The Sustainability Insider Journey

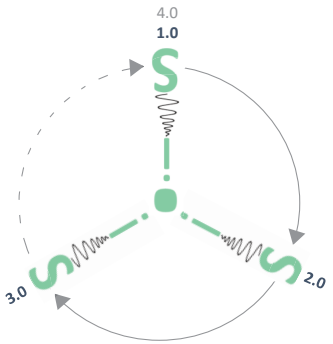
A Framework for Complex Problem-Solution Exploration

This is a five-stage framework, designed for exploring complex problems and their solution.

It is an iterative process — within and across phases — where the project team revisits the different stages as new information and uncertainties emerge. The journey continues until the problem is sufficiently understood and clearly framed by the project team. This shared clarity creates the foundation for designing and implementing a solution that is simpler, more effective, and fit for purpose.

To keep the framework simple and intuitive, each stage outlines its specific goal, key activities, and expected deliverables. Supporting guiding questions help the project team adapt the model and determine the appropriate level of research, ideation, and iteration needed at each phase.

Phase	Goal	Key Activities	Deliverables	Guiding Questions
Phase 3 - Ideation and Iteration "Bring your team creativity and insight into action!"	Create the conditions for effective ideation and iteration cycles, ensuring that individual, pair-based, and collective activities follow best practices to maximise creativity and generate valuable insights.	**1. Individual ideation and iteration cycles** • Team members individually use ideation techniques to generate ideas for potential solutions related to the design and implementation. Leverage AI for further insights and iterations. • Report ideas using defined templates on whiteboards to ensure a harmonized presentation approach and facilitate the presentation of ideas and feedback. • Individual and group feedback loops via the whiteboard and face to face when necessary. • Refinement of initial ideas through multiple iterations (e.g., 2-3 rounds) until they mature into a more finalized state before moving on to group review and ideation. **2. Group feedback, ideation and iteration cycles** • Pair or Group review cycles in which solutions are explained, feedback is received, and ideas are modified according to feedback. • If necessary, consider running brainstorming cycles and other ideation methods – depending on the robust and "maturity level" of the idea. • Incorporation of peer and group feedback and update of idea in terms of: the solution, the strategy for implementation and launch, the pros and , and risks. **3. Team voting on the best ideas** • Individual voting by team member votes for their preferred options and justification. • Group voting to decide on the top-voted and most promising ideas and why **4. Selection of ideas for further development** • Define criteria for evaluating the best ideas (e.g., potential impact, resources needed, alignment with strategic goals, risks, cost). • Define a scoring system to ensure a fair assessment of each idea against these criteria. • Support each solution by a small video or teaser to facilitate voting and decision. • Decide on voters panel if not yet defined: sponsors, stakeholders, partners, • Document the decision-making process, including any feedback received by the voters panel to improve solutions	**1. Ideation Results** A list of selected solutions for further development and testing, including design and implementation strategies to maximize acceptance and scalability, along with their pros, cons, and areas for further validation. **2 . Voting results for best solutions** Individual and group voting results on the best solutions and underlying reasons. **3. Final decision on solutions for further development and testing** The decision from sponsors or the decision-making body along with justifications and priorities.	**Activity 1: Individual Ideation and Iteration Sessions** 1. What ideation techniques should individuals use to generate diverse ideas? 2. How can ideas be presented effectively for feedback? 3. What is the process for refining ideas based on feedback? 4. How many iterations should be completed before group evaluation? **1.1 Possible idea triggers and solution-generating techniques to follow (26)** **1. Cost Reduction (Cheaper)** - Finding ways to reduce costs while maintaining or improving quality. - How can we minimize expenses without sacrificing value or effectiveness? **2. Risk Mitigation (Impact Reduction)** - Strategies to reduce or neutralize the negative impacts of the situation. - How can we prevent or minimize the effects of the problem? **3. Unlimited Resources (What if)** - Ideating as if there were no constraints on time, money, or resources. - What would the ideal solution look like if we had all the resources we needed? **4. Sustainability (Long-Term)** - Ensuring that the solution can be maintained, scaled, or adapted for long-term viability. - Is the solution future-proof? Can it scale and adapt to changes? **5. User-Centered Design** - Focus on user needs, pain points, and user journey to craft a solution that truly benefits the end-user. - How can we improve the user experience and solve user problems directly? **6. Reverse Engineering - S**tarting from the ideal outcome and working backward to discover the steps needed to reach it. - What does the perfect solution look like, and how can we reverse-engineer it? **7. Constraints as Opportunities** - Using limitations (time, budget, resources) as creative triggers to find innovative solutions. - How can we turn limitations into opportunities for efficiency and creativity? **8. Technology Trigger - Le**veraging new or emerging technologies to solve the problem or create innovative solutions. - How can technology (AI, automation, etc.) help solve the problem? **9. Analogy (Cross-Industry Learning)** - Drawing inspiration from unrelated fields or industries to generate solutions. - How do other fields tackle similar challenges, and can we apply those methods he**re?** **10. Collective Action (Collaboration)** - Pooling resources or ideas with others through teamwork, community involvement, or partnerships to co-create a solution. - How can we involve others to create a better solution collectively? **11. Future Trends and Foresight -** Anticipating future trends or challenges and using that insight to create forward-thinking solutions. - What future scenarios should we prepare for, and how do we align our solution with these trends? **12. Environmental & Eth**ical Considerations - Ensuring that the solution is ethical and environmentally sustainable. - Is this solution ethically sound? Does it contribute positively to the environment? **13. Simple Solutions (Occam's Razor)** - Simplifying complex problems by focusing on straightforward, effective solutions. - Can we solve the problem more simply? Is complexity necessary? **14. Scenario Planning (Worst-Case**) - Anticipating and planning for worst-case scenarios to ensure the solution is resilient. - What is the worst-case scenario, and how can we ensure our solution is resilient? **15. Pattern Recognition** - Identifying trends, patterns, or commonalities in similar problems and leveraging them for new solutions. - Are there any patterns in how similar problems ha**ve been solved before?** **16. Feedback Loops** - Creating systems that generate continuous improvement through positive or negative feedback. - How can we implement feedback systems to refine the solution over time? **17. Crowdsourcing (Public Participation**) - Inviting a broader community or crowd to contribute ideas or solutions. - How can we tap into collective intelligence or external ideas to find a solut**ion?**



18. System Thinking (Holistic Approach) - Viewing the problem as part of a larger system, understanding how different elements interact and affect the whole. - How does the problem interact with other parts of the system, and what happens if we change one aspec**t of it?**
19. Blue-Sky Thinking (No Boundaries) - Engaging in bold, open-ended brainstorming without worrying about feasibility. - What if there were no constraints at all? How could we completely reinvent the current situation?
20. Historical Solutions - Drawing inspiration from past events or historical solutions to similar challenges. - How have similar problems been solved throughout history, and can those solutions be adapted to the present context?
21. Diversification (Spread Risks) - Reducing the impact of risks by diversifying approaches, products, or resources. - How can we spread risks across different strategies, resources, or areas to mitigate the effects of on**e failure?**
22. Automation - Automating repetitive or time-consuming processes to improve efficiency. - Can certain tasks be automated to save time and resources?
23. Partnering - Forming partnerships with others (organizations, teams, etc.) to leverage complementary skills and resources. - Can collaboration with a partner enhance the solution's effectiveness or scale?
24. Empathy (Understanding Stakeholders) - Deeply understanding the needs, emotions, and challenges faced by different stakeholders involved. - How does this problem affect the people involved, and what emotional or personal aspects need to be considered?
25. Regulatory Changes - Keeping in mind potential or upcoming changes in laws, regulations, or industry standards that could impact the solution. - How might regulatory shifts open up new opportunities or introduce new challenges to our solution?
26. 80/20 Rule (Pareto Principle) - Focusing on the key 20% of the problem that produces 80% of the impact. - What small changes could create the biggest positive impact on the current situation?

1.2 Other Methods for Idea generation

1. Brainstorming Freely
Set a timer and write down any ideas that come to mind, no matter how wild they may seem. The goal here is volume over quality. Allow ideas to flow without self-editing.
2. Mind Mapping
Start with a central concept or problem, then branch out with related ideas. Mind mapping can reveal connections and prompt new ideas.
3. Reverse Thinking
Instead of asking how to solve a problem, ask how you might create it. By reversing your perspective, you can often uncover unique insights and solutions.
4. SCAMPER Technique
Use SCAMPER as a framework: Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate, and Reverse. Each prompt pushes you to consider changes and variations to improve or transform an idea.
5. Random Word Association
Choose a random word and try to connect it to your problem or topic. The unusual combination can help generate fresh ideas.
6. Engage in Cross-Pollination
Look at ideas from other fields or industries. By bringing in concepts from unrelated areas, you may find innovative approaches.
7. Collaborate and Seek Feedback
Share your ideas with others and invite feedback. Discussions with diverse perspectives can spark new ideas you might not have considered.
8. Imagine Ideal Solutions
Think of the perfect solution without constraints. This can broaden your perspective and inspire realistic yet ambitious ideas.
9. Limitations and Constraints
Sometimes, placing limits on yourself (like using only three words or setting a tiny budget) can lead to surprising ideas. Constraints push you to think more creatively.
10.Take Breaks and Reflect
Ideas often come when you're not actively thinking about them. Take breaks, let your mind wander, and allow ideas to simmer
11.Six Thinking Hats (De Bono's Method)
This method assigns different "hats" or perspectives to approach the problem: facts (white hat), emotions (red hat), negatives (black hat), positives (yellow hat), creativity (green hat), and overview (blue hat). By deliberately adopting these viewpoints, you can generate ideas in a structured yet varied way.
12.Analogy Thinking
Look for analogies from unrelated areas to inspire solutions (e.g., "How would nature solve this problem?"). By thinking in terms of analogies, you can often find unexpected pathways to new ideas.
13.Crowdsourcing and Open Innovation
Invite ideas from a broader group, either within your organization or through public platforms. Gathering perspectives from diverse contributors can generate ideas that would not emerge in a smaller group.
14.The 5 Whys Technique
For problem-solving or refining ideas, ask "Why?" five times in a row. This technique digs deeper into the root cause of an issue and can lead to more innovative ideas by understanding underlying motivations or problems.
15.Storyboarding
Visualize the journey of an idea or product through a series of steps or scenes, like creating a storyboard for a film. This can clarify processes, identify potential gaps, and inspire ideas for improvement.
16.What-If Scenarios
Pose a series of "what-if" questions, such as "What if there were no budget limits?" or "What if we could use only recycled materials?" This approach can stretch your thinking and lead to unconventional ideas.
17.Forced Connections
Pair two unrelated things (like "book" and "bridge") and brainstorm ideas that connect them. The odd combination of unrelated elements can inspire unique approaches.
18.Fishbone Diagram (Ishikawa)
This tool helps identify the root causes of a problem by categorizing contributing factors. Once all factors are listed, you can target specific areas to brainstorm ideas for solutions.
19.Empathy Mapping
Create a map to think from your audience's perspective, considering what they say, think, do, and feel. This can help you understand their needs and spark ideas that resonate more deeply with them.

20.Wishing Technique
Write down an ideal wish for your idea or project as if there were no limitations. Then, list practical steps or mini-goals that could bring you closer to making this wish a reality.
21.Role Storming
Brainstorm by taking on different roles or personas (e.g., a customer, competitor, or investor) and consider what ideas might emerge from their perspectives. Role-playing can open up fresh avenues of thought.
22.Attribute Listing
Break down your concept into its basic attributes (e.g., color, size, function) and brainstorm variations or improvements for each one. This technique is useful for product or process innovation.
23.Design Thinking Process
Go through the five phases: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. This structured approach is ideal for human-centered design and innovation and can lead to well-rounded solutions.
24.Lotus Blossom Technique
Place your main problem or idea at the center of a grid, then surround it with eight related ideas. Expand each of those ideas further, like petals on a lotus, to generate new ideas from the central theme.
25.Rapid Ideation
Set a short time limit (like five minutes) to generate as many ideas as possible. This pressure can encourage more spontaneous and unexpected ideas, bypassing overthinking.
26.Idea Splicing
Take elements from multiple ideas or concepts and combine them into one. By blending different ideas, you might create something novel that incorporates the strengths of each.
27.Use of AI and Creative Tools
Use AI tools to generate ideas, suggest improvements, or explore trends. AI can help synthesize massive amounts of information or provide perspectives you may not have considered.

Activity 2: Group ideation and iteration

1. How can we structure peer review sessions for maximum value?
2. What are the guidelines for providing constructive feedback?
3. How can feedback be effectively tracked for future iterations?
4. How can feedback be effectively integrated into final versions of ideas?
5. What should be highlighted in presentation summaries of refined concepts?

Activity 3: Team voting on the best ideas

1. How can we ensure a transparent and fair voting process?
2. What rationale should team members provide for their votes?
3. How can we facilitate a smooth discussion after individual votes?

Activity 4: Selection of ideas for further development

1. What criteria should we use to evaluate final ideas?
2. How can we document the decision-making process?