A Road map for Vision 2050

An implementation guide for executing the Vision 2050 report

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About this guide

With the desire to contribute to a faster transition towards a more sustainable world, this implementation guide (IG) has been created to help companies integrate sustainability into their organizational culture. It does this by providing strategic planning guidance so that they can reach their Vision 2050 goals and become leaders in sustainability.

Our purpose was to find out what has been demonstrated to be successful in moving a company towards sustainability in an effort to create a comprehensive process that gathers those best approaches and integrates them with the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) [1].

The Roadmap to Vision 2050 Implementation Guide is the outcome of a Master's thesis research project for the Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability program at the Blekinge Institute of Technology in Karlskrona, Sweden.

Apart from the literature review, this guide is informed by the input of 27 sustainability experts and practitioners including Bob Willard –the author of the book The New Sustainability Advantage and other resources for sustainability champions–, experts from three of the "Big 5" professional services firms, sustainability managers representing 14 leading multinational companies members of WBCSD (authors of the Vision 2050 report), and the Vision 2050 Report core team members.

Full references and citations are included in the full thesis report A Strategic Sustainable Development Approach for Vision 2050. This research has been granted with the Sparbanksstiftelsen Kronan Award 2011 for "achievements that have excellent prospects of resulting in corporate development, product development, or creation of new business."

You will find the thesis report (and the first version of this implementation guide) here: http://bit.ly/IGVision2050

We hope that you will find this Roadmap to Vision 2050 helpful in your work. Should you have any feedback or comments, please feel free to contact us at:
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[1] *Please find [x] further explanations in the Glossary section of this Implementation Guide.*

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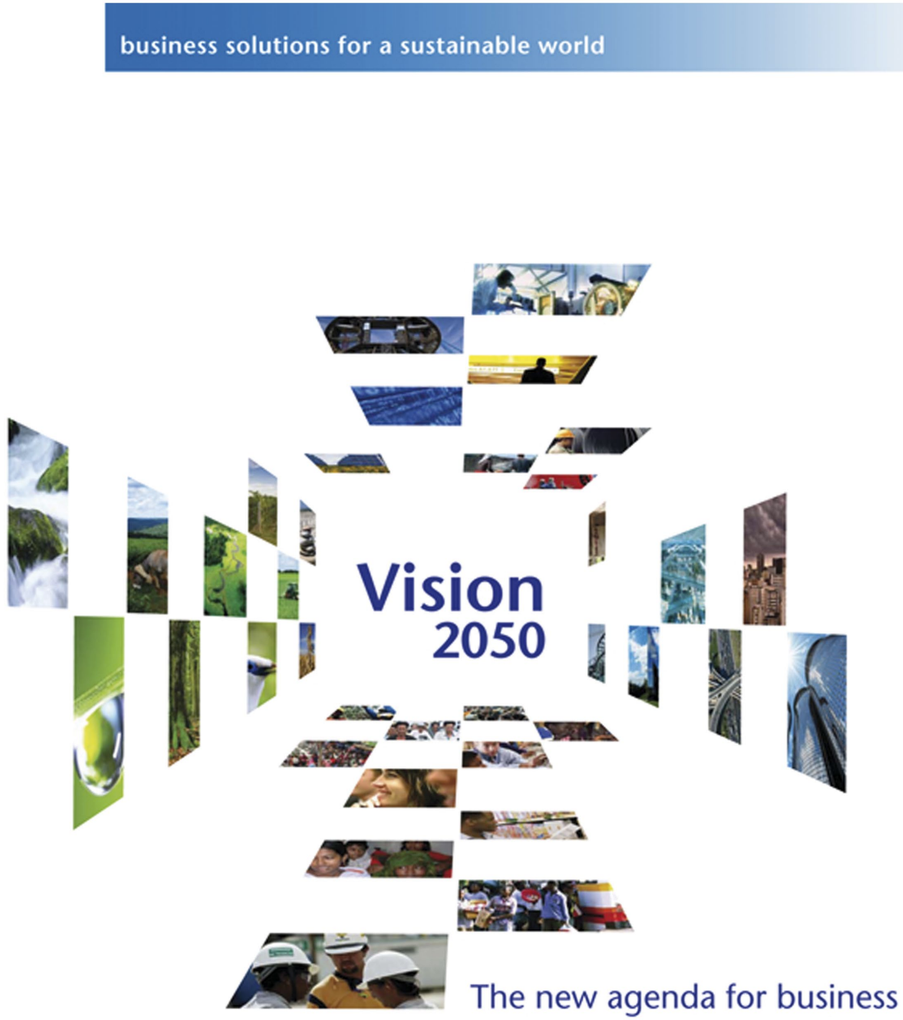


(The Vision 2050 report´s front cover. Source WBCSD)

"9 billion people living well and within the limits of the planet"

From business as usual to a sustainable world in 2050.

The Vision 2050 report

Introduction

In February 2010, 29 of the world´s biggest companies, all members of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), came together to present a holistic view of what the path to a sustainable world could look like. They realized that business-as-usual can not get us to sustainability or secure economic prosperity; that can only be achieved through radical change, starting now.

They understood the need for business leadership as a catalyst for sustainable development, and so they created the Vision 2050 report. The report is the product of 18 months of work and it is a call to action from business to business, and to society as a whole.

Vision 2050 outlines a pathway to reach a sustainable global society by 2050, in which the earth's 9 billion people live well and within the limits of the planet. The pathway is broken up into 9 elements: People's Values, Human Development, Economy, Agriculture, Forests, Energy and Power, Buildings, Mobility and Materials. Each element consists of two time frames: "Turbulent Teens" from now until 2020, and "Transformation Time" from 2020 to 2050. These time frames provide companies with an understanding of the magnitude of the challenge and present the necessary achievements –the "must haves" needed in order to attain the vision.

With this great challenge comes great opportunity, as the Vision 2050 report states "Investment in infrastructure, technology and human services driven by sustainability and resource efficiency could reach USD 3-10 trillion per annum in 2050 creating new opportunities for business to thrive and grow."

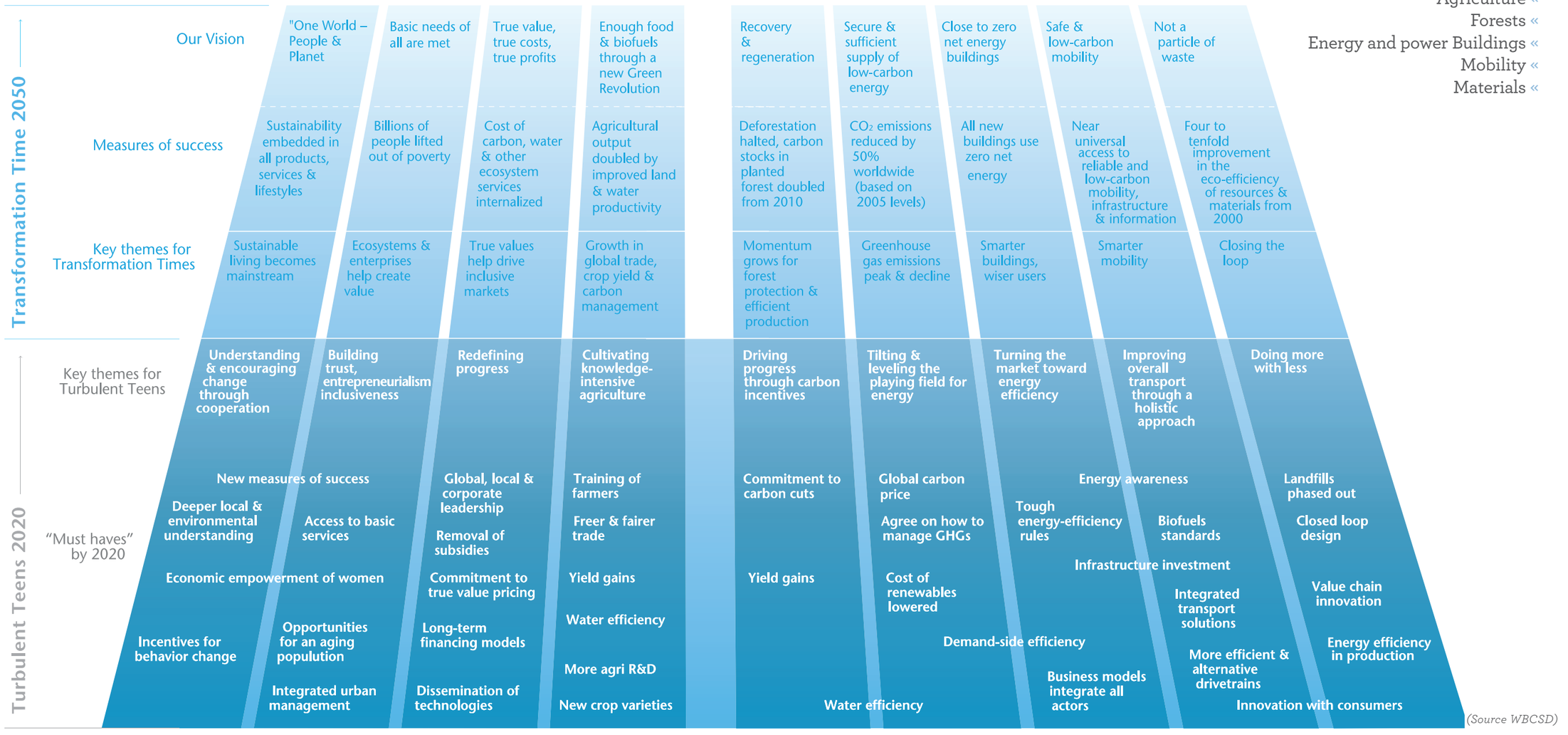
Companies who answer the call of the report can improve the value they provide to the communities they serve and the environment they depend upon, while maintaining or increasing their financial value by opening themselves up to new markets and lessening their risks.

Vision 2050's aim is to have companies and society acknowledge some tough questions, the main one being **"How do we get to 2050 with 9 billion people living well within the limits of the planet?" The report sets the platform to keep this dialogue going, challenging companies to rethink their business model, and break from growth-by-depletion.**

Business-as-usual is sending us on a trajectory to consume 2.3 planet's worth of ecological resources in 2050. The pathway outlined will enable us to live within the limits of one planet limiting the destruction of key ecosystem services – including climate, forest, fisheries and farmlands – and easing human hardship.

The pathway and its nine elements that lead to Vision 2050.

People's Values «
Human Development «
Economy «
Agriculture «
Forests «
Energy and power Buildings «
Mobility «
Materials «



(Source WBCSD)

Why implement a sustainability strategy?

Society has already reached the Earth's carrying capacity and facing its consequent effects including climate change (weather conditions, droughts, floods)-, soil degradation and air pollution.

These occurrences affect not only the earth's socio-ecological systems now and for future generations, it also affects your company's bottom line today – impacting the resources you depend on throughout your supply chain.

Fortunately we still have time and resources to slow down these devastating occurrences and possibly reverse them. By strategically planning towards sustainability, your company not only assists in contributing towards a stable, livable planet, it will ensure greater availability and stability of your company's resources.

"The question of reaching sustainability is not about if we will have enough energy, enough food, or other tangible resources - those we have. The question is: will there be enough leaders in time?" (Dr. Göran Broman and Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt founders of the MSLS programme).*

Initiatives such as the Vision 2050 report stress the urgency of the situation. As the report establishes, the movement towards sustainability must come from all levels of society: consumers, governments, and businesses. Businesses have the capacity, the means, the influence and the size to make society´s transition towards sustainability happen effectively and fast.

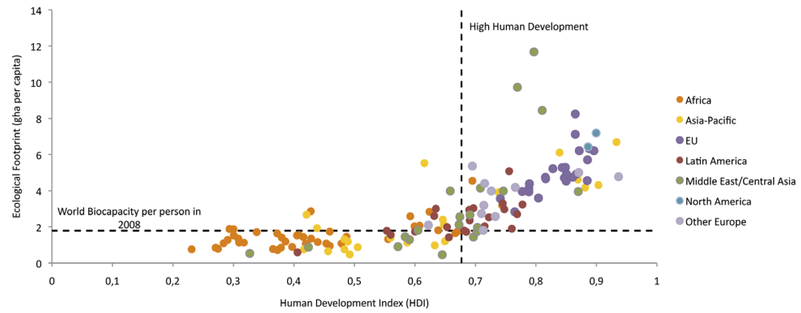
Moving towards sustainability is more than taking on the challenge because it's the right thing to do; it is an excellent business opportunity. In fact, Vision 2050 points to some US$ 0.5–1.5 trillion per annum (at constant 2008 prices) in sustainability-related global business opportunities by 2020 **.

By embracing this move, your company performance will reap the direct benefits that are in it, including increased cost savings and risk mitigation; as well as ease in recruiting top talent and more productivity because your values and mission resonate with them see Bob Willard's Business Case for Sustainability (Willard, 2002).

"Agree: The more socially responsible my company becomes, the more motivated and loyal I become as an employee" (GlobeScan, CSR Monitor 2009).

** Master's for Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability, Blekinge Insitute of Technology. Dr. Karl Henrik Robert is the founder of The Natural Step. Blue Planet 2012 prize winner.*

*** According to an analysis conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers the business value could be US $0.5-1.5 trillion per annum by 2020 at constant 2008 prices (WBCSD, 2010).*



HDI-Footprint graph Source: Global Footprint Network, Footprint Atlas 2011, www.footprintnetwork.org

A radical but feasible transformation of global markets, governance and infrastructure is required, based on a new definition of growth and progress: moving from material flows goals -resources depletion- to achieving real human development -satisfying human needs- (Manfred 1991), within the limits of the planet.

Why should your company use this Guide to develop a sustainability strategy?

This Implementation Guide outlines a process for becoming a leader in sustainability that is informed by what has proven to lead to success for many companies -from a research conducted*.

Its science-based foundation in the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD)[4], ensures a holistic and multidisciplinary approach for planning your strategy. The use of Backcasting in it helps to define a solid path toward success -many organizations have already benefitted from it.

It provides a comprehensive approach to planning that makes the sustainability challenge an exciting and rewarding journey of continual improvement for the entire company and its stakeholders.

The Guide is an iterative 6-step process designed to adapt to each company's individual situation; there is no 'one size fits all' approach to corporate sustainability.

As mentioned before, there is a clear business case for sustainability. This Guide brings about with a focus on empowering its social force. Doing so, it will allow your company to thrive as a cohesive system with employees who have been empowered by taking part in evolving the sustainability plan, and therefore they will strive towards a shared, meaningful purpose. It helps in creating such conditions for your company by introducing a new way of working based on valuing and doing what matters, and engaging people with participatory processes.

"Highly engaged employees can improve business performance by up to 30%" (Hay Group website, May 2009).

It is our hope that this Guide helps your organization in its pursuit to develop a sustainability strategy as you strive to become a sustainability leader. Enjoy your journey!

** The research was informed by 14 multinational companies -all members of WBCSD and authors of the Vision 2050 report-, the Vision 2050 Report core team members, and experts from three of the Big Five professional services firms.*

"As we climb mount sustainability... we are doing better than ever on bottom line business. This is not at the cost of social or ecological systems, but at the cost of our competitors who still haven't got it"

Ray Anderson, President, founder and CEO, Interface.Inc, 2007.

Company´s Vision : purpose, values, stretcht goals

The power of a shared vision

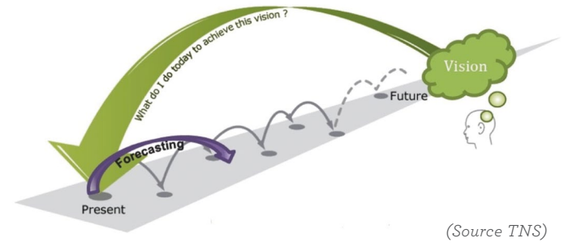
The successful result of the Vision 2050 report lies in the collaborative, forward looking approach used for its creation; it brought people together to build a vision far into the future, backcast from that vision and develop a list of actions that need to be taken (the 'must haves') in order to reach that vision.

This guide outlines a process that leads companies to replicate the same approach. As companies develop their own long term vision towards integrating sustainability into their operations and culture, they should first identify what role they can play in Vision 2050, their contribution to a sustainable society, and start building the vision from there.

A vision is a powerful message, a vivid description of how a company envisions itself in a sustainable and thriving society; the vision is about answering the question "What does success look like?" It encompasses the company´s purpose (its reason for existing), its values (what it represents) and its desired future achievements -stretch goals-, (ideal goals, perhaps some unachievable).

The vision gives direction for setting strategic goals, becoming the 'North Star' towards which all efforts aim for, this is to backcast from the vision.

Moving a company towards sustainability is a process of transformation that requires authentic engagement of its workforce to make it happen. Employees need to feel represented in the shared vision to effectively endeavor towards achieving it -step 3 of this guide expands upon how to do so. The importance of a shared vision is demonstrated by many top-performing companies -studies show that a common denominator for success among the world´s leading companies is that employees had the same understanding of the company´s purpose and values (Collins and Porras 1994).



(Source TNS)

*Backcasting **

The power of a Vision lays not only in the definition of success, but the fact that it is something to backcast from when planning for sustainability. Backcasting is a planning process that can be used by a company seeking to build a future it desires for itself. It consists of a strategic planning approach that identifies the necessary actions that will move the company from their present situation to their envisioned future (instead of what it will look like if they were to plan based on forecasting) (Ny et al. 2006, 63).

What is the Vision 2050 Implementation Guide (IG)?

While the Vision 2050 report provides a clear overarching goal in the shape of a vivid description of what a sustainable world would look and feel like, this Implementation Guide (IG) was created in an effort to support the materialization of this global vision for 2050.

It does so by providing a prescriptive plan of how to get there, which along side the Essential Elements (the 9 elements in the Vision 2050 pathway), helps companies focus their actions and processes to generate benefits while moving towards sustainability.

The Vision 2050 Implementation Guide (IG) is an iterative 6-step process that allows a company to learn along the way and continuously improve their strategic planning to become a resilient organization. At the core of sustainability practices we find "a new way of doing things", therefore it is an on going practice.

This process has been designed to bring a systems thinking approach. Using a systems thinking approach allows a company to first see the interconnected parts within their organization; then, it expands to seeing how their company is interconnected within the greater socio-ecological system it belongs to. This allows them analyze how they relate to each other, to understand the behaviors of those systems and how it affects their business.

Who is the Vision 2050 IG designed for?

The IG is for those who see the business case of sustainability; those who grasp that it is merely a way of doing well, by doing good.

The Vision 2050 IG is mostly designated for companies who see sustainability as a strategic necessity and wish to align their corporate strategies and operations with the spirit of the Vision 2050 report. It is for companies inspired by the report and its goals, who wish to capture the opportunities and the potential it offers.

The systems thinking approach integrated in the IG, ensures that even companies whose industries are not addressed in the report, can be assured that the strategy they put in place will lead them on the right path towards sustainability.

This model can be used by:

-> Companies who have already integrated sustainability into their services and operations, for reflection, assessment and improvement.

-> Companies who are just taking their first steps.

The Vision Implementation Guide is meant for any company who wishes to take on the challenge of becoming a thriving entity!

What does the Vision 2050 IG consist of?

- **6 STEPS** - The process to navigate through the organizational change needed to integrate sustainability into a company's strategy and operations. A MOVING FORWARD box in each step is meant to offer aid in "how to" tackle the step; it gives advices and/or suggests resources or tools to use.

STEPS	PURPOSE
Decide [0]	Establish commitment within the company's top management and deliver the mandate.
Prepare [1]	Build a project team to lead the company´s journey towards sustainability. Conduct an initial broad assessment of the intersection between Vision 2050 and your company's strategies.
Visioning [2]	Create a shared vision tailored to your company which is aligned with Vision 2050.
Explore [3]	Conduct a current reality assessment of the company against the company´s vision to determine the gap. Use this assessment as the creative motor for brainstorming possibilities to bridge the gap.
Action Plan [4]	Create of an action plan based on possibilities identified in the explore phase. Run possibilities through prioritization questions to determine which actions to include in your action plan. For each action define: responsibility; the goal or target to be achieved (i.e. level of reduction of electricity consumption); the deadline for the target to be achieved and a tracking system to measure the evolution and success.
Implement &Track [5]	Execute the action plan and to track a company's progress towards its vision and goals.
Communication[*] [6]	Create a communication plan to communicate your progress internally and externally.

** Ongoing, from step 0 to 6.*

GAP ANALYSIS - The gap analysis in this IG is intended to reinforce sustainability practitioners' criteria with a holistic approach when moving towards Vision 2050 report's goals, ensuring that they meet with the full scope of sustainability.

Since nature is a very complex system where every action has a reaction (that we may not always see), it can be a daunting task to analyze whether an action in your strategic plan meets with the full system conditions. The system conditions are the basic conditions needed to maintain the essential natural resources, structures and functions that sustain us; which when not addressed, it can lead to a negative impact on society and the environment, directly or indirectly.

To avoid this, the gap analysis provides a simplified, science based test that helps to ensure, as much as possible, that the system conditions are being met*.

A CHECKLIST - The checklist gathers overarching themes that should be part of your strategy to ensure success. You will find a reflection point tailored to each step to check these themes are in place:

- **SYSTEMS THINKING** - To see beyond the company's four walls through the system it is a part of, which it affects and is affected by it in return.

- **COLLABORATION** - While business has a major role to play in moving Vision 2050 forward, what this new sustainable economy will need more than anything, are companies who understand the importance of forming partnerships – because no one company can do any of this on their own.

- **LEARNING LOOPS** - Businesses find themselves as part of a dynamic complex system, -economy within society, within nature- which is constantly in flux. Therefore they must be able to keep learning in order to adapt to the changes around it.

- **LEADERSHIP** - personal and organizational. Strive to move Vision 2050 forward and achieve goals while building value; elad others by example and set the tone for good practices. Pay attention to individuals personal leadership development.

- **TRANSPARENCY** - Transparency will be needed throughout the company's process in order to build relationships and trust with both internal and external stakeholders.

- **ENGAGEMENT** - Moving a company towards sustainability is a challenging task where everybody has a role to play. When all forces aim in the same direction, it is much more plausible that the shared purpose will be achieved. Therefore the key to its success is solidifying people´s commitment to a collective effort. If you engage people in creating the process, getting them to share their perspective, they will feel committed to it and there will be no need to "sell" plan. The deeper the level of engagement that people have in the process, the more likely it will succeed.

** The Gap analysis in this IG has been adapted from The Four Sustainability Principles (SPs) [2].*

"We do not just operate today without any thought for tomorrow"

Sam I. Ohuabunwa, Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals Plc.

O Decide

Purpose: *Establish commitment from the company's top management and deliver the mandate.*

Sustainability is successful and makes a company thrive when it is integrated throughout all business units of the company and its culture, and that kind of decision can only come from the company's leadership –it is now time to put it into action.

"96% of CEOs believe that sustainability issues should be fully integrated into the strategy and operations of a company" (UN Global Compact-Accenture, 2010).

Hence, though the call to take action towards sustainability can come from anyone within the company, it is necessary the executive committee commit to it. These are the people who have the entire view of the company and, much like the brain in our body, they control everything from operations to investments. They are the ones who can mandate a decision at this scale, the captains who can turn the course of their vessel, lead it to new ports.

1 Prepare

Purpose: *Build a project team and carry out an initial review.*
Deliverable: *Project team to move mandate forward.*
Timeline: *2-4 weeks.*

1.1 Project team

Building a project team to navigate the company's journey towards sustainability with Vision 2050 goals.

Once the company's executive committee is onboard, the next step is to put together a project team who will lead the company down this new and exciting road.

The project team will be the change agent to implement a cultural change in the company. Hence, identifying the right people is a cornerstone for success. The executive committee should give attention and time to selecting the project team members.

In order to be effective change makers, project team members should be people whose roles in the company are closely related to coordinating and decision making activities. They also should be highly familiar with the company and leaders in their field; people in the company who can influence others and most importantly, are passionate about the topic.

Apart from the sustainability department and the Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO), the company leadership should be represented in the project team; the CEO and C-suite officers, the board, and the heads of all units and departments.

Strategic planning towards sustainability requires engaging people in profound change. An inner shift in people`s values, aspirations and behaviours guided by their mental models, leads to an outer shift in processes, strategies and practices (Peter Senge). Hence, the project team needs to be adept in facilitating such transformational change.

>> MOVING FORWARD

Strategic planning towards sustainability requires engaging people in profound change. An inner shift in people`s values, aspirations and behaviours guided by their mental models, leads to an outer shift in processes, strategies and practices (Peter Senge). Hence, the project team needs to be adept in facilitating such transformational change [3].

Questions to inform this process:

-> What are the strongest skills represented within the company/team?
-> Are there any skills gaps?
-> What is the company/team known for doing well?
-> Do the current employees/team members have the ability to do the job?
-> How are skills monitored and assessed?

Adopted from the McKinsey 7s Framework.

Preparing the project team to facilitate transformational change: Facilitating transformational change depends first on the authentic leadership of the facilitator. We recommend hosting workshops to improve individuals authentic leadership capacities. *One possible source is The Lotus: a practice guide for authentic leadership toward sustainability**.

1.2 Initial review

A review of the intersection between Vision 2050 and the company's mission and strategies.

The Vision 2050 report gives a broad and general picture of the challenge and the opportunities of moving towards sustainability; therefore each company must first identify how Vision 2050 aligns with their own strategy as the basis for creating a version of Vision 2050 that is tailored to the company.

To discover where the company is placed within Vision 2050, the project team performs a broad overview of the 9 elements and the 'must haves', to identify which are most relevant to the company. These could be the ones a company could champion, leading the elements in going beyond its 'must haves'.

In the same way, they should analyze the opportunities and risks presented in the report which could be applied to the company's practices and strategy.

The overview might reveal that the company's field of industry is not clearly specified in the report. In this case the company could become the leader in that sector, by targeting it in the context of the Vision 2050 report; defining its own set of 'must haves' to be achieved by 2020. »

>> MOVING FORWARD

The Vision 2050 Mural is a graphic display of the elements and 'must haves'. It is a friendly user tool that can be used to place the company within Vision 2050, http://www.zoom.it/foTF

In the task of discovering what Vision 2050 means for the company, you can:

- Hold sessions or workshops around 'parts' of the Vision 2050 (by elements, decades or 'must haves').

- Conduct an operational analysis (ex: The House model) to create a value map of the company's resources (all sorts), products, and processes. The analysis can be carried out according to department area, focus area or process and should be done company wide.

This analysis helps in identifying how current aspects of the company's operations and culture can hinder or enhance the company's potential to reach its vision.

** Pearlman, Dana, Christipher Baan, Phil Long, 2011. The Lotus: a practice guide for authentic leadership toward sustainability. Karlskrona, Sweden, 2011. http://www.thelotus.info*

"It's now not whether you're going to do anything on sustainability, it's about how much you're going to do"

Rashid Toefy,
Cape Town International Convention Centre

THE HOUSE MODEL

An example for Operational Analysis

In order to complete an operational analysis the following questions should be asked:

-What do we deliver?
  -What products are we supplying?
  -What services are we supplying?

-What human needs are we helping to fulfill in society?

-What do we depend upon?
  -What raw materials?
  -What energy sources?
  -Infrastructure?
  -Cultural rules and norms?
-And in relations to our workers, what do we depend on?

-What is left?
  -What types of waste and by-products are left?

-What is the organization's planning and decision making framework?

☑ CHECKLIST - PREPARE

Systems thinking & Engagement: Have you ensured that all your business segments have been engaged and are represented in your project team, to ensure that decisions made take into account the broader picture?

"By inviting the right people, there will be no need to 'sell' the plan because they will have been involved in creating it. The extra time invested in the beginning will pay off in the end"

(The Weave)

2 Visioning

Purpose: *: The creation of a current reality assessment of the company against the company's vision.*
Deliverable: *A base for a transition strategy and action plan.*
Timeline: *2-5 months (in coordination with Step 4).*

Raise awareness and engage

The gap between the current reality assessment against the company's vision becomes the creative motor for coming up with possibilities to bridge over it.
be
A thorough process of engagement should start with an education programme to raise awareness of the sustainability challenge and the company´s current situation. Once there is common ground among the employees, the project team should engage them in a collaborative and dialogical manner, unearthing the group's collective intelligence and assisting employees to gain a whole system perspective.

Stretch goals – Creative motor. Big and ambitious targets, challenging enough in order to push the company forward (note: some stretch goal can be unachievable).

World Café – A participatory methodology which fosters dialogue surfacing the collective intelligence of small or large groups of diverse people. For more information visit: www.theworldcafe.com.

Complementary methodologies for participatory process can be found in: http://www.artofhosting.org/the-practice/coremethods/

Building a Shared Vision

Employees are then invited to create a shared vision of the company. This vision should align with the company's 'tailored' version of Vision 2050 created by the project team in Step 1.

Use the following questions to inform the vision:

What does our company stands for? What are our core values?
What do we aspire to?
Why do we exist or who will miss us if we were gone?
What can we be the best at in the world?
What can our contribution to Vision 2050?
be?

A vision is the North Star that the company is moving towards. Since it is the company's workforce who will execute the strategic plan to achieve the company's vision, it should emerge from the body of it - the individuals. They should be engaged by this vision to effectively endeavour towards it, it has to be an inspiring and meaningful goal to them. The result of inviting people to talk about what matters to them, is a shared vision which is owned by all those who took part in building it, and it is this sense of ownership which motivates the employees to achieve it.

The Project team will create the vision informed by the outcomes of these groups. Once the vision is established, it should be shared with the organization to re-affirm people's commitment to it.

>> MOVING FORWARD

Run corporate sustainability training sessions to raise awareness; ex: the Business Ecosystems Training (BET) tool from WBCSD. - http://www.wbcsd.org/bet.aspx

Use participatory processes to engage people in creating the vision. Invite people to talk about what matters to them, do so in small cross-sectoral groups.

To facilitate this process dialogue methodologies are very useful, such as World Café. Should you need gui- dance in strategic planning engagement for sustainabi- lity, we recommend the guide book *The Weave: Partici- patory Process Design Guide for Strategic Sustainable Development* *.

Championing elements could be included in the company's vision. Most relevant 'must haves' can be the stretch goals.

Note: If your company already has a vision, this is a good opportunity to review it in the light of Vision 2050; where are they similar? Where are the differences? Where can we move forward? How can we rethink our vision?

GAP ANALYSIS - When building your vision, it is essential to keep the gap analysis in mind. These questions are to ensure it does not lead to unsustainable practices.

Does our vision contribute to the systematic increasing of:

- Concentrations from the earth's crust?
- Concentrations of substances produced by society?
- Degradation by physical means?

Does our vision systematically undermine people's capacity to meet their needs?

☑ CHECKLIST - VISIONING

Systems thinking: Has the company analyzed how its vision will affect the socio-ecological system it depends on?

Engagement: Have you engaged your organization in the creation of the company's vision?

Transparency: What was the process for developing the company's Vision?

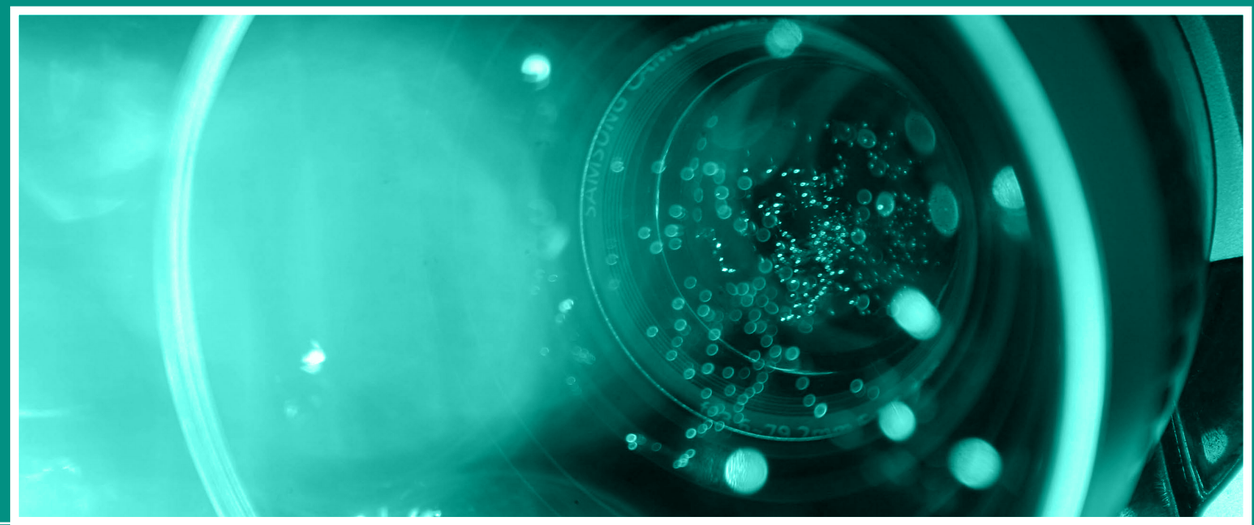
Collaboration: Have you identified any stakeholders that might provide value to the company during this process?

Leadership: How does our vision reflect that of Vision 2050's? Will your vision lead to sustainability?

** Meisterheim, Tracy, Steven Cretney, Alison Cretney. 2011. The Weave v1: Participatory Process Design Guide for Strategic Sustainable Development . Blekinge Tekniska Högskola, Karlskrona, Sweden. June 2011. http://theweave.info/*

3 Explore

Purpose: *The creation of a current reality assessment of the company against the company's vision. The gap between them becomes the creative motor for coming up with possibilities to bridge over it.*
Deliverable: *Creative ideas to inform a company's action plan.*
Timeline: *2-5 months (in coordination with Step 2).*



The creation of a current reality assessment of the company against the company's vision. The gap between them becomes the creative motor for coming up with possibilities to bridge over it.

Current reality assessment and brainstorming

Once the Vision is formed and the company has developed its definition of success, it is time to ask how does it get there. A good way to start could be to address the following inquiries: Referring to our definition of sustainability (our vision) what are the challenges and opportunities we face in getting there? How can we decrease the gap between the current situation and sustainability?

These are complex questions and therefore they require a strategic approach to answering them. Steps 4 and 5 lay out an approach which will help companies to navigate through this process.

3.1 Current reality assessment

At this point, the company carries out an in depth current reality assessment against its new vision to identify the "hot spots"- gaps between the two, which will need to be addressed when creating the strategic plan. Roles and tasks can be determined by the project team but all sectors and departments of the company should be involved. The more sectors and departments that will take part the more accurate and thorough the analysis will be, which will lead to a more feasible and plausible strategic plan. »

Appreciative Inquiry is a process for addressing Organizational Change. It is based on the assumption that every organization has something that works well and those strengths should be used to create positive change. Positive thinking and visioning is a motivator that leads to transformative change. This complements the positive thinking that led to the creation of Vision 2050.

>> MOVING FORWARD

An internal analysis: SWOT (strengths, weakeness, opportunites and threats) analysis of all current trends in the company.

An external analysis: PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental) analysis, strategic tool for understanding market growth or decline, business position, potential and direction for operations.

The house model (found in Step 1) is a useful tool at this phase as well, now to be carried out in a deeper manner including people from all company sectors and departments.

Conduct a SLCA - Sustainable Life Cycle assessment.

Use Appreciative Inquiry during the base-line analysis. The places where the current reality of the company aligns with the vision should be identified as points to be conserved and strengthened.

"Much of what we've seen so far suggests that a large group of diverse individuals will come up with better and more robust forecasts and make more intelligent decisions than even the most skilled decision maker"

James Surowiecki

3.2 Brainstorming compelling measures

Once the gaps are identified, it is time to generate ideas to bridge them. The outcome of this phase should be a very long list of all the possibilities for overcoming the gaps on the way to reaching the vision.

Collective intelligence is bigger than individual intelligence, therefore to generate as many ideas as possible companies should use their richest resource- their social capital. The project team should decide how to facilitate processes which will create a space for creativity and support the identification of a wide range of ideas from people of all levels and sectors. Brainstorming is one way to tap into the creativity of involved individuals. This can be done with groups of all sizes, using the following ground rules:

> All ideas are valuable and welcome.
> It is ok to have contradicting themes or issues.
> Give concrete examples.
> At this stage Judgment should be suspended.

>> MOVING FORWARD

To open a brainstorming session you can ask the following questions:

- How do we become not only the best IN the world but the best for the world?
- How can our processes replenish ecological systems?
- Where can we look to nature to innovate products and services?

The brainstorming session can be run by:

- Workshops
- Collective mind-maps
- Participative processes methodologies, see step 2 (ex: World Café).

This is the place to take the extra mile, to go beyond the obvious and look for those innovative and feasible opportunities to overcome barriers.

By making this a collective task, it not only reaches out a bigger pool of wisdom, it will also contribute to the success of the implementation that will be later carried out.

GAP ANALYSIS - When assessing your organizations current reality, look for these questions in order to identify what is preventing your company from complying with sustainable practices, to further address it.

What do we make and/or do, or what service do we provide in our company that contributes to the systematic increasing of:

- Concentrations from the earth's crust?
- Concentrations of substances produced by society?
- Degradation by physical means?

What do we make and/or do, or what service do we provide in our company that systematically undermine people's capacity to meet their needs?

☑ CHECKLIST - EXPLORE

Systems thinking: What are the system boundaries the company has drawn when analyzing its current reality? Do they encompass the entire socio- ecological system?

Engagement: Who has been invited to participate in this process? Are there individuals outside the organization who could provide valued input?

Transparency: How is the process for collecting the required information for the analysis being communicated to stakeholders?

4 Action Plan

Purpose: *Creating an action plan which will include a time line of prioritized actions.*
Deliverable: *Strategic plan to move a company towards its vision.*
Timeline: *1day – 2-3 months (depending on level of engagement).*

4.1 Prioritize

After all ideas have been gathered, the company needs to carry out a prioritization process to choose the most feasible and impactful actions which will help the company to achieve its vision. Having the final goal in mind helps in keeping a sense of direction of where the company wishes to be and which actions are the best to take it there.

By taking time and carefully analyzing the ideas, there is a higher likelihood that resources and investments will be allocated to the most appropriate actions.

This can be carried out by the project team in collaboration with other planning teams comprising people who have the relevant skills and knowledge.

The three prioritization questions and the gap analysis provide the base by which all actions should be reviewed. To complement this, in order for an action to be considered strategic, its evaluation also needs to be informed by the company's own selection criteria; in which many other influencing aspects are taken into account, for example forthcoming external trends, opportunities and threats. Any further questions to contribute to a systems thinking analysis are encouraged (Robert et al, 2002).

>> MOVING FORWARD

To strategically prioritize, each action should be assessed against the following three prioritization questions:

1. Does this action proceed in the right direction with respect to Vision 2050 goals and the company's vision?
2. Does this action provide a "stepping stone" (flexible platform) for future improvements?
3. Is this action likely to produce a sufficient return on investment to catalyze further action?

4.2 Action plan

With a list of prioritized actions to help reach the goals, the company is now ready to chart its own action plan which will take the company closer to Vision 2050's goals.

One way of starting an action plan is to place the chosen actions on a time line.

A time line is useful for identifying the actions that can build on one another, and avoiding the 'dead-end' ones. This is especially useful for determining whether an action that requires a high level of commitment is worthy to pursue or not because of what it can lead to and/or the potential for return.

All actions that appear in the timeline should:

> be sorted into short, medium or long-term time periods.
> include the set of skills and resources required.
> be assigned to a specific individual, preferrably the best person for that task.
> have a tracking system to measure the evolution and success.
> have a target date to be achieved. »

>> MOVING FORWARD

Vision 2050's goals for the 'turbulent teens' leading to 2020 should be the first targets of the plan.

Here are some questions which can help to build a time line:

- What action can be tackled in the short term?
- Which actions require more resources (time, money and people)?
- Which actions can be used as stepping stones to larger, longer term actions?
- Which actions are items where we can collaborate with others?

GAP ANALYSIS - These questions are to ensure that any of the selected actions lead to unsustainable practices.

Does this action contribute to the systematic increasing of:

- Concentrations from the earth's crust?
- Concentrations of substances produced by society?
- Degradation by physical means?
- Does this action systematically undermine people's capacity to meet their needs?

"During the first ten years we have been discussing direction. Now is the time to implement that direction into business and societal mechanism"

Toshio Arima,
Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd.

» Start with the "the low hanging fruit". These are actions which require minimum investment and few changes, but hold a high potential for a fast and visible return on investment. Once this is achieved it will create momentum on which other actions can later ride.

It is important to continue building on the momentum of first achievements and actions. Moving a company towards sustainability requires long term thinking and constant attention; actions should continue to be aligned so that there is always a next step to be implemented.

☑ CHECKLIST - ACTION PLAN

SYSTEMS THINKING: How will the selected actions affect the socio-ecological system?

ENGAGEMENT: Is the company overlooking someone who should be involved? Will the project team conduct this step of the process in isolation or with a broader group?

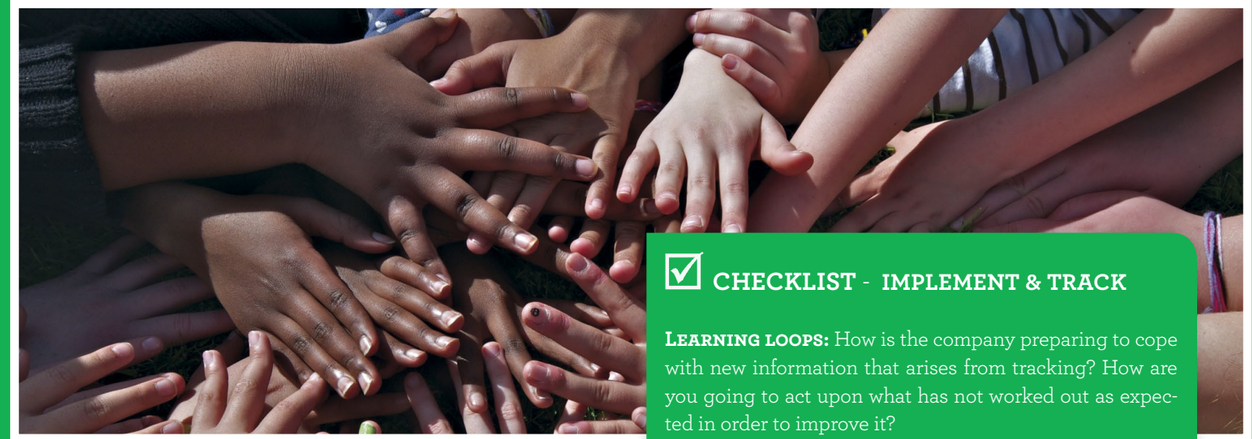
TRANSPARENCY: How are the decision criteria to select the actions being communicated ?

COLLABORATION: Has the company considered seeking collaboration with others to accomplish some actions that might not be feasible for the company to tackle alone? (but are necessary for achieving Vision 2050).

LEADERSHIP: Do the actions the company is planning take it beyond the pathways, or help to discover a new ones? Are people being empowered by the assigned tasks and responsibilities from the action plan?

5 Implement & Track

Purpose: *To execute the action plan and track the company's progress towards achieving its vision and goals.*
Deliverable: *Progress monitoring.*
Timeline: *Ongoing.*



When theory takes shape

It is now time to act and execute the action plan! This process should be led and designed by the project team, who will be working together with individuals from different levels in the company. The Project team will first identify the best entry points for implementing the prioritized actions.

At this point, the company's goals –aligned with Vision 2050- begin to be integrated into the company's mainstream business activities.

While initiatives came from the bottom-up (due to collective brainstorming), the implementation plan comes from the top-down, carrying out the mandate which was given by the executive committee. Here is where the level of commitment to the sustainability mandate makes the difference.

Implementation will look different in each company, but the common thread is to build capacity within the organization, to ensure that the process will continue in the long-term, continually building on the first initiatives.

Decide slow, implement fast

The previous steps, which focus on engaging people and creating a plan, should be given sufficient time in order to create a solidly woven base. Implementation, however, should beging shortly after the action plan is approved and follow a continuous pace. By now, people should be already engaged and the best ideas have been chosen.

>> MOVING FORWARD

Important questions to ask to ensure a coordinated implementation effort include:

- How are people/work-groups involved in the different tasks?
- How do the various departments coordinate activities?
- Is decision-making and control centralized or decentralized?

Building capacity can be done by:

- Giving employees the ability to sharpen existing skills or gain new ones.
- Delegating responsibilities and tasks to specific individuals, and empowering individuals.
- Adjusting existing processes and introducing new ones.

Measure what matters

Every action item should have targets to be measured and followed-up on through the various units and departments, to ensure that the company is on track towards meeting its goals.

These targets and data should be gathered by the project team for the purpose of evaluation and reporting.

The project team has to figure out the entire scope of what needs to be tracked, and how to do it.

Give attention to the non-tangible outcomes including buiding relationships and trust through continued engagement. These are often the drivers of lasting change; consider ways to carry them forward. Holding formal and informal conversations with the heads of departments and employees or other stakeholders is a way to measure things that numbers do not.

Revise and Correct

Check your results and experiences against the company expectations to identify the gap between the two. Plan how to bridge this gap and take the neccesary actions to stay on track in meeting your goals. Go back to step 4 (or step 3, depending on what needs to be corrected) to plan how to correct and/or improve your current results.

Given what we are doing, does our implementation practice mirror our expected results? If not, where is the gap? How can we bridge it?

☑ CHECKLIST - IMPLEMENT & TRACK

Learning loops: How is the company preparing to cope with new information that arises from tracking? How are you going to act upon what has not worked out as expected in order to improve it?

Transparency: What system is the company using to track its progress and how will it report it?

Leadership: How are individuals being empowered to unearth their potential?

>> MOVING FORWARD

Questions to ask to effectively track and measure:

-Where are the controls and how are they monitored and evaluated?

-What internal rules and processes does the team use to keep on track?

Adopt an existing sustainability reporting standard, like GRI, UN Global Compact or ISO. Look for the one that best suits your company.

GAP ANALYSIS - Although the action plan has already been checked with the Gap Analysis, it is good to check that the actual implementation of those actions is not leading to unintended unsustainable practices.

Do any of our implementation practices contribute to the systematic increasing of:

- Concentrations from the earth's crust?
- Concentrations of substances produced by society?
- Degradation by physical means?

Do any of our implementation practices systematically undermine people's capacity to meet their needs?

6 Communication*

Purpose: *To create a communications plan.*
Deliverable: *Communication plan.*
Timeline: **Ongoing, starting the moment the executive commits to it (step 0) and running through all steps.*

Transparent communication

Transparency is an integral part of the implementation process

The project team should design a communication plan which starts from the moment the company decides to commit to Vision 2050 goals, and it is present all along the process. This plan must include individuals from across the company as spokespeople and sounding boards.

Transparent communication should happen accross the company and beyond it, both internally and externally. All stakeholders and shareholders –from employees to the general public- should be informed in an effort to gain their approval and support for the company's commitment to sustainability.

Communicating the plan and the progress being made creates a sense of certainty in the process, which can fuel further and faster development. It also strengthens the company's sense of responsibility and helps in keeping it on track as it works to achieve its ultimate goal, the vision.

Make the most of your achieved results and use your communication plan to: form new win-win **partnerships** and do **benchmarking** inspiring others. This is extremely important becuase as we already know... ***no one company can address sutainability alone.***

>> MOVING FORWARD

The decision to integrate sustainability into the organisation's strategy should be communicated and advocated within the business community through professional partnerships and networks.

The company's accomplishments should be posted on the company's website and other related sites, like the WBCSD website.

In addition, reach out to different media streams –articles, magazines, public reports, sustainability blog, newsletter, twitter or facebook, linked in.

Update your accomplishments regularly keep up for benchmarking and remain in the sustainability leaders scene. Keep an eye open for new partnerships.

☑ CHECKLIST - COMMUNICATION

Collaboration: How can you use your results to reach out to new partners?

Engagement: How is the company engaging key stakeholders to ensure maximum value for its efforts to integrate sustainability into its strategy and operations?

Transparency: Is the company communicating the results of its tracking in a consistent manner?

Leadership: How can the company promote its move towards sustainability in order to inspire others to do the same?

Conclusion

Sustainability is to be understood and spelt out as something positive, beneficial and enjoyable. Right now it is our best and only option. It is time to start thinking about sustainable solutions, which not only present a profitable business case, but can also energize entire organizations to thrive on the path towards a sustainable society.

As Vision 2050 has shown us, opportunity awaits companies who integrate sustainability into their strategies. Companies with a strategic plan for sustainability will be better prepared for the challenges ahead and better able to seize the opportunities – to do less with more, to create value, to prosper and to advance the human condition. It all starts with building a shared vision, a shared definition of success for a sustainable business within a sustainable socio-ecological system. By providing a "simple, yet not simpler" Implementation Guide, it is our hope that Vision 2050 will materialize in business plans around the world.

Vision 2050 calls for a new agenda for business: to work with government and society worldwide to transform markets and competition. Collaboration is required to support each other and advocate for the changes needed to move society towards sustainability.

Many players have a role in this challenge and, as many stated during the creation of this project: "We cannot do it alone." Yet, it CAN be done.

Your path to Vision 2050 could start here...

"There is no business on a dead planet"
David Brower

Glossary:

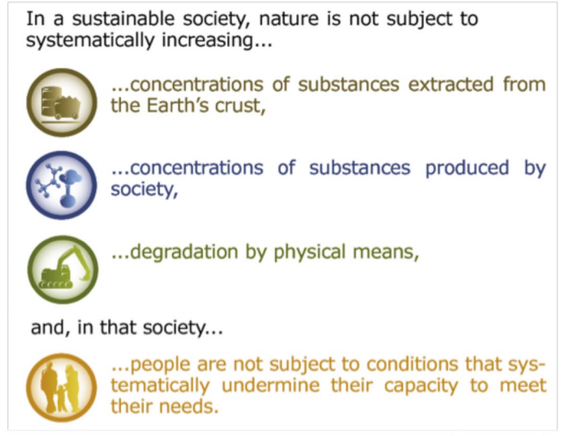
[1] The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD).

The FSSD is a systems-based framework that identifies the ecological and societal conditions necessary for human survival within the finite limits of the biosphere. The FSSD is structured with the Five Level Framework and a key aspect is the strategic use of backcasting from the four sustainability principles (Robert et al. 2002, 198-205).

More information in the:
http://www.thenaturalstep.org/

[2] The Four Sustainability Principles (4SPs).

Led by Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt and Dr. John Holmberg in the early 1990's, the 4SPs were reached through scientific consensus in an effort to establish a shared understanding of what the system conditions for a sustainable society are, based on the laws of nature (Robert et al. 1997, 88). These are:



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More information in
http://www.thenaturalstep.org/

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biography

-**Sara** graduated with a MSc. in Electrical Engineering (Polytechnical University of Madrid) and a MSc. in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability (Blekinge Tekniska Högskola). It was during her first steps in her profes- sion that she felt the paradox of living in the fast rhythm and commodities of a big city while cons- tantly hearing about the socio-ecological issues facing the world. This woke up in her a desire to help build a world where people have their basic needs met; where human relationships and com- munity become a source of wealth, all the while sustainably using what the Earth provides. That was the driver to turn the wheel of her professional career towards the field of sustainability. She has a genuine determination to take things fur- ther, and a passionate attitude to engage others. The initial spark of this project came from her and it has been her spirit which kept this project going until its current level.

She is now working in association with Stantec Consulting Ltd to make this implementation guide of optimal benefit to organizations as part of the effort to extend the integration of sustainability to all spheres of society.

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-**Carmelina Macario** has a background in resource management policy and holds a M.Sc., Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability from the Blekinge Tekniska Högskola (Sweden). Carmelina spent 7 years working in the political realm in Ontario, Canada where she provided ministers of energy and natural resources with strategic advice on policy and issues as well as stakeholder management. Both her foundation in politics and her Masters have solidified her belief in the power of purpose. These two experiences allowed her to witness first hand how effectively an organization can deliver results when employees believe in the mission of their organization and are engaged by management. She believe this is one of the keys to unlocking an organization's sustainability potential.

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-Having graduated from the Master's in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability at BTH in Sweden, **Tamar** works for the Education department in the Heschel center for sustainability in Israel, an organization dedicated to navigating the path towards a more sustainable future for Israel, through leadership development, community-based projects and reflective activism. Along with a few alumni of the MSLS program, Tamar is also currently involved in forming a consulting and training entity, which will deliver the The Natural Step methodologies to different organizations and municipalities. She uses facilitation, and specifically Graphic facilitation (i.e. visualizing, mind maps, flow charts) to deliver what she feels is most needed at this moment, which is; bringing forward the best available practices, connecting the dots and offering clarity when one is needed.

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