

Nature, Business and Community Toolkit

For the development of sustainable business in protected areas

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Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) often lack access to business tools that could help them **enhance their sustainability**. This is especially true in business ecosystems where interactions, access to knowledge and exchange, happen on a (s)lower scale, such as in the **Wadden Sea** protected areas region.

Tailored for **SMEs located in protected areas**, researchers and students from the University of Groningen – Campus Fryslân developed a Nature-Business and Community development canvas in the context of the Interreg **PROWAD LINK** project.

SMEs interested in transforming their current daily practices into more **sustainable** ones, need first to understand their current process flows, then develop **new ideas** and implement them in a way that **value for various stakeholders** is generated.

To do so, business and design thinking tools such as the **business model canva** come in handy.

However, most currently available transformational tools are designed for larger companies with distinct departments and specific competencies. This means these tools are less user-friendly and useful for SMEs.

When it comes to very unique business ecosystems embedded in sensitive protected ecological areas such as **World Heritage sites**, the tools are even less accessible to their final users, namely local entrepreneurs and changemakers.

Research has found that in protected nature areas, businesses involved in tourism are often **embedded at their location site**. They have close links with various stakeholders including the local community.

In this context, in a tight collaboration with SMEs from the **Wadden Sea World Heritage area** (Netherlands and Germany) and the **WASH (UK)**, we developed a **tailored toolkit** which combines items from existing sustainable business model development, with specific elements that capture the **importance of the place site and the local community**.

By means of the Nature, Business and Community Toolkit, SMEs in sensitive ecological sites are facilitated and enabled to undertake the improvement of their existing business models towards sustainability.

In particular the toolkit will help SMEs and entrepreneurs to:

- **map** the existing benefits delivered by their business
- **Identify** new or additional benefit streams.
- **Identify** stakeholders needed to implement sustainable benefits in the business

❖ SUMMARY OF TOOLKIT

Objectives of the toolkit

The toolkit will help you to:

- Map existing benefits delivered by your business (**draw where your business is now**)
- Identify new or additional sustainable benefit streams (**develop sustainable business ideas**)
- Identify stakeholders needed to implement sustainable benefits in the business (**look for how to achieve new ideas**)

Before you begin

- a) Identify the nature and cultural heritage assets in your protected area
- b) For best results, organise to use the toolkit with your team

❖ SUMMARY OF TOOLKIT

Steps you will take in the phases (1 – 4)

1. **Define your current business model with a focus on the current offer you give to customers and stakeholders.** Identify the stakeholders, resources, benefits, partners and current outcomes
2. **Map types of benefits that are available in your business.** Collect information about the type of benefits in your business (benefits missed or benefits destroyed for each stakeholder)
3. **Identify opportunities that can be further developed in your business.** Using information from Phase 1, identify the stakeholders for your business and possible benefits that could be generated for them.
4. **Monitor sustainability of the business.** Using the indicators in Phase 4 (**after 3-6 months** of changes), monitor the sustainable development of your business, and areas that need further improvement.

❖ Phase 1: Reflection Canvas (instructions on how to fill it in the next slide)

<p>1 Nature and cultural heritage assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is the business located? • What are the natural resources utilised by the business? • What are the cultural resources utilised by the business? 	<p>Other resources used by business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which resources are needed to bring the products/services to the end-users? 	<p>Key activities carried out for business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which activities does the business carry out to deliver products/services? 	<p>3 Key partners engaged for business needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who does the business work with to deliver products/services?
<p>2 End-users of products or services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are your customers? • What do you offer them? 		<p>Key activities carried out for nature and or culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which activities does the business carry out to meet nature and/or cultural needs? 	<p>4 Key partners engaged for nature and cultural resources needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who does the business work with to deliver nature and/or cultural benefits?
<p>FOR WHO (list all stakeholders you have identified above)</p>	<p>What are the ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS for this stakeholder</p>	<p>What are the SOCIAL BENEFITS for this stakeholder</p>	<p>What are the ECONOMIC BENEFITS for this stakeholder</p>
<p>1</p>			
<p>2</p>			
<p>3</p>			
<p>4</p>			

Steps to fill in the Reflection Canvas

Step 1 - Answer the **mid blue** section of the canvas first (follow the direction of the arrows)

Step 2 - Move on to the **light blue** section. Answer this section of the canvas in this way:-

- Use the answers from for each **mid blue** section (numbered 1,2,3,4), to fill in the first part of the **light blue** section (also numbered 1,2,3,4)
- Think about the benefits (economic, social and environmental) for these stakeholders (who answers given for 1,2,3,4) – use this to fill in the rest of the **light blue** section

❖ Phase 2: Ideation and Selection Canvas

(instructions on how to fill it in the next slide)

Consider benefits for each Stakeholder	ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS		SOCIAL BENEFITS		ECONOMIC BENEFITS	
	Which benefits are MISSED by the business?	Which benefits are DESTROYED by the business?	Which benefits are MISSED by the business?	Which benefits are DESTROYED by the business?	Which benefits are MISSED by the business?	Which benefits are DESTROYED by the business?
1						
2						
3						
4						

Steps for filling in Ideation and Selection Canvas

Step 1 – Use the list (numbered 1, 2, 3, 4) from the previous canvas to fill in the boxes labelled - 1,2,3 and 4 - in the Ideation and Selection canvas

Step 2 - Move on the next part of the canvas. For each of the stakeholders (numbered 1,2,3 and 4), think about environmental, social and economic chances for each of them, which are missed or destroyed by the business.

Step 3 - For each stakeholder (1,2,3 and 4) fill in at least one environmental, social or economic chance that is missed or destroyed by the business

❖ Phase 3: Nature-Business-Community development Model (instructions on how to fill it in the next slide)

NATURE-BUSINESS-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (N-B-CD) CANVAS

Answer the first two questions, then based on your answers, fill in the columns A-D in that order

- 1. Who/What is the Stakeholder for the business?** *e.g., Nature resources – scenic beauty, birds, beaches, soil etc., Culture heritage resources such as historical sites, cultural events, and local food etc., current customers e.g. visitors, borders or those who hire the services, current partners such as nature and/or culture organisations, local tourism organisations, and nature area managers.*
- 2. Which Benefit is to be developed for the stakeholder?** *e.g., generate funds for development of nature and culture heritage resources, offer ways in which customers can contribute to development of the area/less disruption, new ways to contribute to community development, new collaborations with partners (already named above)*

A	B	C	D
<p>1. Available resources Which resources are needed to develop benefit? <i>E.g., knowledge, finance, location – which provides nature or cultural heritage resources (e.g., ecosystem services)</i></p> <p>2. Available competences What skills are needed to develop the benefit? <i>E.g., Story-telling skills, technological skills, work experience in activity,</i></p> <p>3. Available technology What technology is needed to develop the benefit? <i>E.g., new energy generating technology, new recycling technology, new food processing technology, new event organisation processes (all should be for sustainable innovation)</i></p>	<p>1. Who is/are the end-user/s? Who benefits?</p> <p>2. How do you communicate benefits to the stakeholders? What networks do you use to communicate the benefits?</p> <p>3. Which new partners do you need? Who do you need to partner with to develop the benefits?</p> <p>4. Which partners do you have? Who do you already have a partnership with?</p>	<p>1. Key activities needed Which activities do you need to carry out to give the benefit?</p>	<p>1. New Economic Benefits (value proposition) What is the full description of the benefit? That is: For whom?, By whom? And How? <i>E.g., by developing an online tour visitors are able to experience nature from remote and difficult to access part of the world</i></p> <p>2. Environmental Benefits delivered What is the full description of the benefit? That is: For whom?, By whom? And How? <i>E.g., by designing the tour online, the remote nature area will remain relatively undisturbed</i></p> <p>3. Social Benefits delivered What is the full description of the benefit? That is: For whom?, By whom? And How? <i>E.g., By making sales of the online tour, development funds can be generated for the local community to improve access roads or adapt to climate change</i></p>

Steps for filling Nature-Business-Community development Model

Step 1 – Pick one of the chances (ideas) you identified in the Ideation and Selection canvas (anything in the light blue part)

Step 2 – Fill in each section of the model, while thinking of this chance (ideas)
(Answer questions starting from section A, then B, then C, and then D).

N.B: Complete one model for each of the chances (ideas) you have. It will help determine which chances (ideas) are most likely to work

❖ Phase 4: Monitoring of sustainable benefits

The statements below describe the sustainable performance of your “business” in terms of economic indicators. Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by circling the number on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree).

(1)Strongly disagree (2)Disagree (3)Somewhat disagree (4)Somewhat agree (5)Agree (6)Strongly agree

Economic sustainability for the business						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
We see our business is providing employment to us and others						
Our business’s economic performance is at an acceptable level in terms of ...	1	2	3	4	5	6
Growth in sales (Think of number of visitors hosted/products sold ...has this increased?)						
Providing continuous income (Think of the flow of sales during operation ...is it constant?)						
Return on investments made (Think of costs incurred by the businessis income generated greater than costs incurred?)						
Profitability (Think of financial gain ...does the business yield satisfactory financial gain once costs are covered?)						

❖ Phase 4: Monitoring of sustainable benefits

The statements below describe the sustainable performance of your “business” in terms of social indicators. Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by circling the number on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree).

(1)Strongly disagree (2)Disagree (3)Somewhat disagree (4)Somewhat agree (5)Agree (6)Strongly agree

Social sustainability for the business						
Our business...	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ensures basic needs for our family, and those of our employees are met						
Supports development in the community (for example it sponsors/participates activities for youth or/and the elderly, or/and children, or community as a whole)						
Provides educational opportunities (for example sharing expertise on area’s nature and/or cultural benefits)						
Provides equal opportunity (for example, the hiring process is clear and transparent)						
Is concerned with stewardship of resources used by the business (for example, you are an active member a nature conservation body e.g. a national park, and/or contribute a share of their profit to nature and/or cultural protection)						
Provides job opportunities for the community						
Contributes to the improvement of the liveability of the area (for example, the business reduces the use of cars by visitors)						

❖ Phase 4: Monitoring of sustainable benefits

The statements below describe the sustainable performance of your “business” in terms of environmental indicators. Please read each statement carefully, and then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by circling the number on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree).

(1)Strongly disagree (2)Disagree (3)Somewhat disagree (4)Somewhat agree (5)Agree (6)Strongly agree

Environmental sustainability for business						
Our business.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Uses utilities (e.g. energy and water) in an environmental friendly manner. (Think of type of energy used for example renewable sources, and efficiency of energy use for example, is the energy recycled?)						
Produces fewer wastes and emissions (Think of reduction of CO emissions from facilities or travel)						
Is concerned about waste management (Think of re-use, recycle, reduce methods in the business)						
Uses space efficiently to set up and operate business (Think of the design of the business in relation to the natural resources it needed)						
Is concerned about water management (Think of the source of water, total water usage and management of waste water)						
Is concerned about the use of natural resources by the business (Think about benefits given to nature area for example contributing to management of invading species or/and to land management)						