– Sustainable Development Kit–

Thinking about my entrepreneurial project at 360°

A guide by the Foundation for Future Generations

An initiative of

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FGF

The Foundation for Future Generations supports and funds research, prototypes and start-ups with a positive impact. It thus empowers young people who propose solutions for a fairer, more viable and more sustainable world.

YET - hub.brussels

This Sustainable Development Kit was produced with the support of *Young Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow*, an initiative of hub.brussels, the Brussels agency for entrepreneurship.

INTRO – Kit

Who is this Kit for?

This Kit is aimed at **entrepreneurs** who want to make their projects more sustainable.

This Kit allows you to assess your projects and to place your future actions within a sustainable development perspective. It will also help you identify which changes can be made in how your projects are organised.

What is this Kit?

This document offers a "Kit" approach to help you better understand sustainable development (SD) and put it into practice by integrating it into your entrepreneurial project. It provides a "roadmap" to apply to your business project.

It is mainly designed as a **tool to be used during a project's design phase**, but it can also be applied at other stages.

This Kit is a methodological tool that helps you become familiar with sustainable development by analysing, enriching and assessing a concrete project. It lets you look at your project through "sustainable" glasses. The various activities help participants better understand the importance of sustainable development and offer ideas for how to better integrate it into their projects.

You can do the exercise alone, but in a group, everyone's participation fosters involvement, motivation and creativity! Imagined together, the new directions for your project will be owned by the whole team.

What does this Kit contain and how do you use it?

This Kit offers you a general approach broken down into 5 steps. Each step corresponds to **an activity**, designed to help you step back, question your choices and gradually build a **sustainable, 360° vision** into your project.

The aim is to give you a **clear framework** to challenge your actions, identify levers of impact and anchor sustainability at the heart of your approach. This Kit thus guides you **step by step in developing the sustainability dimension of your project**, whatever its level of maturity.

The 5 steps can be followed in order, which is recommended for a first use, but they can also serve as **reference points** to come back to from time to time to deepen or adjust your thinking.

Feel free to make this tool your own and to share your feedback and/or achievements with us.

THIS KIT IS FOR **ENTREPRENEURS** WHO WANT TO PUT SD AT THE HEART OF THEIR PROJECT

The startup **Lowpact** will be our running example throughout this Kit, to illustrate each activity as clearly as possible. **Lowpact** offers a responsible alternative to outdoor meals, so you can set off on an adventure with complete peace of mind. Their solution: **dehydrated meals** that combine convenience, taste and respect for the environment.

INTRO – Sustainable Development

Sustainable development means: **Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**[1]

This means being able to take into account, in the actions we take, both what is happening here and now and what is happening elsewhere and in the future. It forces us to consider and incorporate many more dimensions into our projects than we usually do.

At an international level, this holistic view of sustainable development is embodied, in particular, by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They provide a common framework for addressing social, environmental, economic and governance issues in an integrated manner.[2]

Sustainable development is traditionally described through **four main dimensions** that must be considered **SIMULTANEOUSLY** (***Planet, People, Prosperity & Participation***).

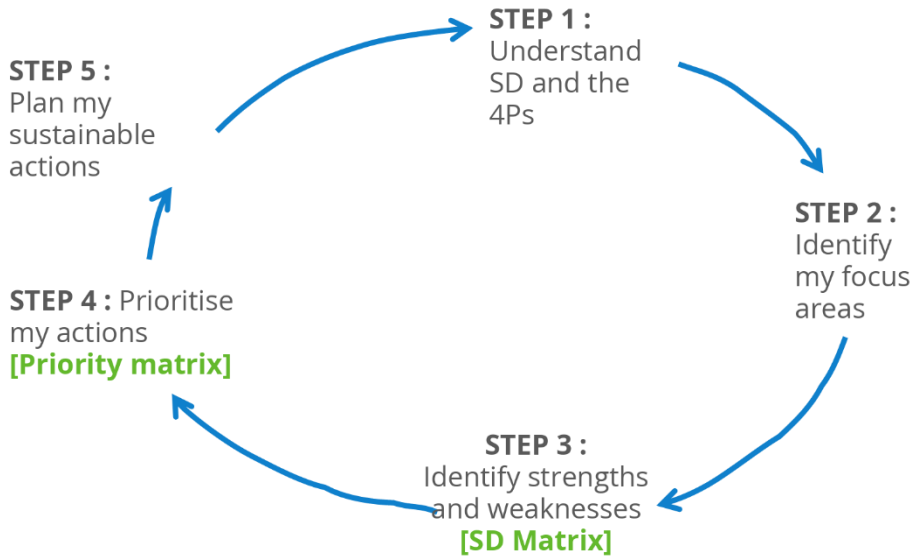
To be able to take these four dimensions into account, you first need to step back and get a 360° panoramic view of your project, with these four dimensions as cardinal points.

In our day-to-day lives, there is little to help us build this 360° view. On the contrary, everything is often compartmentalised (think of the different sections of a newspaper) and we lack the time and resources to do more.

All this keeps us moving forward "with our heads down" along a very narrow track that sometimes tends to make us go round in circles. Moving your organisation or project towards more sustainable development means, above all, being able to look up and take in your surroundings in a 360° view.

Building my 360° action plan

My approach at a glance



[1] Brundtland, G.H. (1987) Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Geneva, UN-Document A/42/427.

[2] For more information, visit the UNDP website *(United Nations Development Programme)*, at the following link: https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals

STEP 1 – Understanding the « 4P » model

To tackle these challenges in an increasingly complex world**, stakeholders must develop the capacity to manage this complexity**. A sustainable development model must adopt **a holistic, systemic, 360° approach** in its choices and practices, connecting the knowledge, perspectives and initiatives of different stakeholders. This means combining these four dimensions simultaneously and harmoniously:



We have noticed a recurring **confusion** between '*Profit*' and '*Prosperity*', as well as between '*People*' and '*Participation*'. Here are some clarifications regarding these terms:

💡 **PROSPERITY**

- **What it is:** An **economy that creates long-term value,** serving people and the planet.
- **What it is not:** It is not just a company's **financial profit**.
- **Keywords:** sustainable economic development, responsible innovation, decent work, circular economy, ...

👉 **Prosperity = How can we create wealth that is useful, fair and sustainable?**

🤝 **PARTICIPATION**

- **What it is:** Participation is about **the stakeholders' power to influence decisions:** participatory democracy, shared governance, genuine stakeholder involvement and **transparent communication** (with citizens, employees, partners, etc.).
- **What it is not:** It does not cover specific actions with a direct, immediate impact on people's well-being (health, education, working/living conditions, accessibility, fairness, non-discrimination, ...). These fall under *People*.
- **Keywords:** involvement, consultation, co-construction, transparency, empowerment, ...

👉 **Participation = Who has a say in decisions, and how?**

STEP 2 – Defining my focus areas

Choose three focus areas for each "P".

What is a focus area?

A broad or narrow topic that we want to focus on.

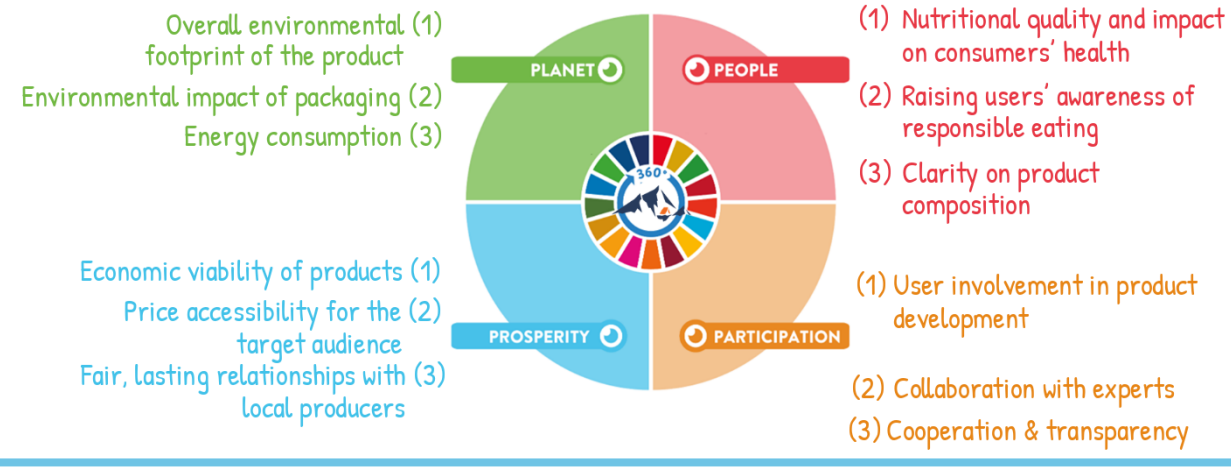
You will find examples of focus areas in Appendix 1, so feel free to draw inspiration from them!

A focus area does not propose any solution.

It is natural to want to jump straight to solutions and concrete actions, but it is essential that you step back and define your **areas of action** before spelling out your actions.

Your focus areas should not set the direction of your project, but simply define the **topics in which it will take root.**

Lowpact's 12 focus areas



STEP 3 – My strengths and weaknesses

Use the sustainable development matrix below to **identify your strengths and weaknesses in terms of sustainable impact**. The matrix below contains examples, but you will find a blank version in Appendix 2.

For each strength and weakness you identify, think through and **develop possible courses of action** to make things happen or improve them.

How do you use the matrix?	Each **column** corresponds to a **segment of your activities.** *Examples: Production, transport, marketing, end of life, operational management, etc.*
Each **row** corresponds to a **focus area,** according to a specific P.	It's at the intersection of these focus areas and segments that you can define **precise, concrete positive and/or negative impacts.**

Lowpact		Production, sales & service	R&D	End of product life
PLANET	Overall environmental footprint of the product	(+) Use of local ingredients and reduced meal weight		
	Environmental impact of packaging materials			(-) Plastic packaging
	Energy consumption		(+) Dehydration as a low-energy preservation technique	
PEOPLE	Nutritional quality and impact on consumers' health	(+) Healthy, practical meals suited to physical activity	(-) Lack of external nutritional expertise	(+) Raising users' awareness of respect for nature and the "leave no trace" principle
	Raising users' awareness of responsible eating			
	Clarity on product composition	(+) Clear information on the ingredients used		
PROSPERITY	Economic viability of the products	(-) Profitability still limited and yet to be developed	(+) Product innovation & market differentiation	
	Price accessibility for the target audience	(-) High unit prices		
	Fair, lasting relationships with local producers	(+) Favouring local producers		
PARTICIPATION	User involvement in product development	(+) Strong community of committed testers		(-) Limited involvement of stakeholders
	Collaboration with experts		(+) Academic and technical partnerships	
	Cooperation & transparency		(+) Collaborative, transparent team working	

Here are a few examples of possible actions:

- Develop compostable packaging that can withstand a boiling water.
- Optimise dehydration processes (time, temperature, energy).
- Co-create certain solutions with players in the outdoor sector.
- Create educational materials on sustainable outdoor food.
- Etc.

STEP 4 – Prioritise my actions

Now that you've thought about several possible actions, **identify the steps** involved in each one. Break each of your possible actions down into concrete, specific steps (contact..., research..., assess the HR and financial cost, ...).

Concrete steps to develop compostable packaging that can withstand a boiling water:

1) Carry out desk research on food safety standards and existing materials.
2) Identify potential suppliers.
3) Carry out technical tests (heat resistance, leak-proofing, food safety).
4) Assess production costs.
5) Run user tests in real-life conditions.
6) Make technical adjustments and final decisions.

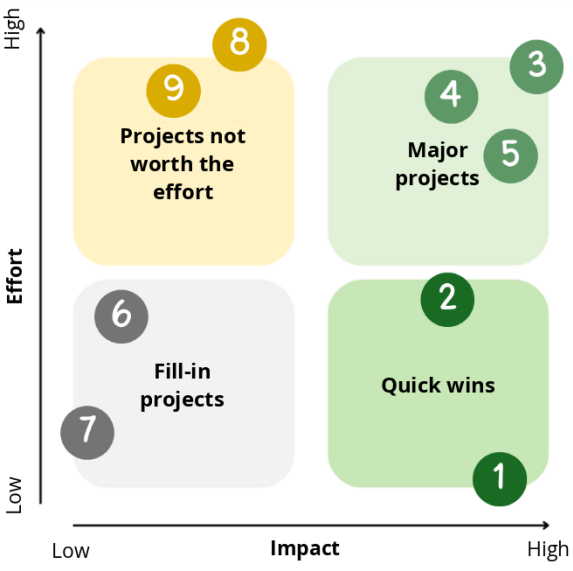
Once you've determined which steps are needed to carry out a project, it will be easier to gauge the effort your possible actions require.

It's now time to place your different possible actions in the **priority matrix** (Appendix 3). Rank your possible actions according to their **effort-impact ratio.**

It is important to look into the impact of your actions in more depth, using reliable sources.

Various frameworks exist that can help you strengthen your impact analysis. Among them, the "B Impact Assessment" and the "SDG Action Manager" are useful tools.

Lowpact's priority matrix



1. Organising field user tests.
2. Educational communication on the product's environmental impact.
3. Development of functional compostable packaging.*
4. Complete nutritional analyses in the laboratory.
5. Building strong partnerships with local producers and processors.
6. Graphic adjustments to the packaging.
7. Minor optimisations of the marketing messaging.
8. Premature rollout in international markets.
9. Setting up complex certifications before market launch.

* Switching to compostable packaging was initially seen as a high-impact, low-effort action. In practice, it proved to be very demanding in technical, financial and regulatory terms. The environmental impact is real, but the effort required is high, which shows the importance of relying on objective analyses and assessment tools.

STEP 5 – Implement my actions

Having sustainability ambitions is good, making them happen is better. To keep your work from gathering dust in a drawer, it's crucial that you integrate these actions into the rest of your entrepreneurial approach. Use the priority matrix to build your sustainable actions into your overall action plan.

Don't keep your sustainability plan apart from your "traditional" entrepreneurial planning. Add each step of your actions to your calendar using the project management tools you already use. Set realistic deadlines and stick to them.



For Lowpact, sustainability-related actions are built directly into the overall management of the entrepreneurial project. They are not treated as a separate component but as a common thread running through strategic, technical and economic decisions.

Management tools used:

- Weekly team meetings
- Task tracking boards (Kanban-style)
- Clear milestones linked to prototyping, testing and market launch

Timeline example:

- Spring 2024: Research on food safety standards and existing materials.
- Summer 2024: Identification of, and outreach to, potential suppliers.
- Autumn 2024: First user tests, impact analysis and consolidation of user feedback.
- Winter 2024-2025: Laboratory testing and packaging development.
- Spring 2025: Final technical choices (recyclable plastic packaging) and preparation for commercialisation.
- June 2025: Product launch and rescheduling of the development of compostable packaging.

Sustainability is not a separate plan. It must be built into every entrepreneurial decision from the outset, in order to create a project that is coherent, credible and resilient in the long term.

Appendices – My resources and templates

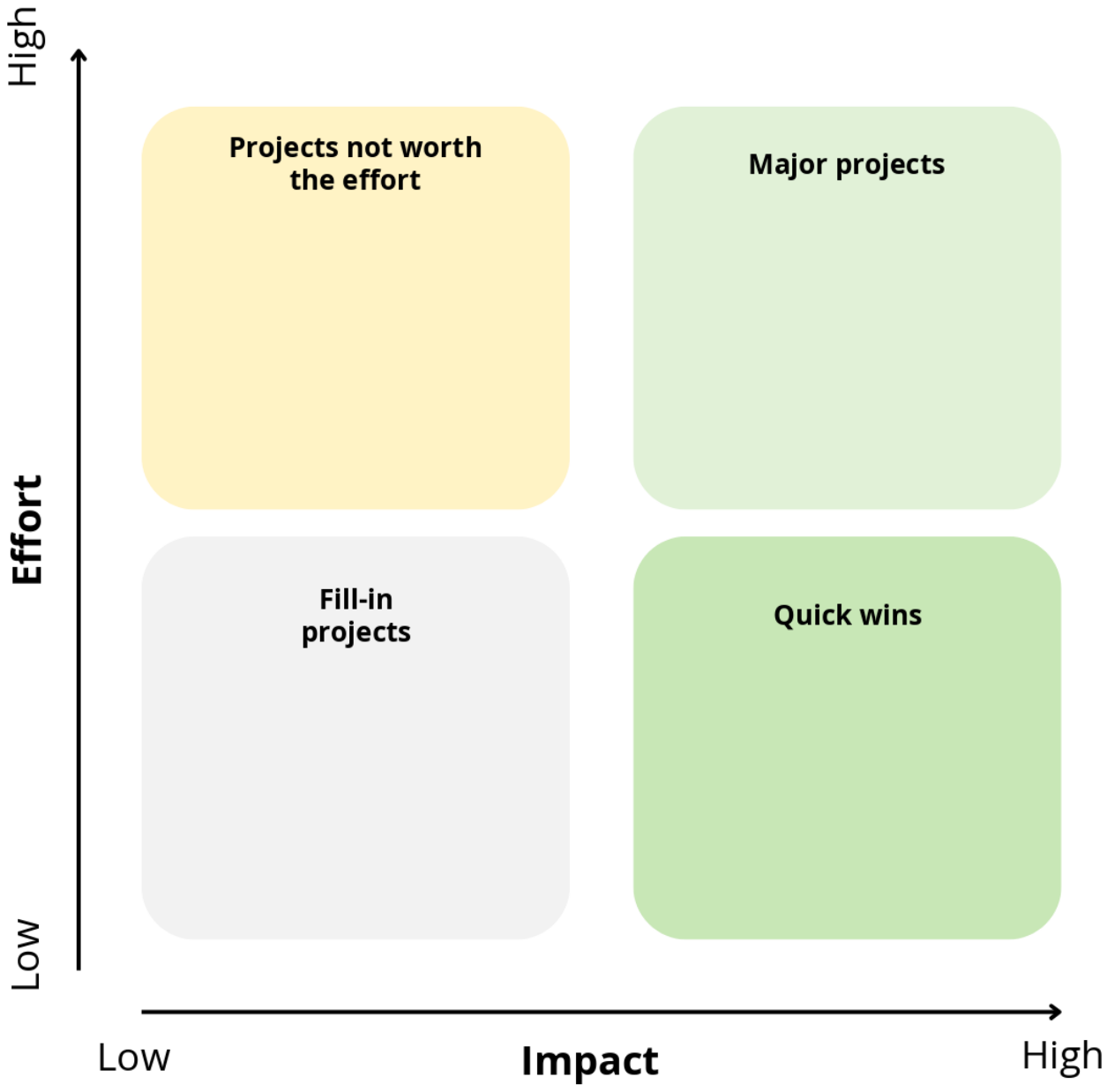
APPENDIX 1 - Examples of focus areas (non-exhaustive list)

PLANET	PEOPLE
• **Energy**: reduce consumption, avoid fossil fuels • **Food**: reduce the footprint of food on the planet • **Travel:** reduce the footprint of travel on the planet • **Waste management**: apply the 3R principle in all your activities (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Contribute to the circular economy • **Raw materials**: reduce the environmental impact of the raw materials you use • **Biodiversity**: have a positive impact on biodiversity • **Responsible use of IT**: be mindful of the impact of your use of IT (local storage and cloud usage: mailbox, photos, video, website, streaming, etc.) • **Eco-design** of your products throughout their life cycle • **Environmental labelling:** work towards different types of label to guide and showcase your efforts	• **Health:** do not have a negative impact on physical and mental health. • **Food:** have a positive impact on people through food-related aspects • **Disturbance:** reduce noise, light and other disturbances that affect well-being, ... • **Accessibility:** ensure the cultural, social, financial and physical accessibility of your activities, products and services... • **Gender:** have a positive impact on gender-related issues • **Integration / diversity / social inclusion:** enable the social and economic integration of vulnerable groups. • **Working conditions:** ensure good working conditions in general (internal staff, subcontractors, suppliers, ...) • **Local community involvement:** actively engage with the local community • **Learning and training**: support the training and learning of everyone involved in the project.
PROSPERITY	**PARTICIPATION**
• **Good management**: track down and reduce waste that weighs on the project's finances. • **Fair sharing of wealth:** a fair distribution of the added value generated by activities (customers, staff, suppliers, local residents, etc.) • **Ethical management of cash flow, borrowing and capital:** have ethical and responsible sources of funding. • **Non-monetary exchange and pooling of resources:** sharing, rentals and loans, bartering, etc. • **Local economy** • **Solidarity economy** • **Accessibility:** make your product/service accessible to people who are usually excluded.	• **Transparency and communication:** be as transparent as possible and use communication suited to workers, suppliers, customers and the public. • **Cooperation:** work in a spirit of cooperation, taking care to identify and share everyone's skills within the company and with other players in the value chain. • **Participatory business model:** favour cooperative models (of the "one person, one vote" type), adapt your legal status, etc. • **Participatory governance model:** aim for participation in the processes of reflection, improvement, evaluation and decision-making (workers, suppliers, local residents, users, etc.)

APPENDIX 2 – SD Matrix

PLANET					
PEOPLE					
PROSPERITY					
PARTICIPATION					

APPENDIX 3 – Priority Matrix (Impact / Effort)



My 360° entrepreneurial project

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We would also like to thank Lowpact for taking part in the exercise and for allowing us to share an example to illustrate this Kit and make it easier to use.

Terms of use

This Kit is free of charge and may be freely shared, provided that the source is credited and a link to the Foundation for Future Generations website is included.

We would appreciate it if you could share your experience of using the Kit with us, so that we can keep improving it. Please send your feedback to prototyping@futuregenerations.be.

An initiative of the Foundation for Future Generations

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www.lowpact.be

This Kit is also available in French and Dutch.