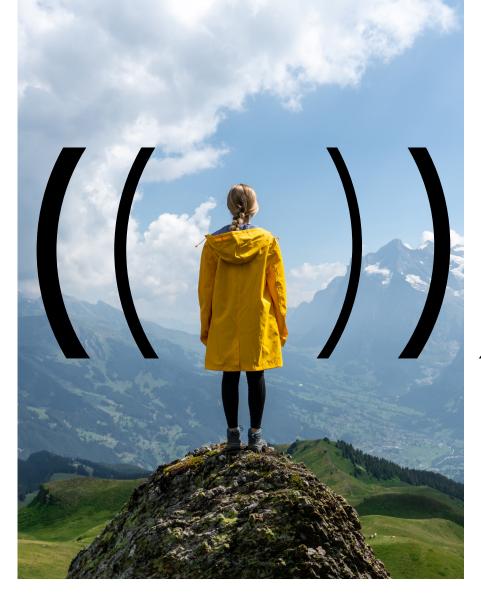
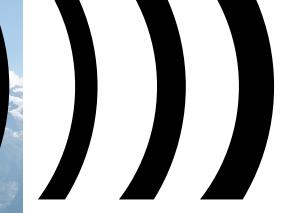
# From purpose to progress





Creating sustainable impact

# Ensuring present and future progress.

Many companies and organisations today can recognise that sustainability needs to be more than a hygiene factor within their business. Still, they struggle to take the necessary steps required to transform themselves.

To dive deeper into the topic, we partnered with Coleman Parkes and spoke to 1,000 businesses about their sustainability practices. Based on the findings, we created a corporate sustainability report; a report we hope can help you take your sustainability efforts to the next level.

Our research uncovered that overall, companies are becoming more sustainable, despite spending only an average of 4% of their revenue on sustainability. 12% of companies identify as 'leaders'. These companies are often more adaptable to change and have an authentic desire to drive real, long-term progress for themselves and the planet. 15% can be described as 'laggards' - companies that are behind the curve of sustainability adaption. And most companies (a whopping 73%) are somewhere between the two. Unfortunately, 14% of companies still believe they're investing too much in sustainability (!).

We discovered that to become a leader, companies need to undergo a transformation. This transformation is not strictly lateral, nor can it be solved as part of a single project. Changing to become more sustainable is a process. But also an opportunity to solve many of the challenges humanity faces today.



By sharing this study, we hope to ignite a conversation with you, whether you're a corporate community, organisation, activist, scientist, or another company in our industry. A conversation that can create action around what a sustainable future could look like for your company and how design could help fuel that transformation.

One of the most relevant principles guiding the work is the intention to make it actionable. Our aim is to provide a framework that will help you identify what your reality could be. And question what progress could mean to you. It's different, more aspirational, and generative for you.

But also a conversation to learn about the role of design and design fuelled innovation. True innovators are stretching the understanding of reality to help everyone do well within planetary boundaries. Design needs to evolve to fuel the innovators of the future. It needs to drive shared progress, enabling a shift from human-centricity to humanity-centricity, considering all stakeholders along the way.

To make this report useful for you, we've extracted and created a set of observations and learnings. They can help you design your transition towards a more sustainable future:

- There is a mix of variables that define the path for a transformation. Some external (market, industry, stakeholder pressure, etc.), and some internal (maturity level, perception of the relationship between sustainability and business goals or sustainability and risk, etc.). We have modelled these in the <u>spectrum</u>.
- There are some opportunity spaces where leaders have acted that are especially important to innovate in if you want to progress in your transformation. We have modelled these in the <u>observations</u>.
- Companies need to strategise their sustainability transformation. This allows them to activate the opportunity spaces in a way that makes sense to their business. They need to integrate this innovation effort with their current strategic frameworks. We have modelled these in the map.



### Spectrum

How does your position on the spectrum affect your current sustainability performance and your challenges to evolve?

Each organisation is unique, but there are some common patterns. Those can be defined in a spectrum that companies go through as they change to become more sustainable. The <a href="mailto:spectrum">spectrum</a> helps you understand where your company is and how to get to the next level. It can give you a broader context in which you can plan the specific actions you need to take to get your desired results.



### **Observations**

What opportunities have the biggest potential to move you forward in your sustainability journey?

Looking at how companies progress to become more sustainable, we've narrowed the findings down to five <u>observations</u>. Each observation has a **challenge**, **recommendations**, and a set of **what-ifs**.



### <u>Map</u>

How can you intentionally embed sustainable innovation in your corporate strategy?

Using our <u>map</u>, you can design your sustainable transitions yourself. Narrow it down to understand where you are, widen the lens to see where you want to be, and narrow it down again to identify concrete actions.

## A <u>spectrum</u> to understand your path to sustainable progress.



### To understand how to get somewhere, you first need to know where you are.

The transformation processes companies go through to become more sustainable are tremendously diverse. Each path is defined by the market in which an organisation, leadership and sustainability team operates, their industry, their stakeholder pressure, and countless other factors.

It's not a matter of ambition or attitude. It's about your starting point.

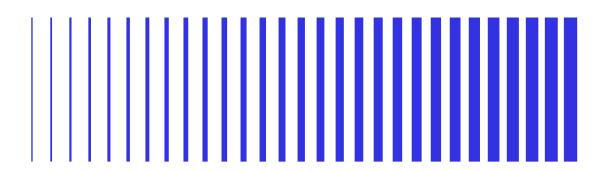
It's not about being leaders or laggards. It's about progressing through a rich spectrum.

> Through our research, we've identified some signals to navigate this rich spectrum: the main variables that define it are patterns at initial and mature stages. We've also created an assessment tool for you to understand where you are and where your opportunities might be.

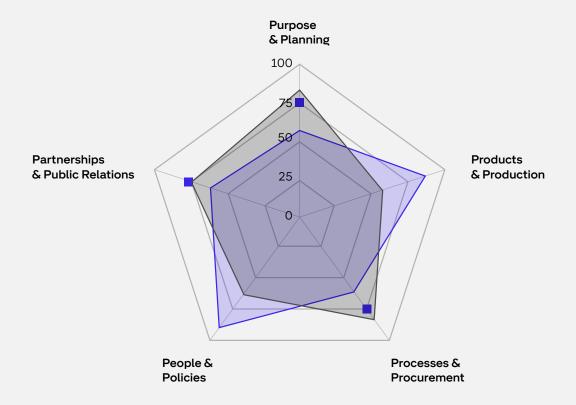
> Use it as a guiding light. A way to better understand the goals and actions you need to take to make progress happen.

Understanding where you are on the spectrum can give you a broader context to plan the specific actions you need to take to get the desired results.

Below, you'll find some of the most relevant differences between companies identifying as leaders and laggards.



	On the lower end	On the higher end
Purpose-influence on sustainability	Purpose is part of the brand narrative.	Purpose is used to design management and operational structures.
Business goals and sustainability	Sustainability investment creates obvious opportunities, such as the availability of discount solutions with an impact on the P&L.	Investment in sustainability is seen as a lever for profitability.
Risk management and sustainability	Due to inexperience and uncertainty, working with sustainability itself is seen as a risk.	Working with sustainability is seen as a way of risk management.
Stakeholder pressure and sustainability	Pressure about right to operate comes from local communities, supply chain and NGOs.	Pressure for value creation and differentiation comes from partners, regulators and competitors and value creation differentiation.
Progression stoppers	Not having a business case and difficulties knowing where to start.	Over-engineering and paralysis by analysis.



Sustainability integration assessment

Whether you want to understand where you sit or are here to further integrate sustainability into your business's core, we've developed a framework for identifying your success and discovering new opportunities: the 10Ps of sustainability integration.

10Ps of sustainability integration	<u>Opportunity</u>	Functions and stakeholders
Purpose & Planning	Infuse sustainability into the company's purpose and put it into practice through focused strategy	Strategy, Risk, Brand, Marketing, Communications
Products & Production	Embed sustainability into the core of the company's offerings and how they're brought to market	Design, Product, Business Development, R&D, Innovation, Supply Chain
Processes & Procurement	Incorporate sustainable practices, standards, and certifications into the company's operational and purchasing decisions	Operations, Procurement, Technology, Data, Information, Finance, Accounting
People & Policies	Incentivise and empower leadership, board, and staff to drive sustainable transformation	HR, Governance, Leadership, Board
Partnerships & Public Relations	Initiate relationships with key stakeholders to push for sustainable progress beyond the sole interest of the company	Global/Public Affairs, Partnerships, Associations

This assessment framework allows for a comprehensive understanding of where your organisation is in the sustainability journey, where the opportunities are, who the key stakeholders are, and how to activate them.

Want to know more about this framework? Get in touch.

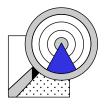
### Five observations to make progress happen.



Companies, their employees, their business models and supply chains are incredibly complex. Using the observations, we want to make sure it's easy to understand what it means to progress through the spectrum towards sustainability.

Although the challenges can't be oversimplified, you can learn how others tackle the complexity.

Through research and experience, we've identified the opportunity spaces where companies are using innovation to progress and, ultimately, become more sustainable.



Commitments are platitudes unless management paradigms are impacted by them.



A company is only as sustainable as its products and services.



Incomplete data is too often an excuse for inaction.



The current level of collaboration is insufficient in ambition and creativity.

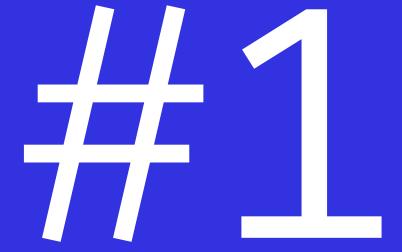


Companies must do a better job engaging employees in sustainability.

Observation #1

# Commitments are platitudes unless management paradigms are impacted by them.





### 42%

of companies identified as 'leaders' on the spectrum integrate sustainability across the whole business while only ...

> of those on the lower end – the so-called 'laggards' – do. This makes the challenge of delivering ambitions and commitments easier.

### Yes, companies must commit to SMART sustainability goals, but ...

- commitments should be aligned with science-based targets and integrated into all functions.
- executives must have skin in the game in the form of individual and team responsibilities and goals.
- purpose translates targets, guiding decision-making from bottom to top.

<u>70%</u> of executives prioritise purpose-led initiatives to become or stay industry leaders.

More than half of executives (52%) fear that by not achieving their sustainability objectives, they will fall behind their competition.

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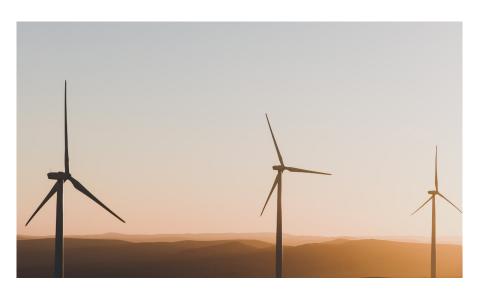
The big differentiator is our reason for doing it. We're not like other organisations chasing a low sustainability number to show off to their marketing department. That's a short-sighted way of looking at it; the real benefit is if you look at it holistically. We're not trying to do it as a sort of waving the flag. We're doing everything to be part of society, which is a huge difference.

Chief Technology Officer in a Banking Company in the UK Purpose defines why a company exists. Management paradigms bring that into action. Both should be ambitious in how the company aims to create value for society and the environment and transform the company over time.

Sustainability should appear on leadership agendas the same way other core business matters like sales, marketing, and legal do. Yet only 20% of executives indicate that sustainability is integrated into the business as a distributed and collective responsibility. It needs to be reframed from 'How do we comply?' to 'How do we differentiate?'

Leadership exemplifies the company's purpose as much as anyone else. But, more importantly, management ensures that the company has the appropriate governance and policies to address situations where leadership does not adhere to that mission. Therefore, leaders must be vocal and authentic.

Company culture and people are foundational in bringing your purpose and goals to life. Inform them, educate them, and engage them. Give them responsibility for achieving the company's mission and create a culture of empowerment that encourages them to drive it forward.



What if company values were determined by present values of future resource flows?

Investors evaluate a company's value by estimating the present value of future cash flows. So why do you rely on yesterday's ESG indicators for the same investment decisions? Instead, let's look into the future to explore the risks and opportunities of your future resource flows (i.e. energy, water, steel, etc.) and measure them against future scenarios.



What if you were only allowed to talk about sustainability in past tense at conferences?

Companies walk a fine line between sharing too much and too little information on their sustainability activity. What if your peers only wanted to see and hear from companies that have either achieved their science-based goals or are willing to openly share their failures and lessons learned? How refreshing would that be?



What if a handful of visionary executives called for a postgrowth economy?

The post-growth economy is slowly infiltrating into business and economic conversation. Like climate change and DEI before it, there will come a time when a few well-respected leaders emerge and challenge the economic assumption of limitless growth. How will that message be received across sectors, regions, income levels, and stakeholders?

Observation #2

### A company is only as sustainable as its products and services.





Companies across the whole spectrum struggle to integrate sustainability into their value propositions, yet those more advanced invest



20% of them see a stronger impact on their ability to innovate.

Yes, companies are making substantial progress in improving their operational sustainability, but ...

- most of a company's impacts occur beyond its four walls, in the whole lifecycle of its products and services.
- companies struggle to substantially embed sustainability into their products and services.
- many companies are yet to incorporate sustainability into the R&D, innovation and design process.

<u>Up to 90%</u> of a company's total GHG emissions may fall under scope 3, also known as 'value chain emissions' as it accounts for the supply, use, and disposal of a company's products.

**54%** of companies experience difficulties integrating sustainability into their products, making it the most common internal sustainability challenge.

**61%** of companies assess the sustainability performance of their product or service portfolio.



We also wish all own-brand items to be created with a circular future by 2040. We will continue to focus on recyclable, regenerative, or sustainably produced materials.

Director of ESG in a Retail Company in the US

### Broaden your lens of sustainability, from operations to the value proposition. Your business is only as sustainable as your products and services. You can achieve this by:

Recognising that sustainable products and services exist on a spectrum and there's always an opportunity to improve. From incremental to integral to inspired, sustainability can serve as a design principle or catalyst.

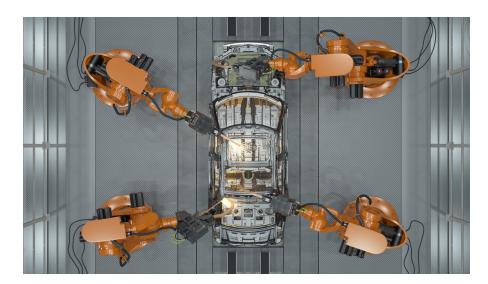
Embedding sustainability into the company's R&D, design, and innovation processes. Sustainability should be considered from the very beginning and tested throughout. Sustainability is an approach that facilitates this integration.

Identifying biases and avoiding tunnel vision. Emissions don't equate to sustainability. Instead, observe multiple environmental and social impacts across your product or service lifecycles.



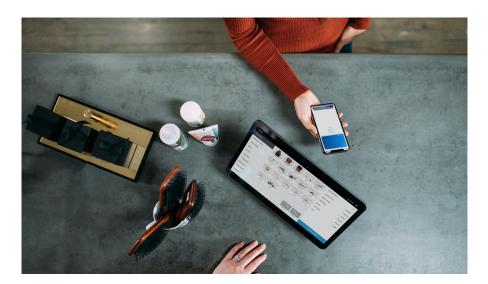
What if ownership became taboo?

As Millennials and Gen Z become the market's biggest consumers, preference for access over ownership is emerging globally. Beyond consumer preferences, inflation and expanding inequality may create economic conditions where ownership isn't possible, creating new market opportunities for those companies that can pivot to alternative business models.



What if you could only sell carbon positive solutions in two years?

Regulations on qualifying and marketing sustainable solutions are gaining momentum. But it may be customers (B2B) and consumers who drive growing demand for sustainable products and services. If regulators and consumers continue this trend, investors and employees will likely follow by applying pressure on companies to improve the sustainability of their solution portfolio.



What if everything put onto the market had to be returned to the producer?

The world is only <u>8.6% circular</u>, meaning 91.4% of everything consumed today goes to a landfill, gets incinerated, or is lost to the environment. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes are growing in number and maturity around the world. Perhaps closing the loop of your company's products is an opportunity for product differentiation and competitive advantage?

Observation #3

### Incomplete <u>data</u> is too often an excuse for inaction.





Companies across the whole spectrum are (probably too) obsessed with data acquisition, but **those more advanced use it more**. For instance, they review the sustainability practices in their supply chains ...

### 2× as often

Yes, leaders should be concerned about collecting the right evidence to inform their sustainability strategy, but ...

- data needs should transcend beyond reporting and drive better decision-making with sustainability at the core.
- the more advanced you are, the more data you want, and the more difficult that data is to collect.
- including sustainability data in decision-making is more impactful than adding more layers to your data pool.

Poor data quality and quantity are frequently referenced as companies' greatest internal challenges in implementing sustainability (13% of executives).

Only 56% of executives feel they will have the correct data (quality and quantity) within two to three years.

**53%** of companies have already invested in data analytics to help manage and improve their sustainability efforts.

"

To standardise data management from decentralised data, we need to invest more in the workforce, databases, and robust software solutions and licenses.

Director of ESG in a Retail Company in the US

### Identify and map out your different data needs for sustainability. While much will be required for ESG reporting, what information do you need today to take action and invest?

Don't suffer from paralysis by analysis (or pre-analysis). Consider Pareto's principle in decision-making, where the last 20% of the data set will take 80% of the time. Keep your ESG material issues and targets in mind to prevent yourself from getting lost along the way.

**67% of companies see their market size grow due to sustainability.** Don't let ESG reporting and disclosure be the limit of your data needs. Consider questions like, 'How does embedding sustainability into the customer experience change buying patterns?'

Fancy and new technologies are only sometimes needed to achieve your goals. For example, while almost half (47%) of executives indicate that they plan to invest in blockchain solutions for sustainability, 35% indicate that they are yet to explore blockchain. Nota bene: blockchain isn't the goal; transparency is.



What if ESG reporting was done automatically and instantaneously?

With over <u>half a billion dollars</u> invested in environmental data startups in just the first six months of 2021, it's easy to see the scale of resources flowing to ESG data collection, management, analytics, and more. Through sensors, IoT, AI, machine learning, and other 4IR tech, it may eventually reach a point where ESG data is observed in real time. If you no longer needed to spend resources on reporting, where would you focus your efforts?



What if you knew where every product you ever sold was at this moment?

Technology may allow us to track and trace where every product, component, and <u>even atom</u> are from the point they leave the factory. What would you do with that information? New business models? New product designs? New partnerships? New lawyers? If you expected this to be the case in five years, what would you change about the products and services you have on the market today?



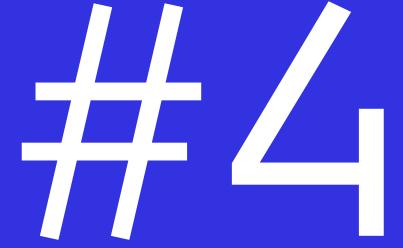
What if data flew openly across value chains?

Data access, aggregation, and alignment present some of the greatest challenges in sustainability today. What if you had access to any ESG data point from your value chain at your fingertips? This would require new ways of thinking about data sharing, firewalls, and partnership agreements but could have profound implications for finding new, collaborative opportunities.

Observation #4

# The current level of collaboration is insufficient in ambition and creativity.





82%

of leaders collaborate with potential competitors to tackle sustainability challenges, while only ...

36%

of laggards do. These different collaboration levels are a reality across the whole ecosystem - shown with local communities (82% vs 54%), strategic partners (74% vs 26%), and supply chains (70% vs 50%).

Yes, it's never been more critical to work on true, open, and systemic collaboration in the pursuit of sustainability, but ...

- much of the collaboration today is still within the company's four walls and between departments.
- finding the right partners in a crowded and constantly evolving landscape is difficult.
- establishing trust, sharing IP, and investing in new relationships is risky and costly.

Only 52% of companies collaborate with strategic partners to improve their sustainability practices.

1 in 3 companies formally engage their suppliers in their sustainability efforts.

2 in 3 executives indicate that their sustainability efforts have positively impacted their relationships with stakeholders.



That's a part of the strategy of how we market and share our goals with likeminded partners. The critical question is – 'How do you partner with them on joint sustainability ventures and engage with them?'

Chief Technology Officer in a Technology Company in the US

Venture outside your comfort zone and collaborate across departments (internally), industries, value chains, and sectors. It takes work, but it's the only way forward.

54% of executives indicate that they contract externally to collaborate with industry and value chain peers. Whether process or product focused, collaboration with other organisations is difficult in the beginning. Identify trusted allies to design a partnership strategy.

60% of companies work with industry partnerships to develop practices and approaches to sustainability challenges. While the sustainability team has subject matter expertise, involve colleagues from around the company in sustainability partnerships to gain buy-in and recognise their interest and expertise.

52% of executives view their efforts to drive sustainability with their suppliers as an opportunity to grow the business relationship. This type of collaboration requires trust, which once established will create a foundation for the relationship to evolve into one of a more strategic nature.



What if every company had a Chief Collaboration Officer?

Sustainable transformations will require collaborations on a scale not seen today. These collaborations will require establishing trust, listening, and sharing for the benefit of something greater than a single enterprise. With the quantity and quality of partnerships that a company will contribute to, it may be constructive to have oversight and accountability for ambitious, productive collaboration in the C-suite and at the board level.



What if the best strategies were designed with your value chain?

Businesses are highly effective in creating and executing strategies for themselves. What if you could improve innovation and mitigate risk and uncertainty by working with your suppliers and customers in co-creating value chain strategies? Known-unknowns and unknown-unknowns alike may be identified and addressed in bringing in partners who have greater visibility in other parts of the value chain.



What if collaborations could raise public funding?

ESG-integrated funds saw investments of <u>USD \$500B</u> in 2021. Across equity, green bonds, mutual funds, and ETFs, there is rapid growth in the allocation of capital in a more sustainable direction. With the scale and ambition of collaborations expected to grow, there may be a need for novel ways to raise public funding. What if you could raise funding for a collaboration without M&A, a joint venture, or a company-specific green bond?

Observation #5

### Companies must do a better job engaging employees in sustainability.





83%

of companies at the higher end of the spectrum are more likely to give performance-based compensation to their staff compared to ...

19% at the lower end

This creates a **virtuous cycle**, where 64% of leaders are pressured by their employees to continue their sustainability efforts, vs 53% of laggards.

Yes, the sustainability department is important in strategising and monitoring sustainable performance, but ...

- until all employees are involved in the company's sustainable transformation, they will be resistant to change.
- employees should be equipped with foundational education to not only support but also drive sustainable change across the company.
- both top-down and bottom-up efforts should be taken to create a culture of empowerment and accountability.

Only 37% of companies formally engage their staff in their sustainability efforts and seek their perspectives.

**35%** of companies reimburse all staff based on the company's sustainability performance.

**49%** of executives indicate that lack of employee knowledge and training is one of the greatest challenges the company faces in sustainability.



Every department works around sustainability; I don't think anyone is excluded. Every department is integrated into our sustainability strategy.

VP of Corporate Responsibility in a Transportation Company in Norway

### Almost universally, company leadership sees their sustainability efforts as more successful than do their stakeholders.

23% of companies don't engage their employees in their sustainability efforts at all. In a time where employee engagement and retention are creating havoc for businesses globally, inviting staff to be part of your company's sustainability efforts will have a positive impact on your company.

60% of executives are confident that their company will address the lack of training, experience, and knowledge in the next 2-3 years. Build a plan to educate, equip, and engage staff in sustainability and embed it within the employee experience.

Clear and demonstrated purpose paired with committed and transparent leadership affect organisational change better than most other strategies. Employees increasingly look for purpose at work. They will follow inspirational leaders with a compelling purpose.



What if your board had the diversity of your company and community?

There are <u>major gaps</u> between how successful sustainability efforts are viewed between executives and employees. Almost universally, stakeholders perceive a company's sustainability efforts to be less successful than a company's leadership. Perhaps board rooms could benefit from more diverse perspectives in the conversation whether by gender, race, age, or stakeholder type?



What if people lived more sustainably because of where they worked?

For years, many businesses have offered discounts and incentives for employees to commute to work. With the changes in working patterns and employees seeking purpose at work, companies may find that they can reduce environmental impacts of their employees and the company with sustainable lifestyle incentives for their people.



What if sustainability was designed throughout the employee experience?

90% of employees engaged in a company's sustainability efforts say it improved their job satisfaction and views of the company. Instead of siloing sustainability to a department or the responsibility of a few, a company may find greater environmental impact and employee retention by getting people from around the company involved in its sustainability efforts. Councils, committees, and forums are a few options.

### A <u>map</u> to design your transformation.



The five observations are indications for your company to define its path to becoming a more sustainable organisation. However, how to activate them might not be that obvious.

> As companies embark on this journey towards transformation, they often need help to bring their aspirations to their strategy and innovation plans.

Sustainability requires an intentional effort to want to change. It should be at the core of any new product or service, process redesign, or improvement of your employees' experience. It should affect your decision-making and innovation portfolio.

Through our research, we've identified two dimensions companies use to successfully design their transition to become more sustainable and a set of principles guiding them. Together they define a map that can be integrated into your current strategic framework.

### Collaborative **Pre-Competitive Solutions Shared Value Solutions** From Profitable to Resilient From Passive to Proactive Sustainable innovations that improve Sustainable innovations that multiple internal processes for multiple companies put into the market, such as companies, such as standards and new ventures. protocols. **Proposition Process Process Solutions Proprietary Solutions** From Efficient to Regenerative From Incremental to Inspired Sustainable innovations that improve Sustainable innovations that one internal processes for a company, such company puts into the market, such as as platforms and calculators. products and services. Unilateral

The map provides a structure for designing a sustainable transition that can be integrated into existing strategic frameworks.

The map is defined by two axes:

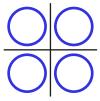
- Focus: connecting Process and Proposition re-imagination.
- **Involvement**: connecting Unilateral and Collaborative endeavours.

These two axes frame four kinds of innovation spaces that a company can invest in:

- Process Solutions: sustainable innovations that improve internal processes for a company.
- **Proprietary Solutions**: sustainable innovations that one company launch to the market.
- **Pre-Competitive Solutions**: sustainable innovations that enhance internal processes for multiple companies.
- Shared Value Solutions: sustainable innovations that numerous companies launch to the market.

Through this map, you can zoom in to assess your current actions and connect them with further opportunities or widen the lens to define a strategy oriented by our set of principles.

There's never just one way for you to navigate the matrix and your progress across these quadrants, but here are a few guiding principles that might help.



### **Nuances**

There is more than one way you can navigate this matrix during your sustainability transformation. But you can't be considered truly sustainable unless you're active in all four spaces.

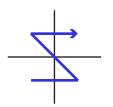
Most companies start with Process Solutions before moving on to Shared Value Solutions. Those more advanced have successfully activated the Shared Value space through collaboration.

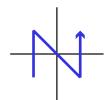


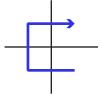
### Learning by doing

Within each quadrant and innovation type, companies evolve as they integrate sustainability into the core of what they sell and who they are.

There is an evolution in maturity inside each quadrant. It generally means a deeper integration of sustainability and the reimagination of processes and propositions.







### **Paths**

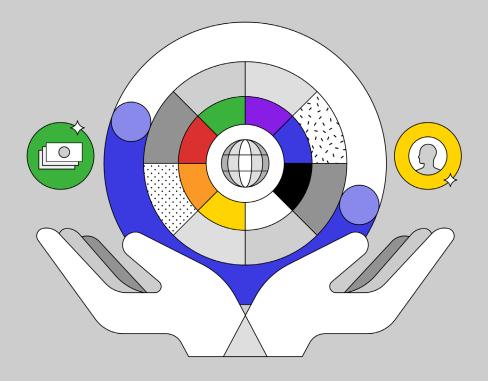
Because resources are limited, companies need to prioritise their actions and investments. As a result, patterns emerge around how companies establish and scale sustainability efforts internally and externally.

	mprove internal process	es for multiple companies, such as standards and protocols	Sustainable innovations t		onto the market, such as new ventures
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The <u>map</u> enables you to integrate sustainability into your current strategic framework for a balanced, intentional innovation portfolio.

Want to know more? We'd love to hear from you. Get in touch to understand how this framework can help you map where you are and where innovation can help you.

### Conclusion



### Progress towards a more sustainable future is necessary, but how to get there is rarely straightforward.

Moving from ambition to action takes more than commitment and passion. As with any other corporate transformation, it needs to be carefully thought out and designed.

You need to know where you are and the path ahead. You need to understand the most relevant opportunity spaces for a better impact on people, planet, and profit. Finally, you need to integrate sustainability-oriented innovation into your strategic planning.

Throughout this report, we've framed our perspective to approach this process, leveraging more than thirty years of experience using design-led innovation to ignite shared progress.

This is a complex topic to cover. But by sharing this report with you, we hope we've ignited a conversation. A conversation that has led you to a new perspective, a unique insight or a new way of thinking about sustainability and design-led innovation.

And we'd love to keep the conversation going. So, if you have any thoughts, ideas, or questions, let us know.