A world map where the landmasses are filled with a dense pattern of vibrant green leaves, symbolizing nature and sustainability. The background is a light, muted green.

S.H.A.R.E. ©

A powerful strategy framework for
sustainable technology business

NEOSTABILITY® CONSULTING

Berlin, May 2020

Why sustainability business must become an opportunity for everyone.

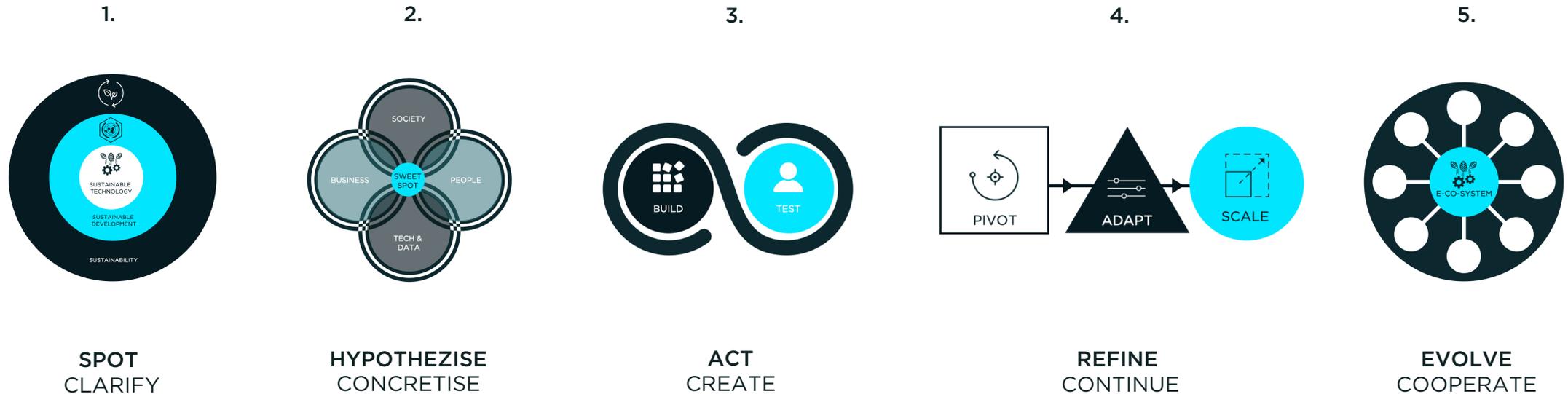
The sustainability topic is all over the place. Politics, economy and society all around the globe are heavily discussing the need for a true shift in how we treat the global resources and create better sustainable behaviour in order to take responsibility for the next generations and help mankind and the earth to survive.

With sustainability though there are a few challenges: on the one hand sustainability has an abstract and generic meaning and on the other there is a wide context in which you can understand sustainability. Science wise there is no single definition and if you ask 20 experts you will get as many interpretations. In 2015, the United Nations have created guidance with their blueprint of 17 sustainable development goals which at least makes it easier to frame the term and clarify the areas of future development.

Lately many new and innovative companies and consultancies try to find new opportunities that have a positive environmental and societal impact on the one hand and gain profitable business success on the other. In this context the term Sustainable Technology is gaining more and more attention, although a clear understanding and common sense, what Sustainable Technology really means, is still missing.

But how can not only specialised Startups find new and profitable business opportunities in sustainability? How can almost everyone be part of this new future thinking behaviour? The framework I recently developed is an attempt to help communities, Startups and incumbents alike, to find the right starting point, strategy and systemised process for successful sustainability initiatives. By applying the framework, many could be empowered in creating, realising and scaling solutions – a sustainable, democratised transition could be achieved – at scale. That's the simple idea of it.

The Sustainability Strategy Model S.H.A.R.E.®



As introduced, finding the right starting point and relevant area of action as well as implementation process you need a framework that is comprehensive, easy to assess, fast and lean in execution, impactful, as well as it needs to be independent from any sustainability topic or idea. The framework presents five steps you can follow:

1. Clarify ---- 2. Concretise ---- 3. Create ---- 4. Continue ---- 5. Cooperate

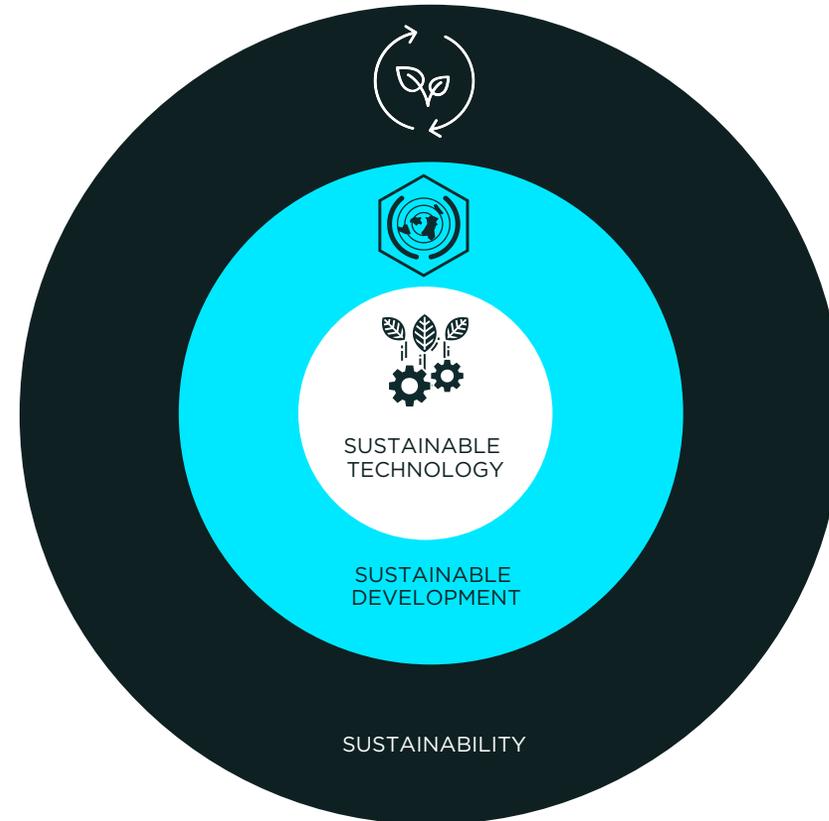
Step 1 – Clarify

The first module aims for a solid kick-off, basic starting point and as an end result: a first vision and commitment. This step gives you opportunities to discuss, reflect and choose on three different levels and define your starting point for your initiative.

1. Clarify the terms, purpose and meaning of sustainability in your company or initiative to gain a common sense what you are talking about and what you want to achieve.
2. In order to not be misled by any hype or overwhelmed by the generic term and complex topic, choose your primary playing field. Decide where you want to start: pick your battle.
3. Frame the vision and scope for your initiative and even if early in stage, frame it as specific as possible.



It is no problem to later get back to step 1 and adjust your initial vision as you learned and gained more insights along the way.



Step 1 – Clarify | Level 1



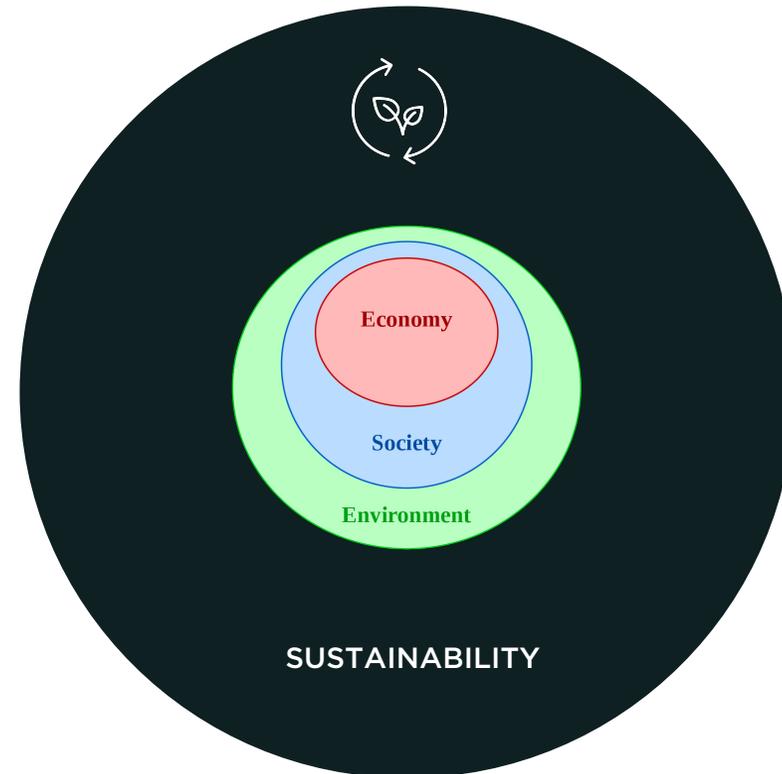
You can find multiple information sources on general areas and components of sustainability, i.e. economic, societal or environmental sustainability on the internet.

LEVEL 1: CLARIFY YOUR VISION

Create a general understanding of your meaning and purpose of sustainability. Do not start without discussing the term and perception what sustainability exactly means for you and your company or community. As there is no singular and unique definition available, it is crucial to clarify the basics first, before diving into any solution thinking.

Once you have reflected in your group, frame a sustainability meta sentence for your first level.

- A. Sustainability for us means _____.
- B. We want to make impact in the area of _____.
- C. The following terms and statements we would like to use as keywords that lead our development journey:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. _____



Step 1 – Clarify | Level 2

LEVEL 2: CLARIFY YOUR SCOPE

The **United Nations** have created the a comprehensive sustainable development goals framework that has been globally introduced and already raised commitment by governments and enterprises.

„The **Sustainable Development Goals** are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.“ (United Nations)

You can find detailed information on the 17 goals here:
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

The blueprint offers you the possibility to become more specific and define the building blocks where you want to create impact.



An additional advantage when using this established blueprint: it is easier to communicate the development goals internally and externally and gain credibility already at an early stage.



Step 1 – Clarify | Level 3



Remember: it is no problem to later get back to the contexts and adjust your initial determination as you learned and gained more insights along the way.

Level 3: CLARIFY YOUR TECH CONTEXT

Sustainable Technology is not a clearly defined term. When talking about Sustainable Technology I recommend to define the meaning of „tech“ within your individual context. Here some suggestions:

1. A technology that is sustainable (i.e. value chain, components, energy use)

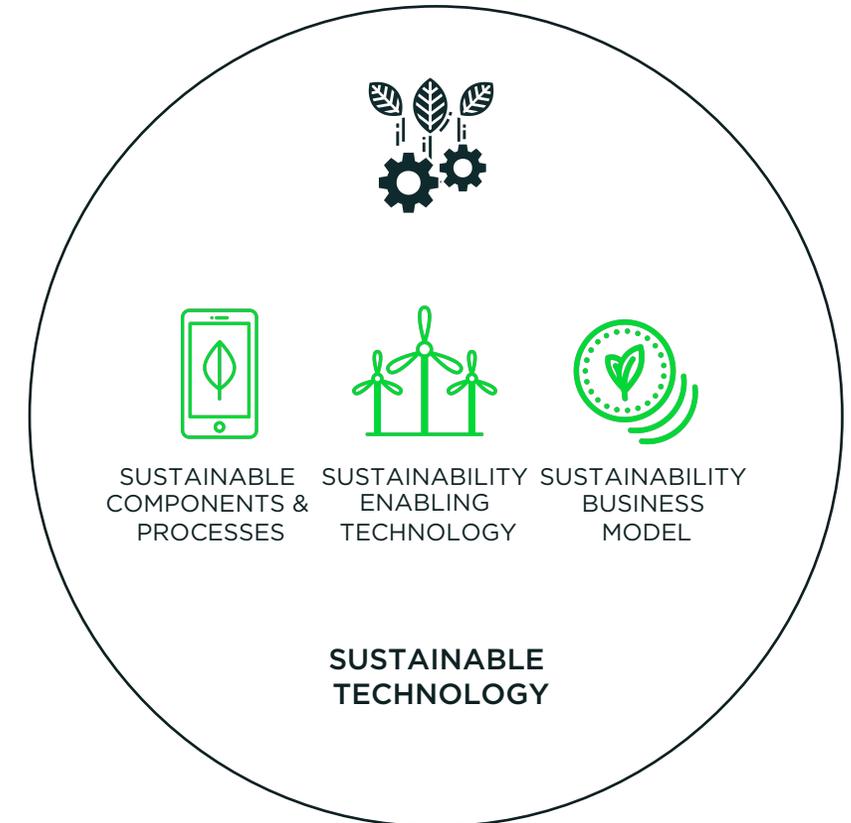
An example is the company **Method** who have defined their entire value creation chain, resource strategy and components to be as sustainable as possible. They are innovation leaders in the **cradle-to-cradle (C2C)** segment

2. A technology that enables the achievement of sustainability in economy/society/community

An example is the company **Solarkiosk**, providing solar energy to the rural areas or **TOMRY**, active in the field of recycling systems and who defined their vision and future business in the field of **Circular Economy**.

3. Business models in the field of sustainability that utilize new technologies

An example is **Microsoft**, investing in using AI for social good and sustainability. The AI for Earth program creates and tests innovative AI applications. **Imago.AI** released Phenox, an AI-powered plant breeding virtual assistant providing instant measurements of the complex traits of your crops and improving breeder's experiences.



Step 2 - Concretise

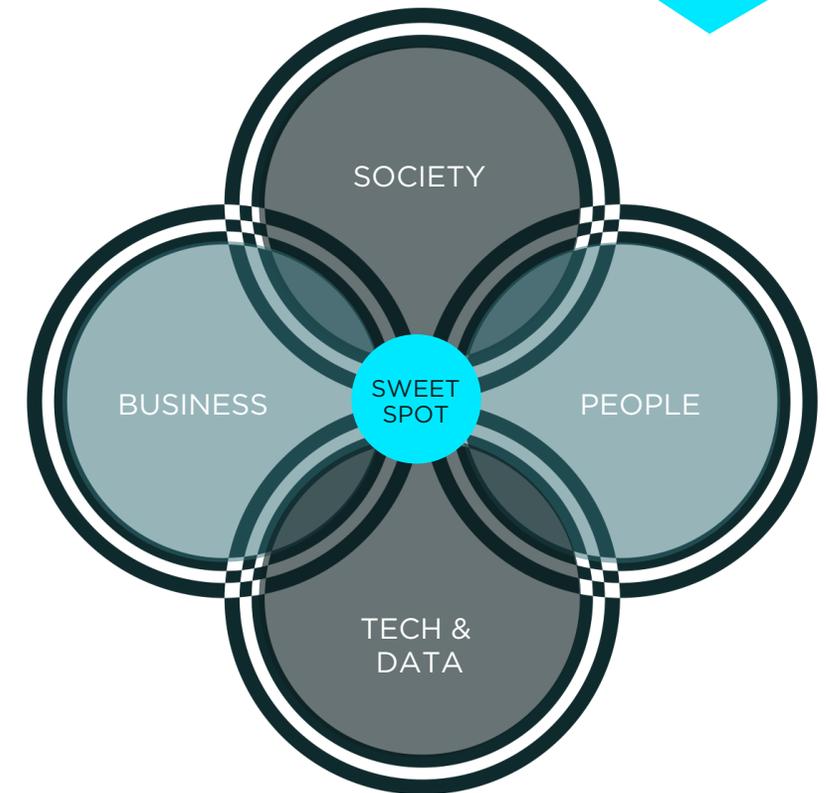
DEFINE THE 4 VALUE CREATION AREAS AND FIND YOUR SWEET SPOT

A successful and profitable sustainability initiative needs to create value at various levels. Hypothesize what the value creation will be in the four areas: people, society, business and tech. Your success story lies the sweet spot. You can create this by doing some basic research or starting with a best guess and hypothesis. As there will be an evaluation phase in the next step, you do not need to go into heavy details at this point. Remember, we want to keep the process fast and lean.

1. **PEOPLE:** What is the impact/value creation for your potential customer? Developing a **Persona** is one way to find a customer to start with.
2. **SOCIETY:** You do not only have your paying customer base but also the societal environment you need to serve. What is the impact and value creation for society? This is crucial, as here the **scalability** of your sustainability effort is manifested.
3. **BUSINESS:** What is the impact/value creation from business perspective? How will you make profit, save costs, reduce resources, waste, or create any other **value** ... (that can be financially manifested – well, we talk business here ;-).
4. **TECH & DATA:** What is the set of (sustainable) technologies you can use to realise your concept? What is the data you need to setup and measure your initiative? Where will you find the data and what is the value that lies in the data itself?



There may be more criteria you want to add like SMART goals, resources, commercialisation or time frames. Be aware that you want to keep the process lean and get to a first prototype fast.



Step 3 - Create

CREATE YOUR SOLUTION LEAN AND VALIDATE EARLY.

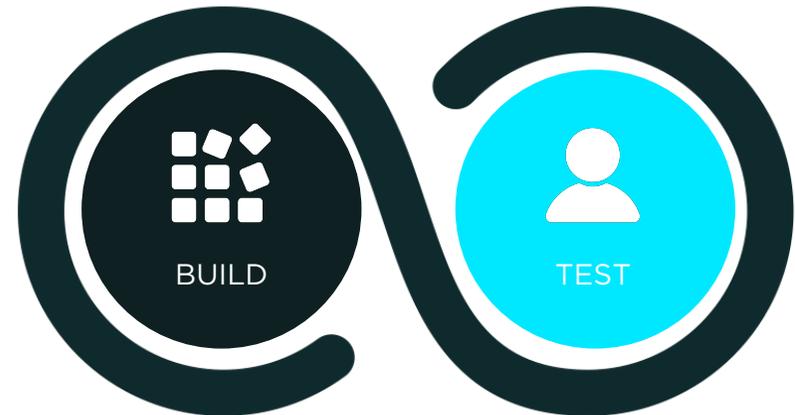
Innovative companies and digital Startups show us how you can build a prototype fast and take it to the market as soon as possible. The idea behind approach is to learn if there is a customer and market for your idea. Adapting the principles of ideation, rapid prototyping and testing instead of wasting too much time, money and other resources (i.e. in an extensive R&D process) is a great way to start your implementation as early as possible.

1. Ideate & build a Minimal Viable Product (MVP), service or prototype. Only build as much as needed to validate your hypothesis or idea. No more, no less. An MVP or prototype can be a paper prototype, an ad, a fake website. No need to already develop any heavy-weight technology or product at this stage.

2. Test your idea to a small but relevant group that represents your potential customer (your persona). Before testing you need to define what success means. An example: if 70% out of 20 users want to spend money for this idea you will continue. As a result from testing you will not only get direct feedback to your idea, you will also gain new insights. This feedback could take you to a pivot or an adoption of your idea. What this process of iterative workflow means, will be introduced in the next step. The magic in this step lies in a fast learning curve.



Don't be afraid to get „negative“ feedback. So-called failure here is highly relevant to learn more about your customer, your idea, and the potential problem you want to solve.



Step 4: Continue

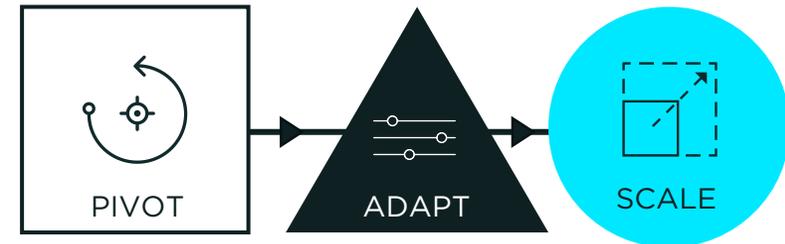
GET INTO A CONTINUOUS WORKFLOW.

Your iterative process and way of working will lead you to continuous validated results and next steps:

1. **Pivot:** your idea does not match the potential user or there is no market for your solution. You need to change your strategy or concept. This can happen several times before you find the right spot.
2. **Adapt:** you find your customer or market, but you need to make adjustments to find a better fit – this could be a new customer or another focus in your solution.
3. **Scale:** once you found your sweet spot and a customer and market fit, you can scale your solution from a small user group to a larger client or community base. Now you have reached the momentum to growth and potential success.



This iterative progress can take weeks, months, even years. Continuous adaptation is key as conditions might change. See your solution as an ever evolving concept.

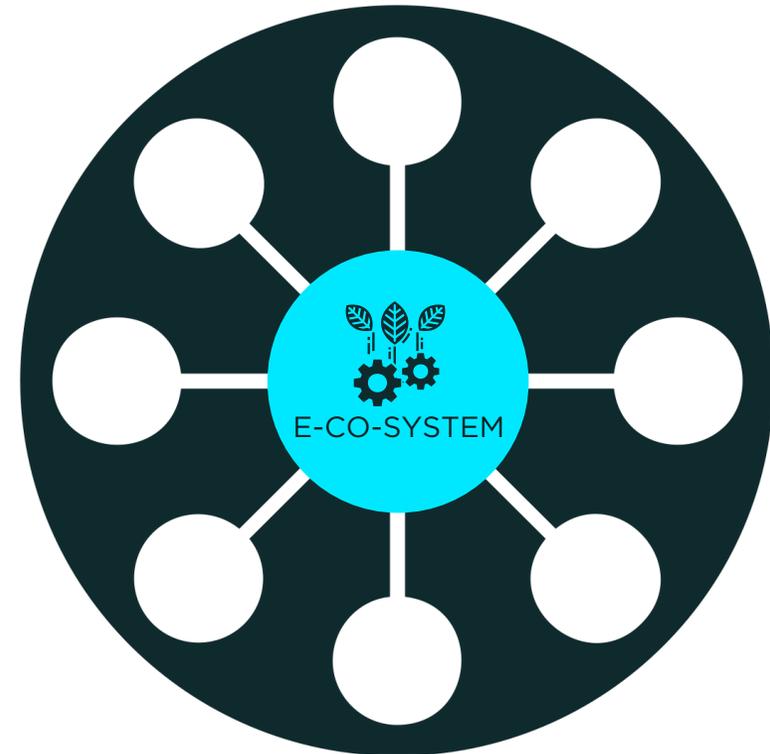


Step 5 – Cooperate

BUILD AN E-CO-SYSTEM.

In today's everchanging environments, no business or initiative can just live in a de-copuled or disconnected universe. Real sustainable impact comes from scaling on the one hand and interconnectivity on the other. Shaping an ecosystem contains three elements:

- 1. E-volvment:** taking the opportunity to continuously adapt, develop and grow your concept will help you to keep your solution alive and relevant.
- 2. Co-operation:** finding partners and a network where you can embed your concept or business model will lead to stronger impact and scaling opportunities. Partners and networks can add resources and access points that help your idea grow. Today it is not uncommon to even cooperate with competitors to make an idea really big.
- 3. Systems:** as a result of a well-managed ecosystem, something can grow, that is bigger than your single idea. Be aware: the more contributors you find in your ecosystem, the more complex, volatile and ambiguous the system gets. This can be a disadvantage but at the same time new unforeseen positive effects can derive from here.



Summary & Outlook

The **S.H.A.R.E.**® framework is strategic approach to find and implement successful sustainability initiatives. The concept helps to start-off, identify and manage opportunities and take them to success. The five steps make it easy to assess the topic in general, identify interesting opportunities, find a solution and drive the implementation process in a systematic and lean way. The model is an iterative, non linear, continuous process.

Purpose of this systemic approach is to enable communities, Startups and established companies alike to create sustainability initiatives and/or sustainability businesses and scale them – and thereby create a positive impact on mankind.

Feel invited to try out and test the framework. Feel free to comment and and share your feedback:
hello@neostability.com

Last but not least some (self-)critical thoughts around the idea and framework:

For philosophical and critical thinkers, there might be considerations, if sustainability as such really exists or can at all be achieved. What sustainability means depends on individual values, perspectives and human ethics. Additionally the impact of related initiatives must be seen in their individual context and period of time. As conditions are constantly changing, sustainability is never a static state or end result. This is the reason why sustainability related strategies also need be contextual, adaptive and flexible.

Furthermore, all our behaviour has consequences – the intended and unintended ones. As everything in the world is interconnected, the impact of sustainability activities or sustainable technology always comes with positive as well as negative side effects. This makes sustainability complex and unpredictable. Data-driven and AI-based support can help to simulate and measure the effects of current behaviour. This is why tech and data as well as measuring and modeling actions will be essential when it comes to managing and scaling sustainability initiatives.

Approaches like [S.H.A.R.E.®](#) that help to identify, implement and scale opportunities, are just first attempts to explore and manage sustainable behaviour in a systematic way. This concept of course needs continuous development, evaluation and critical reflection.

Links & Sources

Sustainability

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainability>

Bibliography of sustainability

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliography_of_sustainability

United Nations - Sustainable Development Goals

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

Sustainability in a Digital World

https://www.thomasosburg.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Sustainability_in_a_Digital_World.pdf

What is sustainable technology?

<http://www.being-here.net/page/6775/what-is-sustainable-technology>

8 Best Sustainable Tech Products

<https://www.independent.co.uk/extras/indybest/gadgets-tech/best-sustainable-tech-products-a8578686.html>

The 10 Fastest Growing Green Startups in 2018

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/021116/10-fastest-growing-green-startups-2016.asp>

Using digital tech to spin the circular economy

https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/Outlook/Documents/2/Accenture-Outlook-Using-Digital-Tech-Spin-Circular-Economy.pdf#zoom=50

Life cycle thinking

https://www.st.com/content/st_com/en/about/st_approach_to_sustainability/sustainability-priorities/sustainable-technology.html

Introduction to cradle to cradle

<https://www.deutschland.de/de/topic/umwelt/cradle-to-cradle-statt-recycling-das-sind-die-vorteile>

Cradle to cradle – a concept for an ideal circular economy

<https://www.fairplanet.org/story/cradle-to-cradle-a-concept-for-an-ideal-circular-economy/>

The Most Sustainable Companies In 2019

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/karstenstrauss/2019/01/22/the-most-sustainable-companies-in-2019/#7f52a8e6d7da>

TOMRA – Leading the resource revolution

<https://www.tomra.com>

Method – People against dirty

<https://methodhome.com>

Solarkiosk- Supplying integrated solar solutions to businesses

<https://www.solarkiosk.eu/solutions/turnkey-solution-sales-of-solar-powered-technology/>

AI for Social Good: 7 Inspiring Examples

<https://www.springboard.com/blog/ai-for-good/>

Microsoft – AI for Earth

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/ai>

Imago.AI – Automating your Plant Breeding Pipeline

<http://www.imagoai.com>

About the author



Vanessa Schmoranzer is a senior strategist, innovation and transformation expert with 20 years of professional business experience. She has helped multiple companies from large enterprise to SME to Startups to shape, re-think, re-invent or transform. She acts as a consultant and coach and in CSO (Strategy), CINO (Innovation) and CxO (Transformation) roles.

Vanessa is a public speaker and lecturer, inventor of the Neostability Model, The Disruptive Innovation Maturity Self-Assessment framework and mentor at the German Tech Entrepreneurship Center GTEC. Her personal fields of interest are adaptive strategy, systemic development and complexity management. She is a design lover, metropolist, urban street art fan and passionate golfer.

Contact

Want to learn more about the [S.H.A.R.E.®](#) framework or share your feedback? Get in touch and book a feedback session, lecture or workshop.

NEOSTABILITY® CONSULTING

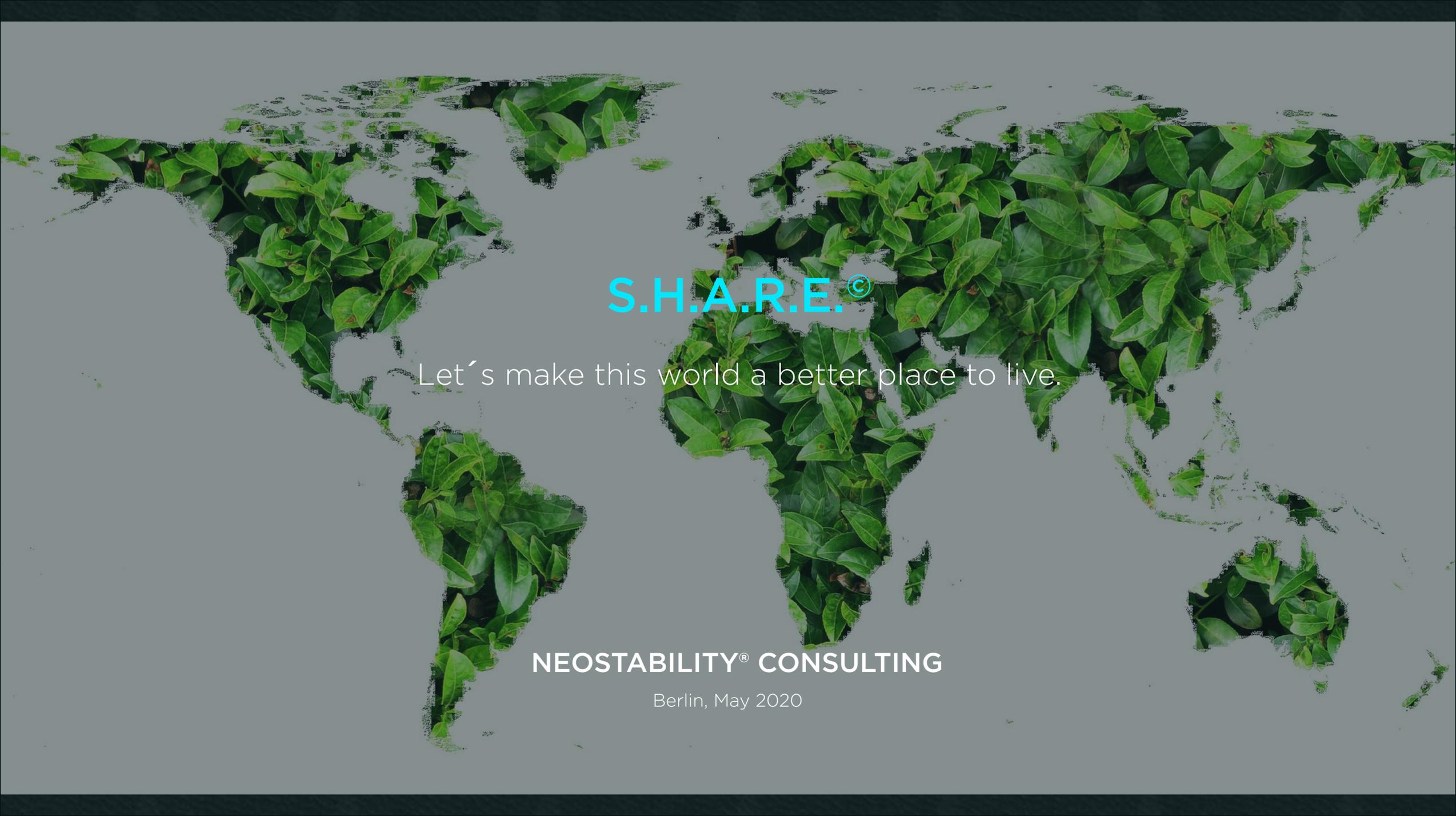
Vanessa Schmoranzer
hello@neostability.com

Linkedin:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/vanessaschmoranzer/>

Xing:

https://www.xing.com/profile/Vanessa_Schmoranzer/



S.H.A.R.E. ©

Let's make this world a better place to live.

NEOSTABILITY® CONSULTING

Berlin, May 2020

Thank you.