KA220YOU

ECO INNOVATORS

Next-Gen Sustainability through Science and Innovation

TOOLKIT

A Practical Resource for Youth-Led Eco-Innovation



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Eco-Innovators Toolkit, a practical, hands-on resource designed to complement the EcoInnovators Guide and turn sustainability knowledge into real action.

While the Guide teaches theory and foundations of sustainable innovation, this Toolkit provides actual tools, templates, and frameworks needed to design, prototype, and launch eco-friendly products or projects in your community.

The Toolkit is structured around seven core components that work together in an integrated workflow. Whether designing packaging, developing a service, or rethinking a supply chain, these tools provide a roadmap from idea to impact.

This Toolkit was created through collaboration across the EcoInnovators partnership and field-tested with youth groups, educators, and entrepreneurs across Europe.

This is not just guidance. This is your innovation operating system.

The EcoInnovators Team



HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Quick Start - Pick Your Path:

You have a sustainability problem but no idea yet?
START WITH DESIGN SPRINT CARDS (Component 1)

You have an idea but need to visualize the whole system?
USE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS (Component 2)

You are choosing materials?
CONSULT MATERIAL DECODER LIBRARY (Component 3)

You need to measure environmental impact?
USE QUICK LCA CALCULATOR (Component 4)

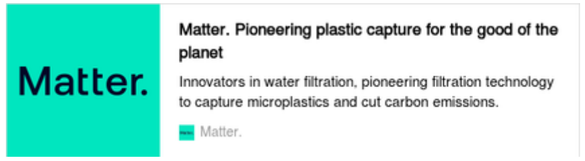
You need to find partners?
USE BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS TOOLKIT (Component 5)

You need to pitch your project?
USE STORYTELLING TOOLKIT (Component 6)

Your team is unorganized?
USE COLLABORATION PLAYBOOK (Component 7)

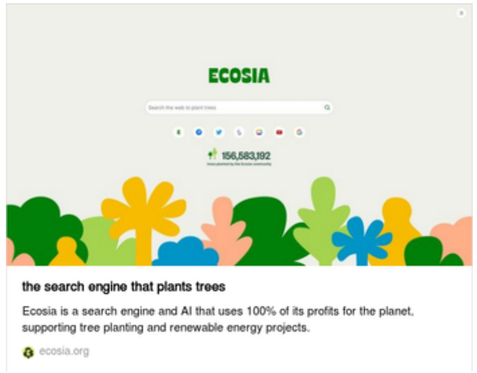
Inspiration - Sustainable Business:

Before you begin designing your sustainable product, ground your thinking in reality. The six businesses below have successfully built sustainable models at scale—they've managed cost structure, secured supply chains, communicated impact credibly, and built profitable revenue streams.
Study their material selections and supply chain choices. Examine their value propositions and pricing strategies. Understand how they positioned sustainability as a market advantage, not a cost burden. Notice where they've had to compromise between impact and scale.
These examples demonstrate what's achievable. Use them as reference points as you develop your own strategy.













COMPONENT 1: DESIGN SPRINT CARDS

HOW TO RUN A 90-MINUTE DESIGN SPRINT

Turn sustainability challenges into actionable innovation sprints.

What is it?

The Eco-Innovators Design Sprint Cards is a complete system with three complementary card types that work together to drive rapid innovation cycles. Teams combine different cards to create unique problem-solving scenarios that push creative boundaries while respecting real-world constraints.
By combining one Challenge + one or two Constraints + one Innovation Method, you create focused sprint scenarios that generate truly sustainable innovations.

How to use it:

Pick one Challenge Card.
Pick one/two Constraint Card.
Pick one Innovation Method Card.
You now have **90 minutes** to generate an initial concept.

What is inside?

Instructions how to run a 90-Minute design sprint

This is a step-by-step facilitation guide for running your 90-minute design sprint workshop. It breaks down each phase—setup, generation, refinement, pitch, and commit—with specific timing, instructions, and prompts to keep your team focused and productive. Use this guide to structure your sprint, manage time effectively, and guide your team through the Design Sprint Cards methodology to generate validated solution concepts.

8 Innovation Method Cards

Different techniques including Biomimicry, Reverse Engineering, Upcycling Logic, Service-based Models, Modular Design, Zero-Waste Manufacturing, Sharing Economy, and Circular Material Flow.

12 Challenge Cards

Real-world problems like reducing plastic in packaging, designing sustainable footwear, and creating circular electronics.

8 Constraint Cards

Realistic limitations such as limited budget, local materials only, and production time limits.

Solution Documentation Form

After your 90-minute design sprint generates multiple solution concepts, this form structures each idea into a documented solution ready for validation and business planning.

Available formats:

- Printable cards
- Printable solution documentation form

HOW TO RUN A 90-MINUTE DESIGN SPRINT

A focused path from challenge to commitment

10 minutes | 30 minutes | 25 minutes | 20 minutes | 5 minutes

1. SETUP
10 minutes

1. Step 1: Gather 4-8 participants representing diverse perspectives
2. Step 2: Introduce the sprint goal and sustainability focus
3. Step 3: Distribute one Challenge Card and one or two Constraint Cards to each team

2. GENERATE
30 minutes

1. Step 1: Teams select 1 Innovation Method Card
2. Step 2: Brainstorm solutions that address the Challenge while respecting Constraints
3. Step 3: Sketch initial concept (rough drawings acceptable)
4. Step 4: Define core innovation principle (what makes this work?)

3. REFINE
25 minutes

1. Step 1: Document solution on template (materials needed, timeline, stakeholders)
2. Step 2: Map system impacts (positive and potential negative consequences)
3. Step 3: Identify scalability pathway (how would this reach 1M users?)
4. Step 4: Calculate rough ROI or sustainability impact

4. PITCH
20 minutes

1. Step 1: Each team presents 3-minute pitch
2. Step 2: Other teams ask clarifying questions
3. Step 3: Group discusses feasibility, innovation, and impact
4. Step 4: Vote on most promising ideas for deeper development

5. COMMIT
5 minutes

1. Step 1: Assign owners to pursue top 2-3 ideas
2. Step 2: Define next steps and timeline
3. Step 3: Schedule follow-up review

CHALLENGE CARDS

REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS THAT DRIVE INNOVATION. EACH CHALLENGE CARD PRESENTS AN ENVIRONMENTAL OR SUSTAINABILITY ISSUE THAT NEEDS CREATIVE SOLUTIONS.

CHALLENGE CARD 1: PLASTIC PACKAGING REDUCTION

Challenge: Reduce single-use plastic in consumer products packaging within minimalist product protection and shelf life.

Context:Packaging accounts for 40% of global plastic waste, and only 9% of all plastic waste is recycled." (Source: OECD, Global Plastics Outlook, 2022)

Key Questions:
What materials can replace plastic without increasing cost? How can we design packaging for reusability or compositability? What does the consumer journey look like for alternative packaging?

Affected Stakeholders: Manufacturers, retailers, consumers, marine ecosystems

CHALLENGE CARD 2: SUSTAINABLE FASHION & TEXTILE WASTE

Challenge: Create a circular economy model for the fashion industry to reduce textile waste and water pollution.

Context: In 2022, the EU generated 6.94 million tonnes of textile waste (16 kg per person), and 85% of household textile waste was not collected separately." (Source: European Environment Agency, 2025)

Key Questions:
How can we design clothing for durability and recycling? What take-back or recycled fiber alternatives exist at scale? How do we shift consumer behavior toward durability and repair?

Affected Stakeholders: Fashion brands, textile manufacturers, consumers, water systems

CHALLENGE CARD 3: FOOD WASTE & SUPPLY CHAIN LOSSES

Challenge: Reduce food waste from farm to consumer while maintaining food security and economic viability for producers.

Context: "In 2022, 1.05 billion tonnes of food were wasted, which is 19% of food available to consumers, in addition to 13% lost in the supply chain." (Source: UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2024; FAO)

Key Questions:
How can technology improve food preservation and traceability?
What supply chain redesign can reduce spoilage?
How can “ugly” produce reach consumers sustainably?

Affected Stakeholders: Farmers, distributors, retailers, consumers, food systems

CHALLENGE CARD 4: CIRCULAR ELECTRONICS & E-WASTE

Challenge: Design consumer electronics for easy repair, upgrades, and recycling to minimize e-waste.

Context: 62 million tonnes of e-waste were generated in 2022, and only 22.3% was formally collected and recycled." (Source: UNITAR & ITU, Global E-waste Monitor 2024)

Key Questions:
How can we design for modular repair and disassembly?
What reverse logistics systems recover valuable materials? How do we reduce rare earth mineral dependence?

Affected Stakeholders: Tech manufacturers, consumers, recyclers, mining communities

CHALLENGE CARDS

CHALLENGE CARD 5: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION & LAST-MILE DELIVERY

Challenge: Develop zero-emission solutions for urban logistics and last-mile delivery.

Transport accounts for around 16% of global greenhouse gas emissions (EDGAR/JRC, European Commission, 2025). Without intervention, urban delivery vehicles are expected to increase by 36% by 2030, raising last-mile emissions and congestion by over 30% (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Key Questions:

- What micro-mobility solutions are viable at scale?
- How can delivery networks be consolidated and optimized?
- What battery or fuel alternatives are practical?

Affected Stakeholders:Logistics companies, urban residents, delivery workers, air quality systemss

CHALLENGE CARD 6: WATER SCARCITY & PURIFICATION

Challenge: Create scalable, affordable water purification and conservation technologies for water-stressed regions.

Context: over 2 billion people live under high water stress; around 4 billion face severe scarcity at least one month a year" (UN-Water/UNESCO).

Key Questions:
What low-cost purification technologies work without electricity?
How can agriculture use 50% less water?
What wastewater treatment can restore water for reuse?

Affected Stakeholders: Rural communities, farmers, municipalities, aquatic ecosystems

CHALLENGE CARD 7: SUSTAINABLE BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION

Challenge:Redesign buildings for zero carbon emissions, circular material use, and resilience to climate change..

Buildings account for 34% of global CO_2 emissions and 32% of global energy use, and generate about one-third of global waste (UNEP & GlobalABC, 2025).

Key Questions:
What low-carbon building materials can scale?
How do we retrofit existing buildings efficiently?
What passive design strategies reduce energy needs?

Affected Stakeholders: Developers, builders, architects, cities, occupants

CHALLENGE CARD 8: AGRICULTURAL REGENERATION & SOIL HEALTH

Challenge: Shift farming practices to regenerate soil, sequester carbon, and eliminate chemical dependency.

Up to 40% of the planet's land is degraded (UNCCD, 2022). Agrifood systems account for about one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions (FAO, 2025).

Key Questions:
How can we scale regenerative agriculture economically?
What crop rotation and polyculture systems work best?
How do we measure and incentivize soil health?

Affected Stakeholders: Farmers, food companies, consumers, soil ecosystems

CHALLENGE CARDS

CHALLENGE CARD 9: PLASTIC ALTERNATIVES & BIOPOLYMERS

Challenge: Develop scalable biopolymers and alternatives that match plastic's performance without environmental harm.

Context: Annual plastic production reached 460 million tonnes. Most biopolymers still cost 2–3 times more than conventional plastics (OECD, 2022).

Key Questions:

- What biopolymer feedstocks are renewable and scalable?
- How can we achieve price parity with conventional plastics?
- What end-of-life systems enable biodegradation safely?

Affected Stakeholders: Chemical manufacturers, brands, consumers, waste systems

CHALLENGE CARD 10: RENEWABLE ENERGY ACCESS & BATTERY INNOVATION

Challenge: Democratize renewable energy access for underserved communities with innovative, affordable battery solutions.

Context: 666 million people still lack access to electricity, 85% of them in Sub-Saharan Africa. Battery pack prices have fallen 93% since 2010 to $108/kWh. (Tracking SDG7 Report, 2025)

Key Questions:
What decentralized renewable solutions work off-grid?
How can we develop cheaper, non-toxic batteries?
What business models enable energy access for low-income populations?

Affected Stakeholders: Rural communities, energy companies, battery manufacturers, energy-poor households

CHALLENGE CARD 11: CIRCULAR PRODUCT DESIGN & TAKE-BACK SYSTEMS

Challenge:Create closed-loop business models where products are designed for recovery, refurbishment, and remanufacturing.

Context: The global economy is only 6.9% circular, down from 9.1% in 2018. (Circle Economy & Deloitte, 2025)

Key Questions:
What materials and designs enable product disassembly?
How do reverse logistics networks function profitably?
What incentives drive consumer participation in take-back programs?

Affected Stakeholders: Product manufacturers, retailers, consumers, waste management systems

CHALLENGE CARD 12: CARBON REMOVAL & CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Challenge: Scale carbon removal technologies to sequester atmospheric CO_2 affordably and permanently.

The world currently removes about 2.2 billion tonnes of CO_2 per year, and national pledges fall more than 5 billion tonnes per year short of 1.5°C pathways by 2050. Direct air capture costs an estimated $100–300 per tonne.(State of Carbon Dioxide Removal, 2026)

Key Questions:
What carbon removal methods are most cost-effective at scale?
How do we store removed carbon safely and permanently?
What policies create demand for carbon removal services?

Affected Stakeholders: Climate tech startups, energy companies, governments, future generations

CONTRAINTS CARDS

Realistic limitations that shape innovation. Each Constraint Card presents a real-world boundary that solutions must respect.



CONSTRAINT CARD 1: LIMITED BUDGET

Contrast: Solution must be implementable with minimal capital investment ($$5,000 startup phase).

Why It Matters: Most sustainable innovations fail because they're too expensive to scale. Budget constraints ensure your solution is viable, scalable and aligned with systemic change.

Implications:

- Leverage existing infrastructure and technology
- Partner with organizations for cost-sharing
- Design for incremental investment over time
- Focus on labor over capital-intensive solutions

CONSTRAINT CARD 2: LOCAL MATERIALS ONLY

Contrast: Solution must use materials and resources available within a 100K radius.

Why It Matters: Transportation accounts for significant carbon costs. Local sourcing builds community resilience.

Implications:

- Research regional material availability
- Partner with local suppliers and cooperatives
- Adapt design to local climate and geography
- Consider seasonal availability variations

CONSTRAINT CARD 3: PRODUCTION TIME LIMITS

Contrast: Manufacturing/Implementation must occur within existing production cycles (typically 2-4 weeks).

Why It Matters: Long development cycles delay market impact. Quick integration into existing systems enables faster adoption.

Implications:

- Work with current production equipment
- Minimize retraining requirements
- Design for minimal process changes
- Consider quality assurance within time limits

CONSTRAINT CARD 4: ZERO HARMFUL CHEMICALS

Contrast: Solution cannot use toxic, carcinogenic, or bioaccumulative substances at any lifecycle stage.

Why It Matters: Harden chemical costs externalize harm to communities and ecosystems. Full transparency is essential.

Implications:

- Research all ingredient safety data
- Test for teaching, off-gassing, and bioacumination
- Ensure end-of-life safety (no toxins in compost/waterways)
- Consider worker safety in manufacturing

CONSTRAINT CARD 5: ENERGY NEUTRAL

Contrast: Solution must consume no more energy than it saves or generates over its lifecycle.

Why It Matters: Energy consumption drives most environmental impact. Net positive energy is non-negotiable.

Implications:

- Calculate total embodied energy (manufacturing to disposal)
- Incorporate renewable energy sources
- Optimize for low-power operation
- Consider end-of-life energy implications

CONSTRAINT CARD 6: NO GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES

Contrast: Solution must be economically viable without subsidies or government support.

Why it Matters: Subsidies are temporary. True sustainability requires market viability and willingness to pay.

Implications:

- Develop compelling value propositions for users
- Identify revenue streams and willingness to pay
- Create competitive advantages beyond price
- Build business models that attract investment

CONSTRAINT CARD 7: SCALABLE TO 1 MILLION USERS

Contrast: Solution must be technically and logistically feasible for 1 million users within 3 years.

Why It Matters: Small pilot projects don't create systemic change. Scalability must be designed from the start.

Implications:

- Avoid bottlenecks (rare materials, specialized labor, etc.)
- Design for automation and standardization
- Plan supply chain growth
- Consider infrastructure requirements at scale

CONSTRAINT CARD 8: COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING SYSTEMS

Contrast: Solution must integrate with current infrastructure without requiring complete system redesign.

Why It Matters: Legacy systems dominate. Innovation succeeds when it works within existing frameworks.

Implications:

- Map existing system dependencies and interfaces
- Ensure backward compatibility
- Use open standards where possible
- Plan for gradual system evolution

Use these constraints as guardrails, not roadblocks. The most impactful innovations emerge when creativity meets discipline.

INNOVATION METHOD CARDS

Different techniques for solving sustainability challenges. Each method offers a distinct approach to ideation and problem-solving.

DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES FOR SOLVING SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES. EACH METHOD OFFERS A DISTINCT APPROACH TO IDEATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING.

CARD 1: BIOMIMICRY 1

Definition:
Study how nature serves similar challenges and adapt those strategies to human problems.

Process:
Define the function you need to perform
Research organisms/ecosystems that perform this function
Abstract the principle or strategy used by nature
Translate that principle into human design/technology

Real-World Examples:
Velcro inspired by burrs clinging to animal fur
Water-harvesting systems based on desert beetle moisture collection
Architecture designed after termite mound ventilation systems
Adhesives inspired by gecko toe pads

When to Use: When existing solutions are energy-intensive or toxic; when you need inspiration for sustainable efficiency

Tools & Resources:
AskNature.org biomimicry database
Natural pattern observation
Academic research on organism behavior
Interdisciplinary expert consultation

CARD 2: CIRCULAR MATERIAL FLOW 2

Definition: Redesign products and systems so materials continuously cycle through biological or technical loops without degradation.

Process:
Map material lifecycle from extraction through disposal
Identify points where value leaks from the system
Design collection and reverse logistics mechanisms
Plan reprocessing pathways to like-new quality
Establish material loops economically

Real-World Examples:
Cradle-to-Cradle certified products with take-back systems
Interface carpet tiles designed for infinite recycling
Patagonia's worn wear program for clothing repair and resale
Recovered ocean plastic in new products

When to Use: When waste is a major cost center; when material extraction is environmentally destructive

Tools & Resources:
Material flow analysis (MFA)
Circular economy business model canvases
Reverse logistics network design
Life cycle assessment (LCA) tools

CARD 3: REVERSE ENGINEERING FOR SUSTAINABILITY 3

Definition: Disassemble existing products, understand their mechanisms, and rebuild them with sustainable materials and methods.

Process:
Acquire target product to deconstruct
Map assembly, materials, and fastening methods
Identify points of improvement for sustainability
Redesign with alternatives (materials, manufacturing, assembly)
Create improvement specifications for manufacturers

Real-World Examples:
Smartphone teardowns revealing repair opportunities
Furniture deconstruction for material recovery and redesign
Automotive components analyzed for lightweight alternatives
Packaging analysis to identify plastic reduction opportunities

When to Use: When you're entering a market with established products; when user needs are clear but execution is unsustainable

Tools & Resources:
Teardown guides and documentation
Material testing and analysis
CAD design software
Manufacturing process research

CARD 4: SERVICE-BASED DESIGN 4

Definition: Shift from selling products to offering services, allowing producers to optimize for durability, repairability, and material efficiency.

Process:
Identify customer needs that currently require product ownership
Envision alternative service delivery model
Design product for long-term durability and maintenance
Create reverse logistics and refurbishment systems
Develop pricing model based on usage/outcomes

Real-World Examples:
Car-sharing instead of car ownership (Zipcar, Blablacar)
Lighting-as-a-service (pay for brightness, not bulbs)
Furniture leasing with take-back and refurbishment
Clothing rental and subscription services

When to Use: When reducing material consumption is the goal; when you can capture product at end of life

Tools & Resources:
Service design blueprints
Customer journey mapping
Reverse logistics network design
Pricing model frameworks

INNOVATION METHOD CARDS (8 CARDS)

Different techniques for solving sustainability challenges. Each method offers a distinct approach to ideation and problem-solving.

CARD 5: ZERO-WASTE MANUFACTURING 5

Definition: Redesign production processes to eliminate waste generation, using byproducts as inputs for other processes.

Process:
Audit all production waste streams and byproducts
Identify potential secondary uses (own process or external)
Redesign production sequence to minimize material loss
Create partnerships for byproduct reuse
Implement tracking and continuous improvement

Real-World Examples:
Brewery grain used for animal feed and textiles
Leather tannery sludge converted to useful compounds
Apple pomace converted to bioplastics and packaging
Textile dye waste transformed into pigments and inks

When to Use: When manufacturing is carbon or resource intensive; when waste management is a cost burden

Tools & Resources:
Industrial symbiosis network mapping
Waste stream analysis
Process engineering consultation
Material chemistry expertise

CARD 6: STANDARDIZATION 6

Definition: Create products from standardized, interchangeable modules that enable easy repair, upgrade, and customization without complete replacement.

Process:
Identify core functional modules needed
Define standardized interfaces between modules
Design each module for easy disassembly
Create ecosystem of compatible replacements
Establish upgrade and repair protocols

Real-World Examples:
Framework laptops with modular, repairable components
Building blocks systems allowing product customization
Modular furniture that adapts to changing needs
Electric vehicle platforms enabling battery replacement

When to Use: When products have varied lifespans for different components; when customization is valued

Tools & Resources:
Modular design principles research
Standard interface specification
CAD for modular architecture
Supplier ecosystem mapping

CARD 7: SHARING ECONOMY PLATFORMS 7

Definition: Create platforms enabling underutilized assets (tools, spaces, vehicles, skills) to be shared, reducing the need for new production.

Process:
Identify underutilized assets in target community
Design secure, convenient sharing mechanism
Develop platform for matching supply and demand
Address liability, maintenance, and quality assurance
Create business model generating value for all parties

Real-World Examples:
Tool libraries allowing community tool sharing
Co-working spaces reducing office space demand
Equipment rental marketplaces (power tools, party supplies)
Skill-sharing networks for services and education

When to Use: When consumption is driven by infrequent use; when capital efficiency matters

Tools & Resources:
Platform development expertise
Community engagement strategies
Liability and insurance frameworks
Digital marketplace design

CARD 8: SHARING ECONOMY PLATFORMS 8

Definition: Map complex systems to identify leverage points where small changes create disproportionate positive impacts.

Process:
Map system boundaries and key actors
Identify flows (materials, energy, information, money)
Locate feedback loops and delays
Analyze unintended consequences of interventions
Target highest-leverage points for change

Real-World Examples:
Policy changes that shift entire industry standards
Certification programs changing business practices
Supply chain transparency enabling consumer pressure
Investment redirecting capital flows toward sustainability

When to Use: When your challenge is complex and interconnected; when you need systemic rather than incremental change

Tools & Resources:
System dynamics modeling
Causal loop diagramming
Stakeholder mapping
Scenario planning frameworks

SOLUTION DOCUMENTATION FORM

PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT NAME: _____ DATE: _____

TEAM MEMBERS: _____

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED:

Challenge Card Used: _____

Core Problem: _____

SOLUTION OVERVIEW:

One-sentence description: _____

Full description (100 words max):

INNOVATION METHOD(S) APPLIED:

- □ Biomimicry
- □ Circular Material Flow
- □ Reverse Engineering
- □ Service-Based Design
- □ Systems Thinking
- □ Zero-Waste Manufacturing
- □ Modular Design
- □ Sharing Economy

CONSTRAINTS RESPECTED:

Constraint 1: _____

How respected: _____

Constraint 2: _____

How respected: _____

IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS:

Materials Needed:

- _____ (quantity/spec)
- _____ (quantity/spec)
- _____ (quantity/spec)

Timeline to Implementation:

_____ Phase 2 (Testing): _____ weeks Phase 3 (Market Launch): _____ weeks

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Primary benefit: _____

Quantified impact: _____

(e.g., "800 tons CO_2 eliminated annually", "2M liters water saved")

ECONOMIC MODEL:

Revenue stream: _____

Unit cost to produce: $___ Price point: $___ Profit margin: ___%

SCALABILITY PLAN:

Current capacity: _____ units/year

3-year target: _____ units/year

Scaling strategy: _____

RISKS & MITIGATION:

Risk 1: _____ → Mitigation: _____

Risk 2: _____ → Mitigation: _____

Risk 3: _____ → Mitigation: _____

NEXT STEPS:

- □ Detailed technical design
- □ Prototype development
- □ Business model refinement
- □ Stakeholder outreach
- □ Pilot testing
- □ Fundraising
- □ Other: _____

Assigned owner: _____ Due date: _____

COMPONENT 2: USE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT CANVAS

Visualize Your Entire Product Ecosystem in One Strategic View

What is it?

The Sustainable Product Canvas is an adaptation of the Business Model Canvas specifically designed for sustainable products. It is a strategic visual tool that allows innovators to map all dimensions of their product: environmental, social, economic, and circularity aspects.

How to use it:

Step 1: Print canvas on A3 or display on large screen
Step 2: Gather team (3-6 people with diverse perspectives)
Step 3: Fill in each dimension using sticky notes
Step 4: Discuss connections between dimensions
Step 5: Take photo and refine digitally
Step 6: Review monthly as your understanding evolves

What is inside?

The 11 Dimensions of the Canvas

A guide explaining each section you'll fill: from partnerships and customer segments to revenue models and impact metrics.

Sustainable Business Canvas

The blank template ready to fill with your team. This is a pre-drawn A3 canvas with all 11 dimensions laid out visually. Print it, gather your team, grab sticky notes, and fill in each box with your answers.

Customer Journey Mapping Tool

A framework to map how customers discover, buy, use, and recommend your product across six key stages.

Available formats:

- A3 (recommended for better visualization and team work)
- Filling time: 90 minutes for the first version
- Best for: Teams of 3-6 people using sticky notes

90 MINUTES TO INNOVATE

THE 11 DIMENSIONS OF THE CANVAS

1. PARTNERSHIPS & ECOSYSTEM

What is it? The network of partners, suppliers, and collaborators needed to deliver the sustainable product.

Questions to answer: Who are the key partners?
Are suppliers aligned with sustainability goals?
Which key resources are we acquiring from our partners?
Are there NGOs, certifiers, or community partners involved?
What partnerships enable circularity?

Practical example: A cosmetics brand partnering with local farmers for ingredients, a B-Corp packaging supplier, and TerraCycle for returns.

2.KEY ACTIVITIES

What is it? The essential operational processes and core workflows required to create and deliver your value proposition, support your distribution channels, maintain customer relationships, and generate revenue streams.

Questions to answer:
What key activities does your value proposition. distribution channels, customer relationships and revenue streams require?
Does your activities include sustainable operations?

3. VALUE PROPOSITION

What is it? The unique value the product offers, combining functional, emotional, and sustainability benefits.

Questions to answer: What problem does it solve?
Which customer needs are we responding?
Why would someone choose this over conventional alternatives?
What is the sustainability story?
How is value communicated?

Practical example: A reusable water bottle positioned not just as eco-friendly but as a status symbol and health tracker.

4. CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

What is it? The specific groups of people or organizations for whom you're creating value. Different customer segments have different needs, behaviors, and willingness to pay—understanding this helps you tailor your product, messaging, and distribution.

Questions to answer:
For whom are we creating value?
Who are our most important customers?
What are the customer archetypes?

Examples: Niche market| Segmented| Diversified| Mass Market

5. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

What is it? How the user interacts with the product and the behaviors it encourages.

Questions to answer: What forms of engagement and connection does each customer group seek from your brand/business?
Which relational approaches you have successfully implemented?
How do these interactions align with your broader business framework?
What resources are required to sustain these connections?

Example: personal assistance | Self-service| Automated services | Communities

6. CHANNELS

What is it? The communication, distribution, and engagement pathways through which your organisation connects with customer segments, delivers value, and enables product recovery and circular flows.

Questions to answer:Via which channels do our customer segments want to engage with yoru business/product? How do other organisations currently reach these customers?Which channels perform most effectively?Which channels offer the best cost-efficiency? How are we integrating them into customer routines and behaviours?

7. MATERIALS & KEY RESOURCES

What is it? The raw materials, components, and resources needed to create the product.

Questions to answer: What materials are used?
Are they renewable, recycled, or virgin?
What is the environmental impact of extracting these materials? Are there more sustainable alternatives?

8. REVENUE MODEL

What is it? How the product generates income and whether the business model aligns with sustainability.

Questions to answer: Is revenue based on selling units or providing access?
What customer benefits and outcomes justify the prices we charge?
What value are your customers really willing to pay?
What does the customers currently pay?
Does the model incentivize durability or obsolescence?
Are there circular revenue streams (repair, refurbish, resell)? What pricing approaches maximize value capture while remaining competitive?

9. Cost Structure

Questions to answer: What are the most important costs inherent to your business model?
Which key resources are most expensive?
Which key activities are more expensive?

Examples:
Fixed Costs (salaries, rents, utilities)
Variable Costs

10. RISKS & TRADE-OFFS

What is it? The tensions, compromises, and potential negative consequences of design decisions.

Questions to answer: What are the trade-offs between cost and sustainability?
What ecological or social costs is business model causing?
Are there rebound effects? What happens if a sustainable material underperforms? What greenwashing risks exist?
What key activities use a lot of non-renewable resources?

11. METRICS & IMPACT

What is it? How success is measured beyond profit — environmental and social indicators.

Questions to answer: What KPIs track sustainability?
How your product or service contribute to the quality of the surrounding community?
How your produt or service contribute to the environment or to benefit people's lives?
How is carbon footprint measured?
What social impact metrics are used? How is progress reported and verified?

Sustainable Business Canvas

1. PARTNERSHIPS & ECOSYSTEM

2.KEY ACTIVITIES

3. VALUE PROPOSITION

4. CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

5. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

6. CHANNELS

7. MATERIALS & KEY RESOURCES

8. REVENUE MODEL

9. Cost Structure

10. RISKS & TRADE-OFFS

11. METRICS & IMPACT

Customer Journey Mapping Tool

Product or service name

Brief description

Value proposition and environmental impact

The 6 Steps of the Journey

1. How do potential customers discover your product?

Awareness and discovery

KEY TOUCHPOINTS IN THIS STAGE

Describe the main touchpoints and actions: Marketing channels, Partnerships, Word of mouth, Social media

ECO INNOVATION CONSIDERATIONS

How eco-conscious customers identify aligned values? How to communicate sustainability authentically? Examples: Eco influencers, sustainability blogs, eco communities, Local events, green certifications

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

What challenges do you face at this stage? What opportunities for improvement exist?

SUCCESS METRICS

How do you measure sucess at this stage? (eg. NPS score)

2.Where do they find more information?

Research and consideration

KEY TOUCHPOINTS IN THIS STAGE

Describe the main touchpoints and actions: website, social media, reviews

ECO INNOVATION CONSIDERATIONS

What enviroemental information is transparent? How do you prove authenticity

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SUCCESS METRICS

3.How do they perceive your value proposition?

Evaluating the offer

KEY TOUCHPOINTS IN THIS STAGE

Describe the main touchpoints and actions: Demonstration, Comparison, Benefits, Quality, Sustainability

ECO INNOVATION CONSIDERATIONS

Is the eco-value understood? What's the ROI—environmental and financial—in their eyes? example: CO2 reduction calculator, waste savings, life cycle comparion

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SUCCESS METRICS

4.Where and how do they purchase?

Conversion and purchase

KEY TOUCHPOINTS IN THIS STAGE

Describe the main touchpoints and actions: e-commerce, physical stores, partnerships, marketplace, direct

ECO INNOVATION CONSIDERATIONS

Is packaging sustainable? Are eco delivery options available? Is access convenient? example: local pickuppoints

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SUCCESS METRICS

5.What's their experience after purchase?

Experience and satisfaction

KEY TOUCHPOINTS IN THIS STAGE

Describe the main touchpoints and actions: Unboxing, Quality, Durability, Support, Feedback

ECO INNOVATION CONSIDERATIONS

Does the experience reflect sustainability values? Support for circular economy? Examples: Extended warranty, take-back programs, repair service, care guidance.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SUCCESS METRICS

6.How do they recommend it to others?

Advocacy and referral

KEY TOUCHPOINTS IN THIS STAGE

How do satisfied customers amplify environmental impact? Stories that inspire? Example: Referral program.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SUCCESS METRICS

COMPONENT 3: Material Decoder Library

What is it?

A comprehensive library and evaluation framework designed to help innovators select sustainable materials aligned with environmental and business goals. It provides practical tools for material comparison, sustainability scoring, decision-making, and supply chain transparency verification throughout your product development process.

Included templates:

Material Comparison Matrix

Interactive tool for side-by-side evaluation of material properties, environmental impact, cost, and performance metrics

Material Sustainability Score card

Guided assessment framework evaluating environmental footprint, social impact, circularity potential, and alignment with innovation goals

Material Decision Framework

Structured decision-support system integrating technical requirements, sustainability criteria, and business constraints into material selection

Supply Chain Transparency Checker

Verification tool for supplier transparency, ethical practices, traceability, and environmental certifications across your material supply chain

How to use it:

Select the tool matching your evaluation stage. Start with the Comparison Matrix for initial screening across options. Use the Sustainability Score card to measure environmental and social dimensions. Apply the Decision Framework to prioritize based on your specific innovation goals. Verify supply chain data with the Transparency Checker before final selection. Track all assessments for documentation and future reference.

Available formats:

PDF printable templates

Why this is importante?

Sustainable material choices alone cannot guarantee environmental impact. You might select an eco-friendly material, but without rigorous evaluation across its full lifecycle—from sourcing through production to end-of-life—your innovation remains theoretical and unverified.
Impact measurement matters at three critical levels:

First, for your decisions. Material data informs strategy. Understanding carbon hotspots, social vulnerabilities, and lifecycle bottlenecks means you can prioritize where to innovate most effectively.

Second, for credibility. Investors, partners, and customers demand evidence-based decisions. Without quantified material impact, you're asking for trust without proof.
Third, for accountability. Greenwashing—claiming environmental benefits without substance—corrodes trust across entire sectors. Rigorous material evaluation distinguishes real progress from marketing.

Component 3 gives you the tools to measure what matters: material sourcing, production emissions, supply chain ethics, circular potential, and full lifecycle impacts. With this framework, your innovation becomes unstoppable—grounded in data, aligned with goals, and ready for scale.

TOOL 1: MATERIAL COMPARISON MATRIX

WHAT IT DOES:

Compare 3-4 material alternatives side-by-side across key sustainability, performance, and cost criteria. This helps you see trade-offs and make informed decisions.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Step 1:** List the materials you're considering (e.g., plastic, bioplastic, aluminum, paper)
2. **Step 2:** For each material, research and fill in the criteria below
3. **Step 3:** Compare across all materials. Look for patterns (which material wins on what criteria?)
4. **Step 4:** Identify the material that best aligns with your priorities

MATERIAL COMPARISON MATRIX

PRODUCT APPLICATION: _____

Example: Packaging for food products, structural component for furniture, textile for clothing

Criteria	Material option 1	Material option 2	Material option 3
✓ Carbon Footprint (kg CO_2/kg material)			
✓ Recyclability (Yes/Partial/No)			
✓ Cost per Unit ($/kg or $/unit)			
✓ Performance Match (1-5 scale)			
✓ Supply Availability			

DECISION: Which material best aligns with your priorities? Why?

_____

_____

TOOL 2: MATERIAL SUSTAINABILITY SCORECARD

WHAT IT DOES:

Score a single material across multiple sustainability dimensions (carbon, water, toxicity, recyclability). Get a holistic view of whether this material is truly sustainable.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Step 1: Name the material you're evaluating
2. Step 2: For each dimension, research and score on a scale of 1-5 (1=high impact/unsustainable, 5=low impact/sustainable)
3. Step 3: Calculate the overall sustainability score (average of all dimensions)
4. Step 4: Interpret: Score 4-5 = highly sustainable, 3 = moderate, 1-2 = significant concerns

MATERIAL SUSTAINABILITY SCORECARD

MATERIAL NAME: _____

SCORING GUIDE: 1=High impact/unsustainable | 3=Moderate | 5=Low impact/highly sustainable

CARBON FOOTPRINT:	Research: How much CO_2 is emitted during production and transport? Score (1-5): Notes:
WATER CONSUMPTION:	Research: How much water is used during production? Score (1-5): Notes:
CHEMICAL TOXICITY:	Research: Does production use harmful chemicals? Will it leach chemicals when in use? Score (1-5): Notes:
RECYCLABILITY:	Research: Can this material be recycled? Is recycling infrastructure available? Score (1-5): Notes:
BIODEGRADABILITY:	Research: If not recycled, how quickly does it break down? Is it compostable? Score (1-5): Notes:

OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY SCORE: Add all 5 scores and divide by 5:

Interpretation: 4-5 (Highly sustainable) | 3 (Moderate) | 1-2 (Significant concerns)

CONCLUSION: Is this material sustainable enough for your product? What are the biggest concerns?

_____

TOOL 3: MATERIAL DECISION FRAMEWORK

WHAT IT DOES:

A step-by-step checklist to determine if a material is the right choice for your product. Helps you understand trade-offs and make confident decisions.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Step 1: Answer each question below (Yes/No/Partial)
2. Step 2: Count Yes answers. If 7+ Yes = good choice. If 4-6 Yes = acceptable with trade-offs. If <4 Yes = reconsider.
3. Step 3: For any No answers, document what would need to change to make this material viable

MATERIAL DECISION FRAMEWORK

MATERIAL BEING EVALUATED: _____

PERFORMANCE & FUNCTIONALITY:

- ☐ Does this material meet all required performance specifications for your product?
- ☐ Will this material maintain quality throughout the product lifecycle?
- ☐ Is this material compatible with your production processes?

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

- ☐ Is the carbon footprint acceptable (ideally <2 kg CO_2 per kg material)?
- ☐ Does this material have recyclability or composability infrastructure available?
- ☐ Is this material free from toxic chemicals that could harm users or environment?

ECONOMIC VIABILITY:

- ☐ Is the cost per unit within your product budget?
- ☐ Is this material available in sufficient quantity for your scale?
- ☐ Are there reliable suppliers for this material?

MARKET & STAKEHOLDER ACCEPTANCE:

- ☐ Will your customers accept this material? (research market feedback if uncertain)
- ☐ Does this material align with your sustainability claims and brand positioning?

SCORING & DECISION: Total checkboxes marked: _____ / 11

Score 9-11: ✓ Recommended - This is a strong material choice	**Score 6-8**: **✓ Acceptable -** Good choice with some trade-offs to manage	**Score <6: X Reconsider** - Significant gaps; explore alternatives

For any unchecked items, what would need to change to make this material viable?

_____

TOOL 4: SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY CHECKER

WHAT IT DOES:

Investigates where your material comes from, who produces it, and whether it's produced ethically and sustainably. Helps you avoid hidden supply chain problems.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Step 1: Identify your material supplier(s)
2. Step 2: Research each question below. If information is unavailable, that's a red flag.
3. Step 3: Assess overall transparency. High transparency = trusted supplier. Low transparency = request more information or find alternatives.

SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY CHECKER

MATERIAL: _____ **SUPPLIER:** _____

ORIGIN & SOURCING:

Where does this material come from? (Country/region)

Answer: _____

Is the sourcing extractive (raw material) or recycled/regenerative?

Answer: _____

PRODUCTION PRACTICES:

What certifications does the supplier hold? (ISO, Fair Trade, FSS, organic, etc.)

Answer: _____

Can the supplier provide documentation on labor practices and worker conditions?

Answer: ☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Can the supplier document water usage and waste management practices?

Answer: ☐ Yes Partial No

Are there known environmental violations or negative reports about this supplier?

Answer: ☐ None known Minor ☐ Significant

TRANSPORTATION & DISTANCE:

How far does this material travel to reach you?

Distance:

Transportation method: ☐ Air ☐ Ship ☐ Truck ☐ Rail

TRANSPARENCY ASSESSMENT

HIGH	☐	(Detailed documentation, third-party certification, no red flags)
MEDIUM	☐	(Some documentation, willing to answer questions, minor concerns)
LOW	☐	(Limited information, evasive answers, significant concerns)

TRANSPARENCY ASSESSMENT

Based on transparency assessment, what will you do?

☐ ☐

COMPONENT 4: Quick LCA Calculator

What is it?

A collection of practical calculators, checklists, and assessment frameworks for measuring the environmental and social impact of your solution across its entire lifecycle—from raw material extraction through end-of-life.

Included templates:

Carbon Footprint Calculator

Interactive tool to calculate annual carbon emissions from Transport, Home Energy, Food, and Air Travel

Social Impact Checklist

Guided assessment on Labor Rights, Community Impact, Accessibility & Inclusion, and Education & Transparency

Product Life Cycle Assessment Checklist

Structured 6-stage workflow for transparent LCA from goal definition through reporting

How to use it:

Select the right tool for your needs. Start with Carbon Footprint Calculator for baseline impact.
Complete Social Impact Checklist for human dimensions.
Run full LCA Checklist for comprehensive lifecycle analysis. Track progress over time.

Why this is importante?

Brilliant ideas alone cannot drive systemic change. You might design the most environmentally revolutionary product or develop a sustainable business model that could transform entire industries—but without rigorous impact measurement, that innovation remains confined to a whiteboard, unrealized and unknown.

Impact measurement matters at three critical levels:
First, for your decisions. Data informs strategy. Knowing your carbon hotspots, social vulnerabilities, and lifecycle bottlenecks means you can prioritize where to innovate.

Second, for credibility. Investors who fund visions, communities who adopt solutions, and partners who collaborate with you all demand evidence. Without quantified impact, you're asking for trust without proof.

Third, for accountability. Greenwashing—claiming environmental benefits without substance—corrodes trust in entire sectors. Rigorous measurement distinguishes real progress from marketing.

Component 4 gives you the tools to measure what matters: carbon emissions, social outcomes, and full lifecycle impacts. With these tools, your impact becomes undeniable, your strategy becomes grounded, and your innovation achieves its real-world potential.

Without your impact data, your innovation remains theoretical. With it, you become unstoppable.

Interactive tools

Use the tools in sequence for a clearer sustainability assessment

1. **Carbon Footprint Calculator**
   Start with a quick baseline of your impact.
   Click HERE to access this calculator
2. **Social Impact Checklist**
   Then review people, labour and community effects.
   Click HERE to access this calculator
3. **Full LCA Checklist**
   Finish with the complete life-cycle assessment.
   Click HERE to access this calculator

COMPONENT 5:

BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

What is it?

A strategic framework and two complementary tasks for identifying, prioritizing, and authentically engaging the key stakeholders whose support is critical to your innovation's successful implementation.

Included templates:

Task A: Stakeholder Identification & Prioritization

Map all internal, intermediate, and external stakeholders. Assess influence and interest levels. Prioritize top 5 whose support is critical for implementation.

Task B: Crafting Engagement Narratives

Develop a personalized narrative for each priority stakeholder using the 5-element framework. Explain your solution through their lens, addressing their specific concerns and demonstrating concrete value.

How to use it:

Step 1: Complete Task A. Map and prioritize your 5 key stakeholders using the stakeholder mapping table.

Step 2: Complete Task B. For each priority stakeholder, craft a tailored engagement narrative using the 5-element framework.

Step 3: Execute your engagement strategy. Use the narratives to build authentic partnerships and guide implementation.

Available formats:

Template Task A: Stakeholder Identification & Prioritization (com tabela de mapeamento)
Template Task B: Crafting Engagement Narratives

Why this is importante?

Sustainability innovations fail not from technical infeasibility, but from stakeholder misalignment. The most sophisticated sustainable product remains unrealized when key stakeholders—investors, supply chains, communities, regulators—are disengaged or opposed.

Three Strategic Imperatives:

Risk Mitigation
Identify risks early—when addressable—rather than at implementation when catastrophic.

Coalition Building
Successful innovations require coalitions: supply chain partners, regulatory bodies, communities, and complementary organizations.

Authentic Partnership
Build genuine relationships where stakeholder input materially shapes strategy. This authenticity is increasingly a prerequisite for capital access and community legitimacy.

Without engaged stakeholders, innovation remains confined to whiteboards. With authentic partnerships, your organization becomes a trusted catalyst for systemic sustainability transformation

BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVE

This activity aims to develop your ability to identify and engage with key stakeholders—internal, intermediate, and external—to create a compelling narrative that promotes buy-in and support for your proposed solution. By mapping out who your stakeholders are and understanding their motivations, you will be better positioned to craft messages that resonate with each group and build sustainable partnerships.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- Successful solutions rarely succeed in isolation. Stakeholder engagement is critical because:
- Internal stakeholders provide resources, expertise, and operational support
- Intermediate stakeholders act as bridges and influencers within your ecosystem
- External stakeholders validate your approach and expand your reach

TASK A: STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION & PRIORITIZATION

Identify all internal, intermediate, and external stakeholders related to your solution.

STEPS:

1. Brainstorm all potential stakeholders
2. Categorize them using the stakeholder influence model
3. Prioritize based on impact and influence

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Examples: Team members, department leaders, organizational leadership

Typically have direct influence and are deeply invested in the initiative's success.

INTERMEDIATE STAKEHOLDERS

Examples: Partners, collaborators, allies, community organizations

Have moderate influence but are essential for implementation and support.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Examples: Funders, policymakers, customers, beneficiaries

Often have high influence and are critical for sustainability and scaling.

PRIORITIZATION QUESTIONS:

- Who has the most influence over the success success of this initiative?
- Who is most affected by the outcomes?
- Who can provide critical resources or support?

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING TABLE

	STAKEHOLDER NAME	CATEGORY (INTERNAL / INTERMEDIATE/ EXTERNAL)	ROLE / INTEREST	LEVEL OF INFLUENCE (HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW)	LEVEL OF INTEREST (HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW)	PRIORITY (HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW)	NOTES
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Task B: Crafting Engagement Narratives – Develop a personalized narrative for each of your five prioritized stakeholders

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR NARRATIVE

1. The problem as it affects them specifically
2. How your solution addresses their particular needs or concerns
3. The benefits they will experience (concrete, measurable where possible)
4. Their role in the implementation and success of the solution
5. The action you're asking them to take

EXAMPLE FRAMEWORK

"[Stakeholder name], we recognize that your primary concern is [specific concern]. Our solution addresses this by [how it solves their problem]. This will result in [concrete benefit]. We are asking you to [specific action] because your [expertise/authority/support] is critical to success."

IDENTIFY THE TRIGGER

What support or information do these stakeholders need to become genuine partners?

STAKEHOLDER	TAILORED NARRATIVE
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

AFTER COMPLETING THIS ACTIVITY, REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING

Which stakeholders surprised you in this process?

Where might alignment be hardest to achieve?

What partnerships will require the most ongoing care?

How will you measure the success of these partnerships?

COMPONENT :6 STORYTELLING TOOLKIT

Communicate your innovation with impact across multiple formats.

What is it?

A collection of narrative templates, script templates, visual guides, and pitch-deck frameworks for communicating your project to different audiences: investors, peers, customers, and policy makers.

Included templates:

5 Narrative Structures

The Before/After story, The Unexpected Journey, The Local Hero, The Barrier Breaker, The Circular Return

3 Video Script Templates

30-second pitch, 2-minute deep dive, testimonial format

8 Visual Templates

Infographics, lifecycle comparison charts, supply chain transparency visuals, before/after graphics

1 Pitch Deck Generator

8-slide template with speaker notes and proven layouts

Social Media Guidance: Post templates, hashtag strategies, platform-specific tips

How to use it:
Choose your audience. Pick a narrative structure that fits. Fill in the template with your story. Record a video or create a deck. Share.

Available formats:

- PowerPoint templates (editable)
- Google Slides (shareable)
- Video script PDFs (printable)

Why this is importante?

Brilliant ideas alone cannot save the planet. You might design the most environmentally revolutionary product or develop a sustainable business model that could transform entire communities—but without effective storytelling, your innovation remains confined to a whiteboard, unrealized and unknown.

The path from concept to real-world impact requires three critical audiences: investors who fund your vision, communities who adopt your solution, and partners who amplify your reach.

Storytelling is the language that transforms technical specifications and sustainability metrics into human narratives that resonate emotionally and inspire action.

When you tell the story of why your product matters—the farmer who will benefit from fair wages, the community that will thrive from local jobs, the individual with disabilities for whom your solution opens new possibilities—you move beyond statistics to meaning.

This is how EcoInnovators shift the narrative from “what if” to “what's now.”

Storytelling is not just about marketing; it is the essential vehicle through which sustainable innovations break through noise, unlock investment, build trust with communities, mobilize collaborative partnerships, and ultimately achieve their full potential to create lasting environmental and social change.

Without your story, your impact remains theoretical. With it, you become unstoppable.

TELL YOUR

PART 1: IDENTIFIY YOUR THREE AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE 1: CUSTOMERS

(People who will buy your product)

What they care about:

- Will this actually work?
- Can I trust this company?
- Is the price worth it?
- Will using this make me feel better about myself?

Your story angle: Transformation

Show them that buying your product = becoming a better version of themselves.

Example from Water Bottle Project:

Before: "I felt guilty throwing away plastic bottles. But my reusable was at home. Easier to buy new."

Realization: "Then I saw this bottle. Beautiful. Cool to carry. Lighter than expected."

Action: "I bought one. Three months later? Zero disposable bottles."

Transformation: "No guilt. No extra effort. Just... better. I don't think about plastic anymore."

Where to tell this story:

Instagram posts
TikTok videos
YouTube shorts
In-person at markets/events
Email newsletters

AUDIENCE 2: INVESTORS

(People who will fund/partner)

What they care about:

- Is there a real market?
- Can these people execute?
- How much money can they make?
- What's the risk?

Your story angle: Market opportunity+ Proof of Execution

Lead with DATA. Show problem is big. Show traction. Show you can win.

Example from Water Bottle Project:

"The single-use plastic bottle market is €50 billion/year in Europe. Growing 5% annually. But consumers are Desperate for alternatives they want to use.
We identified gap.
Tested 12 materials. 50 real users.
94% still actively using 3 months later. That's retention.
Unit cost: €18. Retail: €35. Margin: 49%. Year 1 revenue: €87,500.
Year 3 at scale: €875K."

Where to tell this story:

Pitch events
LinkedIn articles
Direct emails to investors
In-person meetings
Pitch deck presentations

AUDIENCE 3: PEERS/COMMUNITY

(Other youth, educators)

What they care about:

- Is this inspiring?
- Can I do something similar?
- What did they actually learn?
- Are these people like me (not superhuman)?

Your story angle: The Real Journey (failures + learnings)

Show actual process. Show failures. Make it relatable.

Example from Water Bottle Project:

"Six months ago: NO IDEA. None of us ran a business. We thought there had to be a better way. Cork composite first - looked beautiful. Ordered 100 units. €3,000. After 2 weeks? All cracked. We almost quit. Then seaweed plastic. Lower carbon. But degraded too fast. People's bottles fell apart at 6 months. We solved carbon, created new problem. Breakthrough: combine materials instead of finding one perfect. Glass (durable) + cork (beautiful) + seaweed (lower carbon). It worked. Learning: failure is expensive data. Don't give up."

Where to tell this story:

TikTok + Instagram Stories
YouTube
College fairs
Community events
LinkedIn
Podcast interviews

PART 2: FIVE NARRATIVE STRUCTURES FOR ECO-INNOVATION PROJECTS

Choose the right story structure to connect, convince, and drive impact.

1.	**The Problem → Solution → Proof**	Best for communicating to customers and first social media content
2.	**The Unexpected Journey**	Best for building credibility with investors and peers, LinkedIn + YouTube content
3.	**The Local Impact**	Best for video content, brand storytelling, and emotional connection
4.	**The Barrier Breaker**	Best for investor pitches, competitive differentiation, and press coverage
5.	**The Circular Return**	Best for B2B pitches, sustainability reports, and corporate partnerships

Choose the structure that matches your audience, evidence, and story.

STORYTELLING TOOLKIT

PITCH TEMPLATES

1 Template #1: Problem → Solution → Proof

30-second TikTok/Instagram version.

[0-3 sec] Hook
[Number] and [Item] are thrown away, most end up in [Where]

[3-7 sec] Specific Impact on People
We throw them away because ___.
It's not the planet gatguffer. It's [person /group]

[7-15 sec] What we built
Made from: __
Feature #1: __
Feature #2: __
Why it matters: __

[15-25 sec]
Proof it works [Number] people tested it. [Percentage] still use after [Time]. Someone said: "Quote!"

[25-30 sec]
Where to find us: _____
What we want: _____

2 Template #2: Unexpected Journey 2-minute YouTube video. Tell the Real story of what didn't work.

[0-30 sec] CHALLENGE:
We needed __ that was:

1.
2.
3.

[30-60 sec] ATTEMPT #1 (FAILED):
We tried _____What we thought_____
What actually happened: _____Cost: € ___
Lesson:_____

[60-90 sec] ATTEMPT #2 (Different Failure)
We pivoted to: _____
This time the problem was different:"_____"
We almost quit because: _____
[90-120 sec] Breakthrough: then we realized:
Instead of one perfect_____, What if we_____. We tried____the result was_____.

[120-150 sec] Sucess proof

3 Template #3: Local Impact (Person's story)

Video testimonial script. 60-90 seconds.

[0-15 sec] Intro: This is [Name]. [Age]. [Location]. [Profession/Context]. [One sentence about expertise]."

[15-30 sec] Struggle: Every day they face _____
Specific impact: _____
Emotional toll: I feel _____

[30-45 sec] Solution: We proposed_____

[45-60 sec] Proof: (Testing)
"We didn't ask [Name] to believe us. We asked them to test.
After [Timeframe]: _____"

[60-90 sec] Transformation:
[Name] says: "[Quote- Their voice]"
"The real proof: _____"

TEMPLATE #4 (BARRIER BREAKER):

Barrier: Everyone said

"Reframe: What if we?

Solution: We developed

Outomes: This unlocks....

TEMPLATE #5 (CIRCULAR RETURN):

Waste problem: [Amount] of [Material] = [Where]

Reframe: What if it's not garbage?
It's _____

System:

1. Collection → _____
2. Processing → _____
3. Manufacturing → _____
4. Sales → _____
5. End-of-life →_____

Year 1 Results:

✓ _____

✓ _____

✓ _____

Template 6#: E-mail model for sending to investors

Subject: Glass-Flow Water Bottle – 94% User Retention | Seeking €50K

Hi [Investor],

We've built a [ ] that solves [ ].

Proof It Works:
- [ ]usersers tested
- [ ]% retention after [ ] months
- [ ]% lower carbon (LCA verified)

The Market:
- €[ ]/year market
- Unit margin: [ ]%
- Year 1: €[ ] revenue

Numbers don't lie.

Available [Dates] to discuss.

[Attachments: Pitch deck, LCA report]

(This extra template: you can use it if you don't have direct acess to the investors and need to contact them per e-mail the first time.)



COMPONENT 7: COLLABORATION PLAYBOOK

Organize your team for effective innovation sprints.

What is it?

A practical guide for running high-functioning innovation teams. Includes role clarity cards, decision-making frameworks, weekly sprint templates, feedback protocols, and conflict resolution guidance.

What is inside:

- **Innovation Lead**
- **Material Scout**
- **Impact Tracker**
- **Business Thinker**
- **Community Voice**
- **Quality Checker**

Each role has clear responsibilities and decision rights.

Decision-Making Framework

Impact x Feasibility matrix, voting systems, how to handle disagreements

Weekly Sprint Template

Monday planning through Friday retrospective

Feedback Protocol

"I Like, I Wish, I Wonder" for constructive feedback

Conflict Resolution

6 common scenarios with proven solutions

How to use it:

At team launch, have each member choose a role. At the start of each week, print the sprint template. Use the decision matrix when you need to choose between options. Use the feedback protocol in reviews.

Available formats:

● Printable A5 playbook (pocket-sized) ● Digital guide (searchable PDF) ● Individual role cards (laminated)

Why this is important:

Sustainable innovation is never a solo sport. Your most groundbreaking product idea requires diverse expertise—technical knowledge, environmental insight, business acumen, community understanding, and quality control—but without a structured collaboration framework, even the most talented teams dissolve into confusion, frustration, and failure.

The Collaboration Playbook addresses a critical reality: young entrepreneurs (aged 16-25) rarely have experience leading cross-functional teams or managing the complex dynamics of innovation sprints.

When roles are unclear, decisions stall in endless debate, feedback becomes personal instead of constructive, and conflicts fester unresolved. The Playbook solves this by making corporate-world collaboration frameworks accessible to youth—role clarity cards ensure everyone knows their power and responsibility, decision matrices eliminate analysis paralysis, sprint templates create rhythm and accountability, and proven conflict resolution scenarios prepare teams for inevitable friction. High-performing teams don't happen by accident; they're built through deliberate structure.

By providing EcoInnovators with practical tools for team organization, weekly execution, and continuous improvement, the Collaboration Playbook transforms brilliant individuals into cohesive innovation engines capable of moving faster, iterating smarter, and delivering sustainable solutions that actually scale.

In the context of the EcoInnovators mission, effective collaboration isn't just a nice-to-have—it's the difference between a prototype that gathers dust and a movement that changes industries.

PART 1: ROLE CLARITY CARDS

When building a project, each team member needs a clear role and responsibilities. Without this, there's confusion about expectations, decisions get stuck, and conflicts arise. The six role profiles below represent the different perspectives and responsibilities needed to build something that actually scales. As you read through each card, ask yourself:

1. Which of these roles do I naturally fill?
2. Which roles does each member of my team embody?
3. Which perspectives are missing from our conversations?

Understanding what each role represents—even if one person holds multiple roles—helps you anticipate gaps, make better decisions, and catch blind spots earlier.

INNOVATION LEAD

Core Responsibility: Owns the project vision and ensures all decisions align with the core innovation goal.

Decision Rights: Final say on project direction, pivot decisions, and timeline changes.

Responsibilities:
- Set weekly sprint goals
- Facilitate team meetings
- Resolve blockers within 24 hours
- Maintain project timeline
- Present progress to external stakeholders

Success Indicators:
- Sprint goals completed on time
- Team alignment score (weekly check-in)
- Stakeholder satisfaction

When in Doubt: "Does this move us closer to our innovation goal?" If yes, proceed. If no, pause and discuss.

MATERIAL SCOUT

Core Responsibility: Finds and validates sustainable materials and suppliers.

Decision Rights: Final say on material selection and supplier partnerships.

Responsibilities:
- Research sustainable material options
- Contact and vet suppliers
- Compare environmental certifications
- Test material samples
- Negotiate pricing and minimum orders

Success Indicators:
- 3+ material options identified per component
- All suppliers verified for sustainability claims
- Cost per unit documented

When in Doubt: "Is this the most sustainable option we can afford?" If unsure, find one more alternative before deciding.

QUALITY CHECKER

Core Responsibility: Ensures the product meets durability, safety, and performance standards.

Decision Rights: Final say on quality standards, testing protocols, and release readiness.

Responsibilities:
- Define quality benchmarks
- Design and run tests
- Document results and failures
- Ensure regulatory compliance
- Sign off on final product

Success Indicators:
- All quality benchmarks met
- Zero safety issues in testing
- Durability targets achieved

When in Doubt: "Would I trust this product with my own family?" If no, it's not ready.

PART 1: ROLE CLARITY CARDS

These three roles complete the team picture. While Part 1 focused on building and validating the product, Part 2 addresses how you communicate value, engage communities, and measure what matters. Together, the six roles ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

BUSINESS THINKER

Core Responsibility: Translates the innovation into a viable business model and ensures financial sustainability.

Decision Rights: Final say on pricing strategy, revenue model, and go-to-market approach.

Responsibilities:
- Develop and test business model canvas
- Research market size and competitors
- Define pricing strategy
- Create financial projections
- Identify funding opportunities

Success Indicators:
- Business model validated with 5+ potential customers
- Revenue projections documented
- At least 2 funding paths identified

When in Doubt: "Would someone pay for this?" If unsure, talk to 3 more potential customers before deciding.

COMMUNITY VOICE

Core Responsibility: Represents the end user and community perspective in all project decisions.

Decision Rights: Final say on user experience, community engagement strategy, and feedback integration.

Responsibilities:
- Conduct user interviews and surveys
- Build and manage community relationships
- Translate user needs into project requirements
- Test solutions with real users
- Advocate for accessibility and inclusion

Success Indicators:
- 10+ user interviews completed
- Community feedback loop established
- User satisfaction score tracked

When in Doubt: "Have we actually asked the people this is for?" If no, stop and listen before building further.

IMPACT TRACKER

Core Responsibility: Measures and communicates the social, environmental, and economic impact of the project.

Decision Rights: Final say on impact metrics, measurement methodology, and reporting standards.

Responsibilities:
- Define impact KPIs aligned with SDGs
- Design measurement frameworks
- Collect and analyse impact data
- Create impact reports and visualisations
- Benchmark against industry standards

Success Indicators:
- Impact dashboard live and updated weekly
- 3+ measurable impact metrics defined
- Baseline data collected for all KPIs

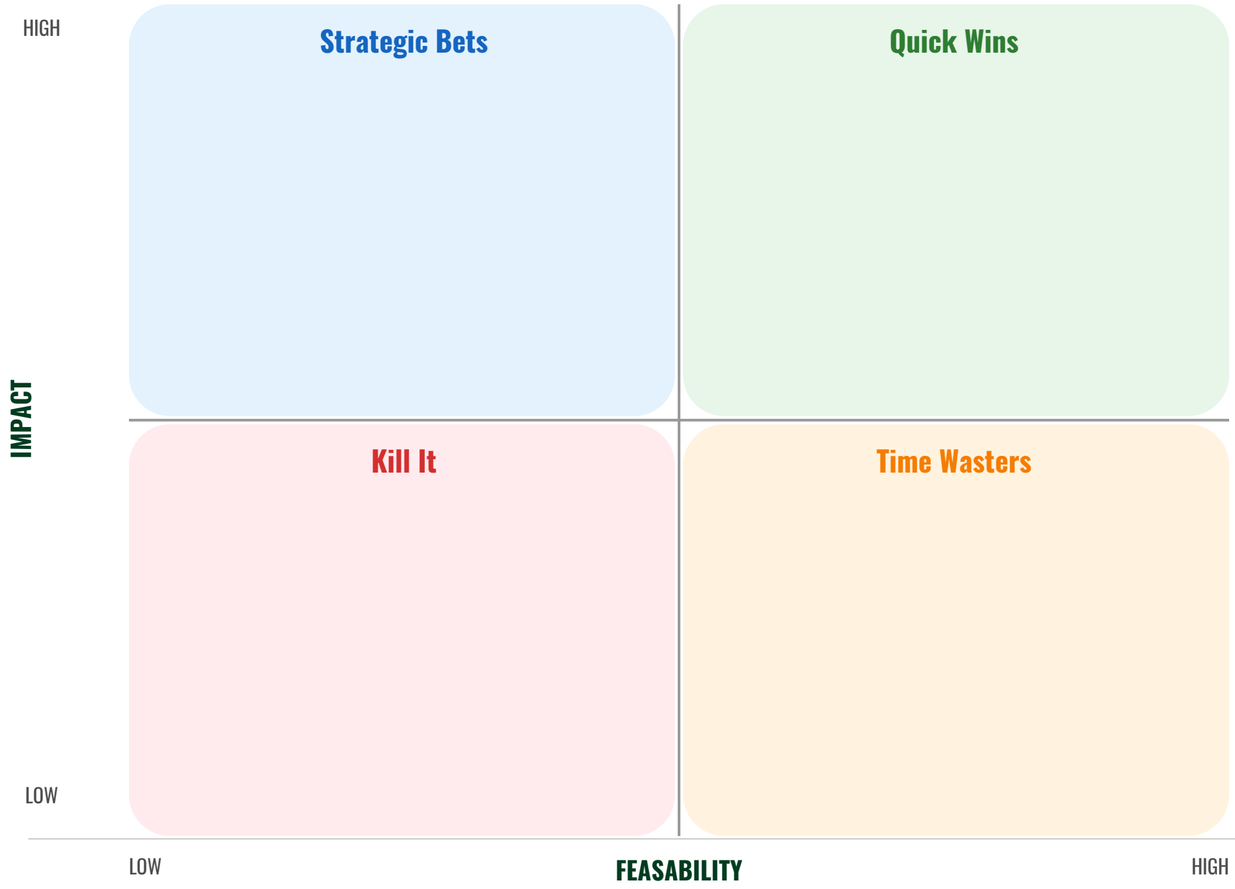
When in Doubt: "Can we prove this is making a difference?" If not yet, define what evidence would convince a sceptic.

PART 2: DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

THE IMPACT × FEASIBILITY MATRIX

How to use it:

1. Identify the decision to be made (new feature, pivot, partnership, etc.)
2. Plot on matrix using criteria below
3. Decision rule applies based on quadrant



Strategic Bets

Decision: High impact but hard to execute — requires significant resources or time.
Action: Invest selectively. Assign dedicated owner. Set 90-day milestones.
Timeline: Plan over 1–3 months with checkpoints.
Example: Launching a hardware prototype requiring new supplier partnerships.

Quick Wins

Decision: High impact and easy to do — no reason to delay.
Action: Execute immediately. Assign and complete within one sprint.
Timeline: This week or next.
Example: Adding a testimonial section to your landing page.

Kill It

Decision: Low impact and hard to do — not worth the effort.
Action: Remove from backlog. Communicate decision to team.
Timeline: Immediately — stop spending time on it.
Example: Building a custom CRM when free tools exist and user base is small.

Time Wasters

Decision: Low impact but easy to do — tempting but distracting.
Action: Deprioritise. Only revisit if all Quick Wins and Strategic Bets are handled.
Timeline: Park for now. Review monthly.
Example: Redesigning your logo for the third time before launching.



PART 2: DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

HANDLING DISAGREEMENTS: THE ESCALATION PATH

ESCALATION

⚡ If still disagreed after testing, Innovation Lead makes final call
Document the decision and why dissenting views were valuable
Build in review point to revisit if data changes

LEVEL 4: EXECUTIVE DECISION

👥 If still disagreed, Community Voice conducts quick user research
Make decision based on user feedback
Document learning for future similar disagreements

LEVEL 3: USER TEST (1 WEEK)

📊 If still disagreed, Impact Tracker gathers relevant data
Decision delayed until data is reviewed
Revisit discussion with evidence

LEVEL 2: DATA CHECK (24 HOURS)

💬 Each perspective gets 5 minutes uninterrupted time
Ask clarifying questions
Reframe disagreement as "different information" not "different values"

LEVEL 1: DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

SPRINT SETUP MEETING

Monday Morning - 60 Minutes

Sprint #: _____ Date: _____ Team: _____

1. VISION ALIGNMENT (10 minutes)
What are we trying to achieve this week? North Star / Vision:

What does success look like for each person?
Innovation Lead:
_____
Business Thinker:
_____
Material Scout:
_____
Community Voice:
_____
Quality Checker:
_____
Impact Tracker:
_____
Clarifications needed:
_____

2. GOAL SETTING (15 minutes)
Define 3-5 SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)

GOAL name+description:	Owner:	Metric:	Time-bound

3. WORKSTREAM PLANNING (20 minutes)
Break work into tasks. Assign owners, deadlines, dependencies.

Task	Owner	Deadline	Depends on	Block

Resource Needs:

4. Risk review (10 minutes)
What could go wrong? Identify top 3-5 risks and mitigation plans.

Risk #1:_____
Impact: _____
Prevention: _____
Owner: _____

Risk #2:_____
Impact: _____
Prevention: _____
Owner: _____

5. COMMUNICATION PLAN (5 minutes)
When update stakeholders? Who owns communication? What if crisis mid-week?

Stakeholder updates:

Communication Owner:

What to communicate:

If crisis mid-week:

Additional Notes:

MID-WEEK CHECK-IN TEMPLATE

Wednesday - 20 Minutes

Sprint #: _____ Date: _____ Team:_____

Overall Progress: ____% toward sprint goals

Workstream	Owner	Status	% Complete	Blockers

Emerging Risks:

1.

2.

3.

User Feedback Received:

Are we on track to hit Friday goals?

□ Yes - Keep doing what we're doing □ Maybe - Need to adjust □ No - Major change needed

Do we need to reprioritize?

What to STOP doing: _____

What to START doing: _____

What to CONTINUE doing: _____

Do any risks need to escalate? _____

Adjustments to Sprint Plan:

RETROSPECTIVE TEMPLATE

Date:

Sprint Goals: (List the 3-5 goals from Monday)

Achievement: (For each goal: hit, missed, or partially achieved? Why?)

Goal	Achieved?	Impact Data	Why?

What Worked Well This Sprint:

1.
2.

What We Want to Improve:

1. What happened?
2. What's the impact?
3. What should we try instead?

Learnings About Our Product/Market:

Learnings About Our Team:

What We're Doing Differently Next Sprint:

1.
2.
3.

Next Sprint Focus:

PART 4: FEEDBACK PROTOCOL

"I LIKE, I WISH, I WONDER"

Purpose: Deliver constructive feedback that builds rather than damages relationships

When to use: Code or design reviews • Presenting ideas to team • Evaluating sprint outcomes • Giving feedback on teammate contributions



I LIKE... (What worked well)

Start positive — identify specific things that were strong
Be genuine, not patronizing
Examples: "I liked how you engaged users in testing" or "I liked the clarity of your analysis"



I WISH... (What could improve)

Frame as hopes for future, not criticism of past
Constructive suggestions only
Examples: "I wish we had more time to explore that second option" or "I wish we had involved the Business Thinker earlier"



I WONDER... (Open questions)

Ask genuine questions rather than make accusations
Shows curiosity rather than judgment
Examples: "I wonder if we tested this assumption with users?" or "I wonder how we'd scale this approach?"

Structure of a complete feedback:

I like [specific strength]: "I liked how you pushed back on that assumption; it made us stronger."

I wish [constructive suggestion]: "I wish we had documented that decision so we remember why we made it."

I wonder [open question]: "I wonder if we should include that edge case in our next test?"

PART 5: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

SCENARIO 1: ROLE CONFUSION

The Problem: Two team members believe they have decision rights on the same issue.
Example: Both the Community Voice and Quality Checker think they should approve the final messaging.

Resolution:

Review role cards together — clarify whose decision right this actually is
Other role provides but doesn't have veto power
Document the decision and why that role owned it
Update team understanding for next time

Prevention: Clarify decision ownership explicitly in sprint planning

SCENARIO 2: ONE PERSON BLOCKING PROGRESS

The Problem: Someone is preventing the team from moving forward (missing deadlines information, refusing to participate). **Example:** The Material Scout isn't providing timeline estimates, so planning can't happen.

Resolution:

Private conversation first (Innovation Lead or Material Scout's peer)
"I've noticed X isn't happening. What's going on?"
Listen for real obstacles: unclear expectations, personal stress, skill gaps, unclear importance
Solve the root cause:
Skill gap? ← Pair with someone or provide training
Unclear expectations?"←Clarify and document
Personal crisis?← Offer support and adjust workload temporally
Disagrees with direction?← Have the real conversation about their concerns
If still not resolved: Innovation Lead makes direct request with clear deadline.
Last resort: Replace them on that task with someone who can deliver

Prevention: Check in weekly; address small issues before they become big gnes

SCENARIO 3: FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENT ON STRATEGY

The Problem: The team disagrees on what direction to take (pivot v. stay course, who to target, what to build).
Example: Business Thinker thinks you should focus on corporate clients; Community Voice thinks you should stay with grassroots organizations.

Resolution:

List assumptions both sides are making of the market, users, or our capability
Identify which assumptions can be tested with users or data
Run quick tests(ideally this week):
Business Thinker: Pitch corporate client profile to 5 prospects, note interest level
Community Voice: Deepen engagement with grassroots partners, measure growth

Prevention: Disagree on strategy earlier; test assumptions before committing big resources

SCENARIO 4: QUALITY VS. SPEED TENSION

The Problem: The team disagrees on quality standards versus speed to market.
Example: Some people want to launch with "good enough" content, others want perfect messaging.

Resolution:

Define "good enough" together for this phase (MVP standards)
Decide what can be improved next what is done is better than perfect"
Set clear quality criteria and timeline "done is better than perfect"
Communicate shared goal: impact over perfection

Prevention: Align on quality standards upfront in sprint planning

SCENARIO 5: UNEQUAL EFFORT (SOME PEOPLE DOING MORE)

The Problem: Some team members consistently contribute more than others.
Example: One person does all the research, while others only show up to meetings.

Resolution:

Private conversation: "I'm noticing I'm taking on more. What's happening?"
Look for root causes: unclear roles, skill gaps, personal oversight
Redistribute work based on capacity and skills
Set clear expectations for contribution levels
Check in regularly about workload balance

Prevention: Set clear expectations about commitment and contribution upfront

SCENARIO 6: CONFLICT BETWEEN TEAM MEMBERS (NOT ABOUT WORK)

The Problem: Personal tension or disagreement is affecting team dynamics.
Example: Two team members have different values or communication styles causing friction.

Resolution:

Pull them aside first
Facilitate a private, respectful conversation between them
Focus on behavior and impact, not personality
Find common ground and agree on how to work together
If needed, set ground rules for interactions

Prevention: Build team relationships early; address tension before it affects work

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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