

# 4D StartUp Sustainability Canvas User Guide

Complete the 4 quadrants of the 4D Sustainability Canvas by answering the questions related to Community, Governance, Planet and Team. For example under Community if the answer to the question "How do you contribute to the local community where you operate?" is "We do not contribute at all", you may highlight it as an area where the company could take action.



## COMMUNITY

Create a healthy and just society along the value chain including suppliers, partners, customers and local communities. Leave no one behind.

- How do you contribute to the local community where you operate?
- How could you engage local and marginalised communities as suppliers in the supply chain?
- How does your company generate employment considering the population nearby?
- How do you ensure transparency in your supply chain?
- How could you improve the social and environmental impact of your suppliers/subcontractors?
- Could your product solve an environmental or social problem for/through your customer?
- Could underrepresented groups use your product/service? If not, how could they become your customers? (people of colour; people with disabilities; people from a lower socioeconomic status; LGBTQ+; people of a nondominant religion; and retirees.)
- How do you ensure that the impact and value created for the customer is real? How do you measure social impact?
- How can your competitors become your collaborators?



## TEAM

Unleash the power of a high-performing team through an inclusive, inspiring and diverse workplace.

- Do you plan to pay minimum living wage to all employees?
- How could you promote and ensure wage transparency in the organisation?
- How does the management take care of employee health, well-being and safety?
- How clear are the roles and responsibilities within the team?
- How can your start-up enable continuous formation and improvement for the team members to reach their highest potential?
- How could you prevent any forms of violence at work, including verbal and/or physical abuse?
- How can you create a business culture that fosters diversity in people, relationships, ideas and approaches?
- How are you planning to ensure diversity and inclusion as the team grows (considering gender, sex, gender-identity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, race, color, ethnic or national origin, nationality)?

## What's your expectation from taking the sustainability path?

It can range from obtaining a competitive advantage (which can lead to customer loyalty or attract impact investors) to a new source of revenue. It is important that every team member has that answer in mind when it comes to identifying and planning the actions that the company will decide to take.



## GOVERNANCE

Have structures and processes in place that will enable real impact creation, transparent operations and authentic leadership.

- How does the values, mission and vision statement of your company align with a sustainable and just future and regeneration of the Planet? And how do you make sure your team acts according to them?
- How are you planning an equal and just allocation of profits? (e.g. establish dividend policy, re-invest in a sustainability related projects or business-driven poverty eradication activities, make all employees shareholders)
- How do you make sure that investors support value creation for the planet and the society instead of extracting value from nature and transforming it into wealth for them? (e.g. consider impact investors and allocation of profits to causes that regenerate the Earth)
- How are you engaging all stakeholders about your social and environmental performance (e.g. impact measurement KPIs, reports, communication materials etc)?
- How does your business model align with circular and regeneration principles?
- How do you ensure ethical business conduct? (e.g. anti-bribery policy, anti-slavery act, ethics policy, data privacy)
- Could your know-how form part of a cross-sector and cross-organizational collaboration in knowledge production and design processes such as open policies and open licences, open education, open source, open standards, and open science, open innovation?



## PLANET

Operate within planetary boundaries. Reduce and mitigate negative environmental impact and contribute to the regeneration of lands, biosphere and animal species.

- How does your company measure and reduce the GHG footprint of its employees/operations/premises? (if you are service provider consider scope 3 emissions such as travel, financial services, purchase of goods and services)
- How do you minimise and plan to eliminate the digital CO2 footprint of your start-up?
- How much waste does your business produce and how could you reduce or eliminate it? (think of solid waste, food waste and electronic waste)
- How could you ensure environmentally responsible and socially equitable water use? (e.g. minimise fresh water consumption and discharges, avoid water pollution and protect water-stressed areas)
- How could you step up from compliance to a stronger commitment to responsible sourcing practices? (e.g. include environmental criteria in the selection criteria, educate suppliers on environmental protection and compliance)
- Have you considered obtaining energy efficiency/eco/fair trade/B corp or other type of sustainability certifications?
- How do you engage employees and suppliers in climate education and action?



### VALUE CHAIN

What are your main activities?  
Who are your stakeholders?

**4D StartUp Sustainability Canvas**

