Management Training Workshop Curriculum on ESG Business Model Innovation - Mariënkroon Method

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Project

Erasmus+ co-funded project name: Project 2024-1-AT01-KA210-VET-000257337 – ESG Business Model Innovation - Enabling Business Leaders and Consultants to Facilitate Business Model Innovation in View of ESG Requirements by Means of Capacity Building/ESG-Align. Prior to the Erasmus+ project, team members developed elements and early versions of the method presented in this curriculum sector in the context of social enterprise and Economy of Communion business model development courses at the Vienna University of Economics and Business as well as the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna.

Team

Authors of this Document: Dr. Markus Ressl, Frank Jungmann, Dr. Tibor Hejj,
Project Contributors: Jean-Marc Ziadé, Johannes Hirschmugl, Dr. Michal Lemanski, Raymond Bronzwaer, Elodie Ressl, Claire Ressl
Our motivation is to support businesses and organizations of all kinds with an affordable and highly efficient method of ESG business model innovation towards becoming ESG champion in their industry, inspiring others and adding superior value to the planet.

Name of Method

The name of the management training workshop approach on ESG business model innovation is derived from the place Mariënkroon in the Netherlands (Nieuwkuijk, region of Heusden), a former Cistercians Abbey, where the method was presented in the framework of an international conference of academics and business leaders and where the first ESG business model management training workshop took place, organized by Abdijhof Conference Center, partner of the Erasmus+ project.

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info@ressolutions.at

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Objective: This guide provides practical instructions for planning and conducting an "ESG Business Model Innovation" workshop and management training aimed at enabling participants to develop sustainable business models based on a proven ESG framework and method. It is based on the project team's experience on ESG, content developed and prototype testing in the framework of the Erasmus+ project. It is a recommended standard and can, of course, be individually adapted according to the training situation.

Target Audience: The document is specifically designed for consultants and company representatives (top & middle management, experts, SMEs[1], family businesses) who want to conduct a 1-day innovation workshop with up to 15 participants. In case of a 2- or 3-days training program, timing and content needs to be adjusted accordingly.

Overall Workshop Agenda: This one-day workshop is structured into three main phases, designed to guide participants through the process of ESG Business Model Innovation:

- *ESG Innovation Kick-Off and Training (Morning):* Participants will be introduced into the fundamental concepts of ESG and various perspectives on business model innovation. This phase includes keynote speeches and an "As-Is" analysis through the presentation of real-world case studies. A deeply rooted "As-Is" analysis in the pre-training-phase of the business models of the cases and their current ESG features can increase the quality of the outcome.
- *ESG Business Model Innovation Process, in workshop method (Afternoon):* This is an intensive, hands-on phase involving group work in dedicated "Innovation Rooms" (breakout sessions). Participants will use a set of practical management tools to develop innovative "To-Be" desired ESG business model elements, validate them and formulate a draft proposal of strategic action plans. At this phase, a collaborative atmosphere of innovation is a key factor for success. Training teams with advanced competencies, skills and experience may include a transformation roadmap consulting proposal.
- *Presentation of ESG Innovation Results & Conclusion (Late Afternoon):* After a moment of preparation, groups will present their developed concepts and action plans. The workshop concludes with a summary of key insights, lessons learned, and an outlook on the next steps for sustainable business model transformation.

Overall Learning Objectives: By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Understand the origins, core principles, and scope of the ESG approach
- Apply classic strategy development methods and tools to create an ESG-embedded strategy
- Master the use of these tools and methods based on real business model innovation process as a service to a real business or organization in a practical, hands-on setting and an atmosphere of innovation and collaborative co-creation
- Effectively communicate their developed To-Be-ESG business concepts and action plans
- Gain new insights by learning from each other's experiences, skills and competences
- Increase ESG related values, mindset and intrinsic motivation to contribute to the global ESG transformation

Note: For optimal preparation and engagement, pre-reads for the case studies should be distributed to participants in advance.

[1] Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

2. Management Training Workshop Structure

Session Name	Duration	Content / Actions	Learning Goals	Method & Materials
ESG Innovation Kick-Off				
Introduction	10 Min.	Welcome, workshop objectives, overview of agenda. Moderator Tip: Start with a quick "one-word expectation" round from each participant.	Develop an understanding of the day's schedule and workshop goals.	Presentation (PC), Interactive Warm-up, Plenum.
		Interactive warm-up: Expectations, introductions.	Establish initial connections between participants and the topic.	Flipchart / Whiteboard.
Keynote Speeches	75 Min.	Presentations on core aspects of ESG, business environment, and innovation. Example themes: Values-based leadership, global responsible business, transformative business models (can be delivered online), circular economy principles, and strategic approaches to business model innovation.	Gain diverse perspectives on the workshop's core objective and its relevance within the current business landscape.	Presentation (PC), Q&A.
Break	30 Min.	Moderator Tip: Encourage participants to stretch or take a short walk to re-energize.		
Presentation of Cases “As-Is” - Business Model and ESG Features	60 Min.	Presentation of the cases to be developed with an ESG business model innovation proposal during the workshop	Gain insights into concrete "As-Is" business models and their ESG features.	Presentation (PC), Case Study Presentation.
		Discussion and questions regarding case examples. Expected Output: Initial understanding of challenges and opportunities	Develop an understanding of the starting situations for the	Plenum, Q&A.

Session Name	Duration	Content / Actions	Learning Goals	Method & Materials
		within the presented cases.	innovation projects.	
Lunch Break	60 Min.			
ESG Business Model Innovation Process				
Introduction: “To-Be” Innovation Process, Toolbox, Roles	50 Min.	Introduction to the "To-Be" innovation process and workshop methodology.	Get to know the innovation process and available tools.	Presentation (PC[2]), Facilitation (Coaches).
		Presentation of toolbox tools (see Appendix A). Moderator Tip: Briefly explain the "why" behind each tool and its relevance to ESG.	Develop an understanding of the structure and benefits of the workshop methodology.	Discussion, Q&A.
		Clarification of roles and tasks in the breakout sessions (see Appendix D).	Set clear expectations for group work.	
Break	10 Min.	Move to "Innovation Rooms" (Breakout Sessions).		
ESG Business Model Speed Innovation in Breakout Sessions and “Innovation	90 Min.	Speed Innovation in Group Work: Application of pre-selected tools for idea generation for the "To-Be" business model (see Appendix A). Moderator Tip: Use an audible timer for each tool. If a group gets stuck, suggest a "worst possible idea" brainstorming to break the ice.	Develop the ability for rapid idea generation under time pressure.	Printed 3D Business Model © [3](A0), IB1, IB2, Moderation Cards, Sticky Notes, Timer.

[2] Personal Computer

[3] 3D Business Model © Approach was developed by Dr. Markus Ressl, based on his Dissertation on Economy of Communion at the University of Economics and Business Vienna filed in 1999. He is sharing the tool, method and approach freely for the objective of this Erasmus+ project. The approach sees impact as well as interpersonal relationship elements like motivation, values, culture and growth as integral part of business models, crucial to manage the global sustainability challenge and at the same time add value to thriving businesses, people and our planet.

Session Name	Duration	Content / Actions	Learning Goals	Method & Materials
Rooms”				
Break	10 Min.			
Elaborate ESG Innovation Presentation (Breakout Session)	35 Min.	Prioritize ideas: Reduce the longlist to Top 10 ideas (colored dots). Moderator Tip: Guide groups to discuss "Who benefits? How to validate? What are the costs? How to quantify value?" during prioritization.	Identify and evaluate the most promising ideas.	IB3, Moderation Cards (colored dots).
		Transfer the Top 10 ideas to the "To-Be" area of the 3D Business Model ©. Expected Output: A visualized "To-Be" business model incorporating the top ideas.	Visualize a future, ESG-integrated business model.	Printed 3D Business Model © (A0).
		Define a brief Vision and Mission for 2030 (or beyond…). Expected Output: A concise vision and mission statement.	Define a clear vision and mission for the company in the context of ESG.	PC (for presentation).
		Create an initial action plan/Transformation Roadmap. Expected Output: A draft roadmap with key steps, responsibilities, and timelines.	Create an initial roll-out plan for implementation.	PC (for presentation).
		Prepare the final presentation of the group results.	Clearly and concisely communicate the developed concepts.	Presentation slides.
Break	15 Min.	Moderator Tip: Encourage a final check of presentation materials and a quick team huddle.		

Session Name	Duration	Content / Actions	Learning Goals	Method & Materials
Presentation of ESG Innovation Results & Conclusion				
Present of ESG Innovation Results (Plenum)	60 Min.	Each group presents their top results and action plan (approx. 15 min per group, incl. Q&A).	Clearly and concisely communicate the developed concepts.	Presentation (PC), Group Presentations.
		Comments and discussion in the plenum.	Give and receive constructive feedback.	Plenum, Q&A.
Next Step Sustainable Business Model Transformation & Lessons Learned, Conclusions	15 Min.	Summary of key insights from the workshop.	Consolidate the core messages of the workshop.	Moderated discussion.
		Outlook on the next steps of sustainable business model transformation.	Create motivation for further implementation.	Feedback form (digital).
		Lessons Learned and feedback round for the workshop.		
End of ESG Business Model Innovation Training				
Dinner & Socializing				

3. USP / Critical Success Factors of the Method

This makes the management training method developed in our team and supported by the Erasmus+ project unique:

1. Integrated capacity building (training) combined with actual ESG business model strategy generation (workshop)
2. Focus on intrinsic motivation for the common good is a key success factor for rich training and workshop results
3. Focus on collaborative interpersonal relationships during the innovation process, increases creativity and group result
4. Speed innovation approach delivers quick results and decreases the barrier of entry for case organizations and workshop participants
5. Universal application of the ESG business model innovation approach for all kinds of organization, situations and contexts
6. The training format increases not only ESG knowledge but strengthens ESG mindset, values and culture often seen as bottleneck for ESG transformation and successful sustainability strategies. The format follows a values-based approach, putting collaborative values in the center of interest and as a key of successful ESG transformations.
7. Valuable outside view on business model potential through mixed training groups including students (next generation), business leaders and experts
8. Pleasant and inspiring surroundings such as for instance nature or spiritual places increase creativity and collaborative experience
9. High input-output efficiency – small time and money input for participants and case companies – high output in terms of training result and strategy input for organizations
10. Publicity and CSR[4] activity for case organizations, when supporting university courses and common good conferences on ESG business model innovation with their time and information shared

[4] Corporate Social Responsibility

4. Erasmus+ Project Partners

Ressolutions GmbH, Austria, E10034765, www.ressolutions.at (Leading Partner)
Starkmacher Impact GmbH Germany, E10251715, www.starkmacherimpact.co
Proactive Management Consulting Korlatolt Felelossegu Tarsasag, Hungary, E10364098, www.p-m-c.eu
Stichting Mariapoli Mariënkroon, Netherlands, E10360972, www.marienkroon.nl, www.abdijhof.com

From left to right: Johannes Hirschmugl, Frank Jungmann, Dr. Tibor Hejj, Dr. Markus Ressl, Claire Ressl, Jean-Marc Ziadé; Erasmus+ Content Meeting and Pilot Course, Vienna, Jan. 2025.

Contact: info@ressolutions.at

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5. Appendix A: Innovation Tools

For further details and more optional tools see “ESG Business Model Innovation Handbook”

Tool	Objective
Tool 1: 3D Business Model © (As-Is): Brief re-evaluation of the starting point. Expected Output: A shared understanding of the current business model's core elements.	- Comprehensively capture the current business model from an ESG perspective.
Tool 2: PESTEL(C) Analysis: Identify external ESG risks and opportunities. Expected Output: A list of key PESTEL(C) factors impacting the business, categorized by double materiality.	- Identify external ESG risks and opportunities.
Tool 3: Circular Economy: Identify circular economy approaches in one's own context. Expected Output: Brainstormed ideas for circularity within the business model.	- Identify circular economy approaches in one's own context.
Tool 4: ESG+ SWOT: Analyze internal strengths/weaknesses, external opportunities/risks in the extended ESG context taking into consideration also values and culture. Expected Output: A completed SWOT matrix focusing on ESG aspects.	- Analyze internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and risks in the ESG context.
Tool 6: Value Chain Analysis: Identify ESG impacts along the entire value chain. Expected Output: A mapped value chain highlighting ESG opportunities and risks at each stage.	- Identify ESG impacts along the entire value chain.
Tool 7: Customer Portfolio Analysis: Understand customer needs and segments with regard to ESG. Expected Output: Insights into customer segments' ESG-related needs and preferences.	- Understand customer needs and segments with regard to ESG.
Tool 8: ESG+ Champion Matrix & Longlist: Generate a comprehensive longlist of ESG innovation ideas with a look to ESG champions in the market. Expected Output: A long list of unprioritized innovation ideas on IB2.	- Generate a comprehensive long list of ESG innovation ideas.
According to the ESG Business Model Innovation management training focus, tools can be customized, selected or added.	

6. Appendix B: Workshop Materials (Facilitator Checklist)

- Moderation cards (various colours)
- Pushpins / adhesive for moderation cards
- Sticky notes (various colours)
- Timer (digital or analogue, possibly app)
- Beamer and screen
- Laptop or computer
- Presentation slides (with tool charts)
- 3 Idea boards (IB1, IB2, IB3) – prepared with headers & categories
- Printed versions of the tools (especially 3D Business Model Canvas © as A0 poster)
- Optional Digital Tools: For hybrid or online workshops, consider using digital collaboration platforms (e.g., Miro, Mural) for idea boards and sticky notes.

7. Appendix C: Material Preparation Timeline

- **2 Weeks Prior:** Distribute pre-reads for case studies to participants.
- **3 Days Prior:** Prepare and print all 3D Business Model Canvases © (A0), ensure all presentation slides are ready, prepare Idea Boards (IB1, IB2, IB3) with headers.
- **Morning of Workshop:** Prepare moderation cards, sticky notes, pushpins, set up beamer/laptop, ensure timers are charged.

8. Appendix D: Roles in the Workshop

- **Workshop Leader (WL):** Time management, group dynamics, stimulate discussion, ensure goal achievement. Experienced co-leader guiding through breakout innovation sessions is recommended.
- **Business Owner (BO), Management Board Member:** Presents the business case, provides context. Option: online interview / presence.
- **Participants:** Active application of tools, idea generation, idea collection, presentation of results. Inhomogeneous teams are important.
- **Assistant (optional):** Support with time management, presentation, process, quality, pictures and documentation.

9. Appendix E: Sources supporting the Workshop

- ESG-related EU Commission and legal documents
- UN documents on SDG and inequality
- Academic papers incl. bachelor and master theses on ESG status and potential of case companies
- ESG-related strategy papers
- Company annual ESG reports
- Case studies