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EYE TO A GREENER FUTURE

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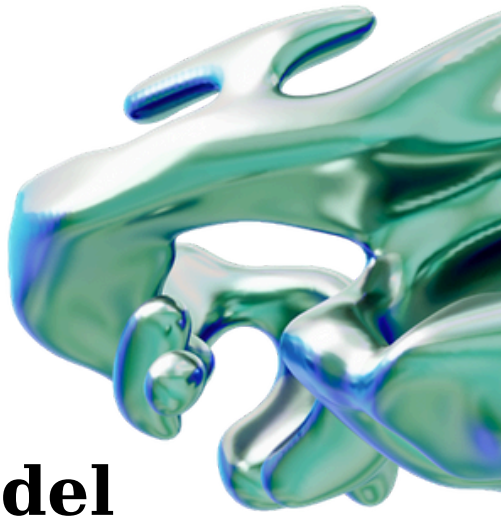
Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future»



e-BOOK

on sustainable business model

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ΕΠΙΜΕΛΗΤΗΡΙΟ ΔΡΑΜΑΣ

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ΕΠΙΜΕΛΗΤΗΡΙΟ
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Erasmus+ EYE TO A GREENER FUTURE

The Green Startup Playbook: Your Guide to Building a Sustainable Business

Welcome, Future Innovators!

Hey there, Students of Eyes to a Greener Future programme! Ever looked around our beautiful city – maybe at the historic city centre – and thought, "How can we make this even better?" Or seen a problem, like plastic on our beaches or wasted food, and wondered, "What if I could fix that?"

This e-book is for you! It's your personal guide to building a business that not only makes money but also makes a real, positive difference for people and the planet. We're going to dive into the Sustainable Business Model Canvas (SBMC), a super cool tool that will help you turn your green ideas into reality.

Think of this as your secret map to becoming a green entrepreneur wherever your dreams take you!

What Does "Sustainable Business" Even Mean?

Forget the old idea that businesses are just about making cash. Sustainable business is about being smart and caring. It's like having a superpower that lets you create something awesome without harming our environment or treating anyone unfairly. Green businesses incorporate principles of sustainability into their business decisions to reduce their negative impacts on the global or local environment. They do this by selling environmentally friendly products or by greening their processes to make them more environmentally sustainable.

it means constantly asking yourself:

- "How can my business help solve big problems, like pollution or social inequality?"
- "Am I creating positive impact, not just avoiding negative ones?"

The Sustainable Business Model Canvas (SBMC) is your special compass for this journey. It helps you think about your business idea from every angle – not just how to sell stuff, but how to do it in a way that's good for the Earth and fair to everyone. We call this Triple Bottom Line thinking:

- People:Howdoesyourbusinesshelpcommunities,treat its workers fairly, and improve lives?
- Planet:Howdoesyourbusinessprotectnature,reducewaste, and use resources wisely ?
- Profit:Howdoesyourbusinessmakeenoughmoneytokeep going and grow its positive impact?

Your Startup's Blueprint: The 9 Blocks of the SBMC

Imagine your green business idea is a house you're building. Each of these nine blocks is a crucial part: a strong foundation, a clever layout, or an eco-friendly feature , that makes your house awesome and sustainable!

1. Customer Segments: Who's Getting Your Green Goodness?

Big Question: Who are the awesome people (or even other businesses!) who will truly benefit from your sustainable idea?

This isn't just about who buys your product. It's about who will feel the positive impact of what you're doing.

Are you aiming for:

- Eco-conscious teens looking for stylish, second-hand clothes?
- Local families who need easier ways to compost their food waste?
- Businesses in the city center that want to reduce their energy bills and carbon footprint?
- Future generations who will inherit the cleaner environment you're helping to create?

Think like a Green Founder: "Who's going to be really happy (and maybe even give us a shout-out on social media!) because we're solving a problem for them or making their lives better in a green way?"

2. Value Proposition: What Sustainable Superpower Are You Offering?

Big Question: What unique, planet-friendly, people-first solution are you bringing to the table? What problem are you solving sustainably?

This is your startup's "secret sauce" – what makes your green idea special. It's how you're solving a problem or making life better, but with a sustainable twist!

Cool Examples:

- A lineofsoapbarsmadefromoliveoilleftoversfromlocal producers, reducing waste and supporting local agriculture.
- A servicethatpicksupanddeliversreusablefoodcontainers from local restaurants to cut down on single-use plastics.
- Workshopsforstudentsandfamiliesonupcyclingold furniture instead of throwing it away, extending product life cycles.

Think likeaGreenFounder:Don'tjustsay"eco-friendly."Say, "My product reduces plastic wasteby70%!"or"Myservicehelpslocalfamiliessave 20% on energy bills and cuts carbonemissions."Beclear,bebold,bespecificabout the green impact!

3. Channels: How Do You Get Your Green Stuff Out There?

Big Question: How will you deliver your amazing product or service to customers in the most eco-friendly and ethical way possible?

This is about how your "green goodness" reaches your customers. Every step counts! Consider:

- Local delivery using bikes, electric scooters, or even just walking, especially around urban narrow streets.
- Selling through an online store to reduce the need for a physical shop and paper advertising.
- Using packaging made from recycled paper, cardboard, or even seaweed, and encouraging customers to reuse or return it.
- Setting up a stall at local markets or school events to connect directly with your community.

Think like a Green Founder: "How can I get my awesome product into people's hands without leaving a big carbon footprint or creating extra waste along the way?"

4. Customer Relationships: Building Green Trust

Big Question: How do you build genuine, honest relationships with your customers around your commitment to sustainability?

People want to know the real story behind your green startup. Build trust by:

- Sharing your journey: Tell stories about where your materials come from, the local people you work with, or the impact you're making. Maybe show videos of your ethical production process!
- Rewarding green actions: Offer discounts for returning old products for recycling or refilling reusable containers.
- Being totally honest: If there's a challenge with your sustainable sourcing, share it and explain how you're working to improve. Transparency is super important!

Think like a GreenFounder:"HowcanImakemycustomersfeellike they're part of my sustainabilitymission,notjustbuyingaproduct?Cantheyhelpspread the word about our green impact?"

5. Revenue Streams: Making Green Money

Big Question: How will your startup make money in a way that supports your sustainability mission, rather than compromising it?

This is where you get creative about making a profit while doing good! Innovative Ideas:

- "Green premium" pricing: Customers might happily pay a bit more for a product that's certified fair trade, made from 100% recycled materials, or sourced directly from local farmers.
- Subscription for reuse: Imagine a service where families subscribe to reusable coffee cups or food containers for their takeaways, returning them for cleaning and reuse by local cafes.
- Partnerships for good: Team up with a local environmental group or charity for a campaign where a portion of your sales goes to their cause.
- Selling the solution, not just the product: Instead of selling watering cans, offer a "garden watering service" using collected rainwater, focusing on efficient resource use.

Think like a Green Founder: "How can my profit model actually encourage more sustainable behavior from my customers and from my own business? Can we make money by helping people save resources?"

6. Key Resources: Your Green Power-Ups

Big Question: What special "power-ups" (resources) do you need to make your green startup happen and keep it sustainable?

These are the essential ingredients for your business. For a green startup, they have a special twist:

- Eco-friendly materials: Think organic cotton, recycled plastic from city's recycling bins, bamboo, or even algae grown locally!
- Talented, fairly paid people: Your team is your biggest asset. Make sure they're treated well and paid fairly, creating a positive work environment.
- Cool green tech: Maybe you need a special machine that reuses old textiles, or an app that helps you track your waste reduction.
- Your unique ideas (IP): If you invent a new eco-friendly process or a clever sustainable design, that's a valuable resource!
- Access to renewable energy: Can your office run on solar power? Could you partner with local solar installers?

Think like a GreenFounder:"Aremyresourcestrulysustainable? Am I using planet-friendly stuff andtreatingpeoplefairlyeverystepoftheway?"

7. Key Activities: Doing the Green Work

Big Question: What are the most important things your startup must do every day to deliver its sustainable value effectively?

This is the daily grind of your business, but with a green filter! Daily Green Tasks:

- Ethical production: Making sure your products are produced without harming workers or the environment. This means knowing your supply chain!
- Energy saving: Constantly looking for ways to reduce energy use in your workspace or during production. Turn off lights, unplug chargers!
- Waste reduction: Setting up strong recycling programs, finding ways to reuse materials, and aiming for minimum waste.
- Engaging with your community: Building strong relationships with local suppliers, participating in local clean-up drives in the city, or supporting local events.
- Tracking your impact: Regularly measuring how much plastic you've diverted, or how many lives you've improved.

Think like a Green Founder: "Sustainability isn't just a marketing slogan; it's baked into everything we do, every single day, from how we make things to how we operate."

8. Key Partnerships: Your Green Alliance

Big Question: Who are your essential allies and collaborators who will help you achieve your sustainability goals?

You don't have to go it alone! Teaming up with the right people can seriously boost your impact. Who to team up with:

- Local farmers or producers: To get fresh, sustainable local ingredients, reducing transport and supporting the local economy.
- Environmental non-profits: Organizations like local conservation groups can offer expert advice, help with community projects, or spread the word about your mission.
- Certification bodies: These organizations can give your products a "Fair Trade" or "Organic" stamp of approval, showing customers your commitment.
- Waste management companies: To help you recycle or even upcycle your materials effectively.
- Even other green startups! You can learn from each other, share resources, and collaborate on bigger projects.

Think like aGreenFounder:"Domypartnerstrulysharemy commitment sustainability? Canweachievemuchmoretogetherthanwecouldby ourselves?" 10

9. Cost Structure: The Price Tag of Being Green

Big Question: What are the costs involved in running your sustainable business, and how do you make sure these investments pay off for both your business and the planet?

Being sustainable might sometimes mean higher initial costs (like ethical sourcing or renewable energy). But often, these are smart investments that save money in the long run and build a strong reputation! Consider:

- Higher material costs: Organic cotton or recycled plastic might cost more than conventional options, but they're better for the planet and people.
- Investing in eco-friendly tech: Buying energy-efficient machines might be pricier upfront, but they'll save money on electricity bills over time.
- Employee training: Investing in your team by teaching them about sustainable practices and fair labor.
- Certification fees: Paying for a "B Corp" certification shows you're a truly responsible business.
- Long-term savings: Less waste means less money spent on disposal; a good reputation attracts more customers and keeps them loyal.

Think like a Green Founder: "These aren't just costs, they're investments in a better future – for my business, for people, and for our planet. How can I show that being green makes good business sense?"

Why Being a Green Business Matters So Much!

Being a green business isn't just a trend; it's a smart way to do business in today's world. Here's why:

Economic Sense for Green Businesses

- Access New Markets: There's an increasing demand for green products and services worldwide. People are actively looking for sustainable options!
- Stay Ahead of Regulations: Environmental regulation is becoming more and more stringent. Green businesses are already prepared for these changes, which gives them an advantage. We can expect more stringent regulations on greenhouse gas emissions, waste, chemicals, and water conservation in the coming years
- Access to Finance: Green businesses may be able to attract certain types of financing options for their green business ideas that are not available for conventional business ideas. Companies with strong ESG (Environmental, Social,

andGovernance)profilesattractmoreinvestmentandbenefit from better financing terms

- ReduceCosts:Thesecostreductionsgenerallyarisefromefficiency gains when lessinputsarerequiredtoproducethesameoutput.Thismeans being smarter with energy and materials can save money!
- ImproveQuality:Greenproductsandservicescantherefore improve the value propositionoftheenterpriseandimproveitsbottomline.They are often designed to bemoredurable,repairable,oreasilyrecyclable,whichcan actually improve their quality and value to customers
- EnhancedBrandLoyalty:Greenbusinessesoftenbuildstronger brand loyalty by aligningwithcustomers'valuesandcommitmentstosustainability.

The Power of the Circular Economy

The concept of a Circular Economy is super important for green startups. Instead of the old "take-make-consume-throw away" model , which uses lots of new materials and creates huge amounts of waste , a circular economy aims to minimize waste by sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling of existing materials and products as long as possible.

Why is it so vital?

- Fights Environmental Challenges: It provides solutions to increasingly pressing environmental challenges, including the depletion of natural resources and the growth of waste that damages ecosystems.

- Reduces Dependence on New Materials: It helps reduce dependence on new raw materials. Reusing and recycling products would slow down the use of natural resources, reduce landscape and habitat disruption, and help to limit biodiversity loss.
- Minimizes Waste and Emissions: It minimizes waste and reduces carbon emissions. A reduction in total annual greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved; industrial processes and product use are responsible for 9.10% of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU, while waste management accounts for 3.32%

- Creates New Jobs: It drives new economic opportunities by encouraging innovation, efficiency, and job creation in industries that prioritize the recycling and reuse of materials.

- Extends Product Life: The second principle of circular economy emphasizes maximizing the value and usefulness of a product for as long as possible. This includes maintenance, repair, recycling, and upcycling.

- Regenerates Natural Systems: The third principle is the regeneration of natural systems, which includes the use of renewable materials and processes that support them

- ImpactofWaste:Plasticwastedoesnoteasilydecompose and can persist in natureforhundredsofyears,makingitasignificantcontributor to environmental damage.Throwingplasticcarelessly,especiallyinthesea,can result in pollution that isdetrimentaltomarineecosystemsandthreatensmarine life. Microplastics formedfromplasticdegradationcanenterthefoodchain,posing a health risk to humans.

The Role of Technology

Technology is a huge friend to the circular economy! Innovations like big data and the Internet of Things (IoT) can help track and optimize product life cycles, make recycling easier, and reduce waste through careful monitoring. Imagine smart bins that tell you when they're full or apps that connect you with repair services!

Your Green Startup Journey: Tips for Success

As you brainstorm and fill out your own SBMC, remember these powerful tips:

- Look for Local Inspiration: Explore businesses in your city that are already doing something sustainable. How do they operate? What challenges did they overcome? You might discover local resources or partners right under your nose!
- Ask "Why Not?" Questions: Instead of asking, "Why should I be sustainable?", flip it around: "Why wouldn't I be sustainable? What's the cost of not being green?"
- Team Up! Work with friends, classmates, or even a teacher. Building a startup is easier and more fun with a team.
- Start Small, Dream Big: You don't need to change the whole world overnight. Pick one problem, find a sustainable solution, test it out, and then grow your impact step by step.
- Don't Be Afraid to Adjust: Your first idea might not be perfect, and that's totally okay! The SBMC is a tool to help you think, learn, and improve your green business constantly. It's all about experimenting and evolving.

Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It...

A truly sustainable business isn't just about making money; it's about making a positive, lasting mark on the world. As a future innovator and potential green entrepreneur, your role is incredibly important. You'll be guiding your ideas to balance profit, purpose, and planet-conscious design.

The SBMC is your superpower. Use it to think big, act responsibly, and innovate with deep intention. The world needs your fresh ideas and your passion for a greener, fairer future. Empowering the next generation of sustainable entrepreneurs helps instill

environmentalresponsibility,fosterscriticalthinking,prepares you for future green careers , andinspiresinnovation.

NOW, GO FORTH AND BUILD YOUR GREEN STARTUP ! WHAT PROBLEM WILL YOU SOLVE FIRST FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR PLANET?

Dive Deeper: Inspiring Reads & Resources for Green Entrepreneurs

Want to learn more and get even more inspired? Check out these amazing resources that teach about sustainability and green business:

- "Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist" by Kate Raworth: This book rethinks how our economies should work – not just growing bigger, but ensuring everyone has enough resources while staying within what our planet can handle. It's a game-changer!
- "Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming" edited by Paul Hawken: This book is filled with 100 real, actionable solutions to reverse global warming, many of which are exciting new businesses and technologies. It's all about positive action!
- Ellen MacArthur Foundation (Website): This amazing organization is a global leader in promoting the circular economy. It's all about keeping resources in use for as long as possible, getting rid of waste and pollution. Their website (www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org) has tons of inspiring videos, reports, and examples of circular businesses. Remember, a circular economy minimizes waste by recycling and reusing!
- B Corporation (Website): Ever heard of "B Corps"? These are businesses that are certified to meet high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. It's a fantastic way to see how companies balance profit with purpose. Check them out at www.bcorporation.net.
- Your Local Community & Businesses: Look around you! Are there local shops that minimize waste? Farmers selling organic produce? Businesses recycling in creative ways? Talk to people, ask questions, and discover the hidden green gems right here in our city. Maybe even visit a local market to see how goods are sourced and sold!
- European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan: This plan aims to promote more sustainable product design, reduce waste, and empower consumers with rights like the "right to repair". It focuses on important sectors like electronics, plastics, and textiles. This shows how governments are supporting

the shifttoacirculareconomy.TheEuropeanParliamenthas called for tighter recyclingrulesandbindingtargetsformaterialsuseandconsumption by 2030. They'vealsoproposednewEU-widerulesonpackagingto reduce waste and improvedesignforreuseandrecycling,includingacall for bio-based, biodegradable,andcompostableplastics.Themainobjectives are to make sustainableproductsthenormintheEU,empowerconsumers, focus on resource-intensivesectors,ensurelesswaste,andleadglobal efforts on the circular economy.

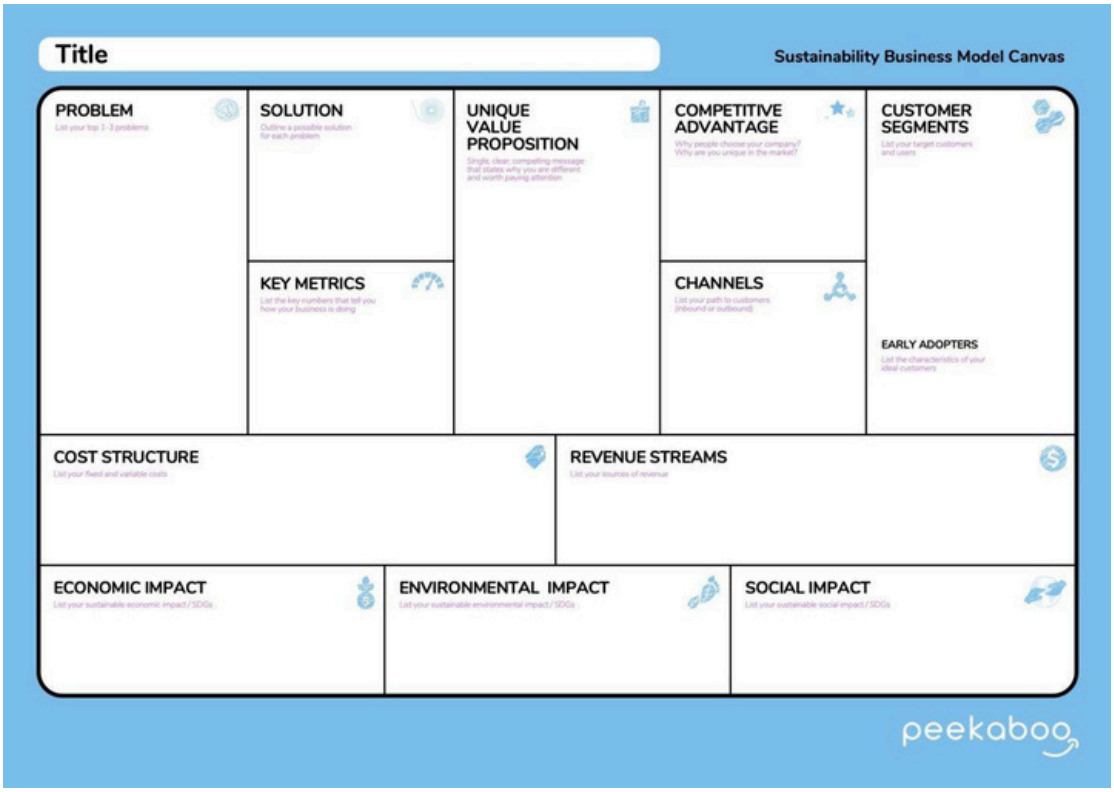
THESE RESOURCES WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THAT BUILDING A GREEN STARTUP IS NOT JUST A DREAM – IT'S A GROWING MOVEMENT THAT YOU CAN BE A PART OF !

Workshop Templates: Your Turn to Design a Green Startup!

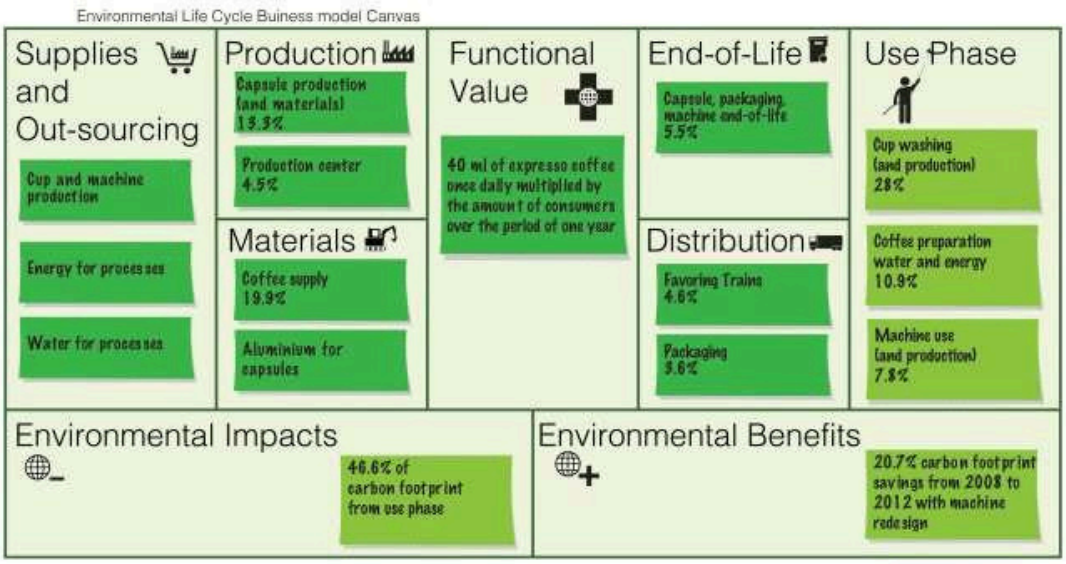
Now that you've learned about the Sustainable Business Model Canvas, it's time to put your ideas into action! Use these templates to map out your own green startup idea. You can print them out or draw them in your notebook.

Template 1: The Sustainable Business Model Canvas (SBMC) - Environmental Lens

This template helps you think about the environmental impacts and benefits of your business idea.



Example fromtheCanvas(CoffeeCapsules):



Supplies and Out-sourcing: Cup and machine production , Energy for processes , Water for processes

Production: Capsule production (and materials) (19.3% of carbon footprint) , Production center (4.5% of carbon footprint)

Materials: Coffee supply (19.9% of carbon footprint) , Aluminium for capsules

Functional Value: 40 ml of espresso coffee once daily multiplied by the amount of consumers over the period of one year

End-of-Life: Capsule, packaging, machine end-of-life (5.5% of carbon footprint)

Distribution: Favoring Trains (4.6% of carbon footprint) , Packaging (3.6% of carbon footprint)

Use Phase: Cup washing (and production) (28% of carbon footprint) , Coffee preparation water and energy (10.9% of carbon footprint) , Machine use (and production) (7.8% of carbon footprint)

Environmental Impacts: 46.6% of carbon footprint from use phase

Environmental Benefits: 20.7% carbon footprint savings from 2008 to 2012 with machine redesign

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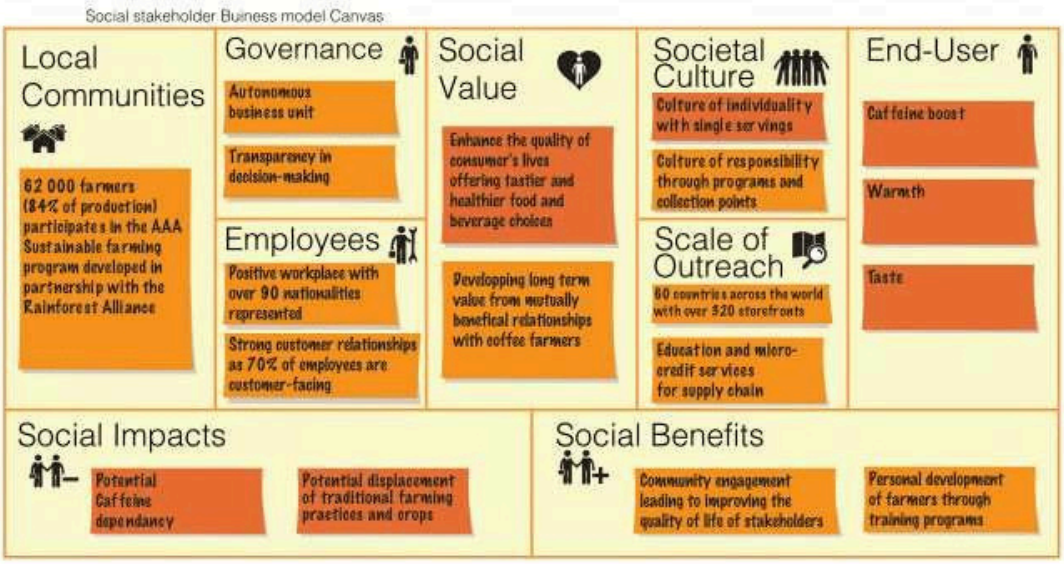
Template 2: The Sustainable Business Model Canvas (SBMC) - Social Stakeholder Lens

This template helps you think about the social impacts and benefits of your business idea on different people involved.



Local Communities: 62,000 farmers (84% of production) participate in the AAA sustainable farming program developed in partnership with the Rainforest Alliance

Governance: Autonomous business unit , Transparency in decision-making.

Employees: Positive workplace with over 90 nationalities represented , Strong customer relationships as 70% of employees are customer-facing.

Social Value: Enhance the quality of consumer's lives offering tastier and healthier food and beverage choices.

Societal Culture: Culture of individuality with single servings , Culture of responsibility through programs and collection points.

Scale of Outreach: 60 countries across the world with over 520 storefronts , Education and micro-credit services for supply chain.

End-User: Caffeine boost , Warmth , Taste.

Social Impacts: Potential caffeine dependency , Potential displacement of traditional farming practices and crops.

Social Benefits: Community engagement leading to improving the quality of life of stakeholders , Personal development of farmers through training programs.

Your GreenStartupJourney:TipsforSuccess

As you brainstormandfilloutyourownSBMC,rememberthesepowerful tips:

- Look forLocalInspiration:Explorebusinessesinyourcitythatare already doing somethingsustainable.Howdotheyoperate?Whatchallenges did they overcome?Youmightdiscoverlocalresourcesorpartnersrightunder your nose!
- Ask "WhyNot?"Questions:Insteadofasking,"WhyshouldIbe sustainable?", flip it around:"Whywouldn'tIbesustainable?What'sthecostofnot being green?"
- Team Up!Workwithfriends,classmates,orevenateacher.Building a startup is easier andmorefunwithateam.
- Start Small,DreamBig:Youdon'tneedtochangethewholeworld overnight. Pick one problem,findasustainablesolution,testitout,andthengrow your impact step by step.
- Don't BeAfraidtoAdjust:Yourfirstideamightnotbeperfect,and that's totally okay! TheSBMCisatooltohelpyouthink,learn,andimproveyour green business constantly. It's all about experimenting and evolving.

Conclusion: Be the Change, Build the Future!

You've now explored the exciting world of green startups and the powerful tool that is the Sustainable Business Model Canvas. Remember, a truly sustainable business isn't just about making money; it's about making a positive, lasting mark on the world. As a future innovator and potential green entrepreneur, your role is incredibly important. You'll be guiding your ideas to balance profit, purpose, and planet-conscious design.

Empowering the next generation of sustainable entrepreneurs helps instill environmental responsibility from an early age, fosters critical thinking about corporate responsibility, prepares you for future green careers, and inspires innovation to solve environmental challenges. The future of the circular economy offers a vision of a world where economic growth no longer depends on the exploitation of limited natural resources, but on innovation and the efficient use of materials. This future will be marked by close collaboration between various sectors, government policies encouraging circular economy practices, and increased consumer awareness.

The SBMC is your superpower. Use it to think big, act responsibly, and innovate with deep intention. The world needs your fresh ideas and your passion for a greener, fairer future.

NOW, GO FORTH AND BUILD YOUR GREEN STARTUP! WHAT PROBLEM WILL YOU SOLVE FIRST FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR PLANET?

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