



# OSTROBOTHNIA IN TRANSITION

ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

## CIRCULAR ECONOMY | So much more than sorting waste

*“Yes, of course we sort our waste”*  
*“This is how we have always done it in the company”*

When we talk about sustainable development and circular economy, many people automatically think of waste sorting and recycling which of course are a part of the picture, but sustainability is so much more. It is about the will of letting the circular economy thinking permeate all activities. Many companies have a page on their website where they describe how the company works in a sustainable manner. There you can read how the company manages their waste sorting, how it has switched to a green electricity producer, and how it has possibly invested in an a company car that is powered with electricity. Sustainability is actually about about making fundamental changes, having a sustainable way of thinking, which is visible in everything from purchases to production as well as communication, marketing, and product development. It is about understanding that circular economy also applies to the finances, competitiveness, and future survival prerequisites of the company.

For a long time, we have lived in a linear consumption society, where products are being produced, used, and then thrown away. Only now we have started re-using items, and in tomorrow's circular economy, we can take a step further – in a circular economy production, there will be no waste created, as everything will be utilised and recycled into new products. Consumers are asking for sustainable options, employees prefer to work in sustainable workplaces, and ultimately, there aren't any other options. It is time to make a transition.

For most of us, changes can be hard because that is how we as humans are built. At the same time, we are curious and have a strong desire to develop ourselves. In Ostrobothnia, we are additionally driven by a will to do things well and preferably first and best. For this reason, we have good prerequisites for being at the forefront of the sustainability work and together encourage others to change their way of producing. Ostrobothnia has been a forerunner for a long time, and we have long traditions in waste management. Now we have the prerequisites for becoming the best within circular economy in the country, and even worldwide.

### How can we get started and why should this be done?

In this roadmap, you can find practical examples on how you can get started on your sustainability journey and develop your sustainability thinking. The examples are based on the latest research and current trends. We have focused on developing hands-on guides, tools and checklists to make the change easier for you as an entrepreneur – whether your company is large or small. We want to help you take part in building a sustainable Ostrobothnia.

What kind of a footprint do you want to leave for future generations?

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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## OSTROBOTHNIA IN TRANSITION

– Roadmap for sustainable development and circular economy

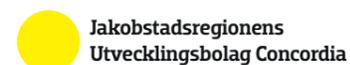
The report **Ostrobothnia in Transition - The Roadmap for Sustainable Development and Circular Economy** is based on the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The report has been prepared by Ostrobothnian development companies in co-operation with the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia and the EU Regional Development Fund. The report is published as part of the CERM project, *Circular Economy Road Map and Action Plan for Ostrobothnia Region in Finland*.

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• This is a "Briefly in english"-version. For the complete roadmap in swedish or finnish, please visit the websites of the development companies.



Kristinestads näringslivscentral Ab  
Kristiinankaupungin elinkeinokeskus Oy



Leverage from  
the EU  
2014–2020



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# 1. THE FUTURE IS SUSTAINABLE AND CIRCULAR

Consumers are asking for sustainable options, employees prefer to work in sustainable workplaces, and ultimately, there are no longer any other options. It is time to change. With this roadmap, we want to help you as an entrepreneur to get started and to find sustainable solutions to everything from purchases and production to communication, marketing, and product development. Circular economy is not just about sustainability, but also about the finances, competitiveness, and future survival prerequisites of the company.

The goal is to work together towards the following targets:

### A COMPETITIVE OSTROBOTHNIA

- ▶ We promote sustainable growth based on knowledge, innovation, mobility, digitalisation and robotics.
- ▶ We take advantage of new ideas and innovations.



### A SUSTAINABLE OSTROBOTHNIA

- ▶ We lead the way to sustainable future solutions.
- ▶ We create a region that is socially, ecologically and financially sustainable with common values and strong ecosystems.



### A CIRCULAR OSTROBOTHNIA

- ▶ We promote the transition to sustainable circular economy solutions.
- ▶ We work towards carbon neutrality, circular economy solutions, and fossil-free energy.





# 2. WHY WILL WE SUCCEED?

## ▶ WE HAVE THE PREREQUISITE FOR SUCCESS

We have an extensive network and a determination to succeed. We are used to working together and achieving our goals.

## ▶ WE HAVE THE DRIVING FORCE

We have a unique opportunity to become a pioneer in the transition to a more low-carbon society and in the transition to a circular economy.

## ▶ WE HAVE CLEAR GOALS

By 2030, Ostrobothnia will be the most sustainable region in the Nordic countries.



### 3. HOW TO FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

► **MAKE A DECISION**

Have courage to start the sustainability work even if you are not an expert. Start from your own core business. Make sure that the management of the company leads the sustainability work and makes the most important decisions.

► **ANALYSE THE NEED**

Think about in which areas your company affects customers, subcontractors and stakeholders the most. Start from there.

► **LEARN FROM THE BEST**

Get inspired by partners and competitors that have come further in their sustainability work and take advantage of their experiences. If you are already the best within your industry, study other industries.

► **SHAPE THE PURPOSE OF YOUR SUSTAINABILITY WORK**

For example, take industry specific principles or UN's global sustainable development goals as your starting point. How does your work promote the sustainability targets? What does sustainability mean to you and why is it important?

► **SET SMART GOALS**

Focus on the sustainability work by placing SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) that you regularly follow up.

► **REMEMBER TO COMMUNICATE**

Do not wait to communicate about your developments until you are completely satisfied or 100 percent sustainable. A clear direction and sincere effort creates trust and inspires. Communication and openness drive development forward.

► **DEMONSTRATE THE SOCIETAL BENEFIT**

Tell how your sustainability work furthers a positive societal change. It strengthens the understanding within the company and makes your operations more relevant to others.

► **ENGAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES**

Engage your co-workers in the sustainability work and positively welcome their improvement suggestions. When many are involved, the responsibility increases, and the brand strengthens.



“The Ostrobothnian coastal area, a World Heritage site, is a special place. The best birch sap is dependent on clean water and natural forests. Our way of giving back to the nature is to plant a new birch for every 1,000 litres of sap we collect.”

ARCTIC BIRCH

PHOTO: VASEK / ANNA SAND

|                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>BENEFITS</b></p> <p>of sustainable and circular business models</p>                                                            | <p><b>MONETARY SAVINGS</b></p>         | <p><b>BETTER STEERING</b></p>             |
| <p><b>STRONGER BUSINESS PLAN</b></p>              | <p><b>STRONGER BRAND</b></p>           | <p><b>GROWING DEMAND</b></p>              |
| <p><b>NEW COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES</b></p>   | <p><b>INCREASED INVOLVEMENT</b></p>  | <p><b>EASIER RECRUITMENT</b></p>        |
| <p><b>IMPROVED FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES</b></p>  | <p><b>BETTER CONNECTION WITH THE AUTHORITIES</b></p>                                                                      | <p><b>LESS ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS</b></p>  |

## 4. CHECKLIST FOR COMPANIES

For everyone who want to keep up with the future progress, it is even more important to be able to examine the company in a larger societal context. Working with the CERM project's road-map, the lessons and experiences about sustainability work in companies have almost always been the same, regardless of who we spoke to or which experts we listened to: start easy and systematically, do not make things too complicated, the simpler the better. It is a never-ending journey.

Many Ostrobothnian companies already have a structured sustainability thinking, while others are in the early stages. To get started with the sustainability thinking, our eleven tips will be helpful for everyone already working on the transition to sustainability targets and circular economy, but also for those planning on it. When you start working with having sustainable development in mind, you are also able to manage and monitor many areas better. You can show how you take part in furthering a sustainable society and show that you are a responsible company. It is a competitive advantage when potential customers are choosing who to collaborate with now and in the future.

The conditions for sustainable business models differ for different industries. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration that different solutions and models are needed depending on which materials you use and whether you offer products or services. Firstly, a materiality analysis can be done, which evaluates which questions are most important to stakeholders, employees, customers, the board, and investors. Since companies are in different stages and situations, we have taken eleven themes as a starting point. The transition can happen in different phases based on the type of company and business model, based on company strategies and prioritisation. When your target is clear, the questions and comments listed by us can help you get started. Another way to start is to use some of the UN's global sustainability goals as a starting point and evaluate how they affect your operations. Regardless of how far you are, or if you have not even started your sustainability journey yet, you can think about the following:

- ▶ Have courage to start the sustainability work even if you are not an expert
- ▶ Take your own operations and prerequisites as a starting point
- ▶ Start from the areas that are most essential for your business
- ▶ Start by taking small steps that you can change and improve
- ▶ Cooperate within your company and outside of it
- ▶ Sustainability work is never completed – it is a development process



“Our sustainability program is built on a materiality analysis that defines which responsible actions have the greatest impact on the environment, society and the individual.”

**DERMOSIL**

PHOTO: DERMOSIL

### Eleven steps towards a sustainable company

We have listed eleven steps and by following them your company can make more sustainable decisions. Not all steps are suitable for all companies, but you can utilise the questions and the tips when you are pondering on how to develop your business to be more in line with the circular economy. The eleven steps are further explained in the following pages.

- ▶ 1. Get started
- ▶ 7. Transports & distribution
- ▶ 2. Facilities & energy
- ▶ 8. Communication & marketing
- ▶ 3. Raw materials
- ▶ 9. Sales
- ▶ 4. Design & product development
- ▶ 10. Waste & recycling
- ▶ 5. Purchases
- ▶ 11. Co-workers & corporate social responsibility
- ▶ 6. Production & manufacturing

### What to focus on?

Consider if it is essential for your company to focus on a specific step. Where is your climate impact the largest and what is the easiest to sort out? Use this matrix as help:

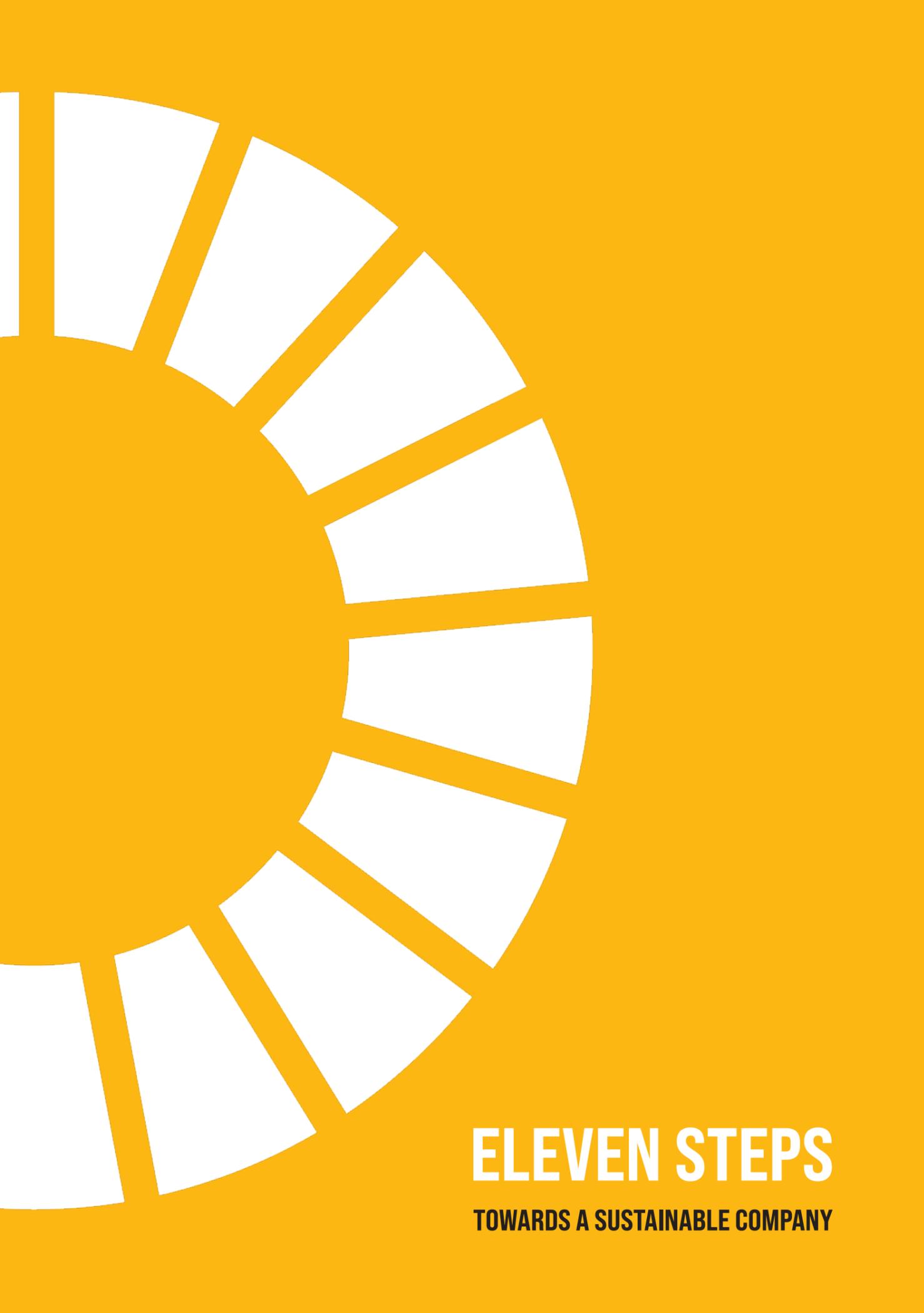
|                                              | If you sell services | If you sell products | If you manufacture products |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Get started                                  | x                    | x                    | x                           |
| Facilities & energy                          | x                    | x                    | x                           |
| Raw materials                                |                      |                      | x                           |
| Design & product development                 |                      |                      | x                           |
| Purchases                                    | x                    | x                    | x                           |
| Production & manufacturing                   |                      |                      | x                           |
| Transports & distribution                    | x                    | x                    | x                           |
| Communication & marketing                    | x                    | x                    | x                           |
| Sales                                        | x                    | x                    | x                           |
| Waste & recycling                            |                      | x                    | x                           |
| Co-workers & corporate social responsibility | x                    | x                    | x                           |



“Our goal is to continuously reduce the environmental impact. This includes switching from oil to biogas and reducing the amount of waste from plastic packaging.”

**SNELLMAN**

PHOTO: SNELLMAN



# ELEVEN STEPS

## TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE COMPANY



## 1. GET STARTED | Focus on sustainability

- ▶ **Decide to start working in a way that focuses on sustainability.** Take your own core operations as a starting point. Make sure that the company management guides the sustainability work and makes the most important decisions. Then you will have good conditions for success.
- ▶ **Make a materiality analysis.** Think about which areas in your company affect customers, subcontractors and stakeholders the most. Start from there.
- ▶ **Learn from the best.** Get inspired by partners and competitors that have come further in their sustainability work and take advantage of their experiences. If you are already the best within your own industry, study other industries.
- ▶ **Shape the purpose of your sustainability work.** For example, take industry specific principles or UN's global sustainable development goals as your starting point. How does your work promote the sustainability targets? What does sustainability mean to you and why is it of importance?
- ▶ **Set SMART goals.** Focus on the sustainability work by placing SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) that you regularly follow up.
- ▶ **Communicate.** Do not wait to communicate about your developments until you are completely satisfied or 100 percent sustainable. A clear direction and sincere effort create trust and inspire. Communication pushes the development forward.
- ▶ **Demonstrate the societal benefit.** Explain how your sustainability work furthers a positive societal change. It strengthens the understanding within the company and makes your operations more relevant to others.
- ▶ **Engage your employees.** Engage your co-workers in the sustainability work and positively welcome their improvement suggestions. When many are involved, the responsibility increases, and the brand strengthens.
- ▶ **Inspire your partners** Set requirements to subcontractors and encourage your partners to develop their sustainability work. Preferably communicate together when you are making changes and taking steps of progress.
- ▶ **Report.** Make a sustainability report, which shows what you are doing and the challenges you have faced. More and more customers, stakeholders and investors are demanding sustainable actions. Use the report as a basis for your sustainability communication.

**KEYWORDS:** Engage, inspire, shape



## 2. FACILITIES AND ENERGY | Less is more?

- ▶ **Go through your emissions.** When you start to get interested in climate impact, the first thing noticed about operations are direct emissions coming from production and heating.
- ▶ **Start from the electricity bill.** The first things you start looking at, when getting interested in mapping your climate impact, are the direct emissions from production and heating. The availability of sustainable, reliable and renewable energy and clean fuel is the first prerequisite for meeting many of the challenges the whole world is facing.
- ▶ **Go through your facilities.** Are the facilities you currently use suitable for your business? Do you have unused spaces that are pointlessly heated? It is not worth maintaining bigger facilities than what you really need. There are companies that are reducing their facilities to enable growth.
- ▶ **Set an example.** Through your choices, you demonstrate to employees, sellers, manufacturers, and electricity providers an important message about the necessity of energy efficiency and environmental considerations. How do you present your activities regarding your facilities and energy consumption?
- ▶ **Reduce emissions.** Greenhouse gas emissions have increased dramatically, which is related to the use of fossil fuels. How can you improve energy supply solutions and simultaneously reduce carbon dioxide emissions?
- ▶ **Determine your ecological footprint.** You can reduce it effectively by reducing private car use, transportations and travels.
- ▶ **Favour sharing.** Can the facilities be in shared use with a neighbour or can an internal rent be introduced to reduce the number of square meters?
- ▶ **Manufacture smartly.** Examine the use of materials, chemicals and water.

● According to the international calculation standard **GHG-protocol**, greenhouse gas emissions can be divided into three so-called scopes, which express the level of emissions. Scope 1 focuses on direct emissions (for example from own vehicles or oil-fired boilers). Scope 2 looks at indirect emissions from the use of grid energy (electricity, district heating, district cooling, steam). Scope 3 covers all other indirect emissions in the company's value chain.

**KEYWORDS:** Emissions, electricity bill, shared facilities

## 3. RAW MATERIALS | Everything starts from the choice of materials

- ▶ **Use sustainable materials.** In manufacturing companies, raw materials are the basis of sustainable manufacturing. In a circular economy, products are manufactured in a way in which they can be dismantled into parts and reused over and over again. Sustainable materials must be able to be broken down by nature or be reintroduced into production. The target is that nothing needs to be thrown away, and in that way reduce the need to constantly purchase new raw materials. How much of the materials in your products can be recycled?
- ▶ **Reduce the use of materials.** This applies to the entire life cycle of manufacturing. Can the amount of materials be reduced by reassessing the size and weight of a product?
- ▶ **Design sustainably.** Can the product be designed in a way that minimises the amount of material waste, and keeps the raw material as clean as possible so that reusing is possible?
- ▶ **Reduce the burden on the environment** by eliminating the use of non-environmentally friendly raw materials. Is it possible to exclude toxic substances and replace them with other alternatives? Can environmentally harmful materials be exchanged? Can toxic materials be avoided?
- ▶ **Use less materials.** Assess whether it would be possible to reduce the number of materials, parts and components. When the design is reassessed, the amount of materials may decrease.
- ▶ **How long does the product last?** Is it possible to switch to stronger and longer lasting materials that age dignifiedly and have a longer life cycle? Can the product be made lighter by reducing the size and weight of it? Are there more durable alternatives that do not wear out so easily and are more shockproof, water resistant or dustproof?
- ▶ **Waste material for one, a resource for another.** Is it possible to use waste materials from other companies as raw materials in your production process? When doing so, your product gets a stronger circular economy stamp.
- ▶ **Use local raw materials.** Is it possible to use more local raw materials? This can help you reduce your climate impact when transports decrease.
- ▶ **Manufacture sustainably.** Use smart manufacturing techniques, reduce complexity, and optimise the chain of subcontractors and (transport) volumes.
- ▶ **What happens when the product has lived its life?** Can it be repaired? Can it be reused? Can it be dismantled and reused as raw material in new production?

**KEYWORDS:** Locality, sustainability, reuse



## 4. DESIGN AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT | Right from the start

- ▶ **Rid of waste by designing.** According to the European Commission, 80 percent of climate impact and 90 percent of manufacturing costs are a result of decisions made in the design stage. How can you design your business in a way that no waste is generated and the products you manufacture are as clean as possible?
- ▶ **Products of the future are also raw materials.** What happens to your product once the customer has used it out? In circular economy, products are always recycled. Products that prevent the circular conversion should be redesigned so that they can function as future raw materials and so that waste is minimised. Do you have an "after use" strategy for your products?
- ▶ **Competitive advantages.** The design affects the manufacturing process and the choice of material. The design is also a reason to choose a sustainable product. What are your strengths?
- ▶ **Decrease your climate impact.** Innovative design solutions take into account the whole life cycle of a product from recycling to manufacturing, distribution and use, to recycling, repairing, and waste. What do the total climate impacts of your products or services look like?
- ▶ **Understand the needs of the users.** Sustainable design means designing user-friendly products in a way that simultaneously takes into account the full lifespan of the product by applying environmental criteria in all stages.
- ▶ **The customers' needs change.** Plan already in the design stage how your product can be updated or changed based on the changing needs or purpose of usage. Then you will have an advantage compared to others and you can adapt to your users' requirements and future changes.
- ▶ **Extend the lifespan.** When life cycle thinking is taken into use in the design, the lifespan of a product can be extended. Is the product designed for a new life with a new function? New ways of use and reusing must be taken into consideration already in the planning stage.
- ▶ **Flexibility and timelessness.** A timeless look, high quality and functionality are the cornerstones of a sustainable product. Can you take a stand and challenge the "throw-away society" and instead offer products that can be shared, repaired, updated, reused and recycled? What does it require from the planning and the designing? Can you communicate how the product can be used and reused in a way that the climate impact is as small as possible?
- ▶ **Can the product be repaired?** Prepare for future legislation. New regulations will require that products are designed in a way that they can be repaired.

**KEYWORDS:** Timelessness, lifespan, user-friendliness

## 5. PURCHASES | Have courage to set strict requirements

- ▶ **Sustainable and efficient.** Sustainable and efficient purchases are a key part of strengthening the competitiveness. You can create additional value for both the company and its customers by choosing competitive and sustainable subcontractors and suppliers as your partners.
- ▶ **Set strict requirements.** Make sure that requirements are set for purchasing raw material, components or materials, both for recycled material as well as virgin material.
- ▶ **Make environmentally friendly purchases.** Do you require active sustainability work from suppliers and subcontractors? Make sure that you receive information about the content of problematic substances in goods and materials to facilitate a sustainable solution that can also be recycled.
- ▶ **How to make an impact?** Think about the purchases that you can directly have an impact on. You can have an impact on sustainability work for example by asking the cleaning or transport company to develop more sustainable alternatives. In this way, your business can also become more sustainable.
- ▶ **Make risk assessments.** Based on given criteria, a risk assessment is always made of existing and future suppliers before signing an agreement. Do your partners focus on sustainability?
- ▶ **Be aware of the origin.** In order to ensure that you are aware on how and where your raw materials are produced, an established traceability system of sensitive raw materials is needed.
- ▶ **Risk management.** The importance of ensuring distribution and transport chains has become clear during the corona pandemic. So-called "local sourcing" is also important from the sustainability angle. Can you make local purchases? Are there subcontractors within the local area? Increasing local collaboration in part also helps to reduce the climate footprint.
- ▶ **Use sustainability criteria in purchases.** Purchases based on life cycle costs also ensure financially reasonable decisions.
- ▶ **Optimise procurements.** When purchases are optimised and coordinated with other companies, the sustainability work can be furthered. When making purchases, is it for example possible to reduce the climate impact of your transports?
- ▶ **Prioritise ecological products.** Are you choosing ecologically, environmentally and fair trade marked products in your purchases?

**KEYWORDS:** Risk assessment, optimisation, prioritisation



## 6. PRODUCTION AND MANUFACTURING | Produce for the future

- ▶ **Sustainable production.** Products and services that are created by using processes and materials which are not polluted and which conserve energy and natural resources, are economically rewarding and harmless to workers, communities and consumers.
- ▶ **Longer lifespan.** In a circular economy, products will be shared, rented and recycled. It sets higher requirements on the quality. Make sure that your products can be used for a longer period, that they are reusable, and can be repaired and recycled.
- ▶ **Environmentally friendly materials and raw materials.** More and more customers are interested in products that are sustainable and environmentally friendly. Can you switch to environmentally friendly alternatives in your production and avoid the use of non-renewable resources?
- ▶ **Remember the product's next life.** Future legislation will increasingly require that products can be maintained and repaired. How does that affect you?
- ▶ **Produce with reuse in mind.** What happens to your product when it reaches the end of its lifespan? Does it contain materials that interest you (or someone else)? Can it be dismantled into parts in a way that makes reuse or recycling easy?
- ▶ **Plan with recycling in mind.** Ease the maintenance, repairing, updating, and modification already in the production stage. Consider improvement suggestions from the employees during the manufacturing process.
- ▶ **Think about the lifespan.** Extend the lifespan by offering products that are functional, easy to take care of and repair. Maximise the functionality and ensure the best possible maintenance.
- ▶ **Save energy.** The energy used during the use of the products is a major source of environmental impact. Can the surplus energy created from your processes be utilised?
- ▶ **Optimise the packaging.** Think about how you pack your products before they leave your facilities. Is the packaging environmentally friendly? What happens to the packaging when it is no longer needed? Can you get it back so that it can be used multiple times?
- ▶ **Make a life cycle assessment.** If you want to be more aware of your real environmental impact, a life cycle assessment (LCA) can be a good way to start. A life cycle assessment provides information on the environmental impact of the whole value chain, from extraction of minerals to the decommissioning of the product.

**KEYWORDS:** Materials, raw materials, energy

## 7. TRANSPORTS AND DISTRIBUTION | The closer the better

- ▶ **Optimise the distribution.** Distribution has a great impact on the climate footprint of a product or a service. By optimising the distribution system and transports, a company can take big steps of progress in their sustainability work.
- ▶ **Better logistics.** When the logistics between the supplier and buyer are improved, the distribution can be made more sustainable. This includes the entire distribution process from warehousing, order processing and packaging to better loading of vehicles and transportation to the customer or buyer and by taking back the packaging.
- ▶ **Coordination of transports.** By optimising and coordinating your distribution and your transports, you contribute to less carbon dioxide emissions in your business. Can you collaborate with neighbouring companies in distribution, purchasing, waste management, and other logistics planning?
- ▶ **Use environmentally friendly transports.** How do you handle the shipping and distribution of goods? Do the goods need to be shipped? What type of transport is the most energy efficient? Is the transport company environmentally certified?
- ▶ **Optimise the packaging.** How can the goods be packaged in a way that uses the least packaging space possible? Use new technology and materials. Think about functional and smart packages, for example those that can be tracked with IoT (Internet of Things).
- ▶ **Choose the correct packaging materials.** Reduce, minimise and optimise the packaging material.
- ▶ **Reduce packaging supplies.** Discard useless packaging, extra boxes or layers. Minimise the use of materials, weight, size and dimensions.
- ▶ **Use recyclable materials.** Are the packages recyclable or reusable? Reuse the materials when it is financially possible and fill the packages again. Can the same packaging be used for other products? Make the packaging functional and valuable with additional use in mind.
- ▶ **Use fossil free energy and fuels.** In Ostrobothnia, biogas operated transports can further the sustainability work and become a competitive advantage.
- ▶ **Local is best.** Locally transported means transports with low consumption of resources.

**KEYWORDS:** Logistics, coordination, smart packaging



## 8. COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING | Tell!

- ▶ **Communicate.** Sustainability communication strengthens your brand, inspires others and furthers the development. Future customers are expecting information about your sustainability work so that they can make sustainable choices. If you are not seen, you do not exist, which is largely true in this context.
- ▶ **Do not wait.** The sustainability work is a continuous work. That is why you should talk about your targets and developments. A clear direction and sincere efforts create trust and inspire. All companies have a long way ahead to become sustainable or circular, but communication furthers the progress. You cannot just wait until the work is completed.
- ▶ **Shape your views.** What does sustainability mean to you and why is it important? For example, take the UN's global sustainable development goals as your starting point, but modify them to fit your challenges. What do you want to communicate from a sustainability perspective?
- ▶ **Analyse.** How do employees, customers and partners perceive your strengths and weaknesses? What opportunities and risks can there be related to profiling your brand as sustainable?
- ▶ **Choose a question.** Invest in one message, even though there are many possible alternatives. In that way the communication becomes clearer. When choosing your message, think both backwards and forwards in time. What have you already done and what do you want to do? Visions create involvement. Choose one question that you want to impact and dare to take a stand on.
- ▶ **Demonstrate the societal benefit.** Communicate how your sustainability work in part contributes to positive societal development, but do not confuse sustainability work with charity projects. Sustainable development must be an integral part of your operations and communication.
- ▶ **Be open.** Openness is the best way to create credibility. Also talk about the not so positive sides of your business and about what you are concretely doing to fix it. Be prepared to answer questions from your target groups. Open communication is key.
- ▶ **Avoid greenwashing.** Focus on concrete, proven impacts and actions. Only communicate what is true and do not present things being better for the environment than they really are.
- ▶ **Keep it simple.** Always try to describe your work as simply and easily as possible. Take advantage of storytelling. Avoid expert vocabulary, technical details and abbreviations. Good sustainability communication can also be a key factor for your employer branding.

**KEYWORDS:** Tell, shape, show

## 9. SALES | New requirements

- ▶ **New view on sales.** Because future products are more durable, they will be used longer and more efficiently. This means that the view on sales is thoroughly going to change. New innovative ways of offering services before products enables this development and is the key to success. Can you make sure that your products can be used more efficiently, for example by renting, sharing, repairing, or reselling?
- ▶ **The customers' requirements change.** Be prepared to talk about sustainability when you talk about sales. The demand for sustainable materials, products, services, and digital alternatives is growing. How well are your salespeople prepared to meet your customers' sustainability requirements?
- ▶ **Expectations on subcontractors.** Despite whether you use subcontractors or are a subcontractor yourself, it is worth a thought. How do you live up to the sustainability goals in your business? If customers have sustainability requirements for their business, it is likely that the requirements also apply to you.
- ▶ **Accessibility is key.** For future consumers it is increasingly important to have access to products, not owning them. How does this impact your way of selling?
- ▶ **Sustainable consumption.** Reusing, renting, sharing, or leasing products instead of owning them will be the new normal in the future. Make it as easy and profitable as possible for both your company and the customers to make sustainable choices and to be able to share, repair and reuse your products.
- ▶ **Communicate.** Customers want to make sustainable choices and making the right choices should be easy. For this reason, information regarding your services has to be clear, so that it is easier for a single consumer to make choices that are sustainable and circular.

**KEYWORDS:** Accessibility, requirements, communication



## 10. WASTE AND RECYCLING | Go through your waste recycling

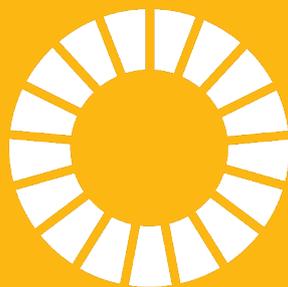
- ▶ **Review your waste recycling.** In order to become more sustainable, the amount of waste must be reduced. When you systematically follow waste amounts and flow, you increase awareness. How do you handle waste? How often do you empty the waste bins? Thinking about company waste amounts and correct recycling automatically leads to sustainability thinking. In addition, it is possible to save money.
- ▶ **Cooperate.** No company can move into a circular economy on its own. When you cooperate with other companies, your waste can in part contribute to other companies' transition to a circular economy and vice versa. One company's waste can be another company's resource.
- ▶ **Offer recycling.** Can you offer repair, reuse, recycling, or the possibility to return the product?
- ▶ **Sort.** In order to increase the usage of waste as a resource, sorting at the source site needs to be improved. Incineration, which uses energy, is only used for waste that is not suitable for other use. Landfilling is only used when the waste cannot be used as a resource.
- ▶ **Inform.** By informing your customers about how to handle the product, the environmental impact is reduced.
- ▶ **Reduce the waste.** In a circular economy, no waste is created. A more sustainable future cannot be achieved by recycling alone. The most important thing is to consider how the amount of waste can be reduced.
- ▶ **Design correctly.** By planning the product from a life cycle perspective, you can contribute to reduced waste and a clear after-use strategy.
- ▶ **Make it easy to make the right decisions.** How can we make it easier for the customer to recycle correctly? Recycling is an effective way of extending the life cycle of a product.

**KEYWORDS:** Sort, recycle, inform

## 11. CO-WORKERS AND SOCIAL CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

- ▶ **Involve everyone.** Social sustainability is about inclusion and equal value, and it concerns the work environment, equality, diversity, health, and accessibility. For some customers, this may make the difference between a completed and missed deal.
- ▶ **Social responsibility.** Make sure that the raw materials and products come from companies with good working conditions, no matter where in the world they are located. Staff who feel good work more productively, which in turn is profitable. Social responsibility is about running a company like a decent citizen. Nobody should suffer because of the actions of your company.
- ▶ **What are you already doing?** You probably unknowingly already do a lot. Social sustainability is about involvement and everyone's equal value, both inside your company and among your partners. Remember to also communicate about the self-evident things.
- ▶ **Do not take anything for granted.** Social sustainability can sound banal and something that applies to companies elsewhere in the world. This is however not the case. By working actively for social sustainability you will show that you are taking responsibility and ensuring that all business operations are built on a sustainable basis.
- ▶ **Values and corporate social responsibility.** The generation of the current work market is increasingly choosing to work in a company that carries out their corporate social responsibility.
- ▶ **Diversity and equality.** Studies show that companies with an organisation based on diversity perform better than other companies in the same industry. How open are you?
- ▶ **Sustainability is branding.** Employees feel that they are working in a responsible company and customers want to work with partners who operate sustainably. Communicate that you are striving to work in a socially sustainable way, it will make others more interested in working with you.
- ▶ **Where do you influence?** In your analyses, examine how your company influences people, so that you can make internal and external changes based on the results.
- ▶ **Internally and externally.** Working conditions need to be taken care of both internally and externally. Strive to create equal, fair and good working conditions for your personnel, but also make sure that your partners, customers and suppliers working terms and conditions are sustainable.
- ▶ **Be open about shortcomings.** When you also report on what is not sustainable in your business, you show that you are aware of the challenges. It strengthens credibility.

**KEYWORDS:** Equality, values, openness



# OSTROBOTHNIA IN TRANSITION

ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

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