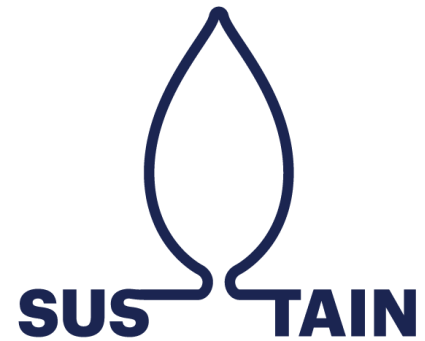


**SUSTAIN Module Syllabus:
Corporate Sustainability and Green
Cities**

**SUS
TAIN**

INTRODUCTION

With more of the global population now living in urban environments than rural (World Resources Institute, 2005) cities across the world are facing significant environmental and social challenges. Business is a critical urban actor as it both directly contributes to sustainability problems but has also the capacity to provide solutions. A growing number of corporate executives are taking real leadership on the complex sustainability issues of cities and seek new business models to create real value to society in the long-term. Such firms and individuals are beginning to question the basic assumptions behind business as-usual and are seeking to challenge current mind-sets, paradigms, worldviews and practices (Marshall et al, 2011). Effective corporate sustainability results in new business models and innovations capable of providing the vehicle to enact sustainability principles in cities and deliver on the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit (Elkington, 1997). The reality check for business leadership is that the projected 6 billion people (UN, 2011) who will live in global cities by 2050 simply cannot live well if companies do not start leading new partnerships to co-create a safe operating space for humanity. In this course we consider how business leaders are taking this challenge seriously. Cutting-edge examples of practice are used to present current approaches and frameworks are provided for how students may both analyze these and also seek to formulate their own in the future.



TARGET LEARNERS

This module is appropriate for wide range of students engaged with urban sustainability such as those of Urban and regional planning studies, business and management studies, and transition management. This module is also appropriate for professionals seeking knowledge on the role of business in green cities. No prerequisite knowledge is required for this module. Students without background in management education may wish to consult general management textbooks if unfamiliar with concepts and terminology.

MODULE OBJECTIVES

This module has three objectives:

1. Introduce the topic of corporate sustainability and its meaning with regards to the urban environment.
2. Present strategies and mechanisms by which business can contribute toward

green cities and their motivation for doing such.

3. Give students understanding of the cutting-edge developments shaping the global agenda of business in cities.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **Corporate Sustainability:** Students will connect with the natural and social sciences to learn and understand about the concept of corporate sustainability. Corporate sustainability will be connected to the urban environment as students learn of how and why companies care and act on city sustainability issues.
- **Business strategies:** Students will learn about corporate strategies for green cities through engagement with corporate front-runners. Students will engage with how businesses are finding opportunities through providing sustainability solutions and how this is bringing benefits and real value to firms.
- **State of the art practices:** The course heavily engages with companies and academics at the forefront of corporate sustainability and green cities. Students will be taught of the cutting edge advancements in the field and an outlook upon the future of business.
- **Analytical skills:** Students will learn how to analyze the corporate sustainability activities of companies in connection to green cities.
- **Elevator pitching skills:** Students will be taught how to make an 'elevator pitch' and will need to put this into practice with an individual recorded message to the CEO.

KEY CONTENT

All lectures by Dr. Steve Kennedy, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University

Lecture 1: Introduction to Corporate Sustainability & Green Cities

This session gives an extensive introduction to the course and the key concepts. The lecture outlines the need for business to provide solutions to urban sustainability problems and details the evolution of corporate sustainability and how business operating within cities is conceptualized.

Lecture 2: Strategies for Sustainability

Strategies for Sustainability offers how business managers can formulate comprehensive strategies to create sustainable value. Ways in which these strategies can be analyzed are presented with use of practical examples in the green city context.

Lecture 3: Doing Business for Green Cities

This session identifies two cutting edge ways in which business is contributing to green cities: the circular economy and social entrepreneurship. The lecture introduces the concept of the circular economy and gives attention to how business can create circular business models. Social Entrepreneurship is offered as an increasingly important phenomenon whereby societal problems are addressed through new viable trading organisations.

Lecture 4: Innovation for Sustainability

This lecture concentrates on how business can innovate to provide both firm competitive advantage and solutions to urban sustainability problems. The lecture characterizes sustainable innovation, gives insight to the process of innovation and walks through sustainable business model innovation for greener cities.

Lecture 5: Future Directions

The final session seeks to identify key developments and thinking which will be shaping the global future of the field. The lecture introduces and discusses the implications of four topics at the cutting edge of thought and practice: Sustaincentric organizations, B Corporations, Place-based enterprises, and Integrated Reporting.

Exercises

Group Business Case Report: Working in small groups (3 persons) students will select a multinational company (MNC) and produce a report critically analyzing its current strategy in relation to urban sustainability and consider the potential strategy for enhancement/ up-scaling.

Individual CEO Pitch: Students are assigned a selected industry and are required to make an individual three minute video to the CEO of a relevant MNC on why urban sustainability matters to their company.

TOOLS

Place-based enterprise framework

The place-based enterprise framework is an offline tool that helps understand how a place-based enterprise may interact with the three categories of place -- geographic location, locale, and sense of place. The tool is useful for across industries in the private sector in considering how it may manage from a place-based perspective, recognizing how place may affect its operations and how it may help to place-build.

The output of the tool is the mapped interactions between the focal organization and the determinants of place. The tool works by stimulating firms to identify and map their interactions with place. This exercise reveals the opportunities and constraints offered by place and opportunities of how the enterprise may seek to build place.

Materiality Matrix

A materiality matrix is a framework to detect what is important for the organization's strategy and for its different stakeholders. The purpose is for companies to improve the focus of sustainability actions by identifying opportunities and managing risks. A materiality matrix can be useful across industries in the private sector. The output of this tool is a materiality map in word format.

A materiality matrix is constructed through qualitative analysis, quantitative assessment and discussion to understand what is material to both the organization's strategy and its most important stakeholder groups.

To complete a materiality matrix you need an understanding of how the firm currently creates its value and its strategy for future operations. You also need to be able to identify the important stakeholders of the firm and be able to obtain representative opinions.

A materiality matrix requires the use of quantitative and qualitative methods to ascertain key stakeholder perspectives. Ideally these stakeholders would be organized to meet with the company for in-depth discussion. In addition the attendance of the Chief Executive Officer is encouraged to provide a clear overview of the company and its strategy. A blackboard with stick notes is practically useful.

Sustainable Value Framework

The Sustainable Value Framework is an offline tool that helps organizations to identify strategies and practices that contribute to a more sustainable world while simultaneously driving

shareholder value. The tool is useful for across industries in the private sector. The output of the tool is mapped portfolio of activities for sustainable value.

The tool works by stimulating firms to identify and map their current activities. This exercise reveals the further opportunities associated with sustainability and connects them to dimensions of value creation for the firm.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Group Business Case Report = 60%

Individual CEO Pitch = 40%

Total = 100%

References

Elkington, J. (1997). *Cannibals with Forks: The triple bottom line of 21st Century Business*, UK: Capstone.

Marshall J., Coleman, G., & Reason, P. (2011). *Leadership for Sustainability – An Action Research Approach*. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.

United Nations. (2012). *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2011 Revision*. New York: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations.

World Resources Institute (2005). *Millennium ecosystem assessment: Ecosystems and Human Well-being – Synthesis*. Island Press: Washington, DC.

MODULE DEVELOPER:



ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

Rotterdam School of Management is one of Europe's leading and largest business schools among the 1% of schools worldwide with Triple Crown accreditation. The school is a world leader in research and teaching on sustainability ranking 3rd in Europe and 19th globally according to The Aspen Institute's Beyond Grey Pinstripes Report.

Project participation is from the Centre for Corporate Eco-Transformation which broadly aims to reach a clearer understanding of the management challenges of corporate sustainability. The Centre conducts high-level research and education on management issues related to sustainability and provides accessible and up-to-date information on cutting-edge research, ideas and works published on the subject of corporate eco-transformation.

Learn more about RSM: <http://www.rsm.nl/>.

MODULE CONTRIBUTORS AND REVIEWERS:



The Dutch Research Institute for Transitions (DRIFT) is a leading research institute in sustainability transitions. We combine cutting-edge research at the intersection of theory and practice with high-level advisory and training programs for governmental institutions, civil society, businesses and intermediary organizations.

Learn more about DRIFT: www.drift.eur.nl



The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is one of the world's most influential international development and environment policy research organizations. Founded in 1971 by economist Barbara Ward, who forged the concept and cause of sustainable development, we work with partners on five continents.

Learn more about IIED: www.iied.org



Studio Navarra is a global network of individuals and organisations bringing together state-of-the-art professional competences and experiences from the worlds of practice and research in the area of urban resilience, development, governance and climate change.

Learn more about IIED: www.studionavarra.co.uk

ABOUT SUSTAIN PROJECT

The SUSTAIN project aims to improve the quality of tertiary education in Sustainable Urban Development in Europe and partner universities in Asia; develop standardized education modules related to SUD and furthermore enriching them with international perspectives and academic and vocational skills and competencies; promote collaboration and international cooperation between European and Asian Higher Education Institutions in SUD but also collaboration and sharing between Erasmus Mundus programmes; establish links and bridge European Higher Education and practice in SUD; increase the visibility and access to European Higher Education in Asia in the field of SUD, attracting prospective Asian and international students.

The SUSTAIN project is co-ordinated by the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) with the Dutch Research Institute for Transitions, the Netherlands, the Rotterdam School of Management, the Netherlands, Darmstadt University of Technology, Germany; National Technical University of Athens, Greece; European Academy of Bolzano, Italy; Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy; Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia; Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology, India; Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, China; and International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, Germany.

www.sustainedu.com

**SUS
TAIN**