MANUAL

OVAM

SIS

TOOLKIT

The OVAM SIS Toolkit is a creative tool to assist organisations in search of sustainable and innovative solutions in every aspect of their business operations. The OVAM SIS Toolkit indeed offers its users a convenient and inspiring framework that transcends the strictly ecological dimension. It also goes beyond the purely technical design and material aspect of sustainability. The OVAM SIS Toolkit offers you the possibility to systematically look for opportunities for sustainable innovation throughout your brand, business organisation, product range and your relations with stakeholders.

This manual contains guidelines and tips to assist you in your use of the OVAM SIS Toolkit. Indeed, this toolkit is no mere linear track that proceeds along a fixed trajectory; on the contrary, it lends itself to several different usages. We would like to invite you to give free rein and expression to your own creativity and to intuitively outline a path throughout the model. To that end, this manual offers a number of possible working methods and trajectories throughout the OVAM SIS Toolkit to get you started.

Fig.1: The structure of the SIS matrix

► # 1. Usage Scenarios

We distinguish between **three applications of the SIS Toolkit:** the strategic scenario, the product-related scenario and the brainstorming session.

Within the three possible usage scenarios, we each time indicate the kind of situations in which they can best be applied and briefly outline the process, the possible opportunities and threats of the application and the desired results.

1.1 Strategic Scenario

When
► Many organisations have already undertaken very worthwhile initiatives, yet they often lack a unified and uniform strategy and coherent vision around the aspect of sustainability. A first step in the strategic approach to sustainability is to map out policy ambitions and concrete needs and expectations among all of the stakeholders. Sometimes, a clear strategy does indeed exist, but it has yet to find full implementation throughout the company.

The OVAM SIS Toolkit can be of great service to you either to clearly and systematically map out all existing initiatives concerning sustainability or to tap into all possible potential and develop a consistent link to your core strategy and communications strategy.

Build-up Process
First, we map out the present situation. We determine the organisation's motivators, ambitions and needs to
► actively and effectively engage in sustainable development. This occurs by means of intake discussions with Management and the employee who will be the overseer and guide throughout the course of the trajectory: one individual within the organisation will be responsible for the entire project.
If possible, this first exploration will be complemented with a qualitative questionnaire among the most important stakeholders within the organisation, both internally and externally.
We establish a multidisciplinary core group that will be actively involved throughout the entire course of the trajectory. Thanks to the preliminary questionnaire, we are able to establish the priorities. We jointly determine what areas in the OVAM SIS Toolkit offer the greatest potential and what aspects deserve the greatest concentration during the work sessions.
The work sessions with the core group provide us with a set of guidelines and/or action points that the organisation can use to start the programme. On the basis of these guidelines, the core group draws up an action plan that is best tested out and validated by the interested parties and managers concerned. An action plan includes an implementation calendar that provides an overview of who, what, how and when ideas will be implemented.

After reaching consensus on the content of the action plan, we conclude the trajectory of the SIS Toolkit with a final session and reporting. This does not, however, mean the end of the story at this point. The organisation may, for example, decide to start with another usage scenario that is a logical adjunct to the existing project, it exercises supervision on the implementation of the action plan, or starts up a trajectory based on some other strategic need for sustainability.

Fig. 2: Qualitative survey of stakeholders (internal and external)

Challenge
The strategic scenario is ideal for developing a collective awareness and a common vision and strategy on sustainability.
► Moreover, it offers the organisation the chance to approach this development in an interdisciplinary and innovative manner. This also is the right moment to identify committed employees able to assist in implementing the follow-up steps.
The mapping out of the current situation will enable you at the same time to discover any (hidden) sustainability potential.

Furthermore, the mapping out of the current situation will enable you at the same time to discover the (latent) potential of sustainability.

► **Points of Attention**
Management does not necessarily have to assume a leading role in this process but ought to be at least minimally involved, given that it concerns a fundamental strategic exercise. Without Management backing, it will prove difficult to translate the results into actual practice. With a view to embedment and implementation, its involvement is recommended. A vision and the intertwining of a sustainability strategy with company policy are not evident. Thanks to the OVAM SIS Toolkit, this issue can be dealt with in a clear and structured manner.

► **Result**
The organisation maintains a view on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and chances with a view to the organisation's sustainable development. Ultimately, the organisation will have developed a central sustainability vision and/or strategy and area of focus where, with its core activities, it can make a very notable difference.

Brought to expression via a credo or a mission, this forms the guiding thread by which to continue the further development of sustainable innovation and that will serve as the starting point for a variety of sustainability actions.

Fig.3: Relevant axes treated at a strategic scenario

1.2 Product-Related Scenario

► **When**
You can also focus on areas in the OVAM SIS Toolkit that will lead to sustainable added value within the scope of the development, the use and the useful life after usage of your products. The OVAM SIS Toolkit indeed considers the entire life cycle of the product or the service and confronts the latter with the human, social, financial, intellectual as well as the ecological dimension. In this instance also, this leads to a kaleidoscopic set of approaches with possible strategic opportunities.

Fig. 4: Concrete example at a crossroad in the matrix

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► Build-Up Process

The build-up of the process runs largely parallel with the build-up of the strategic scenario, the difference being
The build-up of the process runs largely parallel with the build-up of the strategic scenario, the difference being that, in this instance, we are orienting ourselves towards the products and/or services offered by the company and starting with the sustainability vision as our guiding thread.

It is, indeed, possible that, on the basis of the intake and the baseline measurement, you will arrive at the conclusion that there is still a large potential in the "end of life" phase of the products.

Another possibility may be that you note how some of your resource capitals have remained underdeveloped. Accordingly, you decide to organize a few work sessions focusing on promising areas in the OVAM SIS Toolkit.

	1.0 Human capital	2.0 Intellectual capital	3.0 Financial capital	4.0 Social capital	5.0 Natural capital
Ambition	1.1	2.1	3.1	4.1	5.1
Needs	1.2	2.2	3.2	4.2	5.2
Design	1.3	2.3	3.3	4.3	5.3
Production	1.4	2.4	3.4	4.4	5.4
Distribution & use	1.5	2.5	3.5	4.5	5.5
End of life	1.6	2.6	3.6	4.6	5.6

Fig. 5: Relevant axes which are treated with a product-related scenario

► Challenge

The OVAM SIS Toolkit enables you to detect, in group context and from various perspectives, strategic opportunities regarding sustainability.

Thanks to this method, you can adopt a new approach to examine the product or the service. In this way, you can detect unexplored areas that may well prove to offer substantial added value for the organisation.

► Point of Attention

The counsellor that guides the project needs to be mindful of sustainability and strategic relevance of the paths taken throughout the trajectory. In addition, the launch of a product-related scenario in the absence of a proper sustainability vision and/or strategy may present difficulties for implementation of the action plan. In that case, it is advisable that you start by first going through the strategic scenario.

► Result

The organisation maintains a structured overview of the activities that have already been undertaken in the area of sustainability. In its turn, the analysis of this offers the organisation the possibility to make a start with sustainable development and innovation. This way, the organisation will develop sustainable added value, and this in an all-encompassing and well-considered manner.

1.3 [One-time] Brainstorming Session

► When

You can resort to the brainstorming session in various situations and use it in many different ways. For instance, as an introductory tool, as part of a larger trajectory, for creative reflection on value generation, when in need of fresh and new ideas, as team builder...

► Build-Up Process

Using the intake, you establish what you wish to achieve with the brainstorming session(s). It is discussed in advance what the target group will be, what the challenge is and how many participants will attend the session. When you want your employees to freely and openly contribute their ideas about ways to realize sustainable value creation, you best use the dice method. When you start from a specific objective - for instance, you want with the design team to reflect on all aspects of the design and the design process – then the process leader will make prior preparations for the brainstorming session by identifying a trajectory of SIS Cards in advance.

► **Challenge**

To generate new ideas and discover new synergies around existing initiatives and possibilities. In a broader perspective, this kind of process may provide employees with insights and possibilities for sustainable value creation.

► **Point of Attention**

When you request input and collaboration, you had best describe beforehand the precise nature of the ultimate objective of the work session, this in order to avoid misunderstandings, unrealistic expectations and the loss of motivation in the participants.

► **Result**

The participants are enthusiastic about the possibilities and the structure of the OVAM SIS Toolkit and have an understanding of how sustainable added value can be generated for products and services. You have acquired guidelines, ideas and action points that can be used by the organisation in further activities.

► **2. Process Steps**

2.1 Overview of Process Steps

Note here that the stippled blocs are optional
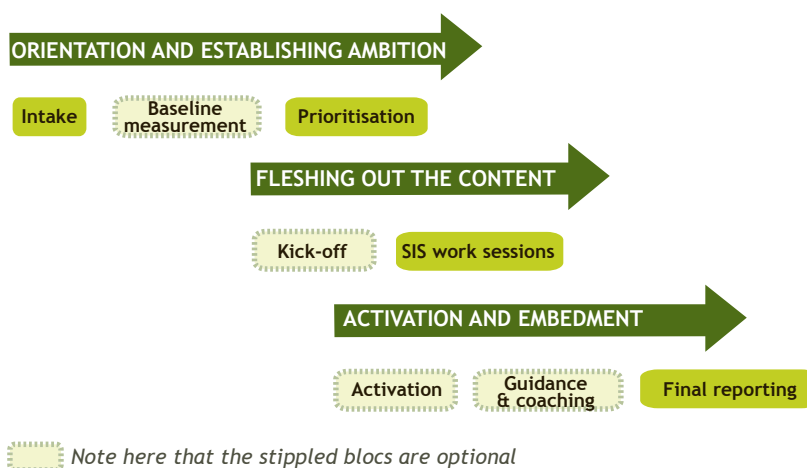
2.2 Explanation of the Process Steps

In order to make it easier for the user to work with the OVAM SIS Toolkit, a process has been developed that can be used as guideline. In what follows we offer a step-by-step explanation of each separate component of the process, which you can refer to in the course of the various usage scenarios. With these guidelines, we want to support the trajectory 's (internal or external) process leader(s).

The process consists of three major components, always starting from an orientation and a definition of the ambition, followed by supplemental textual content, to finally proceed to activation and embedment of the results. Depending on the organisation's ambition, needs and possible time investment, you can decide to run through an extensive or an abbreviated process. In the shortest possible scenario, you eliminate the baseline measurement, kick-off, activation and guidance, resorting only to the intake, the establishment of priorities, OVAM SIS Toolkit work session(s) and final reporting.

In order that the OVAM SIS Toolkit become involved as much as possible in the process, we have added some tips to each of the process steps. These tips can be recognized by this icon.

► ## Orientation and Establishment of the Ambition:

Every process starts out with a proper orientation that is to provide insight into the current state of affairs.

Intake

The intake has both a content-related and a practical scope. In terms of content, it is necessary to define the central objective of the trajectory. What should be the ultimate result of the trajectory? What ambitions or needs should the trajectory satisfy? Is the ambition rather strategic in nature or is it oriented towards a product or a service? Or is it both? (see usage scenarios). It is important that the process leader always ensures the sustainable character of the central objective and the ambitions. Furthermore, it is also important that as much business information as possible is gathered, such as, for instance, the Report on Corporate Social Responsibility, the annual report, production information, the organisational chart, information about the corporate culture...

As external process leader, you ought to designate an internal overseer who will at the same time function as a contact person for the trajectory. Together with this him/her (and other stakeholders) you should draw up a list of potential participants. You form a core group that, if and when necessary, can be complemented with relevant stakeholders and/or experts. The core group runs through the entire trajectory and is co-responsible for the final result, Important points of attention in this process are the following: are all the resource capitals of the SIS matrix represented within the core group? Are both strategic and operational profiles present? Are we forming the team with both internal and external participants? What stakeholders will be involved in the process? What is the ideal number of participants? How do we inform the participants? Is it necessary for the participants to prepare certain things beforehand? Also inform those participants who, possibly afterwards, may play an active executive or deciding role in the implementation.

Orientation:

What is the motivator that prompts you to initiate sustainability action?

What are the present needs in the area of sustainability?

How do these needs fit into the vision and ambitions of the organisation?

Does this lead to a change of ambition?

What has already been happening in terms of sustainable development in the organisation's operations?

In the course of the intake, you can use the introductory video about the OVAM SIS Toolkit, which can be found on the website. In addition, the process leader will during the intake use the structure of the SIS matrix as a guideline and structure for the discussion.

Baseline measurement

Why?

The baseline measurement enables a quick scan of the current situation within the organisation with regard to sustainable innovation. It provides an overview of the ambitions, needs and the various sustainable initiatives that are already ongoing or have been initiated in the past, and this each time for the five resource capitals. In addition, it provides insight into (hidden) opportunities and gaps. Thanks to the baseline measurement, you also have a prioritizing tool that, if so desired, allows you to measure the progress made at the conclusion of the trajectory.

What?

The baseline measurement consists of an in-depth interview that lasts some 30 to 60 minutes, conducted by the process leader(s). The interview may be conducted by telephone or in person, depending on the number of interviewees and their time availability. In the case of a short-term trajectory, the number of interviewees can be limited to the individuals in the core group; in case of a long-term trajectory, it is advisable that several stakeholders (both internal and external) be interviewed.

How?

The process leader will, on the basis of the information gathered from the interviews during the intake and the selected user scenario, compose a questionnaire that comprises: an introduction, questions concerning the current interpretation and the experience of the notion of sustainability within the organisation. At the same time, you determine the current ambition(s) for the various resource capitals, challenges, needs and activities in terms of sustainability. Are the present priorities still valid or is there need for a strategic re-orientation and a new focus? The OVAM SIS Toolkit can, in fact, offer a broader framework and new perspectives that perhaps were never taken into due account in the past but that may well be considered important because of noticeable movements in the market, the legislation, or in view of new trends. The process leader ensures that all resource capitals and process components are discussed during the interview and probes more deeply into issues if he considers it necessary.

Result?

During this phase, you will gain insight not only into the (hidden) potential but also into contradictory visions and viewpoints present within the organisation (or into the views of external parties about the organisation in cases where a number of external stakeholders are being polled). At the same time, for instance, it may also become evident that the organisation scores lower than initially assumed. This provides an important and often new insight for any business that wishes to proactively initiate a programme of sustainable innovation and develop a related commonly held vision and action plan. On the basis of the results obtained, the process leader composes a baseline measurement report to be subsequently discussed within the core group. This report contains not only the results but already an initial incentive towards prioritisation. This will be helpful in simplifying the process and may lead to more in-depth discussions with the core group. In this manner, we arrive in a structured way at the correct approach for the work sessions.

Fig. 6: The matrix used in a brainstorming session, working with post-its here

The results of the baseline measurement can, for instance, be displayed on the blank brainstorm poster in the form of post-its. This way, you will receive an overview of the results, which can then also be used as a discussion and conceptual framework within the core group during the presentation of the results. In this manner, it will visually become quickly evident whether certain resource capitals are underrepresented.

Prioritisation

Prioritisation happens on the basis of the information that was gathered from the intake and the baseline measurement. Based on the analysis of the present situation, the process leader, together with the programme overseer (and, possibly, also Management) can establish an initial prioritisation. We refer here to an 'initial prioritisation' as there will follow a second session jointly with the core group at the time of kick-off. In case the organisation opts against organizing a kick-off, you can immediately carry out the first prioritisation together with the core group. It is important that this is a joint process in order to avoid that the participants later on drop out because they cannot agree with the plan of approach and with the objectives of the work sessions.

Questions that may be helpful to you in establishing priorities:

What are the most important short-term needs?

What needs to be undertaken first in terms of sustainability?

What need is there for change?

Where on the matrix do we find the greatest potential for the organisation?

Is this also compatible with the organisation's present ambitions?

What kinds of subjects elicit the most enthusiasm and "buy-in" within the organisation?

► II. Fleshing out the content

Kick-off

The kick-off session aims at various objectives. Firstly, it is the ideal way for members of the core group to get to know one another (better), to harmonize expectations and to point everyone into the same direction. Secondly, it is useful to once more explain to the participants the content and meaning of the OVAM SIS Toolkit, the central ambition and the trajectory. Thirdly, the process leader explains the results of the baseline measurement and the initial prioritisation in order to further discuss them within the group. At the conclusion of the kick-off, all participants will have obtained a good insight into the objective of the OVAM SIS Toolkit trajectory and consensus has been reached about the approach and the central question(s) (what axes are central) of the coming work session(s). The aim is that the core group becomes enthused about the opportunities that this trajectory can offer for the organisation.

uring this session, the blank poster with the results of the baseline measurement remains a central focus. You may again show the video to the core group during the explanatory session about the OVAM SIS Toolkit. And, finally, you may opt to insert a brief brainstorming session in order to emphasize to the participants, in an interactive manner, the benefits and possibilities of the tool.

SIS work sessions

Preparation

It is important, and of added value, that you, in your capacity of process leader, bring the OVAM SIS Toolkit to life, both in terms of form and content. In terms of content, this means that you look for concrete, relevant, inspiring stories and paradigms that clarify and simplify the link to the lead question. In this process, you ought as much as possible to consider the reality as it exists within the organisation by delivering custom-tailored work and by further appropriate and sufficient complementation and fleshing out of the content of the SIS cards and introductory and lead questions. In concrete terms, this may mean that the question itself may well prove applicable, albeit not the suggestion pertaining to it on the SIS card.

The lead question clearly states what needs to be answered by the group via the SIS card. However, asking this question is often not enough. Hence, it is advisable that, for each and every lead question to be answered, the **correct additional questions** are drawn up, to point the group into the right direction. The process leader provides the complementation and elaboration in the best possible interactive manner by using visuals, testimonials and practical paradigms.

SIS-card 2.4: "How can a production process be developed so that it makes an optimal contribution to the organisation's intellectual capital?"

Or, in other words:

How do we incorporate the knowledge gained in the course of this trajectory into our processes?

How can we possibly further disseminate this knowledge within the organisation?

How do we keep this knowledge current?

…

Implementation

At the start of the initial work session, the process leader briefly recapitulates the results of the baseline measurement, the central objective of the OVAM SIS Toolkit trajectory and the agenda for the day. One work session ideally should take one half day to one full day. You can on average deal with some four to six SIS cards in one day. Each work session will focus on a given ambition or objective. The process leader will here again elaborate on the various resource capitals and their significance. Depending on the trajectory, one or several work sessions may be held. The end result of the work session(s) depends on the selected usage scenario:

► **Strategic scenario: most important elements for the drafting of a sustainability vision and ambition document, possibly coupled to a rough strategic plan.**

► **Product-related scenario: rough action plan with specific and potential measures that the organisation can take in order to realize sustainable innovation.**

► **One-time brainstorming session: insights, vision, ideas and potential measures.**

The process leader illustrates the trajectory to be covered on the SIS matrix, in the process of which he explains and clarifies the various capital categories and junction points. During the exercises themselves, you should place as much focus as possible on the structure of the SIS matrix and, where relevant, in the process make use of the SIS cards and the blank brainstorm poster. Particularly, do not forget to regularly explain the relevance of the exercise and its relationship vis-à-vis the central objective/ambition of the overall project.

► Activation and embedment

Activation

The results obtained during the work sessions form an initial incentive towards the formulation of a vision and an ambition, a rough action plan, a number of important insights... This consequently needs to be translated into actual practice. Hence, its activation should be examined together with the core group. This may be done, for instance, by means of a priorities matrix, whereby you first focus on those activities that will have the greatest impact and can be realized within a relatively short period and with reasonable resources. Next, you continue with the activities that will have great impact but will be realized in the longer term. You then draw up a project plan with clear task distribution. Each team member will be responsible for one or several action points. At this stage, you will mostly involve new employees because of their expertise or involvement in the implementation.

PRIORITIES MATRIX
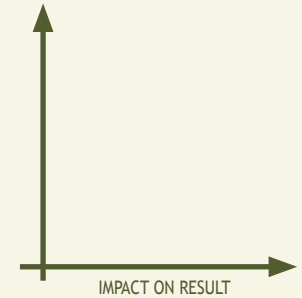
EASY (TIME AND MONEY)

IMPACT ON RESULT

Fig. 7: The priority matrix

Guidance & coaching

Once the project plan has been drawn up, the process leader will provide for follow-up sessions at regular intervals during which the core group makes its reports and can call upon the process leader's expertise. In addition, there is the exchange of experiences between the group members, which is important to the internal learning process, the motivation and the embedment of the actions that have been undertaken. Next it will be discussed what was successful and what less successful, whether there possibly ought to be additional people because of missing expertise and unresolved questions are addressed...

Final reporting

To conclude, the process leader plans a closing session with the core group (and possibly with Management) during which a reporting is presented by both the core group and the process leader. Significant elements during this closing session are: what was successful, what could improve, what lessons have we been able to draw from this, how do we ensure that all of this remain embedded within the organisation and how do we proceed from here? Next, the process leader draws up the final report that will contain the process analysis, the most important findings and possible follow-up steps. As already stated, this does not mean the final word for the organisation to work with the OVAM SIS Toolkit on the aspect of sustainability. For instance, the recommendations in the final reporting may well signify the start of a new trajectory, one that is to be developed around some other need, with, for example, a different core group in place...

The process leader discusses the progress made and the final results by referring to the SIS matrix. You might, for instance, indicate the starting point and the realisations in differently coloured post-its on the matrix. This in turn can be complemented with new ambitions, needs and action points still to be realized in the future.

► 3. Examples of possible trajectories

3.1 Strategic Level
Tutte le cure: Sustainability through intelligent relations with customers

► Background

TTutte le cure is an international company specializing in the production of body cleansing and personal hygiene and care products: soaps, shower gels, shampoos, hand creams, body lotions, etc. In the western market we still detect particularly great potential for growth and differentiation in the use of natural ingredients, in the enjoyment of sensual experiences, and the like, but it is a fact that the market is largely nearing its saturation point. In the BRIC countries, there still remains quite a sizeable potential for growth because of the increase in population and the expanding middle class.

Tutte le cure cannot yet claim a long tradition in sustainability. During the past decades, safety and quality were the areas of special concern. The Corporate Social Responsibility policy remained, until recently, confined to compliance (fulfilment of legislative provisions) and philanthropy (supporting worthwhile causes, especially involving children). For instance, following the tsunami in south-east Asia and after hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, *Tutte le cure* donated large quantities of cleansing and care products in bulk to relief agencies such as the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders. Except for certain niches where *Tutte le cure* maintains a presence with some technical products, the company primarily manufactures products to serve large international retail groups. In other words, you will not find products branded with the name *Tutte le cure* on retail shelves. But when you come upon body lotions, hand soaps, shampoos, or facial exfoliating creams in the supermarket under the name of house brands, chances are that these products were actually produced at a *Tutte le cure* plant.

► Sustainability Strategy

Tutte le cure then is not a brand leader. Its focus has always been on volume and price. No marketing campaigns are conducted with orientation towards the end users, given that there does not exist such a thing as a known brand name and, hence, there is no need to maintain a relationship between brand and consumer. Nonetheless, that does not mean that innovation culture is absent from the *Tutte le cure* organisation. On the contrary, for as soon as innovative major brands appear on the shelves, *Tutte le cure* is immediately pressured by the retail chains to follow suit and quickly come up with a response. As the success and the growth of *Tutte le cure* has already for decades been based on the relationship between scale, price and good relations with the supermarket chains, *Tutte le cure* Management does not lag behind in realizing the potential in eco-efficiency: value creation with less energy, less transportation and fewer materials. The company has engaged an international sustainability officer in order to embed the concept of sustainability within the organisation. Bearing the function title 'CSR Manager', this person has decided to use the OVAM SIS Toolkit in order to gain an overview of all existing initiatives and the potential with regard to sustainability.

Application of the OVAM SIS Toolkit

► Anne-Sophie, the newly recruited 'CSR Manager', reports to Gilbert, the Purchasing Manager stationed in Belgium, and to Dylan, the Marketing Manager stationed in the UK. Anne-Sophie wants to acquire as broad as possible a perspective on all processes, the ambition and the possibilities related to sustainability, and she is drafting a list of 12 internal and external stakeholders she wishes to query individually. In her queries, she is guided by the five categories of sustainability capital stated in the OVAM SIS Toolkit. Aside from an overview of existing minor and major initiatives around packaging, waste, transport-efficiency and worthy objectives, it becomes quickly evident that there are two distinct areas of great potential. On the one hand, in the purchase of base materials and during production, it is quite possible to save up to 30% on energy consumption and materials. In effect, for many petrochemical ingredients it is quite possible to purchase natural or environment-friendly alternatives; in addition, the pressure from purchasing organisations and retailers to manufacture environment-friendly body care products is also growing. Worldwide, on a great number of supermarket shelves one finds an increasing plethora of house brands with a strong claim to sustainability: natural ingredients, bio-degradable ingredients, absence of parabens, and products that meet the requirements of known ecolabels such as Bio-cert and the European ecolabel.

Anne-Sophie's focus is particularly centred on the natural capital and the financial capital, even though substantial changes only occur when the bridge is laid between the design process, the production process and even the internal corporate culture.

An initial general work session with the policy people and key account managers is quickly followed by a series of meetings with product designers, packaging designers and production managers. All disciplines throughout the chains are given the assignment to start looking for opportunities towards optimisation that will lead to cost and eco-efficiency. The result is an agenda with a large set of incremental decisive actions that, jointly, will bring about very substantial savings in energy, materials, transportation costs and waste.

The most important strategic tipping point, however, is found in the area of intellectual capital, particularly around customer relations. This, indeed, comes as the greatest surprise as it passes beyond the general, typical CSR practice. Instead of keeping to the reactive, although fast and flexible, custom of anticipating on trends in the product segment of cleansing and body care products, Management has decided to establish an international 'Future Care Lab'. With this initiative, *Tutte le cure* wishes to pro-actively engage its customers to join in the thinking about coming consumer trends, the application of new ingredients, technology and concrete product development in order to determine the nature of the personal care segment for the future.

► Sustainable Innovation

It has become quickly evident that the 'Future Care Lab' is to be a road show to be given a separate edition per retailer, considering its brand-strategic character and related confidentiality. The first two editions are conducted with representative brand managers and purchasers of Anglo-Saxon retail chains and are taking place in London. The result of the second edition is, amongst others, the development of a Cradle-2-Cradle certifiable shampoo. One retailer is eager to assume the lead and, jointly with *Tutte le cure*, start the construction of the 'concept car' that will serve as a model for very price-competitive body care products in the F1-segment. Likewise, it has quickly become clear that bio-degradable care products also have great potential in some African and Asian growth countries where new suburban regions have yet to be connected to the public sewage networks. With affordable cradle-to-cradle cleansing and body care products, the inhabitants of these new residential districts will certainly have less of a negative impact on the surface water. What is very innovative in the approach with 'Future Care Labs' is that co-creation among retailers, *Tutte le cure* and producers of base materials results in long-term thinking.

3.2 Product Level
Foulie: Looking at product and packaging as one

► Background

Foulie is a Flemish family business that employs 20 people, a toy manufacturer, more specifically the maker of pedagogical puzzles or 'brain teasers'. Years ago, they scored a worldwide major hit with the Metacube, a kind of cube that may take hours to find the correct folding sequence. The firm consequently was able to build on this success for nearly two decades by developing all sorts of variants of the original Metacube. For a while, the step was made towards the production of inexpensive merchandising products – think of the types of little toys that are included in, for instance, breakfast boxes of fast-food chains. However, the firm quickly abandoned this initiative because of severe competition on the world markets. It also considered digital games, in this case think of the explosion in intelligent games and brain teasers that are now available for the iPad.

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Today, *Foulie* has returned to concentrating on its ultimate strength: physical, analogue brain teasers for young and old, and at different levels of difficulty. With four puzzle freaks as designers, the firm is maintaining its product development inside Belgium. The product is made in China.
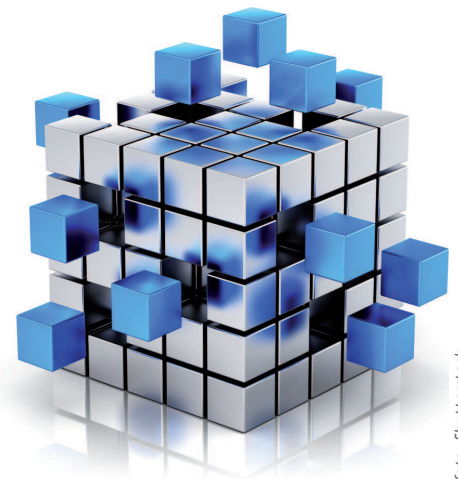
► Sustainability Strategy

Foulie's sustainability strategy has since recently become clear. It is not only a matter of sustainability of its products on the material level. *Foulie* is also conscious of its contribution to the cognitive and psychomotor development of its various target groups. This awareness has been adopted as the central claim in its communications strategy. The firm's current slogan reads: "Toys for the big and small smart ass". It is also considering an assortment of mind-challenging games aimed at seniors. Naturally, the firm wants to maintain its position as a producer of qualitative and dependable products at the annual toy fairs. As *Foulie* looks upon material sustainability as a logical component of quality, it also wishes to maintain its image for what concerns the choice of materials, the meticulous finishing of the products and the quality of the packaging. The firm is fully aware of the qualitative projection that is established by such choices.

► ## Application of the OVAM SIS Toolkit

The CEO of *Foulie* uses the OVAM SIS Toolkit in order to critically evaluate the product assortment, assisted by his Sales Manager, the design team and his Financial Officer. Quickly, the series of cards dealing with the natural capital receives the greatest attention. When critically examining their needs with respect to product and packaging design (qualitative projection, robustness, stackability, visibility…) they conclude that a step-by-step and practical approach is the most realistic for *Foulie*. The 'stopping power' of the products on the retail floor figured for the longest time as their greatest challenge, but they finally are satisfied with the solution. *Foulie's* CEO is careful to avoid that the baby be thrown out with the bathwater.

► ## Sustainable Innovation

When the design process is being examined, it is advisable to also work with OVAM's Ecolizer. This is indeed a simple way to enable a critical evaluation of the different materials and processes in terms of their nature and performance within the environmental context. Products and packaging are being systematically looked at from various perspectives: are we using recycled materials? Are we using non-harmful materials? Where do we find opportunities to 'dematerialize' our products and packaging? All opportunities are tabled in order to test them out against their financial feasibility, possible cost-savings and types of approach.

When, in the course of brainstorming via the OVAM SIS Toolkit, the bridge is crossed from design and production in the direction of distribution, it is found that, for some products, packaging may even be unnecessary.

A secondary packaging would suffice in cases where certain products, such as the Metacube 4 and 5, can be stacked in various different fold configurations to form attractive floor displays inside the stores. A minor test demonstrates that even the characteristically graphic patterns so typical of, and recognizable as, *Foulie* are gaining extra projection and impact.

Not surprisingly, a set of further actions and modifications to the design are still required to realize such ultimate results, but everyone has quickly come to agree that it can only add force to the singular and unique character of the products.

Looking at the packaging and the product as an integral unit means that the primary packaging becomes superfluous and, in this case, contributes to the iconic identity, the visibility and awareness, and the marketing of the brand.