barely ahead of **Tesla**. This is due to limited disclosure on conflict minerals and the aforementioned regression in reporting around grievance mechanisms to deal specifically with smelter/refiner concerns.

BMW, Stellantis, and **Mercedes** also contributed to off-setting progress in this subsection, regressing across a number of indicators as outlined below - a poor show from the European automakers. As a result BMW was overtaken by Renault in the rankings, Stellantis by Hyundai, and Mercedes by Volvo.

Despite some disappointing individual regressions, many automakers improved on their scores. **Renault** was the biggest improver, with a substantial 15-percentage point increase, followed by **Volkswagen, BYD,** and **Nissan**, with 7, 6, and 5 percentage point increases respectively. Geely, Kia, and Volvo improved by a moderate 3 percentage points.

Geely published a standalone Sustainable Raw Material Policy, which applies to high risk critical raw materials, including conflict minerals, leaving BYD, SAIC, GAC, and Stellantis as the only automakers that have not published standalone responsible minerals sourcing policies.

BYD's new SCoC requires suppliers to undertake due diligence in accordance with the OECD Due Diligence Guidance in relation to all minerals from CAHRAs, whilst **Nissan** and **Renault** established new requirements for suppliers to identify raw material sources. These advances leave GAC, Honda, SAIC and Toyota as the only companies without explicit requirements for suppliers to undertake due diligence in accordance with the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High Risk Areas.

It is also worth noting that no company that has explicit responsible minerals sourcing policies limits their commitments to "conflict minerals" only, a practice that was more common in the past. This shows a growing recognition of the serious human rights risks that exist across a much wider spectrum of raw materials supply chains, and the need to broaden policies to address them.

In line with this approach, **Renault, Tesla,** and **Volvo** require all suppliers to conduct due diligence in line with the OECD Guidance, regardless of sourcing location. It was only Tesla that did this last year, once again showing a shift in the right direction. Ford, GM, and Nissan are only one step down, requiring due diligence in line with the OECD Guidance of all suppliers sourcing from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas (CAHRAs). It was only Ford doing this last year. All other automakers that lay out express obligations on suppliers either limit their requirements to act in line with the OECD Guidance

in relation to a small number of minerals (e.g. just conflict minerals), from CAHRAs (BMW, Geely, Mercedes, Stellantis, and Volkswagen) or do not refer to the OECD Guidance at all.

13 automakers disclosed that they were pursuing transition minerals mapping to the point of extraction, and disclosed details regarding their methodologies and tools. This is three more than last year. Like last year, **Ford, Mercedes,** and **Tesla** disclosed information about the specific raw material supply chains they managed to map through to the point of extraction. This year, **BMW** and **Volvo** joined this list. **Stellantis,** on the other hand, failed to disclose these results this year.

Volkswagen and **Volvo** also joined **Tesla, Ford** and **Mercedes** as the companies that provided some concrete information emerging from their mapping, such as the country of origin of some of their raw materials. The surge in mapping efforts is likely a response to the EU Batteries Regulation, which will likely help improve practices across the board.

This year, the Leaderboard seeks separate information regarding conflict minerals and transition minerals more broadly. Disclosure in this area remains poor. A relatively large number of automakers acknowledge the risk of sourcing conflict minerals from CAHRAs, but only Tesla, Toyota, and Volkswagen confirm that they do source from CAHRAs and disclose the specific CAHRAs that they source from, albeit often in an incomplete and rather perfunctory manner. Of these companies, only Tesla discusses the risks associated with the conflict minerals that the company does source (albeit with minimal detail).

Only **Mercedes, Tesla**, and **Volkswagen** disclose salient human rights risks associated with key transition minerals in their products, including lithium, nickel, cobalt, and others. They all additionally indicate relevant tiers and location, though this is often incomplete or inconsistent. Volkswagen did not disclose this information last year, showing that progress and learning from peers is possible. All these companies disclose this information through specialised raw materials reports, or chapters within larger reports, which are examples of best practice (see Best practice/Who leads where section below).

Public access to this information is important. It ensures automakers' information is meaningful, avoiding platitudes and allowing a more accurate understanding about the human rights risks embodied by EVs, their location, and therefore where automakers' due diligence efforts must focus.

Hyundai has joined RMI this year, and **Renault** has joined both RMI and IRMA. This takes the number of participants in RMI to 13 (up from 11), and in IRMA to 7 (up from 6). However, after a regression from Mercedes, only three automakers (Ford, GM, and Tesla) now clarify whether they engage with smelters/refiners directly to build their capacity, and only Ford gives an account of how they do this in practice.

Transparency remains low regarding direct sourcing arrangements with mining companies, although **Renault, Stellantis** and **Volkswagen** all improved their scores in this area, joining **Ford** and **Tesla** as the only companies to score points against this indicator.

This year's edition of the Leaderboard seeks higher levels of specificity regarding direct sourcing arrangements. Many automakers explain that they are actively pursuing vertical integration or expanding direct purchasing as a way of addressing sustainability risks, but do not disclose any information about specific agreements. These automakers fail to meet the relevant indicators. Only Ford, Renault, and Tesla disclosed details such as raw materials they are sourcing directly, as well as relevant mining companies and mine sites.

CASE STUDY

Mining industry stands in the way of auto supply chain progress

By Public Citizen

The 2026 Leaderboard shows that some automakers are beginning to implement more stringent requirements for responsible mineral production within their supply chains. However, these efforts are being undermined by an initiative led by the world's biggest mining company associations that risks providing end users with the illusion of responsible sourcing whilst actually enabling business-as-usual practices, putting communities across the world at risk.

This initiative represents the mining industry's latest attempt to self-regulate, rather than address the horrific human rights abuses that have long been associated with the industry.

'A dangerous platform for greenwashing'

The Consolidated Mining Standard Initiative (CMSI), led by industry bodies such as the International Council of Mining and Metals (ICMM), is developing a new voluntary standard for "responsible mining". However, analysis shows that it will fall well short of existing international standards.

The standard is being developed without the meaningful participation of those who will be affected, such as workers,communities, and Indigenous peoples. Analysis by a broad range of civil society organizations also shows that they are too vague to allow for effective auditing and that they give mining companies too much control over the auditing process, making it likely that audits will not accurately capture a facility's human rights and environmental impacts. As it stands, the Initiative itself would also create an illusion of multi-stake-holder governance, while in practice stacking the Board and its decision-making power in favor of corporate interests.

The new standard risks misleading automakers, as well as their customers and investors, that want to purchase responsible minerals but in reality are purchasing from mines that continue to perpetrate human rights abuses and environmental harms.

Put simply, we cannot expect the companies causing destruction to write their own rules and credit themselves as following them. It's a clear conflict of interest and a dangerous platform for greenwashing.

Urgent need for responsible mining

For real-world examples of such greenwashing risks, one has to look no further than the implementation of ICMM's existing Performance Expectations. ICMM states that these represent a "comprehensive set of performance expectations on how [ICMM] members should be expected to manage a broad range of sustainability issues." However, according to the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, ICMM member companies, whether through direct ownership or joint ventures, account for more than half of the firms responsible for the majority of alleged human-rights violations in critical minerals mining.

All members of ICMM are expected to validate their conformance with ICMM's Performance Expectations on an annual basis, in theory providing assurance to downstream buyers (such as automakers) that the minerals they purchase from these companies are being extracted responsibly. However, behind this facade lie multiple examples of human rights abuses and environmental destruction caused by ICMM members, including:

- Grasberg Mine, a huge copper and gold mine in Indonesia owned by ICMM member Freeport McMoRan, hit the headlines in September 2025 after seven workers died when 800,000 metric tons of mud flooded one of the mines. As a result the mine was shut, contributing to a global squeeze on copper supplies that drove up prices. The mine won't fully reopen until the end of 2027. This wasn't the first such incident at the mine: in 2013, 21 workers died and in 2006 three workers died at the site. Run by Arizona-based Freeport McMoRan, the mine is also linked with contamination of the Ajkwa river system, its surrounding land and mangrove forests.

- Indonesia's second largest copper and gold mine, IPT AMNT's Batu Hijau mine, has been at the center of allegations of environmental destruction, destroyed traditional livelihoods, and violations of U.N. backed Indigenous rights of Free Information and Prior Consent. In 2025, the Cek Bocek Indigenous community filed a complaint with the Copper Mark accreditation scheme and took their case to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. IPT AMNT is a subsidiary of USA-based ICMM member, Newmont Corporation.
- The Cerrejón coal mine in La Guarjira, Colombia, operated by ICMM member Glencore, is one of the largest open-air coal pits in the world. The mine is connected to the Hyundai supply chain through Vale's iron pellet processing plant in Brazil. Reports indicate this mine is polluting the air, critical waterways, and adversely impacting the health of Indigenous people, the Wayúu, in the region. Additionally, reports allege Glencore took land away from Wayúu through fraudulent negotiations, threats, confinement and forced evictions. UN Special Rapperateur Dr David Boyd described the impacts of the mine on the local Indigenous community as, "a total calamity in terms of their quality of life and human rights."

The Consolidated Mining Standard Initiative must meet basic standards of rigor

Voluntary standards like CMSI are not a replacement for strong laws and policies, but can be an important driver of better mining practices. The CMSI must meet minimum benchmarks to assure automakers, consumers, and governments of the 'responsibility' of mining projects.

- Voluntary standards must insure accountable decision making processes that give equal power to affected communities, and allow representatives to publicly disagree with the standard.
- They must implement culturally relevant, independently managed grievance mechanisms for affected communites.
- Audits must be informed by broad engagement from affected communities and conducted by firms independent from the mining company. Results of the audits and corrective action plans must be timebound, measurable, and public.
- Standards must require transparency of member companies. Mining companies must disclose project-level payments to governments; full contracts; and related documents including permitting documents, country-by-country tax reporting, and beneficial ownership.

There are other, more robust voluntary mining standards that undermine the need for weak standards like CMSI. A Lead the Charge assessment of eight accreditation schemes found that IRMA was "the strongest performer by a considerable margin". Despite this the biggest mining companies are choosing to craft a system that will allow them to attempt to greenwash their actions, continue harming communities and exposing automakers to major risks.

As important stakeholders in mining supply chains, automakers can stand up to the attempted race to the bottom. The Leaderboard clearly shows some automakers are beginning to do things differently, they now need to make their voices louder and encourage others to get on board.

Indigenous Peoples' Rights

The average achievement score in this subsection is 9%, up from 6% last year. Whilst this is still an abysmally slow rate of progress, it does represent an acceleration over previous years, where the annual rate of progress was between 1 and 2 percentage points. In fact, this year registered the largest number of companies making improvements on Indigenous Peoples' rights since the Leaderboard was first launched, although many of these were basic initial steps.

These improvements are cause for some optimism as they have meant that, for the first time since the Leaderboard was first launched in 2023, **automakers that have taken initial first steps and commitments on Indigenous Peoples' rights are now in the majority**: representing just 1/3 in the 2023 edition, they now represent 2/3 of automakers. Additionally, there are signs that some automakers are beginning to move beyond general commitments and requirements, towards concrete and practical steps to ensure actual implementation.

Top five companies and improvers for Indigenous Peoples' Rights

	TOP FIVE SCORING COMPANIES (2026 Score on Indigenous Peoples' Rights)	**TOP FIVE IMPROVERS** (Percentage point change in Indigenous Peoples' Rights score over 2025)
1	Ford (26%)	Volkswagen (17%)
2	Mercedes (26%)	Renault (12%)
3	Tesla (25%)	Ford (6%)
4	Volkswagen (23%)	Kia (6%)
5	Renault (17%)	Mercedes (6%)

Ford and **Mercedes** improved their scores by 6 and 5 percentage points respectively, enabling Ford to take the top spot, displacing Tesla from first to third place. However, **Volkswagen** and **Renault** are actually the best improvers on Indigenous Peoples' rights this year. This allowed them to climb up the rankings, displacing BMW and GM from the top five to 6th and 7th place.

In addition to these companies, **Volvo, Hyundai, Kia** and **Stellantis** also improved their achievement score, ranging from 3 to 6 percentage point increases.

Four automakers now expressly commit to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), with **Tesla** now joining **Ford, GM**, and **Renault.** 11 companies have also now articulated an express commitment and/or supplier requirement towards FPIC. This is four more than last year, with **Volvo, Hyundai, Stellantis** and **VW** all establishing new commitments or requirements on FPIC. This shows real and significant progress. Stellantis stands out in particular for establishing a standalone policy on FPIC, although it is disappointing that the current version of the policy does not appear to apply to suppliers.

More companies indicate this year that they explicitly include risks to Indigenous Peoples' rights in their supply chain risk identification process. While only **Mercedes** and **Tesla** did this last year, **Kia, Renault,** and **Volkswagen** also meet this indicator this year. However, the number of companies that disclose where in the supply chain these risks exist remains extremely low, with Volkswagen joining Mercedes as the only automakers disclosing this information this year.

Ford, Mercedes, Tesla, and **Volvo** all provide some indication about the way in which suppliers are expected to obtain FPIC. This again is two more than last year, when only Ford and Tesla disclosed this information. However, this information still remains extremely basic and is considered limited.

For the first time this year, some automakers have disclosed information about direct engagement with extractive companies on FPIC. **Ford, Stellantis,** and **Tesla** all disclosed some information such as engaging directly, conducting their own investigations, or capacity building. However, their disclosures were still rather superficial and perfunctory, barely enough to earn them basic points. Other practical indicators such as reviewing documentation or engaging with Indigenous Peoples directly remain unanswered. Ford also disclosed information about the action it would take in response to findings of FPIC breaches in the supply chain – the first and only company to meet this specific indicator.

In conclusion, more automakers are expressing relevant commitments and articulating supplier requirements, and some are also beginning to disclose incipient information about implementation. Progress is clear, though terribly modest and slow. There continues to be a failure across all automakers to demonstrate, through concrete and complete evidence, actual implementation and results on the ground.

CASE STUDY

The Impact of Harita Nickel on the Tobelo Galela Indigenous People

By The SIRGE Coalition

The residents of Kawasi Village on Obi Island, the ancestral land of the Tobelo Galela Indigenous People, stand as a powerful example of the negative impacts of nickel mining - and a community's determination for accountability.

They have been documenting the impacts of Harita Nickel, the company operating a nickel mine and processing facility, on the island which has possible supply chain connections to major car companies such as BMW, Ford, General Motors, Honda, Mercedes-Benz, Tesla, Toyota, Volkswagen and Volvo*. There have been multiple flooding events, exacerbated by or originating from infrastructure failures at the mine and deforestation linked to mining.

On June 13, 2025, community members and regional environmental organization, WALHI Maluku Utara, reported the partial collapse of the interior sediment pond wall built by the company to collect run-off and sediment from nickel mining and refining operations. Overflow from the sediment pond flooded crops and homes, damaging belongings and harming water sources. Harita Nickel stated in a 2024 response to the Washington Post, "Our analysis showed that the runoff in affected water bodies presents no danger to the environment or humans. Yet, in response to inputs and questions from the community and our stakeholders, and as a precautionary measure, we took steps to remedy and prevent this occurrence, including enlarging our sediment ponds."

But the issue of flooding has not been adequately addressed by Harita and is only worsening with each rainy season. The problem extends to fisherfolk who have documented polluted seawater at the beach in Kawasi Village following flooding events, like that of June 13, 2025.

> **"They took our rights. This is the land of our ancestors, the land of our customs and culture."**
> **Jemy,** *who is both Tobelo Galela and Seram, and has been impacted by Harita Nickel.*

The operations of Harita Nickel came under further scrutiny by investigations non-profits the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and The Gecko Project which revealed the company constructed the sediment ponds in an attempt to control the persistently high levels of the carcinogenic chemical, chromium-6, in water originating from mining operations, which was also showing up in the drinking water in Kawasi Village. Reporting also shows that the ponds did not successfully reduce the levels of chromium-6 in water originating from mining operations.

After 15 civil society organizations around the world sent a letter of support for the community's demands, Harita nickel stated that "no drainage channel, sediment pond, or outlet channel intersects with natural drinking water sources or rivers."

This letter was further shared with automakers sourcing from the company such as Mercedes-Benz, Tesla, Volvo, and Volkswagen, but only Mercedes-Benz met with civil society, and a representative from Kawasi village for more information about the letter in order to continue engaging Harita Nickel.

The community is demanding compensation to residents for costs associated with damages incurred from the flooding and to address the root causes of ongoing infrastructure and waste management failures to prevent future disasters. To date, Harita has not responded to the community directly or shared its plans on what mitigation measures will be implemented to address the harm caused by their operations.

* Business and Human Rights Resource Center "Powering Electrical Vehicles: Human Rights Impacts of Indonesia's Nickel Rush" (July 2024) at pg 14. Clean cars poisoned water: A Nickel Titan's Toxic Secret (30 May 2025) *The Gecko Project*

Workers' Rights in the supply chain

The average achievement score in this subsection is 23%, the second lowest after Indigenous Peoples' rights. With an average score increase of only 2 percentage points, little has changed from the last edition. However, there are a few notable exceptions.

Top five companies and improvers for Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain

	TOP FIVE SCORING COMPANIES (2026 Score on Workers' Rights Rights)	**TOP FIVE IMPROVERS** (Percentage point change in Workers' Rights score over 2025)
1	Mercedes (48%)	Geely (14%)
2	Volkswagen (46%)	Volkswagen (13%)
3	Tesla (40%)	Tesla (13%)
4	BMW (39%)	Renault (12%)
5	Renault (36%)	BYD (8%)

Geely is the best improver this year, increasing its score by 14 percentage points, and climbing up the ladder from 13th to 7th place. Geely is followed by **Tesla** and **Volkswagen**, both advancing by 13 percentage points and climbing to second and third place respectively. They are in turn followed by **Renault,** with a 12-percentage point increase, enabling the company to take fifth place.

A 12-percentage point gap separates the top performer, Mercedes (48%), from Renault in fifth place (36%), highlighting significant variation even among leading companies and clear scope for further improvement. Beyond this point, scores drop sharply, falling to 28% and below.

While a total of 8 automakers improved their score, the small increase in the average score across all automakers is due to the fact that some automakers, including **Volvo, Mercedes, Ford** and **Toyota**, regressed in important areas. Additionally, five companies did improve their scores. Of these, Toyota is noteworthy for its significant 14 percentage point drop.

BYD, Ford, Nissan, Volkswagen and **Volvo** all established new commitments and/or supplier requirements on workers' rights, or strengthened existing ones. BYD joined 13 other automakers that explicitly require respect for the ILO Declaration and/or the Five Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

On living wages, **BMW, Ford,** and **Volvo** now require suppliers to pay a living wage, up from just one company (BMW) last year, marking meaningful progress. Ford and Volvo stand out for taking a fully consistent approach, as the only automakers that both commit to paying a living wage themselves and require the same of their suppliers. **Volkswagen**, while still stopping short of an explicit living wage commitment, now discloses its methodology for calculating a living wage. In addition, ten automakers now explicitly prohibit recruitment fees, two more than last year, signalling continued progress in efforts to prevent forced labour.

Notably, **Geely, Renault** and **Volkswagen** joined **Mercedes** as the only automakers that state that they consult supply chain workers and/or their representatives regarding risks in the supply chain, despite this being a fundamental requirement for accurate risk identification. Unfortunately, this progress was partially offset by **Volvo,** who did not disclose similar information this year as the company had done in previous years.

When it comes to reporting identified salient workers' rights risks, very little progress can be observed. Like last year, **BMW, Mercedes, Tesla**, and **Volkswagen** all described identified workers' rights risks in their supply chains, adding detail as to relevant raw materials and location. **Ford** and **Hyundai** also disclosed some information this year, but this was much more limited, earning them only half points. **Toyota** used to be in this group, but failed to disclose any relevant information this year.

BMW, Mercedes, Renault, Stellantis, Volvo, and **Volkswagen** all disclose formal mechanisms for consulting unions and/or workers' representatives on their workers' rights principles and policies, with Stellantis and Volvo improving their scores in this area this year. This year, **Tesla** also became the first company to disclose a number of examples of remedies for breaches of workers' rights in the supply chain.

This year's results show limited progress on workers' rights, with few new examples of best practice. Some automakers have taken early steps to involve supply chain workers in due diligence, but this engagement remains largely confined to risk identification. To close this gap, automakers should deepen and formalise consultation so that workers and their representatives play an active role across all stages of supply chain due diligence, from risk identification through to remediation.

CHAPTER 004

Current best practices by automakers on clean and equitable supply chains

This year's edition shows that industry leaders are beginning to further differentiate themselves in certain areas by implementing more targeted, material- and issue-specific supply chain strategies to drive positive impact.

In doing so, these companies are bringing their practices more fully in line with international due diligence frameworks, such as the UNGPs and the OECD Due Diligence instruments, as well as international best practices on supply chain decarbonization, such as those outlined by the New Climate Institute and the the Science-based Targets Initiative.

Both average performers and leading companies may start with a broad analysis and strategy to map and address human rights and environmental risks and impacts across their supply chains. But industry leaders stand out by honing in on priority areas for targeted interventions—whether that means reducing major sources of supply chain emissions like those from coal-fired blast furnaces used for steel production, tackling circularity challenges related to specific materials like aluminum, or addressing the most salient environmental and human rights risks linked to specific raw materials like nickel or lithium. In so doing, they direct their efforts where adverse impacts are greatest and where their leverage can drive meaningful outcomes.

Targeted strategies that are tailored to the specific risks, challenges, and opportunities found in different material supply chains and issue areas are ultimately more effective at driving positive impacts for the environment and human rights (see Box 3). It is no coincidence that the automakers implementing more sophisticated and bespoke supply chain strategies are also the ones able to disclose more concrete, comprehensive, and compelling information about their activities and progress.

HOW LEAD THE CHARGE UNDERSTANDS "IMPACT" IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LEADERBOARD

In assessing automakers' supply chain practices, the Leaderboard adopts a comprehensive definition of "impact" that encompasses both outcomes and process. Impact includes not only the ultimate goal— automotive supply chains with reduced emissions, environmental harms, and human rights violations—but also the critical intermediate step of automakers using their leverage as major downstream purchasers to drive the adoption and implementation of more robust human rights and environmental standards by suppliers and to hold them accountable when abuses or shortcomings in performance are identified. This dual understanding reflects the reality that achieving meaningful outcomes requires sustained systemic work focused on raising standards at the level of key industries and supply chains, whilst also pushing individual suppliers to take targeted action to address harms and challenges in specific contexts.

While documented examples of the former kind of impact remain limited, the Leaderboard has identified a growing body of best practices through which automakers are actively driving the kinds of changes captured by the latter definition. These include automakers signing offtake agreements to unlock investments in green steel and aluminum facilities, requiring suppliers to use low-carbon materials or to undergo audits by robust third-party assurance schemes like IRMA, and pushing suppliers to respond to allegations of abuses at the local level.

This section presents examples of these practices, documented across the different indicators of the Leaderboard. It is a summary of a new companion briefing published together with this year's Leaderboard report, which illustrates the currently identified best practices across each of the subsections of the Leaderboard. The briefing is intended to be used as a resource by automakers, investors, regulators and other stakeholders working to drive more impactful supply chain practices within the automotive industry.

Fossil-free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains

Examples of basic practices	Examples of emerging best practices
Basic identification and disclosure of generic risks, challenges and barriers to progress across the company's supply chain →	**Identifying and disclosing concrete risks, challenges and barriers to progress in specific contexts and material supply chains using a risk-based, dynamic and responsive approach**
Honda provides a general statement about the challenge of reducing its supply chain emissions being that "CO2 emissions associated with the manufacturing of materials and components required for these electric products (Scope 3 Category 1) are expected to increase" as the company increases its productions of EVs.	Volvo has published a position paper on sustainable steel that outlines the specific challenges related to the decarbonization of steel, including a description of the technologies and methods needed to achieve this and the challenge of securing large investments for them. The paper also outlines the company's strategy for overcoming these challenges.
Toyota discloses a table with major potential material risks of minerals with a generic grouping of "environmental impacts" without specifying the specific environmental risks per mineral.	Volkswagen discloses specific environmental risks for each mineral in its Responsible Raw Materials Report and specifies its approach between direct engagement with suppliers and cross-industry multi-stakeholder engagement.
One-size-fits-all targets, strategies, processes and tools/methods to mitigate emissions, environmental harms and human rights violations from across the supply chain. →	**Developing tailored targets, strategies and theories of change for using the company's leverage to drive meaningful impact on priority issues & materials**
Nissan has only set a target of a 30% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2030 across entire product life cycles.	Ford discloses a series of science-based targets to reduce emissions from its operations, vehicle use and supply chain by 2030. The supply chain target is to achieve a 25% reduction by 2030 (with 2023 as base year). Additionally, Ford has set a target to purchase 10% near-zero steel by 2030 and a target for 10% of its primary aluminium purchases to have near-zero carbon emissions by 2030.
GAC only provides generic statements about its strategy for "circular economy development", such as that it "continuously promotes the green transformation of the industrial chain through innovative business models and in-depth implementation of green development philosophy. From product design, production and manufacturing to waste recycling and reuse, a complete green circular industrial chain has been established."	Geely has disclosed a detailed strategy for battery circularity and emissions management, both at the company level (which includes strategies for Battery R&D, Battery procurement, Battery usage, Battery recycling, Battery production, Battery scrap and dismantling and recycling) and at the level of its battery subsidiary VREMT, whose strategy involves a three-pronged approach of product emissions reduction, operational emissions reduction, and scenario-based emissions reduction.
General Motors Supplier Code of Conduct that "suppliers shall establish time-bound emission reduction goals and shall strive to obtain approved science based targets that are at a minimum aligned with GM's Supplier Sustainability Partnership Pledge".	Volvo states that all its steel suppliers should become members and certify their sites with ResponsibleSteel by 2030. For aluminum, the company directs its tier 1 suppliers to source from smelters with at least 90 per cent of the electricity used for processing coming from renewable sources.

Ford's Supplier Code of Conduct requires its suppliers to "avoid illegal deforestation in accordance with international biodiversity and deforestation regulations", but without disclosing further detail.	Volkswagen has a general requirement for all suppliers to ensure their supply chains are deforestation free and has also developed specific requirements for suppliers in its leather and rubber supply chains to mitigate risks of deforestation. In the case of rubber, the company launched a pilot project for a "natural rubber specification sheet in the tire supply chain," which "requires suppliers to take measures to improve transparency within their natural rubber supply chain and ask them to establish an appropriate due diligence management system according to the criteria of the OECD Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains." The company's leather specification sheet requires suppliers to achieve LWG (Leather Working Group) Bronze certification or higher.
Generic reporting about company progress via broad statements about activities undertaken and disclosure of aggregated / supply chain-wide progress data.	**→ Disclosing granular, disaggregated progress data from company- and supply-chain-specific decarbonisation and due-diligence processes, supported by concrete examples of interventions, policy enforcement and supplier engagement**
Toyota discloses that its scope 3 emissions from "purchased goods & services" was 126.33 million t-CO2e in 2024, without providing further disaggregation	Tesla discloses the total amount of its scope 3 category 1 emissions (49,376,000) and then a percentage breakdown of these emissions according to batteries, aluminum, steel, glass, plastic and others. The company also further breaks down the percentages of its battery supply chain emissions that correspond to cell production, graphite, nickel, cathode production, lithium, precursors cobalt and manganese.
Kia's LCA for its EV4 model discloses aggregated emissions for Raw material extraction and then Parts manufacturing	Volvo's vehicle LCAs include disaggregated GHG emissions for steel, aluminum and Li-ion battery modules (as a total) for individual vehicles.
Stellantis only discloses supply chain-wide data on decarbonization progress, for example that more than 84% of its key suppliers have set CO2 reduction targets compliant with the Paris Agreement as of 2024, that 90% of its annual purchase volume from Tier 1 suppliers evaluated on sustainability criteria, and that 35 audits of Tier 1 suppliers were conducted in 2024, which included GHG emissions reductions.	Tesla discloses quantitative data on supplier decarbonization for a range of supply chains. On batteries, Tesla discloses the percentage of primary emissions data it has collected from suppliers on cell production, graphite, nickel, cathode production, lithium, precursors cobalt and manganese. Tesla also discloses percentages of its battery supply chain suppliers that have disclosed GHG emissions data, have established decarbonization plans and targets, including disaggregated data on the percentage of suppliers that have set interim GHG reduction targets. Additionally Tesla discloses the percentage of its graphite suppliers that have commitment to renewable energy usage through RECs and the percentage of cell and direct cathode suppliers that have completed LCAs.
Hyundai states that "in the raw material acquisition stage, we are expanding the use of reduced-carbon steel and aluminium materials"	Mercedes has disclosed a number of offtake agreements, including binding contracts, across multiple production geographies for both lower emission and fossil-free steel. For some of these agreements, the company publicly discloses timelines and scale of supply. Additionally, in Mercedes' LCA for its CLA model the company states that "that "39 kg of steel from electric arc furnaces, which are manufactured using electricity from renewable energy sources, is used for the steel scopes produced inhouse in our own stamping plants." Mercedes also mentions that steel is 45% of the weight of the vehicle and that the total weight is 1980kg. In the same LCA, Mercedes states "around 40 % of the aluminum used in the CLA is produced in electrolysis plants using renewable energies. This reduces the aluminum CO2 foot print by around 40 % per kilogram compared to the conventional import mix and saves a total of around 0.4 metric tons of CO2 emissions."

Human Rights & Responsible Sourcing

Examples of basic practices	Examples of emerging best practices
Basic identification and disclosure of generic risks, challenges and barriers to progress across the company's supply chain →	**Identifying and disclosing concrete risks, challenges and barriers to progress in specific contexts and material supply chains using a risk-based, dynamic and responsive approach**
Stellantis lists broad risk areas it has identified in its value chain, which include "precarious employment conditions," "violation of freedom of expression" and "violation of local community rights." The company does not disclose additional details or where in the supply chain these risks occur.	Mercedes, Tesla & Volkswagen provide detailed descriptions of specific human rights risks the company has identified in different material supply chains through their due diligence processes. Mercedes and VW have published separate raw material reports with this information and Tesla has dedicated chapters on individual raw materials in its Impact Report.
GM provides generic descriptions of its processes to identify salient human rights risks and high risk suppliers, without explaining whether/how this extends beyond tier 1.	BMW, Ford, Mercedes, VW & Volvo identify and assess supplier risks through a risk-based process that goes beyond tier 1, including during the pre-sourcing risk identification stage.
One-size-fits-all targets, strategies, processes and tools/methods to mitigate emissions, environmental harms and human rights violations from across the supply chain. →	**Developing tailored targets, strategies and theories of change for using the company's leverage to drive meaningful impact on priority issues and materials.**
Nissan uses standard tools to monitor and address risk: third-party assessments, corrective action, verification, and regular reassessments. Stellantis' preventive/mitigating actions include corrective actions, sustainability assessments, and follow up on-site audits for entities categorised as high risk.	In addition to explaining its supply chain-wide approach to mitigating human rights and environmental risks, Mercedes has also developed individual theories of change for 12 different raw materials, explaining how the company will use its leverage to prevent, mitigate and remedy the risk of adverse human rights and environmental impacts. Tesla addresses specific raw materials risks by identifying priority areas for engagement and devising a mitigation plan with timescales for continuous improvement.
Toyota provides generic descriptions of methods to address supply chain risks in general such as monitoring, business partner collaboration, interaction with human rights associations, and risk mitigation plans.	Ford details a bespoke strategy for mitigating risks of forced labor in its supply chain, stating that it implements supplier education & training to support suppliers in conducting their own forced labor due diligence to help reduce risks. Ford also describes measures to mitigate risks to FPIC in its supply chain, including engaging with mining suppliers, requiring that they obtain third-party certification of respect for FPIC rights, investigating allegations of FPIC breaches, working with suppliers to remediate any abuses, and involving and consulting with indigenous representatives in the determination of breaches.
Honda's Supplier Sustainability Guidelines include general expectations for suppliers to use smelters and refiners of mineral resources that are not linked to human rights issues and to "conduct a survey of the supply chain." The company does not disclose more specific requirements.	Mercedes, Ford and VW have developed specific requirements for suppliers of battery minerals to undergo IRMA audits and ensure that, in high-risk regions, the sourcing of battery raw materials is restricted to materials originating from mines that are audited according to the IRMA Standard.

BMW explains that, in assessing the material sustainability topics, the company consulted with "investors, the Works Council of BMW AG as employee representatives, among others. The consultation did not extend to labour unions and/or workers' representatives in the supply chain, or global union federations.	Volkswagen describes a number of ways through which trade unions and/or workers' representatives in the supply chain are consulted on risks to workers' rights. VW explains that, through their participation in MSIs and local projects, the company meets with value chain workers' representatives such as trade unions to discuss due diligence standards and working conditions.
Generic reporting about company progress via broad statements about activities undertaken and disclosure of aggregated / supply chain-wide progress data →	**Disclosing granular, disaggregated progress data from company- and supply chain-specific decarbonisation and due-diligence processes, supported by concrete examples of interventions, policy enforcement and supplier engagement**
Kia explains their supply chain mapping process through "visualization system", "to map the supply chain status from Tier 1 to Tier N suppliers". However, the company does not disclose any concrete information from its mapping.	Tesla explains its supply chain mapping process and discloses detailed findings, including country of origin of nickel and lithium and the name and location of key actors in the nickel and lithium supply chains (e.g. mining companies and mine sites, smelters/refiners and their geographical location). Less information is given for 3TG, mica, aluminium, and steel, although this still includes some important information for some of them such as country of origin, key suppliers and their location.
Hyundai states that to address material and component procurement risks, they are expanding direct purchasing of strategic materials. However, the company does not disclose any details about these agreements. Honda describes activities and plans for the direct procurement of raw materials, but does not provide any detail regarding human rights requirements, or the name of relevant extractive companies, minerals, and mine sites.	Ford discloses a supply agreement for lithium from Australia with Albemarle, and explains in detail the requirements it lays out regarding respect for human rights: "contracts were written to consider appropriate ESG requirements to protect human rights, working conditions and the environment." The company explains that it made undergoing an independent Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) audit verification at the mine site a condition of the agreement, as well as other conditions related to "water conservation, decarbonization through further clean energy agreements, and promoting waste recycling and recovery practices."
Volvo only provides aggregate data about the total number of suppliers across its supply chain that have been assessed for compliance through their supplier Sustainability Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) and audits. The company does not discuss whether, and if so how, it engages with extractive companies and impacted rightsholders directly to address concerns, or provide any examples of this.	Mercedes, Volkswagen and Tesla all disclose multiple examples of on-the-ground due diligence and direct engagement with extractive companies and impacted rightsholders to address specific human rights and environmental issues, including copper and cobalt suppliers in the DRC; lithium suppliers in Chile and Australia; and nickel suppliers in Indonesia.
Renault discloses that, "within Renault Group, 765 new reports [grievances raised through its grievance mechanism] were registered worldwide in 2024". The company does not specify how many of these were supply chain grievances, and does not provide any statistical data concerning their type, status, or outcome	Tesla discloses the total number of supply chain grievances raised during the year, including one through their formal grievance mechanism, and their status and/or outcome. The company also discloses many examples of remedy provided to supply chain workers for confirmed breaches of their rights. These include a supplier in Vietnam installing a partition curtain for a mothers' room, a supplier in Taiwan switching to anonymous online forms to preserve workers' rights to safety and privacy (Impact Report, p. 146), and 102 workers in Taiwan, 346 workers in Hungary, 142 workers in Malaysia, and 40 workers in Mexico all benefiting from various changes in practices relating to withholding of wages and unclear contractual terms

CHAPTER 005

Where is there room for improvement?

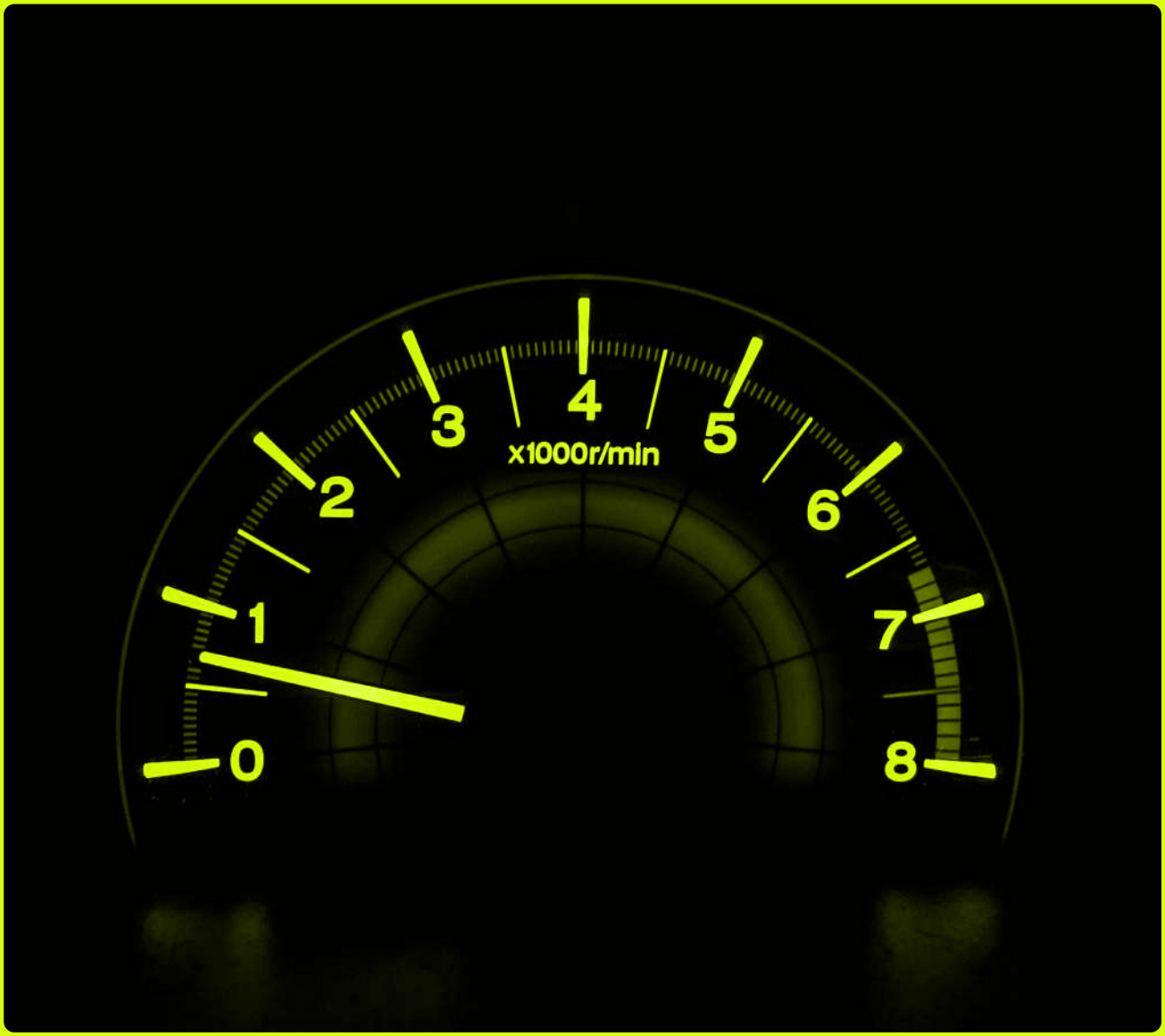
There are two main ways for automakers to improve their performance. Automakers can make significant gains simply by matching the best practice of their higher performing peers across different issue areas.

For example, just four sub-indicators across both the General Human Rights Due Diligence and the Responsible Mineral Sourcing subsections have not yet been met by at least one automaker. Across the whole Leaderboard, adding up the highest scores achieved by any company for each sub-indicator results in a total score of 86% (called the “best in class” score).

This means that automakers can take inspiration from what industry leaders are doing across different issues to dramatically improve their performance.

This is an especially important strategy for low-performing companies, but also a viable one for industry leaders. Tesla, for example, was this year’s top-ranking automaker but only achieved an overall score of 49%. Tesla could therefore improve its score by at least 28 percentage points by matching the best practices of its competitors that outperformed Tesla across the different indicators.

On the other hand, a small minority of the indicators are still not currently being met by any automaker. Closing this gap will require bold leadership from automakers that are willing to innovate and raise the bar for their competitors. This section highlights key areas of opportunities for progress across the different sections of the Leaderboard.



Fossil-free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains performance

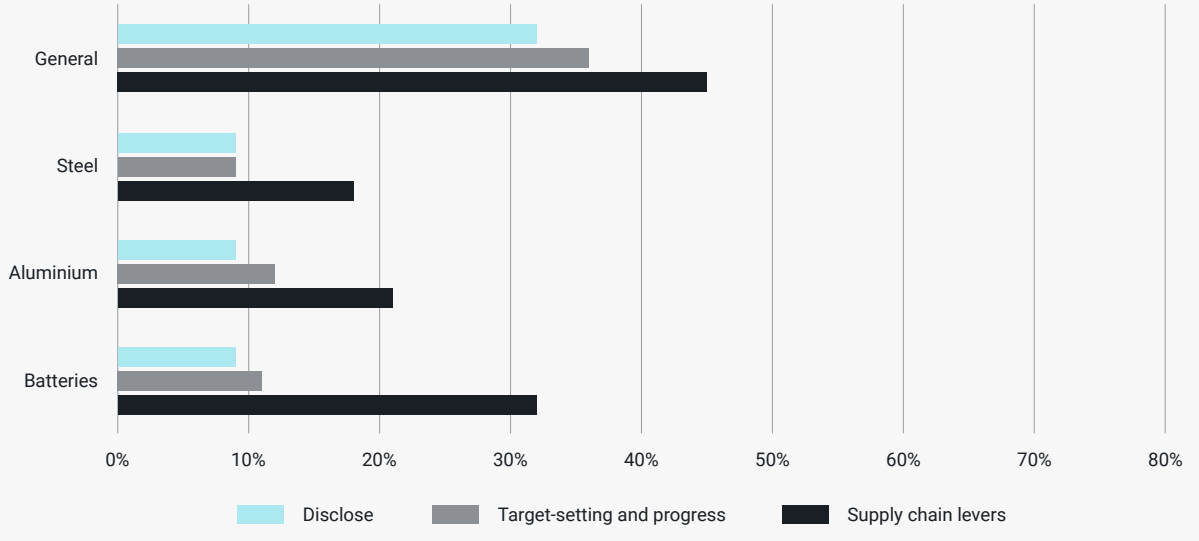
The General subsection on overall supply chain decarbonization and sustainability section records an average score of 39%, nearly double that of Batteries (20%) and more than double the averages scores for Aluminum (15%) and Steel (12%). This persistent disparity indicates that the majority of automakers have not yet translated high-level decarbonization and sustainability commitments into targeted, material-specific strategies for the largest sources of their upstream emissions. The gap is most significant among average and lower-ranked companies, many of which continue to score close to zero in the steel and aluminum subsections, and less than 10% in the batteries subsection.

However, significant imbalances are also evident among industry leaders. Volvo, the top performer in the Climate and Environment section, scores just 17% in Batteries, which is less than one third its scores in the General, Steel and Aluminium subsections. Similarly, Tesla only scored 22% on Steel, less than half its score in the General (45%) and Batteries (51%) subsections. Volkswagen, despite ranking second in the General subsection (54%), achieves less than one third of that in both the Steel and Aluminium subsections. These disparities highlight that even leading companies are implementing best practices inconsistently, and therefore still have substantial room for improvement.

As can be observed in the graph below, there is a greater need for improvement on the disclosure and target-setting indicators across all four subsections. This indicates that the majority of automakers are still implementing piecemeal approaches to supply chain sustainability, consisting of ad-hoc interventions that are not connected to specific targets and strategies.

However, across most of these indicators, there is at least one company that has scored full or partial points. In the General subsection for example, overall performance remains poor in areas such as disclosing water usage by key suppliers, and supplier requirements to set targets to reduce their GHG emissions and water usage. However, for each of these indicators there is at least one automaker that has scored at least partial points.

Figure 7 - **Average scores for each indicator category across the four fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains subsections**



Although upstream scope 3 emissions disclosure and overall supply chain decarbonization target setting are becoming the industry norm, few companies have disclosed disaggregated scope 3 emissions and targets for specific supply chains, with only a small number of companies meeting these indicators. Similarly, despite notable improvement on the circularity indicators across the steel, aluminum and batteries subsections, only a few automakers have established targets to increase the use of recycled steel and aluminum in their vehicles or disclosed the current proportions of recycled materials used in their annual production. Performance is also weak across all the target-setting indicators in the battery subsection, with only a few exceptions, such as Renault.

Performance consistently falls short across several of the indicators in the supply chain levers category as well. In the General subsection, most companies have established requirements for suppliers on water usage and deforestation, but few disclose specific incentives to drive better performance by suppliers in these areas or provide evidence of how they have actually operationalized and enforced these requirements across their supply chains.

In the steel and aluminium subsections, a growing number of automakers have now disclosed offtake agreements for the purchase of lower emission steel and aluminum, but few provide crucial details about these agreements, such as the technologies and processes being used to reduce emissions, whether the agreement is binding or nonbinding, as well as timelines and the scale of supply. Disclosing such details are essential for mitigating greenwashing risks and being able to differentiate genuine leaders from average performers.

Similarly, most companies now disclose initiatives related to steel, aluminum and battery circularity. But few substantiate these claims with qualitative details and quantitative data. When it comes to steel and aluminum circularity, only a small number of companies describe how they are developing systems to recycle post-consumer steel and aluminum scrap specifically. On battery circularity, few companies disclose qualitative information about the battery recycling methods being used or quantitative data to illustrate the actual implementation of their recycling initiatives.

Performance is also low on the indicators evaluating environmental due diligence for battery minerals. Overall, automakers have yet to adopt a proactive approach to managing environmental risks throughout their upstream supply chains, with currently employed practices often failing to meet standards and practices outlined in the OECD Handbook on Environmental Due Diligence for Mineral Supply Chains.

A number of industry laggards are still failing on the basics. Although the number of companies scoring 0% in the aluminum section has been halved compared to last year, GAC, SAIC and Toyota are all still stuck at 0%, whilst Honda scores 0% for steel and only 1% for aluminum. Stellantis, meanwhile, scores 1% across both steel and aluminum. In the light of the progress made by their peers, these companies have no excuse for continuing to perform so poorly.

Performance by many other companies within the different subsections continues to be extremely patchy. Hyundai and Kia score points against some of the indicators focused on steel and aluminum recycling, but continue to score 0 against all the indicators focused on the decarbonization of (primary) steel and aluminum. In the batteries subsection, BYD and Geely have made notable progress on the battery circularity indicators, but do not score any points on the indicators on environmental due diligence for battery minerals.

Across all subsections, some indicators and sub-indicators continue to register a score of 0% across all automakers. Similar to last year, the General subsection sees 0% score on the disclosure of deforestation and conversion-free commodity volumes, as well as other significant supply chain emissions. In the steel and aluminum subsections, no company has set targets to increase their usage of both lower emission and fossil-free steel/alumnium, despite the fact that progress in both areas is needed to catalyze the decarbonization of these industries.[13] Similarly, no company disaggregates for post-consumer steel and aluminum scrap in their existing targets and disclosures.

Human Rights and Responsible Sourcing performance

The average score against the general human rights due diligence indicators (47%) was the highest across all the indicator subsections of the Leaderboard. Company performance across the issue-specific human rights subsections, however, drops significantly: 28% for the responsible sourcing subsection, 9% for the Indigenous Peoples' rights subsection, and 23% for the Workers' rights in the supply chain subsection.

Only two sub-indicators have not been met by any automaker in the General subsection this year. These concern communication about grievance mechanisms to workers and other potentially affected rightsholders in the supply chain, and disclosure of grievance data concerning type, severity, tier, and geographical location. All other general human rights due diligence sub-indicators have been met by at least one company.

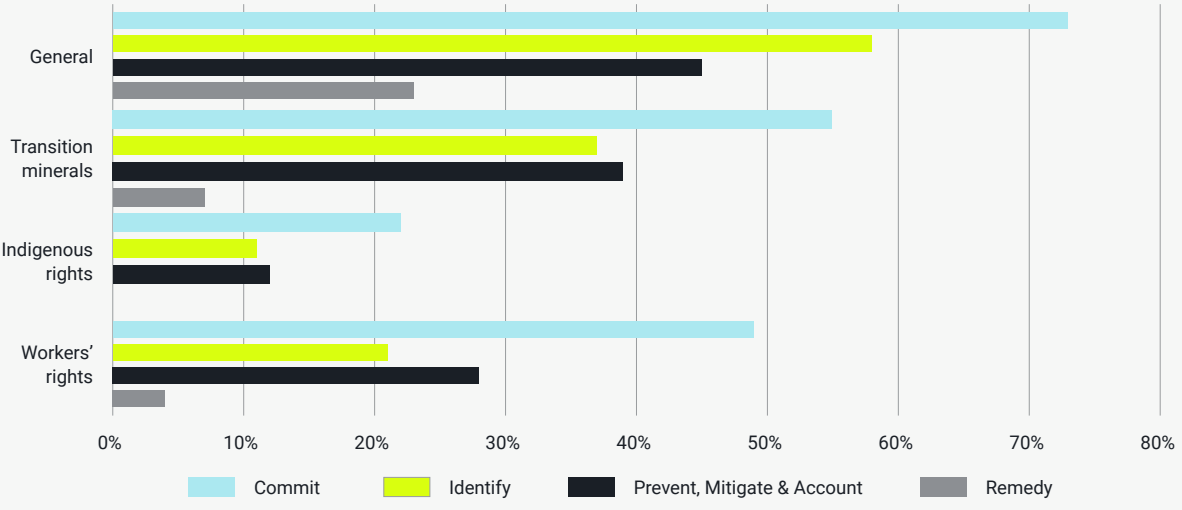
Similarly, only one sub-indicator in the Responsible Mineral Sourcing subsection has not been met by any automaker. This concerns information about the automakers' review of complaints submitted to specialised smelter/refiner grievance mechanisms, although it is notable that Ford met this indicator in previous years.

The vast majority of sub-indicators on Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain have also been met by at least one automaker, with the exception of three sub-indicators where all automakers score 0%. These all concern indicators measuring workers' participation in various stages of the due diligence process, confirming a generalised resistance to allowing greater worker voice in corporate due diligence processes.

These results show that, simply based on corporate practices, almost full compliance with indicators in the general human rights due diligence, responsible sourcing, and workers' rights subsections, is possible.

The level of accomplishment on Indigenous Peoples' rights remains more dire, with many sub-indicators still not being met by any company. These sub-indicators are based on international Indigenous Peoples' rights standards and should be met by automakers claiming to abide by human rights. Addressing these failures requires automakers who have already made commitments on Indigenous Peoples' rights to implement these commitments in practice, and show evidence of it. For others, it requires emulating their better performing peers.

Figure 8 - **Average scores for each indicator category across the four human rights and responsible sourcing subsections**



As the previous graph shows, there are clear priorities for improving industry performance across all human rights subsections. Although companies tend to score higher on the commit indicators, there remains a (smaller) group of companies still failing to unequivocally commit to respecting all human rights, and/or require suppliers to respect the full range of human rights without qualifications or limitations. This number is bigger for workers' rights, and still represents the majority for Indigenous Peoples' rights.

In the workers' rights subsection, Geely, Hyundai, Kia, and Nissan all continue to undermine the strength of their commitments to the ILO Principles by introducing limiting or caveating language. A similar problem occurs in relation to commitments and requirements regarding Indigenous Peoples' rights, with Renault, Mercedes, Stellantis, and Geely introducing similarly limiting or qualifying language.

Like last year, BYD, GAC, SAIC and Stellantis are still failing to adopt specific responsible transition mineral sourcing commitments. On a positive note, a smaller number of automakers than last year are failing to lay out express requirements on suppliers in this area (GAC, Honda, SAIC and Toyota). However, even among those who do express commitments and lay down requirements, their level of ambition continues to vary considerably.

Most automakers are now meeting indicators concerning risk identification processes, including at the pre-sourcing stage. However, some automakers (BYD, GAC, SAIC, Toyota, and GM) are still failing to either describe their processes to identify high risk suppliers or disclose information about their risk prevention/mitigation measures.

The majority of companies still fail to disclose sufficient levels of detail regarding their salient supply chain human rights risks. Only BMW, Mercedes, Renault, Tesla, and Volkswagen specify where in the supply chain these risks occur. However, even these companies still fail to provide information consistently in relation to all risks, and/or all raw materials. The same is true of risks to Indigenous Peoples' rights and workers' rights. A common practice among automakers is to disclose the human rights risks typically associated with certain raw materials, but not necessarily those distinctive to them. This information is not useful and does not get automakers any points.

A persistent failure across all the human rights subsections is the lack of evidence or insufficient information on actual implementation, and on the outcome of supply chain due diligence and mapping efforts. For example, most companies claim to have supply chain monitoring programs. However, very few disclose data to demonstrate the scale of their monitoring activities such as the number or percentage of suppliers assessed and audited. Similarly, while some companies claim to carry out supply chain mapping to the point of extraction, very few disclose key actors identified as a result of these mapping efforts.

Another common practice among automakers is to disclose the place where some raw materials typically come from, but not necessarily where the raw materials in their products come from. As Renault states in its Vigilance report, there are "main mineral extraction countries", and then "the countries in the Renault Group supplier base". Reporting countries of origin by reference to where raw materials generally come from is not useful (anybody can get this information through a simple web search) and automakers that do this do not get points.

When it comes to Indigenous Peoples' rights, signs of practical implementation are even more scarce. A few more automakers described procedures and steps to operationalise commitments in this area, but these remain basic. Information about Indigenous Peoples' participation in risk assessments and remedial processes is completely absent, and the majority of automakers are still failing to disclose practical information regarding direct engagement with extractive companies and/or Indigenous Peoples to address and resolve concerns. The fact that these are the same issues automakers have failed to report on for the last three years shows a general and consistent disregard for Indigenous Peoples' rights.

On Workers' rights, the number of automakers that express commitments or lay out requirements on the payment of a living wage remain low, and there continue to be some automakers that fail to expressly ban recruitment fees in their supply chains. A few recalcitrant automakers continue to not have a collective agreement with their workers. Information on participation of labour unions or worker representatives in the elaboration of automakers' labour rights policies and principles remains low, and so does disclosure about supply chain worker participation in risk assessment processes.

Qualitative and quantitative information about grievance processes is still also generally poor. Just over half of the automakers assessed under the Leaderboard have grievance mechanisms that are available to value chain workers and other stakeholders to address human rights concerns in their supply chains. Of these, only six have independent mechanisms. It is notable that no company has yet explained how they proactively communicate the existence of their supply chain grievance mechanisms to suppliers' workers and other potentially impacted rightsholders. This is a serious gap since this communication is the first step towards ensuring accessibility.

Information on the involvement of rightsholders in the determination of remedy is also virtually non-existent, as is information on grievance procedures specifically designed to address breaches to Indigenous Peoples' rights or workers' rights. Disclosure of statistical data about the practical operation of grievance mechanisms is similarly poor. No automaker provided details regarding the type or severity of the supply chain grievances received, or whether any of these grievances led to reparations for confirmed harm to rightsholders. In this critical area of human rights due diligence, most automakers are failing to back up their claims with evidence.

Ongoing Mistakes or Misconceptions

There are a number of ongoing mistakes or misconceptions in the approach to human rights due diligence. Many still overwhelmingly or exclusively focus on risks and abuses within their own operations, neglecting or ignoring what happens in the supply chain. This is reflected, for example, in the scope of risk assessments, or the focus of grievance mechanisms.

Some companies also still focus on risks to the company and its bottom line. This reveals an enduring misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of human rights due diligence, which is focused on the risks and impacts that companies pose or inflict on individuals' and communities' human rights. An example of this is the practice of defining human rights risk by reference to legislation. Automakers seeking to identify risks to human rights should be looking widely at any potential for harm regardless of the specific focus of a particular piece of legislation. Using legislation to predefine the scope of human rights risks an automaker will address responds to a concern for the potential liability or other adverse consequences that not complying might carry for the company. This is not the correct approach to human rights due diligence as defined by the UNGPs and other international business and human rights standards.

Another recurrent mistake is to subject human rights commitments or requirements to local legislation. Of course, automakers must comply with local laws, but these norms often fall short of international human rights standards. When this is the case, companies must apply or require suppliers to apply the higher standard, unless doing so would cause them to breach the law. However, even in these cases, the UNGPs still require companies to "seek ways to honour the principles of internationally recognized human rights when faced with conflicting requirements."[14]

Automakers that subject their human rights commitments to local laws when these are renowned for undermining human rights do not get points. However, they may still meet the relevant indicator if they seek to resolve the challenge of differing norms in line with international business and human rights standards. A number of automakers expressly adopt this approach. Geely, for example, states: "If the standards set by local laws, regulations or business practices are higher than those specified in this Code, the local laws, regulations or business practices shall apply; otherwise, this Code shall prevail."[15] Tesla seeks to resolve both differing and clashing standards: "Where national law and international human rights standards differ, we will follow the higher standard; where they are in conflict, we will adhere to national law, while seeking ways to respect international human rights to the greatest extent possible."[16] Regarding suppliers, Tesla indicates: "The Code represents a minimum standard which our suppliers must follow and where there are differences between the Code and applicable local or national laws and regulations, Tesla expects the supplier to follow the stricter standard."[17]

Finally, automakers must avoid falling into the trade-off trap, an old corporate practice that the UNGPs also sought to eliminate: "Business enterprises may undertake other commitments or activities to support and promote human rights, which may contribute to the enjoyment of rights. But this does not offset a failure to respect human rights throughout their operations."[18] Some company statements suggest that this belief still exists among some automakers. For example, Renault states: "The Group… provides remedies to material negative impacts by working closely with public authorities to enhance job opportunities and foster employment growth, contributing to the communities' well-being, and promoting social and local dialogue." … "such local ongoing actions allow the Group to mitigate material risks arising from impacts and their effectiveness is monitored locally".[19] Adverse human rights impacts must be avoided, not compensated for by way of positive impacts elsewhere.

CHAPTER 006

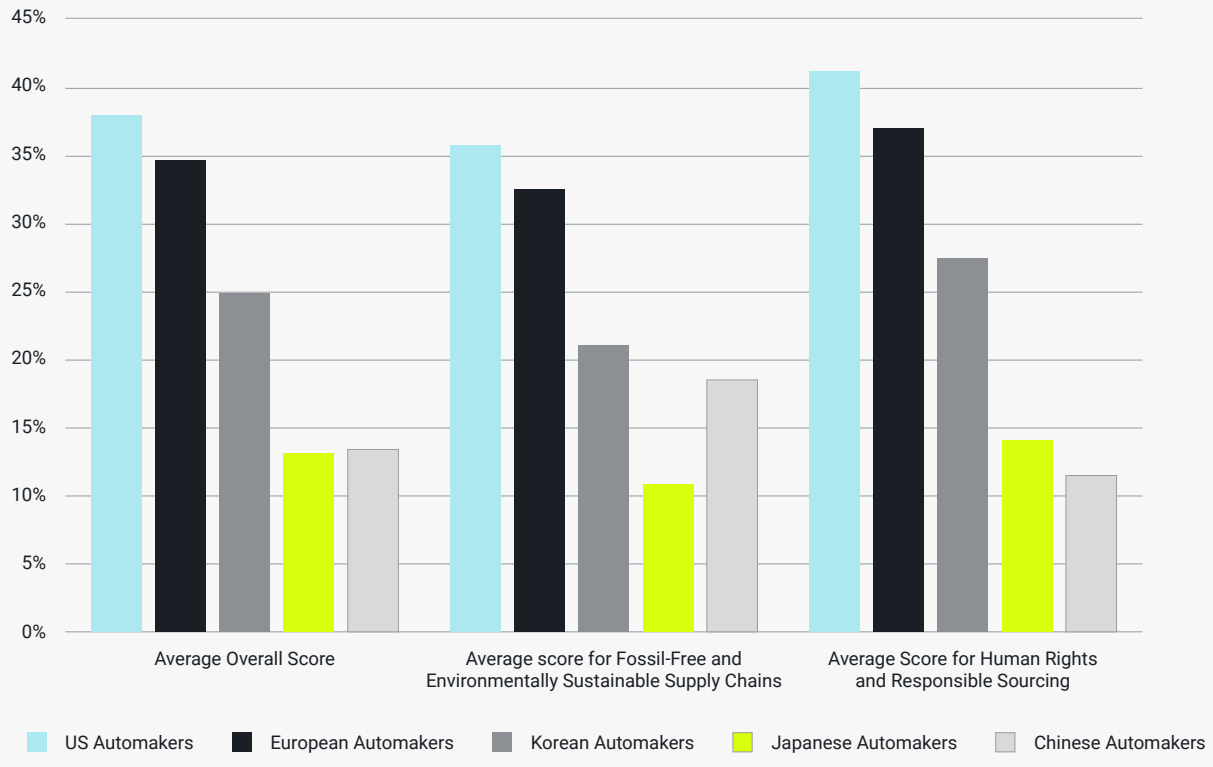
Differences across markets

US automakers remain the top scorers of the Leaderboard this year, with an average overall score of 38%. The US companies maintain this leadership across both sections of the Leaderboard, achieving average scores of 36% and 41% respectively for the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains and the human rights and responsible sourcing sections.

European automakers achieved the second-highest average score, both overall (35%) and for the Leaderboard's two sections (33% for fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains and 37% for human rights and responsible sourcing). They are followed by South Korean companies, which achieved an overall average score of 22% and average scores of 21% and 24% across the two sections. Japanese and Chinese companies are last, both with an average overall score of 12%.

However, whilst the Japanese automakers continue to outperform their Chinese counterparts on the human rights indicators (with an average score of 14% versus 11%), the Chinese companies have once again outpaced their Japanese competitors in the climate and environment section (with an average score of 13% versus 9%). Of course, all credit for this progress goes to Geely and BYD, as GAC and SAIC do nothing but push averages down.

Figure 9 - **Average Leaderboard scores by automakers across different markets**



There were diverging performances within, as well as between, markets. This means that better or worse performance between regions is often the result of one or two companies driving or sinking the regions' overall achievement. For example, without GAC and SAIC, the Chinese automakers would no longer be the lowest scoring companies on human rights: they would in fact jump ahead of their Japanese competitors.

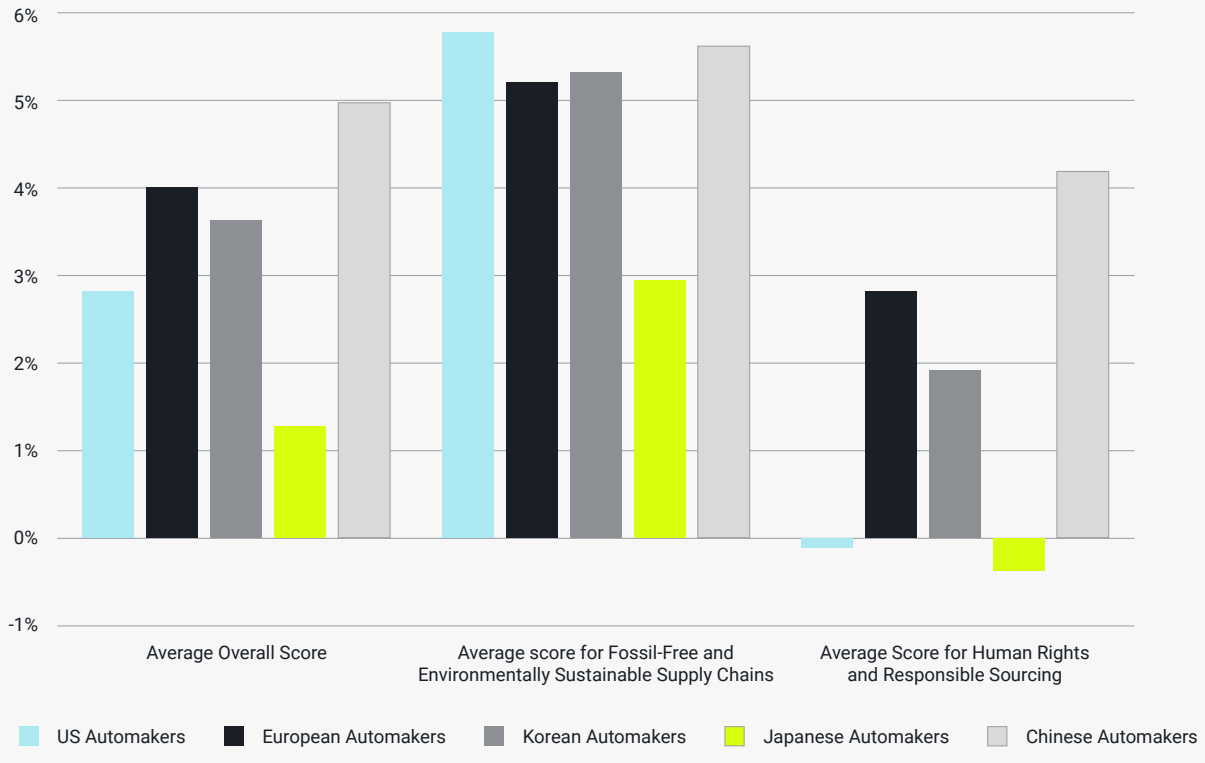
Without Stellantis, European automakers would achieve the same overall average score as the US automakers. Stellantis trails behind its national peers by varying margins, but in some fields this is especially pronounced. For example, on Indigenous Peoples' rights, the company achieves 9 times less than top scorer Mercedes. On steel and aluminum, the company scores more than 50 times less than Volvo.

Without GM, US automakers would lead by a much larger margin, even without Stellantis in the equation. GM achieves only half of Ford's overall score. In some areas, such as battery sustainability and responsible mineral sourcing, GM achieves less than a third of Ford's and Tesla's scores.

The differences in scores not only between geographies but within them demonstrates that there is ample room for improvement between markets as well as within specific regions or nations. Weaker performers within each region must draw inspiration from their better performing regional peers and seek to emulate their practices.

When looking at the average score *improvements* between the 2025 and 2026 editions of the Leaderboard, market differences paint a different picture. This year, the Chinese automakers made more progress overall than all other groups. They are followed by European, Korean, and US automakers, in that order. Once again, the Japanese automakers made the least progress, improving their average score by a meagre 1 percentage point. These differences are particularly pronounced in the human rights section, where the US and Japanese automakers actually regressed on their average scores compared to 2025.

Figure 10 - **Average score improvements between 2025 and 2026 by automakers across different markets**



European and US automakers demonstrate stronger performance across the four climate and environmental subsections, with European automakers collectively scoring higher in the General subsection and the US automakers scoring higher across the three supply chain-specific subsections. However, if it wasn't for the poor performance of Stellantis, the European companies would score higher than their US counterparts in the Steel decarbonization subsection. On the flipside, if it wasn't for GM's weak performance on Batteries sustainability, the US automakers would have a 13 point lead over their US counterparts in this subsection, compared to their current lead of just 2 percentage points.

This year, Chinese and Korean automakers have shown strong progress in the Climate and Environment section, improving their average scores by a greater margin than the European and US automakers. BYD and Geely are among the top improvers in this section, with Geely making its debut among the top five performers in both the steel and aluminum subsections. Both companies have also shown strong improvement in battery supply chain sustainability.

The performance of the Korean companies was more of a mixed bag, achieving notable score improvements in the general, aluminium and batteries subsections but only a tiny improvement in the steel subsection. This is a missed opportunity for the two companies, given their unique position as the only automotive group with its own steelmaking subsidiary.

Asian automakers overall have still failed to put some foundational decarbonization and due diligence strategies into practice. For example, as also highlighted in a recent report by the Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs (IPE), Chinese automakers BYD, GAC, and SAIC remain the only three companies that have yet to disclose upstream Scope 3 emissions data. This failure to translate high-level carbon neutrality commitments into targeted practices and disclosure risks turning public net-zero pledges into "empty greenwashing narratives".

While European automakers are the highest scorers in the general human rights due diligence and Workers' rights subsections, their US counterparts continue to achieve higher scores on the responsible sourcing and Indigenous Peoples' rights subsections.

The better performance of European companies on general human rights due diligence may be explained by the early adoption of mandatory human rights due diligence laws in the region.

US companies' better performance on transition minerals, on the other hand, could be explained by mandatory conflict minerals reporting requirements under the US Dodd-Frank Act which have been in place for the last 15 years. While these focus on conflict minerals, these requirements may have helped US companies develop general supply chain mapping and traceability expertise.

However, these trends do not always apply at individual company level. For example, Ford is ahead of many European companies on general human rights due diligence. Tesla is also ahead of Renault, even though Renault has been bound by the Duty of Vigilance law since its inception. All European companies are ahead of GM on responsible transition minerals sourcing.

Overall, transparency of human rights due diligence continues to be much higher among European and US automakers, although this is not the case across the board. Many East Asian automakers disclose relevant statistical data and they in fact often appear more comfortable doing so than many European and US automakers. For example, Geely, BYD, Hyundai, and Kia, all disclosed the number of suppliers assessed and their tiers, something automakers like BMW, Ford, GM, Mercedes and other western companies did not do. Geely, Hyundai, and Kia disclosed the number of suppliers audited and their tiers, something several western companies, including BMW, GM and Mercedes, failed to do. In fact, this year Hyundai and Kia are the only automakers across the entire Leaderboard that disclosed the number of corrective action plans issued during the reporting year. Similarly, Geely was the only company across the entire Leaderboard that disclosed data about potential new suppliers assessed, and the results of these assessments.

European and US automakers tend to be more rigorous in the demands they place on suppliers than their East Asian competitors. They generally impose stronger requirements and are more prepared to use mandatory language. East Asian automakers tend to limit the scope of their requirements, and more of them adopt voluntary language. The same is true of responsible sourcing requirements, where European and US companies tend to go further in their demands (e.g. supply chain tracking, disclosure of smelters/refiners). No East Asian company, for example, explicitly requires suppliers to disclose their smelters/refiners. However, there are exceptions here too. For example, Volkswagen does not explicitly require suppliers to respect human rights, and Renault does not require suppliers to cascade its human rights requirements. Nissan, on the other hand, does both. BYD requires suppliers to operate in line with the OECD Guidance when sourcing any minerals from CAHRAs, whereas BMW, Mercedes, Stellantis, and Volkswagen only do this in relation to conflict minerals from CAHRAs.

Another important difference between these broad markets relates to grievance mechanisms. While all European and US companies have a supply chain grievance mechanism (independent or in-house), no East Asian company has an independent supply chain grievance mechanism, and only two (BYD and Geely) have supply chain grievance mechanisms at all. This is a serious gap in East Asian companies' practices and grossly out of sync with the UNGPs and all other international business and human rights standards. Many East Asian automakers such as Honda, Hyundai, and Kia do provide a grievance mechanism, but this is limited to their own workforce and/or integrity concerns.

CHAPTER 007

Regulatory reforms and their implications for automakers

Existing or planned human rights due diligence legislation in Europe is driving better performance. Draft laws begin to shape corporate practices even before they come into effect, as companies start preparing for full compliance. German automakers' strong performance on all human rights categories, and on general human rights due diligence in particular, is at least in part a result of human rights and environmental due diligence requirements under Germany's supply chain due diligence legislation, in effect since January 2023.

Renault and Stellantis both fall under the due diligence requirements of the French Duty of Vigilance law. Although these companies' performance has not been as strong as that of their German counterparts, their human rights due diligence practices have been developing rapidly. Stellantis is in the top five performing automakers on general human rights due diligence this year, and Renault is this year's best improver, moving up to 6th place in the overall human rights ranking. EU-wide non-financial reporting legislation has also been in place since 2014, with important effects on corporate transparency.

Many automakers completed their first double materiality assessment this year, under the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). Automakers have also begun to comply with the due diligence requirements of the EU Battery and Deforestation Regulations. National or regional human rights due diligence laws also have global repercussions, as many large non-EU companies operating in Europe are caught within their scope. Non-EU companies are also forced to align with European legislation to be able to continue selling their products in the EU, or remain within EU supply chains. For example, Ford has proactively expanded their human rights due diligence practices to conform with the German law.[20] Geely provides a detailed account of efforts to align with various existing and forthcoming EU laws.[21]

In December 2025, the European Commission also strengthened the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), announcing plans to expand its scope from 2028 to cover 180 steel and aluminum-intensive downstream products, including some autoparts —a move that will further incentivize automakers and their suppliers to prioritize low-carbon materials or face increased costs on imports into the EU market.

Although the majority of regulatory efforts are occurring in Europe, other countries are also legislating to strengthen corporate sustainability practices. China enacted mandatory climate disclosures for scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, and expanded the country's emission trading scheme to cover the emissions-intensive steel, aluminium, and cement industries. The Chinese Due Diligence Guidelines for Mineral Supply Chains, issued by the China Chamber of Commerce of Metals, Minerals & Chemicals Importers & Exporters (CCCMC), provide further guidance on responsible sourcing practices.

In June 2025, a bill on corporate human rights and environmental due diligence was reintroduced in South Korea's National Assembly, after a two-year revision of a 2023 version. The bill seeks to establish mandatory corporate due diligence to proactively identify and address potential human rights and environmental abuses across global supply chains.[22] This bill is the first of its kind in Asia, and the latest in a growing body of rules on responsible business conduct worldwide. If passed, it will directly shape the due diligence policies and practices of automakers Hyundai and Kia, likely improving their performance under the Leaderboard.

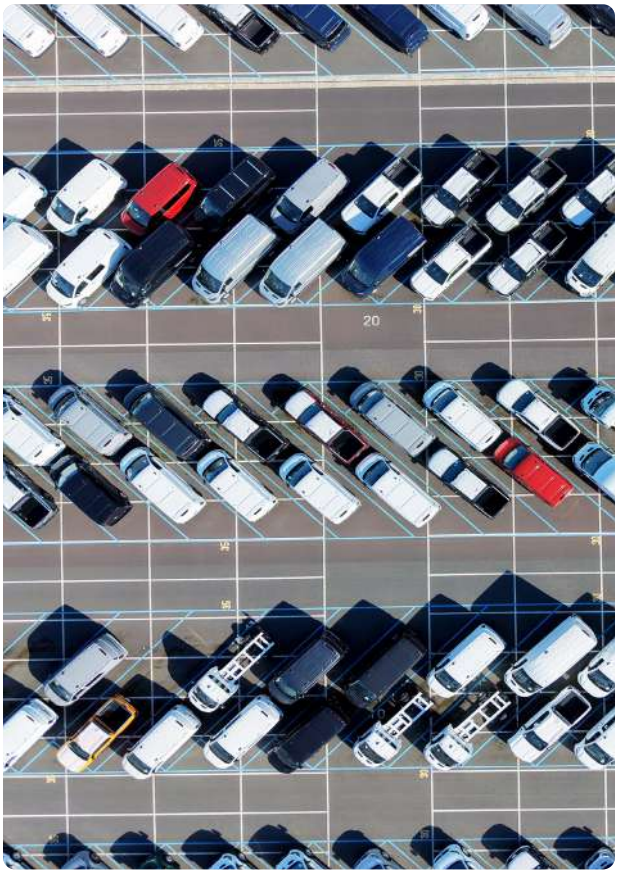
Environmental and human rights due diligence laws are critical for laying out minimum standards, but they should not be seen as a ceiling. This is important because laws or certain provisions within them are often the product of trade-offs which result in lowest common denominators. They can have an adverse effect on corporate practices if they entrench approaches or provisions that are weaker than international due diligence standards, or even existing or emerging corporate practices. In May 2024, EU Member States formally adopted the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). However, a last-minute move from the German minority coalition partner FDP blocked German support for the law. The CSDDD was subsequently reopened as part of an "Omnibus Simplification Package" along with other key EU Green Deal laws, including the CSRD.[23]

The newly approved version of the Omnibus package narrows the group of companies subject to CSDDD and CSRD.[24] The vast majority of the automakers assessed by the Leaderboard will continue to be captured by these laws. However, many other large companies within auto supply chains will now not be captured by the new thresholds. This will have adverse repercussions on efforts to level the playing field among large industry actors. Automakers in scope may also find it more challenging to obtain information or work with large suppliers that now also fall out of the CSDDD's revised scope. There will now also be a limitation on the information in-scope companies can demand from suppliers that fall outside the scope of CSRD (the so-called "value chain cap"). The revised CSDDD has its own version of a "value chain cap", regulating when or under what circumstances information can be requested of smaller suppliers.[25] Other detrimental changes include the elimination of the obligation to publish climate transition plans. However, companies that remain in scope of CSRD will still have to report this information. At a minimum, if they do not have such plans, they must explain whether and when they intend to adopt one.

The risk-based approach to due diligence, at risk for some time, was retained.[26] This year's Leaderboard assessment identified a number of automakers already seeking to identify and address salient risks wherever they occur in their operations and supply chains. These automakers demonstrate the feasibility of a risk-based approach to due diligence, and are already ahead. The impact that the newly incorporated restrictions on information requests will have on automakers remains to be seen, but this should not undermine automakers' ongoing efforts to identify and address supply chain risks.

The latest Omnibus agreement contains many regrettable modifications. The process offers many lessons for how not to legislate in the public interest.[27] As law-makers consider legislation in this area, they must ensure they have a very clear understanding of the state of corporate practice for two very important reasons. The first is to make sure that any new legislation effectively fills gaps and deficiencies in corporate policies and practices which lead to human rights abuses and environmental harm, and levels the playing field where good practices already exist. The second is to ensure that future laws do not have a detrimental effect on existing good practices, leading to a levelling down of corporate action to respect and protect the environment and human rights.

In the meantime, automakers must continue to strengthen their due diligence policies and practices in line with international business and human rights standards. They must also guard against backsliding, whether this is sanctioned by watered-down norms or a permissive political environment. Given their size, resources, and leverage, the automakers assessed under the Leaderboard have the capacity to shape markets and model best practices. Some of them are already taking important steps towards ensuring fair, equitable, and sustainable auto supply chains. These efforts must not only continue but accelerate in the coming years. Ultimately, scrutiny from civil society, investors, and consumers against key international frameworks will continue, and demand for transparency and accountability will persist, regardless of any temporary regulatory relief.



CHAPTER 008

Implications of the 2026 Leaderboard findings for investors

US automakers remain the top scorers of the Leaderboard this year, with an average overall score of 38%. The US companies maintain this leadership across both sections of the Leaderboard, achieving average scores of 36% and 41% respectively for the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains and the human rights and responsible sourcing sections.

All of the 18 automakers in the Leaderboard are listed on major stock exchanges where ESG regulations have been increasingly stringent. This evolving regulatory landscape, coupled with growing sophistication of institutional investors' ESG strategies, creates a strong momentum for investors to leverage investor stewardship and engage with automotive companies on their supply chain ESG policies and practices.

The Lead the Charge network's 2024 investor briefing highlighted key supply chain risks and opportunities, showcasing how investors can leverage their voting power, shareholder resolutions, as well as direct and collaborative engagement to hold automakers accountable and drive action on supply chain decarbonization, human rights due diligence, and broader ESG risks and opportunities most material for the automotive sector.

AUTOMAKER	PRIMARY STOCK MARKET(S)	STOCK TICKER(S)
BMW AG	Frankfurt Stock Exchange (Germany) / XETRA	BMWX:GER
BYD Company Ltd.	Hong Kong Stock Exchange & Shenzhen Stock Exchange (China)	1211.HK / 002594.SZ
Ford Motor Company	NYSE (USA)	F:NYQ
GAC Group	Hong Kong Stock Exchange & Shanghai Stock Exchange (China)	2238.HK / 601238.SH
Geely Auto	Hong Kong Stock Exchange	0175.HK
General Motors Company	NYSE (USA)	GM:NYQ
Hyundai Motor Company	Korea Exchange (South Korea)	005380.KS
Kia Corporation	Korea Exchange (South Korea)	000270.KS
Mercedes-Benz Group AG	Frankfurt Stock Exchange (Germany) / XETRA	MBG.DE
Nissan Motor Co., Ltd.	Tokyo Stock Exchange	7201:TYO
Renault	Euronext Paris (France)	RNO:PAR
Stellantis N.V.	NYSE (USA), Euronext Amsterdam (Netherlands) / Milan Stock Exchange	NYSE: STLA /Euronext Paris: STLAP / BIT: STLAM
Tesla, Inc.	Nasdaq (USA)	NSQ: TSLA
Toyota Motor Corporation	Tokyo Stock Exchange, Nagoya Stock Exchange, NYSE & London Stock Exchange	7203 :TYO/ 7203:NAG/ TM:NYQ / TYT:LSE
Volkswagen AG	Frankfurt Stock Exchange (Germany) / XETRA	VOW3:GER
Volvo Cars	Nasdaq Stockholm (Sweden)	VOLCAR B:STO
Honda Motor Co., Ltd.	Tokyo Stock Exchange	7267:TYO
SAIC Motor Corporation Limited	Shanghai Stock Exchange (China)	600104.SS / 600104.SH

Institutional investors around the world have been increasingly leveraging their shareholder rights to hold investee companies accountable on material ESG issues through the form of collaborative engagement. Emerging issues of concern covered by these investor alliances include climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and human rights, which are being addressed through initiatives such as Climate Action 100+, Nature Action 100, the UNPRI's Spring and Advance initiatives, Finance for Biodiversity, the Investor Initiative on Responsible Nickel Supply Chains, and the Investor Alliance for Human Rights.

In alignment with the objectives of these investor alliances and complementing their research efforts, the Leaderboard offers a tool to support more focused and impactful investor engagement with the automotive industry and enhances investors' ability to track corporate actions.

The 2026 Leaderboard results reveal that, while automakers have made notable improvements in both general climate and human rights commitments, which is to some extent driven by regulatory pressure and civil society demands, many still fail to translate high-level commitments into concrete actions. This gap is concerning and has important implications for investors that use ESG data to assess company performance. Relying on broad ESG metrics and thresholds based on high-level commitments and policies may expose investors to risks of corporate greenwashing or superficial compliance. Additionally, it may also subject their own products labeled as sustainable to greenwashing risks, which is increasingly being scrutinized by financial regulators.

The 2026 Leaderboard underscores the need for institutional investors to demand more meaningful transparency by automakers, particularly in supply chain decarbonization efforts and due diligence processes. By pushing for disaggregated, evidence-based disclosures, investors can better differentiate between leaders and laggards and ensure that their investee automakers are not merely ticking boxes but are implementing measurable actions that align with long-term sustainability goals. To support investors with these efforts, this year's Leaderboard includes a "Current Best Practices" companion briefing, which serves as an easy reference guide to best practices being implemented across the industry. Investors can leverage these insights to push automakers for more tailored and transparent action, holding them accountable for sustainability goals across their operations and supply chains.

Since introducing the deforestation indicators for the first time last year, the Leaderboard has developed indicators with more granular criteria, which can provide insights into automakers' actions on deforestation across disclosure, target setting, progress tracking and due diligence. This year's Leaderboard results reveal that while some companies have made strides, progress remains limited to specific commodities, lacking time-bound commitments and concrete due diligence measures that allow progress tracking and risk mitigation on the ground.

This aligns with broader trends identified in the Nature Action 100 Benchmark, where companies increasingly disclose ambition but often fall short on implementation, especially regarding establishing robust systems for due diligence and risk mitigation as well as recognizing and protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities. Investors can drive further action by using these insights from the Leaderboard to push automakers for more robust systems of risk mitigation and due diligence across environmental and human rights areas among companies beyond the 100 companies in the Nature Action 100 Benchmark.

CHAPTER 009

Conclusion

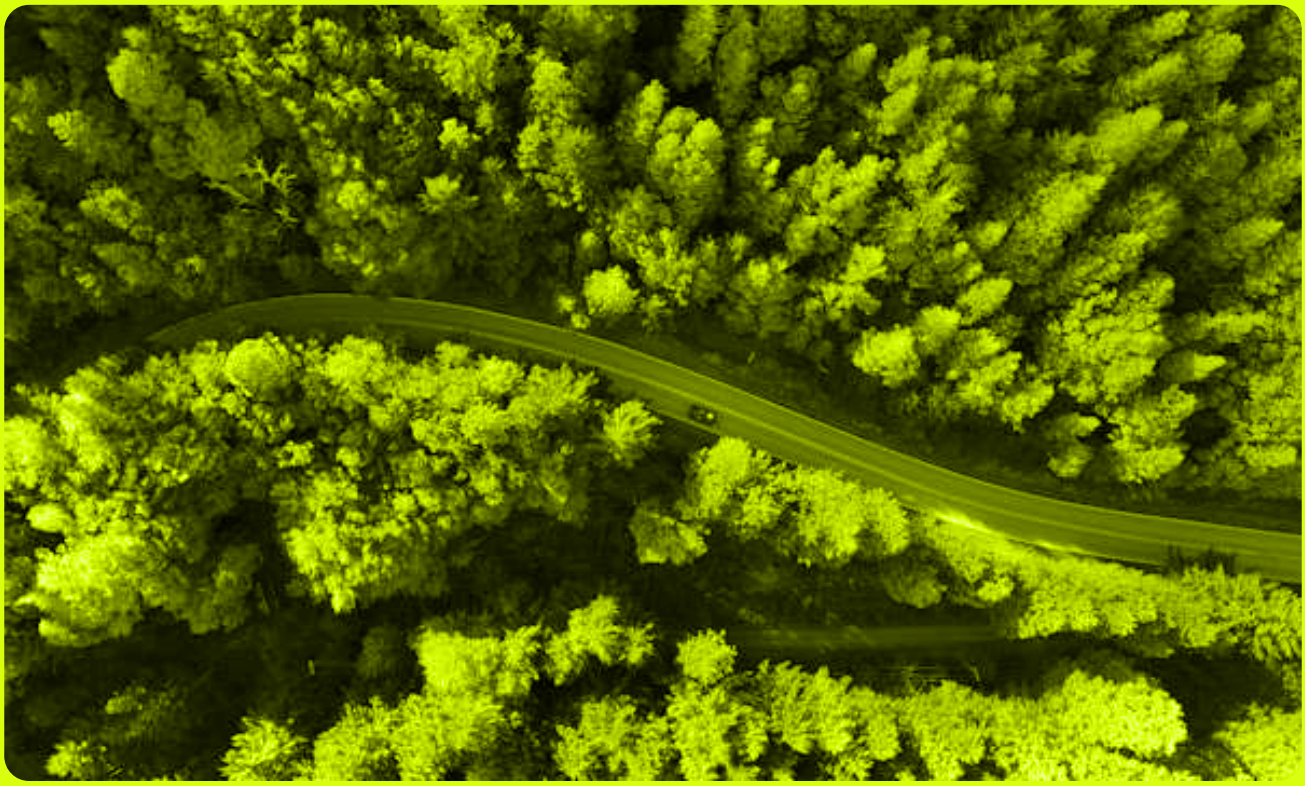
The 2026 edition of the annual Lead the Charge Leaderboard reveals a meaningful shift is underway.

The 2026 edition of the annual Lead the Charge Leaderboard reveals a meaningful shift is underway. Whilst most automakers continue to rely on standardized, formulaic approaches to supply chain decarbonization and due diligence, some industry leaders are beginning to pull further ahead by shifting towards more targeted, material-specific strategies — whether focused on accelerating renewable energy use in aluminum production, driving innovations to enhance battery recycling, or improving responsible mining practices across transition mineral supply chains. These shifts represent an important evolution in automaker supply chain practices: moving from checking boxes towards tailored strategies designed to drive impact where it matters most.

Formulaic, one-size-fits-all approaches and tools are, by themselves, ineffective at addressing the distinct challenges found across the range of industries supplying the automotive sector. Achieving genuine impact requires automakers to think strategically about how they can best deploy their leverage to drive change across different industries and contexts. The emerging best practices identified in this Leaderboard demonstrate that such strategic approaches are both feasible and effective.

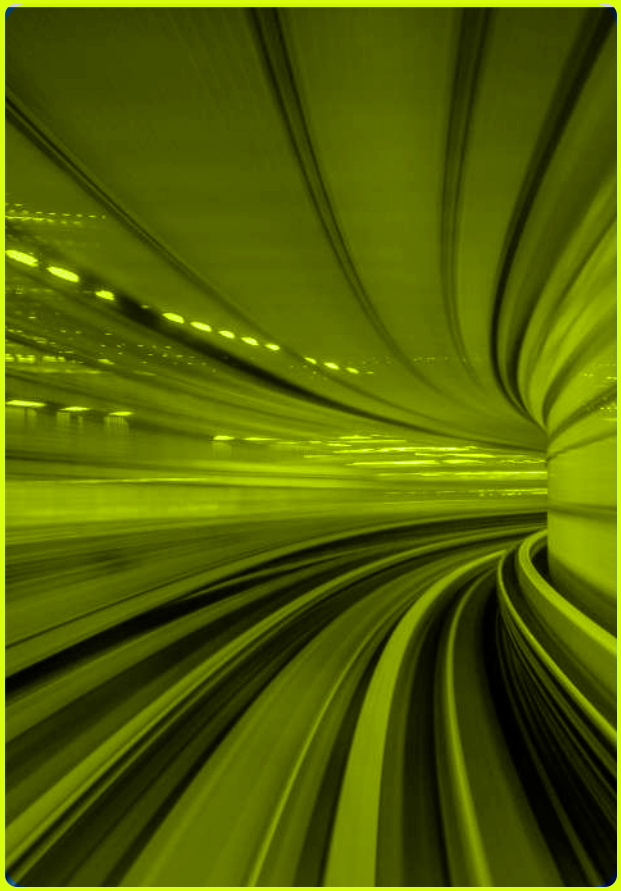
These shifts also lay the groundwork for an accelerated race to the top on clean and equitable supply chains. Some companies are starting to disclose more information about the practical steps they are taking to ensure the actual implementation of their policies and commitments across different supply chains and contexts. A handful of automakers have also begun publishing more granular quantitative data to demonstrate the progress they are making. Such shifts empower key stakeholders, from investors to regulators, to better distinguish genuine leaders from those simply ticking boxes, creating competitive pressures that reward frontrunners and expose laggards.

Importantly, automakers that are investing simultaneously in targeted strategies and supply chain



traceability are better positioned to link the results of their efforts directly to the vehicles they bring to market. We now have early glimpses of what this can look like, with automakers such as Mercedes, Volvo, and Geely bringing to market new EV models with the proportion of low-carbon steel and aluminum quantified. These kinds of disclosures create a powerful opportunity for automakers to tell compelling impact stories that resonate with consumers, employees, and investors alike.

The emerging best practices identified in this year's Leaderboard are also examples of companies beginning to implement existing international standards and frameworks more fully—including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines. Because many incoming regulations, from the EU Batteries Regulation to the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and European Sustainability Reporting Standards, are grounded in these same international frameworks, the results of this year's Leaderboard give lie to any claims by companies that such regulatory requirements are impractical or unachievable.



Finally, it is notable that much of this progress is unique to electric vehicle supply chains, demonstrating how electrification can catalyze broader supply chain transformation and vice versa. EV-specific regulations like the EU Battery Regulations are already driving significant advances in transparency and traceability far beyond what was ever achieved for internal combustion engine vehicle supply chains. The Leaderboard results reflect this: automakers are often demonstrating more comprehensive supply chain mapping, due diligence, and circularity practices for batteries and transition minerals than for other vehicle components. They are also choosing to use low-carbon steel and aluminum specifically for their EV models, rather than their outdated ICE vehicles. Clean supply chains aren't simply an EV add-on: EVs are increasingly driving clean supply chains and clean supply chains are being prioritized in an ever-more-competitive EV market.

As the transition to electric vehicles addresses the auto industry's tailpipe emissions, it is essential that automakers also look towards their supply chains. We need to manufacture EVs that are truly clean across their lifecycle – and automakers are increasingly making this a reality: from reducing supply chain emissions to addressing environmental harms and human rights impacts, and from mining through to manufacturing, reuse and recycling. Achieving this is not only a moral imperative but a growing expectation of regulators, investors, and consumers. The progress documented in this Leaderboard shows that this vision is not only achievable but increasingly within reach—for automakers ready to lead the charge.

CHAPTER 010

2026 Company Performance Summaries

Source: Automotive sales data from Marklines. All figures are cumulative annual values for the year 2025. The data covers passenger vehicles only.

*Geely Auto Group data includes Marklines sales data from the Geely, Galaxy, Zeekr and Lynk&Co brands only.

Ranking	
6	

Comparison

=

#6 in 2025

Bev Sales #	418,432
Bev Sales %	19%
Total Score	34%
Climate and environment	30%
Human rights	39%

SUMMARY

BMW continued to make improvements in the Leaderboard this year, achieving a 5 percentage point score increase overall, driven by significant progress on Fossil Free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains, and on General Human Rights Due Diligence. The company remains in sixth place overall.

BMW is now the top scoring automaker in both General subsections of the Leaderboard, which evaluate companies' overall approach to supply chain decarbonization and due diligence. The company scores 67% in the General Climate and Environment subsection and 73% in the General Human Rights Due Diligence subsection.

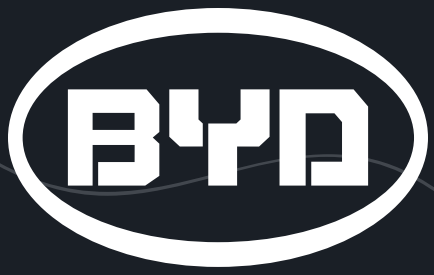
The company improved its score across each of the four subsections in the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains section, increasing its overall score in this area by 11 percentage points.

BMW continued to make significant improvements on its General Human Rights Due Diligence practices, achieving another 8 percentage point increase. However, this progress has been offset by the lack of improvement on Indigenous Peoples' and Workers' Rights, and a 10 percentage point dip on Responsible Minerals Sourcing. This has made BMW's overall progress on human rights amount to zero, and has pushed the company's position on human rights from 4th to 5th place.

BMW should now build on these strong foundations to develop and implement more targeted strategies on the specific issue areas covered by the leaderboard, such as steel decarbonization and Indigenous Peoples' rights.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Strongest performer on deforestation in the General Climate and Environment subsection, as the only company with deforestation targets for two commodities (leather and rubber) and the company also discloses specific measures it undertakes to mitigate deforestation risks through both the supplier selection and supplier monitoring processes.
- Made marginal improvements in the steel and aluminum subsections, specifically on the circularity-focused indicators, disclosing new information on closed-loop processes and design for circularity approaches for steel and aluminum recycling.
- Published a new Responsible Raw Material Management report in 2025, improving levels of transparency. However, the descriptions of human rights risks and due diligence measures per raw material are more limited than those of its peers (e.g. Mercedes and VW).
- One of the few companies to score 0 for its efforts on battery reuse and repurposing, and scores minimum points regarding its efforts on battery recycling.
- Continues to perform strongly on human rights commitments and supply chain due diligence systems, with robust requirements on suppliers and risk identification tools that extend beyond Tier 1.
- Provides more detail about its supply chain mapping efforts, including plans for the provision of digital product passports with product-specific data. However, key information is still lacking, and the company has actually regressed on disclosure of direct sourcing agreements this year.
- Has not progressed on Indigenous Peoples' rights, where the company's performance remains extremely low. While requiring suppliers to respect UNDRIP and FPIC, the company is still not disclosing any information to demonstrate effective implementation.
- One of only three companies to require suppliers to pay a living wage, though is yet to adopt for itself the requirement it places on suppliers. Information on involvement of supply chain workers or their representatives in supply chain risk assessments, monitoring, or remediation, still lacking.



Ranking
14

Comparison
↑
#16 in 2025

BEV Sales #	2,501,646
BEV Sales %	53%
Total Score	14%
Climate & Environment Score	13%
Human Rights Score	16%

SUMMARY

Together with Geely, BYD was this year's strongest improver, improving its total overall score by 9 percentage points, with important improvements both on Climate and the Environment and Human Rights. With the exception of Indigenous People's rights, the company has progressed steadily across all the Leaderboard subsections this year, enabling the company to move up two places in the overall ranking to 14th place.

In the Climate and Environment section, BYD was among the top improvers in the General, aluminium, and batteries subsections. These improvements were due to more comprehensive and precise supplier requirements on decarbonization, water management, and deforestation that BYD and FinDreams Battery disclosed this year. However, the company has still not made progress in areas such as green steel and aluminum procurement, as well as environmental due diligence on battery minerals.

Similarly, BYD's performance improved in three of the four Human Rights subsections. On the General Human Rights Due Diligence subsection alone, the company has achieved an impressive 22 percentage point increase. Among the improvements are a new Code of Conduct for suppliers that requires respect for a number of human rights, and a supply chain grievance mechanism which the company previously lacked.

However, BYD's disclosure practices remain very poor across the board, and the company continues to trail behind most Asian automakers on most subsections.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Established a 2045 carbon neutrality target in 2024, but lacks interim targets that cover upstream Scope 3 emissions and still does not disclose its Scope 3 emissions due to purchased goods and services.
- Has a new Code of Conduct for BYD Suppliers with requirements for suppliers on decarbonization, deforestation, water management and respecting a range of human rights, as well as to cascade these requirements along the supply chain and undertake minerals due diligence in accordance with the OECD Due Diligence Guidance.
- Made progress on aluminium circularity, disclosing an internal recycling line for aluminium waste from both production and automobile dismantling processes.
- Made notable progress in the battery subsection, rising 4 places, mainly due to improved disclosure on battery circularity and enhanced decarbonization efforts by its battery subsidiary FinDreams.
- Continues to score low in steel and aluminium subsections, with a 0% score in steel and 8% in aluminium. Also scores 0% across the battery mineral due diligence indicators.
- Discloses a process for identifying human rights risks in the supply chain, provides greater disclosure regarding supply chain monitoring and has put in place a new supply chain grievance mechanism, although more granular data to demonstrate implementation is still lacking.
- Completed a pilot supply chain map in the second round of the Global Battery Alliance's 'Battery Passport' pilot project, although the company does not provide much detail about the process or information about the results of this mapping effort.
- Made progress on Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain by expressly requiring suppliers to respect the five fundamental principles and rights at work in its new Code of Conduct, and by prohibiting recruitment fees. However, the company does not meet any other indicator in this subsection.

Ranking
2

Comparison
=
#2 in 2025

BEV Sales #	246,779
BEV Sales %	6%
Total Score	45%
Climate & Environment Score	40%
Human Rights Score	49%

SUMMARY

Ford continues to be one of the strongest performers of the Leaderboard, remaining in second place overall, behind Tesla. However, despite retaining a leadership position, Ford only managed to improve its overall score by 2 percentage points this year. The company is just 1 percentage point ahead of Volvo and has fallen further behind Tesla compared to last year.

Ford was one of the top performers in the Climate and Environmental section this year, overtaking Mercedes to take third place. Most notably, Ford set a supply chain emissions reduction target and also achieved a notable score increase in the battery subsection for publishing new lifecycle assessments for its European EV Explorer and Capri models, which includes disaggregated data for battery supply chain emissions. The company is also one of the strongest performers on the battery mineral due diligence indicators in this subsection.

The company's strong performance on the climate and environmental indicators was offset by a poor performance on human rights. Although Ford remains the top performer in this section, and improved its score this year in the General and Indigenous Peoples' Rights subsections, the company's score stagnated in Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain, and fell by 19 percentage points in Responsible Minerals Sourcing. This caused the company's overall human rights score to drop by 2 percentage points. Unless Ford changes tack, it is only a question of time until the company is displaced from its top position.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Has established a new target to achieve a 25% reduction in its upstream supply chain emissions by 2030.
- Achieved a 10 percentage point score increase in the batteries subsection, for starting to disclose disaggregated battery supply chain emissions data at the vehicle level and for disclosing more specific information on environmental due diligence undertaken for its lithium and nickel supply chains.
- Did not improve its performance against any of the steel and aluminum indicators, despite having set targets with the First Movers' Coalition on near-zero steel and aluminum procurement.
- The only company assessed that discloses data about the number and percentage of supplier non-conformances, including detail as to their type and severity. However, unlike previous years, the company failed to disclose both the number of Corrective Action Plans issued and whether any contracts were terminated due to non-compliance.
- The only company in the Leaderboard to assess its grievance mechanism against the UN Guiding Principles Effectiveness Criteria, and one of only two automakers to explain rightsholders' participation in the determination of remedy.
- Lost points in the Responsible Minerals Sourcing subsection for eliminating a mineral-specific grievance mechanism previously in place - an area where the company had in the past demonstrated industry-wide best practice. However, still illustrates some of the best responsible mineral sourcing practices in other areas, including 3TG smelter/refiner disclosure, IRMA auditing, and direct engagement with smelters and refiners.
- Still the only company to fully commit to respecting UNDRIP and FPIC, and place the same unqualified requirements on suppliers. Has now also disclosed steps for guaranteeing FPIC by mining suppliers, as well as an explanation as to how it will respond to findings of FPIC breaches, the only company to do so.
- One of only three companies to commit to a living wage and to require supplies to pay a living wage.

Ranking	
17	

Comparison

=

#17 in 2025

BEV Sales #	301,776
BEV Sales %	48%
Total Score	4%
Climate & Environment Score	5%
Human Rights Score	2%

SUMMARY

Overall, GAC only achieved very marginal improvements in this year's Leaderboard. GAC is still largely failing to adopt initial commitments and disclose basic information on its efforts to ensure a clean and equitable supply chain. As a result the company is still stuck near the bottom of the Leaderboard rankings.

GAC failed to maintain last year's momentum in the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains section, causing the company to drop by one place in the rankings to 17th position. GAC did improve its score in the General subsection of the Climate and Environment section by disclosing more information on how it monitors suppliers for compliance with greenhouse gas emissions reduction and other environmental impacts. However, the company still scores 0% in both the steel and aluminum subsections, remaining one of only three companies with a 0 score in aluminum.

GAC's performance was also poor in the responsible sourcing section. Despite being second to last in the Leaderboard's human rights ranking, GAC has not taken even minimal steps to begin to improve its performance on supply chain due diligence or responsible sourcing.

This lack of progress across the board is disappointing, especially when viewed in the light of the performance of GAC's national peers BYD and Geely - who are making significantly faster progress on supply chain decarbonization and due diligence. BYD's score is now three times higher than GAC's, whilst Geely's is seven times higher. On human rights, the difference is even more stark, with BYD and Geely achieving eight and twelve times more than GAC, respectively.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Has a 2050 net zero target, but lacks Group-level interim targets for its supply chain or related requirements for suppliers to set their own emissions reduction targets.
- Has made initial commitments to prioritize the selection of low-carbon materials in its procurement process, but provides no detail of specific requirements or actions taken to decarbonize its steel, aluminum or battery supply chains.
- Despite having established in-house battery R&D and production, does not disclose any actions taken to improve the recyclability of EV batteries.
- Is yet to produce a standalone human rights policy or other formal commitment to respect human rights. Despite referring to many internal supplier management instruments, GAC has not published any document to facilitate an understanding of its requirements or expectations from suppliers.
- Continues to publish some information regarding monitoring of suppliers concerning ESG impacts. GAC should seek to build from these incipient steps to expand its efforts and disclosure practices relating to human rights, and to human rights due diligence.

GEELY

Ranking
8

Comparison
↑
#11 in 2025

BEV Sales #	1,120,705
BEV Sales %	36%
Total Score	27%
Climate & Environment Score	31%
Human Rights Score	24%

SUMMARY

For the third year running, Geely achieved one of the largest score increases in the Leaderboard, this year tied with BYD and Renault as the strongest overall improvers. This caused Geely to move up three places in the overall Leaderboard ranking, from 11th to 8th place. Geely is the first Chinese automaker to make the top 10 best-performing companies in the Leaderboard, and is now the top scoring East Asian automaker overall, laying down the challenge for its peers to catch up. The company is now also ahead of GM and Stellantis by a considerable margin.

In the Climate and Environment section, Geely made notable progress on battery circularity, where the company improved its score against all the indicators evaluating performance in this area. Geely is now also one of the few companies to disclose the quantity of low-carbon steel and aluminum used in specific vehicle models, although the company still trails behind many competitors on steel and aluminum decarbonization more broadly.

Geely improved its performance in all Human Rights fields, with the exception of Indigenous Peoples' Rights. This has enabled the company to move up from 12th to 11th position in the human rights ranking. The company achieved particularly high rates of improvement in the General and Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain subsections. In the General subsection, Geely has now improved its performance by a commendable 34 percentage points in just two years. Much of this progress is due to growing levels of transparency, often far outpacing some of its peers.

Despite these notable advancements, Geely's total score on human rights is 24%, leaving ample room for continued rapid improvement.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Has published new policies that specified the company's commitments and requirements for suppliers on deforestation and raw material supply chain sustainability.
- Has set carbon emissions reduction targets at Group Level and for specific subsidiaries/brands with detailed timelines. Has also established a commitment to reduce carbon emissions in new energy vehicle power batteries by 25% by 2025, but lacks equivalent targets for steel and aluminum supply chain decarbonization.
- Published a new Sustainable Raw Materials Policy that applies to high risk critical raw materials, including but going beyond conflict minerals. However, unlike other automakers, the company does not disclose information on its human rights and environmental due diligence efforts at the level of individual raw materials.
- One of the top-performing companies against the battery circularity indicators due to disclosing a detailed strategy and progress reporting on battery circularity and lifecycle emissions management, both at the company level (including strategies for Battery R&D, procurement, usage, recycling, production, scrap, and dismantling and recycling) and at the level of its battery subsidiary VREMT.
- Has a new Human Rights Policy Statement where the company commits to respecting human rights and labour rights.
- Has a strong human rights risk identification and assessment process which extends beyond Tier 1, and now names the salient human rights risks identified. Is also the only company to disclose data about potential new suppliers assessed against their human rights risk screening process and to publish the results of these assessments.
- One of only four automakers to consult with suppliers' employees and worker representatives on the company's final list of salient human rights issues.

Ranking
10

Comparison
↓
#7 in 2025

BEV Sales #	1,090,292
BEV Sales %	19%
Total Score	22%
Climate & Environment Score	20%
Human Rights Score	25%

SUMMARY

GM's performance has been one of the worst of the Leaderboard this year. The company failed to publish a sustainability report in 2025, a major regression on transparency and accountability. This caused the company to lose points against many indicators that require updated, year-on-year information.

This is especially unfortunate because GM did make limited progress in a small number of other areas this year, for example, by publishing a new Responsible Materials Policy and an updated Supplier Code of Conduct with new sustainability requirements for suppliers, as well as a new Supply Chain Due Diligence Policy. However, this limited progress was more than offset by GM's regressions.

As a result, GM's scores stagnated or regressed in all the Leaderboard subsections this year, causing the company's overall achievement level to drop by 1 percentage point, one of only four companies to experience a fall in their score this year. This has also caused the company to fall down the rankings from 7th to 10th position, and to be overtaken by Hyundai and Geely. In the human rights section, GM is now the worst performing company of all European and US automakers.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Did not publish a Sustainability Report in 2025, the only automaker not to do so.
- Published a new Responsible Materials Policy, which details specific goals, strategies and supplier expectations for critical minerals, rubber and leather. Additionally updated the company's Supplier Code of Conduct with additional requirements on biodiversity and deforestation.
- Has still not published a Battery Supply Chain Report, despite committing to do so in the company's Batteries Supply Chain Due Diligence Policy in order to communicate how GM is addressing impacts in its battery supply chain.
- A member of the First Movers Coalition sector groups on steel and aluminum but has so far not disclosed any tangible progress in this area.
- Published a new Supply Chain Due Diligence Policy which provides a good level of detail about the company's risk identification process, including best practices concerning regularity: the process is "ongoing" and relies on the use of "a variety of tools that provide continuous, real-time insights".
- Regressed on many of the human rights indicators that require updated, year-on-year information and data, such as identified human rights risks, and statistical information concerning monitoring practices and the operationalization of grievance mechanisms.
- One of the few companies that does not disclose any information about any activities undertaken to map its supply chain, and no longer discloses a list of smelters and refiners identified in its supply chain, having discontinued this practice in 2024.
- Continues to perform poorly on Indigenous Peoples' rights and workers' rights in the supply chain. Despite having commitments in these areas, the company fails to disclose tangible evidence of how they are being effectively operationalized and enforced in practice.

HONDA

Ranking	Comparison
15	=
	#15 in 2025

BEV Sales #	78,562
BEV Sales %	2%
Total Score	12%
Climate & Environment Score	8%
Human Rights Score	16%

SUMMARY

Honda achieved marginal improvements in the 2026 edition, improving its overall score by just 2 percentage points this year. As a result, the company remains near the bottom of the Leaderboard rankings.

However, Honda did make notable progress in the two General subsections of the Leaderboard, improving its score by an impressive 17 percentage points in the General climate and environment subsection and by 5 percentage points in the General human rights subsection. This indicates that Honda is beginning to take basic first steps to implement foundational supply chain decarbonization and due diligence processes.

However, these marginal improvements are still not being translated into more targeted action in the remaining issue-specific subsections. In the climate and environment section, Honda continues to score 0%, 1% and 2% on the steel, aluminum and batteries subsections. In the human rights section, Honda's scores actually decreased in the Responsible Sourcing and Workers' Rights subsections, by 2 percentage points and 3 percentage points respectively.

This indicates that, rather than building on the limited progress the company has made on overall supply chain sustainability and due diligence, Honda is instead shirking its responsibilities to address adverse human rights and environmental impacts across critical parts of its value chain.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- For the first time, disclosed a full disaggregation of its Scope 3 GHG emissions across all categories, including purchased products and services (Category 1).
- Established a clearer process to monitor supplier CO2 emissions reduction progress, including implementing a PDCA cycle, document request and on-site investigation. Has additionally adopted a visualization system to analyze supplier alignment with Honda's 2030 and 2050 targets.
- Continues to be the only company to disclose data on water usage by key suppliers (limited to tier 1 suppliers in Japan), through which the company demonstrates progress against targets to reduce water consumption within its supply chain.
- Disclosed minimal details on aluminum recycling processes, though this lacks detail and does not mention post-consumer scrap.
- Launched the ALTNA joint venture with Mitsubishi Corporation, focused on battery health monitoring and repurposing.
- Has yet to take some basic first steps on human rights due diligence, such as requiring suppliers to respect all human rights, disclosing salient supply chain human rights risks, and setting up a supply chain grievance mechanism.
- Strengthened its supply chain risk assessment process, including processes to identify high risk suppliers beyond Tier 1 and monitor supplier compliance.
- Still fares poorly on Responsible Transition Mineral Sourcing, with only limited commitments and supplier requirements in this area. Has disclosed some progress on supply chain mapping, but fails to disclose any information resulting from these efforts.
- Continues to be one of the poorest performing companies on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain, having failed to take basic first steps such as committing to respecting FPIC and requiring suppliers to respect the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work.

HYUNDAI

Ranking
9

Comparison
↑
#10 in 2025

BEV Sales #	256,282
BEV Sales %	9%
Total Score	23%
Climate & Environment Score	21%
Human Rights Score	25%

SUMMARY

Hyundai continues to make steady but slow progress on sustainable and equitable supply chains, with an overall improvement of 2 percentage points in the Leaderboard. Nevertheless, this improvement has allowed the company to move up one position in the Leaderboard to 9th place.

In the Climate and Environment section, Hyundai made notable progress in the battery subsection, increasing its score by six percentage points due to disclosing new initiatives on battery circularity, including a service agreement with Lithion in 2024 to advance EV battery recovery and recycling.

Despite this progress, Hyundai has failed to improve its performance on steel decarbonization for the third consecutive year. This continued inaction is particularly concerning as Hyundai is the only automaker with its own steelmaking subsidiary.

On human rights, Hyundai's progress has been slow overall. Most notably, the company established a new public commitment to respecting Indigenous Peoples' right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, finally moving it away from 0% achievement in this subsection.

In contrast, Hyundai made no progress at all on General Human Rights or Responsible Transition Minerals Sourcing. This too differs significantly from the considerable progress the company achieved last year in both these areas, representing a marked loss of momentum. All in all, the company only managed a disappointing 1 percentage point improvement on human rights, causing the company to drop from 9th to 10th place.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Appears to have dropped a previously disclosed supply chain emissions reduction target. The company's 2045 carbon neutrality target and roadmap is still in place, but the company no longer discloses a quantitative interim target for Scope 3 Category 1 emissions, representing a major regression.
- Has updated several environmental and supply chain sustainability policies, including those related to deforestation, but has not set any time-bound or commodity-specific targets on deforestation.
- Disclosed lifecycle assessments for a number of EV models, but these lack disaggregated data on the embodied GHG emissions from the steel, aluminium, and batteries used in the vehicles. This represents a missed opportunity compared to industry peers that have provided more granular LCA data.
- Still fails to require suppliers to respect all human rights, and lacks a supply chain grievance mechanism.
- Describes a robust two-stage human rights risk identification process, and discloses plans to expand its supply chain risk identification beyond Tier 1.
- Has a strong overall supply chain monitoring system, and continues to be one of very few companies to disclose data about the number of suppliers assessed and audited, together with their tiers, as well as the the number of corrective action plans issued.
- Despite ongoing supply chain risk assessment and mapping efforts, is yet to disclose concrete information about the results of these activities.
- Has taken first steps on Indigenous Peoples' Rights by now including an express commitment to FPIC in both its Human Rights Policy and new Supply Chain Sustainability Management Policy.
- Marginally improved its score on workers' rights in the supply chai by disclosing more information regarding identified salient supply chain workers' rights risks.

Ranking
11

Comparison
↑
#12 in 2025

BEV Sales #	241,500
BEV Sales %	12%
Total Score	21%
Climate & Environment Score	20%
Human Rights Score	23%

SUMMARY

For the second year running, Kia achieved the second largest overall score increase, jointly with Volkswagen, Tesla, and Volvo. The company consistently improved its performance across all the Leaderboard subsections except for Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain. This has enabled Kia to move up yet again by one place in the overall ranking, rising to 11th place. However, with a total overall achievement score of just 21%, the company is only actually meeting one fifth of the Leaderboard indicators, and has much to improve.

In the Climate and Environment section, Kia made the largest improvement in the General subsection, increasing its score by an impressive 21 percentage points. This was driven by clearer supplier requirements for emissions reduction and more detailed disclosure on supplier progress. Kia also improved its scores on mitigating water and deforestation risks in its supply chain by providing more granular information on the measures it has undertaken.

In contrast, its improvement in the steel, aluminium and battery subsections were marginal, with improvements limited solely to the circularity indicators. However, Kia remains a weak performer on steel and aluminium decarbonization.

While improving in most human rights subsections, Kia's rate of progress this year has not matched that of last year. Its moderate progress compared to other companies has caused the company to fall back by one place in the overall human rights ranking.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Disclosed the percentage of Tier 1 suppliers with GHG emissions targets for the first time, improving transparency on supply chain decarbonization efforts.
- The top-scoring automaker on battery repurposing, alongside Geely, disclosing detailed information on multiple battery repurposing initiatives, together with quantitative data on batteries collected for repair, reuse and remanufacturing.
- Has established a new, although vague and unambitious, target to use carbon-reduced steel (e.g., produced with electric arc furnaces) in mass-produced vehicles for the first time before 2030, as well as hydrogen-based steel "in the long-term," but does not disclose additional details.
- Discloses plans to use smelter certification and conduct on-site due diligence based on OECD Guidelines in its responsible minerals management plan for battery materials, but does not provide evidence of due diligence implementation for specific supply chains or contexts.
- Still does not require suppliers to respect all human rights, and lacks a supply chain grievance mechanism.
- Has a strong process for identifying high risk suppliers which extend beyond Tier 1, though the company fails to explain whether this also applies before signing sourcing contracts.
- Lost momentum on disclosure, still failing to publish details about the company's risk identification process and the identified salient human rights risks.
- Has begun to implement supply chain mapping to the point of extraction, but has not yet disclosed any concrete information emerging from these efforts.
- Has taken an important first step on Indigenous Peoples' Rights by expressly including risks to Indigenous Peoples' rights in the company's risk identification process. However, the company is yet to publicly commit to respecting UNDRIP and FPIC, and require this same commitment from suppliers.
- Did not make any progress on workers' rights in the supply chain.

Mercedes-Benz

Ranking
4

Comparison
↓
#3 in 2025

BEV Sales #	188,593
BEV Sales %	11%
Total Score	41%
Climate & Environment Score	39%
Human Rights Score	42%

SUMMARY

Although Mercedes continues to be one of the top performers of the Leaderboard, the company's overall progress has been disappointing this year. Despite achieving notable improvements in some areas, these gains were offset by regressions in others, causing Mercedes' score to drop in five of the eight sub-sections. As a result the company's overall score remains at 41% and it has fallen in the rankings by one position.

In the fossil-free and environmentally sustainable supply chains section, Mercedes took an important step forward in this year's edition by becoming the first automaker to disclose an EV lifecycle assessment that provides information on the specific quantities of low-carbon steel and aluminum used in the vehicle. However, regressions in other areas meant that Mercedes overall score in this section increased by just 1 percentage point.

The company regressed against indicators in all of the Human Rights sub-sections with the exception of Indigenous Peoples' Rights, causing the company's total human rights score to fall by 2 percentage points.

Despite this poor rate of progress, Mercedes remains among the top five highest scoring automakers in most of the human rights sub-sections, only sliding to sixth place on General Human Rights Due Diligence. The company also continues to demonstrate some of the industry's best practices in this area, and remains in second and first place on Indigenous Peoples' and Workers' Rights respectively.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Updated its Responsible Sourcing Standards in 2025, which now require suppliers to commit to CO2 targets specific to materials and components, but no longer mandate the setting of science-based climate targets. The new standards also no longer explicitly prohibit recruitment fees, and removed key information on measures to verify the implementation of corrective action plans.
- Stopped disclosing important data across both sections including the percentage of end-of-life batteries undergoing reuse or repurposing, the number of prospective suppliers assessed against sustainability standards and their tiers, and the number of grievances raised through the company's grievance mechanism.
- Disclosed an LCA for its CLA with EQ Technology EV model which specifies that the vehicle uses "39 kg of steel from electric arc furnaces, which are manufactured using electricity from renewable energy sources" and that "40% of the aluminum used in the CLA is produced in electrolysis plants using renewable energies."
- Remains among the top three performers on steel supply chain decarbonization, and continues to be the top scoring automaker for green steel offtake agreements specifically.
- Opened Europe's first integrated mechanical-hydrometallurgical battery recycling plant in Kuppenheim in 2024, capable of achieving a 96% recovery rate.
- Demonstrates some of the best practices on human rights risk assessment, with an agile process that responds to changes in circumstances, goes beyond Tier 1 and includes the pre-sourcing stage.
- Publishes a detailed Raw Materials Report that provides substantive descriptions of identified human rights and environmental risks across different supply chains, explains Mercedes' theory of change for addressing these risks, and includes concrete evidence of due diligence implementation in a range of contexts.
- Remains in the top two highest scoring automakers regarding Indigenous People's Rights, has strengthened requirements on suppliers in this area.
- Remains the top performer on workers' rights, demonstrating some of the best practices regarding worker participation in due diligence processes.

NISSAN

Ranking
13

Comparison
=
#13 in 2025

BEV Sales #	121,886
BEV Sales %	4%
Total Score	15%
Climate & Environment Score	13%
Human Rights Score	17%

SUMMARY

Nissan has performed better this year compared to last, with improvements in five out of the eight Leaderboard subsections. However, a significant drop in the Steel subsection has offset much of this progress, causing the company to achieve a small overall score improvement of 3 percentage points, and to remain in 13th place.

Nissan made notable progress in the General Climate and Environment subsection, increasing its score by 15 percentage points, due to establishing more specific requirements for suppliers to set science-based CO2 reduction targets and manage deforestation risks. Nissan also took initial steps on battery material supply chain environmental risk due diligence.

However, it is disappointing that Nissan did not improve its score at all on steel decarbonization. Nissan's score in this section was in fact downgraded due to the Leaderboard's updated definitions for lower-emission steel. The company had previously disclosed offtake agreements with Japanese steelmakers for "green steel" that uses highly problematic mass balance methodologies. As this steel is still produced in a coal-fired blast furnace, it was not considered an example of a production method that eliminates "as much coal as technically possible in the ironmaking and steelmaking processes" and so was no longer valid for points.

On the flipside, Nissan improved its scores in the General Human Rights Due Diligence and Responsible Minerals Sourcing subsections by a commendable 13 percentage points and 5 percentage points respectively, and has managed to move from 15th to 14th place in the human rights ladder. Despite these improvements, Nissan's overall human rights score is just 17%.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Updated and strengthened several environmental and supply chain policies, clarifying supplier requirements for science-based CO2 reduction targets and deforestation risk management.
- Identified natural rubber as a priority material for sustainability initiatives and joined the Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPSNR) in 2025.
- Made incremental improvement in aluminium circularity, with the disclosure of closed-loop recycling processes at Nissan Motor Kyushu and plants in North America and Europe, as well as examples of using post-consumer aluminium scrap to produce suspension parts.
- Provides only high-level disclosure of environmental risks for battery minerals, relying solely on third-party sources.
- Has begun to disclose information about processes to identify high risk suppliers and mitigate risks, identified supply chain human rights risks, and supplier monitoring systems.
- Does not offer a clear grievance channel for rightsholders along the supply chain.
- Has a new Responsible Materials Sourcing Policy which now requires suppliers to undertake due diligence in accordance with the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from CAHRAs in relation to "all minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas", to have a human rights due diligence process for all raw materials, and to establish traceability systems.
- Remains one of the industry laggards on Indigenous Peoples' Rights, with no action to move its performance from 0%.
- Has strengthened supplier requirements on Workers' Rights, but is yet to fully commit and require supplier compliance with the ILO's five fundamental principles and rights at work without qualifications, and discloses very little to demonstrate how the company is actually enforcing these requirements.

RENAULT

Ranking
7

Comparison
↑
#8 in 2025

BEV Sales #	242,080
BEV Sales %	12%
Total Score	31%
Climate & Environment Score	28%
Human Rights Score	35%

SUMMARY

Renault was one of the strongest performers this year, improving its score in 7 out of the 8 Leaderboard subsections, and achieving an overall score increase of 9 percentage points. Jointly with Geely and BYD, it is the top improver this year, and has managed to move up from 8th to 7th position in the overall ranking. If Renault continues improving at this rate, it could soon displace some of its competitors in the leading positions.

Renault's rate of improvement was lower in the Climate and Environment section, where the company was outpaced by Geely and BMW, both managing to overtake the company in 2026, pushing Renault down to 8th place. Although Renault continues to be among the top 3 in the fossil free and environmentally sustainable batteries subsection, and an industry leader on battery circularity specifically, this is disappointingly not the case for steel and aluminium circularity.

Renault made more substantial progress in the Human Rights section. With a 12 percentage point improvement overall, it is by far the top improver in this area. The company has also moved up the ranking in each of the Human Rights sub-sections, and is now among the top five scoring automakers on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Workers' Rights.

Overall, the company has managed to move 4 places up in the Human Rights ranking, now occupying the sixth place. Having overtaken competitors Volvo and Stellantis, Renault is no longer the European laggard. Nevertheless, with a total human rights score of 35%, the company still has a long way to go.

KEY TAKEAWAYS: CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

- Published a new Supplier Code of Conduct that now clearly requires respect for all human rights and requires suppliers of any minerals from CAHRAs to apply the OECD Due Diligence Guidance. However, the new SCoC also relaxes the mandatory requirement for suppliers to set science-based targets which had previously been mandated in the earlier Green Procurement Guidelines.
- Continues to demonstrate best practice in supplier engagement on emissions reductions: the company required 500 main suppliers to submit GHG emissions reduction targets to the SBTi for validation, with 35% already approved.
- Since September 2024, has required suppliers in seven high-emission material sectors, including steel, aluminium, and battery, to provide the carbon footprint of their parts and submit reduction proposals when participating in tenders.
- The only company to have set 2030 goals on both battery recycling and decarbonization: with a goal to recycle and reuse 80% of cobalt, lithium and nickel from its end-of-life batteries and another to reduce the carbon footprint of its batteries by up to 35% by 2030.
- The only company to have signed procurement agreements for low-carbon cobalt, nickel and lithium.
- Discloses more information regarding identified human rights risks, including detail as to where in the supply chain these risks occur., but does not yet disaggregate identified risks per relevant raw material, tier, and geographical location.
- Has become a member of both RMI and IRMA, but does not yet disclose evidence of directly engaging suppliers regarding IRMA auditing and due diligence implementation.
- Now explicitly requires suppliers to respect the UNDRIP and FPIC, and is one of only five companies to expressly include risks to FPIC and other Indigenous Peoples' rights in their risk assessment through to the point of extraction.

Ranking
18

Comparison
=
#18 in 2025

BEV Sales #	330,409
BEV Sales %	22%
Total Score	3%
Climate & Environment Score	4%
Human Rights Score	1%

SUMMARY

Despite another disappointing overall performance, SAIC has managed to progress by 9 percentage points on the General Fossil Free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains subsection. With this improvement, the company's overall score has increased by 2 percentage points. Nevertheless, the company remains the lowest-scoring automaker in the Leaderboard, scoring less than 10% across all Leaderboard subsections.

SAIC's improvement in the General climate and environment section was due to disclosing more precise requirements for its suppliers in areas such as reducing GHG emissions and environmental management. However, it remains one of the only three companies that score 0% on steel and aluminium supply chain decarbonization.

SAIC is the only company of the Leaderboard to score 0% in three of the four Human Rights subsections. This poor level of achievement stands in stark contrast with those of its national peers BYD and Geely, who have been consistently progressing year on year and outpaced most or many of their East Asian competitors. The margin between these companies and SAIC is broadening, with BYD moving ahead of SAIC from 5 to 15 percentage points, and Geely from 17 to 23 percentage points respectively.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Discloses new plans to calculate Scope 3 emissions but remains as one of only two automakers that have not disclosed their scope 3 emissions for purchased goods and services.
- Discloses a new supplier due diligence mechanism and a green supplier selection system, noting 100% coverage for mass-production part suppliers, but without providing further details.
- Discloses minimal details on some initiatives for battery repurposing, but none on battery recycling specifically.
- Still lacks basic public commitments on human rights and responsible sourcing, and supply chain management processes remain overly focused on risks and impacts to the company's bottom line.
- Mentions a Supplier Code of Conduct theoretically containing requirements regarding labour standards and other ethical issues, but this is not publicly available.

STELLANTIS

Ranking
12

Comparison
↓
#9 in 2025

BEV Sales #	352,574
BEV Sales %	7%
Total Score	21%
Climate & Environment Score	14%
Human Rights Score	29%

SUMMARY

Stellantis had a very bad year in the 2026 edition of the Leaderboard, regressing in five of the eight Leaderboard subsections, and experiencing a 2 percentage points drop in its overall score. This has caused the company to move back from 9th to 12th place in the overall ranking. Jointly with Toyota, the company is actually this year's worst performer in terms of year-on-year progress. Following a poor performance last year, the company continues in a downward spiral: it has now become the worst performing company among European and US automakers, and has also been overtaken by Hyundai, Kia and Geely.

Stellantis' regressions are disappointing, particularly because they include areas where Stellantis had previously set industry-leading best practices, such as the quantitative data the company was previously disclosing on end-of-life EV battery treatment, identified supplier non-conformances, and the issuance of corrective action plans.

In the Climate and Environment section, other than a marginal improvement of scores in the General subsection by 1 percentage point, Stellantis has regressed across steel, aluminium and battery subsections, largely due to reduced transparency. Stellantis' scores in the steel and aluminum subsections are particularly abysmal, reaching just 1% in both subsections, 25 percentage points lower than the average score of its European counterparts.

On Human Rights, Stellantis regressed in the General Human Rights Due Diligence and Responsible Sourcing subsections (the latter by 8 percentage points), stagnated on Workers' Rights, and moderately improved by 3 percentage points on Indigenous Peoples' Rights. This poor performance has caused the company to drop 2 percentage points on human rights overall, and to fall from 7th to 8th position in the human rights ranking. Unless the company significantly increases its efforts, it will soon find itself in the bottom half of the ranking.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Maintains strong performance on emissions reduction targets by suppliers, aiming for 95% of key suppliers to adopt Paris-aligned carbon-reduction targets by 2030, with over 84% already compliant.
- Regressed on recycled steel disclosure, with its latest sustainability report report omitting previously disclosed data on scrap usage, instead providing only aggregated secondary-material data.
- Operates robust 4R (remanufacturing, repair, reuse, recycle) processes for batteries, especially through its subsidiary SUSTAINera Valorauto, but no longer discloses granular end-of-life battery treatment data on collection volumes, repair/remanufacture/ recycling outcomes, or recycling rates by battery type.
- Remains one of the top five scoring companies in General Human Rights Due Diligence, with strong human rights commitments, supplier requirements, and due diligence processes that go beyond Tier 1 and includes mine sites.
- One of only four companies to not have a standalone responsible minerals policy or articulate clear commitments regarding mineral sourcing. Has also regressed on the level of disclosure regarding supply chain mapping, and does not publish an up-to-date list of smelters/refiners in the supply chain.
- Has published a new standalone Free Prior and Informed Consent Policy - the only automaker with such a policy - and is one of only three companies to actively engage with extractive companies regarding FPIC. However, disappointingly, the company's FPIC policy does not appear to apply to suppliers.
- One of only two companies to commit to a living wage and to explain how it calculates the living wage, though has yet to translate this commitment into express requirements on suppliers to pay a living wage.

TESLA

Ranking
1

Comparison
=
#1 in 2025

BEV Sales #	1,836,477
BEV Sales %	100%
Total Score	49%
Climate & Environment Score	50%
Human Rights Score	48%

SUMMARY

Tesla remains the top performing automaker of the Leaderboard for the second year running. Due to an overall score improvement of 6 percentage points, the company has actually managed to widen its lead from less than one percentage point ahead of Ford (in second place) in 2025 to over four percentage points in 2026.

Tesla's improvements this year were most pronounced in the climate and environment section, where the company achieved an overall score improvement of 10 percentage points. The company improved in three out of the four subsections, with particularly notable progress in the aluminum and batteries subsections.

Nonetheless, Tesla lags behind many peers on steel decarbonization and could also further improve its score in the battery subsection by providing more comprehensive information on its battery circularity efforts.

Tesla's performance on Human Rights has been more uneven, and Tesla remains behind Ford in all Human Rights areas. Tesla did achieve a notable 13 percentage point score improvement in the Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain subsection, after becoming the first automaker to disclose concrete examples of remedy provided to supply chain workers for violations of their rights. This progress stands in stark contrast to Tesla's terrible record on labor rights for its own operations

Tesla's performance in the other human rights subsection stagnated this year, leading to an overall score improvement of 3 percentage points, considerably less than some of its competitors.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The only automaker to disclose disaggregated scope 3 emissions from its steel, aluminum and battery supply chains, and continued to improve its battery supply chain disclosures with a detailed emissions breakdown for cell production and key materials, along with data coverage percentage for each category, setting a new best-practice standard for its peers.
- Introduced stricter supplier emissions requirements, mandating either an emissions monitoring plan or independent third-party verified product LCA.
- Signed a new procurement agreement for low-carbon aluminium in North America, with an emission intensity below 2kg of CO_2e per kg. However, did not make similar progress on steel decarbonization, where the company scores notably lower.
- One of the top-performing automakers for the indicators on environmental due diligence for battery minerals, disclosing detailed information about risks identified and measures implemented in relation to the company's nickel, lithium and cobalt supply chains. However, has made less progress than others on low-carbon battery mineral procurement.
- Remains one of the most transparent companies in relation to identified human rights risks, but still failing to disclose data to demonstrate the scale of due diligence efforts, such as number of suppliers assessed prior to signing contracts and non-conformances found, number of suppliers audited, etc.
- Discloses the most detailed results from its supply chain mapping efforts and one of only two companies to provide a sufficient level of description regarding direct mineral sourcing agreements
- Now articulates an express commitment to the UNDRIP in its human rights policy, but still fails to articulate a similar commitment on FPIC.
- The only company to provide concrete examples of remedy provided to supply chain workers for breaches to their rights, but is also one of only four companies to not have a collective agreement with their workers, and the only US company not to have one.

TOYOTA

Ranking	Comparison
16	↓ #14 in 2025

BEV Sales #	194,798
BEV Sales %	2%
Total Score	9%
Climate & Environment Score	7%
Human Rights Score	10%

SUMMARY

Toyota's performance in this year's Leaderboard has been very disappointing. While improving on two Climate and Environment subsections, the company has either achieved zero progress or seen its scores decrease in each of the remaining 6 subsections. In fact, in terms of year-on-year progress, Toyota is the worst performer overall in this year's edition, registering an overall score regression of 2 percentage points. As a result, Toyota has slid from 14th to 16th place in the Leaderboard.

In the Climate and Environment section, Toyota was able to improve its score in the General and Batteries subsections, due to setting a new 2030 GHG emissions reduction target, which includes the company's supply chain, and disclosing additional details on battery circularity efforts. Nonetheless, Toyota is one of only three companies, together with GAC and SAIC, that continues to score 0% on steel and aluminum decarbonization.

On human rights, Toyota failed to maintain the momentum gained last year. Instead of capitalising on its improvements, the company actually regressed in most human rights subsections, including a 14 percentage point drop on Workers' Rights, the second largest score drop of all companies in all the Leaderboard subsections. The company's overall human rights score fell by 6 percentage points as a result, the largest overall score drop for one of the Leaderboard sections this year.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Has set a long-term lifecycle carbon neutrality target for 2050 and a medium-term target for 2030, which now explicitly cover Scope 1, 2, and 3, including the company's supply chain emissions.
- Provided additional details on battery circularity, including the adoption of "Easy-to-Dismantle Design" to improve large battery recycling, being one of the few companies to disclose concrete examples of using design to improve the battery recycling process.
- Still fails on some of the basics for human rights due diligence: not requiring suppliers to respect human rights or workers' rights, or to undertake minimum due diligence regarding mineral sourcing; not implementing a supply chain grievance mechanism; and disclosing practically nothing in relation to human rights risk assessment processes and identified human rights risks. Additionally, the company provides no statistical data or evidence to substantiate the few basic human rights commitments or processes the company says it has.
- Has a supply chain mapping process in place, but reports no information emerging from this mapping. However, is one of the few automakers to provide minimal information about risks associated with conflict minerals, and to publish a partial list of smelters/refiners in the supply chain, including some information about RMI-conformance.
- In contrast to progress on conflict minerals, does not provide concrete evidence of human rights and environmental due diligence on battery minerals.
- Continues to score 0% on Indigenous Peoples' rights, consolidating its position as one of the worst laggards in this area.
- Made no progress on Workers' Rights, even though the company has yet to take the most basic of steps, and discloses less information this year concerning risks to workers' rights the company has identified in its supply chain.

Ranking	
5	

Comparison

=

#5 in 2025

BEV Sales #	923,977
BEV Sales %	11%
Total Score	39%
Climate & Environment Score	31%
Human Rights Score	46%

SUMMARY

For the second year running, Volkswagen's performance has been one of the strongest of the Leaderboard. The company has improved in six out of the eight subsections, increasing its overall score by 6 percentage points.

In the Climate and Environment section, Volkswagen notably improved in the aluminium subsection, with a score increase of 12 percentage points. VW earned additional points for disclosing a new low-carbon aluminium supply agreement and more details on its closed-loop systems for aluminium recycling. However, while the company has now signed multiple purchase agreements for low-carbon steel and aluminium, it lacks specific decarbonization targets, tailored strategies and detailed progress reporting on its efforts to decarbonize these two supply chains.

On human rights, Volkswagen's overall score has risen by 9 percentage points, the second largest score increase, together with BYD. Having been the top improver on human rights last year, the company is clearly on an upward trajectory. This continued strong rate of progress means that, although VW remains in 5th position overall, the company has been able to climb from 5th to 3rd position in the human rights ranking, further consolidating its leadership position in this area. Particularly noteworthy is the company's score improvement of 17 percentage points on Indigenous Peoples' Rights, due to stronger commitments and enhanced disclosures in this area.

An important source of VW's score improvements is the company's detailed Responsible Raw Materials Report, providing some of the most comprehensive information out of all 18 automakers about the company's environmental and human rights due diligence efforts across a range of supply chains and issues. This report is earning the company points across a number of indicators in both of the climate and environment and human rights sections.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Has a net carbon neutrality target for 2050, but its interim 2030 target only covers Scope 3 emissions from the use phase, excluding upstream/purchased goods.
- A leader on deforestation risk management, applying tailored, and contractually binding, sustainability specifications for new contracts across both leather and rubber.
- Has made notable progress in aluminum decarbonization, with Porsche partnering with Hydro to procure low-carbon aluminum. However, progress in the steel subsection has stagnated.
- Maintains a good level of transparency on due diligence efforts: is one of very few automakers to provide a good level of description regarding identified human rights risks, including in relation to conflict and transition minerals, and one of only two companies to disclose the number of suppliers assessed prior to signing contracts, including detail as to their tiers.
- Still failing to demonstrate the scale and results of supply chain monitoring efforts by disclosing data relating to supplier audits, non-performances, and Corrective Action Plans.
- Regressed on grievance disclosure, no longer providing a breakdown of supply chain grievances by type, tier, and geographical location, and information about their outcome. This was previously an area where VW was setting a best practice standard for its peers.
- Joins Mercedes and Ford as the only three automakers require IRMA auditing of mining suppliers, and to engage directly with extractive companies in this regard.
- Has made considerable progress on Indigenous Peoples' rights: now explicitly commits to FPIC in its new Responsible Raw Materials Policy; includes risks to FPIC and other Indigenous Peoples' rights in their risk identification process through to the extraction point; and discloses where in the supply chain risks to Indigenous Peoples' rights occur.
- One of a few companies to describe the ways in which supply chain workers are consulted on risks to their rights.

VOLVO

Ranking
3

Comparison
↑
#4 in 2025

BEV Sales #	162,132
BEV Sales %	23%
Total Score	44%
Climate & Environment Score	55%
Human Rights Score	32%

SUMMARY

Volvo has had another strong performance this year. The company has made progress in seven out of eight Leaderboard subsections, with a 6 percentage point improvement overall. Its steady improvement has allowed the company to move up one place in the Leaderboard, now ranking 3rd.

Volvo retains the top position in Climate and Environment, improving its score by 11 percentage points and achieving a total score more than double the average for this section. Volvo continues to show strong performance in steel and aluminum decarbonization where the company maintains an even larger lead over industry peers. Volvo is also the only company that has published disaggregated emissions data from steel, aluminum and batteries at the vehicle-model level through LCA reports.

Despite its leadership in steel and aluminium, Volvo lacks progress in the battery subsection, scoring less than half of the top three performers. The company's acquisition of NOVO Energy with the aim to develop sustainable batteries offers an opportunity for the company to improve its score in this subsection.

While also improving on human rights, this progress has been more modest. Volvo improved by an average of 3 percentage points on all human rights subsections except for Workers' Rights, where the company actually regressed by 6 percentage points. This means that, overall, the company only managed a 1 percentage point improvement, causing Volvo to slide down the ranking from 6th to 7th place. The company did however take initial steps on Indigenous Peoples' rights, although its score for this subsection is still only 8%.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Requires suppliers to set water reduction targets in its latest CoC for business partners, with plans to expand supply chain water management reporting within two years.
- Published new position papers on nature and biodiversity, sustainable materials and responsible sourcing, detailing the company's overall strategy on these issues.
- Discloses comprehensive and granular LCAs for its EVs, including disaggregated emissions data from steel, aluminum and batteries
- The only company to have set disaggregated targets to increase its use of both low-carbon steel and aluminum, and recycled steel and aluminum.
- Discloses disaggregated quantitative data on the implementation of its battery recycling, repair, reuse and repurposing activities.
- One of very few companies to provide a complete description of risk assessment processes, including consultation with external human rights experts, but is extremely limited in the level of detail disclosed concerning identified human rights risks, including those associated with conflict or transition minerals.
- Has already introduced a first battery passport in line with the EU Battery Regulation that can be accessed via an app and QR code and includes information on the country of origin of the cobalt, nickel, graphite, lithium, and mica in the vehicle's battery.
- Still failing to disclose a list of smelters/refiners in the supply chain, but discloses some information about smelter RMI conformance, and engages with extractive companies regarding IRMA auditing.
- Now requires suppliers to respect FPIC, and provides some minimal indication about what is expected. However, does not disclose evidence on how the company actually enforces these requirements.
- Remains one of only three automakers to commit to a living wage, and has now begun to explicitly require suppliers to pay a living wage.

Endnotes

1 Automakers' overall / supply chain-wide approaches are evaluated in the two "General" subsections of the Leaderboard. The average score across these two subsections has risen from 26% in 2023 to 43% in 2026.

2 The six issue-areas are evaluated under the following subsections: Fossil-free and Environmentally Sustainable Supply Chains: Steel, Aluminum, and Batteries; Human Rights & Responsible Sourcing: Transition minerals, Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Workers' Rights in the Supply Chain.

3 The average score across all 18 automakers for these six subsections was 18% in 2026.

4 The average score of the top 5 companies across these 6 subsections was 35% in 2026 (up from 22% in 2023). For the remaining 13 companies it was 11% (up from 7% in 2023

5 See box 2 on page 27 for a more detailed summary of the key shifts in practices identified in the 2026 Leaderboard

6 See box 3 on page 54 for an explanation of how the Lead the Charge defines impact in the context of the Leaderboard

7 See: Science-based Target Initiative (2018), Value Chain in the Value Chain: Best Practices in Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Management, https://sciencebasedtargets.org/resources/files/SBT_Value_Chain_Report-1.pdf

8 See: UN OHCHR (2011), Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf

9 See: Germanwatch (2022), An Examination Of Industry Standards In The Raw Materials Sector, https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/germanwatch_abstract_an_examination_of_industry_standards_in_the_raw_materials_sector_2022-09.pdf

10 See InfluenceMap, Automotive Climate Tool: https://automotive.influencemap.org

11 Note: a small modification was made to the methodology for calculating the best-in-class score this year, which is now calculated at the level of scores against the individual sub-indicators (previously it was only calculated at the level of the scores against whole indicators). However, even without this modification to the methodology, the overall best-in-class score still registered an increase this year.

12 These best-in-class scores have improved even without the methodology adjustment mentioned in the previous footnote.

13 See: SteelZero (2023), How demand signals work together to decarbonise the steel market: Overview of commonalities and distinctions between First Movers Coalition, SteelZero and the IDDI-Green Procurement Pledge

14 Principle 23(b), UNGPs.

15 Geely Supplier Code of Conduct http://www.geelyauto.com.hk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/20240425-Geely-Supplier-Code-of-Conduct-EN.pdf

16 Tesla Global Human Rights Policy (GHRP) https://www.tesla.com/legal/additional-resources#global-human-rights-policy

17 Tesla Supplier Code of Conduct https://digitalassets.tesla.com/tesla-contents/image/upload/tesla-supplier-code-of-conduct.pdf

18 Principle 11 and Commentary, UNGPs.

19 Renault Group, Universal Registration Document 2024, p. 211, https://assets.renaultgroup.com/uploads/2025/03/Renault_URD_2024_EN.pdf

20 Ford Integrated Sustainability and Financial Report (ISFR) 2025, p. 25, 94, 98 ("Enabled by the requirements of Germany's Supply Chain Due Diligence Act, we have strengthened our due diligence processes to identify, prevent, and mitigate risk at our suppliers"), https://corporate.ford.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en-us/documents/reports/2025-integrated-sustainability-and-financial-report.pdf

21 Geely ESG Report 2024, p. 76, http://www.geelyauto.com.hk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/e_2024-ESG-Report_20250428.pdf

22 KTNC Watch, "Asia's First Corporate Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence Bill Reintroduced in South Korea", 13 June 2025, https://ktncwatch.org/news/press-release-asias-first-corporate-human-rights-and-environmental-due-diligence

23 Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, "EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive: 'Omnibus' updates", 10 July 2025, https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/csddd-omnibus

24 CSDDD will only apply to companies with more than 5,000 employees and a net annual turnover above EUR 1.5 billion. This includes non-EU companies operating in the EU meeting this threshold for EU generated turnover. Reporting under CSRD will apply only to EU companies with more than 1,000 employees and more than EUR 450 million in net annual turnover. See, "Deal on Updated Sustainability Reporting and Due Diligence Rules, 9 December 2025, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20251208IPR32080/deal-on-updated-sustainability-reporting-and-due-diligence-rules

25 These limitations will need to be reconciled with the comprehensive requests for information that complying with laws such as the EU Battery and Deforestation Regulations and forthcoming Forced Labor Regulation will demand.

26 Instead of limiting due diligence to Tier 1, companies will take a risk-based approach along their "chain of activities".

27 See "Ombudsman finds maladministration in how Commission prepared urgent legislative proposals", 26 November 2025, https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/press-release/en/215989

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