Our projects advance understanding of business impact on environment, society and economy

100 human rights indicators of 98 big businesses
The inaugural Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (CHRB) report, released last week, focuses on 98 publicly traded firms from three industries – agricultural products/food and beverage, apparel, and extractives. Firms are benchmarked on indicators such as governance and policies, transparency, human rights due diligence, and responses to serious allegations. The report highlights a number of leading companies in each industry: Marks and Spencer, BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto all scored in the 60-69% range, while Nestlé, Unilever and Adidas follow just behind with scores between 50-59%. However, these leaders are few in number. McDonalds, Walmart, and Yum! Brands are among the firms that are ranked below the 20% band range, according to the article on edie.net. The report is here.

Sifting through the Anthropocene
Though quite new, the Anthropocene concept has rapidly leapt the bounds of earth-systems science and emerged as a new paradigm for understanding our place in the world by social scientists, humanities scholars, politicians, activists, journalists, educators and artists. This has thrown up some thorny questions. When did the Anthropocene begin? What are the implications for science and policy? Could there be a “good Anthropocene”? In this PICS-hosted public talk at UVic on March 28, geologist James Syvitski will explore these prickly topics. It’s FREE, but please register.

Undergrad Mark Speakman’s research award
"When I think of Foxconn, I think of working conditions so horrific that employees would rather jump out of factory windows than work another grueling shift,” wrote BCom student Mark Speakman in his submission to the Jamie Cassels Undergraduate Research Awards. Speakman went on to research the electronics manufacturer’s labour practices in the Czech Republic, where he was attending university on an academic exchange term. You can learn more about his research project on the JCURA webpage.

Pfizer and the SDGs
Pfizer is a publicly traded pharmaceutical and health-care product company. Its purpose, according to its annual report, is “to bring innovative therapies to patients that significantly improve their lives.” The firm is committed to all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, although Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-Being – is the closest fit. They call their approach to global health Entrepreneurship for Good, and throughout the annual report, they’ve linked the SDG icons to their initiatives.