



SDG Posters: How to create them

LEADING QUESTION OF AN SDG POSTER:

HOW ‘WICKED’ IS THE SDG-RELATED PROBLEM, AND WHAT INTERESTING APPROACHES BY ORGANIZATIONS – EITHER ALONE, OR IN (CROSS-SECTOR) PARTNERSHIP – CAN BE IDENTIFIED?

Developing a greater understanding of the SDGs requires an (in-class) approach in which participants are facilitated to go from macro-considerations on societal (often wicked) problems, to a micro-assessment covering promising strategies to effectively address these issues. Poster presentations have proven a fruitful didactical approach to challenge (groups of) students – and in-company or inter-organizational working group participants – to come to grips with complexity, get to the core, apply a number of analytical and info-graphical techniques, and engage in inter-rater reliability and peer-review processes that, until recently, were primarily used in scientific conferences.

The techniques and principles-based approaches introduced in Chapters 4 and 5 of *Principles of Sustainable Business* provide useful frameworks and analytical angles to help navigate group processes in compiling convincing and inspiring posters – in a relatively short period of time (one to two weeks).

Selected principles related to ‘wicked problems analysis’ (Chapter 4)	Selected principles related to ‘wicked opportunities approaches’ (Chapter 5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wickedness principle: wicked problems cannot be solved, only addressed. ■ Intellectual principle: develop a high ‘tolerance for ambiguity’. ■ Multi-dimensionality and pluralism principle: Identifying a multitude of definitions, diversity of views and stands – rather than a single approach, theory or method – helps in assessing relevant dimensions of the problem. ■ Participatory principle: the involvement of multiple stakeholders is not only a way to collect useful information and insights, but also allows to experiment and learn what works and what does not. ■ Integrative assessment principle: develop an analytical and reflective attitude that takes all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fiduciary duty principle: denote primary responsibilities in not acting against the benefit of others in the execution of core roles, functions and activities. ■ ‘Do no harm’ principle: actions of actors should enclose preventing, reducing and controlling the risk of harm to others (related to trade-off and dilemma thinking). ■ ‘Doing good’ principle: actions of actors should contribute to the creation, distribution and maximization of beneficial outcomes for others (related to ethical puzzles and paradoxical thinking). ■ Societal triangulation principle: always consider the complementary logics, roles, functions, values, means and competences of all three societal spheres (state, market, civil society) when analyzing a wicked problem and



<p>five complexity categories into account: (1) structural, (2) generative, (3) dynamic, (4) communicative, and (5) societal complexities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ‘Wisdom of the crowd’ principle: the combination of multiple, independent judgements of diverse (and relatively uninformed) groups is often more accurate than the professional judgement, prediction or forecast of individual experts. ■ Peer review principle: create the highest possible consensus on the quality of an assessment. ■ Sociocratic principles: reaching agreement and group decisions on the basis of equal participation and joint assessment. 	<p>considering solution-oriented opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partnering principle: collaborating can create additional value (collaborative advantage, synergistic value, ‘wicked opportunity’) ■ ‘Fit’ principles: to seize opportunities from collaborative advantage in addressing societal problems, various ‘fit’ dimensions must be reckoned with: ‘complexity fit’, ‘issue-partnering fit’, ‘partner fit’, ‘culture fit’, ‘dynamic fit’.
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[1] CHOOSE POSTER FORMAT AND JOINT AMBITION

- ▶ Format: Poster A-3 format (or two A-4 formats).
- ▶ Clear and expressive layout to effectively reveal your most important analytical efforts as well as present your argument on possible solution-oriented approaches.
- ▶ Group formation: create a group of 3–4 people to work on this challenge in a set period of time.
- ▶ The ambition of the SDG-poster is exploratory and analytical, aimed at gaining better insights. The ambition can never be to define clear-cut ‘solutions’ or to identify ‘best-practice’ cases. Rather, the function of the poster-creating process is heuristic: to identify relevant dimensions, analyze the degree of complexity of a specific problem, and to consider possible (interesting, relevant, promising) approaches to address the problem.

[2] CHOOSE AN SDG AND A LEADING QUESTION

- ▶ The leading question of most group poster at the start will probably be: “How wicked is the SDG-related problem, and what interesting approaches by organizations – either alone, or in (cross-sector) partnership – can be identified?”
- ▶ However, more specific questions can also be formulated within the realm of a particular SDG. For instance, referring to one of the 169 SDG-targets, or contextualized for a particular country or region.

[3] APPLY TWO BASIC ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES → SCOREBOARDS #1 and #2

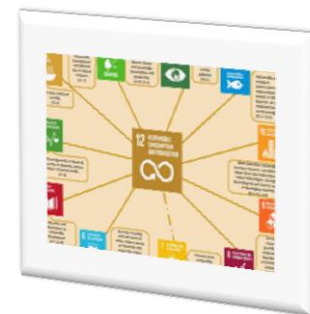
- ▶ The consecutive steps for using Scoreboard #1 and Scoreboard #2 are set out on in the Box on the next pages. Both Scoreboards – as well as a short explanation on how to use them – can be found under ‘Tools & Skills’ on this website (buttons: ‘Wicked Problems Analysis: 10 Scales’ and ‘Wicked Opportunities Analysis: Societal Triangulation’). More detailed information on this step-by-step analysis can be found on pages 249–256 of *Principles of Sustainable Business*.



SCOREBOARD #1 – Wickedness Scales (Chapter 4):

- ▶ **Scoring the degree of wickedness on 10 complexity dimensions:** Not all dimensions of a wicked problem are equally intractable and not all aspects of each SDG are equally wicked. How wicked is the problem? Score all 10 complexity dimensions of Scoreboard #1 (see pp.187–188 in the book) and calculate the overall score. Apply the ‘wisdom of the crowd’ technique and make sure to get a proper level of inter-rater reliability within the group (see section 4.4 and Tool 4.1 in the book for various techniques to use – such as the sociocratic method).
- ▶ **Make a trend analysis:** have various aspects of the problem been increasing or decreasing over the last ten years? Relevant statistics for exploring trends are available on various UN-related websites: see, for instance, ‘SDG Knowledge’ (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>) or the ‘SDG Global Database’ of the UN Statistics Division (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>)
- ▶ **Consult other relevant sources of information:** the ‘Selected Web Resources’ section at the end of each chapter of *Principles of Sustainable Business* lists various knowledge hubs, open access data initiatives and information platforms.
- ▶ **Nexus approach:** if time allows, try to assess the level of ‘interconnectedness’ of your SDG with other SDGs, and consider the extent to which this creates (a) a higher degree of complexity, but also (b) key intervention points and ‘nodes for leverage’ beyond the chosen SDG that might reveal opportunities for integrated, more effective intervention strategies (see section 10.5).

Scoreboard #1 Assessing levels of Complexity and Wickedness		Score	Complex	Wicked
STRUCTURAL COMPLEXITY	Multi-directional	0	0	0
	Multi-level	0	0	0
GENERATIVE COMPLEXITY	Multi-directional	0	0	0
	Multi-level	0	0	0
DYNAMIC COMPLEXITY	Multi-directional	0	0	0
	Multi-level	0	0	0
COMBINATORIAL COMPLEXITY	Multi-directional	0	0	0
	Multi-level	0	0	0
SOCIAL COMPLEXITY	Multi-directional	0	0	0
	Multi-level	0	0	0



SCOREBOARD #2 – Societal Triangulation (Chapter 5):

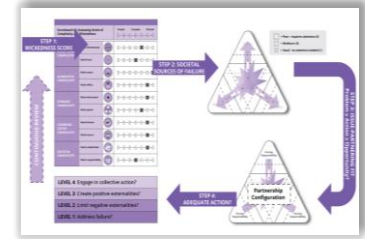
What societal stakeholders should be involved in addressing the SDG-related issue, and at what level of intervention and commitment (i.e., addressing failure; minimizing negative externalities; creating and scaling positive externalities; engaging in collective action)?

- ▶ **Read Chapter 5 on ‘having’ and ‘taking’ responsibilities** in addressing societal sources of failure, the ‘societal spheres’ involved, and their complementary roles and functions in societal value creation. Then choose the societal angle (state, market, civil society) from which you would like to approach the specified issue in particular.
- ▶ **Define the levels of engagement** (level 1, 2, 3, 4) at which organizations (from state, market, civil society) have, take, or should take responsibility for addressing the defined issue. → Filling out Scoreboard #2 (see page 251 in the book helps to identify societal gaps and obvious intervention logics of each of the three societal spheres.



LEVEL 1 Address failure	LEVEL 2 Minimize negative externalities	LEVEL 3 Create positive externalities	LEVEL 4 Engage in collective action
State	Market	Civil Society	State
Market	Civil Society	State	Market
Civil Society	State	Market	Civil Society

- ▶ **Define issue-partnering fit**, which delineates the type of partnership configuration (intra-sectoral, bipartite or tripartite partnerships; see sections 5.4–5.6 in the book) that would best match the level of complexity of the problem. Such analysis links the required level(s) of intervention (section 5.3) and the type of change required (sections 5.5) with actors from those societal sectors that have primary, secondary, tertiary or collective responsibility for resolving the problem.



[4] SELECT POSSIBLE ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACHES AND REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES

- ▶ **Can you identify an example** of a private organization (for-profit, non-profit or hybrid) that has addressed this particular issue? What are the ‘Pros and Cons’ of their proposed/adopted approach? Think of organizations that have adopted this particular SDG (and inter- related goals) in their annual report; what is their vision and organizational narrative on the issue? Do you consider this an adequate and sufficient approach (taking the level of complexity into account)? Why?
- ▶ **Can you identify inspiring partnering approaches** to the challenge? Does this partnership approach sufficiently mirrors the level of change and societal impact aspired (see section 5.5.3)? What societal stakeholders do you think are vital yet missing in the delineated (cross-sector) partnering approach? What would you consider a more appropriate ‘issue complexity – partnering fit’? Why?
- ▶ In all cases: **discuss strengths and weaknesses** of these (frontrunner) examples as well as relevant **opportunities and threats** that you anticipate (even when you don’t have detailed information on the case).

[5] CREATE THE FINAL POSTER

- ▶ **Create visually compelling infographics**: spend sufficient time (approx. 10% of total project time) in bringing the above components together in a well-designed poster that: (a) presents the collected information and results of your analyses in an appealing fashion; and (b) answers the leading research question.
- ▶ **Source references, attribution, reliability**: always (!) appropriately reveal the sources of information used at the bottom or the back of the poster, or under the graph that you reproduced from this source.