



environment programme

finance initiative

Finance Initiative

Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles - Signatory
Reporting by **Growth Partners Capital**

2023

Introduction

Growth Partners Capital is a registered private equity firm in Portugal (Registration Number: 513793186), that was established in 2016. Currently managing four investment funds, Growth Partners Capital has successfully invested in 12 companies over various sectors in the last 3,5 years. Its investment strategy remains consistent across all funds, with a primary focus on SMEs and Mid-Caps with EBITDA levels over €2 million, sustainable debt ratios and ambitious growth plans. Moreover, Growth Partners Capital Iberian team plays a critical role in facilitating the expansion of portfolio companies into the Iberian market.

The most recent fund of Growth Partners Capital - Growth Blue FCR - is currently in the fundraising phase and the expectations are to conclude the first closing before July 2023. This fund, which has attracted the European Investment Bank as an anchor investor, centers its investment thesis on the "Blue Economy". Its primary objective is to invest in companies that promote the sustainable utilization of ocean resources for economic growth. Similar to other funds managed by Growth Partners Capital, the Growth Blue Fund is also focused on supporting the growth of SMEs and Mid-Caps in Portugal and in Europe.

Growth Partners Capital is signatory to the Sustainable Blue Economy Financing Principles (SBE FP) since November 2021. In this report, the company provides a summary of its progress in implementing the SBE FP in its investment activities under Growth Blue FCR.

Short and Long-term plans

Growth Blue is the fourth fund of Growth Partners Capital, being the first fund to be entirely focused on investing in companies operating in the Blue Economy sector.

The Fund is currently in the fundraising phase and has not initiated any activity yet. This fund was established in alignment with the Sustainable Blue Economy Principles, with a primary objective of responsibly deploying its capital while upholding the integrity and sustainability of the marine environment. Moreover, it seeks to allocate investments towards small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Mid-Caps that actively contribute to the preservation and promotion of biodiversity through their operations. Finally, an integral aim of the Growth Blue Fund, as well as Growth Partners Capital, is to facilitate knowledge sharing pertaining to the oceans by engaging with key stakeholders in the sector.

Following this, the Growth Blue Fund has outlined a plan for both the short and long term to ensure it achieves its objectives and meets its sustainability goals. The plan focuses on the following points:

1. **The Growth Blue Fund has a strategy focused on investing in small and medium-sized enterprises that promote activities related to the Blue Economy.** The definition of Blue Economy for us includes sustainable economic activities that take place in the marine environment or that use sea resources (other than oil and gas) as an input, as well as economic activities outside the marine environment that are involved in the production of goods or the provision of services that will contribute to those activities. Despite being agnostic in sectorial terms, Growth Blue will implement a holistic approach around the value chains of the some preferred areas of investment, namely Seafod; Offshore Energy; Blue Bioeconomy; and Technology. The fund aims to accelerate growth and value creation, aligning with the overarching objectives of Growth Partners Capital. This approach ultimately benefits stakeholders and contributes to the advancement of the

Blue Economy. Adding to that, to ensure investment diversity and promote economic progress, the Growth Blue Fund has set a maximum investment limit of 15% of its capital in any single company. This prudent measure enables the fund to distribute its resources across multiple companies, thereby supporting a broader range of initiatives and stimulating economic development.

2. **All investments within the Growth Blue Fund will undergo a rigorous risk analysis and compliance process.** Growth Partners Capital takes pride in its stringent compliance procedures and ensures that thorough processes are conducted to ensure the integrity of the invested companies and all counter-parties. These processes include conducting financial, environmental, legal, and other due diligence assessments, which help identify any environmental risks associated with the companies. Growth Partners Capital recognizes the importance of considering environmental factors and strives to ensure that all investments within the Growth Blue Fund adhere to responsible and sustainable practices. By implementing robust compliance and ESG measures, the fund aims to safeguard the interests of its investors and contribute to the preservation and protection of the marine environment within the Blue Economy.
3. **Investing Beyond Growth.** Growth Partners Capital believes that significant financial returns can be generated while prioritizing the sustainable development of companies. As part of this approach, Growth Partners Capital identifies the key environmental and social risks within the Fund's portfolio companies. Once these risks are identified, detailed plans are developed to mitigate potential situations that could impact the environment or society. In addition to risk mitigation, Growth Partners Capital also seeks to drive the sustainable development of its portfolio companies by exploring their potential.
4. **Growth Blue recognizes the importance of knowledge sharing and collaboration in the field of the Blue Economy.** Growth Partners Capital believes that only through knowledge and experience sharing can a path of growth be charted. In this regard, Growth Blue will leverage the experience and wide network of its Managing Partner, Miguel Herédia, to strengthen its relationship with key institutions, companies, investors and service providers. One of these institutions is the Oceano Azul Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans. Growth Blue will continue to work closely with the Foundation to exchange expertise and collaborate on initiatives that are aligned with their shared goals in promoting the Blue Economy. Miguel Herédia was the founder of Blue Bio Value Acceleration Program and is still a member of the Jury. Additionally, Growth Blue will engage in different clusters and association like Bluebio Alliance, a national network in Portugal that encompasses all subsectors of the marine bioresources value chain. This alliance includes raw material producers, research and development units, biotech SMEs, transformation centers, manufacturers, public sector entities, support companies, and product developers targeting the final consumer. By collaborating with the Bluebio Alliance or Fórum Oceano, Growth Blue aims to tap into a broad network of stakeholders in the marine areas, fostering knowledge exchange and facilitating partnerships for sustainable growth.

5. **Growth Blue Fund will ensure the provision of high-quality and transparent information.** Similar to other funds managed by Growth Partners Capital, Growth Blue follows rigorous procedures for information sharing. In this way, Growth Partners Capital will guarantee the sharing of information regarding the performance of portfolio companies, including their sustainability objectives. The Fund intends to set sustainability goals in all portfolio companies which will be measured and reported. This information sharing will occur directly with investors or through the company's website.

Alignment with Global Agreements

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (SDG 14 – life Below Water)

SDG 14, also known as "Life Below Water," is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations. It focuses on conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources for present and future generations.

In order to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 14 - Life Below Water, Growth Partners Capital, through the Growth Blue Fund, will undertake the following initiatives (non-exhaustive description):

- **Evaluate the impact of target companies:** Growth Blue will conduct an assessment and measure the impact of each company's activities on marine ecosystems.
- **Investment in companies that promote or contribute to conservation of marine ecosystems:** Growth Blue will promote investments in small and medium-sized enterprises that develop and implement "ocean-friendly" technologies, notably technologies that can contribute to reduce emissions, avoid ocean contamination and pollution and enhance the sustainable use of ocean resources.

Paris Climate Agreement

The Paris Climate Agreement is an international agreement on climate change that was adopted in December 2015. Its main objective is to limit the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

In order to contribute to the Paris Climate Agreement, Growth Partners Capital, through the Growth Blue Fund, will undertake the following initiatives (non-exhaustive description):

- **Identify and establish emission reduction targets:** Based on the assessment of companies' carbon footprint, Growth Blue will promote the establishment of targets to reduce emissions. These targets should be ambitious and aligned with the trajectory necessary to limit global temperature increase.
- **Promote energy efficiency in portfolio companies:** Within its portfolio, Growth Blue will seek opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of its invested companies. This can involve initiatives such as upgrading old equipment (more energy-consuming), using efficient lighting, proper insulation, among others. This will help reduce the energy consumption and associated emissions of the companies.

- **Foster the transition to renewable energy:** Growth Blue will actively contribute to the transition to clean energy solutions by investing in the value chain around offshore energy, with a primary focus on wind energy.
- **Promote sustainability in the supply chain:** Growth Blue will collaborate with suppliers of its portfolio companies to promote sustainable practices throughout the supply chain. This may include a preference for suppliers that adopt environmental measures, such as reducing carbon emissions in their own operations.
- **Monitor, measure and disclose progress:** Growth Blue will promote the establishment of a regular monitoring and measurement system to track the progress of implemented measures. This will ensure transparency and accountability in achieving emission reduction targets.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, also known as the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, is a global agreement aimed at halting the loss of biodiversity and promoting its sustainable use.

In order to contribute to The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, Growth Partners Capital, through the Growth Blue fund, will undertake the following initiatives (non-exhaustive description):

- **Evaluate the companies' impact on biodiversity:** Growth Blue, at the time of investment in companies, will promote an assessment of the impact of their activities on biodiversity, identifying key areas of concern and interactions with natural ecosystems.
- **Establish biodiversity conservation goals:** Based on the impact assessment, Growth Blue will promote and set specific and measurable goals for biodiversity conservation within its portfolio companies' operations. This may include protecting natural habitats, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, reducing the use of natural resources, among others.
- **Collaborate with stakeholders:** Growth Blue will seek to collaborate with non-governmental organizations and associations to share knowledge, resources, and best practices in biodiversity conservation.

Actions taken during the reporting period

Growth Blue Fund is not active yet and for that reason doesn't have any concrete actions to report other than its commitment to actively contribute to a more sustainable ocean via its investment policy and portfolio management.