

# Our clients

We firmly believe that companies must balance the provision of solid returns for their shareholders with the delivery of measurable benefits to society and the environment - sustainability has to provide social, ecological and economical value.

At the same time as developing sustainability services, we are ensuring that they are woven through our current portfolio. The aim is to fully embed sustainability into all of our service offerings and to translate this into a change of mindset within our clients' organisations.

To this end, we have created a varied toolset, including the Sustainability Assessment Framework, Maturity Assessment, Sustainability Strategy Benchmarks and the Sustainability Value Map.

The Sustainable Value Map identifies opportunities for value protection and value creation. This tool links directly to stakeholder demand and helps define material issues and strategy development. It also describes key performance indicators definition and external reporting schemes and enables long-term programme setting.

In early 2009, we went to market with the Sustainable Value Map. The various components can be used in combination to help companies create a roadmap to become a more sustainable enterprise.

## Creating a responsible mindset

Our experience is that excellence in sustainability is only possible if practices are integrated into an overall business strategy. We believe that changing perspectives on sustainability will have a profound impact on the way business is conducted around the world.

The traditional approach to sustainability focuses on compliance with sustainability standards and sustainability reporting and assurance that comes from a third party. Organisations often find it a challenge to integrate sustainability into day-to-day operations and to demonstrate added value. This results in added-on and disconnected internal and external information and reporting which is difficult for a third party to audit.

Our recommended approach is to follow the right steps to efficiently and effectively integrate sustainability into the overall business strategy. This begins with the question: 'Are we doing the right things?' and is followed by management asking, 'Do we implement and execute strategies effectively and efficiently in all relevant business processes?'. This leads to integrated sustainability activities and accurate reporting, which can be efficiently audited.

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“Corporate responsibility can reveal opportunities, catalyse innovation and enhance reputations.”

When done properly, corporate responsibility can reveal opportunities, catalyse innovation and enhance reputations, at the same time as conferring great benefits on society. Part of our commitment to clients is to help them embed sustainable practices into their DNA.

The current economic crisis has made it even more apparent that businesses must be accountable, responsible and uphold ethical standards. Trust in the business world has diminished, leading to an increased requirement for accountability, transparency and the full engagement of stakeholder groups. Good sustainability practices can offer another line of defence in a downturn.

## An essential journey: nine steps to sustainability excellence

### Step 1: Understand the present

Evaluate the regulatory climate, benchmark the field, survey stakeholders, take inventory, don't neglect the business of business

### Step 2: Envision the future

Define long-term visions (what will your company's legacy be), key growth strategies, keeping them inextricably integrated with core business strategy

### Step 3: Plan the journey

Prioritise your sustainability issues, mark the gaps, perform risk intelligent scenario planning (risk for reward)

### Step 4: Plan and build

Assess resource requirements, pull oversight to executive level, define performance and incentives, define traditional and non-traditional collaboration (internally and externally), define alliances and networking (e.g. UNGC, WBCSD, GRI)

### Step 5: Execute

Take measured steps, develop governance policies and procedures related to implementation

### Step 6: Review and revise

Monitor progress and assess the success, get feedback from stakeholders

### Step 7: Report and communicate

Use the GRI G3 guidelines and sector supplements

### Step 8: Assure internally

Involve internal auditors in business process analysis (financial, operational, compliance, IT controls, risk management)

### Step 9: Assure externally

Envisage a 'roadmap to assurance' (phasing in), stakeholder involvement, track voluntary and mandatory requirements