

Sustainable Ecosystem Development Workshop

Sustainable Innovation Practices Toolkit



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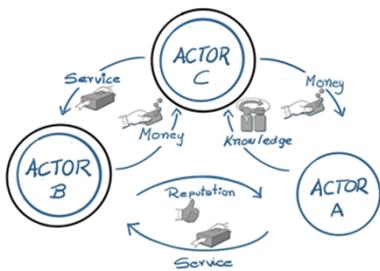
Sustainable Innovation Practices Toolkit

Created by Henning Breuer and Kiril Ivanov from HMKW in 2024 based on results from the IMPACT project (www.impact-project.site), edited by Kiril Ivanov and Henning Breuer, illustrations by Milagros Villalta Begazo



Thanks to our project partners

Sustainable Ecosystem Development Workshop

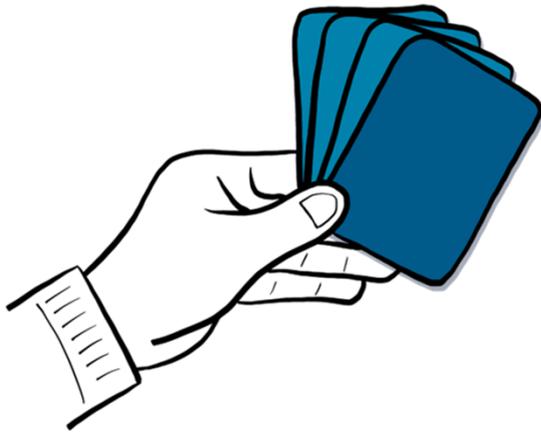


Sustainable Ecosystem Development Workshop

Many companies don't leverage their potential to enhance their business ecosystem through values-based partnerships and sustainability-oriented services. Based on shared commitments and striving for ecological, social and economic outcomes, sustainable ecosystems provide mutual benefits for interdependent actors and stakeholders. They foster cooperation and exchange of resources, knowledge, and technologies to effectively tackle grand challenges. Commitment to a mutually desirable vision and common ground of understanding are basic preconditions to foster collaboration and back-casting of immediate measures that can lead towards future sustainability-oriented ecosystems.

How might we envision new business and service opportunities for a sustainability-oriented business ecosystem?

These Cards



These Cards

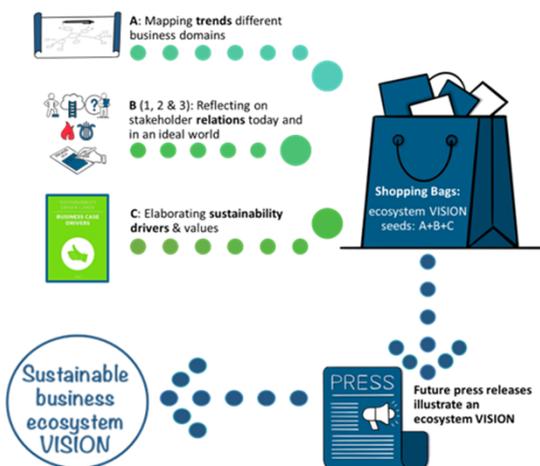
These 16 cards provide workshop facilitators with a stepwise approach and materials to conduct a full-day workshop on sustainable ecosystem development with usually 4-12 participants. The cards can be used to prepare a detailed storyboard of the workflow or serve as a reminder of each step for facilitators.

Facilitators typically stem from an organization intending to grow its ecosystems or to become an ecosystem orchestrator, or they work as consultants for (potential) business partners seeking to improve their collaboration. In order to facilitate the workshop, they should be familiar with basic moderation techniques and guidelines such as brainwriting rules.

The workshop format was originally designed for in-person settings, but it can also be conducted online with a collaborative workspace. For more tools, templates and workshop slides see www.uxberlin.com/workshops.



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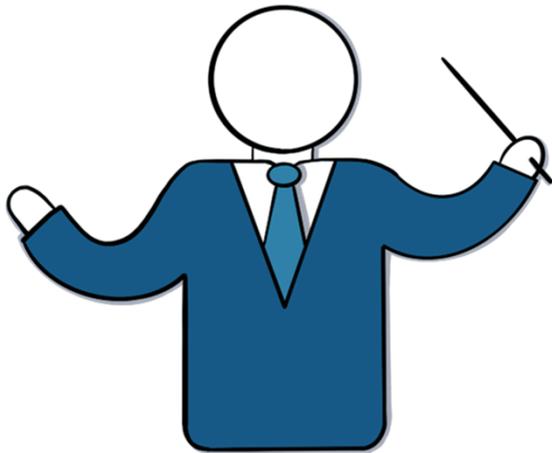
Basic approach

In a preparatory scoping session, review the core values of your organisation, identify key stakeholders and roles to enhance the current business ecosystem, and set a time horizon. Then envision a future, sustainability-oriented ecosystem with internal staff and (if possible) stakeholder representatives in **eight steps**:

1. Map trends concerning selected business areas (A).
2. Brainwrite prouds, sorries and untapped potentials in relation to key stakeholders (B1).
3. Envision how stakeholder relationships can lead to extreme negative and positive outcomes (B2).
4. Write headlines about your stakeholder relationships in an ideal or dystopian future (B3)
5. Use sustainability driver cards to brainwrite ideas for your firm's role within a sustainable ecosystem (C).
6. Use "Shopping Bags" to combine compatible elements (from A, B3 and C) into vision seeds.
7. Use a "Future Press Releases" to turn vision seeds into tangible components of an ecosystem vision.
8. Combine "Future Press Releases" into a single vision.



Brainwriting Rules



Brainwriting Rules*

- Encourage your team to come up with ideas that are over-the-top or seem even far-fetched – but stay focused.
- Don't discard ideas too early: Quantity prevails above quality in the idea-collecting phase.
- Put each idea on a separate sticky note! Participants handwriting should be legible, the content compact and self-explanatory so that it's clearly comprehensible when you return to it.
- Invite team members to work alone and collect their own ideas on sticky notes. Follow up by reading out all contributions and sticking them in the idea pool.
- Build on the ideas of other team members to generate and develop further ideas.
- Each word counts equally. No hierarchy should exist among the participants during the session.

*copied from the Business Innovation Kit
(www.uxberlin.com/business-innovation-kit)



Step 2: Prouds, Sorries and Untapped Potentials (B1)



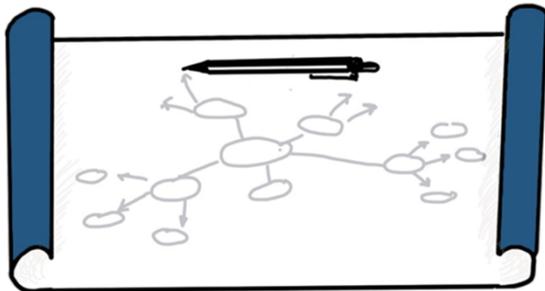
Step 2: Prouds, Sorries and Untapped Potentials (B1)

- Arrange a table grid on the wall with the key stakeholders on the top row and three questions in the first column:
 1. **Prouds:** "What do we feel proud of concerning the present-day relations with this stakeholder group?"
 2. **Untapped potentials:** "What potentials remain untapped?"
 3. **Sorries:** "What do we feel sorry about?"
- Participants take 3 minutes for each question and brainwrite their answers on post-its in relation to the key stakeholder groups.
- After each question, they share their notes and place their post-its in the table boxes.
- Participants take ownership for the current status of stakeholder relations and better understand the affective components of their values and attitudes towards key stakeholders.

 Time: 25 min



Step 1: Mind Map of Trends, Problems, Solutions and Concerns (A)



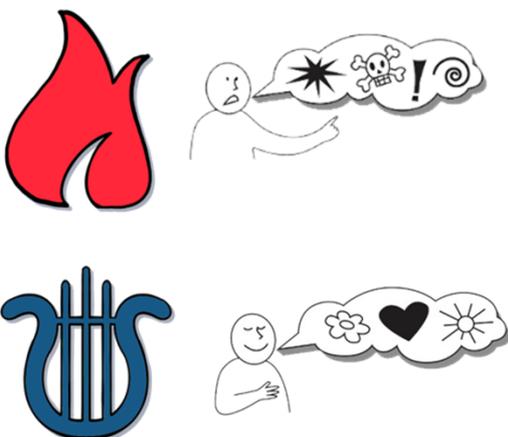
Step 1: Mind Map (A)

- Write 1 to 3 relevant business or market domains into the centre of your mind map.
- Participants think for 3 minutes about relevant trends and write each trend with a high-level title and a short explanation on post-its.
- The person who names the trend says where it goes on the map. The facilitator arranges the post-its on the mind map.
- At the end, participants distribute voting dots to mark the most relevant trends. This outlines the trends with highest impact on ecosystem development.
- **Remember:**
 - All trends are valid
 - Opposing trends are OK
 - Illustrate trends with examples

 Time: 45 min



Step 3: Heaven & Hell: Extreme Outcomes of Stakeholder Relations (B2)



Step 3: Heaven & Hell: (B2)

- Arrange a table grid on the wall with the key stakeholders on the top row and two questions in the first column:
 1. **Hell:** "How could this relationship worsen? how could we make it worse?"
 2. **Heaven:** "What would improve this relationship beyond believe? How might a radical, ideal solution to any persisting problems look like?"
- Participants take 3 minutes for each question and brainwrite their answers on post-its in relation to the key stakeholder groups.
- After each question, they share their input in the group and place their post-its in the table boxes.
- This activity helps to to elicit deep concerns, fear and far-reaching hopes with respect to key stakeholder relationships.

 Time: 20 min



Step 4: Headlines from an Ideal or Dystopian Future (B3)

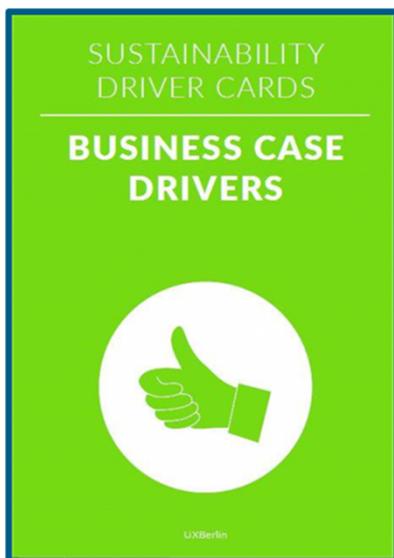


Step 4: Headlines from an Ideal or Dystopian Future (B3)

- Provide participants with mock front pages of daily newspapers or tabloids with an empty space for them to write a headline from the future.
- Each participant takes 5 minutes to select at least two from the heaven or hell items and write a future headline about it.
- This activity puts the outcomes of the previous two steps in a nutshell and helps participants to outline the main pathways for ecosystem development.
- It also helps to reflect on how stakeholder relations can impact the company's reputation in the long run.

Time: 10 min

Step 5: Sustainability-related Business Case Drivers for Ideating Ecosystem Contributions (C)

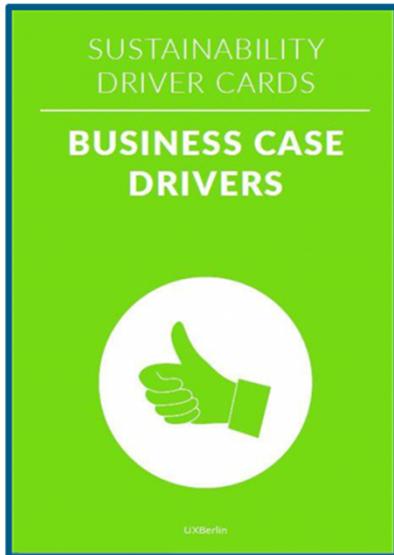


Step 5: Sustainability-related Business Case Drivers (C)

Business case driver	Description
Costs	Reduce the costs of your own business operations, or the costs incurred for your partners, customers, and other stakeholders
Risks	Proactively anticipate, control, and reduce ecological and/or social risks. This includes financial risks associated to costs of potential proxy wars or prosecution
Revenues	Increase sales volumes and tap new revenue sources with more sustainable products and services
Efficiency	Increase your operational efficiency by harvesting 'low hanging fruits' and substantial improvements of your core processes
Reputation	Improve your reputation and brand value and improve the positioning of your products and services through ecological and social business practices and offerings
Workforce	Increase your attractiveness as an ecologically and socially responsible employer. Motivate employees to engage in real customer relationships
Innovation	Take sustainability-related goals and metrics as a foundation and evaluation criteria to initiate and manage innovation
Ecosystem	Contribute to, and profit from, your wider business ecosystem, for instance by exploring new forms of cooperation based on shared values

*Breuer, H. & Lüdeke-Freund, F. (2018). Values-Based Business Model Innovation: A Toolkit. In: Moratis, L., Mellissen, F. & Idowu, S.O. (Eds.). Sustainable Business Models, pp. 395-416. Springer.

Step 5: Sustainability-related Business Case Drivers for Ideating Ecosystem Contributions (C)



Step 5: Sustainability-related Business Case Drivers (C)

- Eight “Sustainability Driver Cards”* prompt ideas for business model development.
- Participants select and read one of the eight Sustainability Driver Cards (costs, risks, revenues, efficiency, reputation, workforce, innovation and ecosystem).
- Each specifies a how-might-we question concerning the selected sustainability driver and in relation to one of the business domains at the centre of the mind map (A).
- Then, each writes potential solutions to the how-might-we question that can improve the firm’s business model sustainability within a future ecosystem.
- Participants share their ideas at the end.
- This activity helps to define how the focal firm will contribute within a future sustainable ecosystem.

*Breuer, H. & Lüdeke-Freund, F. (2018). *Values-Based Business Model Innovation: A Toolkit*. In: Moratis, L., Melissen, F. & Idowu, S.O. (Eds.). *Sustainable Business Models*, pp. 395-416. Springer.

 Time: 30 min



Step 6: Shopping Bags for Combining Compatible Elements Into Vision Seeds



Step 6: Shopping Bags

- Individual participants combine compatible elements from the A, B3 and C lists (steps 1, 4 and 5) into “Shopping Bags”.
- At least one “Shopping Bag” should be dedicated for each key stakeholder relation.
- However, participants should not create too many combinations to keep the process manageable.
- Participants share their ideas at the end.
- This activity helps to imagine different possible and desirable futures, while covering an adequate number of stakeholder perspectives and sorting out unlikely combinations of factors that can impact the development of a sustainable business ecosystem.

 Time: 30 min



Step 7: Future Press Releases for Generating Tangible Vision Components



Step 7: Future Press Releases

- Participants work in groups of 2 to describe one raw scenario as a “Future Press Release” for each of their shopping bags.
- They are provided with a template that mimics a future news article from the media or the corporate intranet and has empty fields to answer four questions:
 1. *What are we doing in the future?*
 2. *What was a barrier that we had to overcome?*
 3. *How we did it?*
 4. *Thanks to which one of our corporate values?*
- Participants share their ideas at the end.
- “Future Press Releases” help to stimulate discussion and to derive strategic measures to be taken for each raw scenario.

 Time: 30 min



Example (Steps 1 To 7): Envisioning a Sustainable Business Ecosystem of an Inspection Company



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- Challenge: “How might we leverage external interfaces to drive sustainability-oriented innovation?” in inspection and certification business and in relation to selected stakeholder groups (private and business clients, manufacturers, authorities)
- Exercise A: E.g. sustainability becomes a driver of cross selling (e.g. of consultancy services to B2B clients), certification of green mobility
- Exercise B3: E.g. inspection company manages data from manufacturers & service providers
- Exercise C: How might we create *new revenues* by monitoring environmental impact across the vehicle lifecycle? E.g. utilize new sensors and data to estimate the impact & sell info to OEMs, private customers, insurers, governments; enable green pricing for mobility providers.
- Future Press Release for 2030: Unique data provided by Inspection Company empowers manufacturers & service providers to create more durable, safe and sustainable offerings.



Step 8: Sustainable Business Ecosystem VISION Storytelling

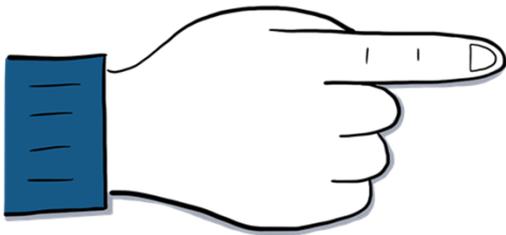


Step 8: Sustainable Business Ecosystem VISION Storytelling

- In a final activity, the facilitator and the participants combine all raw scenarios (future press releases) into a single vision.
- They map relations between the raw scenarios and envision the new ecosystem.
- Discuss how the key stakeholders cooperate to create potential ecological, social and economic benefits in the future ecosystem.
- Creatively reuse any previous outputs.
- Assessing multiple trends and potential ecosystem developments helps to derive desirable futures and back-cast strategic and policy measures for the present.
- As a follow-up, all scenarios need to be elaborated upon, refined and strategically interpreted to handle the complexity. Audio recording of the final discussion can aid the documentation of results.

 Time: 30 min

Follow-up



How to Follow-up

- The major result of the workshop are new options to advance your business ecosystem. You need this overview before you can take the strategic decision which options to pursue. However, the workshop participants should be able to identify: Who can take this decision, where and when? Which information would be needed to inform the decision-making process and people?
- You can start gathering this information from the participants, asking for potential challenges and barriers in each option to expand the ecosystem, and for expectable costs and benefits of the expansion in order to prepare comparative assessment.
- You can also further elaborate upon the vision: Describe a normative future scenario narratively specifying implications and anticipating experiences when the vision is reached, thereby also probing its plausibility. Once the vision is clear, you can back-cast measures that need to be taken in order to reach the desired stage.