

## **Supplementary Materials**

### **Methodology of the Literature Search**

The theoretical background including the development of the conceptual framework were developed via a prior literature search on Google Scholar using keywords like “sustainability”, “decision-making”, “green supply chain”, “sustainable performance”, “assessment”, “development”, “framework”, “stakeholder theory”, “influence”, “drivers”, “corporate sustainability”, “corporate social responsibility” and “triple-bottom-line” in order to get a basic overview of possible factors.

For the boundary conditions of the framework textbooks on management fundamentals and organizational theory were used, as well as a Google Scholar search with keywords like “organizational theory”, “levels of management”, “communication”, “project management”. After influential factors were identified, keywords expressing these factors were incorporated as well, e. g. “top management commitment”. These keywords were used in variations using the known connectors “AND” and “OR”.

Furthermore, relevant in-paper sources and citations in papers that were found during the Google Scholar search were incorporated as well. To measure the objective quality of papers, the “Jourqual3” ranking was consulted where feasible. The primary literature search was limited to the years 2000s and above, however this restriction was not put on literature found in-text.

Due to the vast scope of the topic sustainability and time constraints the search was limited to one database. However, this still does not ensure that all influential factors that would be retrievable on Google Scholar were found.

Abstract and conclusion of identified sources were screened for relevance and only relevant sources were then read completely and their content analyzed. Factors that were described as having an impact on either corporate sustainability performance, decision-making or the organization were then written down and mapped to the framework.

### **Interview Questions**

#### **General questions:**

#### **Personal questions:**

1. What role do you have in your company and for how long have you been in your position?
2. How do you define sustainability?

#### **Sustainability in your company:**

3. Is organizational strategy aligned with sustainability? Do you report on generated competitive advantages from sustainability?
4. How important is sustainability for top management?
5. Do you differentiate between sustainability projects and other projects, or are sustainability considerations integrated in all projects/decisions?

#### **Questions for Framework:**

#### **Influences on the Organization:**

6. There exist a couple of drivers, that lead to organizations adopting sustainability practices (e. g. an enhanced external image). What drivers do you see in your company?
7. Sustainability also always has to be affordable by the company (e.g. investments in R&D incur costs and outcomes can be uncertain).
  - a. Are you seeing a dependence of sustainability on the financial situation of the company?
  - b. Does politics & regulation in an individual country influence sustainability strategy?

**Influences on Top Management**

8. What role does top-management play for sustainability in your company?
  - a. Are you aware that top management commitment and attitude towards sustainability plays a key role?
  - b. How is the top management composed? Would you say this influences sustainability integration?
  - c. In literature, scholars found that managers often sacrifice long-term value creation in order to smooth over the short term. Would you say that top management holds a long-term view?

**Influences on Project Team/Managers/Employees**

9. Managers and employees are inclined to follow profit maximization. How does your company deal with the fact that decisions for sustainability might compromise on the short term?

**Influences on Projects**

10. How do you proceed during project assessment? Would you say that the current project assessment favors certain project parameters and KPIs?
11. Which tools are you using to assess projects? (e. g. NPV, Cost-benefit analysis)
  - a. Are sustainability assessments tools used?
  - b. How does sustainability influence the creation of the business case?
12. An organization usually has limited resources. Would you say there's competition for resources of sustainability projects with other projects?
13. Is sustainability integrated directly at the beginning of a project?

**Superordinate influences:****Stakeholder: (influences people)**

14. Stakeholders usually massively influence organizational strategy; however, definition of these stakeholders depends on the organization itself.
  - a. How does the organization define its stakeholders? How do they rate their importance?
  - b. Do organizations mainly see stakeholders in the financial area?
  - c. Are there differences in stakeholder definition between top-management and rest of the employees?

**Uncertainty: (influences people)**

15. The benefits of sustainability projects are not always fully evident directly and the outcome is influenced by external factor
  - a. How do companies deal with this uncertainty? Are projects preferred where the benefit is clearly evident now?
  - b. Are you aware of cognitive limitations, biases? (e.g. status quo bias)

**Concluding questions:**

16. How would you evaluate the discussed factors? What is an especially big influence on sustainability?
17. Do you have any more factors that were not mentioned?

Additional Results

Table S1: Results of the introductory questions (1-5) for interview partners in the chemical industry

Chemical Industry Interview Partners	Company 9	Company 10	Company 11	Company 12	Company 13	Company 14
Role	Management, Head sustainability, 10 years sustainability experience	Management, Head environment health & safety, for 5 years, innovation experience	Management, Leading innovation and sustainability strategy for business unit	Management, Director Sustainability	Management, Vice President Corporate Sustainability	No information available
Definition of Sustainability	It is about the people living well	Three dimensions, environment, social, economic	Taking care of the future of the company while doing good	Three dimensions, environment, social, economic	Three dimensions, environment, social, economic	No information available
Importance of Sustainability for Top Management	High	High	High	High	High	No information available
Strategy Alignment with Sustainability	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No information available
Disclosure of competitive advantages of sustainability in a financial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No information available
Existence of sustainability projects	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No information available
Integration in all projects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No information available

Chemical Industry Interview Partners	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3	Company 4	Company 6	Company 7
<b>Role</b>	Management, innovation experience Chemist 5 years Sustainability experience	Management, Head Sustainability Department 40 years' experience	Management, responsible for environmental division in business unit	Management, Head corporate services inclusive sustainability	Management, Head of innovation in business unit	Management, Vice President Sustainability, integrating sustainability in company strategy
<b>Definition of Sustainability</b>	Future of the company, using "Brundtlandt" definition	Answering stakeholder demands for the future	Three dimensions, environment, social, economic	No information available	Three dimensions, environment, social, economic	Three dimensions, environment, social, economic
<b>Importance of Sustainability for Top Management</b>	High	High	High	No information available	High	High
<b>Strategy aligned with Sustainability</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No information available	Yes	Yes
<b>Disclosure of competitive advantages of sustainability in a</b>	No	To a small degree	No	No information available	No	No
<b>Existence of sustainability projects</b>	No	yes	No	No information available	Yes	Yes
<b>Integration in all projects</b>	Yes	No, but efforts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note. Based on interview results

**Table S2:** Results of the introductory questions (1-5) for the interview partners in the automotive industry

<b>Automotive Interview Partners</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Definition of Sustainability</b>	<b>Importance of Sustainability for Top Management</b>	<b>Strategy aligned with Sustainability</b>	<b>Disclosure of competitive advantages of sustainability in a financial way</b>	<b>Existence of sustainability projects</b>	<b>Integration in all projects</b>
Company 5	Management, team-lead sustainability	Resource efficiency	High	Yes	No	Yes	As a decision criterion for investments
Company 8	Project management, sustainability reporting	Answering stakeholder demands with continuity, three dimensions	High	Yes	No	Yes	No, but efforts

Note. Based on interview results

**Table S3:** Interview partner responses to question 16 and 17, stating most important and additional influencing factors on sustainability

<b>Chemical Industry</b>	<b>Most important factor for sustainability?</b>	<b>Additional Factor?</b>
Company 1	Interplay of drivers and top management	No
Company 2	Interplay of different factors	Affordability (was already covered)
Company 3	Interplay, market, customers, stakeholders and politics	No
Company 4	Interplay of different factors	Internal dynamic developing, company culture
Company 6	Sustainability drives innovation	No
Company 7	No information available	Sustainability reporting to create awareness
Company 9	No information available	Soft dimension, making people comfortable, tangible decision processes
Company 10	Responsibility of company, market, image, competitive advantages	License to operate becomes especially important if companies are lagging
Company 11	Responsibility of company	No
Company 12	Not being too early with sustainability	People with passion on all levels
Company 13	Top management	No
Company 14	No information available	No information available
<b>Automotive Sector</b>		
Company 5	Stakeholder pressure	No
Company 8	No information available	No

Note. Based on interview results